

# OREGON BALLET THEATRE

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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MEDIA CONTACT  
Erik Jones  
503.227.0977  
erik.jones@obt.org

## OBT EXPECTS TO SELL OUT SEASON-OPENING PERFORMANCES OF SWAN LAKE

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“Oregon Ballet Theatre pulls out all the stops with this big, bold full-length journey into one of the landmarks of ballet history.” – *The Oregonian*

“...this is true reverential spectacle...” – *Willamette Week*

One of this fall’s shows “you shouldn’t dare miss.” – *Portland Monthly*

**Portland, Ore...** Oregon Ballet Theatre opens its 19<sup>th</sup> season **October 11-18** with the highly anticipated return of Artistic Director **Christopher Stowell**’s acclaimed *Swan Lake*. The ballet premiered in 2006 to rave reviews and four packed houses. Due to even greater demand in 2008, a fifth show has been added to this October’s schedule. All performances are once again expected to sell out.

A heart-wrenching fable of true love heroically won and tragically squandered, *Swan Lake* is classical theatricality at its thrilling best. Virtuoso solos, an aching beautiful Tchaikovsky score, and majestic lines of dancers in brilliant white are all emblematic of the greatest of all 19<sup>th</sup>-Century story ballets.

*Swan Lake*’s dual role of Odette/Odile demands stamina and technique of her portrayer that is unmatched in classical ballet, and OBT principal dancers **Yuka Iino** and **Alison Roper** will again take on the challenge. This year, principal dancer **Kathi Martuza** will join them, making her debut in the role.

Other featured performers include principal dancers **Artur Sultanov** and **Ronnie Underwood** who will share the role of Odette’s lover, Prince Siegfried. Underwood performs the role for the first time.

*Swan Lake* also marks the official debut of soloist **Chauncey Parsons**, who danced with OBT in last June’s Russian Program as a guest from Washington Ballet, and has since joined the company. Parsons will dance the Acts I and III *pas de trois*, as well as the Neapolitan dance.

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New soloists for 2008-09 also include returning OBT dancers **Candace Bouchard** and **Adrian Fry**, who have both been promoted from the rank of company artist.

Company artists joining OBT this season are: **Leta Biasucci** (from Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and the San Francisco Ballet School), **Julia Rowe** (Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, San Francisco Ballet School), **Christian Squires** (Boston Ballet), and **Raychel Weiner** (St. Louis Ballet).

**Performances** of *Swan Lake* take place at **Keller Auditorium**, SW Third at Clay.

Evenings: October 11, 17 and 18 at 7:30 p.m. / Matinees: October 12 and 18 at 2 p.m.

Principal casting is as follows, ***and is subject to change***:

October 11: Iino / Underwood\*  
October 12: Roper / Sultanov  
October 17: Martuza\* / Underwood  
October 18 (mat): Iino / Underwood  
October 18 (eve): Roper / Sultanov

***\*debut***

**Tickets start at \$19.**

**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-5pm / Ticketmaster Outlets

OBT's production of *Swan Lake* is sponsored by **The Standard**.

The 2008-09 season is sponsored by **Gerding Edlen Development** and **The Oregonian**. Season media support is provided by **KGW**, **kink fm102**, **Northwest Cable News** and **All Classical 89.9**.

Audience enrichment events for *Swan Lake* include **Dance Talks**, Monday, **October 6th, 7 p.m., at Keller Auditorium**. This **free** forum gives audiences a chance to hear directly from artists and critics who have significantly shaped the aesthetic, contemporary and historic evolution of ballet and the creative process. Moderated by Christopher Stowell, the 75-minute program makes extensive use of visual aids to assist audience members in contextualizing the work(s) under discussion. Introduced as part of Stowell's initial year as artistic director, The Dance Talks series is unique in Portland and was an instant success with the city's dance-going community. Nearly 500 patrons, dance lovers, students of dance and academics attended the forums in the first year.

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The revival of Christopher Stowell's *Swan Lake* provides OBT with an intriguing opportunity for Dance Talks. This popular forum will present historic photographs and film footage, seen alongside photographs and video of OBT's 2006 performances, to place the company's accomplishment into historical perspective within the century-long history of *Swan Lake*. In addition, OBT principal dancers **Alison Roper**, **Kathi Martuza** and **Ronnie Underwood**, will discuss their experiences with this great classic. At the conclusion of the program, attendees will have the opportunity to enter the seating area and observe backstage preparations for *Swan Lake*.

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 OBT Dance Historian **Linda Besant**, takes place in the orchestra level seating area of Keller Auditorium, **one hour prior to each performance**. Performance Perspectives demystifies ballet's exacting movement vocabulary, ventures into dance history, and investigates the process of dance production.

### **Swan Lake**

Music: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreography: Christopher Stowell (after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov)

Set Design: Filippo Sanjust

Costume Design: Sandra Woodall

Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

Premiere: June 9, 2006, Keller Auditorium, Portland.

*Swan Lake* is the story of young Prince Siegfried and his love for the Swan Queen Odette – a beautiful woman transformed into a bird by the sinister magician Von Rothbart. She is destined to remain a swan-by-day and woman-by-night until the sorcerer's curse is broken by a man's undying love. Captivated by Odette's beauty, Siegfried pledges his eternal devotion; but Von Rothbart tricks him into subsequently declaring his love for Odile, the magician's equally wicked daughter. Realizing his betrayal, Siegfried rushes back to the lake where he first met Odette, only to face the consequences of his actions.

Revered by audiences and dancers throughout the world, *Swan Lake* is one of the greatest classical ballets of all time. "It's the story and the music," said Christopher Stowell. "The tale of love found and lost is elemental; it resonates with just about everyone. But then you have Tchaikovsky's score, which is written perfectly for dancers. You hear the music and feel that it needs to be danced. That's the sign of a true artistic marriage"

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It's a union that began inauspiciously, however. Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre premiered *Swan Lake* in 1877, with a specially commissioned score by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky and choreography by Austrian ballet master Julius Reisinger. Critics roundly panned the production, and Reisinger's lasting legacy was its monumental failure. But in 1895, two years after Tchaikovsky's death, the illustrious Marius Petipa and his assistant Lev Ivanov revived *Swan Lake* at the Maryinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. It was their choreography that elevated the work to its present stature.

Following ballet tradition, choreographers have often re-visited the ballet. "*Swan Lake* lends itself to reinvention, to be made viable for today's audience," said Stowell. "My aim was to have audiences enjoy a larger-than-life experience and see the beauty of dance meld with the drama of the story,"

His version keeps the best of the Petipa/Ivanov original, the essential *Swan Lake* — including its iconic dance for "Four Little Swans," White and Black Swan *pas de deus*, and Odile's dizzying Act III succession of 32 whip-like turns known as *fouettes*. From this core, the OBT artistic director worked to reshape the ballet for his company. "The new details are respectful," said Stowell, "but not reverent. I felt there was an opportunity to add richness."

For the last act, he looked to his father Kent Stowell's *Swan Lake* for inspiration. "Call me biased, but I think my father's Act IV is the best I've ever seen. He's taken an act that's often treated as a throwaway and given it drama and power. It's this structure I emulated for this production."

### **Oregon Ballet Theatre's 2008 – 2009 Season**

#### **"Swan Lake"**

October 11-18, 2008 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra  
*Swan Lake* (2006)—Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky/Christopher Stowell (after Petipa and Ivanov)

#### **"George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™"**

December 12-24, 2008 • Keller Auditorium • with Full Orchestra

#### **"Lambarena"**

February 21-28, 2009 • Keller Auditorium • Music: Ensembles  
*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**

#### **"Left Unsaid"**

April 17–26, 2009 • Newmark Theatre • Music: Ensembles  
*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 by James Kudelka (2009)—**World Premiere**

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**“Rush + Robbins”**

June 5 -7, 2009 • Keller Auditorium • Music: Ensembles  
*RUSH* (2003)—Bohuslav Martinu/Christopher Wheeldon  
*Afternoon of a Faun* (1953)—Claude Debussy/Jerome Robbins  
*The Cage* (1951)—Igor Stravinsky/Jerome Robbins —**Company Premiere**  
*The Concert* (1956)—Frederic Chopin/Jerome Robbins

**COMPANY ROSTER**

*Principal Dancers*

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

*Soloists*

Candace Bouchard • Brennan Boyer • Ansa Deguchi • Daniela Deloe • Adrian Fry • Steven Houser • Chauncey Parsons

*Company Artists*

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

*Apprentices*

Lauren Anderson • Ian Buchanan • Michael Davis • Christina Hanna • Mackenzie Martin • Janel Meindersee • Liliana Muhlbach • Lydia Relle • Brent Slack-Wolfe • Ashley Smith

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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