

The newest young stars of American Ballet Theatre II will kick off the Arts Center's Presenting Series this January with a stunning performance of classical and contemporary works featuring the traditions of the revered New York dance company.



Handpicked from around the world, these talented dancers participate in a rigorous training and touring schedule. Among the famed works to be included in the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina's Jan. 16 performance is the pas de deux from the second act of Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" and "Le Corsaire Pas de Trois."

"It's was important for us to bring the American Ballet Theatre to the Lowcountry, because to see artists of this caliber up-close is inspirational to us all," said Kathleen Bateson, Arts Center president and CEO. "Plus, we have so many talented young dancers in the area. I'm excited not just because it will be a great performance but also to see the affect this show will have on the next generation of local dancers."

ABT II also showcases the work of emerging choreographers. As part of the Arts Center program, the company will present "Barbara," a piece choreographed for them by Aszure Barton in 2007.

"I love this particular piece because it really showcases the dancers' individuality," Wes Chapman, artistic director of the 12-member company, said. "You see who they are as young people rather than as characters in a ballet."

The evening program also will include one of the first performances of "Pavlovsk," a duet based on the true story of a Russian general assassinated in 1799.

Choreographer Roger VanFleteren, of the Alabama Ballet, turned the historic event into a work of fantasy. In the ballet, the general's wife visits a statue erected in his honor on the grounds of Pavlovsk Palace to say a final goodbye. As she grieves for her husband, the statue comes to

life. The general comes down off the pedestal, and he and his wife enjoy one last passionate dance.

“It’s very romantic,” Chapman said. “People jumped to their feet at the world premiere this fall in Arizona.”

The evening will close with “Interplay,” a work created by Jerome Robbins for the American Ballet Theatre in 1946. Choreographed long before he became famous for his Broadway hits “West Side Story,” “Fiddler on the Roof” and “The King and I,” the piece features some of the jazz elements he later incorporated in his theater work.

“You can see his style really starting to come through,” Chapman said. “It’s a high-spirited dance that’s very challenging to perform.”

The Presenting Series will continue March 16 with a concert by Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience and May 17 with the one-man show “Say Goodnight Gracie,” about the life of George Burns. Also, coming Aug. 10-15, is a performance by Bjorn Again: The Abba Experience.

Tickets for ABT II are \$54. Visit www.artshhi.com or call 843-842-ARTS to order or for details.

The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina is a non-profit performing arts organization. In addition to a 349-seat, main-stage theater that hosts an annual theater and performing arts series, the organization oversees two art galleries and regional arts educational programs, as well as produces four community outreach festivals. The Arts Center received the 2006 Elizabeth O’Neill Verner Award for top arts organization in South Carolina.

