

PRESSEINFORMATION

Collien Konzert & Theater GmbH

Rasta Thomas'
ROCK THE BALLET
starring **THE AMAZING BOYS OF DANCE**

Rasta Thomas' "Rock the Ballet" is a dynamic, high energy show filled with great music and set against a backdrop of fascinating video projected scenery. Choreographed by husband & wife Rasta Thomas & Adrienne Canterna, this show is a fusion of classic ballet technique blended with the excitement of hip hop, ballet, tap, contemporary & gymnastics, featuring the Bad Boys of Dance.

"Rock the Ballet" is the perfect show for dance lovers and first time theater goers. Rasta Thomas' Rock the Ballet debuted at the St. Pauli Theater in Hamburg, Germany. The show has received standing ovations across the USA & Eur

Rasta Thomas (Director/Founder/Dancer)

Rasta Thomas was born in San Francisco, California in 1981 and raised in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Rasta studied at the world-renowned Kirov Academy in Washington D.C. As a teenager, Rasta made dance competition history with honors including the Special Jury Prize from the 1994 Paris International Dance Competition, the Gold Medal in the Junior Men's Division from the 1996 Varna International Ballet Competition, and the Gold Medal in the Senior Men's Division from the Jackson, MS USA-IBC. In 1995, he became a member of Le Jeune Ballet de France and in 1997, was invited to be a Principal Dancer with the Hartford Ballet. Some of his guest credits include American Ballet Theatre, Victor Ullate Ballet of Spain, National Ballet of China, Joffrey Ballet, Lines Contemporary Ballet, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company and Pacific Northwest Ballet. In 2001, Rasta was the first American to become a member of the Kirov Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia and then in 2003 he joined Dance Theatre of Harlem as a Principal. Rasta has danced diverse roles from "Albrecht" in Giselle, "Basilio" in Don Quixote, "Ali" in Le Corsaire, to works by Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Debbie Allen, Ulysses Dove and Jerry Mitchell. Rasta has been in several TV documentaries, performed at the Academy Awards, was a featured dancer in an international ad campaign for GAP, and appeared in the feature film, "One Last Dance", starring Patrick Swayze. He has performed at the White House for the President of the United States and opened for Aretha Franklin at Harlem's famous "Apollo Theater". In 2005, Rasta starred on Broadway in Twyla Tharp's hit musical, "Movin' Out". In 2007, Rasta performed as a guest artist in "Othello" in the title role with American Ballet Theatre for their Met season. Rasta is the founding director of "Bad Boys of Dance" and in 2008 he created Rasta Thomas' "Rock The Ballet" with his wife Adrienne Canterna.

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Press commentaries

„Discipline and Energy“ – Der Tagesspiegel; „Seven Dancer, who enthuse“ – Berliner Kurier; „unfettered bodies“ – WAZ; „Rock The Ballet peps“ – Rheinische Post; „Gorgeous men who do the splits“-WZ; „Seven against boredom“
Kölnische Rundschau

„Dance at it's best!“

New York Times

„With a so far unknown mixture of ballet, martial arts, acrobatic, modern and disco dance, Rasta Thomas and his company are able to stir up the young audience. And doesn't put only the female audience into euphoria“

„....a game between grounded power and a light ballet“

WAZ 06.02.2010

„Well trained and bursting with energy are all the dancers of the “Amazing Boys of Dance”but Rasta Thomas easily blows a light bulb into pieces when he dances and therefore, as we know, he is strictly speaking prohibited.

„Technique, body control, condition: all immaculate. On this foundation, which he (Rasta Thomas) worked very hard for, shows the sunny boy a dancing Robbie Williams, who is able to present a nice mix of humour, fun and erotic for over 90 minutes.“

„The show is plausible, full of pep and colourful...“

Rheinische Post, 06.02.2010

„Cause what these glorious 7, the dancer and choreographer Rasta Thomas and his “Amazing Boys of Dance” and Adrienne Canterna are showing is delightful “

„The delight of their bodies shown by these seven dancers, the unruly love of life and their dipping into the music – leaves a very excited audience behind. Standing ovations“

Kölnische Rundschau, 06.02.2010

„Rock the Ballet“ a show full of power and pure energy.... A must for all who loves dance....“ „Delightful“

Berliner Kurier, 28.01.2010

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„.... a mix that electrifies...“

„The bravery and the discipline of ballet and the rampant energy of rock showing a delightful contrast.“

„...amaze with difficult variations of jumps. The technical level in „Rock the Ballet“ is astounding – these dancing boys really do have style.

Der Tagesspiegel, 28.01.2010

„Here you see seven people on stage who show nothing but pure enjoyment of dance. It seems so real and so contagious that you have to like this group.“

B.Z., 28.01.2010

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Interview mit Rasta Thomas – künstlerischer Leiter, erster Tänzer

Have you always dreamed of dancing?

Between the age of seven and eleven I hated ballet. Then around eleven I started to appreciate it and began to look up to dance masters like Michael Jackson and Michail Baryshnikov.

Was someone dancing in your family?

No, my parents are both physicians. My dad was also into martial arts. One day, my dad sent me to ballet class, because I was acting bad in martial arts class. He said if I didn't behave in martial arts class, he was going to put me in a tutu.

And what happened?

When I was ten years old, my parents took me to the Kirov Academy in Washington DC, a professional ballet school - because I wanted to! By the way: I met my wife Adrienne there.

What did you like most during your education?

I appreciate the technique and foundation that ballet has given me, but I have always thought I was better at contemporary. However, it is the discipline I received from martial arts that I value the most.

Do you remember the very first role you danced on stage?

I danced many roles in "The Nutcracker" when I was younger, but the first part may have been George Balanchine's "The Prodigal Son" when I was about 16 years old.

And which part did you like the most?

I love dancing Basilio in "Don Quixote" and Albrecht in "Giselle". I also loved playing the title role in Lar Lubovitch's "Othello".

Then your international career started...

Since winning my first Gold Medal at the age of 14, I've danced all over the world with more than 20 companies. To mention a few: Dance Theater of Harlem, American Ballet Theatre, Kirov Ballet and National Ballet of China.

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Did you miss anything while dancing in those companies?

I was so tired of not being pushed to my fullest in every aspect of my art form. I need to be fulfilled not only by steps, but by emotion, direction and by someone or something that is unique and groundbreaking. I don't think any ONE company can give me that... thus the start of Bad Boys of Dance.

So you founded your own company...

Yes, in July 2007 we gave our first performance at the prestigious American Dance Festival called "Jacob's Pillow".

What's so special about your company?

There aren't that many dance shows and I think „Rock the Ballet” is a show that goes way beyond a normal dance company experience. And the show is full of young talent: Boys and girls starting as young as 18, my wife and I being only 26 and 27 and having choreographed the whole show, and myself directing and starring in it. I am amazed by our success every day and I am so grateful people keep coming to the show.

You want to perform for a young audience, don't you?

Although I am appreciative of anyone who comes to my shows, I would LOVE to perform to more people of my generation. I feel I create shows that appeal to a very large age span and that most young people think that the theatre is for older or richer people. My shows are changing that.

Well-known Mel Howard is producing your shows, did he discover you?

I met Mel over ten years ago in New York City. We were introduced by a mutual friend. He followed my solo career for a while, and when I started “Bad Boys of Dance” he was instrumental in allowing us to share our art with the world.

Could you convince Mel right away of rocking the ballet?

I trust Mel's ideas and advice very much. He has had much success in show business and I am a new, a young director. Luckily, Mel trusts me too and knows that my experience as a dancer has made me a director that wants to please his dancers, the audience and everyone involved in putting on my show. I wouldn't say I convinced him right away, but he is always willing to trust my vision as an artist.

St. Pauli Theater in Hamburg was the first place in Europe, where “Rock the Ballet” was shown, did the audience like it?

Our audience at the St. Pauli was the best audience we've ever had! They were so fun to perform for every night! I believe they loved seeing an energetic dance show. They gave us the motivation to come back to Hamburg this year with an even better show!

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So what's new this year?

Eleven new dancers will be coming with us. Because we have a longer tour scheduled this summer and fall we are traveling with a full double cast and alternating them between roles.

Any new choreographies?

The 1st Act is 90 % new and will showcase some very exciting new art work and choreography. As for the 2nd Act, it will remain the same.

What's it like, being on tour with your family, traveling with your wife and daughter and mother-in-law?

It is a blessing to work everyday with my wife and to travel the world with her, our daughter and our family. Family is life and my life would be incomplete without them.

You and your dancers live in Maryland?

We all live in Maryland. Our homes are very close to the studio we rehearse in and we all get along like family. The boys all live in our old home. We moved when our daughter was born, to the town Adrienne grew up in. The boys are very happy and are wonderful roommates. They are like brothers!

What do your parents think about your profession today –looking at ballet as a punishment...?

My parents are both extremely proud of me. They are both doctors and have had huge success themselves so pleasing them hasn't always been easy. But they are dance lovers and have always been there for me – every step of the way.

Interview: Dagmar Fischer

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SONGLISTE/ MUSIC PLAYLIST

ACT 1: BEAUTIFUL DAY

Choreography: Adrienne Canterna-Thomas,
*Rasta Thomas

I GOTTA FEELINN' - Black Eyed Peas

VERTIGO - U2

CARMEN - Maria Callas*

AMERICAN WOMAN - Lenny Kravitz

CRASH INTO ME - Dave Mathews Band

VIDA LA VIDA - Coldplay

FAITHFULLY - Journey

WITH OR WITHOUT YOU - U2

CITY OF BLINDING LIGHTS - U2

BEAUTIFUL DAY - U2

ACT 2: ROCK YOU

Choreography: Adrienne Canterna-Thomas

INTRO - Clint Mansell

WE WILL ROCK YOU - Queen

LET'S GO CRAZY - Prince

IN THE CLOSET - Michael Jackson

PYT - Michael Jackson

BICYCLE RACE - Queen

BABY I'M A STAR - Prince

WANNA BE STARTIN' SOMETHIN' - Michael Jackson

MAN IN THE MIRROR - Michael Jackson

WHEN DOVES CRY - Prince

IT'S ABOUT THAT WALK - Prince

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST - Queen

BILLY JEAN - Michael Jackson

SMOOTH CRIMINAL - Michael Jackson

BODY LANGUAGE - Queen

THE WAY YOU MAKE YOU FEEL - Michael Jackson

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY - Queen

BAD - Michael Jackson

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Biographies

About the company "Bad boys of dance"

Bad Boys of Dance was founded by dance superstar Rasta Thomas in 2007. BBD debuted at the 75th anniversary season of the world renowned American dance festival "Jacob's Pillow". Giving over 150 shows a year, these boys are bringing their magic to the masses. The Bad Boys are a hit with every crowd... from the catwalks at NYC Fashion Week for the opening of designer Richie Rich's show to the famous Swiss TV show, Benissimo. These amazing dancers are versatile and talented and push the bounds of dance today with athletic jumps, endless turns and en-dearing individuality. The Bad Boys of Dance are sexy, athletic, entertaining and fun and are featured in Rasta Thomas' international hit dance show, "Rock the Ballet".

Rasta Thomas (Director/Founder)

Rasta Thomas was born in San Francisco, California in 1981 and raised in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Rasta studied at the world-renowned Kirov Academy in Washington D.C. As a teenager, Rasta made dance competition history with honors including the Special Jury Prize from the 1994 Paris International Dance Competition, the Gold Medal in the Junior Men's Division from the 1996 Varna International Ballet Competition, and the Gold Medal in the Senior Men's Division from the Jackson, MS USA-IBC. In 1995, he became a member of Le Jeune Ballet de France and in 1997, was invited to be a Principal Dancer with the Hartford Ballet. Some of his guest credits include American Ballet Theatre, Victor Ullate Ballet of Spain, National Ballet of China, Joffrey Ballet, Lines Contemporary Ballet, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company and Pacific Northwest Ballet. In 2001, Rasta was the first American to become a member of the Kirov Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia and then in 2003 he joined Dance Theatre of Harlem as a Principal. Rasta has danced diverse roles from "Albrecht" in Giselle, "Basilio" in Don Quixote, "Ali" in Le Corsaire, to works by Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Debbie Allen, Ulysses Dove and Jerry Mitchell. Rasta has been in several TV documentaries, performed at the Academy Awards, was a featured dancer in an international ad campaign for GAP, and appeared in the feature film, "One Last Dance", starring Patrick Swayze. He has performed at the White House for the President of the United States and opened for Aretha Franklin at Harlem's famous "Apollo Theater". In 2005, Rasta starred on Broadway in Twyla Tharp's hit musical, "Movin' Out". In 2007, Rasta performed as a guest artist in "Othello" in the title role with American Ballet Theatre for their Met season. Rasta is the founding director of "Bad Boys of Dance" and in 2008 he created Rasta Thomas' "Rock The Ballet" with his wife Adrienne Canterna.

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Adrienne Canterna-Thomas - Co-Regie, Choreografie, Tanz

Adrienne is a Kirov Academy of Ballet scholarship graduate, and the recipient of numerous national and international awards including the 1998 Women's Junior Gold Medal at the USA International Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi. Other prestigious awards include winning the title of "Teen Miss Dance of America" and the "Grishko Award of Excellence in Ballet." Adrienne has traveled extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Caribbean. As a Principal guest ballerina she danced the roles of Gamzatti in "La Bayadere", the Sugar Plum Fairy in "The Nutcracker", and Kitri in "Don Quixote" with the Universal Ballet in Seoul, Korea. She has also danced with the Washington Ballet and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. She appeared as a soloist in the "Placido Domingo Tribute to the Washington Opera". Adrienne also works as a dance coach and choreographer. Adrienne is the founder and Artistic Director of "Pretty Girls of Dance".

Rachel Kreiling (Zweitbesetzung/Principal Swing)

Rachel is from Pittsburgh. Growing up she was awarded numerous scholarships and awards on a national level. Immediately graduating high school, she went on to perform in Japan with Tokyo Disneyland as a featured dancer. She also toured northern Europe on a luxury cruise line as a featured adage dancer, aerialist, and acrobatic performer. Currently, Rachel resides in NYC and travels the United States on faculty with New York City Dance Alliance. Her recent stage credits also include being a featured dancer, and dance captain, of REVOLUTION, which opened at the Joyce Theater in NYC in the fall of 2007.

Michael Keefe – Zweitbesetzung Solist

Michael trained at Kerry Smith's Academy of Dance Arts and K&M Studio, Inc. in Massachusetts. He was also a featured dancer with The Massachusetts Youth Ballet. He then went on to expand his training at NYU's Tisch School for the Performing Arts. Mike won numerous individual titles including "Mr. Headliner". His professional credits include dancing with recording artist JoJo, performing at the New York City Fringe Festival, and being a featured soloist in Rythmic Circus "Feet Don't Fail Me Now". He has been a part of "Rock the Ballet" since it's debut in 2008.

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Robbie Nicholson - Dance Captain

Robbie Nicholson is from Virginia and a veteran of the Broadway stage having spent almost two years in "The Music Man". During that time, he appeared on "The Tony Awards," "The Today Show", "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" and the "Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade." Robbie won the first and only title of "American Dance Idol". 2008 he was a featured dancer in the final cast of "Encore!" at the Tokyo Disney Resort in Japan. Robbie is a founding member of Bad Boys of Dance and Rock the Ballet.

THE AMAZING BOYS OF DANCE

Anthony Colantone
Alexei Geronimo
Chris King
Chris McCarthy
Kevin Mylrea

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THE CREATIV TEAM

Rasta Thomas	Regie, Choreografie
Adrienne Canterna-Thomas	Co-Regie, Choreografie
Sean Kelly	Resident Director/Ballet Master)
Ashley Day	Lighting Designer
Lutin Tanner	Licht-Design und Bühne, Lighting Designer Production Stage Manager

STAGE

William Cusick	(Video/Projection Designer)
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William is a video and projections designer based in NYC, whose work has recently been seen in productions at the BAM Harvey, Lincoln Center Theater, New York Theater Workshop, PS122, Culture Project, Ontological-Hysteric Theater, and The Chocolate Factory, as well as various theaters in Europe and Canada. Cusick is the recipient of the 2007 Henry Hewes Design Award for Projections for his work on Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* at Lincoln Center Theater. Cusick has designed four original productions for the experimental theater company Temporary Distortion, including the recent *Americana Kamikaze* at PS122. Cusick is a recipient of the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers for 2009-2011.

Assistent Video/Animation/Associate Projections Designer: Jon Weiss

Assistent Video / Associate Animator: Collin Holmes

Illustration/Illustrator: Tara Fawn Marek

Contributing Photographers: Tim Boyd, Helen Cook, William Cusick, Gregory Lee, Bill Jacobus, Paul Sapiano, Jon Weiss

Cameos by "The Peach Tarts" burlesque dancers – Jessica Pagan, Jessica Savage and Jessica Silver

Video Playback: Isadora by Troika Tronix

PRODUCER

Mel Howard	Producer
Thomas Collien	Co-Producer

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Dortmund
21 - 31 Jul 2010
Konzerthaus Dortmund

München
02 - 15 Aug 2010
Prinzregententheater

Köln
17 - 22 Aug 2010
Kölner Philharmonie

Frankfurt
24 - 29 Aug 2010
Alte Oper Frankfurt

Australia
31 May - 18 Jul 2010
www.rocktheballet.com.au

In progress:
Madrid/Barcelona/Paris
Sep - Nov 2010

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