

OREGON **BALLET** THEATRE

KEVIN IRVING / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Oregon Ballet Theatre Presents OBT MOVES – a Reimagined 2020/21 Season

With the onset of Covid-19 Oregon Ballet Theatre announced the cancellation of the remainder of its 30th anniversary season. As restrictions on public gatherings continue to be in effect, and out of concern for the safety and health of its patrons, dancers, and staff, OBT has made the difficult decision to cancel four of its planned 2020/21 season productions: *Pink & Blue*, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*, *Alice (in wonderland)*, and *Masters & Moderns*. While this is disappointing news, OBT does not intend to sit out the season on the sidelines. **OBT is thrilled to announce a reimagined 2020/21 Season titled OBT MOVES**, reflecting the company's literal movement out of traditional theaters and modes of performance into locations throughout Portland with a variety of events, discussions, and scaled back raw performances that examine what ballet is and what it may be.

"Our community has a clear challenge of division." says OBT artistic director, Kevin Irving. "Now more than ever, we have the chance to bring people together through the transformative power of dance. Our re-imagined 2020/21 season is designed to connect with people throughout our region and remind them of a common bond we share in a love of movement and music. OBT is not asking how the community can save it, but rather how it can be an agent of healing and progress."

The OBT MOVES 2020/21 season unfolds in three acts. Each act includes content created exclusively for digital presentation as well as in-person performances which will be adjusted in scale based on progress made in controlling the virus.

Act I features *Wish List*. Every dancer keeps a running list of roles and ballets they hope to dance one day and every artistic director has roles in mind with which they want to challenge their dancers. *Wish List* is an evening of solos and duets that explores those challenges and reveals the differences between dancers, between roles, and between artistic styles. Act II brings *OBT Raw* which builds on *Wish List* presenting audiences with the more complex demands of duets, trios, and larger ensembles. At this level dancers must master not only their personal roles but also coordinate timing, establish trust, and develop an emotional connection with others.

Wish List and *OBT Raw* will be held at the OBT Warehouse, an entire block of storage and construction space for the company's numerous sets, props, and costumes. OBT is converting its spacious warehouse into a black box theater, giving patrons access not only to the grit behind ballet, but also a peek at the production work involved to bring their ballets to the main stage.

The season will close with Act III as OBT presents *Americans (Re)imagined*, a scaled back take on the originally planned *Americans V3*, and yet, a major step forward as the company and the community work toward a return to health. Assuming this progress, OBT plans to present *Americans (Re)imagined* at the Newmark Theatre following an absence of more than a year from the stage!

Every OBT MOVES in-person production will be streamed live and be available on demand through OBTV this season. OBT is also excited to be investing in original digital content this season. *Dancer Video Portraits* will be a series of profiles exploring each dancer's journey – the determination it takes to make what is tremendously difficult look effortless. *New Ballet Works* will present choreography created exclusively for video where the camera and editing take a part in the dance as much as the dancers. This is an exciting time to be creative, to play, and to break barriers and traditions.

Woven through each act of OBT MOVES will be *Revolve*, a series of frank and open discussions with local leaders on a range of social issues and the evolving role of ballet in bringing them to light. Audiences will discover the potential and power of ballet to open minds, and stimulate new perspectives and thinking. These talks will be in a panel format with moderators and include dance performance.

With initiatives like *Revolve* and OBT MOVES/ *Exposed* - a month of free, week-long outdoor OBT residencies in the Portland metro area which began September 8 - and with a season that offers rare behind-the-scenes access, OBT is boldly moving forward. "Ironically in the midst of the chaos we face, this is a season of growth for the company like no other," says Irving. "We are devoting ourselves to renewal and to the future. This is a season that doesn't just dance with change, but is change itself!"

Scheduling Ticketing and Pricing

In-Person Performances:

Wish List, October 29 – November 15, 2020

OBT Raw, February 22 – March 13, 2021

Americans (Re)imagined May 3 - June 19, 2021

(R)Evolve – guests, topics, and dates to be posted at obt.org/revolve

OBT Digital Content

Live and on demand streams of each in-person performance and event

Original OBT digital works *Dancer Video Portraits* and *New Dance Works* to be released throughout the season beginning in November.

Pricing:

All Access Passes - \$200

Digital Access Passes - \$100

Public on sale dates for single tickets to be announced.

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 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*, 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 and Community Engagement 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.