

OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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OREGON BALLET THEATRE TO CLOSE 20TH-ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH DANCE UNITED 2010 AND THE RETURN OF *BOLERO*

Portland, Ore... Oregon Ballet Theatre's 20th-Anniversary season will close in dramatic fashion this June with two separate programs and five performances over one long early-summer weekend. Thursday, **June 3rd**, OBT will reprise its successful **DANCE UNITED** benefit from last year. In June of 2009, the first DANCE UNITED brought together artists from across the continent and Portland to raise funds necessary to keep the company solvent. With last season's financial crisis averted and Oregon Ballet Theatre well on its way to recovery, DANCE UNITED 2010 returns as a celebration of OBT's first two decades in Portland. The 90-minute gala program will serve as the company's major fundraiser for the year and will feature a preview of **Oregon Ballet Theatre's** new full-length *The Sleeping Beauty*, which will premiere in October. The program also boasts dancers from **The Australian Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, Miami City Ballet** and **San Francisco Ballet**. A separately ticketed VIP onstage after-party will follow the performance.

Beginning the evening of **June 4th**, Oregon Ballet Theatre will return to the stage for a three day run of its final repertory series of the 2009-10 season. OBT's **summer program** will revive the company's dramatic and popular interpretation of Maurice Ravel's signature score, the enchanting *Bolero*. Choreographed by the Brooklyn-based **Nicolo Fonte**, OBT's *Bolero* was a standout hit when it premiered in 2008 and has since been taken into the repertoire of the Washington Ballet in the nation's capitol. It's joined on the program by two additional works created specifically for OBT: San Francisco Ballet Resident Choreographer **Yuri Possokhov's** opulently Russian *Raymonda*, and *Hush*, a work choreographed for OBT in 2009 by **James Kudelka** to a dreamlike score for two harps.

Performances of both **DANCE UNITED 2010** and **Bolero** will take place at **Keller Auditorium**, at SW 3rd and Clay:

DANCE UNITED 2010: Thursday, June 3rd, at 7:00 p.m.

Bolero: Friday, June 4th, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, June 5th, at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, June 5th, at 2:00 p.m.

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Tickets start at \$50 for Dance United 2010 and \$17 for Bolero.

Online: www.obt.org / www.ticketmaster.com

By Phone: 503-2-BALLET (503-222-5538) or 888-9-BALLET (888-922-5538)

In Person: OBT Box Office, 818 SE Sixth Ave., M-F 9am-5pm / Ticketmaster Outlets

Bolero is sponsored by **The Standard**.

Support for the 2009-10 season is provided by **KINK.fm**, **The Paramount Hotel**, **200 Market Building**, **Rex Hill Winery**, **Geranium Lake Flowers** and **All Classical 89.9**.

Media support for **DANCE UNITED 2010** is provided by **KINK.fm** and **The Oregonian**.

DANCE UNITED 2010

The Australian Ballet

Act III pas de deux from *The Sleeping Beauty*

Composer: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreographer: Marius Petipa

Dancers: Stephanie Williams
 Andrew Wright

Dutch National Ballet

Two

Composer: Ferruccio Busoni

Choreographer: Hans Van Manen

Dancers: Maia Makhateli
 Felipe Diaz Gomez

San Francisco Ballet

Pas de Deux from *Quaternary*

Composer: Arvo Pärt

Choreographer: Christopher Wheeldon

Lighting Recreation: Michael Mazzola

Dancers: Muriel Maffre
 Damian Smith

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The Joffrey Ballet

Sea Shadow

Music: Piano Concerto in G, 2nd (Adagio) Movement

Composer: Maurice Ravel

Choreographer: Gerald Arpino

Dancers: Victoria Jaiani
Temur Suluasvilli

Miami City Ballet

Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux

Music: Original music for the pas de deux from Act III of *Swan Lake**

Composer: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreographer: George Balanchine

Dancers: Jeanette Delgado
Renato Penteadó

*The music for this pas de deux was originally intended for the pas de deux in Act III of *Swan Lake*. Because it was not published with the rest of the score, it remained unknown to Petipa and Ivanov when they were preparing to stage the St. Petersburg version. They substituted music from Act I, which became the famous "Black Swan Pas de Deux." The music lay unnoticed in the Tchaikovsky Museum in Klin until it was discovered by the efforts of the Tchaikovsky Foundation of New York.

Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux, a Balanchine® Ballet, is presented by arrangement with The George Balanchine Trust and has been produced in accordance with the Balanchine Technique® Service standards established and provided by the Trust.

Oregon Ballet Theatre

“The Rose Adagio” from *The Sleeping Beauty*

Composer: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreographer: Christopher Stowell after Marius Petipa

Excerpt from *Bolero*

Composer: Maurice Ravel

Choreography: Nicolo Fonte

Excerpt from *Raymonda*

Music: *Raymonda*, Op. 57

Composer: Alexander Glazounov

Choreography: Yuri Possokhov after Petipa

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Oregon Ballet Theatre's Summer Program, "Bolero" – June 4-6

Raymonda

Music: Alexander Glazounov - *Raymonda, Op. 57*

Choreography: Yuri Possokhov, after Marius Petipa

Costume Design: Mark Zappone

Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

World Premiere: June 6, 2008, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Keller Auditorium, Portland

Marius Petipa's *Raymonda* was first performed at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in 1898, when Petipa was 80 years old. Following the success of *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake* it proved to be the choreographer's final masterpiece. Despite a story considered to be, in the words of British dance writer Clement Crisp, both "inane and incomprehensible," major ballet companies around the world have mounted both abbreviated and full-length versions of *Raymonda* since its creation. "The truth is that *Raymonda* has endured in various versions less because of its thin-soup story than because of its glorious ballet score by Glazounov and because Petipa poured a cornucopia of high-style classical choreography and character dancing into the three-act original," wrote Anna Kisselgoff in *The New York Times* in 2004.

Yuri Possokhov's staging of the ballet, created for Oregon Ballet Theatre in 2008, only hints at the underlying story, focusing instead on its wealth of virtuoso dancing. "The base of this *Raymonda* is the famous *Grand Pas Classique* from the Third Act," said Possokhov. "For a ballerina, *Raymonda* is one of the richest roles existing in classical ballet. She has tons of variations [i.e. solos]; it's one of the hardest roles."

After receiving his dance training at the Moscow Ballet School, **Yuri Possokhov** danced with the Bolshoi Ballet for ten years, working primarily with Ballet Master Yuri Grigorovich. He joined the Royal Danish Ballet in 1992 and performed there for two years before moving west to join San Francisco Ballet as a principal dancer. Mr. Possokhov has danced numerous major roles throughout his career, ranging in style from classical to contemporary. In 1999, he organized a tour entitled "Ballet Beyond Borders," where sixteen dancers from SFB, including Mr. Possokhov and Christopher Stowell, performed in more than ten cities throughout Russia.

As a choreographer, Mr. Possokhov's credits include *Songs of Spain*, choreographed in 1997 for SFB Principal Dancer Muriel Maffre, *A Duet for Two* created the same year for SFB Principal Dancer Joanna Berman, and *Impromptu Scriabin* for former SFB Soloist Felipe Diaz, performed at the 1997 Jackson International Ballet Competition. In 2000, Mr. Possokhov completed a new work for a dancer at the Maryinsky Ballet and that same year choreographed *5 Mazurkas* for the Marin Dance Theatre.

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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. Mr. Possokhov's ballet *Damned*, based on the Euripides' play *Medea*, premiered in 2002. In 2003 he collaborated with SFB Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson on a new staging of *Don Quixote*. He has created three works for OBT: *Firebird* in 2004, *La Valse* in 2005 and *Raymonda* in 2008.

In 2006, Mr. Possokhov choreographed a new *Cinderella* for the Bolshoi Ballet. The work premiered in Moscow and was subsequently performed by the company in London and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Hush

Music: *Etudes 1-7 for solo harp; dances for solo harp*

Composer: Rodney Sharman

Choreography: James Kudelka

Costume Design: Christine Darch

Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

Harpists: Rita Costanzi and Auna Selberg

World Premiere: April 17, 2009, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Newmark Theatre, Portland

James Kudelka's *Hush* is set to harp compositions by the Canadian composer Rodney Sharman: seven etudes written as exercises for Celtic harp students, several pieces composed for pedal harpist Rita Costanzi, and a transition piece created especially for this ballet. The Celtic harp etudes have a clear rhythmic base and a straightforward structure, while those for the pedal harp have a delicate, shifting transparency that leaves them nearly devoid of rhythmic or melodic clues. "The predictability of the etudes," said Kudelka, "transferred in my mind to an ordered world, while the pedal harp pieces suggest a more complicated one. To me, that transferred into childhood and adulthood. *Hush* took on an arc that goes from childhood through adulthood to the end of life."

The creative process for a work like *Hush* is quite different than for a full-length narrative ballet. "This gives me an opportunity to be more abstract, to celebrate dance as poetry," Kudelka said. "Though a lot of work goes into preparation, rather than having a concrete plan, each day I go into the studio and ask, 'Where will my art take me today?' Preconceived ideas are only little signposts along the way."

In Kudelka's new work, the harpists perform on stage alongside a cast of 21 dancers. Their placement implies an ascending journey, and their instruments energize the dance space and the choreography. Kudelka said he hopes that audiences will approach *Hush* the way he created it, "as a meditation on the transience of life. I think this is how the power of dance best reveals itself."

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James Kudelka is widely acknowledged as one of North America's most innovative choreographers. His mastery of both classical ballet and modern/contemporary dance has earned him commissions from companies—some 20 in all—as stylistically diverse as American Ballet Theatre, Chicago's Hubbard Street Dance and Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal.

Even as a student at Canada's National Ballet School Kudelka demonstrated a choreographic interest in exploring innovative approaches. While adept in the classical ballet vocabulary he infuses it with a contemporary sensibility acquired from his intense interest in modern movement idioms.

Kudelka's work covers an impressive range, from virtuoso pas de deux, through large-scale and always arresting adaptations of such classics as *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *Cinderella*, to boldly innovative creative collaborations with dancers, designers and musicians. Kudelka has never been afraid to tackle psychologically challenging subject matter in his story ballets—he views dance as a primary medium of artistic discourse—and through his gift for movement metaphor infuses poetic, emotional meaning into his many non-narrative works. After nine distinguished years as artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada (1996-2005) James Kudelka continues to undertake collaborative projects that engage and challenge him as a choreographer.

Bolero

Music: Maurice Ravel – *Bolero*

Choreography: Nicolo Fonte

Costume Design: Mark Zappone

Lighting and Scenic Design: Michael Mazzola

Sound Design: Duane Rodakowski

World Premiere: February 23, 2008, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Keller Auditorium, Portland

Ravel composed the music to *Bolero* for the Ida Rubenstein Ballet in 1928. Over a relentlessly repeated snare drum rhythm, he placed a plaintive melody. “Don't you think this theme has an insistent quality?” wrote the composer. “I'm going to try and repeat it a number of times without any development, gradually increasing the orchestra as best I can.”

The result is *Bolero's* long and gradual crescendo, achieved through masterful orchestration. “The music is so unremitting that it could be restrictive,” said choreographer Nicolo Fonte, “but it doesn't have to be. I can follow the music rhythmically, or I can break it up as much as I want. Either way, the continuity of the music doesn't change. That makes for very interesting dynamics on stage.”

When Ravel envisioned a ballet to *Bolero*, he imagined a factory-like stage setting in keeping with the repetitive nature of the music. Nicolo Fonte and designer Michael

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Mazzola abstracted that idea for this production, Fonte's first work for OBT. Corrugated metal panels, suspended in the stage space and hit with angular light, echo the mechanical character of the music. "The panels are metaphorical for me," Fonte said, "like having our guards up. As the music gets richer and stronger, we become more open. The panels fly out, the dancing becomes freer, we reveal more of who we are as people. How interesting that I'm using a very mechanical piece of music to explore something basic about what it is to be human: Can we let our guards down? And what might happen if we do?"

Choreographer **Nicolo Fonte** is known for his daring and original approach to dance. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he studied at the Joffrey Ballet School as well as at the San Francisco Ballet and New York City Ballet Schools. Upon completing a Bachelor Degree of Fine Arts at SUNY Purchase, he danced with Peridance in NYC and later joined Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal. Fonte subsequently joined Nacho Duato's Compañía Nacional de Danza in Madrid and forged a strong identity in the Spanish company for seven years - for both his dancing and his choreography. *En los Segundos Ocultos*, (*In Hidden Seconds*), one of three ballets Fonte made for the Spanish company, was hailed as a breakthrough work of great impact with the poetic vision of a mature artist and indeed this ballet established his presence on the European dance scene.

In 2000 Fonte retired from performing to devote himself full-time to his choreographic career. Since then he has created or staged his ballets for prominent companies all over the world. While working with the Göteborg Ballet in Sweden he created his first full-length ballet, *Re: Tchaikovsky*, based on the life of the composer. The work appeared on the "Best of 2005" lists of both Ballett-Tanz and Dance Europe. Fonte also received a Choo San Goh award for his 2002 collaboration with Pacific Northwest Ballet, *Almost Tango*. In addition, he has created six highly successful works for Aspen Santa Fe Ballet that have toured throughout the US and overseas.

Fonte continues to pursue a career that keeps him involved with some of the most dynamic companies on both sides of the Atlantic. In July of 2009 he premiered his first work for Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, the critically acclaimed *Quiet Bang*, and in September created the equally well-received *Record of Joy*, his second work for Het Nationale Ballet in Holland. *Made Man*, inspired by Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and Fonte's fourth creation for The Royal Ballet of Flanders, premiered this past March in Antwerp and was met with ecstatic reviews and public response.

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Oregon Ballet Theatre's 2009-2010 Season

“Emerald Retrospective”

October 10-17, 2009 • Keller Auditorium
Emeralds—Gabriel Fauré / George Balanchine
20th Anniversary Retrospective

“George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker™”

December 12-27, 2009 • Keller Auditorium

“A Midsummer Night’s Dream”

February 27-March 6, 2010 • Keller Auditorium
The Four Temperaments—Paul Hindemith/George Balanchine
A Midsummer Night’s Dream—Felix Mendelssohn/Christopher Stowell

“Duets”

April 22–May 2, 2010 • Newmark Theatre
Tolstoy’s Waltz (2008)—Russian composers/Christophe Stowell
Known By Heart (“Junk”) Duet (1998)—Donald Knaack/Twyla Tharp—**Company Premiere**
Duo Concertant (1972)—Igor Stravinsky/George Balanchine
Like A Samba (1997)—Astrud Gilberto/Trey McIntyre
Divergence (2010) – Joby Talbot / Emery LeCrone – **World Premiere**

“Bolero”

June 4-6, 2010 • Keller Auditorium
Raymonda (2008)—Alexander Glazounov/Yuri Possokhov
Hush (2009)—Rodney Sharman/James Kudelka
Bolero (2008)—Maurice Ravel/Nicolo Fonte

COMPANY ROSTER

Principal Dancers

Yuka Iino • Gavin Larsen • Kathi Martuza • Anne Mueller • Chauncey Parsons • Alison Roper • Artur Sultanov • Ronnie Underwood

Soloists

Candace Bouchard • Brennan Boyer • Ansa Deguchi • Adrian Fry • Steven Houser

Company Artists

Leta Biasucci • Martina Chavez • Andrea Cooper • Olga Krochik • Mia Leimkuhler • Matthew Pippin • Julia Rowe • Grace Shibley • Brian Simcoe • Christian Squires • Lucas Threefoot • Javier Ubell • Raychel Weiner

Apprentices

Ashley Smith • Adam Hartley • Olivia Ornelas • Hanh Pham • Crystal Serrano • Brent Slack-Wolfe

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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