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**January 15, 2016 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Oregon Ballet Theatre Launches ChoreographyXX, a Groundbreaking Project  
Celebrating Dance Created by Women**

Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT) is thrilled to announce the launch of *ChoreographyXX* an innovative competition and performance project dedicated to nurturing the talents of North American female choreographers. This groundbreaking program has been made possible by a generous grant from the Oregon Community Foundation's Creative Heights Initiative. Three winners will be selected by a panel of Pacific Northwest artists and arts producers and receive a commission to stage their work on the OBT company. All three works will be premiered by the company in the summer of 2017 in a fully-produced, free outdoor performance.

Qualified individuals must submit their applications by March 31<sup>st</sup> for review. OBT Artistic Director Kevin Irving will lead the jury whose members include: Angela Mattox (Artistic Director, PICA), Paul King (Co-Founder, White Bird), local choreographer Mary Oslund (Co-Founder, Conduit) and long-time ballet teacher Catherine Levi (Corvallis Academy of Ballet). Together, they will choose from a pool of applicants, focusing on the creative capacity for unique, contemporary expressions of a classical ballet vocabulary. The three finalists and their works will be announced in June 2016, and the program will take place in the summer of 2017 as part of OBT's extended 2016/2017 season.

"While OBT has regularly offered free programming during the summer such as OBT Exposed and Fall Arts Live, this opportunity is quite unique," observes Irving. "With the critical funding from the Creative Heights Initiative we will be able to present a fully produced evening of dance complete with lights, sets, and costumes for free to the public! We will also support and bring attention to female choreographers whose voices are disproportionately underrepresented in this field."

OBT's 26th season has already brought much incredible news for the company. From the launch of its junior ensemble OBT2, to the move to its new home in the South Waterfront, the company is investing in its future, as well its commitment to the community like never before. This latest initiative is yet another example of the company's growth as well as the fulfillment of a long-term goal which is to increase the representation of female choreographers in its repertoire.

Full submission details for *ChoreographyXX* are available at:  
<http://www.obt.org/index.php/choreography-xx/>

## **ABOUT OREGON BALLET THEATRE**

Oregon Ballet Theatre is committed to sharing our passion for the expressive power of ballet, inspiring an enduring appreciation of dance, and connecting in meaningful ways to our community through excellence in performance, training and educational programs. OBT is the largest professional ballet company in Oregon, employing nearly 200 people and attracting artists from around the globe with a reputation for excellence. The company is rooted in the traditions of classical ballet, with a repertoire that ranges from the great classics to premieres from some of the most exciting choreographic voices in the field today. Our mission is dedicated to the vitality of, and access to, world-class ballet performance and training in our region. Founded in 1989 by James Canfield, a former principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet, OBT quickly developed a distinctive style and unique repertoire that grew to comprise over 80 ballets. From 2003-2012, under the direction of Christopher Stowell, OBT presented nearly 350 performances and added 51 ballets, including 20 world premieres, to its diverse body of work. In June 2013, we were delighted to name Kevin Irving as the company's third Artistic Director. Irving brings over 25 years of experience performing with and managing world-renowned cultural organizations and dance companies, including The Göteborg Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, and Compañía Nacional de Danza (Spain). His tenure has been marked by a commitment to collaborative partnerships with other Portland artists and organizations, including the Portland Art Museum, Multnomah County Library, Kenji Bunch, and Pink Martini. He has expanded the company's classical repertoire – with the premieres of Ben Stevenson's Cinderella and August Bournonville's Napoli – while preserving OBT's legacy and restoring major works such as James Canfield's Romeo & Juliet. At the same time, he continues to build a diverse body of work with world premieres from internationally acclaimed, contemporary choreographers such as Nicolo Fonte, Darrell Grand Moultrie, and James Kudelka.

Irving will be working with OBT to develop a unique approach to 21st century American ballet that reflects the vigor of the art form as it continues to evolve.