

# OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

Erik Jones

503.227.0977

erik.jones@obt.org

## OREGON BALLET THEATRE'S *EYES ON YOU* PROGRAM MATCHES BALANCHINE'S APOLLO WITH TWO RETURNING AUDIENCE FAVORITES

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### *Apollo* (Company Premiere) – George Balanchine

*"One of the greatest achievements of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century ballet."* – The Seattle Times

### *il nodo* – Julia Adam

*"Fresh...Evocative...Scintillating."* – Portland Mercury

### *Eyes On You* – Christopher Stowell

*"Easy on the eyes and fun for the ears...It's clear that Stowell and OBT have a new audience favorite here."* – Critical Dance

Portland, Ore... **April 27-May 5**, Oregon Ballet Theatre returns to the Newmark Theatre with encore performances of two lighthearted audience favorites created especially for OBT's dancers: **Julia Adam's whimsical *il nodo***, and **Christopher Stowell's *Eyes On You***, the smash-hit **tribute to Cole Porter** that premiered in 2005 to rave reviews and sold out houses. Plus, the company premiere of **George Balanchine's masterful *Apollo*** – a work added to the OBT repertoire in celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of composer **Igor Stravinsky**, whose score accompanies the ballet.

Performances take place **April 27-May 5, 2007**, at the **Newmark Theatre**, SW Broadway and Main.

Evenings: April 27-29, May 2-5 at 7:30 p.m. / Matinees: April 28-29, May 5 at 2 p.m.

**Tickets start at \$10**, with special rates for students, seniors, groups and organizations.

**Online:** [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org) / [www.ticketmaster.com](http://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-6pm / Ticketmaster Outlets

Oregon Ballet Theatre's *Eyes on You* Program is sponsored by **The Standard**.

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Audience enrichment for *Eyes on You* includes **Dance Talks**, Monday, April 23, 2007, 7 p.m., at The Newmark Theatre, SW Broadway at Main Street. The topic for this Dance Talks is “**Apollo: an Archetype Revisited.**” **Christopher Stowell** will investigate the power of eternal themes that inspire artistic creations. Special thought will be given to influences of time and place on choreographers and composers, and the development of a unique creative voice. **Francia Russell**, Co-Founding Artistic Director of Pacific Northwest Ballet, and **Niel DePonte**, OBT’s Music Director, will discuss the seminal collaboration between George Balanchine and Igor Stravinsky. This event is **free** and open to the public. Reservations are requested, as seating is limited. To reserve, send name and number of seats requested to: outreach@obt.org or phone (503)227-0977, ext.213.

In addition, **Performance Perspectives**, providing context for the entire program and led by dance historian **Linda Besant**, takes place **45 minutes before each performance** on the Newmark Theatre’s first balcony level. Audience members are also invited to a **Question and Answer session with Christopher Stowell** and company dancers at the front of the auditorium immediately following every performance, with the exception of opening night.

On **Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00pm** in the Newmark Theatre, OBT presents its annual **Choreographic Institute**, featuring **new ballets** by company members **Anne Mueller** and **Paul DeStrooper**. This unticketed showing is **free and open to the general public**.

### **Oregon Ballet Theatre’s Eyes On You Program**

#### ***Apollo* (1928) – OBT Company Premiere**

Music: Igor Stravinsky  
Choreography: George Balanchine  
Staging: Francia Russell  
Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

*“There is no longer any discussion; Apollo is one of the great masterpieces of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Few works have been so consistently performed over such a long period of time, and few works are so revered by dancers, audiences, and dance scholars alike.”* – Pacific Northwest Ballet Co-Founding Artistic Director Francia Russell

*Apollo* was born in Paris as *Apollon Musagète* (“Apollo, Leader of the Muses”) during the heyday of Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Igor Stravinsky composed the music for an American commission, but reserved the European performance rights for Diaghilev, who assigned the choreography to his twenty-four-year-old ballet master, George Balanchine. It was Balanchine’s choreography, wrote dance historian John Gruen, “visible upon the rise and fall of Stravinsky’s cool, aristocratic music, that, in 1928, announced the era of neoclassicism, and it was this work that marked the beginning of perhaps *the* inspired collaboration in the history of modern ballet.”

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Balanchine choreographed a total of 28 ballets to Stravinsky's music. Of these, *Apollo* was the first, and one of the most significant. In one fell swoop, it reintroduced classical conventions into an art form that for nearly two decades had shaken them off almost entirely in favor of elaborate collaborations between composers, choreographers and designers. Balanchine's stunningly brilliant ballet depicting the sun god Apollo and muses Terpsichore, Calliope and Polyhymnia, at once reestablished the relevance of the unadorned combination of beautiful music and dance.

"When I was at New York City Ballet, *Apollo* was, in a way, sacred, partly because Mr. Balanchine always rehearsed it himself," said Francia Russell, "and I teach the version that we danced in the late 1950s. For dancers, you feel as though you're part of an almost mystical, quasi-religious experience. The integration of movement and music in *Apollo* is especially pure—that sense of inevitability that Balanchine's choreography has that there is no other movement that could be executed to that bar of music. The shapes of *Apollo* are beautiful. It's like looking at a great painting. *Apollo* gives you that rush of joy."

Widely regarded as the foremost choreographer in 20<sup>th</sup> century ballet, **George Balanchine** (1904 – 1983) 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*, *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* and *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*. Mr. Balanchine's ballets have become a part of nearly every major company's repertoire.

### ***Il nodo* (2004)**

Music: Renaissance Dances

Choreography: Julia Adam

Costume Design: Christine Darch

Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

When Julia Adam choreographed *il nodo* for Oregon Ballet Theatre in 2004, she chose a renaissance score to accompany the ballet, both for its rhythmic qualities and because it suggests a sense of playfulness that she finds appealing. A previous work, *Ketubah* for Houston Ballet, begins with a round of musical chairs, and Adam returns here to movement drawn from familiar games. In choreography inspired by schoolyard pursuits such as cat's cradle, tug-of-war and jumping rope, she whimsically explores the patterns and shapes created by the bodies of people at play. "When I work," said Adam, "I'm most interested in the idea of negative space. I look at the shape of a raised arm but also at what's between it and the body." *Il nodo* is energetic and constructed of intersecting lines – a concept that is echoed in the use of props such as yo-yos, elastic ropes and balloons on strings, as well as in the title of the ballet, which means in Italian: the knot. Upon *il nodo*'s premiere, the Oregonian dubbed the ballet "a delightful tangle."

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Canadian-born **Julia Adam** studied at the National Ballet School in Toronto and danced with the National Ballet of Canada and San Francisco Ballet. Her first work, *The Medium is the Message*, was performed at the opening of San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art and earned her an Isadora Duncan Award nomination for Choreography. She later won the award for her ballet *Thirteen Lullabies*. In 2001, San Francisco Ballet performed her critically acclaimed *Night* at the Palais Garnier in Paris and at London's Royal Opera House. Adam has choreographed for a number of companies, including The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, Alberta Ballet, American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, Cincinnati Ballet and Atlanta Ballet. In February 2004, she had a premiere with Nashville Ballet, set to country music, and another with Houston Ballet, danced to klezmer music. In May of 2004, she created *il nodo* for OBT. Ms. Adam's works are renowned for their clever use of music and their whimsical playfulness.

### ***Eyes On You (2005)***

Choreography: Christopher Stowell  
Music: Cole Porter  
Costume Design: Mark Zappone  
Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola  
Soprano: Pamela South  
Piano: Richard Bower

In creating *Eyes on You*, Christopher Stowell set out to choreograph a lively ballet especially suited to the intimacy of the Newmark Theatre. He was drawn to the musical complexity and urbane wit of Cole Porter's songs, considering them the finest of their genre. "That I could go to Music Millennium and find 18 different Porter compilations proves that his music still speaks to us," said Stowell.

He eventually chose ten songs from among the hundreds that Porter wrote for Broadway, film and television: *De-Lovely*, *In the Still of the Night*, *Just One of Those Things*, *You Do Something to Me*, *Begin the Beguine*, *My Heart Belongs to Daddy*, *Night and Day*, *I Get a Kick Out of You*, *So in Love* and *Anything Goes*.

*Eyes on You* pays homage to the madcap and slightly surreal spirit of 1930s and 40s film musicals. While it's movement vocabulary remains firmly grounded in classical ballet, it frequently references the flirtations and stylizations of social dancing. The use of both live, operatic vocals and classic recordings provides a structure for alternating between intimate duets and balletic tributes to large-scale, Hollywood production numbers.

**Christopher Stowell** is Oregon Ballet Theatre's second artistic director. Since his 2003-04 debut season, he has made significant additions to the OBT repertoire, bringing to Portland works from some of the world's most celebrated choreographers. In addition to creating four world premieres for OBT, including the company's first full-length *Swan Lake* in 2006, Mr. Stowell has also commissioned works by internationally prominent artists James Kudelka, Kent Stowell, Trey McIntyre, Yuri

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Possokhov and Julia Adam. Mr. Stowell was born in New York City and received his training at Pacific Northwest Ballet School and the School of American Ballet. In 1985 he joined San Francisco Ballet where he danced for sixteen years, appearing in theaters throughout the world including the Paris Opera, New York's Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. and Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre. As a principal dancer, Mr. Stowell performed leading roles in the full-length classics *Romeo and Juliet*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Othello*, and had roles created for him by Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson and by contemporary choreographers including Mark Morris, William Forsythe and James Kudelka. An established interpreter of the George Balanchine repertoire, Mr. Stowell appeared in almost every Balanchine ballet performed by SFB. Upon his retirement, he was accorded a gala farewell in the War Memorial Opera House. In recent years, Mr. Stowell has taught and coached in San Francisco, New York, Japan and Europe. He has created new works for San Francisco Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Diablo Ballet and Pacific Northwest Ballet, as well as the New York City Ballet Choreographic Institute. He has also staged the works of George Balanchine and Mark Morris.

**Pamela South** began her professional career with San Francisco Opera and has since performed with Boston Lyric Opera, New York City Opera and Washington Opera. Her exquisite voice has graced such roles as Sieglinde in *Die Walkure*, Lady Macbeth and Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. She returned to Portland Opera as Verdi's Lady Macbeth and as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. A recent recipient of an honorary doctorate in fine arts from the University of Montana in Missoula, this former rodeo queen and avid Jets and Nets fan currently resides in Portland.

### **Oregon Ballet Theatre's 2006 – 2007 Season**

#### **“The Four Temperaments”**

October 14 – 21, 2006 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra  
*The Four Temperaments* (1946) George Balanchine – **Company premiere**  
*Adin* (2004) Christopher Stowell  
*The Concert* (1956) Jerome Robbins – **Company premiere**

#### **“George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™”**

December 8 – 24, 2006 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra

#### **“All Premieres”**

March 3 – 10, 2007 • Keller Auditorium  
*Ash* (1991) Peter Martins – **Company premiere**  
*Blue Rose* (2006) Helgi Tomasson – **Company premiere**  
*Through Eden's Gates* (2007) Kent Stowell – **World premiere**

#### **“Eyes on You”**

April 27 – May 5, 2007 • Newmark Theatre  
*Apollo* (1928) George Balanchine – **Company premiere**  
*il nodo* (2004) Julia Adam  
*Eyes on You* (2005) Christopher Stowell

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**“The Sleeping Beauty, Act III”**

June 8 – 10, 2007 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra

*Firebird* (2004) Yuri Possokhov

*The Sleeping Beauty, Act III* (2007) Christopher Stowell after Marius Petipa – **World premiere**

The OREGON BALLET THEATRE company: Candace Bouchard•Brennan Boyer•Andrea Cooper•Paul De Strooper•Ansa Deguchi•Daniela Deloe•Alexey Dmitrenko•Damian Drake•Jon Drake•Adrian Frye•Steven Houser•Yuka Iino•Olga Krochik•Gavin Larsen•Mia Leimkuhler•Valerie Limbrunner•Kathi Martuza•Anne Mueller•Alison Roper•Brian Simcoe•Amanda Simnitt•Artur Sultanov•Emily Tedesco•Ronnie Underwood•Holly Zimmerman

With Apprentices: Martina Chavez•Thomas Hirschy•Kate Kearney•Patrick Kilbane•Erika Klein•Deirdre Lyons-Keefe•Megan McConnell•Jennifer McDonald•Ashley Muangmaithong•Grace Shibley•Lucas Threefoot•Natalie Wilson

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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