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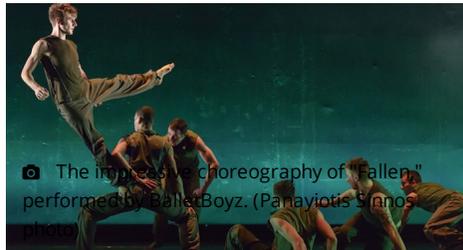
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© The impressive choreography of "Fallen" performed by BalletBoyz. (Panayiotis Sianos photo)

30-Second Reviews: BalletBoyz and William Way's Indigo Ball

 [Bill Chenevert](#)
(<http://phillynow.com/author/bchenevert/>)

🕒 **October 27, 2014**

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BalletBoyz at the Annenberg Center for Performing Arts

Fri., Oct. 24. annenbergcenter.org

Overall vibe: Gasp-worthy and jaw-dropping choreography from the London-based [all-male company \(http://www.balletboyz.com/\)](http://www.balletboyz.com/). Founded in 2000 by Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, co-artistic directors and Royal Ballet alums, their now 10-man cast won a 2013 National Dance Award for Best Independent Company. I can see why. Now, I've been lucky enough to witness companies like the Bad Boys of Dance come through the Annenberg, and with a rather skin-friendly promotional shot of their company floating around, I wasn't sure what to expect. It was *nothing* like [Rasta Thomas \(http://www.rastathomas.com/\)](http://www.rastathomas.com/)' light-hearted hybrid of Chippendales and contemporary ballet-heavy dance. Nunn and Trevitt are clearly interested in some of the questions I was sent off into the night thinking: What does masculinity mean in dance and ballet? What can

be achieved without women that will make their absence artistically smart? How can male bodies perform mind-blowing choreography in ways that female bodies cannot? "Serpent," the first act, had the most bits of sensuality and homoerotic tension, but it was never tongue-in-cheek. "Fallen," after the intermission, was even more astonishing for the way that it went for pure physicality, tribal instincts and rhythms born of man's earliest times. In "Serpent," dancers wear flesh-toned shorts that mightily accentuate all of their incredible bodies, but again, never for kitsch or cheap thrills. And in "Fallen," their costumes were mostly unremarkable baggy cargo pants and sleeveless shirts, which just helped accentuate the insane dancing on display.

Most memorable moment: During "Fallen," they started doing these cyclical movements, with pairs executing identical feats in staggered and round-robin fashion. One of them was a move that had one dancer jump—extraordinarily athletically and gracefully, I might add—to the top of a partner's firmly planted thigh, then leap another few feet higher from there. There were less-memorable moments of slightly askew coordination and alignment, but perhaps it's more forgiving when a 5'2" dancer and a 6'1" dancer are executing the same choreography. But with "Fallen," there was so little stress on the exactitude of sameness, it felt like a perfect 10-dancer piece. And the audience agreed. They went nuts. Almost everyone stood on their feet to applaud.

Scene stealer: Just the talent on display. So, kudos to "Serpent"'s choreographer, Liam Scarlett, and double-kudos to "Fallen"'s choreographer, Russell Maliphant, and those 10 stone cold foxes who made it come off so dramatically and powerfully.

William Way's Indigo Ball at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts

Sat., Oct. 25. pafa.org

Overall vibe: A familial and loving celebration of what the [William Way LGBT Community Center](http://waygay.org/) (<http://waygay.org/>) does, has become and will continue to be: a beacon of hope for queer people, offering life-affirming programming and spaces 365 days a year. I think that's what choked me up the most. In the [program](http://www.waygay.org/index.php/v2/reading/indigo_ball) (http://www.waygay.org/index.php/v2/reading/indigo_ball) welcome by executive director and WayGay hero Chris Bartlett, he expressed how proud he was for the center to be open on some of the most important days of the year for families when many LGBT folks need a family most. (Thanksgiving and Christmas are coming, friends; that's a not-so-subtle directive to [help if you can](http://www.waygay.org/v2/get_involved/volunteer). (http://www.waygay.org/v2/get_involved/volunteer)) Can you imagine being a 16-year-old queer boy or lesbian or trans teen who has been kicked out of his home and shunned by the people they love simply for being themselves? It's enough to

make you weep. Saturday night's Ball celebrated Mark Aronchick as Ally of the Year, Reggie Shuford as Humanitarian of the Year, the Attic Youth Center as Community Partner of the Year and Comcast as Corporate Partner of the Year, plus John Dougherty was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Jeff Sotland, co-chair of the evening, made remarks that celebrated Bartlett and his boundless leadership spirit, and there was drinks and dinner amid extraordinary environs provided by PAFA works of art.

Most memorable moment: No one in attendance would probably disagree that Amber Hikes stole the show with a lively introduction for Comcast's award, joking that they'll *never* go away and, even if you think they don't care about you, at least they do once a month. The kindness they've shown to the William Way Center and the LGBTQA community at large, including their corps of LGBT employees, is—and has been—greatly appreciated. By the way, #AmberHasFIOS became a thing that night, and I've seen it a few times on Facebook since. And Dougherty—the prominent local labor organizer and the business manager of Local 98 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers—was a wonderful surprise. He told stories of his long and affable working relationship with [Philadelphia Gay News](http://www.epgn.com/) (<http://www.epgn.com/>)' founder and editor Mark Segal, and pulled at heartstrings when he concluded that he welcomed his daughter into his arms when she told him she was a lesbian.

Scene stealer: Yeah, I'll go with Hikes. Not only is she stunningly beautiful and a wonderful asset to the center and our community, but her levity gave the room a sweet injection of humor and heart. That goes a long way in our City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

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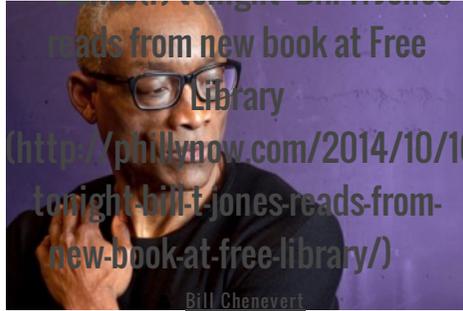
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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→ Staff writer

Bill Chenevert went to journalism school at the U of O (Go Ducks) and then interned for Willamette Week, Next and Out magazines, and Flavorpill.com. Now he's the senior music writer for @PhillyWeekly, where he blogs on LGBT stuff, style, art, music, theater, comedy and dance.

He's also the staff writer for the @SoPhReview, writing two news features every week for PW's free-and-delivered sister paper.

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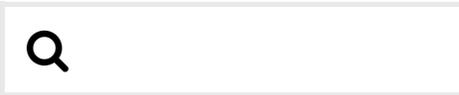
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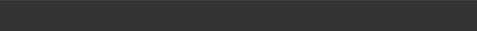
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