

OREGON BALLET THEATRE

KEVIN IRVING / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Portland, OR (March 8, 2016) –
Oregon Ballet Theatre Presents Nicolo Fonte's *Beautiful Decay* a Ground Breaking Full Evening Work Featuring Portland Dance Icons Susan Banyas and Greg Bielemeier

Oregon Ballet Theatre is thrilled to present *Beautiful Decay* a company premiere from newly named resident choreographer Nicolo Fonte featuring guest artists Gregg Bielemeier and Susan Banyas in a full evening work which explores the onslaught of time and the changes that come with it. With this multigenerational cast, Fonte juxtaposes the technical prowess and daring athleticism for which he is so well-known, against the stark reality that with age come a more fragile state, that resonates with the power and beauty of distant youth.

Fonte's inspiration for *Beautiful Decay* came from feelings he experienced when looking at artist Mark Golebiowski's series of 3-d photographs of what he describes as "very much dead, but still very vibrant exotic flowers. These flowers were so full of movement, and retained such a potent identity and sense of 'self,' that the beauty evident in the decay was to me both noble and touching."

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 IS!!!! 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.