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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Portland, OR (Jan. 12, 2023)

This February Oregon Ballet Theatre premieres a timeless masterpiece, *La Sylphide*, bids farewell to a beloved ballerina, welcomes a new star, and throws a huge party!



(Bailey Shaw and Xuan Cheng by Jingzi Zhao)

Following a near sold out run of *The Nutcracker*, Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT) returns to the Keller stage this February with August Bournonville’s exquisite *La Sylphide*. The Romantic era ballet that was the first to put ballerinas on their toes, tells the story of a young Scottish squire whose life is upended in pursuit of an unattainable love. Four dancers will alternate in the featured roles of Sylphide and James including departing Principal Ballerina Xuan Cheng alongside longtime partner and Portland favorite, Principal Dancer Brian Simcoe, and the debut of OBT’s

newest star, Charles-Louis Yoshiyama. Complete with vengeful witches and magical forest spirits, *La Sylphide* also boasts an enchanting score to be performed live by the OBT Orchestra.

“I am thrilled to add *La Sylphide* to OBT’s repertory,” says Interim Artistic Director Peter Franc who starred in the company’s 2018 premiere of another Bournonville classic, *Napoli*. “Bournonville ballets are a delight for audiences and dancers alike, celebrating incredible technique and musicality as well as honoring the art and power of effective storytelling. We are pleased to have renowned stager Frank Andersen join us again to coach the company in these fine details.”

Andersen has travelled the world staging Bournonville ballets which remain as fresh and relevant now as when they were first performed nearly 200 years ago. “*La Sylphide* is a timeless story,” Andersen explains. “James, the Scotsman, is torn between the comfort of everyday existence and the lure of the unknown. This is a significant dilemma in our modern world. James tries to capture his dream — but, when he catches it, he also kills it, because you cannot catch a dream, because then it is not a dream anymore.”

While principal casting for *La Sylphide* is still being finalized, there are three dancers who are sure to fill key roles. Newcomer [Charles-Louis Yoshiyama will make his OBT debut](#) as James.

And in a real-world twist, OBT’s beloved principal dancer Xuan Cheng will make her farewell performances as Sylphide with long time partner Brian Simcoe in the role of James. After 10 years



Cheng departs for Hong Kong Ballet where she will take the dual role of principal dancer and ballet mistress. Cheng joined OBT in 2011 under then artistic director, Christopher Stowell. Known for her incredible classical technique and delicacy on stage, Cheng also wowed Portland audiences with her no-holds barred performances in contemporary works by William Forsythe, Nacho Duato, and Jiří Kylián among others.

Cheng's final performance will be on the closing night of *La Sylphide*, Saturday, February 25 at 7:30 pm. OBT will be honoring Cheng's career during its annual gala dinner held the same evening followed by an on-stage post show party.

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OBT presents August Bournonville's *La Sylphide*

February 18 – 25, 2023 | Keller Auditorium

Five performances only. Visit obt.org

Single Tickets \$29 – \$128

Special offers and group discounts available. Learn more [HERE](#)

OBT 2023 Gala: Love, Lost, La Sylphide

Saturday, February 25, 2023. Doors open at 4:45 pm

Keller Auditorium

Tickets on sale [HERE](#) and include: cocktails, dinner, *La Sylphide* performance featuring Xuan Cheng, and The After Pàrtaidh

The After Pàrtaidh

Saturday, February 25, 2023 | Keller Auditorium

Tickets on sale [HERE](#)

The after party follows the closing performance of *La Sylphide* at 9:30 pm

ABOUT OBT

Founded in 1989, OBT is among the nation's leading professional ballet companies, employing 250 people and attracting artists from around the globe with its reputation for excellence. OBT's mission is to share our passion for the expressive power of ballet, inspire an enduring appreciation of dance, and connect to our community through excellence in performance, training and education.

In addition to the quality of its artistic product, OBT continues to thrive organizationally and has emerged from COVID exceptionally well-positioned for the future. The nationally acclaimed OBT School is robust, with 300 students from across the country. Education and Community Engagement reaches thousands of students in classrooms across the state, 50% of whom are youth of color. OBT has a multi-year action plan to



advance diversity, equity and inclusion. The Board is actively engaged in oversight, strategy and fundraising. OBT remains debt-free; 2022 was its eighth consecutive year operating in the black financially, and the organization maintains a Board-designated building fund approaching \$5 million. Learn more at obt.org.