

FIRST STEPS 2007

(February 7, 2007; Winnipeg, Manitoba) - The RWB School Professional Division presents **First Steps 2007** from February 15 –22 at the Founders' Studio in the RWB Building. *First Steps*, the School's annual competition, gives the RWB School students the opportunity to step into the role of choreographer and present their original works to the public.

Students will compete for various awards including first, second and third place; the CIBC Award for Innovation; and the Paddy Stone Scholarship.

Award recipients are chosen by a select group of jury members that includes artists, arts administrators and RWB School faculty. This year's jury members include:

Arlene Minkhorst - Director, RWB School
Jacqueline Weber - Professional Division Principal, RWB School
Jordan Morris - Choreographer & Associate School Director, RWB School
Johanne Gingras -Teacher's Training Program Director, RWB School
Yosuke Mino - Second Soloist, Royal Winnipeg Ballet
Nicole Langevin-Owens- Executive Director, Dance Manitoba
John B.Lowe - Theatre School and Community Programs Director, PTE
Keira Fullerton - Assistant Principal Cellist, WSO

In addition to the juried awards, the RWB School artistic staff will select the RWB School Award and the Doreen MacDonald Scholarship recipients. Audience members can cast their vote for the People's Choice Award. All award presentations will be made at the First Steps Gala on February 24 at 7:30 pm, which will also feature all the award-winning performances.

The RWB School developed *First Steps* in response to students expressing their desire to create their own works. Students are involved in each step of producing a performance — from choreography and rehearsal of their own pieces to designing and creating their own sets, costumes and lighting.

CIBC Wood Gundy and CIBC World Markets continue their generous support of students presenting their creative works through their ongoing sponsorship of *First Steps*.

Each *First Steps* performance will feature one of two different programs (each incorporating half of the total entries). This year's entries include the following choreographers' works:

Kaylah Ainslie – **Thank Heaven for Little Girls** – Set to the well-known tune from the musical *Gigi*, Ms Ainslie's passion for Audrey Hepburn and Hepburn's movies was the inspiration for this piece about a love story.

Lesley Allred – **Speeding Cars** – In this lyrical work arranged to *Speeding Cars* by Imogen Heap, a young dancer expresses who she is as she dances alone in her bedroom under the moonlight, in her pajamas.

Scott Andrew – **Mystery** – A graduate of the Professional Division academic program and currently in his first year of the Teacher Training Program, Mr. Andrew describes his neo-classical piece as free and imaginative.

Kelsey Crockett – **Secretly I...** – Winner of last year's First Steps People's Choice award, Kelsey Crockett has choreographed a piece about a relationship between two friends as one begins to fall in love with the other.

Sarah Davey – **Come Here Boy** – Choreographed by the Level 7 student from Waterdown, ON, this lyrical dance explores a love triangle between a man and two women.

Sarah deVries – **Drive Away** – "My inspiration for this piece came from the way the music made me feel," says Ms deVries who has choreographed her piece to Thomas Newman's music from *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

Jesse Fraser – **Tell Me What you Saw** – As the first time choreographer puts it, his jazz/contemporary style piece "takes advantage of the music's intensity to go all out."

Jessie Gervais – **Crosswalk** – Accompanied by an original Mark Cameron composition, this work takes a look at the lives and actions of ordinary people as they cross the street.

Vimila Jeffrey-Howe – **Full Reich** – The Level 6 student from Tacoma, Washington says her piece is about reaching for the top. "Not being limited by outside influences, but more so not limiting your self from within."

Rebekah Jones – **The Prayer** – Recipient of the 2006 Paddy Stone Scholarship, Ms Jones' piece follows the journey of a love who has passed on but now acts as a guardian angel to the one she loved.

Elijah Labay – **Nameless** – “I tried to create those different emotions that one would experience when they lose somebody they truly love,” says Labay about his neo-classical piece danced to the theme song from *Shindler’s List*.

Megan Mound – **First You Cry** – After hearing the song on *Grey’s Anatomy*, Ms Mound decided to choreograph her work to *Open Your Eyes* by Snow Patrol. Mound’s piece is a mixture of modern and balletic dance styles.

Renée Plante – **Beauty Runs Deep** – The setting of this ballet piece takes place under water beneath the waves. “Here I explored the relationship of two people who meet unexpectedly and the seamless bond that they form,” explains Plante.

Katie Polaski – **The March** – Teacher Training Program student, Ms Polaski has choreographed a *Nutcracker* piece using younger dancers from the PD program. “I love Tchaikovsky,” says Polaski. “His music is what made me want to be a dancer and teacher in the first place.”

Amanda Radetzky – **Revolution** – “My piece is about dynamic movement and has a modern-contemporary feel,” explains Ms Radetzky, a Level 6 student from Edmonton.

Nicolette Rieger – **Passage through Egypt** – Two strangers traveling through the harsh, unforgiving climate of the Egyptian deserts rely on one another to escape the guardians of the realm.

Catherine Rutherford – **What would you do?** – Ms Rutherford’s first choreographic work is about hanging out and having a good time with friends. She has set her dance to *The Yeah Yeah Yeah* song by the Flaming Lips.

Peter Smida – **Black Swan** – “My piece looks at *Swan Lake* from the perspective of the Black Swan, whose feelings for the Prince are sincere. The piece expresses the alienation she feels and shows the true arrogance of the white swans,” describes the choreographer.

Daniel Smith – **Faded Weakness** – In Mr. Smith’s contribution to *First Steps*, a trio struggles between vulnerability, strength and a resistance to see someone for who they really are.

Brett Taylor – **Abstract Attraction** – Mr. Taylor explores the relationship between men and women after their initial attraction in this contemporary ballet piece danced to *Toys R Us* by Hexstatic.

Fairwind Truscott – **Man Comes Around** – “I loved the guitar and the combination with Johnny Cash’s voice,” says Truscott about the music he chose for his cheerful contemporary piece.

Leanne Veale – **Gypsy Fire** – The style of the Teacher Training Program student’s piece is half Moldavian, half Hungarian. “I’ve always wanted to choreograph this style without having to put limits on the movements,” explains the choreographer.

Johnstuart Winchell – **The Heeby Jeebies** – “My piece can’t easily be categorized as a style of dance,” says choreographer Mr. Winchell. “One could say that it isn’t so much dance as it is reactive movement brought on by the frustrations of imperfection.”

Dates and Times:

Thursday	February 15	7:30 pm
Friday	February 16	7:30 pm
Saturday	February 17	2:00 pm
Saturday	February 17	7:30 pm
Monday	February 19	7:30 pm
Tuesday	February 20	7:30 pm
Wednesday	February 21	7:30 pm
Thursday	February 22	7:30 pm

Saturday February 24 7:30 pm (Gala)

First Steps performances will take place in the Founders’ Studio at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Building, 380 Graham Avenue. Admission is silver collection at the door, with the exception of the Gala performance on February 24, where tickets are \$20.00. For more information on the Gala contact the RWB Box Office at (204) 956-2792.

Media call will take place on February 14, 2007 at 2:00pm in the Founders’ Studio at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Building, 380 Graham Ave.

For more information please contact Heather Saxton, School Marketing Coordinator, at (204) 957-3447.