



Ashton in Ecuador



IN OCTOBER 2019, the En-Avant Dance Company in Guayaquil, Ecuador, in association with the Frederick Ashton Foundation, presented a *Homage to Sir Frederick Ashton* (Ashton was born in Guayaquil). The homage formed the final part of a triple bill given by the company at the Teatro Sánchez Aguilar on October 25 and 26.

Ashton Foundation répétiteur (and Foundation trustee) Lynn Wallis, assisted by Isobel McMeekan (a participant on the Foundation's shadowing scheme to train up the Ashton répétiteurs of the future), taught and staged a number of divertissements from the early Ashton

Above: The statue of Sir Frederick Ashton in Guayaquil. Below: Lynn Wallis (left) and Isobel McMeekan.

repertoire, including the Red Couple and the White pas de deux from *Les Patineurs*, Margot Fonteyn's solo from *The Wise Virgins*, the Tango from *Façade* and the final section of *Valses*



nobles et sentimentales.

The divertissements were preceded by an introduction given by Wallis, supported by a Powerpoint presentation of relevant ballet images and photographs of the young Ashton, Ninette de Valois, Constant Lambert and Fonteyn, as well as Ashton at the end of his career.

The particular dances were selected to reflect the experience of the young artists of En-Avant, a company made up of 12 professional dancers recruited annually and augmented as necessary, under the artistic direction of Jessica Abouganem. (See *Dancing Times*, July 2019, for more information about the company.)

During Lynn and Isobel's visit to Guayaquil, a statue of Sir Frederick by Juan Pablo Toral, situated outside the house where he was born, was formally unveiled by the Municipality in front of an invited audience of distinguished guests, including relatives of Ashton, Wallis and McMeekan and the dancers and staff of the En-Avant Dance Company. ■

CHRISTOPHER NOURSE

In brief

★ NAFISAH BABA, winner of the BBC's Young Dancer competition in 2017, will be appearing in KATE PRINCE's *Message In A Bottle*, which opens at the Peacock Theatre in London's West End on February 6. Danced to hit songs by Sting and The Police, the production also features LUKAS MCFARLANE, TOMMY FRANZÉN and NATASHA GOODEN, as well as the ZONATION company.

★ Dancers HARRY ALEXANDER, VIDYA PATEL and EDD ARNOLD will be taking part in *Thick and Tight's Romancing The Apocalypse* at the Lilian Baylis Studio from January 9 to 11 as part of the *London International Mime Festival*. Each dancer will perform a solo that embodies "a famous character from history in distinct and radical ways, challenging perceptions of what dance can be and how it can be used to further queer culture".

★ The line-up has been announced for the 2020 edition of *MOVE IT*, the UK's largest dance event, taking place at ExCeL London from March 13 to 15. Headliners include LAYTON WILLIAMS, tap star CLARE HALSE, ballroom and Latin dancers NEIL AND KATYA JONES, and FLAWLESS. See page 104 for more information and to take advantage of an exclusive ten per cent off tickets deal for readers of *Dancing Times*.