

Feb 4-13

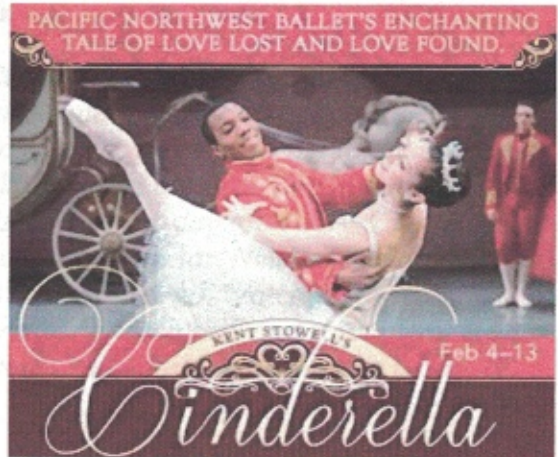
KENT
STOWELL'S*Cinderella*PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET'S ENCHANTING
TALE OF LOVE LOST AND LOVE FOUND.

The Year in Review: Junk Shots and Shattered Vases

Our critics pick the most
memorable stage moments—not
all of them good—of 2010.

By Gavin Borchert, Margaret Friedman, Sandra
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Chris Bennion

Megan Cole in *Three Tall Women*.

Less than
halfway into

June's first performance of *The Female of the Species* at ACT, after a psycho-fan (Renata Friedman) has taken a famous author (Suzy Hunt) hostage, the latter's estranged daughter (Morgan Rowe) joins the interrogation with far more verve than expected. So exhilarated was Rowe's character to take revenge on her mother that the actress slammed a vase on a desk for emphasis—and the glass prop accidentally shattered. Shards were everywhere, Friedman was barefoot, and 45 minutes of slapstick and physical mayhem remained in the one-act play. Such moments of suspense—in which the performers, stage crew, and director share the audience's terror—trump almost anything scripted or choreographed. Jeopardy electrifies the air. New lines are invented (the author tells her captor, "Put your boots on!"). Blocking is amended (Rowe wanders into the kitchen for a broom). Within a few minutes, the disaster is under control, and the pros manage to make the whole episode seem like something in the script. But later, when another character stamps his foot for emphasis, then winces suddenly in pain,

we know the pain's for real. MARGARET FRIEDMAN

Pacific Northwest Ballet has been performing works by George Balanchine since the company was founded, but in May we got a chance to see where Balanchine may have gotten some of his best ideas. PNB Education Director **Doug Fullington's** lecture/demonstration on the relationship between Balanchine and Marius Petipa, the architect of classical ballet, was laced with snippets of fabulous choreography danced with zest by the company. But it was Fullington's commentary, pointing out similarities in structure, vocabulary, and pattern, that made the audience feel so much smarter than when they'd walked in the door. SANDRA KURTZ

Choreographer Mark Haim had a great 2010, staging his beautiful solo *No More Sweet Hours of Rapture* to music from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, creating a showcase for the equally beautiful Betsy Cooper at Seattle Dance Project's January show. Then for June's Northwest New Works Festival at *On the Boards*, he premiered *This Land Is Your Land*, contrasting a set of postmodern walking patterns with an idiosyncratic collection of "accessories"—from a Starbucks coffee cup to an Uzi. And in October he showed a revised version of *Buoyant Despite Slump*, featuring the invaluable Jim Kent dancing to Chopin with pink satin ribbons holding up his wool socks—another charming non sequitur image from a repertory stocked with eccentricities. KURTZ

There's nothing like the thrill of seeing a new play for the first time. Eric Lane Barnes' **Rapture of the Deep** is a show that continues to haunt—not only for its music (like a Protestant worship service at full gale), but for a turbulent story line that explores the fine line between madness and spiritual ecstasy. Family issues and betrayals, loves won and scorned, and a general mess of emotions roam the play's landscape. I'm not sure *Rapture* is quite ready for anything larger than the Balagan Theatre, where it debuted in September, but the possibilities still have me in sway. Should Barnes discover how to streamline his plot and really sort out the motivations of his central characters, I believe his play will be worthy of a major restaging. Barnes' characters, to paraphrase Pat Benatar, can't seem to stop using God as a weapon, and the effect is riveting. PHINNEY

The organizers of the spring's Bernstein Festival persuaded a couple dozen ensembles to take on the work of a composer/conductor with—well, no significant ties to Seattle at all, though it did result in a zingy and affectionate production of his **On the Town** and a natty staging of his problematic but gorgeous **Candide**, both at the 5th Avenue. Each, respectively, offered a spectacular diva turn: Sarah Rudinoff went off like fireworks as brassy cab driver Hildy in her would-be seduction number "I Can Cook Too," while Laura Griffith sang as good as she looked (a brunette Grace Kelly in Dior) in that showiest of all possible arias, "Glitter and Be Gay." BORCHERT

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