OREGON BALLET THEATRE OPENS ITS FIRST SEASON UNDER THE ARTISTIC DIRECTION OF KEVIN IRVING WITH “DREAM” AT THE KELLER AUDITORIUM

Includes company’s first performances of a work by Nacho Duato and the revival of Christopher Stowell’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream

September 23, 2013 - Portland, OR

Marking both the inaugural performances under newly appointed Artistic Director Kevin Irving and the final season of Principal Dancer Alison Roper, Oregon Ballet Theatre will present their opening program, DREAM, at the grand Keller Auditorium. This double bill offers Christopher Stowell’s effervescent and witty A Midsummer Night’s Dream, based on the classic Shakespearean comedy, alongside the company’s first work by renowned Spanish choreographer Nacho Duato, Por Vos Muero.

In DREAM, Ms. Roper reprises the role of Titania in Stowell’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream, which she originated in 2007, and also appears in the premier of Duato’s Por Vos Muero.

DREAM also offers audiences a first look at four new members of the company, Jennifer Christie (newly promoted from apprentice), Kohhei Kuwana (most recently of Ballet Sarasota), Jenna Nelson (most recently of Pacific Northwest Ballet), and Avery Reiners (from San Francisco Ballet School).

DATES AND TIMES:

DREAM opens Saturday, October 12th, 2013 and runs for 5 performances before closing Saturday, October 19th. For complete show dates and times, please visit www.obt.org

TICKET PRICES:

Tickets start at $25. Visit www.obt.org or call 503.2.BALLET for tickets. OBT also participates in the Arts for All program, providing $5 tickets to patrons carrying an Oregon Trail Card.
About Por Vos Muero:

OBT’s entire 13/14 season exhibits a spirit of renewal, but this may be the most clearly expressed in the addition of a work by renowned Spanish choreographer Nacho Duato. Duato’s work is already in the repertory of the world’s most significant ballet companies – including Paris Opera Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet – except, until now, Oregon Ballet Theatre. Known for the marriage of classical technique with fluidity and suppleness, his choreography offers a new approach to dancing. Duato’s ballets are almost always danced as an experience, not a presentation, allowing the viewer to witness this swell of emotion in a way that is as powerful as entering a rose arboretum or a fresh pine forest. Danced to a soundtrack by Jordi Savall, featuring Spanish poetry and music from the 15th and 16th century, Por Vos Muero is transportive, romantic, and offers audiences a fresh look at many of the Oregon Ballet Theatre dancers they know so well. Kevin Irving has been an important collaborator of Duato’s since 1994, allowing him to bring unprecedented expertise to the staging process and making these performances of Por Vos Muero even more special to the company.

About A Midsummer Night’s Dream:

Originally choreographed in 2007 for Oregon Ballet Theatre, Christopher Stowell’s A Midsomer Night’s Dream, set to the ethereal Felix Mendelssohn score, is notable for its wit, charm, and lush Pacific Northwest-inspired sets and costumes. The characters from Shakespeare’s classic comedy are clearly drawn, with fantastic dancing even as the story is being told. Students from the School of Oregon Ballet Theatre join the company as dragonflies and lightning bugs in the fairy realm, and the OBT Orchestra performs live for every show.

About Oregon Ballet Theatre:

Founded in 1989, OBT is the state’s largest full-time professional ballet company, dedicated to creating and preserving the art of ballet through the highest quality performances, training and educational programming. OBT is committed to producing compelling and diverse works that consistently inspire and entice audiences. OBT offers experiential arts education programs for youth and adults, as well as a professional ballet school for students, ages 4-18. Through all the programs it offers, OBT reaches over 130,000 members of the community each year. For more information about OBT go to: www.obt.org.

About Kevin Irving:

As a dancer, Kevin Irving appeared with the Alvin Ailey Training Ensemble, Elisa Monte Dance Company, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (as a soloist and principal dancer) and with American icon Twyla Tharp. In 1994, Kevin retired from the stage to take a position as ballet master and head of the artistic department with Nacho Duato’s Compañía Nacional de Danza in Spain. From 2002 to 2007, Kevin was the Artistic Director of The Goteborg Ballet; the company under Kevin’s leadership was named the most important dance company in Sweden by Ballet International Magazine. Since 2007 Kevin has been based in the U.S., while still maintaining a vast network of contacts abroad. Irving has been a frequent guest teacher with companies and schools such as, The Royal Danish Ballet, Alvin Ailey, Grands Ballets Canadiens.
Aspen Santa Fe, Juilliard, etc. Mr. Irving was also Associate Director at dance company Morphoses (2011-2012). He continues to stage ballets by Nacho Duato and American choreographer Nicolo Fonte and is the Founder/Director of I-DANCE, a non-profit organization that sends teachers and choreographers to Latin American dance communities. He was appointed Artistic Director of Oregon Ballet Theatre in June 2013.

**About Alison Roper:**

Alison Roper was born in Portland, Maine, and began her ballet training at age five with local teachers Jon and Linda Miele. Alison received her formal dance training from The Portland School of Ballet, Boston Ballet School and the School of Oregon Ballet Theatre. Alison joined Oregon Ballet Theatre in 1996 and was promoted into the corps in 1997. She was honored by Dance Magazine in 2002 as one of “25 to Watch,” and in 2007 was ranked principal dancer. Alison’s repertoire includes principal roles in works by George Balanchine, Christopher Wheeldon, Jerome Robbins, Sir Frederick Ashton, Kent Stowell, Peter Martins, Paul Taylor and Bebe Miller. She has originated leading roles in ballets by James Kudelka, Trey McIntyre, Yuri Possokhov, James Canfield, Christopher Stowell and Nicolo Fonte, among others.

In addition to her performances with OBT, Alison spent her summers performing with the Trey McIntyre Project from 2005-2007 and has since worked as a repetiteur and ballet mistress for that company. In the winter of 2010 she performed with Morphoses: The Wheeldon Company on the West Coast and in Canada.

**About Christopher Stowell:**

Christopher 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, 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, Stowell appeared in almost every Balanchine ballet performed by SFB. Upon his retirement in 2001, he was accorded a gala farewell in the War Memorial Opera House.
Stowell has taught and coached in San Francisco, New York, Japan, China 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.

In 2003, Christopher Stowell became Oregon Ballet Theatre’s second artistic director. He made significant additions to the OBT repertoire, bringing to Portland works from some of the world’s most celebrated choreographers, including Ashton, Balanchine, Robbins, Taylor, Tomasson, Wheeldon and Lubovitch. During Stowell’s tenure with OBT, the company performed in Korea and at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C, as well as venues in New York, Chicago, Colorado, Washington and Wyoming. In addition to creating eight world premieres for OBT, including Swan Lake (2006), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2007) The Rite of Spring (2009), Carmen (2011) and Ekho (2012), Stowell also commissioned works by internationally prominent artists James Kudelka, Kent Stowell, Trey McIntyre, Yuri Possokhov, Julia Adam and Nicolo Fonte. Stowell served as OBT’s Artistic Director from 2003-2012.

About Nacho Duato:

Born in Valencia, Spain, Nacho Duato started professional ballet training with the Rambert School in London at eighteen, expanding studies at Maurice Béjart’s Mudra School in Brussels and completing his dance education at The Alvin Ailey American Dance Centre in New York. In 1980, Duato signed his first professional contract with the Cullberg Ballet in Stockholm and a year later Jirí Kylián brought him to the Nederlands Dans Theater in Holland, where he was quickly incorporated into the company and repertoire.

His first choreographic attempt in 1983 turned into a major succès: Jardí Tancat to Spanish/Catalan music by compatriot Mª del Mar Bonet won him the first prize at the International Choreographic Workshop (Internationaler Choreographischer Wettbewerb) at Cologne.

Duato has created more than a dozen works for the two companies of Nederlands Dans Theater and in 1988 was named Resident Choreographer next to Hans van Manen and Jiri Kylian.

From June 1990 until July 2010, Nacho Duato was Artistic Director of Compañía Nacional de Danza (Madrid-Spain). In 1995 he received the grade of Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres which is annually given by the French Embassy in Spain. In 1998 the Spanish Government rewarded him the Golden Medal for the Merit in the Fine Arts. At the Stuttgart Opera he was offered the Benois de la Danse, one of the most prestigious international awards for choreography, presented by the International Dance Association for his ballet *Multiplicity, Forms of Silence and Emptiness* in April, 2000.

In January 2011, he took the position of Artistic Director of Mikhailovsky Ballet (Saint Petersburg-Russia). In 2014, he’ll become Artistic Director of Berlin State Ballet (Germany).