

# Dancing times

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## FAREWELL MERCÉ

Cunningham  
remembered



## PLUS

Audition advice

Natalia Osipova  
and Ivan Vasiliev

Tamara Rojo

## NUTCRACKER NATION

The classic that  
rules Christmas

Sister to Dance Today





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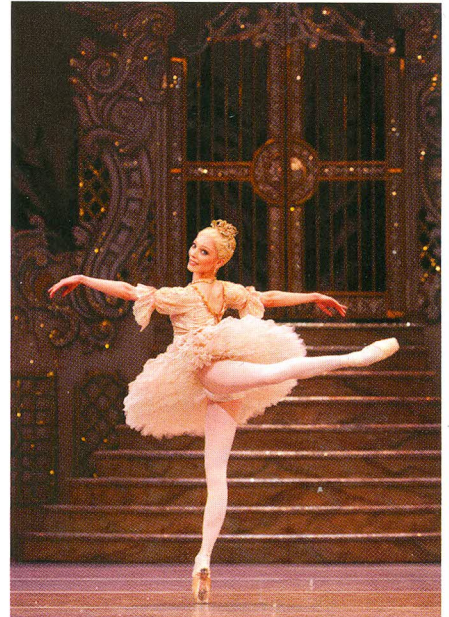
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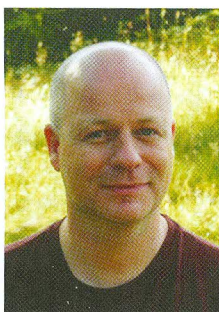
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# Editorial



**W**e've gone *Nutcracker* mad with the December *Dancingtimes*, highlighting the fact that there will be no fewer than four different productions playing in London over the Christmas period – it seems we just can't get enough of this seasonal favourite. In this issue, Zoë Anderson looks at the enduring appeal of *The Nutcracker*; Mary Clarke talks to Peter Wright about his production for Birmingham Royal Ballet; we offer pairs of tickets as prizes to see New York City Ballet's production of Balanchine's *Nutcracker* in the cinema; Natalie When looks behind the scenes at The O2 as

BRB prepare to stage *The Nutcracker* there; and in Dance Scene UK I see my first (but not my last) *Nutcracker* of the 2011–12 season! Rest assured, there is much more to read this month, including a Talking Point written by Tamara Rojo. Also included is Kathryn Wade's advice on how best to prepare for vocational school auditions for students and their parents; and Matthew Hawkins' tribute to Merce Cunningham, whose company gives its final performances this month. Finally, all at *Dancingtimes* would like to wish our readers a very Merry Christmas.

JONATHAN GRAY

## Contributors

**Matthew Hawkins** trained at The Royal Ballet School and danced for five years with The Royal Ballet before beginning his freelance career, in which mode he danced for choreographers Ian Spink, Siobhan Davies, Richard Alston and Michael Clark, before coming to prominence as a choreographer in his own right. Currently his practice is international and includes performing, teaching, writing and choreographic assignments. He received The Jerwood Choreography Prize in 2002 and subsequently an Arts Council England International Fellowship (for visual arts collaboration in China) and an Arts Council England Dance Artists Fellowship (2005). Currently he is an associate dancer for Compagnie Blanca Li in Paris, and is also preparing a new solo work.

**Tamara Rojo** is a principal dancer with The Royal Ballet and has a Bachelor of Dance and a Master of Scenic Arts from the University Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid. She trained at the Victor Ullate Ballet School, then with David Howard and Renato Paroni and currently works with Alexander Agadzhyanov and Loipa Araujo. Her awards include The Prince of Asturias Arts Award, Spanish Royal Gold Medal for Fine Arts, Gold Medal and Special Jury Award at the Paris International Dance Competition, Critics' Circle National Dance Award, Barclays Award, the Italian Critics' Award and she recently won a Laurence Olivier Award for her collaboration with Kim Brandstrup on *Goldberg: The Brandstrup Rojo Project*. She was also recently awarded the "Encomienda de Número" of the Spanish Order of "Isabel la Católica".

**Kathryn Wade** was born in Bombay and trained at The Royal Ballet Lower and Upper Schools. She graduated into The Royal Ballet from Dame Ninette de Valois' class, and danced as a soloist with the company, and London Festival Ballet. On retiring as a performer with The Royal Ballet she was encouraged to teach by Kenneth MacMillan. She started her teaching career at The Royal Ballet School, and became the first director of English National Ballet School in 1992. She subsequently returned to the RBS as principal of the Outreach Programme until 2010. Kathryn now freelances as an international guest teacher and adjudicator.

**Natalie When** was going to be a professional musician but got diverted into broadcasting and writing. For many years she presented music programmes on BBC Radio 3 and then Classic FM. She also worked on Arts programmes for Radio 4 ("Kaleidoscope") and the World Service. But her first interest when starting as a radio producer (which she's now back pursuing) was investigating the stories and issues behind the performances.