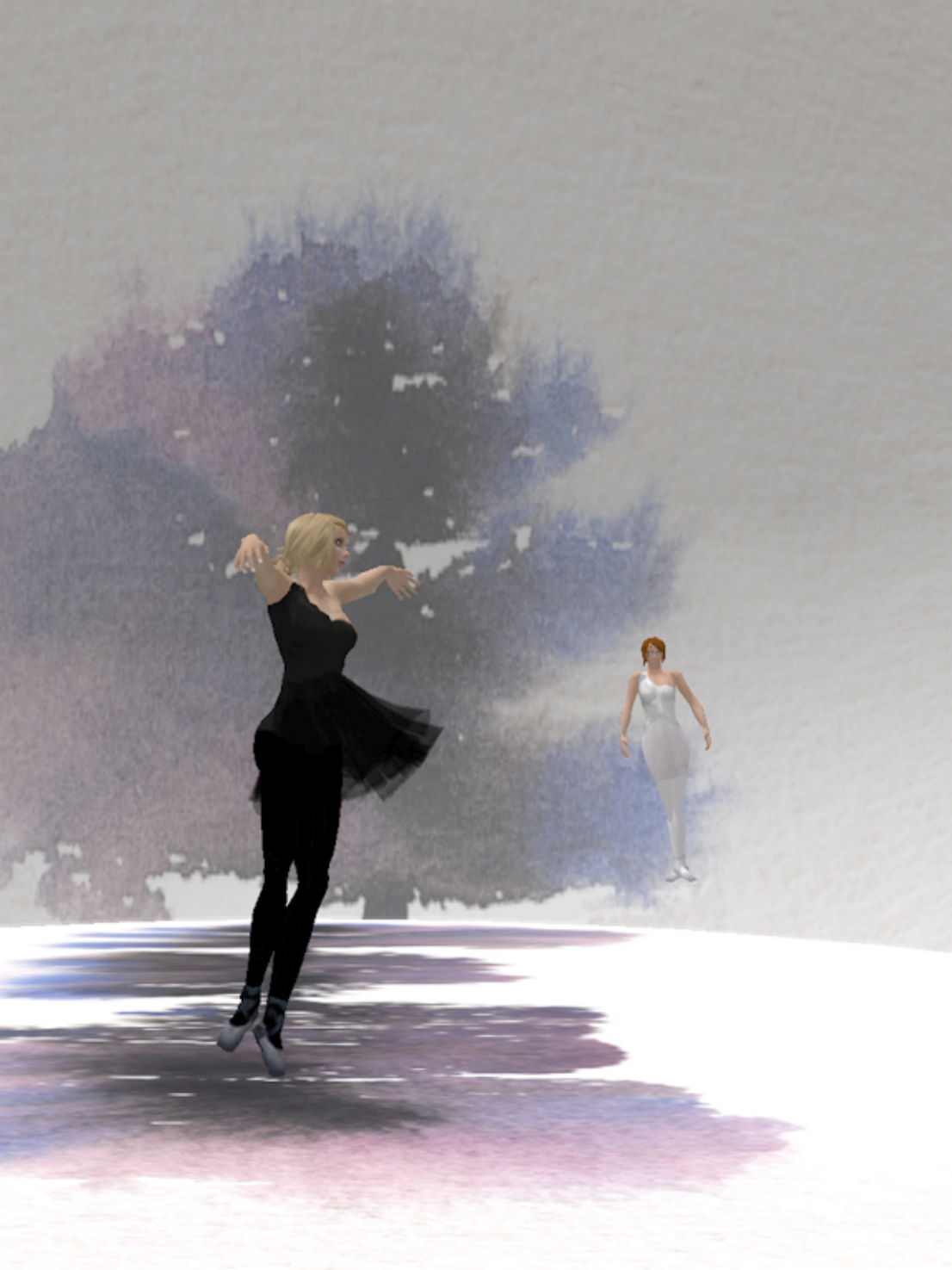


Ballet Pixelle presents

AVATARA





BALLET PIRELLE
presents the original ballet

AVATARA

Story, Animations, Choreography by Inarra Saarinen

Music composed and performed by Solary Clary / Sora Izumikawa

Dancers

AbaBrunkh Aabye
Aiyana Tripsa
Amelie Dibou
Cecilia Mistwalker
Desiree Lurra
Deyna Broek
Luci Yokosuka
Marsden Tomorrow
Patros Zifer
Sherainbow Merlin
Tik Merlin
Tinka Bondar
Vivienne Darcy

MCs - AbaBrunkh Aabye, Sherrell Hird, Skippy Flossberg (Coordinator)

Sound Engineer - Willis Rossini

Ballet Mistress - Amelie Dibou
Ballet Coordinator - Vivienne Darcy

Costume Mistress - Vivienne Darcy

Set Builds - Amelie Dibou, Tik Merlin
Theatre Build & Roadie - Espresso Saarinen

Webmaster (<http://www.balletpixelle.org>) - Skippy Flossberg
Facebook manager (Ballett Pixelle) - Marsden Tomorrow
Myspace.com/balletpixelle

Ushers - Alexa Sideways, Anaid Daviau (Coordinator)

Consultant, Japan - Asami Larsson
Poster - Cecilia Mistwalker

Artistic Director - Inarra Saarinen

AVATARA

SYNOPSIS

What if a real world dancer could dance in a virtual world? What movements would be the same or different? What kinds of different beings could she be? What would be the same? And how would that dancer be changed after her experience?

The virtual dancers you will see are real dancers all over the world dancing at their computers. Our physical dancer is in Japan. But we all meet and dance in our virtual community.

SCENE SUMMARIES

ACT I: A Meeting of the Physical and Virtual Worlds

A real life, physical dancer dances a Pas de Deux with a dancer in the virtual world, Tara. In this case, we login to the virtual global community called Second Life.

ACT II: Investigation of a Virtual Space

Scene 1: A Real Life Dancer Enters the Virtual World

The real life dancer takes on an avatar, or representation of herself in the virtual world, named Ava, and dances with Tara.

Scene 2: Virtual Dancers

Ava dances with the Ballet Pirelle Company of dancers in the virtual world.

Scene 3: Flights of Fancy

Fantasy can be danced in the virtual world. Dancers can crawl and hover and fly!

Scene 4: Travelling Light

Have you always wondered about the most efficient way to move and travel? It's easier than you think in a virtual world.

Scene 5: So You Think Aliens Can Dance?

One can dance as anything in a virtual world. Especially something surprising!

Scene 6: Ava and Tara Pas de Quatre

Ava becomes more and more of a virtual dancer. In fact, who can tell the difference? Here Ava and Tara dance with two danseurs in a Pas de Deux of virtual beauty.

Scene 7: Orange Aliens

Some objects can dance in virtual reality, too. Let's see what kind of different movements these Orange Aliens can do.

Scene 8: The Real Dancer Returns to the Real World

Ava and Tara dance a Pas de Deux of farewell. Ava will leave her avatar in the virtual world and become her physical self again. But what memories she keep and what new ideas does she have!

BALLET PIXELLE COMPANY

AbaBrukh Abaye - Arkansas
Alexa Sideways - Montreal
Aiyana Tripsa - Florida
Amelie Dibou - Washington, DC
Anaïd Daviau - Second Life
Asami Larsson - Tokyo
Calia Cachin - Hawai'i
Cecilia Mistwalker - Florida
Derrick Perl - Chicago
Desiree Lurra - Tennessee
Deyna Broek - California
Dubhna Rhiandra - England
Espresso Saarinen - Tokyo
Geoffrey Unsworth - Massachusetts
Hanna Wahwah - Tokyo
Inarra Saarinen - Tokyo
Luci Yokosuka - Osaka
Marsden Tomorrow - Texas
Neena Botanical - New York
Patros Zifer - Toronto
Satine Heart - London
Sherainbow Merlin - Spain
Sherrell Hird - California
Skippy Flossberg - Chicago
Solary Clary - Tokyo
Tik Merlin - Portugal
Tinka Bondar - Pennsylvania
Vivienne Darcy - Colorado
Willis Rossini - Washington, DC
Xanthi Oridium - Estonia







Inarra Saarinen
artistic director-choreographer
Tokyo

Ms. Saarinen is the founder and artistic director of Ballet Pixelle (formerly Second Life Ballet). She is also a First Life dancer and choreographer for stage, film, and video. She is interested in exploring the unique capabilities and intersection of movement in virtual and physical space and investigating and developing an aesthetic and vocabulary of virtual dance -- whether it be by tiger, dragon, bird, or human.



Solary Clary
composer
Tokyo

Ms. Clary is the composer and musician for "Shuzenji", "Living Goddess", and "Avatara". She is a popular Japanese professional musician, singer, songwriter Sora Izumikawa. Ms. Clary has created music and lyrics for other professional singers, TV programs, commercials and manga songs in First Life. Ms. Clary performs live in Second Life and First Life.

<http://www.sorasora.com/>
<http://www.myspace.com/soraizumikawa>

First Name:

Ava

Last Name:

Tara

Password:

Start Location:

Ballet Pixelle Theatre

☒ Remember





AbaAbrukh Aabye
dancer, master of ceremonies
Arkansas

Mr. Aabye was entranced with virtual ballet attending the first performance of "Olmannen," but couldn't again until "Living Goddess." Then he had to join. AbaAbrukh trained in tap and other dance as a child, was on the stage from the age of 6, and was a performing member of the Swedish Folk Dance Club of Boston as well as a life-long lover of ballet, opera, and all performing arts. Unable to pursue archaeology as a career, he is creating Virtual Abyssinia in Second Life, restoring ancient and traditional sites where he excavated in First Life.



Aiyana Tripsa
dancer
Florida

Ms. Tripsa says that dance and music are her life's blood. In First Life, she began dance classes at age 5, music at age 7, and theater at age 9. If she's not dancing she is probably listening to music or playing her piano. For the past decade, Ms. Tripsa has been studying Flamenco dance and hopes to bring all that experience to dancing in Second Life. She is nervous and excited and absolutely thrilled to be dancing with Ballet Pixelle because it combines so many of her loves.



Amelie Dibou
ballet mistress, dancer, sets
Washington, DC

Ms. Dibou has danced with Ballet Pixelle since its inception and was a member of the original cast of "Olmannen", the Company's first ballet. She has premiered in all 8 ballets written for Second Life and serves as the Ballet Mistress. Some of her botanical and other creations are featured in the Company's sets. A dancer and musician in First Life, Amelie loves developing these arts in Second Life.



Cecilia Mistwalker
dancer, graphic artist
Florida

Ms. Mistwalker has been fortunate to have danced ballet since she was 2 years old, thanks to her aunt who has both taught and danced. Cecilia feels so fortunate to have been selected to be with Ballet Pixelle as a new dancer. Dancing is Cecilia's passion, and Second Life is another way of expressing it, especially with so many talented people. Ms. Mistwalker is also a graphic artist, and designs art for the Company.



Desiree Lurra
dancer, costumer
Tennessee

Ms Lurra has been a member of Second Life since 2006. She began modeling in 2007. A natural curiosity to learn new things progressed to designing her own line of clothing "Desiree's Rose". A lover of music, theatre, and dancing, Ms Lurra has taken ballet, tap, modeling and voice lessons. Upon seeing "The Nut", Ms Lurra was enthralled with the idea of ballet in Second Life. She thinks Ballet Pixelle is simply beautiful! Hearing of the auditions Ms Lurra could not wait to try out and is proud to be a dancer for Ballet Pixelle!



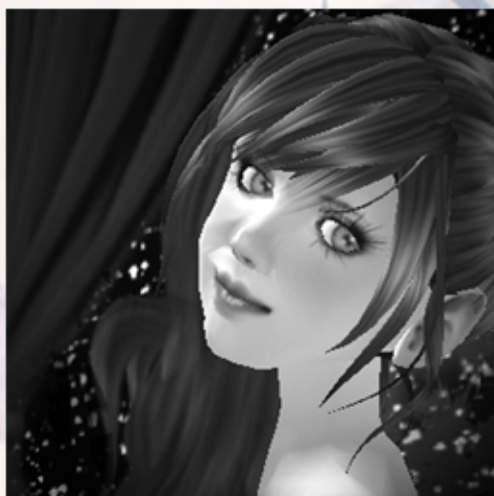
Deyna Broek
dancer
California

Ms. Broek is 33 and a California Native.
She feels blessed.



Dubhna Rhiandra
dancer
England

In her First Life, Ms. Rhiandra has been involved in community dance for over 20 years. In Second Life she has been performing as a story teller, sometimes interpreting stories in dance. She is in Second Life for the creative opportunities it offers and is thrilled to be able to dance and perform in this world, too.



Luci Tokosuka
dancer
Osaka

Ms. Yokosuka is a Balinese gamelan player as well as a manager of the Students' Union of University of Human Arts and Sciences, and a VWBC newscaster.



Marsden Tomorrow
dancer, party mistress
Texas

Ms. Tomorrow dances in First Life and Second Life. As this angelic ballerina loves to say: "Tomorrow is another day that I get to shoe shop on Second Life!". She wakes everyday and gets to do what she loves the most, teaching children the art of dance. Graceful and grateful to be a part of Ballet Pixelle, Marsden auditioned for the company after watching "The Nut", coincidentally, right after performing "The Nutcracker" in First Life. In addition to her Ballet Pixelle career, she is owner of Tomorrow Illusions, selling First and Second Life Angelic Fairy Artworks by Frank Eizenhart.



Neena Botanical
dancer
New york

A lifelong balletomane, Ms. Botanical is a First Life musician with a degree from Berkeley College of Music. She has two beautiful First Life kids. In Second Life, Ms. Botanical is a very ardent art supporter.



Patros Zifer
dancer, photographer
Toronto

Mr. Zifer commenced dancing in First Life about a week after birth. His movement obsession proved such a time consuming challenge to his parents that they put him into gymnastics training at the age of eight. In his mid-teens tumbling begat tendu as he traded the parallel bars for ballet barres and hasn't looked back since...certainly not without a reasonably well-lined "attitude". His very minor professional career ended early by injury but he continues to work in the field as both a dance photographer and as the perennial bad-penny in daily company class. Fifth position will always be home to him. Patros welcomes the opportunity to bourré on in Second Life without the nagging pull of gravity.



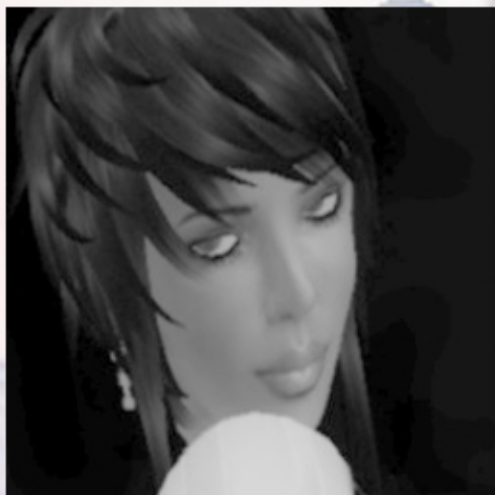
Satine Heart
dancer
London

Ms. Heart is a professional dancer and has trained from the age of 5 in ballet and contemporary dance. Satine holds a BA honours in dance and professional practice.



Sherainbow Merlin
dancer
Spain

Born in Spain within a family of Arts lovers --melomans, composers, dancers, designers, writers, bullfighters... -- in Meridional Europe bullfighting is an art-- Ms. Merlin was born for dancing and delivered into First Life by her feet -- en pointe. Classical ballet is in her blood and her deepest passion. The only reason she was introduced into Second Life, knowing very little of this exceptional medium, was to express her soul. Due to the continuous travelling of her parents she only started proper training at the age of 8 and she has danced ever since assimilating the best of the techniques of the different academies she attended in various parts of the world.



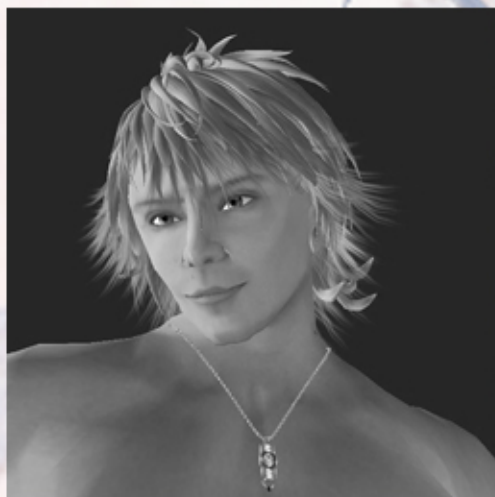
Sherrell Hird
mistress of ceremonies, dancer
California

Ms. Hird's interest in dance was sparked when she was 5 years old. Since then she has loved everything about the arts. When she entered into Second Life and found that it had ballet she liked it even more. From watching her very first ballet, "Olmannen", she was hooked and knew that she wanted to be a part of the Company.



Skippy Flossberg
mc coordinator, web master, dancer
Chicago

Mr. Flossberg manages the Ballet Pixelle website www.balletpixelle.org, is also the MC Coordinator, and sweeps up after the shows! He is also, at times, a dancer.



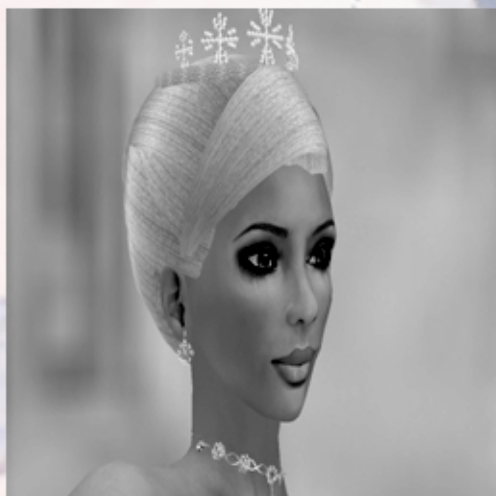
Tik Merlin
dancer, sets
Portugal

Mr. Merlin lives his First Life surrounded by keyboards, musical applications, and programming snippets. He has always been mesmerized by the beauty of movement and amazed by the weight of his feet. Dreams do come true in Second Life and when not busy scripting, landscaping, or building sets, he's been passionately learning the art of dancing with Ballet Pixelle, plus the magic of gracefully escaping from inside tiny Nutcracker doll.



Tinka Bondar
dancer
Pennsylvania

Ms. Bondar is from Philadelphia, USA. She is a lover of the performing arts along with being a trained figure skater. Tinka values her friends and family and loves meeting new people.



Vivienne Darcy
ballet coordinator, costume mistress, dancer
Colorado

Ms. Darcy is dancing for joy at the opportunity to don her toe shoes for Ballet Pixelle! She is from Colorado and when not skiing loves to dance!



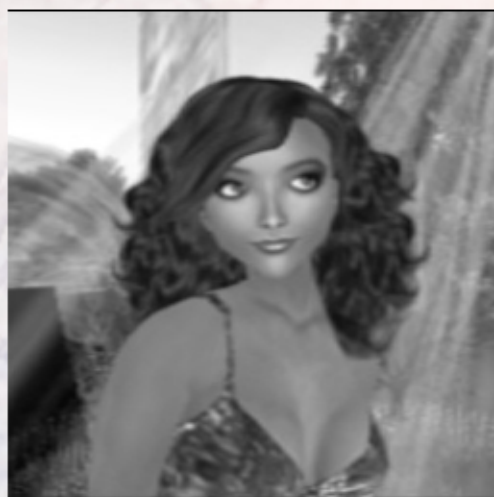
Xanthi Orídium
dancer
Estonia

Ms. Orídium has been attracted to music and visual arts as long as she remembers, so it's quite natural that both have quickly become her interest after joining Second Life. Xanthi used to dance only for her own pleasure in First Life, until she discovered a true deep passion for dancing in Second Life. Now she joined Ballet Pixelle to use every chance to learn and elevate her skills. She loves to perform and to show that dancing in Second Life is so much more than just sitting on a poseball or clicking on a club dance machine.









Alexa Sideways
usher
Montreal

Ms. Sideways is an usher with Ballet Pixelle and is happy to assist our audience to fully enjoy our performances. The first Ballet Pixelle production she attended was "The Nut". She was amazed by the fluidity of movement, the grace of the dancers and their interpretation of music. Designer of Absolutely Smitten, a line of women's clothing, she sometimes combines her loves of fashion and dance by creating outfits worn by our ushers.



Anaïd Daviau
usher coordinator

Ms. Daviau started with Ballet Pixelle as an usher and is now Usher Coordinator. The ushers provide the key technical and courteous interface that allows our audience to enjoy the ballets.



Asami Larsson
consultant, japan
Tokyo

Mr. Larsson is fascinated in Ballet Pixelle as art, and always thinks about cultural exchanges. He lives in Japan. Mr. Larsson is a professional patent and industrial translator and a researcher of intellectual property law in First Life.



Calia Cachin
financial & stage manager
Hawai'i

Ms. Cachin has been financial manager and stage manager with Ballet Pixelle for some years. She feels a heavy responsibility to the Company in handling all financial transaction in a transparent way. In addition, she calls all of the cues for each performance. Ms. Cachin does not dance since she has very large feet and an inability to count unless it is in Linden dollars. Ms. Cachin is honored to be part of Ballet Pixelle.



Derrick Perl
roadie
Chicago

Mr. Perl is thrilled to be a part of Ballet
Pixelle, and contributing to the arts in
Second Life!



Espresso Saarinen
builder, roadie
Tokyo

Mr. Saarinen is an over-attenuated computer scientist in First Life, which has given him a small leg up in the various tasks of building, scripting, and general technical work to assist the ballet. He makes the playbill and is the builder of Ballet Pixelle's stages.



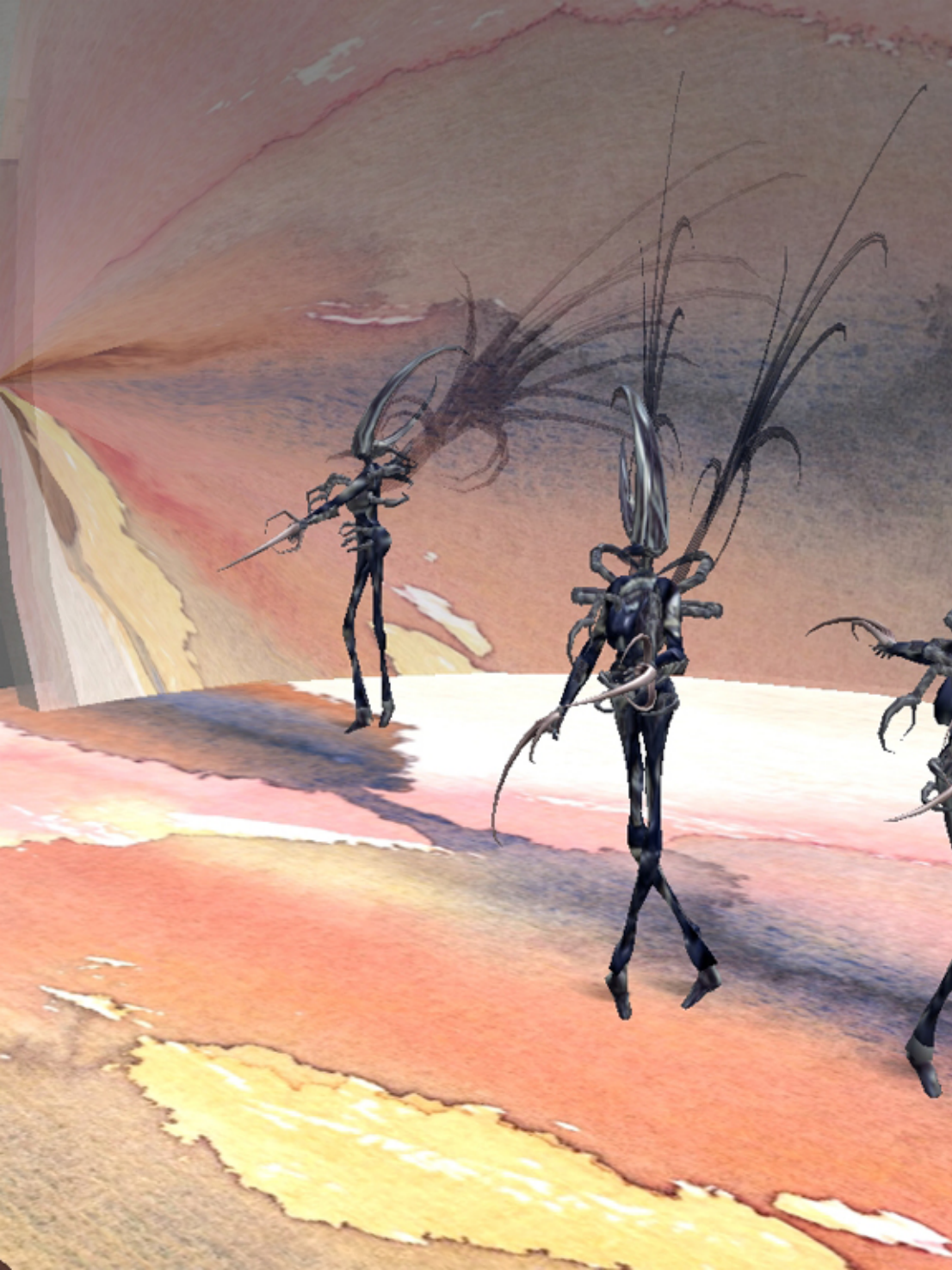
Geoffrey Unsworth
machinimatographer
Massachusetts

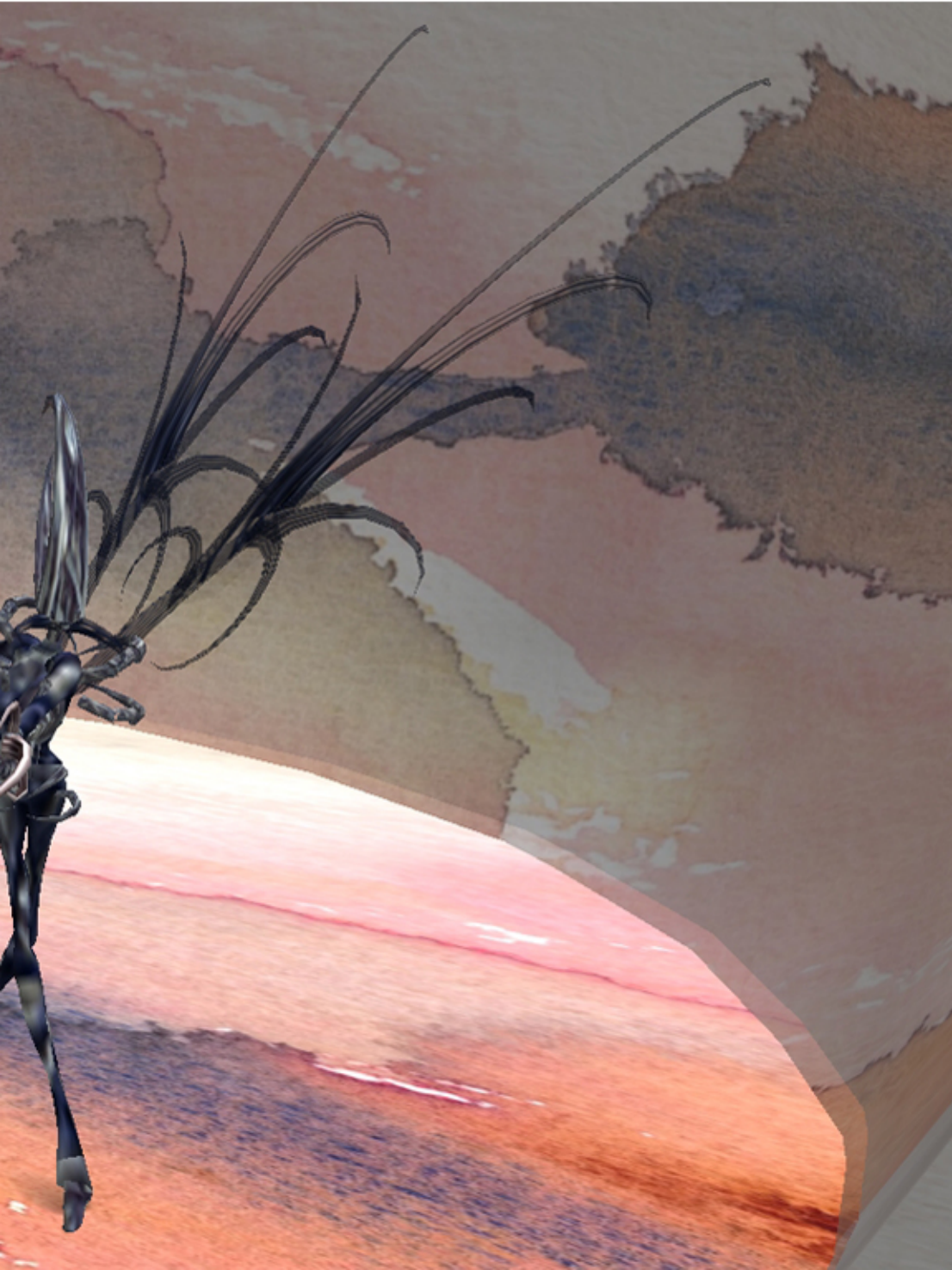
Mr. Unsworth is a singer, musician, and machinimatographer. His recordings of Ballet Pixelle's performances are available on Vimeo and YouTube. Search for Ballet Pixelle and Second Life Ballet (our previous name).



Willis Rossini
sound engineer
Washington, DC

Mr. Rossini joined Ballet Pixelle in Spring 2007 playing sound for all the productions. He is also the chief sound engineer, editing and signal processing the music to fit the ballets, producing sound effects, and improving the quality of the sound to play through shout-cast.





The Making of a Ballet in Virtual Space

Inarra Saarinen, Artistic Director

Creating ballet in Second Life is truly an amazing experience -- one that stretches all of us in the Ballet Pixelle Company artistically, technically, and logistically. Dancing original works in the virtual world requires an extraordinary dedication and adherence to highest professional standards. It is not a task for the faint of heart, yet each performance lifts us all to the heights of artistic accomplishment. I had quickly realized the creative and dance possibilities from my first days in Second Life. Now after four years of hard work, a ton of perseverance, and some fabulously talented and committed people we have brought nine ballets to audiences in Second Life and three into First Life as well. Each ballet is different from the others, yet they all begin in the same place.

The Goal

My goal from the beginning has been to explore and investigate physical and virtual dance and movement. This has never changed.

So far, we have held an invited presentation of "The Nut" at a New York City dance kinetics workshop where I was interviewed while in Tokyo. We were deemed "charming" by NYC dance critics. We danced our commissioned "Phylogeny" which was shown under a big screen while the Indiana Telematics Ensemble played live in Indiana. Recently, we presented and performed "Shuzenji" at the time - transcendence - performance conference hosted by Monash University in Australia.

The point is threefold, one to blend the realities of physical and virtual space, two to define a new aesthetic for virtual and virtual dance, and three, to create a new vocabulary of virtual / physical dance. This is well on its way.

Now that we have brought Ballet Pixelle into First Life, and Second Life to Second Life, we are now bringing First Life dance into Second Life.

How the Ballet Begins

Every ballet begins with an idea. Part of the beauty of writing the story specifically for Ballet Pixelle is that I am able to utilize the unique aspects of Second Life, the three-dimensional virtual world, to bring the story to life. For example, In "Olmanen" I saw dragon-like creatures appearing in the air, a couple in love spiraling down to earth, sprites flying, and a beautiful woman transforming instantly into an old woman while the man transformed into one of the evil beings. In "Windows" I saw silhouetted women dancing in the air, teenagers doing slow aerial flips, and a dream sequence where a man transforms to his younger self and the lovers rise up to the air together. In "Shuzenji" I saw how to dramatize the bonds of everlasting love as a hero murdered in a jealous rage enters the spirit world before our eyes and then returns to dance with his beloved. Once I've written the story and outlined the characters and their relationships, it is time to animate and choreograph. The story is expanded and refined over time as the dance continues to take shape in my head and in rehearsal.

Developing the Choreographic Animations

I began writing Ballet Pixelle movements with some different animation software programs and have created the majority of our animations over the course of the eight ballets. I have used Avimator, Qavimator, Poser and others as a starting point in this process. I now have approximately 650 original animations. When I am choreographing a ballet, I put these animations into gestures, similar to musical phrases in ballet. This way the choreographer and dancers and composer are able to work in a normal First Life style. These gestures also allow very precise timing between animations (in tenth of seconds but, alas, not counting lag) and compound animations. That is, in a gesture if you do not add a "wait" step the two animations happen at the same time. Each dancer can decide how to activate these gestures, for example by mapping the gestures to function keys or using chat `/gesture_name` to activate the phrase. Ballet Pixelle dancers rehearse

and time the execution of each gesture in order, with the music, and with other dancers. I have tried working with both off-the-shelf and custom HUDs, but neither of them gave me all of the functionality that I needed. There were added lags in a HUD, for example, even though having buttons might have been convenient for the dancers.

It is important to recognize that there is a significant difference between Ballet Pixelle's animations and the typical dance animations avatars can use at clubs in Second Life. Club dances are simply loops of movement the avatar clicks onto and the animations play on their own. In Ballet Pixelle rehearsals and performances each dancer runs his or her own animation as though dancing on a real stage. And no poseballs!

How the Music is Played

Music is always composed specifically for Ballet Pixelle's ballets. Sometimes it is played from a recording, sometimes it is played live from London or the U.S. and streamed into our Second Life theatre. In "Shuzenji" the composer wrote lyrics afterwards and sang and played live to accompany some performances. And sometimes the orchestra is in First Life playing to a large-screen playing Ballet Pixelle dancing!

Rehearsal is Part of the Creative Process

Once the story begins to fall in place and the animations are written, I can begin to see my visions in the rehearsal process and refine what will work on stage. What a wonderful freedom to be able to choreograph with dancers who have grand jetés that are full splits in the air, perfect "turn-out", and timely forever turns! The virtual world also suggests movements impossible on a traditional stage. Here Nutcracker snowflakes can float and swirl in mid-air without wires. This limitless movement lets me envision and then produce stunning effects other choreographers can only dream of. Rehearsals take place in almost exactly the

same way a First Life rehearsal does -- except for the "I need you to hover up a bit" kind of directions. Of course, these are real dancers, so there are always the "I thought said you wanted me to come downstage?" kind of discussions. The dancers are not scripted!

Costumes and Sets Play a Role in Ballet Pixelle

For Ballet Pixelle a "costume" is more than a tutu and a wig, it can be the entire look of a character including body shape, size, and skin texture. For some characters we have designed and built our own specialized avatars, for others we have sought resources outside the Company. Second Life is a user-built community filled with creative people. Ballet Pixelle spends a significant amount of time working with designers of clothing and of avatar body and skin types to find the pieces that work to fulfill the ballet's artistic vision. We negotiate with each designer to make the costumes "transfer ok". In this way, costumes can go out to the dancers and then are transferred back into Ballet Pixelle's wardrobe department. Designers who contribute costumes are acknowledged in the playbill.

Ballet Pixelle sets have character as well. We have a number of extremely creative builders and object animators within our Company. I describe my vision for the look and even action of the set pieces and after a lot of hard work and very long hours they deliver pieces that enhance the overall impact of the ballet.

We Quickly Outgrew Our First Theatre

Our home theatre in Quat is where we first debuted. The theatre originally held 20, then 30, then 40 avatars, and then we could no longer hold our audience. So we investigated and researched plans for a more efficient, reduced lag, larger theatre. Eventually, we built theatre hosted by IBM in the IBM sims. This theatre stretched across two sims -- the audience of 80 in one and the stage and dancers are in the other. Besides reducing lag, and allowing for a larger audience. With IBM moving behind their firewall, we moved back home to Quat and Marunogere, in our own two sim theater.

Real People in a Virtual Ballet

At every step in the process from first thoughts through performance I am working with wonderful collaborators literally all around the world. We are able to meet in a space in Second Life and work together live, as though we were really in the same geographical time and place. This intercontinental collaboration would be impossible First Life. Composers for our ballets live in London, the United States, and Japan. Our theater architects are in Australia and Japan, and our dancers and crew are from Austria, Denmark, East Coast of the U.S., England, Hawai'i, mid-West U.S., Netherlands, Portugal, and the West Coast of the U.S. The entire cast and crew are volunteers who are interested in pursuing artistic movement and dance in the virtual world that is Second Life. Each person from the emcee to the lighting and sound technicians and stage manager, put in long hours to assure the performances go as smoothly as possible within the complexity and variability of the Second Life platform. The dancers are also cross-trained in some crew positions. Understanding this commitment is a part of the audition process. Ballet Pixelle dancers are extraordinarily dedicated and are a large part of why the ballet works.

What Next?

From what we have learned over four years, we are now moving to our long-awaited next step. In "Degas" we have Second Life dancers dancing with a machinima, or video, of another Second Life dancer. So there is a new element of time and we can bring Second Life to Second Life and explore what that means. The next step is to bring in First Life dancers into Second Life.

In Closing

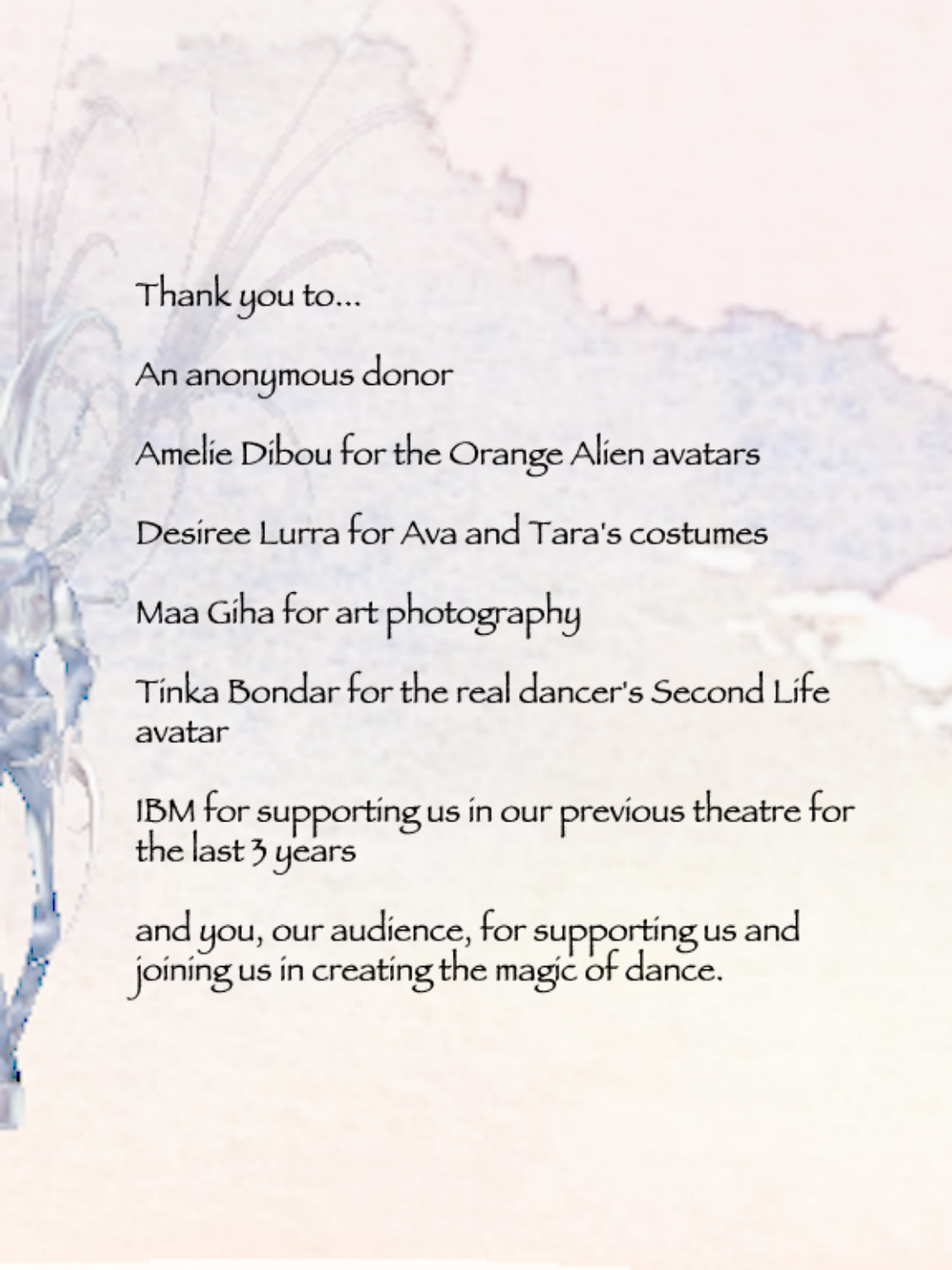
In closing, this is an exhilarating experience with an absolutely wonderful committed artistic team. We are learning an amazing amount about the limitations and possibilities of virtual and physical dance and how they interconnect. We look forward to more exploration in the future. Remember, if you have the chance to sit it out or dance, dance.

Join us in dancing into the digital future!









Thank you to...

An anonymous donor

Amelie Dibou for the Orange Alien avatars

Desiree Lurra for Ava and Tara's costumes

Maa Giha for art photography

Tinka Bondar for the real dancer's Second Life avatar

IBM for supporting us in our previous theatre for the last 3 years

and you, our audience, for supporting us and joining us in creating the magic of dance.



