

Out &

About

By Cynthia Tavlin

IT'S A BIRD. IT'S A PLANE. IT'S A DANCER!



Photo: Fred Hart

Traditional dance has *pas de deux* and Swing has the sweetheart position. When **Fly-by-Night Dance Theater** takes the stage for its **5th Annual Free-for-Kids Project**, the trapeze is the dance partner in a performance that takes dance into the vertical space through the use of low-flying rigging. Asked to describe the format, Fly-by-Night's artistic director Julie Ludwick likens the trapeze to a piece of playground equipment and the company's choreography to the circus. "It's liberating," she says. "The first time you fly a smile breaks out on your face. The dancers are being challenged in a way traditional floor dance doesn't. It's a challenge to learn new movement and vocabulary."

Though the company didn't originally mount productions with kids in mind, the shows have consistently attracted families, and kids who attended were mesmerized — hence the annual **Free-for-Kids Project**. "The idea that a body can fly or float in the air is not a big leap for a child," explains Ludwick. "It's in their dream world. They don't analyze it the way adults do."

This year's Free-for-Kids Project, **From the Ground Up**, is presented **June 5-8**. Children's matinee performances are Friday at 4pm; Saturday & Sunday at 2pm. Evening performances are Thursday-Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 7pm. True to its moniker, children 18 and under are admitted **FREE**. Adults accompanied by a child, students and seniors are admitted for \$12, and general admission is \$20. Two **FREE** pre-performance workshops, **Drumming in the Haitian Tradition** (ages 12-18) and **Drawing and Dancing**, are offered June 7 at noon. Location is Chashama Theater, 135 West 42nd Street. Reservations are recommended; call (212) 624-0077 or visit www.flybynightdance.org.

Tom Canty is a beggar of Offal Court and Prince Edward is next in line to be King of England. The two boys, lookalikes, born on the same day, could not be any more different, yet ending up switching places in **Prince and the Pauper**, an appealing musical which returns for a limited engagement this month. Based on the Mark Twain classic, the production's lively score, broad humor and rousing swordfights makes it a winner with parents and kids alike.

Prince and the Pauper runs June 4-August 31. Showtime is Tuesday and Thursday at 7pm, Friday and Saturday at 8pm, with matinees Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday at 2pm and Sunday at 3pm. Tickets are \$40-\$55. At the Lamb's Theatre, 130 West 44th Street. For tickets, call (212) 239-6200.



Photo: Carol Rosegg

MARS 2003

Get ready for Mars mania this month as the Red Planet appears increasingly luminous from Earth. "This is the big, big show for backyard astronomers," says David Eicher, editor-in-chief of *Astronomy* magazine, noting the reason for the planet's heightened visibility is opposition — an event that puts the Earth between Mars and the Sun. "Apart from the moon, it will be the brightest thing in the sky," Eicher explains.

Visible to the naked eye as an orange-red star, the best days to look for Mars will be **June 18, July 16 and August 13**. There is one caveat for stargazers. "As Mars gets closer to the sun, it heats up," explains Eicher, adding that the heat can cause a dust storm, which may obscure some of the planet's

