

# Ballet Nouveau stages 'Moulin Rouge' for Valentine's Day

By [Aimee Heckel \(Contact\)](#)  
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Valentine's Day isn't just chocolate, roses and pink hearts.

And ballet isn't limited to tutus, pointed toes and satin ribbons.

Both can be sexy, edgy, unusual and dark, as Garrett Ammon sees it.

Ammon, of Broomfield, wrote and choreographed Ballet Nouveau Colorado's latest show, his spin on "Moulin Rouge."

Ammon, a former star dancer with Ballet Memphis, arrived at the Broomfield dance studio this year. He is known for unique choreography that pushes the definition of ballet. He created one ballet to Johnny Cash music. Last fall, Ballet Nouveau featured one of his shows to music by Queen. Ammon's "Moulin Rouge" isn't the same as the 2001 movie that featured Nicole Kidman, and it's different from the version the ballet company did two years ago. That show, the first Valentine's Day show Ballet Nouveau put on, was a sellout.

But it was only a one-act, and it was lighter. Executive director Lissy Garrison says this story explores humanity on a deeper level. She calls it gritty, meaningful and real. "It's a love-themed show, but looking at love from a different standpoint," Garrison says. "Not just skimming it over in an easy way, but looking at the dark side of manipulation, when they take away truth and beauty and love."

Ammon's "Moulin Rouge" follows a woman who is put under a spell by a man who thinks she has beautiful feet. He kidnaps her and makes her dance for him and another man at the Moulin Rouge. But the woman is really in love with the man who hypnotized her, and they cannot be together. The inspiration: the 1894 Gothic horror novel "Trilby," by George du Maurier, with the hypnotist character Svengali. Ammon says he hopes people can relate to or sympathize with the characters on some level to spark reflection.

"I want to engage them and entertain them, but I also want things to trigger in their heart, to walk away thinking about their own lives and relationships and their own reality," Ammon says. Talia Davis, a Ballet Nouveau spokeswoman, says she would give the performance a PG-13 rating if she could. But then the nature of can-can is sexy and hot, she says. Although the story is set to classical music and the dancers are classically trained, the performance also incorporates jazz, modern, kicks, stomps and jumps. Add to that garter belts, fishnet stockings and heels. Davis says she thinks classical ballet remains an important piece of history. But she says it is also important to evolve and push boundaries. In that spirit, Ballet Nouveau is hosting a choreographer competition through Youtube.com, a user-submitted video Web site. The three finalists will create routines to modern music.

"We understand and appreciate our history, but we are also looking forward to our future," Davis says.

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Photo by David Jennings

OOH-LA-LA: Ballet Nouveau Company members Julie King, left, Julie Meng, Catherine Wells, Sarah Tallman, Elizabeth Towles, Laura Guerra and Jason Franklin rehearse a scene from 'Moulin Rouge'.

If you go

**What** Garrett Ammon's "Moulin Rouge," presented by Broomfield's Ballet Nouveau Colorado

**When** 8 p.m. today and Saturday, 4 p.m. Sunday and 8 p.m. Thursday

**Where** Today through Sunday at the DL Parson Theatre, 11801 Community Center Drive, Northglenn, and Thursday at the Paramount Theatre, 1621 Glenarm Place, Denver

**Tickets** \$22-\$26 today through Sunday, \$38-\$55 Thursday

**Info** 303-466-5685, [www.fakewindmill.com](http://www.fakewindmill.com) or [www.bnrevolution.com](http://www.bnrevolution.com)

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