

# Ballet: Dance Theatre of Harlem was founded in 1969

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## Classic beginnings

Co-founded in 1969 by Arthur Mitchell, the first black dancer with the New York City Ballet, and Karel Shook, a Renton, Wash., born ballet master, the Dance Theatre of Harlem was initially a project to expose inner-city youth to classical ballet in the aftermath of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The ballet company's objective has always been to both educate and entertain, to break stereotypes and put a multicultural face on a traditionally white art form.

Weighted down by debt, the Dance Theatre of Harlem stopped touring in 2004 but was able to relaunch two years ago with a leaner troupe. Last week, the ballet company made its first appearance in Portland in three decades — and its first ever in Astoria.

While the Dance Theatre of Harlem's performance at the Liberty Theater Saturday night showed the dancers in full bloom, three intimate workshops at the theater Friday gave students a rare look inside the world of ballet.

"Ballet belongs to everybody," said Virginia Johnson, the ballet company's artistic director. "It's not just one group of people. So there are many reasons why we do it, but it really is about planting that seed for the next generation."

Elementary school students from Seaside, Gearhart and



**'Ballet belongs to everybody. It's not just one group of people.'**

— Virginia Johnson

Dance Theatre of Harlem's artistic director

Naselle, Wash., along with youngsters from the Shooting Stars Child Development Center in Astoria, caught the morning session. Students from Hilda Lahti Elementary School in Knappa and Seaside High School had the afternoon session.

On Friday evening, Johnson, a former principal ballerina, led a master class for local dance students upstairs at the theater's Paulson Pavilion. Cool and exacting, she did not spare the unsteady amateurs

from her precise standards.

At the end of the 90-minute lesson, several flushed dance students looked relieved.

"I always enjoy learning from beautiful people who have so many ideas," said Peggy Boisvert, a special needs assistant who lives in Astoria. "I like having more things to think about."

"So you go home and think about it. And so it's not necessarily tough right now but it makes your dancing better later."



Photos by JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

**ABOVE:** Trixie Gunn, of Astoria, takes part in a ballet class taught at by Artistic Director Virginia Johnson at the Dance Theatre of Harlem at the Paulson Pavilion in the Liberty Theater Friday. **LEFT:** Anthony Savoy and Alison Stroming, both with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, demonstrate ballet for local students at the Liberty Theater Friday.



**Members of the Dance Theatre of Harlem demonstrate ballet techniques for local students at the Liberty Theater Friday.**

## Removal: Attorney says low morale was tied in part to ship's condition

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But Darrin Gibbons, Bitterman's attorney, said Bitterman, who took command of the Steadfast last July, identified problems such as lead contamination, poor decking and moldy mattresses.

The commander, the attorney said, reported the issues to Coast Guard leadership. His temporary removal, his attorney claims, was in retaliation.

"They're alleging that his performance was substandard. He denies that," Gibbons, a former Coast Guard judge advocate, said by telephone Monday from Virginia. "He believes that's false, of course. The performance of the ship on all metrics that the government uses to measure the performance of the cutter meet or exceed all standards."

"He was removed — we believe, he believes — due to

whistleblowing activity."

Gibbons said Bitterman, who has been temporarily assigned to Coast Guard Sector Columbia River in Warrenton, will challenge his removal. He may also seek protection under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act.

"He absolutely is going to defend himself to the maximum degree under the law," Gibbons said.

Lt. Donnie Brzuska of the

Coast Guard's Pacific Area Command in Alameda, Calif., denied that Bitterman was removed in retaliation.

"Commander Bitterman was not relieved as a result of reporting issues with the material condition aboard the Cutter Steadfast," Brzuska said. "He was relieved due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command."

"I can assure you that the Coast Guard acted in the best

interest of the crew of the Cutter Steadfast to ensure a positive working environment."

The Steadfast, a 210-foot medium endurance cutter, was commissioned in 1968 and underwent major maintenance in the 1990s to extend its life for an additional 25 years.

The Steadfast, under the temporary leadership of Cmdr. John Pruitt from the Coast Guard Motion Picture & Television Office in Los Angeles,

left Astoria on Saturday afternoon for its latest deployment.

Gibbons said the Coast Guard cited low morale among the Steadfast crew as among the reasons for Bitterman's removal. The attorney said, however, that morale was tied in part to the ship's condition and high tempo deployment schedule.

"Essentially, he inherited a ship that was in disrepair and beyond its service life," he said.

## Pot: Increased demand for electricity could drive up rates

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Power-hungry grow lights and ventilation systems are not just an environmental issue.

Small, consumer-owned utilities across Oregon purchase electricity from the Bonneville Power Administration on a tiered system, which allows smaller utilities to purchase power at lower rates. Those rates could attract indoor growers, but the increased demand for electricity might drive up rates for all utility customers.

That prompted Ashland City Manager Dave Kanner to call for the state to adopt energy efficiency standards for indoor agriculture.

The Oregon Department of Energy tasked Diana Enright, program and policy adviser to agency director Michael Kaplan, with working on the intersection of pot and power.

Wray said cannabis remains "a small part of (Enright's) policy portfolio," but Enright attended a conference in December on energy demand from the marijuana industry. She is also following efforts to address the issue in two other states with legal recreational pot, Colorado and Washington.

In Colorado, Boulder Coun-



Courtesy Portland General Electric

**Oregon Energy Department officials and electric utilities in the state are trying to address power issues produced by large, indoor marijuana ahead of recreational pot becoming legal in July.**

ty enacted a cannabis carbon tax, Enright said. Oregon state government is not currently considering anything similar.

On July 1, adults aged 21 and older can possess up to four marijuana plants. Growing those four plants indoors with lighting, climate control, ventilation and equipment to boost carbon dioxide to improve plant growth typically uses as much electricity as running 29 new refrigerators, according to one report by

a California scientist. It is also equivalent to the total energy used by an average U.S. home.

"So you can start to see where the energy consumption is huge," Enright said.

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council estimated in September that energy demand from pot growers in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana will nearly double over the next 20 years.

The anticipated increase in

energy demand from legal recreational marijuana also caught the attention of investor and consumer-owned utilities. At a hearing in February, Portland General Electric government affairs analyst Brendan McCarthy told lawmakers on the committee working to implement legal pot that 85 percent of residential transformer problems it handles are caused by indoor marijuana grows.

McCarthy said there is currently a shortage of information about energy demand from pot grows. Utilities want the information so they can deliver the power cannabis growers need and plan for energy efficiency measures. McCarthy said utilities also need that information so they can keep employees and customers safe.

"It doesn't help us for someone to say, 'We're gonna start a pottery business and we're gonna have a lot of kilns running,'" McCarthy said. "We've heard that."

Power-hungry pot gardens can rival the energy intensity of data centers, with lights as intense as in operating rooms and air circulating at 60-times the rate of ventilation in a modern home.

The increase in energy usage that accompanies growth of

the marijuana industry has been documented when states legalized medical pot.

After California legalized medical marijuana in 1996, per capita residential electricity usage increased by 50 percent in Humboldt County, according to research by Evan Mills, a senior scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California, published in the journal Energy Policy in 2012.

Enright said Mills' research is still the "most definitive work" on energy consumption by pot growers.

Mills estimated at the time that indoor cannabis cultivation and transport of the product was responsible for 1 percent of national energy consumption or \$6 billion each year. The study also looked into the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from pot gardens.

"One average kilogram of final product is associated with 4,600 kg of carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere, or that of 3 million average U.S. cars when aggregated across all national production," Mills wrote.

Criminalization of marijuana was only part of the reason growers favored indoor gardens; the environmental control has also allowed them to increase yields and control pests and other issues. Mills wrote that indoor marijuana growers could reduce the energy intensity of their operations by as much as 75 percent, if they adopt commercially available technologies such as those used by indoor agricultural greenhouse operators.

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## Bartlett: She earned awards for her work

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with a question-and-answer section and comments from Emergency Communications Manager Jeff Rusiecki.

Bartlett, who has worked seven years for Astoria Dispatch, was one of the recognized dispatchers.

"Summer is a true top performer. She has been recognized as the State of Oregon Telecommunicator of the Year in 2012 along with receiving various other state, local, and department level awards," Rusiecki wrote. "Summer always goes the extra mile to make sure those in need get the required help. Summer is also our Law Enforcement

Data Systems representative and serves as a field training officer."

Bartlett earned the Oregon Telecommunicator of the Year award for handling an incident where a man had shot his mother in rural Astoria. In 2010, Bartlett received the Oregon State Critical Incident Award for her reaction that resulted in an arrest and a domestic violence victim's rescue.

While her work on those two calls earned awards, Bartlett said, she treats all calls the same. To properly handle 911 calls, Bartlett is trained to be detached and as monotone as possible.

"I detach during the phone

call because I can't do my job if I'm emotionally invested in an incident," Bartlett said. "If we do emotionally invest too much in these calls, we are not providing service to them that is beneficial."

Sometimes the detachment seeps into a dispatcher's personal life, Bartlett said. Over time, Bartlett has learned to turn off the detachment by spending time with family, going for walks and enjoying hobbies such as hunting, fishing and reading.

"I have to remember that I'm not at work and it's OK to have emotions," Bartlett said. "Because when someone tells me that they just shot someone, I can't say 'Oh, really?'"

I can't engage them in that as I would another person on the street."

To become a dispatcher, Bartlett, who studied law enforcement at Western Oregon University, completed a two-week course, three-day training session and six months training with Astoria Dispatch. Now, seven years into her career, Bartlett still enjoys the adrenaline rush of not knowing who is on the other line.

"I like multitasking. I like going fast. I enjoy a really busy period and afterward looking back and knowing I did well," Bartlett said. "I like the not knowing. I like that every call is different."

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