

Two Generations of Australian Dance

Acclaimed Australian ballet dancer Robin Haig - whose decades long career has seen her perform with some of the world's leading dancers and dance schools - travelled to Adelaide in April to perform her delightful one-woman stage show at the Adelaide College of the Arts.

Titled *Backstage with Margot Fonteyn and the Bumptious Colonial*, this unique staged memoir is an entertaining behind-the-scenes look into the life of ballet legend Margot Fonteyn, whose magnificent career was often interwoven with that of Robin.

"The performance came out of lectures that I was giving teaching dance history in two different universities in America, where I was teaching about great women in dance.

Margot Fonteyn was one of these great women," Robin explains. "I began with a theatre colleague to work on a script for this staged memoir, an anecdotal exploration of Margot's life, my life and the dancer's life ... all set in a dressing room."

Beginning ballet at a very early age, Fonteyn joined the Vic-Wells Ballet School in 1933. During the 1940s, she had a successful on-stage partnership with Sir Robert Helpmann, and danced through much of her career with ballet legend Rudolf Nureyev.

Robin Haig's career in ballet has been an extraordinary one, which included performances with both Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev. Born in Perth in 1937, Robin began dancing at an early age, and



Margot Fonteyn (left) with Robin Haig.

at 17 she won a Royal Academy of Dancing scholarship and completed her training in London at the Royal Ballet School. She has danced with the Australian Theatre Ballet, the Royal Ballet, London Ballet, Western Theatre Ballet, Scottish Ballet, the Australian Ballet and the West Australian Ballet. Robin directed the West Australian Ballet for two years from 1977 to 1979, before moving to the United States in 1981. She has lectured in ballet and dance history at numerous universities and in February 2002, Robin gave a series of five lectures on *Great Women in Dance* at the University of Western Australia. //

Taking up the current mantle of contemporary Australian dance is Clancy Sullivan, currently in third year at the Adelaide College of the Arts. Clancy was invited by Wayne McGregor - resident choreographer of the Royal Ballet Company in London - to audition for a position in his company Random Dance. The audition took place at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in June.

"For Clancy to be asked to audition for such a renowned dance company - solely on the basis of her show reel - says a lot about her prowess as a contemporary dancer," says AC Arts dance lecturer Sally Collard-Gentle. "The opportunity to audition for such a groundbreaking contemporary dance company is outstanding."

Following her whirlwind two-day audition in London, Clancy flew back to Adelaide to perform in the opening night premiere of *A Philosophy on the Development of EDEN* in the AC Arts main theatre.



Clancy Sullivan.