

DANCE | By Chrissie Flint

"Sirens" Dec 2006, Choreography:  
A. Colandrea, Dancers: Carolina  
Constantinou and Bledi Bejledi.

"Rhapsody in Blue" 2008, Choreography:  
Julien Ficely, Dancers: Justin Cumine and  
Elsa Sabbatini.

PHOTO: P. FICETAKIS

PHOTO: ANTHI GABRIELIDES

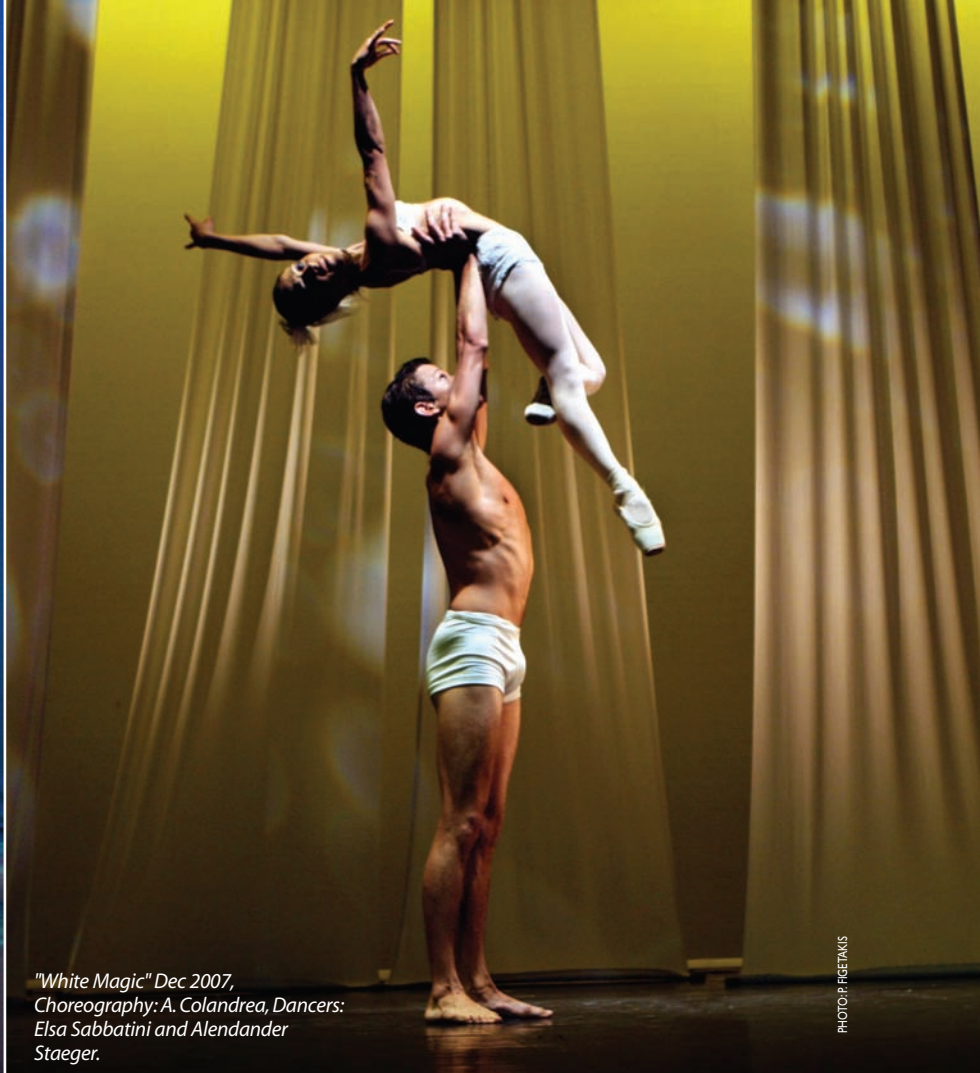
# Born to dance

Dancing lessons are extremely popular with young people in Cyprus and there are more than 100 ballet schools on the island.

**Y**oung girls and boys begin their training from the age of around 3 and many continue right up until the age of 17 or 18. They love their weekly lessons, the thrill of performing to an audience and the mixture of nerves and exhilaration as their dancing exams draw near. But for almost all of those young enthusiastic students, that's where it ends.

In Cyprus, the opportunities for those who are talented enough to take their art to a professional level are virtually non-existent, making it impossible to be a professional dancer and continue to live on the island. Talented young dancers were forced to move abroad in search of work or to compromise and train as dance teachers so that they could remain at home.

Five years ago, a group of interested people began to discuss



*"White Magic" Dec 2007,  
Choreography: A. Colandrea, Dancers:  
Elsa Sabbatini and Alendander  
Staeger.*

PHOTO: P. FGETANIS

the formation of a permanent dance company in Cyprus so that young dancers could enjoy dancing at home and earn a living from doing so. In May 2005, a professional ballet company called Dancecyprus was founded as an exciting non-profit organization. It aims to become the foundation of a national ballet company.

Dancecyprus is now the focus for neoclassical ballet in Cyprus offering professional Cypriot dancers and choreographers the opportunity to work alongside visiting professionals to create and perform to their highly

**Increasingly, Dancecyprus is becoming well known amongst international dancers who are keen to travel to Cyprus to take part in the company's exciting projects**

appreciative audiences and to show that there is a growing need for a national ballet company on the island.

For dancer/choreographers like Limassol-born Carolina Constantinou, the Dancecyprus Artistic Director who has worked in many European countries, the new company offers the chance to showcase her work to a home audience. Increasingly, Dancecyprus is becoming well known amongst international dancers who are keen to travel to Cyprus to take part in the company's exciting projects working alongside innovative choreographers who are experimenting with ballet and giving it a contemporary and exciting character that appeals to ever larger audiences.

The enthusiastic founders of Dancecyprus included Christina Arestis a soloist with the Royal Ballet in London whose father is from Pafos, Androula Vassiliou, a former First Lady, the flamboyant Italian choreographer Antonio Colandrea from Maggiodanza in Florence and the former mayor of Lefkosia, Lellos Demetriades. The patrons of Dancecyprus are Bryony Brind (former principal dancer with the Royal Ballet) and

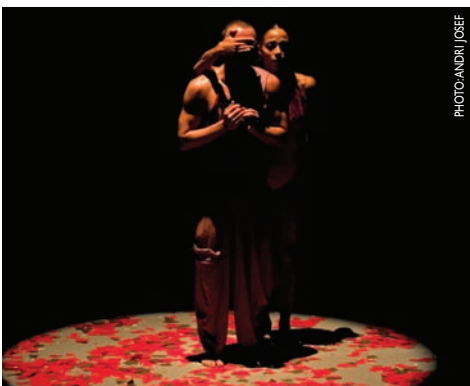


PHOTO: ANDRI JOSEF

*Amoroso" 2008, Choreography: Carolina Constantinou,  
Dancers: Sebastien Mari and Carolina Constantinou*

the popular Cypriot pianist and composer, Martino Tirimo.

Since its conception, Dancecyprus has produced some memorable performances. Its first was *Sirens* in December 2006 which was performed by 12 of the company's dancers. *Sirens* was choreographed by Antonio Colandrea, the company's first Artistic Director, who explains, "I chose to dedicate my first assignment with Dancecyprus to the Mediterranean temperament of all the women who derive from the sea. This is why I called it 'Sirens'. The choreographic inspiration is the fruit of a narration that I have cherished in my heart, and I felt it was a great honour for me to be presenting it on the island of Cyprus, where due to the Mediterranean emotional and passionate feelings, I feel that all Cypriots are close to my heart".

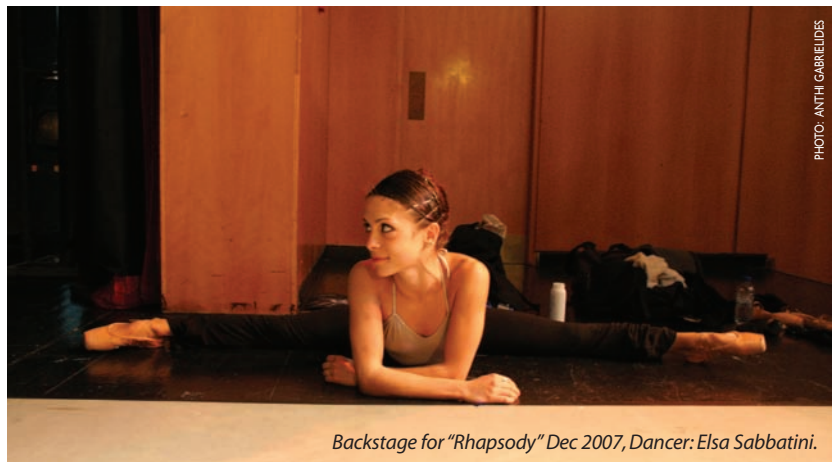
As part of the same performance Dancecyprus also presented *A Pair of Wings Please?* choreographed by Carolina Constantinou. The audiences were enthralled by the high quality of the performances, the ethos of the new company and the enthusiasm shown by the young dancers. Word quickly spread and people of all ages were eager to see Dancecyprus perform. They were particularly delighted to have the opportunity to watch Cypriot dancers and to offer them their support.

The following year Dancecyprus presented *White Magic*, which was the result of dramatic collaboration between Antonio Colandrea and Martino Tirimo, using music by Mozart and Chopin. The seven young



"Rhapsody in Blue" Dec 2007, Choreography: J. Ficely, Dancers: Elsa Sabbatini and Sebastien Mari.

PHOTO: ANDRIJ JOSEF



Backstage for "Rhapsody" Dec 2007, Dancer: Elsa Sabbatini.

PHOTO: ANTHI GABRIELIDES

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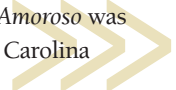


Backstage Makeup Dec. 2008, Dancer: Galatia Savva, Makeup: Georgia Karayianni.

PHOTO: ANTHI GABRIELIDES

dancers were from Cyprus, Denmark and Italy and included Anastasia Paschali (working with the Royal Danish Ballet), Galatia Savva and Demetra Demetriou. It was another wonderful performance for ballet lovers and showed once again, that Dancecyprus has its own unique identity.

The company's third performance was in 2008 and was entitled *Rhapsody*. The three contrasting ballets displayed musical diversity with George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, as well as extracts from Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* for *Une Nuit Blanche*, which was choreographed by French choreographer Julien Ficely. The third piece *Amoroso* was beautifully choreographed by Carolina



Constantinou with music by Xenakis, J.S Bach and Monteverdi. Once again, the audience thoroughly enjoyed the enthralling mixture of neo-classical and contemporary ballet with colourful and imaginative costumes that emphasised the relevance of ballet in today's fast-changing society.

The next Dancecyprus production will be 'Summer Gala' when soloists and principals from some of Europe's most famous ballet companies will dance works from the repertoire of choreographers in the forefront of modern classical ballet - never seen before in Cyprus. A new production *Triptych* for the company's dancers is planned for later in the year in all the main towns - pending confirmation of funding. The choreography will be by French and Israeli choreographers as well as by Carolina Constantinou whose inspiration has been drawn from the famous painting *The World of Cyprus*, by Cypriot artist Adamantios Diamantis.

At the moment Dancecyprus is funding performances on a project basis to provide opportunities for Cypriot dancers to perform but it is hoped that in the near future the company will be able to offer many of them full-time employment and job security. Importantly, as well as the dancers, the company's artistic director, Carolina Constantinou, who is so enthusiastically dividing her time between Cyprus and Germany (where she is a soloist with the Munich Theatre) needs financial support to continue her work at home in Cyprus.

As well as encouraging Cypriot dancers, Dancecyprus raises the profile of dance and encourages the enjoyment of dance in the community with a variety of informal lectures and discussions. Since December 2006, Dancecyprus has also been working with village youth groups in its Outreach Programme which aims to reach as many young people as possible, introducing them to dance and teaching them how to enjoy and appreciate it. As part of the programme, young people watch the dancers rehearsing, spend time talking with them afterwards and are then invited to attend one of their performances.

*What is Ballet?* is the title of a new presentation which has been launched this year as part of The Dancecyprus Education Programme for state and private schools in



: "White Magic" Dec 2007, Choreography: A.Colandrea, Dancers: Anastasia Paschali, Alexander Staeger, Photo: P.Figetakis

PHOTO: P.FIGETAKIS

**Outreach Programme aims to reach as many young people as possible, introducing them to dance and teaching them how to enjoy and appreciate it.**

Cyprus Airways is the Official Carrier for Dancecyprus.

towns and villages throughout Cyprus. The Dancecyprus Educational Programme is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The presentations have been enthusiastically received everywhere. In them, children are given an introduction to the wonderful world of ballet and to learn how ballet developed. Everyone has fun trying some of the basic techniques!

Dancecyprus is proving to be very dynamic and has many ambitious plans for the future but it needs to secure some long term corporate sponsorship. For both companies and individuals who enjoy dance and would like to support Dancecyprus it is possible to become a 'Friend of Dancecyprus' and Friends' membership offers special privileges throughout the year and the knowledge that you are definitely helping to make dreams come true for young Cypriot dancers....

*Summer Gala* will be performed under the auspices of the First Lady, Mrs. Elsi Christofias on Friday 11 September in the Rialto Theatre, Lemesos (77-77-77-45) and Saturday 12 September in the Strovolos Theatre in Lefkosia (22-313010).

For details of membership and further information about performances please contact Dancecyprus, P.O. Box 125, Lania 4744, Lemesos Tel. 25 -432404/99-920264 or email [dance@dancecyprus.org](mailto:dance@dancecyprus.org). There is also plenty of information on the website [www.dancecyprus.org](http://www.dancecyprus.org)

