

NEW/ADVENTURES RE;BOURNE



**SPOTLIGHT – Katie Webb, Svetlana Beriosova
in *The Red Shoes*
Tues 14 February 2017**

Tell us a bit about your role in Matthew Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*:

My main role in *The Red Shoes* is Svetlana Beriosova, who is based on the Lithuanian-born British prima ballerina who danced with The Royal Ballet for more than 20 years. I also cover Lady Neston, Pamela and Vicky Page.

Svetlana is a very disciplined, hard-working dancer within the company who is very eager to please but one of the least extrovert and pushily ambitious. She has a regal poise and eloquent style but lacks confidence and is very on edge the whole

time, very much a worrier! I've also added an element of ditsy-ness to the character, which is great fun to play. The ditsy-ness comes naturally to me!! Once Svet's had a drink at the company party in Act Two though she comes out of her shell and lets her hair down!

What is your favourite moment in *The Red Shoes* for your character?

My favourite moment in the show for Svetlana would probably be the Les Sylphides rehearsal scene. I play Svet doing the steps on the wrong leg or in a different direction to everyone else, shaking with nerves, generally worrying and wanting to do well. She has a lot of interaction with company dancer Nadia in this scene like moments where Nadia is telling Svet she's got lipstick on her teeth before the performance, so Svet's rubbing it off her teeth frantically before she's running on stage. It's a fun scene to do!

What has inspired how you created and play your character?

I was able to get hold of various books, articles and reviews on Svetlana giving me an insight to her life, personality, dance ability and relationships. From this information, I was able to take certain key traits or situations and use these as a foundation for my character, so that I could develop and build on top of this with my own interpretation. Video footage helped in many ways to distinguish the difference between company life back then in comparison to current company life! Some of the main things that differed a lot were rehearsal attire and the period style.

If your role is played by someone else also how has this informed how you develop/play the character yourself?

When you're playing the same role as someone else, no character will ever be played exactly the same. Obviously, the main choreography and the character in general has to be specific but there's room for self-interpretation within. I find I learn far more from watching my part alternate and fellow friends. You can see what works and what doesn't and talk it through with each other so that you're creating a better character between the two of you or however many people play that role. That's the beauty in keeping the show alive!

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How do you reflect on your performance after the show other than receiving notes from other company members/resident director etc?

I find it's always good to try and switch off from the show in the evening after a long day and assess what worked or didn't work in the show the next day with a fresh mind. Hopefully you haven't had a nightmare of a show to give you good reason to dwell on it after the performance, equally if you've had a great show there's a sense of self achievement! Self-noting is always a good thing and needs to be ongoing. You can't rely upon someone giving you a note for every wrong arm or head direction you're doing because it's impossible to watch everyone on stage so things will go a miss, especially initially when it's a new creation and clean up calls are limited. Therefore, when notes are given it's up to us as dancers to see if those notes apply to us also, even if they weren't specifically directed at us.

With a new creation it's important to reflect on the show and your character and think 'have I got the most out of this character or a certain moment within the show' and if not reflect on how you can change that particular moment so it reads better to the audience. For example, being spontaneous with acting moments and changing things within reason is all part of the process and keeps the show fresh!

You can follow Katie on Instagram: @KatieWebb152 for a further insight into her world.