

Why Do We Keep Falling in Love with Ballet?

BY NHI PHAN

There's something about dance that just gets to us. Maybe it's the way a simple movement can hold a thousand emotions, or how music and motion combine to say what words can't. We've all felt it, whether it's a dramatic twirl in the living room when no one's watching or that involuntary foot tap when a song hits just right. Dance is in us, woven into history, art, and the everyday. And when it comes to ballet, that's where it all comes together, tradition, storytelling, sheer physical brilliance. But ballet isn't just about perfect pirouettes or satin shoes; it's constantly evolving, reinterpreting, finding new ways to move us. Find out more at *Why Do We Keep Falling in Love with Ballet?*

Dance is woven into the fabric of human expression, a language that speaks beyond words. It carries our joys, our sorrows, our deepest emotions, shaping stories through movement. It's how we celebrate, how we grieve, and how we survive awkward wedding receptions when the DJ plays something questionable.

There's something both primal and poetic about it, the way our bodies instinctively respond to rhythm, the way a single movement can say what words never could. And let's be real, sometimes it's just about shaking off a long day (or an embarrassing email sent to the wrong person). It connects us to history, to culture, and to each other, offering both performer and audience a shared experience of beauty and emotion.

And ballet? It's the heart of it all, the discipline, the grace, the sheer magic of movement. But let's not pretend it's effortless. Anyone who's tried a plié knows how hard it is to look elegant while staying upright. Dancers make floating across the stage look easy, but behind the scenes? It's relentless training, aching muscles, and blisters. Yet, within that discipline lies endless creativity.

Choreographers and dancers twist tradition, reinvent stories, and push boundaries, proving ballet isn't just about the past, it's about constantly evolving, reinterpreting, and finding new ways to move us.

This is what we see in the upcoming performances, ballet as a living, breathing force, telling stories in ways we never expected.

San Francisco Ballet Presents *Raymonda* and *Eugene Onegin*

San Francisco Ballet's 2026 season brings two ambitious productions that highlight both artistic reinvention and timeless storytelling.

From March 1 to 8, Tamara Rojo's *Raymonda* makes its North American premiere, reinterpreting the classic ballet through the lens of the 19th-century Crimean War and the legacy of Florence Nightingale. While honoring Petipa's choreography, this version emphasizes resilience and purpose, shifting the focus from romance to a heroine driven by conviction.



Kamryn Baldwin and Nathaniel Remez in the Hungarian Dance from Rojo's *Raymonda*, © San Francisco Ballet, photo by Lindsey Rallo.

Then, from June 4 to 14, 2026, *Eugene Onegin* will debut at the Lyric Opera House, marking the first co-



commission between San Francisco Ballet and The Joffrey Ballet. Choreographer Yuri Possokhov and composer Ilya Demutsky reunite following their acclaimed *Anna Karenina* to bring Pushkin's novel to life with an original score. A tragic duel, a devastating loss, and a chance reunion unfold against the backdrop of 19th-century Russian society, exploring the weight of regret and unspoken words.

These productions celebrate ballet's evolving landscape, where collaboration fuels innovation, tradition meets reinvention, and timeless stories continue to resonate.

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2025: A Celebration of Movement

Jacob's Pillow has announced its 2025 program, continuing its legacy as a stage for ballet's evolution. This year, the festival welcomes Ballet BC back to the Ted Shawn Theatre for the first time since 2019.

Known for its bold approach to contemporary ballet, the company will present the U.S. premiere of *BOLERO X* by Shahar Binyamini, *SWAY* by artistic director Medhi Walerski, and *Obsidian* by Bobbi Jene Smith and Or Schraiber. With a repertoire that includes works by William Forsythe, Crystal Pite, and Ohad Naharin, Ballet BC's performances promise to be visually arresting and emotionally profound.



Dancers of Ballet BC, Photo by Marcus Eriksson

Also returning to Jacob's Pillow is The Sarasota Ballet, making its first appearance in a decade. Under the direction of Iain Webb and Margaret Barbieri, the company has gained recognition for its extensive repertoire and deep connection to the works of Sir Frederick Ashton.

This summer, they bring a mixed program featuring a classic Ashton ballet alongside a world premiere by American choreographer Jessica Lang. Known for her poetic movement language, Lang's new work is set to be a highlight of the festival.

Jacob's Pillow remains a meeting place for ballet's past and future, where innovation and tradition collide on stage.

'Needle Dance' at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery x art'otel Hoxton, London

Towering needle sculptures, dancers entwined in brilliant red rope, and a captivating underwater setting converge in *Needle Dance*, the latest work by American-Japanese artist Makiko Harris.

This five-minute conceptual art film premieres from 17 February to 2 March at art'otel London Hoxton. Alongside the film, an exhibition of sculptures and two-dimensional artworks will be on display, co-presented by art'otel London Hoxton and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, which represents Harris.



Needle Dance Film 2025, © The Artist, BEN PIPE PHOTOGRAPHY

At its core, *Needle Dance* explores movement as an artistic language, much like ballet itself. The dancers' bodies, suspended in striking visual compositions, evoke the precision and discipline of classical technique while pushing the boundaries of how we perceive choreography.

It was a collaborative effort. Director Peter Gray, known for his editorial work in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, brought his striking visual style. Costume designer Deborah Milner, who helped craft some of Alexander

Queen's most iconic pieces, designed the film's distinctive looks.

The music, a bold mix of violin and percussion, was co-composed by Carlos Basileco and Harris. Together, they created a film that blurs the lines between dance, visual art, and cinematic storytelling, expanding the ways we experience movement beyond the stage.

Blushing: The Next Generation of the Finnish National Ballet

The young dancers of the Finnish National Ballet take center stage in *Blushing*, a program blending classical and contemporary works. The evening features Marco Goecke's *Blushing*, first created for Stuttgart Ballet and awarded the Prix Dom Pérignon Choreographic Competition, *Fragments of Time* by Julian Nicosia, and an excerpt from *La Bayadère*. With performances selling out quickly, this year's show will be available via free livestream on 1 March through Stage24, in collaboration with OperaVision and EU Creative Europe.



The Finnish National Ballet's Youth Company, founded in 2013 and supported by the Jane and Aatos Erkkö Foundation, brings together 14 dancers from Finland, the UK, France, Italy, the US, Australia, and South Korea. In June, they will perform at London's Next Generation Festival, hosted by The Royal Ballet & Opera, joining other leading youth ensembles in a showcase of ballet's evolving artistry.

Wayne McGregor's 'Deepstaria' at Sadler's Wells

Ballet may be the heart of storytelling through movement, but sometimes, interpretations of dance go beyond traditional boundaries. *Deepstaria*, Wayne McGregor's latest creation, is not a ballet, but it embraces balletic clarity and technique.



Wayne McGregor's *Deepstaria*, Company Wayne McGregor, Photo credit Ravi Deepres

Sir Wayne McGregor CBE is one of the most influential choreographers of our time, known for his radical approach to movement and his ability to fuse dance with science, technology, and visual art. As Resident Choreographer at The Royal Ballet since 2006, he has reshaped the landscape of contemporary ballet, creating works that push the boundaries of physical expression.

His choreography is featured in the repertoires of leading companies worldwide, from Paris Opera Ballet to Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. His influence extends beyond the stage, he directed the groundbreaking *ABBA Voyage* avatar concert and leads Studio Wayne McGregor, a hub for artistic and scientific collaboration.

From February 27 to March 2, Sadler's Wells will host the UK premiere of *Deepstaria*, inspired by the deep-sea jellyfish of the same name, a creature known for its translucent, ever-shifting form. The production delves into themes of transformation and the unknown, amplified by McGregor's signature experimental style.

The use of Vantablack Vision® technology, one of the darkest substances in existence, creates an immersive stage experience, enveloping dancers in profound darkness. With sound design by Oscar-winner Nicolas Becker and music from producer LEXX, *Deepstaria* promises an otherworldly journey into movement and light.

Each of these performances reinforces ballet's enduring power to captivate and transform. Whether through reinterpretation, innovation, or sheer technical brilliance, they remind us why dance remains essential to our lives. In movement, we find meaning; in ballet, we find a timeless story waiting to be told again and again.

[Find out more about Tamara Rojo's 'Raymonda' Here](#)

[Eugene Onegin Here](#)

[Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2025 Here](#)

['Needle Dance' at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery x art'otel Hoxton, London Here](#)

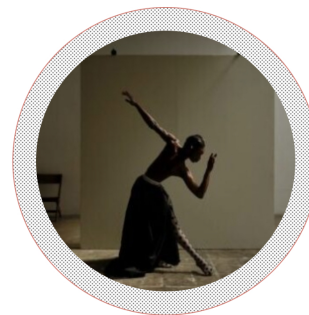
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