



Tickets: 608-258-4141

Little Women

by Mark Adamo
after the novel by Louisa May Alcott
February 5 & 7, 2016
Capitol Theater at Overture Center

ISTHMUS

SEARCH

ARTS & CULTURE

HOME / ARTS & CULTURE / STAGE /

"We're not going anywhere"

Madison Ballet calls off remaining season productions to rebuild after budget shortfall

by JAY RATH
FEBRUARY 2, 2016



ANDREW WEEKS

Matthew Linzer in the Madison Ballet's 2013 production of "Dracula."

We're not losing our ballet company.

But there's cause to worry, as **Madison Ballet** is canceling the balance of its season due to financial concerns. The staff points to an immediate shortfall of \$70,000-\$80,000 in operating funds, projecting another \$100,000 of debt if the season proceeded as planned. The decision to opt out of most of the remaining productions was made at the nonprofit's Jan. 25 board meeting.

The troupe will still perform its repertory concert at the Bartell Theatre this weekend, but has

You've been thinking about going back to school ...

But what's been stopping you?

The time it will take?
The cost?

You are not alone.

ISTHMUS picks

THU FRI SAT SUN MON TUE WED

MEAT WAVE

Feb 4, 2016 7:30 PM

The Frequency

ISTHMUS PICKS

THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID: FIRSTS

Feb 4, 2016 7:30 PM

Brink Lounge

ISTHMUS PICKS

THE FLICK

Feb 4, 2016 7:30 PM

Overture Center-Playhouse

ISTHMUS PICKS

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

SEARCH ALL EVENTS

canceled another repertory concert in April, a spring production of *Peter Pan* at the Overture Center and a Missouri tour of the ballet's original production of *Dracula*.

"This is such a sad situation for the ballet and their audiences," says Anne Katz, executive director of **Arts Wisconsin**, a statewide advocacy organization based in Madison. "Like all of our community's arts treasures, their work is so important. We can't take any of these resources for granted."

Karin Wolf, program administrator with the Madison Arts Commission, says that the city is pleased that the organization has taken a proactive approach and that it is looking for ways to assist the troupe. "Madison Ballet is a critical arts resource for our community," she says.

The organization's immediate concern is the lack of operating funds. "And then when we were looking at the budget to the end of our fiscal year, we were looking at another \$100,000 of debt," says general manager Gretchen Bourg. The organization has an annual operating budget that exceeds \$1 million.

The ballet, which formed in 1981, finishes its fiscal year Aug. 31. Bourg estimates that the company finished its 2014 fiscal year with a \$31,100 loss. That's significantly better than fiscal 2013, when the ballet's tax return showed \$101,000 of debt.

Arts groups nationwide have had fundraising problems since 9/11, and even more since the recession. The same has been true [here](#). In local arts circles, Madison Ballet has ironically been seen as a model of financial caution. It survived a 2009 crisis by reorganizing and partnering with Madison Youth Choirs, sharing space and personnel.

Bourg characterizes the recent decision as another example of the ballet's cautious approach. "I applaud the board," she says. "They took a proactive stance on this, rather than plod away until the fall and be in real trouble. We talked about the various arts groups in Madison that just said, 'We can soldier on. We can do it.' And they don't exist anymore. We were not about to take that path."

The problem, says Bourg, is the lack of staff and time to do fundraising. Besides gifts, grants and performances, the ballet earns revenue by operating its own dance school. A look at the organization's publicly available tax returns reveals that, until recently, the ballet had been operating on a nearly break-even basis.

The fiscal years of performing arts organizations typically do not follow calendar years, owing to the seasonal nature of their work. The ballet finishes its fiscal year in August. Its last publicly available return, for 2013, was filed Aug. 31, 2014. Total revenue was \$1.07 million. Total expenses were \$1.17 million. The organization's assets remained fairly robust, totaling nearly \$820,000.

Earlier years were mixed. The organization finished fiscal 2010 with nearly \$80,000 of debt. The situation improved, however. In 2011, the ballet made up the loss and had revenue less expenses of \$4,560; in 2012, \$31,202.

"We have been in worse situations," says Bourg. "We've been through some really bad times and made it just fine. We're not going anywhere."

For information or tickets for "Repertory I," Feb. 5-6, the ballet's final concert of the season, visit bartelltheatre.org or call the box office at (608) 661-9696.

THEATER & DANCE | **OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS**



RELATED

MADISON DINING

LOCATION TYPE / CUISINE / FEATURES / FOOD CONSIDERATIONS / GOODS/PRODUCTS / MEAL TYPE / SPECIAL NEEDS

All

WHERE

All

FIND

ARTS & CULTURE



Gains in women's cyclocross
Former Purgolder
Emma Swartz makes it to the world championships in the inaugural year for the

under-23 category. [more »](#)

BY **MICHAEL POPKE** | FEB 4, 2016 | **SPORTS**



Guiding their own ship
Metric broke through the major-label logjam in the late 2000s to form its own label and place the band's

synth-fueled sound squarely in the vanguard of a massive indie-rock explosion. Today things look a little different. And eerily similar, too. [more »](#)

BY **AARON R. CONKLIN** | FEB 4, 2016 | **MUSIC**



Welcome back to Planet Coen
The Coen Brothers return to their comic roots in "Hail, Caesar!" a wacky period comedy set in 1950s

Hollywood. [more »](#)

BY **MARC SAVLOV** | FEB 4, 2016 | **MOVIES**

ISTHMUS Newsletters

EMAIL ADDRESS

ISTHMUS ON TAP:
What's happening this weekend

ISTHMUS MOVIE TIMES:
All the movies, all the times



Captivating princess

Madison Ballet's elaborate and stunning production of "Cinderella" showcases Madison's finest dancers, enchanting audiences of all ages.

Mar 29, 2015



Solo performers dazzle as Madison Ballet stages its tenth "Nutcracker" at Overture Center

Madison Ballet is marking a decade of residence at Overture Center with its 2014 production of "The Nutcracker", and Saturday evening's performance revealed some changes in

both choreography and costumes.

Dec 14, 2014



There's something happening here

Erasing the boundaries between high and low, serious and silly, our fall arts preview has something for everyone.

Sep 17, 2015

Comments

the 2016
Isthmus



Book of Love

send us your lovely words
and pretty pictures

NEWS

News
Cover Stories
Snapshot
Week in Review
Madison Matrix

OPINION

Opinion
Citizen Dave
Madland
Savage Love
Cartoons
Tell All
Feedback
Forum

FOOD & DRINK

Beer
Cocktails
Cooking
Reviews
Restaurant Guide

ARTS & CULTURE

Books
Comedy
Emphasis
Sports
Stage

MUSIC

Music Calendar
Isthmus Live Sessions
Vinyl Cave

SCREENS

Movies
TV & Video
Games
Movie Times

EVENTS

Calendar
Giveaways
Isthmus Events
Isthmus Picks
Isthmus Tickets

