

# The Register-Guard



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**ENTERTAINMENT**    ARTS

REVIEWS

# Ballet Fantastique’s ‘Aladdin’ rocks audience with captivating, original performance

BY GWEN CURRAN

*For The Register-Guard*

8:28 P.M., MAY 13, 2017



“We will, we will rock you...” and Ballet Fantastique did this Mother’s Day weekend with ballet, magic, music and Mercury, Freddie that is.

“Aladdin” is the fourth original ballet by Donna and Hannah Bontrager this season. Adapted from “1001 Nights” by the Bontragers plus Genevieve and Deborah Speer, this beloved tale exploded on the Hult Center’s Soreng Theater stage as a colorful dynamic rock opera ballet. The Satin Love Orchestra provided all original arrangements of favorite ’80s Queen songs including “Killer Queen,” “I Want It All,” “Don’t Stop Me Now,” “We Are the Champions” and “I Was Born to Love You.”

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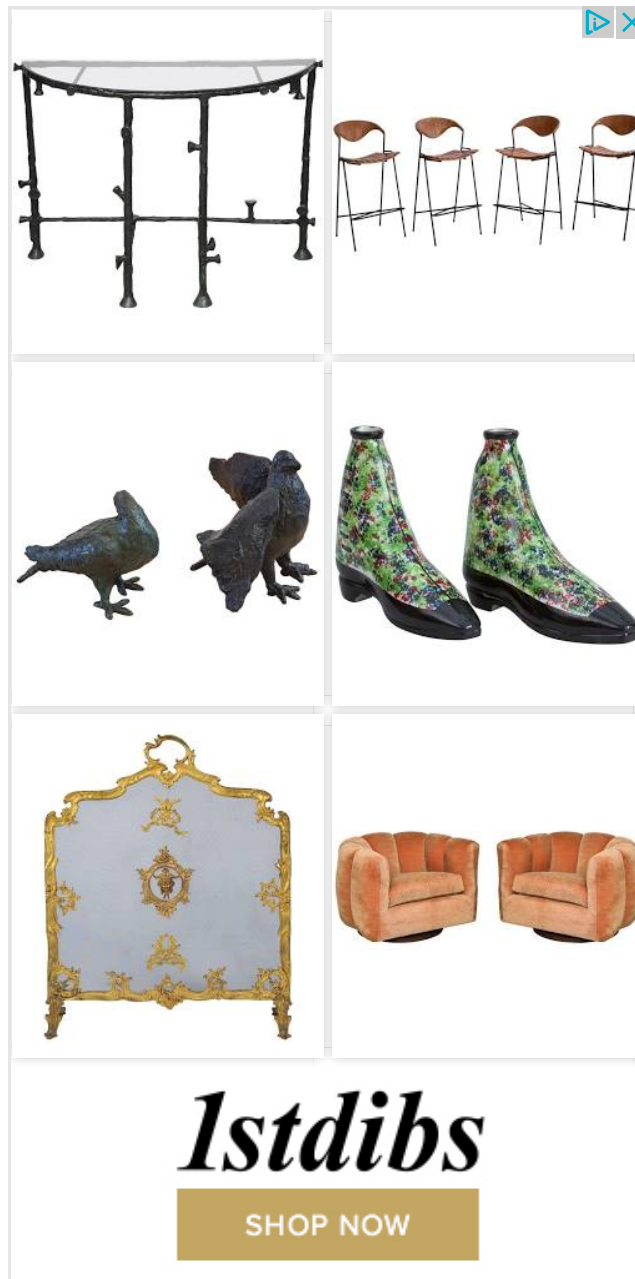
Satin Love Orchestra celebrates their 20th year with this performance. Jason Palmer directs from his drums. Matthew Larson's vocals amazingly brought Freddie Mercury to life. Shelly James and Rica Wright's soulful sounds delighted us with their luxurious voices. Joe Weber on guitar, Owen Wright on keyboards, Callan Coleman on bass, and electrical percussion by Daren Kromarek captured the Queen sound, transporting us to the '70s and '80s.

The evening opened with Jim Ballard strolling down the aisle as a charming and humorous Arabian merchant to tell the story. Ballard also delighted us as the Genie of the Lamp. Not only does he act and dance, but he enjoys his roles. A gem among the jewels of this performance.

The costumes sparkled and glowed thanks to Donna Bontrager and her astonishing team. The turban/hats for the women were refreshing and perfect.

And the dancing; it seemed a captivating mashup of ballet, jazz, gymnastics, the Pony, the Swim, Bollywood, and Eastern belly dance; and it worked! Using everyone in the company and the school was brilliant and brought an energy to the evening that a chamber company cannot produce. During "We Will Rock You," the students in the aisles and the audience participation gave the illusion of attending a rock concert. Well done.

Natanael Leal's Aladdin was perfect. His leaps were breathtaking, his pirouettes perfection, his lifts stunning. A spirited addition to the company.



Amanda Coleman as Princess Jasmine brought perfect technique, an enchanting aura, and beautiful form to her role. We look forward to her next role.

Ashley and Hannah Bontrager, Carolin Koepplin and Leanne Mizzoni were exquisite in their supporting parts. Their experience and skill make them bewitch-

ing on stage.

Raymond Silos as the Sultan was comical and refreshing.

Gustavo Ramirez's strength, good looks and acting ability captivated us as the bad guy.

Apprentices Kenzie Ballenger and Della Griffin were perfect as the Palace Calla Girls. Palace Boys Kalan Guetti and Zehpan Holt carried out their roles with dedication and pride. The use of a sedan chair to bring in the Princess in Act 1 was fantastic.

Kudos to the Rock You Kids: Bree Erickson, LilyAnn Halseide, Nikolaie Mills, Delancey Shultz, Isla Waddell, Jakob Wilson, Sahalie Wilson, and Karissa Wolf. You rock!

Congratulations to all for an enjoyable, lively performance.

*Gwen Curran of Eugene reviews dance for The Register-Guard.*

More [REVIEWS](#) articles »

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## **BALLET REVIEW**

*Ballet Fantastique's Aladdin*

When: 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday

Where: Hult Center Soreng Theater, Seventh Avenue and Willamette Street

Tickets: \$28 to \$53 ([hultcenter.org](http://hultcenter.org))

Learn more: [balletfantastique.org](http://balletfantastique.org)

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## Today's Arts stories

**REVIEWS**

8:28 p.m.

**Ballet Fantastique's 'Aladdin' rocks audience with captivating, original performance**



**REVIEWS**

**Eugene Symphony's splendid high points slightly marred by awkwardness during Rachev's final concert**



**DANCE**

**This 'Aladdin' is well-versed in disco, Bollywood**



**ARTS**

**Look(kind)alike**



**THEATER**

**Wildish celebrates 10th birthday with a return to its roots**



**VISUAL ARTS**

**Second Friday Art Walk starts at Emerald Art Center; ‘We Are Neighbors’ chronicles immigrants**



**VISUAL ARTS**

**Little orphan Annie’s moxie will charm you**



**MUSIC**

**UO dancers to tell stories at concert; expert takes stage at MEDGE show**



**BUZZWORTHY**

**This week: UO Opera Ensemble showcases Italian opera**



**OPPORTUNITIES**

**Roving Park Players holding auditions; ShelterCare event benefits homeless**



**UO MUSIC AND DANCE**

**UO Jazz Ensembles Spring Concert features guest artist Walter Smith III; soprano Emma Rose Lynn to present master’s recital**



**MUSIC**

# Eugene Symphony's Rachev closes tenure with 'Alpine'



## Business

### BUSINESS

## Springfield entrepreneur takes next step in second career, opening watchmaking shop downtown

Celeste Wong found the time was right to bring back the wristwatch as a handcrafted piece of art

SPRINGFIELD — Celeste Wong is the latest entrepreneur to put her faith in downtown Springfield, opening what she says is a one-of-a-kind business. Three months ago, Wong opened Celeste Watch Co. on Main Street, across ...



- Tax and fee proposals for Oregon transportation work include a shiny new idea: sales tax on motor vehicles
- Under the radar: Air traffic control for drones
- Best places to move in retirement? They're all over the map

*More BUSINESS »*

## Lifestyles

### OREGON LIFE

## A fresh look at the comics

A readers survey is aimed at removing deadwood and bringing new voices and energy to the funny pages

When it comes to The Register-Guard comics, two things are for certain: 1. Readers are passionate. When there's been a change to the comics lineup, the readers are vocal about it, placing calls and writing ...



- Mom passed on fear — and courage
- Indian murder spree still reverberates
- Celebrating the American voice

## Tastings

### BEER

## Deep, dark Hellshire beers again emerge into the light

Oakshire Brewing's Hellshire VII, a bourbon barrel-aged imperial stout, will be focus of attention during May 5-6 festivities in Eugene

First take "the burliest" Russian imperial stout. Add it to freshly emptied bourbon barrels. Then leave it alone for a year. The result, says Oakshire Brewing's lead brewer Dan Russo, is Hellshire VII, "a massive ...



- Next generation up for winemaking families
- Guardians of 'beer geekery'
- The real rub on fruit shrubs

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