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August 12, 2015 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oregon Ballet Theatre's Artistic Director Kevin Irving Welcomes Royal Danish Ballet's Principal Ballerina Amy Watson as a Guest Artist in its 2015/2016 Season and Announces New Company Hires

Oregon Ballet Theatre's (OBT) Artistic Director Kevin Irving has announced the hiring of three dancers, Peter Franc as soloist, and Ian Shramer and Shae McAdoo as apprentices for its 2015/16 season, as well as the promotion of apprentice Kimberly Nobriga to company artist. OBT is further thrilled to welcome Royal Danish Ballet Principal Dancer Amy Watson as a guest artist in its fall production of *Amore Italiano*, which includes the company premiere of *Napoli, Act 3*.

Created in 1842 by Danish choreographer August Bournonville, *Napoli* is a joyous and vibrant ballet inspired by the Italian street scenes Bournonville observed while traveling in Southern Italy: "From my window, in the course of an hour, I would witness more tableaux than I could use in ten ballets", he wrote in his memoirs. *Napoli* was an immediate success and became the calling card of Bournonville style ballet which has been passed on and much-loved by generations of dance enthusiasts.

In preparing for its company premiere of *Napoli*, Oregon Ballet Theatre has taken extraordinary care. Former Royal Danish Ballet Artistic Director and Bournonville expert Frank Andersen was retained to stage the work and began advance rehearsals with the company last February. Inspired by what he saw, Andersen with the support of OBT and the Scan|Design Foundation, collaborated to sponsor six OBT dancers to attend the Bournonville Summer Academy (BSA) in Copenhagen. The BSA is a one week intensive focusing on Bournonville technique and repertory from the choreographer's major ballets. The faculty consists of foremost Bournonville specialists from the Royal Danish Ballet.

Topping off this exciting cultural exchange, and demonstrating further commitment to an authentic interpretation of this delightful ballet, OBT is thrilled to present Portland audiences with Royal Danish Ballet star Amy Watson who will dance in both *Napoli* and the World Premiere of *Sub Rosa* by visiting choreographer James Kudelka. Watson is an exceptional and versatile artist who excels both in neoclassical Balanchine ballets as well as Bournonville's work. After dancing with the Suzanne Farrell Ballet in Washington DC, Watson was accepted to the corps of the Royal Danish Ballet in 2000. She quickly moved up the rank to soloist in 2003 and principal artist in 2007. In 2011, she received the Order of the Dannebrog from Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. "I can't begin to explain how rare it is for an American dancer to be honored in this way," comments Irving.

Watson who has made guest appearances with only two other companies in the United States - American Ballet Theatre and New York City Ballet - is delighted to share her passion for Bournonville. "When you watch the Bournonville style you can't help but have a smile on your face. ... There is something so incredibly human about his ballets. After seeing *Napoli*, you should leave with a warm heart and a sore jaw from smiling so much!"

While welcoming many talented dancers this season, OBT also announces the retirement of company member Ye Li as well as the departure of Brett Bauer, Haiyan Wu, and Kohhei Kuwana. The company thanks these dancers for their considerable contribution and wishes them all the best in their future projects.

ABOUT OREGON BALLET THEATRE

Founded in 1989, Oregon Ballet Theatre is the state's largest full-time professional ballet company. Oregon Ballet Theatre is committed to its mission to share our passion for the expressive power of ballet, to inspire an enduring appreciation of dance, and to connect in meaningful ways to our community through excellence in performance, training and educational programs.

About Amy Watson:

Originally from Washington, DC, Watson trained at the School of American Ballet and performed with the Suzanne Farrell Ballet before joining the corps de ballet of the Royal Danish Ballet in 2000. In 2003 she was appointed soloist and, in 2007, principal dancer.

Watson's roles as a principal included Other Dances, Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*, Teresina in *Napoli*, Kitri in *Don Quixote*, Anita in *West Side Story*, Titania and Hermia in *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, the Ballerina in *Études*, Myrtha in *Giselle*, Irma in *Abdallah*, Victorine in *La Conservatoire*, Lescaut's Mistress in *Manon*, Olga in *Onegin*, Sophie in *The Kings Volunteers on Amager*, Effy in *La Sylphide*, Calypso and Kirke in *The Odyssey*, Eleonora and the pas de deux in *The Kermesse in Bruges*, Princess Henriette in *The Little Mermaid*, Mercedes in *Don Quixote*, Betsy in *AnnaKarenina* and Babe in *Twyla Tharp's Come Fly Away*.

Watson created a leading role in *Bournonville Fantasy* by Thomas Lund, Jacopo Godani's *Uncontaminated*, the principal part in Jo Strømgren's *Air* and in Jorma Elo's *Lost on Slow* and the soloist part in Anna Lærkesen's *Wings* and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's *L'Homme de bois*.

Watson has performed at Alexander Kølpin's Copenhagen International Ballet as well as with soloists and principals of the Royal Danish Ballet at the Dance Salad Festival in Houston, Texas.

Watson has received a Helena Rubinstein Scholarship, a George Balanchine Scholarship, the Grant of Albert Gaubier (2004) and the Grant of Ulla Poulsen (2005). In 2011, she received the Order of the Dannebrog from Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

About Peter Franc:

Peter Franc began dancing in Atlanta, Georgia at the Metropolitan Ballet Theatre and continued training at the Louisville Ballet School. He then joined the Houston Ballet where he danced for 8 years rising to the rank of Demi-Soloist. Notable performances include works by Jerome Robbins, George Balanchine, Jiri Kylian, Hans Van Manen, and Stanton Welch. He then joined the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet for 3 years performing many contemporary ballets by leading choreographers including: Nicolo Fonte, Jorma Elo, Cayetano Soto, and Alejandro Cerrudo.

About Ian C. Schwaner:

Ian Schwaner, a native of Atlanta, took his first ballet class at age seventeen at the Northeast Atlanta Ballet. He then attended University of North Carolina School of the Arts on scholarship, where he danced Principal roles in Stiefel's *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Birthday Offering*, Jaffe's *Metallurgy*, and Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante*.

About Shea McAdoo:

Shea McAdoo was born in Scottsdale, Arizona where she began dancing at the age of 3. Her ballet training began at Master Ballet Academy under the direction of Slawomir and Irena Wozniak. Shea joined OBT in 2014 as a student in the Professional Division before being promoted to Apprentice for the upcoming 2015/16 season. Her favorite roles thus far with OBT include Spanish from *The Nutcracker* and Orange in *Crayola*.