

# OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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THE NEW, THE CLASSICS, OREGON BALLET THEATRE PRESENTS

## MARTINS, TOMASSON, KENT STOWELL, *FIREBIRD AND SLEEPING BEAUTY, ACT III*

**2006-2007 Season Highlights Includes Three World Premiere Ballets, Four Portland Premieres, and the return of *Eyes on You, il nodo* and *Adin***

PORTLAND, Ore. (March 14, 2006) – OREGON BALLET THEATRE announces its 2006-2007 Season, the fourth under Artistic Director **Christopher Stowell**. The season is an exciting mix of returning works and important new ballets from contemporary masters of the art.

The season features

- The **Portland Premieres** of ballets by **Peter Martins** and **Helgi Tomasson**, and a **World Premiere** by **Kent Stowell**.
- **Company Premieres** of works by **George Balanchine** and **Jerome Robbins**
- The return of **Christopher Stowell's *Eyes on You*** and ***Adin***
- An encore presentation of ***il nodo*** by **Julia Adam**
- OBT's delightful production of ***George Balanchine's The Nutcracker***<sup>TM</sup>

Once again the schedule adds a fifth program with an early summer presentation of two beloved classics: OBT's magical ***Firebird*** and the spectacular third act of ***Sleeping Beauty***.

Christopher Stowell remarks, "As OBT continues to develop, the creative options we have to explore have expanded greatly. We have the honor of working with three renowned choreographers, we're able to take on higher level of challenge from Balanchine and Robbins, and, since we invested well in original works, we're proud to have them return to the repertory."

Tickets go on sale in April, with subscription packages starting at under \$50. For more information, contact the OBT box office: 503-2-BALLET (222-5538) or 888-9-BALLET (922-5538).

**Fall Program • October 14-21, 2006 • Keller Auditorium • Full Orchestra**

*Stowell's choreography (for Anne Mueller and Karl Vakili) skews the lines, loosens the canters and maximizes the pair's comedic gifts. - The Oregonian, 2004*

The season opens with a **company premiere** of George Balanchine's 1946 work ***The Four Temperaments***, Christopher Stowell's ***Adin***, and the company premiere of Jerome Robbins' ballet, ***The Concert***. The inaugural program of the season is, appropriately, a celebration of "firsts." ***The Four Temperaments***, set to music commissioned by Balanchine from Paul Hindemith, was a major new work on the first program of Ballet Society, forerunner of the New York City Ballet. "***The Four Temperaments*** is a piece that we weren't ready for until now. It makes demands of a large cast, requiring every dancer to be in top form," notes Christopher

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Stowell. In 2004, *Adin* was both Christopher Stowell's first ballet choreographed on OBT's dancers and the first world premiere presented under his leadership as the company's Artistic Director. Music Director Niel DePonte created new orchestrations for three of the four Rachmaninov songs for *Adin*. Considered by many to be the funniest ballet ever choreographed, *The Concert* was Robbins' first set to the music of Chopin. Displaying the wit and levity that made Robbins a favorite on Broadway, *The Concert* is a hilarious look into the wandering minds of an audience at a piano recital. "The roles in this ballet are wonderfully over-the-top – the husband and wife, the off-balance ballerina, the music aficionado – it's a great opportunity for our dancers to play characters," said Christopher Stowell. As promised, *The Concert* also moves forward Christopher Stowell's addition of Robbins' works into the OREGON BALLET THEATRE repertoire.

**George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*™ • December 8-24, 2006 • Keller Auditorium • Full Orchestra**

*"...the queen of Portland's Christmas Season."* – **The Oregonian, 2004**

OBT's production of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*™ brings glorious visions of the Sugarplum Fairy, Marzipan, and other confections to the awed appreciation of ballet goes near and far. And who will surprise us with a special appearance this year?

**Winter Program • March 3-10, 2007 • Keller Auditorium**

*"This meditative trio...has an aura of genuine purity about it. The lines of the choreography are clear and clean, and a sense of quiet searching marks Hubbe's partnering of each woman in turn...The generous space between the partners allows each one to move with dignity and self-possession. It's another perspective on intimacy entirely."* - **New York Magazine, 2004**, of Peter Martins' *Eros Piano*

OREGON BALLET THEATRE's Winter Program brings to Portland the works of three choreographers who, at the helms of this country's most important companies, have shaped American ballet over the past 30 years. OBT presents the **company premiere** of *Ash* by Peter Martins, New York City Ballet's renowned Ballet Master in Chief, a **company premiere** of *Blue Rose* by Helgi Tomasson, artistic director of the San Francisco Ballet and a **world premiere New Work** by Kent Stowell, former artistic director of Pacific Northwest Ballet.

**Spring Program • April 27-May 5, 2007 • the Newmark Theatre**

*"Eyes on You bristles with a sleek and lively sense of fun but never forgets it's a ballet... it affectionately tweaks the pleasures of the movie house and the Broadway chorus line, revisiting and revising Porter's own playfulness as it goes along... it's delovely.."* – **The Oregonian, 2005**

The intimate setting of the Newmark Theatre is perfect for the simple clarity of *Apollo*, one of George Balanchine's earliest works, the energetic, intersecting lines of Julia Adam's *il nodo* and the return of Christopher Stowell's acclaimed *Eyes on You*. In a **company premiere**, OREGON BALLET THEATRE performs *Apollo*, an audacious ballet by the 24-year-old genius that took 1920's Paris by storm. The work, presented here with its "birth" section, is also notable for its rare focus on the male dancer. "I felt the time was right for OBT to take on this essential work, as we have both literally and figuratively added manpower," comments Christopher Stowell. Of *il nodo*'s arrival in 2004 on OBT's Spring Program, *The Oregonian* proclaimed, "Adam trumps the field, reaching back further than anyone to create the most forward-looking dance..." An instant success, last year's premiere of *Eyes on You* had audience members bursting into song, so be prepared for a similar reaction as they take in this joyously-rendered, expertly-executed pairing of dance and the tunes of Cole Porter.

**Early Summer Program • June 8-10, 2007 • Keller Auditorium • Full Orchestra**

*“Possokhov’s Firebird...is a charming “storybook” production with the feel of a Persian miniature.” - Dance Magazine, October 2004*

The fifth and final program of the season will captivate audiences with a pair of spellbinding ballets: Yuri Possokhov’s *Firebird*, created for OREGON BALLET THEATRE, set to Stravinsky’s 1945 suite and *Sleeping Beauty, Act III*, a world premiere with choreography by Christopher Stowell after Marius Petipa. *Sleeping Beauty* was the first collaboration of Petipa and the incomparable Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky. OBT audiences will be transported by the power and fantasy of the program, sure to be the talk of the town, from the delicate first encounter of The Firebird with Ivan through the sumptuous spectacle of Princess Aurora and Prince Florimund’s royal wedding.

Live music has been a part of every OBT program since Christopher Stowell became Artistic Director in July 2003, and this season is no exception. The full OBT Orchestra, led by **Music Director Neil DePonte**, will accompany the Fall Program, *George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker™*, *Firebird* and *Sleeping Beauty, Act III*, and soloist musicians will be featured in the Winter and Spring Programs.

As it has for the past 12 years, the OBT season officially begins in August with “OBT Exposed,” **free**, under-a-tent rehearsals in downtown’s South Park Blocks.

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 the company 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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2006-2007 Season  
Oregon Ballet Theatre  
Christopher Stowell, Artistic Director

Keller Auditorium (2292 seats), 222 SW Clay at Third  
Newmark Theatre (880 seats), 1111 SW Broadway at Main  
OBT box office/studio, 818 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
503-2-BALLET (222-5538) • 888-9-BALLET • obt.org

**OBT Exposed! • August 2006 • South Park Blocks • Free**

**Fall Program • October 14 – 21, 2006 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra**

*The Four Temperaments* (1946) George Balanchine – **Company premiere**  
*Theme with Four Variations (According to the Four Temperaments)*, for string orchestra and piano, Paul Hindemith, commissioned by Balanchine

*Adin* (2004) Christopher Stowell  
Four songs by Sergei Rachmaninov. Three orchestrated by Niel DePonte

*The Concert* (1956) Jerome Robbins – **Company premiere**  
Chopin, solo pianist

**George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™ • December 8 – 24, 2006 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra**

**Winter Program • March 3 – 10, 2007 • Keller Auditorium**

*Ash* (1991) Peter Martins - **Company premiere**  
*Blue Rose* (2006) A Helgi Tomasson - **Company premiere**  
**A Kent Stowell Ballet** **World premiere**

**Spring Program • April 27 – May 5, 2007 • Newmark Theatre**

*Apollo* (1928) George Balanchine – **Company premiere**  
Igor Stravinsky

*il nodo* (2004) Julia Adam  
Renaissance dances

*Eyes on You* (2005) Christopher Stowell  
Cole Porter, soprano and pianist

**Early Summer Program • June 8 – 10, 2007 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra**

*Firebird* (2004) Yuri Possokhov  
Igor Stravinsky

*Sleeping Beauty, Act III* (1890) Christopher Stowell after Marius Petipa – **World premiere**  
Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky

## THE CHOREOGRAPHERS, 2006 – 2007

One of the world's most sought after young choreographers, Canadian-born **JULIA ADAM** has created award-winning works for institutions and companies including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, Alberta Ballet, The American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, OBT and Atlanta Ballet. In 2001, San Francisco Ballet performed her critically acclaimed *Night* at the Palais Garnier in Paris and at London's Royal Opera House. Ms. Adam had a premiere in February 2004 with the Nashville Ballet, set to country music, and another with Houston Ballet, danced to klezmer music. In May of that year, she created the Renaissance songs-inspired *il nodo* for OBT. During its 2005-2006 season, OBT performed her bittersweet 2002 dance *Angelo*. Ms. Adam's works are renowned for their clever use of music and whimsical playfulness.

Widely regarded as the foremost choreographer in 20<sup>th</sup> Century ballet, **GEORGE BALANCHINE** was at the helm of the New York City Ballet from its creation in 1948 until his death in 1983. He was born in St. Petersburg in 1904 and danced and choreographed in Europe until co-founding the School of American Ballet in New York in 1934. This eventually led to the formation of the prestigious New York City Ballet and the creation of hundreds of diverse works including *Jewels*, *Serenade*, *Concerto Barocco*, *Apollo*, *The Four Temperaments* and *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*. His ballets have become a part of nearly every major company's repertory.

Danish-born **PETER MARTINS** has spent more than 30 years with the New York City Ballet as a dancer, choreographer and Ballet Master in Chief. During his career as a dancer, from which he retired in 1983, Mr. Martins danced roles ranging in style from Balanchine to Alexandra Danilova's version of the 19th-century classic *Coppelia*. In 1981, he assumed the position of Ballet Master at the New York City Ballet, a title he shared with George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins and John Taras. Mr. Martins and Jerome Robbins served as Co-Ballet Masters in Chief from 1983 to 1989, with Mr. Martins assuming sole directorship in 1990. Mr. Martins choreographed his first ballet, *Calcium Light Night*, set to several pieces by Charles Ives, in 1977. He has since created more than 75 ballets – primarily for the New York City Ballet – ranging from pas de deux to large scale pieces, set to music by composers as diverse as Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, George Gershwin and Michael Torke.

**MARIUS PETIPA** (1822-1910) has been called "the father of classical ballet." As ballet master of the Tsar's Imperial Ballet of St. Petersburg Russia from 1862 until 1905, he laid the foundations for modern classical ballet and the Russian school of classical dance. He was the creator of over 100 ballets, some of which have survived and have remained cornerstones of the modern classical ballet repertoire.

After receiving his training at the Moscow Ballet School, **YURI POSSOKHOV** danced for ten years with the Bolshoi Ballet and two with the Royal Danish Ballet. In 1994, he joined San Francisco Ballet as a principal dancer. He has danced numerous major roles throughout his career, ranging in style from classical to contemporary, and also organized and performed in a ten-city, Russian tour in 1997 entitled "Ballet Beyond Borders." His *Magritomania*, a work inspired by the paintings of René Magritte, premiered in March 2000 at San Francisco Ballet and garnered him the 2001 Isadora Duncan Award for Outstanding Choreography. It has since been added to the Bolshoi Ballet's repertoire. His other works for San Francisco Ballet include *Damned*, *Studies in Motion*, and *Reflections*. Mr. Possokhov has created two works for OBT: *Firebird* in 2004 and *La Valse* in 2005.

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**JEROME ROBBINS** received world renown as a choreographer of ballets created for the New York City Ballet, Ballets U.S.A., American Ballet Theatre and other international companies. He received equal kudos for his work on Broadway in commercial theater and as a director of musicals, plays, movies and television programs. This dual interest produced a staggering number of ballets and stagings of musical plays, notable for their diversity, brilliance, lyric beauty and humor. His work is characterized by the intensity and compactness of its expression, its wide variety of mood - be it rhapsodic, introspective, poignant or hilarious. He had the ability to make the most complex movement appear effortless, and totally reflective of the musical score, as if it were created spontaneously for that exact period of time. OBT includes Mr. Robbin's *In the Night* in its repertoire.

**CHRISTOPHER STOWELL** is OREGON BALLET THEATRE's second artistic director. He was trained at the Pacific Northwest Ballet School and the School of American Ballet (New York City Ballet's school). He joined San Francisco Ballet in 1985. As a principal dancer, his repertoire included leading roles in the full-length ballets *Romeo and Juliet*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Othello*, as well as in many of the works of George Balanchine. He had roles created for him by William Forsythe, Mark Morris, Helgi Tomasson and James Kudelka. Mr. Stowell has also appeared in theaters throughout the world including the Palais Garnier in Paris, Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. He has created new works for San Francisco Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Diablo Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and the New York City Ballet Choreographic Institute. For OREGON BALLET THEATRE, Christopher Stowell created *Eyes on You*, *Adin*, and *The Impending Hour*, and the company has performed his *Opus 50*. He has also staged works by George Balanchine and Mark Morris.

**KENT STOWELL** is the former Artistic Director and Principal Choreographer of Pacific Northwest Ballet, positions he held from 1977 to 2005. He began his dance training with Willam Christensen at the University of Utah, later joining San Francisco Ballet and, in 1962, New York City Ballet. In 1970, he joined the Munich Opera Ballet as a leading dancer and choreographer. In 1973 Mr. Stowell was appointed Ballet Master and Choreographer of Frankfurt Ballet and was named, with Francia Russell, Co-Artistic Director of the Company in 1975. His contributions to Pacific Northwest Ballet's repertoire include *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *Nutcracker*, *Dumbarton Oaks*, *Carmina Burana*, *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, *Duo Fantasy*, *Silver Lining* and *Firebird*. Mr. Stowell was honored by the University of Utah with its Lifetime Achievement Award and has received numerous other awards including the Washington State Governor's Award and the Dance Magazine Award. In 2003, he received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Seattle University. In 2004 Stowell and Russell received the Seattle ArtsFund annual Lifetime Achievement in the Arts award.

Since his appointment to the position of artistic director in 1985, **HELGI TOMASSON** has developed San Francisco Ballet from a regional troupe to a world-class company, praised for its diversity and broad repertory. Tomasson was first discovered by Jerome Robbins in his native Iceland and offered a dance scholarship to New York's School of American Ballet. Subsequently, he began his professional career with The Joffrey Ballet, The Harkness Ballet, and later joined New York City Ballet where he became one of the company's most celebrated principal dancers. Tomasson has choreographed over 30 works, and his numerous awards include being named Officier in the French Order of Arts and Letters for contributing to further the arts in France and worldwide. In 2002 he received an honorary degree from New York's Julliard School.

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