

**ARTS**

# “Cocktail Hour: The Show” Shakes Up Ballet at Tryon Fine Arts Center

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‘Champagne’ from *Cocktail Hour: The Show*

**Asheville** - If you thought ballet was all about tutus and serious expressions, think again. Ballets with a Twist is here to serve up a delightful cocktail of dance, humor, and nostalgia with their production, *Cocktail Hour: The Show*. Set to take the stage at Tryon Fine Arts Center on November 21, 2024, this performance promises to be a refreshing twist on traditional ballet that will have audiences of all ages tapping their toes and raising their glasses.

## **A Unique Concept Inspired by Childhood Memories**

Marilyn Klaus, the artistic director and choreographer behind *Cocktail Hour: The Show*, has a rich history with dance that dates back to her childhood. “I’ve been choreographing since I was three years old,” she shared. “My parents would host cocktail parties — with dancing, of course — and I would create dances in my living room.” This early exposure to the theatricality of social gatherings, combined with her love for Old Hollywood films and iconic stars like Busby Berkeley and Lucille Ball, laid the groundwork for this innovative production.



‘Hot Toddy’ from *Cocktail Hour: The Show*

Klaus aims to draw audiences out of their living rooms and into the theater. “*Cocktail Hour: The Show* has a pop sensibility,” she said. “I want to get audiences out of their living rooms and into the theater again.” With its vibrant choreography and engaging storytelling, this show is designed to be an entertaining escape from everyday life.

### **A Journey Through Time and Space**

The show features a series of vignettes inspired by classic cocktails, each reflecting different cultures and eras. From the lively rhythms of Salsa and Tango to the nostalgic sounds of Americana and Swing, the choreography takes audiences on a whirlwind journey. “We draw inspiration from various styles and travel through time — from the Roaring Twenties to 1950s Hollywood,” Klaus explained.

Highlights include “Champagne,” where a glittering ballroom comes alive, and “Manhattan,” which captures the essence of a big-city evening. Klaus also mentioned “Roy Rogers,” a playful piece set against the backdrop of America’s Wild West, showcasing the fun and flirtation that define the show.

### **Collaboration Enhances the Experience**

The success of *Cocktail Hour: The Show* is not just due to Klaus’s choreography; it’s also a product of a collaboration with talented individuals like composer Stephen Gaboury and costume designer Catherine Zehr. Their contributions enhance the overall presentation, creating a cohesive experience that captivates audiences.

“It all starts with the choreography,” Klaus noted. “Steve and Catherine come into the studio to watch rehearsals. Their inspiration comes from the pieces themselves — and their individual talent, of course.” This collaborative spirit allows for continuous evolution in the performance, ensuring that each show is fresh and exciting.

## **Entertainment for Everyone**

One of the standout features of *Cocktail Hour: The Show* is its accessibility. With vignettes ranging from three to fifteen minutes long, there’s something for everyone. Klaus hopes that audiences will leave with a sense of joy and connection. “Our show is unique in that we do put a Twist on traditional ballet,” she said. “It’s pure entertainment. Any audience can relate to the stories we tell, and most importantly, it’s really fun!”

The playful nature of the production is evident in its comedic elements. Klaus shared that while she approaches her work seriously, it often results in humor. “The more serious I am — and I am very serious — the funnier the dances are,” she said. This blend of seriousness and playfulness creates an engaging atmosphere that invites laughter and enjoyment.

## **A Legacy of Artistic Excellence**

Ballets with a Twist has made a name for itself across various prestigious venues, from Cleveland’s Playhouse Square to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. The company’s ability to blend vaudeville flair with classical ballet has garnered praise from critics, including *The New York Times*, which noted that “this troupe blends vaudeville flash and flair with tutus and pointe shoes.”

As part of Tryon Fine Arts Center’s 2024-2025 Signature Series, *Cocktail Hour: The Show* is set to be a highlight of the season. Tickets are priced between \$38-\$48, with student tickets available for \$20-\$25. For those looking to experience this unique blend of dance and entertainment, tickets can be purchased at [tryonarts.org](https://tryonarts.org).

With its vibrant choreography, engaging music, and playful themes, *Cocktail Hour: The Show* is poised to be an unforgettable experience for all who attend. Whether you’re a ballet aficionado or a newcomer to the art form, this production promises to deliver an evening filled with laughter, joy, and perhaps even a few surprises along the way.

For more information about Ballets with a Twist or to learn more about upcoming performances at Tryon Fine Arts Center, visit [tryonarts.org](https://tryonarts.org) or contact them at 828-859-8322 or info@tryonarts.org. Don’t miss your chance to witness this delightful celebration of dance!