

OREGON **BALLET** THEATRE

KEVIN IRVING / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESS CONTACT:

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Oregon Ballet Theatre Brings Dance to All of Portland with Newly Launched OBT MOVES

In the months following the onset of Covid-19, Oregon Ballet Theatre faced a dramatically changed landscape severely restricting its mission to share, inspire, and connect with its community through the art of dance. But with challenge comes opportunity - a rare moment to reflect and pivot and find a new path. OBT has used this time to rethink its originally planned programming and recommit to its mission.

OBT is thrilled to announce a reimagined 2020/21 Season titled OBT MOVES reflecting the company's literal movement out of traditional theaters and mode of performance, to locations throughout Portland, offering rare behind-the-scenes access revealing what ballet is, and what it can be. The initiative will feature a range of activities including pop up performances, demonstrations, and classes presented by OBT company dancers, students, and teaching artists. **OBT MOVES events will begin next week with OBT MOVES/ Exposed** and are produced in partnership with a diverse group of local organizations including Zidell Yards, OMSI, Hacienda Community Development Corporation, and Portland Public Schools, among others.

"At a time when traditional live performance isn't possible, OBT is not standing by, but rising up!" says OBT artistic director Kevin Irving. "We are dedicating our resources to become a better ballet by connecting more deeply with our community."

OBT MOVES/ Exposed is the first program under the OBT MOVES initiative and will launch on September 8, 2020 with a month of free, week-long outdoor OBT residencies to rotate through four locations in the Portland metro area. The focus of these residencies, an expansion of the popular OBT Exposed series, held for years in the Park Blocks of downtown Portland, is to share with the public the work, determination, and stubborn optimism of the professional dancer. OBT company members who have not been able to exercise or rehearse in our studio since March are getting back in shape and sharing with our community the tough road they face to return to performance ready condition.

OBT MOVES/ Exposed will kick-off in OBT's own South Waterfront neighborhood, through a partnership with ZRZ Realty at Zidell Yards. There are no formal performances or events and therefore no need to make a reservation! This is an exclusive, behind-the-scenes experience of dancer training, the rituals seldom shared with the public, as the company takes its first steps returning to work. While dancers typically take some time off in the summer, this reunion, this new beginning, after six months of waiting and uncertainty will be like no other.

OBT dancers, artistic faculty, and staff are all eager to share this powerful art form with the Portland public and invite everyone to come be a part of their world as they begin a shared journey this season to return to the stage!

STAND BY - Further exciting announcements about the OBT's 2020/21 Season including in-person performances and original digital works will be released next week.

OBT MOVES/Exposed Schedule and Locations:

OBT MOVES/Exposed **September 8 - October 3**

Zidell Yards
September 8-12, 2020
10:00 am – 5:00 pm daily*
3121 SW. Moody Ave, Portland, OR 97239

OMSI
September 14-19, 2020
10:00 am – 5:00 pm daily*
1945 SE Water Ave, Portland, OR 97214

Hacienda Community Development Corporation
September 21-26,
10:00 am – 5:00 pm daily*
6700 NE Killingsworth St, Portland, OR 97218

TBD
September 28 - October 3

***Times subject to change. Visit www.obt.org/obt-moves/ for daily schedules. Updates will also be posted on OBT social media channels.**

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.