

BALLET PIXELLE

PERFORMERS

Amelie Dibou
Aiyana Tripsa
Brie Mimulus
Deyna Broek
Luci Yokosuka
Marlena Petrov
Sherrell Hird
Skippy Flossberg
Vivienne Darcy

CREW

Solary Clary - Composer
Vivienne Darcy - Ballet Coordinator
Amelie Dibou - Ballet Mistress
TheAbsinthe Fairey - Costume Mistress
Willis Rossini - Sound Engineer
Kae Sura - Public Relations Coordinator
Calia Cachin - Financial Manager & Stage Manager
Skippy Flossberg - MC Coordinator & Web Master
(balletpixelle.org)

Aiyana Tripsa - Machinimatographer
Sherrell Hird - Mistress of Ceremonies
Amelie Dibou - Builds & Scripts
Mo Hax - Builds & Scripts
Espresso Saarinen - Theatre build & Scripts
Anaid Daviau - Usher Coordinator
Adele Halcali - Usher
Asami Larsson - Consultant
Inarra Saarinen - Artistic Director & Choreographer

BALLET PIXELLE

presents

Living Goddess

An original ballet

Story, Animations, and Choreography by Inarra Saarinen

Music, Composition, and Recording by Solary Clary

Featuring

Kumari Devi - A young girl, The Living Goddess,
the embodiment of the goddess Durga
Devotees - devoted followers of Kumari Devi
Durga - goddess of creation and destruction
Bishamon - god of war and warriors
Kisshoten - goddess of fortune and beauty
Green Taras - male and female gods who provide
a bridge to immortality

Set Architects - Amelie Dibou, Mo Hax, Skippy Flossberg Theatre Build - Espresso Saarinen MCs - Sherrell Hird, Skippy Flossberg

> For more information on Ballet Pixelle, visit http://balletpixelle.org/ and join the group Ballet Pixelle

LIVING GODDESS SYNOPSYS

Before there was Second Life, there were avatars...

This is a ballet based on the real story of the "Living Goddess", or Kumari Devi, who is worshipped in Nepal. She is chosen based on several physical, emotional, and astrological different attributes and then, in a secret ceremony, the goddess Durga comes into her body and she becomes he embodiment of Durga. From then on, she leaves her family, and stays in her temple, Kumari Che, except for 13 days when she leaves for festivals which she attends in her golden chariot. She always wears red, and does not wear shoes or walk while she is the living goddess. When she reaches puberty, a new living goddess is chosen and she becomes mortal again and returns to her family.

ACT SUMMARIES

ACT I: Outside of Kumari Che, the temple of the Living Goddess

Kumari Devi rises from a white lotus flower. Devotees come in to honor her and receive a flower from her that blesses them. She walks on a white silk path towards her chariot. The worshippers are dancing around her in jubilation. She passes through into Kumari Che and appears briefly into the top center window.

ACT II: Mt. Everest in the land of the Gods

Kumari appears on a cloud as her mortal self and then suddenly transforms into Durga, goddess of both creation and destruction. Bishamon, the god of war, fights with Durga. The goddess Kisshoten brings love. And the green Tara god and goddess provide the bridge to immortality.

ACT III: In front of Kumari Che

Kumari Devi has grown into adulthood so the ceremony takes place where she transforms back into a normal human and we see the new (young girl) Kumari Devi. A grand festival takes place celebrating the Kumari and Durga. We see the devotees dancing and dancing honoring this wheel of life. But the pattern repeats itself over and over. A Kumari is chosen, grows up, amd a new one is chosen. Over and over. Reliance on ritual.

Through ritual and tradition, Kumari Devi provides hope, peace, and blessings to her troubled people. What does it mean to all of our living gods and goddesses, our heroes and icons, our prophets and stars across the lands? All who flower, are idolized, and grow old or die replaced by a new one in a forever progression. What does it mean to be a living goddess?

CHARACTERS

Devotees: devoted followers of Kumari Devi.

Kumari Devi (the Living Goddess): a young girl dressed in red and jewels, who is the embodiment of the goddess Durga; she is melancholy for whatever is outside Kumari Che; she never walks (except while she is initiated), but hovers or is carried in her chariot.

Durga: the goddess with twelve arms (Kumari transforms into Durga,); she is fierce and the goddess of creation and destuction. She is a surpremely radiant goddess, a superheroine riding a tiger, carrying weapons (including a lotus flower), maintaining a meditative smile. Durga is the embodiment of creative feminine force and exits in a state of dependence on the universe and nothing and noone else.

Bishamon: God of war and warriors. Dispenser of wealth and good fortune. Also considered the god of healing, with the power to save emperors from life-threatening illness and to expel the demons of plague.

Kisshoten: Goddess of fortune, luck, beauty, and merit.

Green Taras: The male and female Taras serve as the bridge to eternity.

Kumari Devi (old & new): similar to previous young Kumani Devi in Act I, but the girls grow and leave Kumari-hood, and new girls constantly come in to replace them in the neverending cycle.





Inarra Saarinen director / choreographer

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 | musician

Ms. Clary is the composer for Living Goddess. 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, and her sweet voice provides cheer and happiness.



AbaBrukh Aabye master of ceremonies

Attending the first performance of Olmannen, Mr. Aabye was entranced with the process and performance of virtual ballet, but other activities prevented a deeper connection with the Company until he became friends with one of the ballerinas. One performance was enough to revive his fascination; after two, he had no choice but to join.

AbaBrukh 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 lifelong lover of ballet, opera, and all performing arts.

Since Mr. Aabye was not been able to pursue archaeology as a career, he is making up for it by creating Virtual Abyssinia in Second Life to restore ancient and traditional buildings, including sites where he excavated in First Life.



Aiyana Tripsa dancer / machinamatographer

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

Ms. Dibou has danced with Ballet Pixelle since November 2006 and has premiered in Olmannen, Windows, The Nut -- playing all lead and supporting roles. She also serves as Ballet Mistress, mastering all parts and rehearsing the dancers. Founder of DiBoutanicals and DiBoutique, her botanical creations have also been featured in the ballet sets. A Highland dancer, social dancer, and musician in First Life, Amelie loves developing these arts in Second Life.



Brie Mimulus

Ms. Mimulus has been interested in dance her whole life.
She resides in Canada, loves to sing, dance, and act and is thrilled to be a member of Ballet Pixelle.



Deyna Broek

Ms. Brock is a 31 year old Californian who is a lover of dance and music. She is from a family that is into the Arts. Ms. Brock is an Elementary school teacher and loves teaching and loves teaching her students to dance.



Luci Tokosuka

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



Marlena Petrov

Since Ms. Petrov has been in Second Life she has attended all of Ballet Pixelle's ballets. She finally reached the point where she felt she could put all her First Life and Second Life dancing to good use and be part of something much bigger than herself.

She has trained at the Washington School of Ballet, was a member of the George Washington University Ballroom group, and is a member of Virginia Ballet Theatre, and the Richmond Ballet.



Sherrell Hird mistress of ceremonies | dancer

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 a 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 web master | mc coordinator | dancer

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



Vivienne Darcy ballet coordinator | dancer

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!







Ms. Halcali is an usher for Ballet Pixelle. She has ushered for Shuzenji, Les Fleurs Rose, and now Living Goddess. Ms. Halcali is also a model in Second Life.



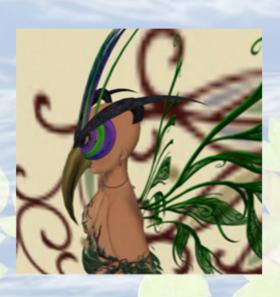
Ms. Daviau started with Ballet Pixelle as an usher and is now Usher Coordinator. The ushers provide the key technical and courteous interface that allows our audience to enjoy the ballets.



Asami Larsson

consultant

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 manager / stage manager

Ms. Cachin provides right-brain assistance to Ms. Saarinen.



Derrick Perl

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



Espresso Saarinen builder, roadie

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 produces the playbill and is the builder of Ballet Pixelle's Theatres.



Ms. Sura is the writer for all of Ballet Pixelle's press releases, newsletters, and other written material. She is a free-lance writer and editor.



Mark Cassini set hud architect

Ms. Cassini is the set HUD architect and set consultant for Ballet Pixelle. He enjoys finding new and different avatars in Second Life; the snow leopard is still his favorite. He has a sensitive and artistic bent, enjoys making new friends, and making himself generally useful. When given a chance, Mark enjoys exploring scripting and building in Second Life.



Mo Hax scripter

Raised under the ballet floorboards by merciful dancers, snow leopards, and dragons, Mr. Hax haunts the Company occasionally contributing tools, time, money and moral support. He has created the autograph pads for Ballet Pixelle and is the co-creator of Audrey, the Lotus. Mr. Hax has also been spotted at http://imohax.com.



The Absinthe Fairey

costume mistress

Ms. Fairey has a background in Commedia del Arte, Eccentric Dance, and Circus Skills. As a child she studied ballet and has been an avid fan ever since. She came to Ballet Pixelle by chance after overhearing a conference call from one of her friends. Ms. Fairey saw Ballet Pixelle's *The Nut* three times and performed in *Je'Taime*.



Willis Ros<mark>sini</mark>

sound engineer

Mr. Rossini joined Ballet Pixelle in Spring 2007 playing sound for Olmannen, Windows, and The Nut. He is also the chief sound engineer, editing and signal processing the music to fit the ballet, producing sound effects, and improving the quality of the sound as it plays through shoutcast.



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 two years of hard work, a ton of perseverance, and some fabulously talented and committed people we have brought six ballets to audiences in Second Life and two into First Life as well. Each ballet different from the others, yet they all begin in the same place.

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 and up, 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 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 six ballets. I have used Avimator, Qavimator, Poser and others as a starting point in this process. I now have approximately 350 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 uses. 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 jete's 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

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 userbuilt 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 a similar theatre to our home theatre hosted by IBM in the IBM sims. This theatre stretches across two sims -- the audience of 80 is in one and the stage and dancers are in another. Besides reducing lag, and allowing for a larger audience, Security is enabled by simply putting different access restrictions on the stage sim.

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 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?

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!

Thanks to IBM for hosting us.

Thanks to our sponsors:

Audrey the Lotus by Amelie Dibou & Mo Hax

Trees & Stone by Diboutanicals - San Julienne Straits (149, 169, 22)

Devotee Hair by Sheltered Heart - Tropical Escape (127, 70, 23)

Photos & Video of Kumari Che & Mount Everest by Inarra Saarinen

God Avatars in Act II by Ryusho Ort - Rieul (247, 151, 84)

Green Tara Skins in Act II by Evangeline Schism (Schismphrenic) - Kittyland 2 (237, 183, 604)

Kumari Costume & Makeup by Terpsichore Music & Dance - Victoriana Square (95, 88, 43)

Devotee Costumes in Act I by Yak & Yeti - Roman, Salzburg (182, 82, 27)

Devotee Costumes in Act III by Zaara - Zaara (142, 132, 26)

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



