

HOUSTON BALLET

STANTON WELCH - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE IN
DECEMBER 2008

CONTACT:
MELISSA CARROLL
KIM BIES ESPINOSA
713 535 3226

HOUSTON BALLET PRESENTS ONE-NIGHT ONLY
JUBILEE OF DANCE: A CELEBRATION OF MOVEMENT

Stanton Welch's Sexy Signature Piece *Divergence* Highlights Performance

**Connor Walsh and Sara Webb
Perform Balanchine's Classical Showpiece *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux***

Company Revives Stanton Welch's *Punctilious*

Jubilee of Dance Dedicated to Canadian Arts Impresario David Haber

Houston, Texas - On Friday, December 5 at 7:30 p.m, Houston Ballet presents the fifth annual **Jubilee of Dance**, a special one-night only performance spotlighting the talent and artistry of the company dancers in a kaleidoscope of shorter works designed to showcase their unique talents. The highlight of the evening will be a special revival of excerpts from Houston Ballet Artistic Director Stanton Welch's signature work **Divergence**, a sexy and explosive ballet last seen in 2005 and an encore performance of Mr. Welch's dazzling classical showpiece **Punctilious** created in 2007 to showcase the rising young stars of Houston Ballet. The program will also offer an opportunity to see Houston Ballet Principal Dancers Connor Walsh and Sara Webb perform Balanchine's classical showpiece **Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux**, a work they performed in September at the prestigious New York City Center Fall for Dance Festival. The program also includes excerpts from Mr. Welch's ballets **Clear** and **Play**, and excerpts from the season's most popular works. For tickets to **Jubilee of Dance**, call 713 227 2787 or purchase online at www.houstonballet.org

The 2008 Jubilee of Dance will be dedicated to the memory of longtime Houston Ballet patron David Haber, a Canadian arts entrepreneur who produced the International Arts Festival for EXPO 67 (the 1967 World's Fair held in Montreal, Canada); served as a theatrical agent with the

William Morris Agency in New York representing clients including Marlene Dietrich, John Gielgud and Mahalia Jackson; and served as artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada from 1974-75. With his life partner Dr. Didier Piot, Mr. Haber created the David Haber and Dr. Didier Piot Scholarship Trust in 2006, the purpose of which is to provide financial assistance for male students training at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy. Mr. Haber died in September 2008 at the age of eighty-one.

Houston Ballet's **Jubilee of Dance** has established a festive annual tradition – an exciting gala performance that offers the audience a sample of everything from its eclectic repertoire. “From the audience perspective, it’s like a buffet, featuring all the company’s stars featured in one performance,” says Mr. Welch. “You get to see all your favorite artists, and the performance really showcases the depth and breadth of the talent in the company. It’s like an adult Christmas program.”

A delicious example of ballet of that order is Welch’s **Punctilious**, a ten minute romp choreographed to Dvořák’s *Carnival Overture*. The piece comprises a series of solos and ensemble work for 12 women and eight men that reflect the vivacious and exuberant quality of the score. In his own description, the Czech composer wanted to create an atmosphere of a jubilant carnival. “On every side is heard the clangor of instruments, mingled with shouts of joy and restrained hilarity of people giving vent to their feelings in the songs and dancers tunes,” wrote Dvořák. As choreographer, Mr. Welch balances the music’s energy with, as the title suggests, the precision of classical ballet vocabulary.

Dance critic Nancy Wozny in *Arts Houston* wrote, “In the world premiere department, Welch offered **Punctilious**, a pretty, white frosting of a ballet fitting a celebration. Mr. Welch explored its pure classic side and showcased the mighty talents of his dancers.” (January 2008). Dance critic Molly Glentzer observed in the *Houston Chronicle Online*, “It’s loaded with technical fireworks, and really pops at the end when the whole cast of 20 onstage in close, alternating lines.” (December 1, 2007).

Originally created in 1960 for New York City Ballet Dancers Violette Verdy and Conrad Ludlow, George Balanchine's Tchaikovsky **Pas de Deux** premiered at the City Center for Music and Dance in New York. An eight-minute display of ballet bravura and technique, the work features music that the composer belatedly created for Act III of **Swan Lake**. The work has not been seen in Houston since 1993.

The company will also perform the climactic pas de deux from James Kudelka's work, **Little Dancer**, set to the third movement of Philip Glass's Symphony No. 8 and created especially for Houston Ballet in May; the first movement of Mr. Welch's 2005 work **Falling**, set to music by Mozart; the autumn pas de deux from Mr. Welch's **The Four Seasons**, set to the music of Vivaldi; and the male solo from the Bluebird pas de deux from **The Sleeping Beauty**.

The **Jubilee of Dance** will also include excerpts from one of Mr. Welch's signature pieces, **Divergence**, set to Bizet's *L'Arlesienne*. **Divergence**, Mr. Welch's memorable, sexy take on classical ballet returns to Houston in the **Jubilee of Dance** by popular demand. The work, which was created for The Australian Ballet in 1994, had its Houston premiere in 2004. Molly Glentzer, dance critic for the *Houston Chronicle*, exclaimed, "Wow. Am I just giddy with love at first sight, or is **Divergence** the coolest thing Houston Ballet has ever done? If this is 21st century ballet, bring it on." (February 28, 2004).

Mr. Welch commented, "For years I had heard that classical ballet was dying: staggering along like some prehistoric creature, tiredly dragging its old and limited repertoire around. I have never believed this. I was raised on the beauty of classical ballet and have never seen its limitations – it was my breast milk.

"I wanted to take classical ballet, and diverge from it. The first image in the work is what one would consider very traditional classical ballet. From then on, I kept branching off into different paths. I wanted to show the women working as hard as the men. I wanted to show the inside of ballet, to make it look difficult and athletic. I wanted to show the pain and the strength and the difficulty behind what the dancers were doing, rather than hide it."

###

HOUSTON BALLET
JUBILEE OF DANCE
FACT SHEET

WHAT: JUBILEE OF DANCE

Featuring:

CLEAR (2001)

First Movement

Music by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

Concerto for Violin and Oboe in C minor and the first and second
Movements from the *Violin Concerto in G minor*

Choreography by Stanton Welch

Costume Design by Michael Kors

Lighting by Lisa Pinkham

SWAN LAKE (2006)

Act II, Big Swans

Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Choreography by Stanton Welch, after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov

Scenic and Costume Designs by Kristian Fredrikson

FALLING (2005)

First Movement

Music by W. A. Mozart

Choreography by Stanton Welch

Costume Design by Holly Hynes

Lighting Design by Lisa Pinkham

LITTLE DANCER (2008)

Pas de Deux

Music by Philip Glass

Choreography by James Kudelka

Costume Design by Denis Lavoie

Lighting by Scott Zielinsk

PLAY (2004)

Men's Dance

Music by Moby (*Play*)

Choreography and Costumes Conceived by Stanton Welch

Lighting Design by Lisa Pinkham

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Male solo from the Blue Bird Variation

Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Choreographed by Marius Petipa

MEDIÆVAL BÆBES (2008)

Ah Si Mon Moine

Music by Mediæval Bæbes

Choreography and Costume Design by Stanton Welch

Scenic Design by Thomas Boyd

Lighting Design by Lisa Pinkham

SWAN LAKE (2006)

Act I, Hungarian Solo

Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Choreography by Stanton Welch, after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov

Scenic and Costume Designs by Kristian Fredrikson

THE FOUR SEASONS (2007)

Autumn Pas de Deux

Music by Antonio Vivaldi

Choreography by Stanton Welch

Scenic Design by Thomas Boyd

Costume Design by Kandis Cook

Lighting Design by Christina R. Giannelli

SYMPHONY IN C (1947)

Fourth Movement and Finale

Music by Georges Bizet

Choreography by George Balanchine

Costume Design – after Karinska.

Lighting Design by Christina R. Giannelli

PUNCTILIOUS (2007)

Music by Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)

Carnival Overture

Choreography by Stanton Welch

SOLO (1997)

Music by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Sigiswald Kuijken's amplified recording of Bach's Suite for Violin in D Minor

Choreography by Hans van Manen

Staged by Mea Venema

Costume Design by Keso Dekker

Lighting Design by Jan Hofstra

TCHAIKOVSKY PAS DE DEUX (1960)

Choreographed by George Balanchine

Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Staged by Victoria Simon
Costumes after Karinska
Lighting by Christina R. Giannelli

DIVERGENCE (1994)

Music by Georges Bizet (1838-1875), *L'Arlésienne, Suites No. 1 & 2*
Choreography by Stanton Welch
Costumes by Vanessa Leyonhjelm
Lighting by Francis Croese

**ABOUT THE
PROGRAM:**

Houston Ballet's spectacular **Jubilee of Dance** returns with a kaleidoscope of works showcasing the present and future stars of Houston Ballet. The highlight of the evening will be an encore performance of excerpts from Stanton Welch's sexy signature piece **Divergence**, the return of the classical showpiece **Punctilious**, and George Balanchine's bravura **Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux**.

WHEN: At 7:30 pm on Friday, December 5, 2008

WHERE: Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center
501 Texas Avenue in downtown Houston

TICKETS: Start at \$17. Call (713) 227 ARTS or 1 800 828 ARTS
Also available at Houston Ballet Box Office at Wortham Theater Center
downtown at Texas at Smith Street, or purchase tickets online at
www.houstonballet.org.

FOR MORE

INFORMATION: Visit Houston Ballet online at www.houstonballet.org

###