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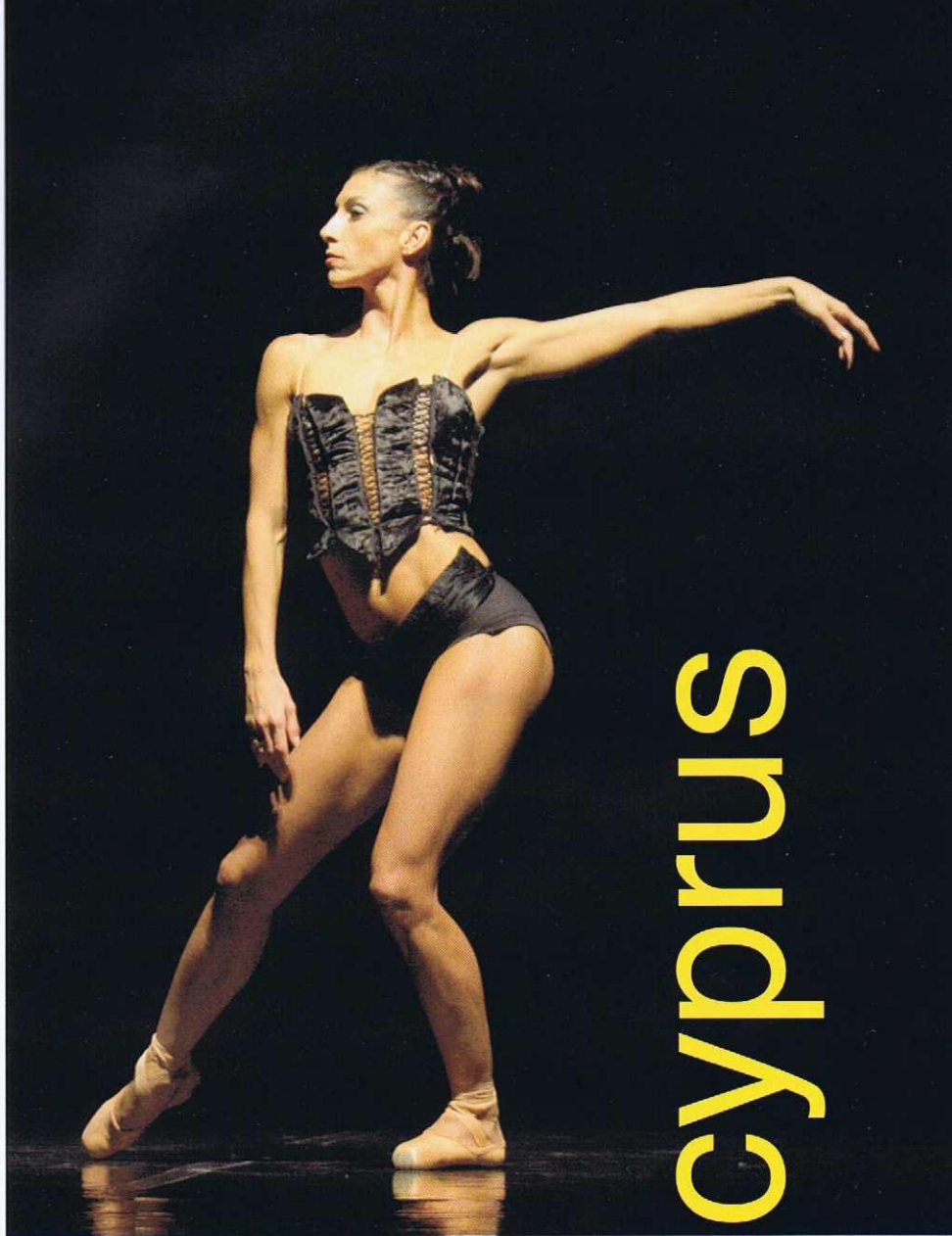
## MAGGIE FOYER discovers blossoming dance on a holiday island

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**S**ea, sun and happy hols is for most of us what Cyprus is about, but did you know that it has more dance teachers per capita than any other country? In light of this it is surprising that it still doesn't have a permanent company, but Cypriot Carolina Constantinou, recently appointed as artistic director of Dancecyprus, plans to change this. The project-based group presents a short season each year while her International Gala offered the public the excitement of an unusual dance bill by top international artists.

The Gala fare was predominantly contemporary; not a fouetté or tutu in sight. Laura Morera and Ricardo Cervera, from the Royal Ballet in London, brought Liam Scarlett's *Liebstraum*. In contrast to the lush romanticism of the music, it was taut and deep, the relationship expressed through a quivering foot, a searching hand or a telling glance. Morera also opened the second half, with a fiery rendition of Gamzatti's solo. William Moore from Stuttgart gave the other classical piece, Siegfried's Act III solo, which paled somewhat in comparison with his performance in *Eddy*, choreographed for him by Constantinou. She dedicated this work to dancer Edward Sebastian Nichita, who died tragically young. It is a powerful, emotional work to heavy rock music and wowed the audience, particularly the group of teenage girls near me who were very much in favour of both the virtuoso display and Moore's bare chest!

*Prince and fiancée*, a tantalising extract from Ray Barra's *Swan Lake*, brought a new psychological twist to the old tale. Severine Ferrolier and Cyril Pierre from the Bayerisches Staatsballett gave a compelling interpretation and later showed their versatility in Martin Schlöpfer's *Violakonzert/III*. Berlin Staatsballett dancers Soraya Bruno and Martin Buczko delighted



Stefania Figliossi in Bigonzetti's *Prelude Fugasse*. Photo: Anthi Gabriellides

the audience with Benvindo Fonseca's duet of adolescent passion in *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*. This is a great vehicle for these two talented dancers but it has never seemed, to me, to relate to Lorca's tragedy. Nacho Duato's sensual *Cor Perdut* was danced with the emotions on the outside by Ana Maria Lopez and Francisco Lorenzo, lead dancers from his company, while Mauro Bigonzetti's choreography was showcased in two sleek and sassy solos by Stefania Figliossi.

Constantinou paired with Buczko in Itzik Galili's *Fragile* closed the programme. It is a long serious work and was at a slight disadvantage as the closing number. But the sharp-edged, well focused performances saved the day. It is good that the local dancers have the opportunity to see international artists, but the urgent need is to build a local product.

This is a tough time to be looking for funding for dance but talent and enthusiasm do not seem to be lacking on the island. A junior ballet company run by local teachers provides performing experience (and builds audiences) and the next step is to stop the talent drain by providing jobs for the graduating dancers. This is Constantinou's vision. I look forward to the day when Dancecyprus will be presenting its own exciting dance programme.

# Dance cyprus