

## RETIREMENTS

In her final performance after 20 seasons with the Joffrey Ballet in May, **Suzanne Lopez** exuded poetry and grace. Dancing Helgi Tomasson's *Valses Poeticos* with partner Mauro Villanueva, she delivered a romantic tour de force that left the audience in awe. "I think this piece showcases her beautiful artistry," says Ashley Wheatler, Joffrey's artistic director. "She

possesses an innate sense of musicality. She brings many wonderful layers to everything she dances." Known for her precise, consistent technique and pristine pointework, Lopez brought passion to the stage with every step.

The New Jersey native trained at the New Jersey School of Ballet, NYC's Joffrey Ballet School (on scholarship), and danced one season with Joffrey II before

joining the main company in 1991. Adapting naturally to the speed and stamina required of an Arpino repertoire, she collected quite a list of leading roles. Some of her favorites: Juliet, Sugar Plum Fairy, Arpino's *L'Air D'Esprit*, Ashton's *Birthday Variations*, Tudor's *Lilac Garden*, and Limón's *The Moor's Pavane*. "I realized a little later in my career that I really loved acting roles," Lopez says. "They're so much meatier to me."

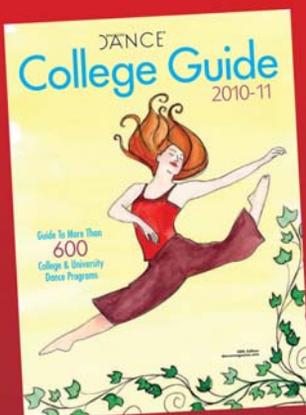
She now teaches at various local dance schools and companies, volunteers for the Gerald Arpino Foundation (which involves setting Arpino's ballets), and enjoys quality time with her husband,

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Suzanne Lopez and Mauro Villanueva in *Valses Poeticos*

former Joffrey master carpenter Keith Prisco, and their two daughters. "I have no regrets. I worked hard for everything I got to do, but that feeling of earning it made my career even more fulfilling." —*Vicki Crain*

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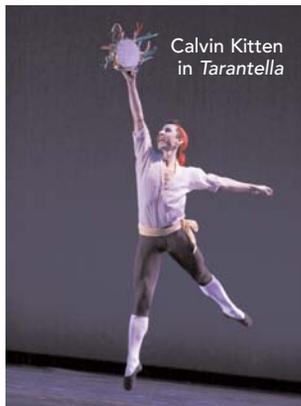
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Joffrey dancer **Calvin Kitten**, at 39, still has a grand jeté with jaw-dropping hang time. An audience favorite who has impish charm, incredible speed, and gravity-defying jumps, he was most famous for his role as Fritz/Snow Prince in *The Nutcracker*—his first Joffrey role 19 years ago and still his favorite.

A California native, Kitten trained at the California Ballet School in San Diego, V. Chabukiani Tbilisi State School of Ballet Art in the Republic of Georgia, Joffrey Ballet School in NYC, and spent a year in Joffrey II before joining the main company in 1992. Then came the accolades, including two Ruth Page Awards for his roles in Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* and Léonide Massine's *Parade* (Chinese

Herbert Migdall, Courtesy Joffrey



Calvin Kitten  
in *Tarantella*

Conjurer). The latter also landed him on *DM*'s January 2001 cover as a "25 to Watch." Other standouts in his vast repertoire were *Apollo*, *Appalachian Spring*, *Suite Saint-Saëns*, *Kettentanz*, and David Parson's *Caught*.

To mark his retirement, Kitten chose Balanchine's *Tarantella* for his final performance in May. A last-minute program change had Kitten closing the show. "It was the longest wait ever," says Kitten, who admits to having been nervous waiting in the wings. It didn't show. "Once I was onstage, my feet never touched the ground. I just remember flying. I felt like a kid." Dancing with Yumelia Garcia, he took one last bravura turn in the sassy role and had the audience at his feet. The lengthy ovation said it all.

Kitten will continue dancing as a guest artist and teaching in Utah at Ballet West and the University of Utah. "My career was more than I ever wanted. I have been so fulfilled and blessed in my dance and normal life. What more could you ask for?" —V. C.

## DEATHS

### Tamara Grigorieva (1918–2010)

A member of the Ballet Russe and former director of Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón, Tamara Grigorieva died in June. Born in Leningrad, she was trained by the legendary Olga Preobrajenska in Paris. After briefly dancing with Balanchine's Les Ballets 1933, she joined Colonel de Basil's Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo (later the Ballet Russe) in 1933, where she performed the Nymph in Nijinsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* and the Polovtsian Woman in Fokine's *Prince Igor*. She left the company in 1944 to settle in South America, where she continued to dance as a guest ballerina with companies in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. She became director, ballet mistress, and choreographer of Teatro Colón in 1961, a position she held for more than 20 years. ■

Herbert Migdall, Courtesy Jeffrey

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