



PHOTOS BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION



From left, Erin Lewis, Camille Passante, Sydney Sasser and Glenna Yu perform "Four Little Swans" from "Swan Lake" at the "Ballet and Bordeaux" fundraiser event for the Classical Ballet Theatre at the Center for Innovative Technology March 26.

Elissa Marshall, a 2009 graduate of the Classical Ballet Theatre in Herndon, performs a modern dance piece at "Ballet and Bordeaux" March 26 at the Center for Innovative Technology.

## Bringing Ballet Dancers Together

Classical Ballet Theatre kicks off capital campaign with "Ballet and Bordeaux."

BY ALEX McVEIGH  
THE CONNECTION

**A**aron Thayer, who grew up in Reston, graduated from the Classical Ballet Theatre in Herndon in 2000 and has danced professionally in Cincinnati and San Francisco. He is currently headed back to school, to Stanford to study bioengineering, but returned to the area March 26 night to perform "Before the Kiss" a piece he choreographed to a composition by Sergei Rachmaninoff.

"Dancing helped me become attuned to so many other technical disciplines, and showed me how beneficial a strong arts education can be," he said. "It's sort of hard to qualify. I have an athleticism, and body awareness that I'll always take with me, and I know what it's like to work long hours at something."

**THE PERFORMANCE** was part of "Ballet and Bordeaux" at the Center for Innovative Technology, which showcased the nonprofit's current and former students, many of whom have gone on to successful professional dance careers. The event also kicked off the theater's capital campaign, as they attempt to find or build a new location in the Herndon-Reston area that will give them more space.

"This is the best-kept secret in the performing arts in the area, and we're hoping to end that tonight," said Richard Thayer, chair of the CBT's board. "We've been growing so much, both in stronger faculty and performances that our current space doesn't work anymore. Our mission is edu-

cation, outreach, but most of all, performance."

Meghan Rudorfer grew up in Herndon and graduated from the program in 2006, and danced with the Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance in New York City. She still teaches dance.

"I love to move and share energy with fellow dancers," she said. "It's another way to speak to people, to express what you have to say without using words."

Rudorfer is currently working in the field of neuroscience, and credits the theater for helping her develop a work ethic, and called

Cynthia Donavin, the theatre's executive director "the most motivational, inspiring woman I've ever worked with."

Elissa Marshall branched off from ballet to modern dance, and she performed a modern dance piece at the event.

"It's funny, when I was at the theater, I hated modern dance, but I also knew I wouldn't keep up with ballet," said Marshall, who grew up in the Oak Hill area. "But I realized that there are so many different ways to express yourself. And I still come back to work on ballet, to work on my techniques."

Marshall credited the CBT's staff with helping her through her initial self-doubt, and she currently works in New York City as a freelance dancer and photographer.

"They showed me so much kindness, I always doubted myself, but they showed me there's no place for self-doubt if you really want to do something," she said. "I think even if current students don't go on to professionally dance, it builds character that helps you no matter what you do."

**THE CLASSICAL BALLET THEATRE** is a 501(c)3 organization that performs outreach events to local schools. More information including ticket information for their April 9 and 10 performances of "Sleeping Beauty" can be found at [www.cbtnva.org](http://www.cbtnva.org)



Hannah Markowitz performs "The Dying Swan" at the "Ballet and Bordeaux" fundraiser event for the Classical Ballet Theatre at the Center for Innovative Technology.



Aaron Thayer and Ariane Georg perform "Before the Kiss" at the "Ballet and Bordeaux" fundraiser event for the Classical Ballet Theatre at the Center for Innovative Technology.