



Thomas and his Bad Boys take over the Zellerbach Theatre at the Annenberg Center, 3680 Walnut St., Feb. 20-22. Full details are at www.annenbergcenter.org. / PROVIDED

Versatility. Don't think dancers are tough? Check out these Bad Boys.

Just how bad are Rasta Thomas and the Bad Boys of Dance?

Well, let's just say you probably don't want to get on Thomas' bad side.

"I had a little bit of a hot temper," says Thomas, on the phone. "I pushed and punched a ballet master once. I've hit a few people — I guess that's the Bad Boys of Dance."

Thomas, 32, says his brawling days are over and for a good reason.

"I have a 6-year-old daughter now," says Thomas, who is married to choreographer Adrienne Canterna.

The flying fists may be gone but the fire for danc-

ing excellence is still there. The Bad Boys set up shop at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts tonight through Feb. 22. It's a high-energy merging of classical dance and just about anything that you can imagine, from hip-hop to tap, set to the music of Michael Jackson, Coldplay, Robin Thicke, Maroon 5, Alicia Keys and more.

"We definitely believe strongly that a classical foundation is the base that's necessary to be a Bad Boy and it's the foundation for a good to great dancer," says Thomas, who is based in Maryland. "So we heavily emphasize that all our dancers have a ballet base and we make sure that they can jazz it up and mix it up with contemporary, hip-hop or sometimes tap dancing — we love versatility."

Thomas was born in

San Francisco, raised in Saudi Arabia, and studied dance at the prestigious Kirov Academy in Washington, D.C. He turned heads in the dance world as a teenager by winning a truckload of international competitions, and went on to appear in the film "One Last Dance" with Patrick Swayze, dance at the White House and the Academy Awards and star on Broadway in the Twyla Tharp-Billy Joel musical, "Movin' Out."

The Bad Boys aren't exactly slouching on their résumés either. Members' credits include Broadway, "So You Think You Can Dance," "Dancing with the Stars" and the troupe's "Rock the Ballet."

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Age ain't nothin' but a number?

Baby boys

Thomas stays on the scene but he's no longer on the stage — it's a young man's game, he says.

"Our average age is

18 to 25, so it's tricky, because of the rigors and the difficulty of our show, once they get over 25 it almost becomes too hard of a show for them," Thomas says. "It's more of a gypsy lifestyle."

Quoted

"Dance has a magical power to make people happy and to relieve their troubles for the two hours they're watching you. At the end of the day, that's what's important."

Rasta Thomas