Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT) will open its 2017-18 Season with Rhapsody in Blue on October 7-14. The double bill will reunite two of Portland’s most creative artists – OBT Resident Choreographer Nicolo Fonte and Pink Martini Founder Thomas Lauderdale. The evening will pair a world premiere set to Lauderdale’s masterful take on George Gershwin's famous Rhapsody in Blue with the return of Fonte’s Never Stop Falling (In Love), an audience favorite.

One of the most anticipated events of the fall, OBT’s season opener will showcase the company’s commitment to broadening the appeal of classical ballet and will feature not only Lauderdale, but also China Forbes and Pink Martini at every performance.

While the dynamic rhythms and melodies of Rhapsody in Blue are extremely familiar due to the iconic status of Gershwin’s score, Lauderdale, together with concert pianist Hunter Noack, has created an innovative arrangement that will bring out nuances in the work of which audiences may have never been aware. Lauderdale, who has been playing this music since the age of 10, will imbue the score with emotion and resonance forged over a lifetime.

“Thomas’s arrangement brings a dreamy and mysterious quality to the work that completely inspires me,” explains Fonte.

Through expanded lyrical phrases, Lauderdale and Fonte will seek to capture a magical time of day ripe with the potential of discovery – the blue hour. “l’heure bleue” – when day becomes night, life becomes less linear, boundaries become more fluid – and there is an electric charge in the air. Themes of betrayal, discovery and triumphant realization are woven together into a narrative heightened by the mysterious strains of familiar melodies reimagined expressly for this production. Lauderdale and Noack will each be seated at a grand piano to perform the score.

From this ethereal setting, the program will dramatically shift gears with the much-longed for return of Never Stop Falling (In Love). The 40-minute ballet, performed to a medley of Pink Martini’s most popular songs, was originally created in honor of OBT’s 25th anniversary. Fonte’s exhilarating and athletic choreography captures the unapologetic euphoria of Lauderdale’s arrangements, which are performed on stage by Pink Martini with Portland’s beloved vocalist, China Forbes.

Transported to what Fonte calls a “Hotel of Love”, the dancers and musicians embark on a journey of intense emotion, where delirium, hope, disillusionment and of course, romance, are all intertwined. Pink Martini’s trademark combination of joyful celebration and great beats permeates the entire auditorium in an explosive finale.

For further information, visit [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org). Performances will take place at Keller Auditorium.
Let there be light: Ballet teacher Noriko Hara brightens the NYC dance scene

Special Ticket Offer for Broadway’s ‘An American in Paris’

Catching Up with Beckanne Sisk of Ballet West

CLICK TO COMMENT