

OREGON **BALLET** THEATRE

KEVIN IRVING / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESS CONTACT:

Natasha Kautsky | Director of Marketing & Communications

PHONE: 503.227.0977 | EMAIL: natasha.kautsky@obt.org

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Oregon Ballet Theatre's 30th Anniversary continues with the exciting return of Christopher Stowell's *The Sleeping Beauty*

Oregon Ballet Theatre's 30th anniversary season continues this February with the exciting return of one of ballet's most beloved and demanding works, *The Sleeping Beauty*. Based on the original Marius Petipa choreography, this production was created for the company by former Artistic Director Christopher Stowell and premiered in 2010. Now a new generation of OBT stars invigorate the work with the OBT Orchestra performing Tchaikovsky's glorious score.

With its beloved characters, sublime music, and rich choreography, *The Sleeping Beauty* is a ballet for the ages. But even its creator, Marius Petipa, acknowledged that "every ballet master will revive ballets with the tastes of the public in his own time." **While respectful of tradition, Stowell's *Sleeping Beauty* is "very American"** observed dance critic Martha Ullman West in her review of the premiere. "High art can be hugely entertaining to watch... From the fiendishly difficult fairy variations... to the storybook (solos) **this rendering of the great 19th century classic is an immense amount of fun.**"

The Sleeping Beauty epitomizes the highest ideals of classical ballet. In the fall of 2010 when Stowell added the work to the OBT repertory, it marked a coming of age for the company in terms of technical and artistic ability. "It is no exaggeration to say that this ballet was emblematic of his aspirations for the company," notes Artistic Director Kevin Irving. "It is remarkable to see how Christopher injected into this work all the wit, nobility, and purity of classical ballet necessary to rediscover the endless genius embedded in its structure."

Now Stowell has returned to set the ballet on a new generation of OBT dancers. **Featured in the demanding role of Princess Aurora audiences will thrill to see Xuan Cheng, Ansa Capizzi, and Eva Burton**, and stepping into the many challenging soloist parts are emerging stars Jessica Lind, Emily Parker, Kelsie Nobriga, and Kimberly Fromm. As part of OBT's 30th anniversary season, these young ballerinas have been paired with four retired company principals, Elizabeth Guerin, Gavin Larsen, Yuka Iino, and Katarina Svetlova (respectively) in a unique mentorship program to provide artistic, technical, and professional guidance.

“Connecting to our company’s roots through past works and artists has defined our 30th anniversary season,” says Irving. “We began with the return of founding resident choreographer Dennis Spaight’s *Scheherazade*. With Stowell’s *Sleeping Beauty*, the company not only revives a masterpiece, but demonstrates its unique ability to handle both contemporary and classical ballets with aplomb with a new generation of dancers in the wings to take us forward.”

Oregon Ballet Theatre presents Christopher Stowell’s *The Sleeping Beauty*

Sat, Feb 15 – 2:00 PM

Sat, Feb 15 – 7:30 PM

Sun, Feb 16 – 2:00 PM

Fri, Feb 21 – 7:30 PM

Sat, Feb 22 – 2:00 PM

Sat, Feb 22 – 7:30 PM

Sun, Feb 23 – 12:00 PM

Tickets start at \$29

Group tickets start at \$22

OBT Box Office

0720 SW Bancroft Street

9am – 5pm | M-F

503-222-5538

ABOUT OREGON BALLET THEATRE

OBT is the largest professional ballet company in Oregon, employing nearly 200 people and attracting artists from around the globe with our 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.

Oregon Ballet Theatre was founded in 1989 through the consolidation of Pacific Ballet Theatre and Ballet Oregon; James Canfield, a former principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet, was the company’s first artistic director. Under his leadership, 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, Kevin Irving became 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 Gothenburg Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, and Compañia 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*, August Bournonville's *Napoli*, and his own *Swan Lake* – while preserving OBT's legacy and restoring major works such as James Canfield's *Romeo & Juliet* and Christopher Stowell's *The Sleeping Beauty*. At the same time, he continues to build a diverse body of work with premieres from internationally acclaimed contemporary choreographers such as Nacho Duato, Jiří Kylián, and James Kudelka, while investing in American choreographers such as Alvin Ailey, Twyla Tharp, and Agnes de Mille as well as new dance makers Helen Pickett, Darrell Grand Moultrie and OBT's Resident Choreographer, Nicolo Fonte.

OBT's investment in the community extends far beyond our stages and studios, as we seek to enrich the community and invest in our art form. We provide ballet training to over 800 students through the OBT School, which attracts dancers from as far away as Spain and Japan, and through OBT2, our junior company, which brings professional level performance to underserved audiences throughout Portland.

Our robust Education Outreach programming impacts nearly 40,000 people annually, including thousands of K-12 youth across 21 school districts. Ongoing efforts to ensure equitable access include: scholarships to OBT School, field trip transportation for low income and Title 1 schools, and our Share the Wonder campaign, which provides thousands of tickets to our mainstage performances for families in need.