

OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 6, 2007

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OREGON BALLET THEATRE INVITED TO MAKE KENNEDY CENTER DEBUT

Portland, Ore., and Washington, D.C.... Today in the nation's capital, Michael M. Kaiser, President of the **John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**, announced that **OREGON BALLET THEATRE** has been invited to make its **Kennedy Center debut in June of 2008**. OBT is one of nine major United States companies selected to participate in *Ballet Across America*, a six-day festival exploring the breadth of the art form and showcasing ballet from both coasts as well as the heartland.

"We're thrilled to present the Kennedy Center debut of **OREGON BALLET THEATRE** as part of our *Ballet Across America* festival," said **Kristen Brogdon, the center's Director of Dance Programming**. "OBT has been making waves in the ballet world with its performances of American classics and new works, and now Washington, D.C., audiences will have the opportunity to see this exciting West Coast company."

OBT will perform twice during the festival, sharing the stage June 13th and 15th with Boston Ballet and Chicago's Joffrey Ballet. Also scheduled to perform are Pennsylvania Ballet, Seattle's Pacific Northwest Ballet, Houston Ballet, Salt Lake City's Ballet West, Kansas City Ballet and the Washington Ballet. OBT is the smallest and youngest of the companies invited to participate.

"On the eve of our own 20th Anniversary, we are honored to have been chosen to perform alongside some of this country's most venerable ballet companies," said **OBT Artistic Director Christopher Stowell**. "The Kennedy Center is in several ways the national theater. Many memorable performances have occurred there, and we look forward to contributing to that legacy."

"OBT's invite puts Portland literally on one of the world's most prestigious stages," said **Sam Adams, Portland's Commissioner for the Arts and Culture**. "It will be a huge benefit to the city."

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Stowell announced that OBT will perform a work by **Christopher Wheeldon**, the acclaimed New York City Ballet resident choreographer who earlier this year revealed his plans to step down from that post in order to form his own New York-based company. OBT previously performed Wheeldon's *There Where She Loved* during its 2003-04 season.

“OBT’s Kennedy Center debut provides an auspicious occasion for us to renew our relationship with one of the world’s most celebrated contemporary choreographers,” said Stowell. “Our Washington performances will not only expose us to a national audience but will also expand our repertoire in a very significant way.”

The complete *Ballet Across America* schedule is as follows:

June 10-15, 2008 – Kennedy Center Opera House

Program A (June 10 & 11) features Ballet West in George Balanchine's *Serenade*, Pennsylvania Ballet in Jerome Robbins' *In the Night* and Houston Ballet in Stanton Welch's *Velocity*. Program B (June 12 & 14) features Pacific Northwest Ballet in Nacho Duato's *Jardi Tancat*, Kansas City Ballet in Todd Bolender's *The Still Point* and The Washington Ballet in a work by Twyla Tharp. Program C (June 13 & 15) features Boston Ballet in a new work by Jorma Elo, Joffrey Ballet in Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden* and Oregon Ballet Theater in a work by Christopher Wheeldon.

Ballet Across America is made possible through the generosity of the Charles E. Smith Family Foundation.

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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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