

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Ballet Boyz

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, November 5th, 2014

In 1999 Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, two lead dancers with the Royal Ballet, made a short, documentary style, video diary about life in this legendary company. The doc was given the name **Ballet Boyz**, in part with an intention to create youth appeal for marketing purposes. Fifteen years later the name has stuck and now represents a company of ten stunning male dancers run by these same two as artistic directors. After shaking up the dance world in the UK and Europe, **Ballet Boyz** is finally on its first North American tour, and making its Los Angeles debut this week with three performances November 7-9, at the Music Center's Ahmanson Theater.



Ballet Boyz in rehearsal

In addition to currently playing major theatrical venues all over the world **Ballet Boyz** also have a full-fledged production company. Their website features some beautiful pieces of dance on film (to be featured in upcoming articles). These aptly named "Rebels of Ballet" have even crossed party lines from stage to (gasp!) commercial venues, appearing as guest judges on "So You Think You Can Dance", and they just recently completed presentation of a 7 part dance series for the Ovation Network in the U.S. called "A Chance to Dance".

There is a striking and intense merging of athleticism and grace in these dancers. And the idea of seeing a company composed solely of men is distinct and compelling, especially given the historical but antiquated concept of men dancing as being effeminate. Men dancing together gives way to an entirely different set of kinesthetic possibilities.



A dancer in Ballet Boyz explores grace and power

The Music Center's Programming Director Renae Williams Niles said Ballet Boyz, came onto her radar around in the early 2000's. *"They're not doing ballet and they're certainly not boys. There are things that are more physical and powerful in the interplay and exchange of weight and such then when it's a male & female... There's something that was timely fifteen years ago that still remains quite timely. They dance with masculinity but also with sensitivity. These elements don't have to be separate, they can be one and the same."*

This weekend in LA, **Ballet Boyz** will be performing works by Liam Scarlett – "Serpent", and Russell Maliphant "Fallen". In the attached clever clip, **Ballet Boyz** power and grace is immediately evident. The choreography is contemporary, investigating both space, human

interactions, and new movement concepts, and the feel of it is both nuanced and thrilling.

*“There is something...” says Williams Niles. “Maybe because I am the mother of a boy. I think were he to decide to be a dancer I would probably be more encouraging towards him than my two teenage daughters... But what I feel when I watch **Ballet Boyz** is their sense of commitment and of absolute joy.”*

For tickets go to [www.musiccenter.org/balletboyz](http://www.musiccenter.org/balletboyz). Go.

<http://youtu.be/XecXb9ynXAY>

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