

OREGON **BALLET** THEATRE  
**OBT/25**  
KEVIN IRVING / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OREGON BALLET THEATRE NAMES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND SIGNS IRVING FOR THREE-YEAR TERM  
AFTER LEAPING OVER THE FY14 FINISH LINE**

*Dennis Buehler to Lead Ballet Alongside Artistic Director Kevin Irving*

**July 28, 2014 - Portland, OR**

After wrapping up a 2013/14 season marked by stellar critical reviews, increased audience engagement, record single ticket sales, and a strong finish to the fiscal year, Oregon Ballet Theatre makes two big announcements this week. **Artistic Director Kevin Irving** has **signed a three-year contract** with the Ballet affirming his continued and uninterrupted artistic leadership **through the 2016/17 season**. Additionally, Oregon Ballet Theatre has announced the appointment of **Dennis Buehler** as **Executive Director**. Buehler and his family will move from Milwaukee, where he most recently worked as Executive Director to the Milwaukee Ballet.

**Oregon Ballet Theatre finishes strong year under Irving's Leadership**

Since taking the reins in July 2013, Irving has brought thoughtful persistence and dynamic personality to Oregon Ballet Theatre, challenging the organization to exceed expectations in every element of its work. Irving made waves by facilitating a marriage proposal on stage during the DREAM program, chatting with the audience from the house during pre-curtain speeches, and bringing an element of surprise to the CREATE program, having audience members pull names out of a velvet bag to decide who would perform an excerpt from Nacho Duato's *Cor Perdut* for them at each performance. "This whole year has been a process of righting the ship and setting the course. I'm thrilled to now be starting the journey ahead," says Irving. In the 2013/14 season,

- Over **34,500** children and adults connected with Oregon Ballet Theatre through nearly twenty different programs led by our **Education Outreach** department – an increase in impact of 10% over previous years
- Single **ticket sales** to repertory shows **increased by 28%** over the previous year
- Total contributions to the organization **increased by 13.4%** over the previous year
- Exciting works by international star **Nacho Duato** and American choreographer **Helen Pickett** added to the repertoire, showing new facets of OBT's dancers and promising a bright future
- Oregon Ballet Theatre saw a budgetary **surplus** for the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year

**Dennis Buehler appointed Executive Director**

Buehler will join the company in September 2014, with a strong record of success building and maintaining collaborative environments that place a premium on innovative artistic and educational programming.

Prior to joining Oregon Ballet Theatre, for seven years Buehler served as Executive Director for Milwaukee Ballet where he was credited with not only bringing a strong business sense and strategic vision to the company, but also greatly enhancing their regional and national reputation.

Speaking of what drew him to the company, Buehler said "I quickly felt a strong connection with Oregon Ballet Theatre and could not be more delighted to be joining Kevin and the entire OBT team at this time. They have positioned themselves very well and I am confident we can continue to develop this company into one of this country's premier dance organizations. Portland is a region that makes access to the arts a high priority and Oregon Ballet Theatre is building a foundation to sustain that for generations to come."

During his time at Milwaukee Ballet, he spearheaded the creation and implementation of an innovative strategic plan that saw both significant programmatic growth and improved fiscal health. Under his leadership Milwaukee Ballet considerably expanded its commitment to the development of new work and achieved national accreditation for its well-regarded professional ballet school. Most recently Buehler originated a unique collaborative business model, called *The Harmony Initiative*, which sought to change the landscape of how organizations can find greater financial stability while investing more deeply in their program mission. His background in dance, theatre and education reach deep into the greater Milwaukee and Wisconsin arts community, where he has also served as the Executive Director for the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts along with a number of leadership roles in local and statewide boards.

Oregon Ballet Theatre begins its **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season** with **OBT Exposed, August 25<sup>th</sup> through the 28<sup>th</sup>** in **Pioneer Courthouse Square**. From 11:00 to 6:30 each day, the company will take their daily technique class and rehearse with choreographer **Nicolo Fonte** for a world premiere work that will debut during **OBT 25** at the **Keller Auditorium, October 11-18, 2014**. Additional classes and demonstrations round out the schedule, and all events are free to the public. More information is available at [http://www.obt.org/outreach\\_events\\_exposed.html](http://www.obt.org/outreach_events_exposed.html).

## **ABOUT OREGON BALLET THEATRE**

Founded in 1989, Oregon Ballet Theatre is the state's largest full-time professional ballet company. OBT's mission is to inspire an enduring passion and appreciation for the unique art form of dance through artistic excellence, thrilling live performances, innovative choreography and exceptional educational programs. The nationally and internationally acclaimed Oregon Ballet Theatre is recognized for its dynamic approach to both classical and contemporary ballet. For more information, please visit [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org).

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