

dance

Stepping into a premiere performance

By Diane Hubbard Burns
Special to the Sentinel

In a program full of firsts this weekend — including **Orlando Ballet's** debut performances of three ballets by new artistic director **Robert Hill** — the opening spot is held by a collaborative performance.

Ballerina **Katia Garza's** original ballet to Winter Park composer **Steve Goldman's** score marks firsts in the careers of both creators. It's his debut as a ballet composer, hers as a solo choreographer on the **Carr Performing Arts Centre** stage.

But it was not so much a collaborative process as a happenstance that brought their creative efforts together: Though Goldman has donated his 10-minute orchestral

piece to the ballet, he may not see the dance that accompanies it until opening night.

"I really like being able to inspire a completely different art form," says Goldman. "I don't want to control or contaminate that process."

The piece Goldman called *Acadian Dance* didn't begin life as a ballet. The Winter Park philanthropist wrote it to accompany opening credits of a film that never made it beyond the planning stages. In his mind, the music calls forth images of a snowy pine forest.

But Garza, hearing it the first time, envisioned "autumn, and the leaves are falling, and I'm dancing in and moving the leaves."

Her original vision has evolved into a dance for three principal dancers and five couples, which she calls *Pas de Thirteen*. They are "kind of like going to a concert, in a stylish way. It's an opening to the show — a welcoming," she says.

Goldman, 57, has indulged his interests in music and science since selling his computer-technology company in 1999. He served as inter-

Katia Garza choreographed a piece for **Orlando Ballet's** 35th anniversary program.

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im director of the **Orlando Science Center** for a time and is founder of the **Young Composers Challenge**, which encourages young musicians to try composing and provides winners prize money and an **Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra** performance of their work.

When the film for which he'd written *Acadian Dance* never came to fruition, he reworked the piece for full orchestra and recorded it with the Phil. Fellow philanthropist **Harriett Lake** was in the audience for the recorded performance, and it was she — the underwriter, incidentally for this weekend's program — who suggested the ballet company use it.

Garza, 32, took the assignment last fall, at the same time she was choreographing *The Little Mermaid* for the Orlando Ballet's school performance. She has been creating dances since she was 18, but usually has collaborated with her husband, **Israel Rodriguez**. This is her first solo work for the professional company on the Carr stage.

The challenges of the piece were



twofold, she said.

"First, it is very hard when you are still part of the company and you are choreographing for your co-workers. . . . Second, because I don't know if I can realize the expectations of the composer."

But she was happy to be on the creative end for the 35th-anniversary program of the company, with which she has danced nine years.

"If you don't understand ballet, this is the best show to show up for," she says. "There is a little bit of everything."

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see for
yourself

'Encore!'

When: 8 p.m. today and Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday.

Where: Carr Performing Arts Centre, 401 W. Livingston St., Orlando.

Cost: \$30 to \$85.
Call: 407-426-1739 or 407-839-3900.

Online: orlando.ballet.org

What else: Read a review of the show Saturday at **Orlando**

Sentinel.com/entertainment or Sunday in the Local In-Depth section.