

# OREGON BALLET THEATRE

## CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

M E D I A R E L E A S E

*FORGIVENESS TRIUMPHS AND TECHNIQUE SHINES IN OBT'S GISELLE*  
*Dancers Prep for the Role of a Lifetime in OBT's Lush New Staging of **Giselle**,*  
*Opening **February 25th** at the Keller Auditorium*

**January 31, 2012 – PORTLAND, OR.** *Giselle*, the timeless tale of a peasant girl driven mad by the betrayal of her first love, offers the role of a lifetime for a dancer at the peak of her career. Technically demanding and complex both in its emotional range and its choreographic details, *Giselle* shares a place in the cannon of great tragic heroines alongside Desdemona, Camille or Jayne Eyre. Yuka Iino, Xuan Cheng, Haiyan Wu and Julia Rowe are each in the studios working to put their own unique stamp on this iconic role, with the guidance of noted Romantic ballet expert (and Associate Director of the San Francisco Ballet School) Lola de Avila.

### DATES AND TIMES

*Giselle* premieres **Saturday, February 25th, 2011** and runs for 5 performances through **Saturday, October 15, 2011**. Show times: Saturday, February 25th at 7:30pm; Sunday, February 26th at 2:00pm; Thursday, March 1st at 7:30 pm; Friday, March 2nd at 7:30pm and Saturday, March 3rd at 7:30pm.

### TICKET PRICES

Tickets start at \$23.00 Visit [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org) or dial **503.2.BALLET** for tickets.

- A “**Pay Your Age**” discount is offered for all patrons under 35 years old. Patrons receive best available seating at the same price as their age when they order by phone or in person and give their birthdate and email address. Patrons under 15 pay \$15.
- Oregon Ballet Theatre participates in the **Arts for All** program, providing \$5 tickets to patrons with the Oregon Trail Card.

### ABOUT GISELLE

*“You shall dance, the way you made me dance.  
Your heart shall burst, as mine broke.  
And you shall die, suffering as I suffered.”  
--Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis, to her paramour*



*Giselle* premiered in 1841 at the Royal Music Academy in Paris, with a score by Adolphe Adam, libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and ballet critic Théophile Gautier, and original choreography by Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot.

The performance was based on a poem by Heinrich Heine inspired by Slavic myths about avenging virgin spirit ghosts, called Wilis.

Modern versions of *Giselle* stem from revival productions in 1880s that were choreographed for the Imperial Russian Ballet by Marius Petipa. This ballet masterwork offers some of the most technically demanding choreography in the

ballet cannon, requiring a dancer with extraordinary grace, precision and dramatic abilities.

*Giselle* is set in the Rhineland of the Middle Ages on the day of the grape harvest festival. Duke Albrecht of Silesia has been living in disguise among the peasants in order to sow a few wild oats before his upcoming marriage to Bathilde, the daughter of the Prince of Courland. He flirts with the fragile young peasant girl Giselle, who falls completely in love with him. Hilarion, the gamekeeper, is suspicious of Albrecht and when Bathilde's royal hunting party arrives in the village, he unmasks the duke as a fraud. When Giselle learns the truth about his deception, madness overwhelms her fragile heart and she dies.

Act II is set in a moonlit glade near Giselle's grave on the night of her burial, where Albrecht has come to grieve. Giselle is summoned from her grave by the Wilis, female spirits who, jilted before their wedding day, rise from their graves at night and seek revenge upon men by dancing them to death. Myrtha, their queen, sentences Albrecht to death, but Giselle intervenes and her love saves his life, sending the Wilis back to their graves and releasing Giselle from their power so she may rest in peace.

Oregon Ballet Theatre's brand new production will be choreographed by noted Romantic-era ballet expert Lola de Avila, and features lush scenery and costumes from the Teatro del Maggio Musical Fiorentino in Florence, Italy.

For **high-resolution images** of *Giselle* rehearsals, costume fittings and opening night photos visit **OBT's Flickr page** <http://www.flickr.com/photos/oregonballettheatre>.

*Giselle* is sponsored by **The Standard**. Oregon Ballet Theatre's 2011/12 season is funded in part by the **Regional Arts & Culture Council** and Work for Art; the **Oregon Arts Commission**; the **Oregon Cultural Trust**; **The Oregonian** and **Kink.fm**

#### ABOUT OREGON BALLETTHEATRE

Founded in 1989, OBT is the region's largest full-time professional ballet company. Christopher Stowell joined the company as Artistic Director in 2003. Since then, OBT has added over 50 ballets to its repertoire, including nearly two dozen world premieres; providing a compelling and diverse five-program season of work that reflects the broadest spectrum of what great ballet can be. Annually, OBT offers eleven experiential arts education programs for youth and adults, as well as a professional ballet school for students, ages 4-18. Through all the programs offered, OBT reached over 145,000 members of the community last year. For more information about OBT go to: [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org).

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