

OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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OREGON BALLET THEATRE'S 2007-08 SEASON TO MAKE A GRAND MUSICAL TOUR OF EUROPE AND THE USA

Portland, Ore... **OREGON BALLET THEATRE** today announced its **2007-08 season**. A harmonious mix of new works, company premieres and returning favorites, OBT's **Grand Tour** season underscores Artistic Director **Christopher Stowell's** ongoing commitment to fostering the important relationship between music and dance. Each set of performances focuses thematically on composers from a single country or region, with **Germany/Austria, France, Russia** and the **United States** all represented on separate programs.

Season highlights include:

- The **world premiere** of Christopher Stowell's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- OBT's first performances of the work of **William Forsythe**
- A "French Dance Art" collaboration with the Portland Art Museum marked by the premiere of a new ballet set to Ravel's *Bolero*
- The revival of critically acclaimed world premieres from recent seasons, *Almost Mozart* and *Just*
- New additions to the OBT repertoire by **George Balanchine** and **Jerome Robbins**
- A rousing, Russian finale to the season, pairing **Yuri Possokhov's world-premiere** *Raymonda* with the return of Balanchine's *Rubies*

"My goal in envisioning the **Grand Tour**," said Christopher Stowell, "was to create an arc of programs that has a natural thematic flow and encourages people to get onboard for an entire season's worth of performances. What they'll witness is a sophisticated collection of varied musical styles and cultural influences." By promoting this comprehensive experience, **OREGON BALLET THEATRE** expects to add further to a subscriber base that has grown by more than 50% during the current 2006-07 season.

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Season tickets go on sale in mid-March, with subscription packages starting at under \$50. Once season ticket renewals have been processed, new subscribers will be seated on a first-come-first-served basis. For more information, contact the OBT box office at 503-2-BALLET (222-5538) or 888-9-BALLET (922-5538), or visit www.obt.org.

A Grand Tour · Oregon Ballet Theatre's 2007-08 Season

The Germanic Lands · October 13-20, 2007 · Keller Auditorium · Full Orchestra

The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude (1996)—Franz Schubert/William Forsythe—Company Premiere

Almost Mozart (2006)—W.A. Mozart/James Kudelka

A Midsummer Night's Dream (2007)—Felix Mendelssohn/Christopher Stowell—World Premiere

The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude “shoots out with cannonball force.” – *The New York Times*

United under an umbrella of Germanic composers, the season-opening program matches a significant company premiere with an ambitious new work, and revives an audience favorite. Since 1976, **William Forsythe** has created works on all of the world's major ballet companies. Noted for combining choreographic invention with unique theatrical vision, he is one of the most sought-after choreographers working in the world today. ***The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude*** is an **important addition to the OBT repertoire**. Christopher Stowell calls the ballet “21st century virtuoso pyrotechnics to show off our dancers.” **James Kudelka's *Almost Mozart*** is one of the most acclaimed OBT world premieres of the last decade. This “riveting” work (The Oregonian, 2006) juxtaposes a gorgeous Mozart score with stunning moments of complete silence. It makes its return alongside **Christopher Stowell's new telling of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*** – his first fully original narrative ballet. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will feature the work of world-renowned costume and set designer **Sandra Woodall**.

Holiday Season · December 8-24, 2007 · Keller Auditorium · Full Orchestra

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker (1954)—P.I. Tchaikovsky/George Balanchine

“The Queen of Portland's Christmas season.” – *The Oregonian*

For the fifth consecutive season, **OREGON BALLET THEATRE** offers **the only West Coast performances of America's quintessential *Nutcracker***. George Balanchine's is the gold standard *Nutcracker* performed by the New York City Ballet and just a handful of other companies east of the Mississippi. The traditional holiday classic returns in December for **18 spectacular Keller Auditorium shows**. Tickets are available exclusively to subscribers until July.

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France · February 23-March 1, 2008 · Keller Auditorium · Full Orchestra with Soprano and Chorus

Zais (2002)—Jean-Philippe Rameau/Christopher Stowell—Company Premiere

Afternoon of a Faun (1953)—Claude Debussy/Jerome Robbins—Company Premiere

A New Pas de Deux (2008)—Léo Delibes/Christopher Stowell—World Premiere

Bolero (2008)—Maurice Ravel/Choreographer TBA—World Premiere

Afternoon of a Faun is “an absolute masterpiece, worthy of a place beside the most important choreographic creations of the past and present.” – *La Nazione*, Florence

OBT’s French program brings together a collection of **four works never-before-seen on the Portland stage**. *Afternoon of a Faun* is the third **Jerome Robbins** ballet added to the repertoire during Christopher Stowell’s tenure as artistic director. It is an adoring work for a man and a woman set within a three-sided ballet studio - with the audience representing the mirrored wall in which the dancers see themselves. It is joined on the program by *Zais*, a work originally created for Pacific Northwest Ballet and danced to a Baroque composition of **Rameau**’s discovered by Stowell in the gift shop at Versailles. Upon seeing *Zais*, critic Martha Ullman West wrote in *Dance Magazine* that Stowell’s “emotion-laden, spiraling choreography” shows “acute musical sense, a sure hand with large groups of dancers, and a keen respect for the history of his art.” A pair of world-premiere works round out the program: **a duet by Stowell** in the grand style of **19th-Century Parisian ballet**, and a contemporary interpretation of **Ravel’s *Bolero*** commissioned from a noted 21st-Century choreographer.

In 2008, the Portland Art Museum will present a major exhibition of French dance art – works of paint, print and sculpture titled *The Dancer: Degas, Forain, and Toulouse-Lautrec*. Showing from February 2 - May 11, the exhibition will overlap OBT’s French program. OBT and PAM are already planning to capitalize fully upon collaborative education and outreach efforts.

America · April 18-27, 2008 · Newmark Theatre · Music: Ensembles

Through Eden’s Gates (2007)—William Bolcom/Kent Stowell

Just (2006)—Henry Cowell/Trey McIntyre

Slaughter on Tenth Avenue (1968)—Richard Rodgers/George Balanchine—Company Premiere

“Trey McIntyre’s stunning *Just* dazzled an opening night audience...Everything about the world premiere works brilliantly.” – *The Portland Tribune*

While **Trey McIntyre** was creating *Just* for OBT in 2006, he spoke of his intention to

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expose “the push, the drive, the lurch for new ideas.” The resulting work was a resounding critical success. Aislesay.com’s review, paying homage to the ballet’s daunting aerobic challenges, described it as “gymnastic in complexity...an exquisite range of lifts done with frenetic speed.” *Just* is joined on the American program by ***Through Eden’s Gates***, the 2007 world premiere created for OBT by Pacific Northwest Ballet Founding Artistic Director **Kent Stowell**. It is his first work choreographed on **OREGON BALLET THEATRE**, the company directed by his son, Christopher. To close the program, Portland’s cozy Newmark Theatre will be transformed into a **steamy 1930’s nightclub**, inhabited by **a hooper, his striptease-girl dance partner and their mobster adversaries**. Originally choreographed for the 1936 Rodgers and Hart musical *On Your Toes*, **George Balanchine’s *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*** became a stand-alone ballet in 1968. The work provides a rare opportunity for OBT’s dancers to once again display the razor-sharp **physical comedy** skills they employed to rave reviews during performances of Jerome Robbins’ *The Concert* in 2006.

Russia • June 6-8, 2008 • Keller Auditorium • Music: Ensembles

***Rubies* (1967)—Igor Stravinsky/George Balanchine**

***Tolstoy’s Waltz* (2008)—Various/Christopher Stowell—World Premiere**

***Raymonda* (2008)—Alexander Glazounov/Yuri Possokhov, after Marius Petipa—World Premiere**

“On the theatrical side, [*Rubies*] has athleticism and sassiness and an innocent sexiness. But on the technical side, it’s extremely physical” – *The Oregonian*

George Balanchine’s neo-classical masterpiece *Rubies* was the opening ballet on Christopher Stowell’s first program as OBT’s artistic director, and offered a statement of intent for the company he has now led for going on five seasons. Its return to the **OREGON BALLET THEATRE** repertoire serves as a benchmark of progress, as do the **two world premieres** with which it shares billing. **Stowell’s own *Tolstoy’s Waltz*** will be choreographed to a unique collection of piano works and songs composed by noted Russian artists and intellectuals from other fields, among them Tolstoy, Pasternak, Diaghilev and Balanchine; and the program – and season – closes with a new version of the **spectacular, 19th-Century Russian masterpiece *Raymonda***. Ex-Bolshoi star and newly named San Francisco Ballet choreographer-in-residence **Yuri Possokhov** will draw upon his roots and training to stage a one-act setting of this classic-era ballet packed with virtuoso solos, duets and ensembles. Possokhov has previously crafted ***Firebird*** and ***La Valse*** for OBT. The addition of *Raymonda* continues the expansion of the company’s repertoire of important ballet classics.

Founded in 1989, OREGON BALLET THEATRE is a not-for-profit, professional ballet company, with a school, based in Portland, Oregon. On July 1, 2003, Christopher Stowell became OREGON BALLET THEATRE’s artistic director and Damara Bennett joined OBT as school director. OREGON BALLET THEATRE offers the highest quality ballet, in a repertoire of classic and contemporary work, to the people of Oregon, the Pacific Northwest and the United States.

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