

**JAMES
SEWELL
BALLET**

Not your normal ballet company



The denizens of "Awedville" (l-r): Benjamin Johnson, Peggy Seipp, Matthew Keefe, Sally Rousse (w/rope), Julia Welsh, Justin Leaf, Penelope Freeh, James Sewell. Not pictured: Brittany Fridenstine and Nina Black.

Spring ballet program features three commissions

JAMES SEWELL BALLET's spring program will feature three commissioned works: "Awedville," "A Water Death," and "Metamorphosis." The program will be co-presented at The O'Shaughnessy, on the campus of The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Apr. 23–24 and Apr. 30–May 2.

Awedville

"Awedville," choreographed by James Sewell and commissioned by the Wharton Center for Performing Arts of Michigan State University, navigates the often compelling and absurd performance idiom of vaudeville through dance, juggling, magic, human puppetry, aerial work, and popular 20th century music. It is set to music by Scott Joplin, Irving Berlin, and others. The Apr. 23 performance will be its Minnesota premiere (the world premiere will take place Apr. 3 in East Lansing, Mich.).

The Wharton Center has become the largest commissioner of new work among Big Ten institutions. "Awedville" is Wharton's second dance commission. The first, "In From the Cold," was choreographed by Dan Shapiro and Joanie Smith of Minneapolis, and performed in 2002 by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

American vaudeville evolved from 19th century minstrel shows and performances in concert saloons and variety halls. With "Awedville," Sewell and dramaturge Sally Rousse wanted to capture that era's inventive spirit for the 21st century.

Metamorphosis

"Metamorphosis," choreographed by Sewell and featuring the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, was commissioned by that organi-

zation through the generosity of Dwight Joyner and Mike Murphy and Orlyn and Bonnie Joyner. The Apr. 23 performance will be its JSB subscription season premiere (the world premiere will take place Mar. 19 at the Ted Mann Concert Hall in Minneapolis).

Two years in the making, "Metamorphosis" is the brainchild of Dr. Stan Hill, artistic director of the Chorus. Hill commissioned lyricist Robert Seeley and composer Robert Espindola, who interviewed more than 80 members of the Chorus.

In its entirety, "Metamorphosis" has 11 movements and an encore with a running time of 50 minutes; the full-length work will be presented at Ted Mann Concert Hall in March. The work looks at life chronologically: *Womb, Lullaby/Take Back the Night, Dialogue, Picket Fences, In My Dreams, Kicked in the Gut, It May Be, Grace, Tidy Endings, If I Could Choose, I Can Fly, and Legacy.*

At O'Shaughnessy, the Chorus and JSB will present a 25-minute version; this version will be performed by both organizations in Montreal in July at the international GALA chorus festival.

A Water Death

JAMES SEWELL BALLET commissioned "A Water Death" from Minnesota dance maker Wynn Fricke with funds provided by the Jerome Foundation. The work explores the universal experience of loss of control. The Apr. 23 performance will be its world premiere.

Fricke's creation of "A Water Death," a modern dance, started during a choreographic workshop, the Ballet Works Project, sponsored by JSB, in the spring of 2003. It was inspired by a childhood experience of near-drowning and the feelings of struggle and helplessness that it evoked.

Taking Manhattan by storm

In January, we performed at the Joyce Theater, an intimate but major venue for concert dance in New York's Chelsea neighborhood. More than 2,100 people attended eight performances. Our Joyce program included "Moving Works" (1996), "Loves Remembered" (1991), and "Barrage" (2003). Audiences and critics were candid in their comments and generous with their praise.

"A polished gem of a chamber dance troupe...One of American ballet's most inventive choreographers."
– New York Times (Anna Kisselgoff)

"Innovative choreography blithely combines ballet and postmodernism."
– Newsday New York City (Sylviane Gold)

"An evening of intelligent choreography and heartfelt dancing.... So much attractive choreography...is very much worth watching."
– New York Sun (Pia Catton)

"A small company of dancers can take the world by storm. All it takes is a fine maker of ballets like Balanchine who was a good dancer and knew music. James Sewell is a superb dancer who studied the violin."
– World of Dance, WQXR FM (Francis Mason)

"Refreshingly unaffected and musically astute."
– danceviewtimes.com (Susan Reiter)

"A contemporary style aligned with the classical tradition. Legibility of design is a major component..."
– Village Voice (Deborah Jowitz)

"This is not your grandma's ballet company... A fresh way of putting the standard vocabulary together into sparkling dances."
– Gay City News (Gus Solomons, Jr.)

"Each company member is an excellent dancer... with a strong sense of line, a committed intelligence, and an extraordinary understanding of Sewell's personal vision."
– Backstage (Phyllis Goldman)

The Minnesota Shubert Center ...today's dream, tomorrow's reality

Legislators support Minnesota's dance and music arts

Forty nine of 201 members of the Minnesota Legislature have signed on as co-sponsors of legislation requesting \$10 million of state bonding authority for The Minnesota Shubert Performing Arts and Education Center in Minneapolis.

The Shubert Center will fulfill a long-held dream of Minnesota's dance community for a viable and visible base for dance creation and performance. It will serve more than 20 small and mid-size arts organizations.

It also will provide an education program capable of reaching every child in every community in Minnesota through web-based technology.

In addition, the Center will serve as the Minneapolis home of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

To date, \$12 million of the \$34 million project cost has been raised.

If the legislature and governor provide \$10 million of bonding authority, ground could be broken on the project as early as fall 2004.

Your legislators, senators, and the governor always welcome your views. Let them know you support the Minnesota Shubert Center!

Thirty five members of the Minnesota House of Representatives have agreed to be co-sponsors: **Jim Rhodes** (St. Louis Park), **Ray Cox** (Northfield), **Bud Nornes** (Fergus Falls), **Margaret Kelliher** (Minneapolis), **Ron Erhardt** (Edina), **Matt Entenza** (St. Paul), **Howard Swenson** (Nicollet), **Kathy Tingelstad** (Andover), **Dan Dorman** (Albert Lea), **Bob Gunther** (Fairmont), **Lynne Osterman** (New Hope), **Neva Walker** (Minneapolis), **Katie Sieben** (Cottage Grove), **Anthony Sertich** (Chisholm), **Keith Ellison** (Minneapolis), **Arlon Lindner** (Corcoran), **Paul Thissen** (Minneapolis), **Scott Wasiluk** (Maplewood), **Jim Abeler** (Anoka), **John Dorn** (Mankato), **Doug Magnus** (Slayton), **Dean Urdahl** (Grove City), **Doug Lindgren** (Bagley), **Dale Walz** (Brainerd), **Steve Smith** (Mound), **Thomas Pugh** (South St. Paul), **Kurt Zellers** (Maple Grove), **Mindy Greiling** (Roseville), **Alice Hausman** (St. Paul), **Loren Solberg** (Grand Rapids), **Karen Clark** (Minneapolis), **Jim Davnie** (Minneapolis), **Cy Thao** (St. Paul), **Mike Jaros** (Duluth), **Frank Hornstein** (Minneapolis).

Fourteen Minnesota Senate sponsors include: **Linda Higgins** (Minneapolis), **Scott Dibble** (Minneapolis), **Dennis Frederickson** (New Ulm), **LeRoy Stumpf** (Thief River Falls), **Keith Langseth** (Glyndon), **Richard Cohen** (St. Paul), **David Senjem** (Rochester), **Gary Kubly** (Granite Falls), **Yvonne Solon** (Duluth), **Cal Larson** (Fergus Falls), **Sandra Pappas** (St. Paul), **Carrie Ruud** (Breezy Point), **Dan Sparks** (Austin), **James Metzen** (South St. Paul).



Spring Performances at O'Shaughnessy

Four performances, Friday, Apr. 23 and 30, and Saturday, Apr. 24 and May 1, will begin at 8pm. A discussion, led by JSB staff, will begin 25 minutes before each performance. During and following each discussion, the dancers will perform improvisational ballets, with and without music.

The Sunday, May 2, matinee, will begin at 2pm, and will be followed by a question and answer session.

First Chance Dance

An informal, 50-minute performance for very young or first-time viewers of any age, will begin at 2pm, Saturday, Apr. 24. House lights will be partially illuminated during this shorter ballet experience, and attendees will be free to enter and exit as needed. The program for First Chance Dance will consist of "Awedville."



Above, dancer **Matthew Keefe** taught a dance class for boys, Nov. 24, at Ramona Jacobs' **Fergus Falls School of Dance**, Fergus Falls MN. This spring, he will work with boys at **Dance Works, Inc.**, a studio in Memphis TN directed by **Karen Zisoff**.



Artistic Director **James Sewell**, Artistic Associate **Sally Rousse**, and **Mona Ondine Rouse Sewell**, 5, welcomed the birth of **Oliver Cabot Sewell** on Feb. 12. Above, dad and baby share a look to the future.

Backstage Notes

One of the most frequent questions we receive is "Who does your gorgeous photography?!" Roughly every six months, photographer **Erik Saulitis** phones our office to invite the dancers to "come play around some Saturday" at his Minneapolis studio. The results of their first play-date 10 years ago—dancers **Julia Tehven**, **Christian Burns**, **James Sewell**, **Sally Rousse**, and **Erik**—were particularly fruitful: the silhouette images of the solo and duet shots had so much energy and quirky lines that they defined the company during our years of printing only in black and white, and they retain a resonant presence still today. One shot of **Christian** and **Sally** currently represents JSB in the **IDS Crystal Court** in downtown Minneapolis. Others can be viewed in the skyways of St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Rochester. **Erik** enjoys trying new things in the studio, and his suggestion of playing with a long piece of fabric in a photo shoot became a central prop in "**The High Rock Project**" (1994) ballet. Over the years, **Erik's** photography has been prominent on JSB mugs, tee-shirts, sweatshirts, ads, programs, posters—even a series of greeting cards. Every summer, he can be found at his booth in the **Minneapolis Uptown Art Fair** where he displays and sells his photos. We are grateful for **Erik's** generous efforts and well-developed keen eye and sense of timing.... Last Sept. 23, two dozen **RBC Dain Rauscher** employees hosted a brown bag lunch in Minneapolis attended by **James Sewell**, artistic director, **Gary Peterson**, executive director, and **Tom McNamee**, development director. Sewell led a discussion and demonstration about dance and ballet.... Dain Rauscher employee **Laura Bundy** performed in the shepherds' chorus in JSB's six performances of "**Amahl and the Night Visitors**" at O'Shaughnessy in December.... The **Leadership Twin Cities** program of the **Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce** sponsors an annual **Arts & Culture Day** for employees of companies throughout the metropolitan area. On Feb. 12, 40 participants attended a studio performance by JSB's dancers. JSB has participated twice previously.... For the second year running, employees of **American Express Financial Advisors** in the Twin Cities lead in the numbers of their attendees at JSB performances, arranged through JSB's corporate ticket program.... The dancers performed for 500 students, Feb. 11, at **Washburn Elementary School, Bloomington**, and for 900 students, Feb. 13, at **Kenwood Trail Junior High, Lakeville**. Both visits were arranged by **Young Audiences of Minnesota**.... Attendance at JSB's annual performance at **Rochester's Mayo Civic Center**, Mar. 5, totaled 526, up 8% from last year.... **Momentum: New Dance Works** has asked dancer/choreographer **Penelope Freeh** to create and present a new work at the **Southern Theater**, July 15-18. Momentum is co-produced by the **Walker Art Center** and the Southern.... Dancer/choreographer **Matthew Keefe** will create a new work this spring as part of JSB's **Ballet Works Project**.... **Zoe Johnson**, 1, daughter of dancer **Benjamin Johnson** and cellist **Kirsten Whitson**, learned to walk while touring Europe in February with mom and the **Minnesota Orchestra**.... Dancer **Brittany Fridenstine** and occupational therapist **Jody Fridenstine** will teach "Kids In Motion!" in Minneapolis in July and August. The dance class, for children with varying physical and developmental disabilities, is modeled on similar programs they started in Seattle WA and Memphis TN.... On March 4, **Brittany** and **Matthew Keefe** taught classes at the **Janet Lang Dance Studio** in Rochester MN, while **Penelope Freeh** and **Peggy Seipp** taught at Rochester's **Allegro School of Dance**.... **Paula Claire**, Burnsville, **Stephen Fischer**, Eden Prairie, and **Susan Nestegard**, St. Paul, began first terms as members of JAMES SEWELL BALLET's board of directors.... The **Choo-San Goh & H. Robert Magee Foundation** approved a grant to JAMES SEWELL BALLET to commission a new work by former company member **Christian Burns**, to be staged in fall 2004.



Erik Saulitis

JAMES SEWELL BALLET

James Sewell, artistic director • Gary Peterson, executive director

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**“Different and
unpredictable, this
is the company
to see.”**

– The New York Times

Spring 2004 Performances

Minneapolis MN, Ted Mann Concert Hall at the University of Minnesota
“Metamorphosis” (world premiere) *

Friday	March 19	8 pm	
Saturday	March 20	8 pm	ASL interpreted
Sunday	March 21	2 pm	

Tickets: 612.624.2345 or www.tcgmc.org
Adults: \$31, \$25, \$19; Children 12 and under 50% off

East Lansing MI, Wharton Center for Performing Arts at Michigan State University
“Awedville” (world premiere) **

Saturday	April 3	8 pm
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Tickets: 1.800.WHARTON or www.whartoncenter.com

St. Paul MN, The O’Shaughnessy at The College of St. Catherine
“Metamorphosis” * • **“Awedville”** ** • **“A Water Death”**

Friday-Saturday	April 23 & 24	8 pm	Discussion & improvisation at 7:35pm
Saturday	April 24	2 pm	50-minute First Chance Dance : “Awedville”
Friday-Saturday	April 30 & May 1	8 pm	Discussion & improvisation at 7:35pm
Sunday	May 2	2 pm	Post-performance Q & A

Tickets: 651.690.6700 or 612.673.0404
Adults: \$25 • Students: \$12 • Seniors (65+): \$20 • Groups: \$19
All First Chance Dance Tickets: \$10 – Ages under 3 attend free



* Commissioned by, and performed with, the Twin Cities Gay Men’s Chorus

** Commissioned by the Wharton Center for Performing Arts of Michigan State University