

# OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 14, 2008

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## OREGON BALLET THEATRE'S 2008-09 SEASON TO OPEN WITH THE RETURN OF *SWAN LAKE*

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Portland, Ore... **Oregon Ballet Theatre** announced today that its **2008-09 season** will open in October with the return of the company's popular production of *Swan Lake*. Artistic Director **Christopher Stowell**'s retelling of the iconic classical story ballet premiered in 2006 to critical acclaim and a four-show run of completely sold out houses. In anticipation of an even higher demand for tickets this fall, a fifth performance of the work has been added to the 2008-09 schedule.

OBT's season will again be comprised of five programs between October and June, four of which will be performed in Portland's Keller Auditorium and the fifth in the intimate, 900-seat Newmark Theatre.

In addition to *Swan Lake*, season highlights include:

- A **world-premiere** by **James Kudelka** whose *Almost Mozart* has become of the signature works in OBT's active repertoire.
- **Christopher Stowell**'s all-new *The Rite of Spring* set to a stunning, dual-piano arrangement of the powerful Stravinsky score.
- The **company premiere** of **Val Caniparoli's Lambarena**, famous for its ingenious fusion of Bach and ballet with traditional African music and dance.
- A tribute to **Jerome Robbins**, featuring the **company premiere** of *The Cage*.
- New additions to the repertoire by **George Balanchine** and **Nicolo Fonte**.
- **Christopher Wheeldon's Rush**, the work OBT takes to Washington D.C. this June for the company's **Kennedy Center** debut.
- The nation's only West Coast performances of **George Balanchine's The Nutcracker**, now in its sixth season at OBT.

"Our new season runs the gamut, from some of our most popular existing works to an important new addition from James Kudelka and a celebration of the American master, Jerry Robbins," said Artistic Director Christopher Stowell. "It demonstrates that OBT is

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building on past success while pushing forward with new goals and also acknowledging our place in the wider world of ballet.”

OBT announces the 2008-09 season at a point when ticket revenue is at an all-time high. With just two of the current season’s five programs completed, sales have nearly eclipsed the **final** total from last year. Despite the added *Swan Lake* performance, tickets to October’s season-opening program are expected to be in short supply by the time they go on sale to the general public.

**Season tickets for 2008-09 are available today**, with four-program subscription packages that include *Swan Lake* starting at \$51. Individual performance tickets are available exclusively to subscribers until July 7<sup>th</sup>. To purchase season tickets, contact the OBT box office at 503-2-BALLET (222-5538) or 888-9-BALLET (922-5538), or visit [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org).

## Oregon Ballet Theatre’s 2008-09 Season

### **Swan Lake · October 11-18, 2008 · Keller Auditorium · Full Orchestra**

*Swan Lake* (2006)—Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky / Christopher Stowell (after Petipa and Ivanov)

“A production that sparkled.” – *Dance Magazine*

“The art soars.” – *The Oregonian*

A heart-wrenching fable of true love heroically won and tragically squandered.

*Swan Lake* is classical theatricality at it’s thrilling best. Virtuoso solos, an achingly beautiful score, and a majestic corps de ballet in brilliant white are all emblematic of the opulent grandeur of the greatest of all 19<sup>th</sup>-Century story ballets.

*Swan Lake* was OBT’s first full-length classic under Christopher Stowell’s artistic direction. It features the entire company, along with apprentices and students from the School of OBT.

### **Holiday Season · December 12-24, 2008 · Keller Auditorium · Full Orchestra**

*George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker* (1954)—Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky / George Balanchine

“ . . . A masterpiece of construction that repays endless viewings.” – *The New York Times*

For the sixth consecutive season, Oregon Ballet Theatre offers **the only West Coast performances of America’s quintessential *Nutcracker***. George Balanchine’s is the

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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 **16 spectacular Keller Auditorium shows.**

**Lambarena • February 21-28, 2009 • Keller Auditorium**

*Ash* (1991)—Michael Torke / Peter Martins

*The Rite of Spring* (2009)—Igor Stravinsky / Christopher Stowell—World Premiere

*Lambarena* (1994)—J.S. Bach and Traditional African Music / Val Caniparoli—Company Premiere

“Whipsaw athleticism” —*The Oregonian* (on *Ash*)

“...[Lambarena is] a bold and heady cocktail of classical ballet and West African dance forms...this piece breaks all the rules while simultaneously revitalizing classical ballet’s canonized repertory.” — *Cincinnati City Beat*

*Lambarena*’s irresistible fusion of Bach and traditional African songs have made it an international sensation. It’s the third ballet by the remarkable Val Caniparoli to enter the OBT repertoire, and the first since 1992. The February program pairs it with Peter Martins’ exhilarating *Ash*, and a Christopher Stowell world premiere set to the jagged, percussive rhythms of a two-piano arrangement of Igor Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*.

**Left Unsaid • April 17-26, 2009 • Newmark Theatre**

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

*Left Unsaid* (2003)—J. S. Bach / Nicolo Fonte—Company Premiere

*Tarantella* (1964)—Louis Moreau Gottschalk / George Balanchine—Company Premiere

*A New Work* (2009)—James Kudelka—World Premiere

“*Left Unsaid*, to pieces for solo cello by Bach, suggested [Fonte] is a choreographer worth knowing.” – *The New York Times*

“[Kudelka is] the most imaginative voice to come out of ballet in the last decade.” — *The New York Times*

The annual Newmark Theatre performances include an emotionally charged OBT premiere by Nicolo Fonte, the choreographer of the company’s new *Bolero*, plus the whirlwind force of William Forsythe’s *The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude* and Balanchine’s flirtatiously energetic *Tarantella*. The program’s exclamation point is a

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major world premiere by James Kudelka – the choreographer of *Almost Mozart* who in 2007, with “impeccable craftsmanship” and “inventive, technical twists,” left Portland audiences and critics alike “breathless in his wake.” (Willamette Week)

**Rush + Robbins · June 5-7, 2009 · Keller Auditorium · Full Orchestra**

*Rush* (1967)—Bohuslav Martinu / Christopher Wheeldon

*Afternoon of a Faun* (2008)—Claude Debussy / Jerome Robbins

*The Cage* (2008)—Igor Stravinsky / Jerome Robbins—Company Premiere

*The Concert* (2008)—Frederic Chopin / Jerome Robbins

“It would be impossible to imagine American dance or the musical theater in the second half of the 20th century without Robbins.” – *Variety*

“A giant of ballet and Broadway.” – *The New York Times*

“America's first great native-born ballet choreographer.” – *Time Magazine*

The season closes with four Portland performances of *Rush*, the Christopher Wheeldon masterpiece that OBT takes to Washington D.C. this June for the company’s Kennedy Center debut. The program also pays tribute to the memory of a true American icon in Jerome Robbins. From the lighthearted comic genius of *The Concert* to the dark and savage romanticism of *The Cage*, the works display the full range of both the choreographer’s unsurpassed brilliance and the dancers’ versatility.

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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