

OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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OREGON BALLET THEATRE RAISES FUNDS NEEDED TO CONTINUE OPERATIONS

Portland, Ore... Oregon Ballet Theatre Artistic Director **Christopher Stowell** and Executive Director **Jon Ulsh** announced today that the company has successfully raised the \$750,000 needed to ensure OBT's survival beyond the June 30th close of its fiscal year. As of the end of business on Wednesday, June 17th, the total amount raised through fundraising and ticket sales to OBT's June 12th benefit performance, DANCE UNITED, stood at **\$853,271**.

All told, 967 donors from 26 states donated more than \$500,000 to Oregon Ballet Theatre since it was announced in late May that a recession-related fundraising shortfall, coupled with the devastating effects of Portland's December 2008 snowstorms on OBT's Nutcracker ticket sales, had left the company short of the cash needed to continue operations beyond the end of June. In addition, 2,750 people purchased tickets to the nearly sold out June 12th benefit, raising an additional \$330,000.

When it was revealed on Tuesday of this week that OBT was approaching its goal, a number of donors stepped forward to close the final gap, including Portlanders **Eric and Ronna Hoffman**, whose gift of \$20,000 officially brought the total to \$750,000. Other June gifts and grants in excess of \$20,000 were received from:

Bill Cortelyou (\$25,000)
Howard Hedinger (\$25,000)
Henry Hillman (\$25,000)
The James W. Fowler Company (\$25,000)
The Swigert Foundation (\$25,000)
Nani Warren (\$25,000)
The Oregon Arts Commission (\$20,000 Gap Grant)

"All of us at OBT are incredibly moved by how many people, not just here but all across the country, have overwhelmingly demonstrated that they care about the arts and the future of professional ballet in this city," said Stowell.

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According to Ulsh, fundraising efforts are ongoing. “Thanks to the incredible generosity of thousands of people, we’ve raised what we need to get us through the rest of this fiscal year,” he said. “Every additional dollar that comes in gives us a head start on our fundraising goal for FY2010.” Beginning July 1, OBT will begin operating under a budget that is 28% leaner than the current one. “We’ve made a number of very difficult but judicious cuts designed to safeguard us against the sort of danger we’ve just narrowly avoided,” said Ulsh.

“Oregon Ballet Theatre just received an incredible gift from the people of Portland,” said Stowell. “It’s our responsibility to not simply be good stewards of that money, but also to demonstrate to the community our ongoing commitment to being a fiscally responsible, sustainable organization.”

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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