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HoustonBallet

HOUSTON BALLET PROUDLY ANNOUNCES ITS 2021-2022 SEASON

HOUSTON, TEXAS [May 3, 2021] — Houston Ballet proudly announces its 2021-2022 season and return to live performances at its home theater at Wortham Theater Center this fall. After canceling part of its 2019-2020 season and the entirety of its 2020-2021 season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Houston Ballet is thrilled to share the joy of its jubilant return to the stage.

“We’re overjoyed to return the Wortham Theater Center stage and bring back our talented artists and supporters into the same space to share these joyous occasions once more,” says Stanton Welch AM, Houston Ballet Artistic Director. “We’ve grown from this difficult time and have been inspired by our community to keep creating art that reflects the diverse and innovative city we call home.”

The 2021-2022 season lineup includes an array of works by world-renowned artists, continuing to showcase Houston as a mecca for global talent. In addition to Welch’s own works being presented, patrons will enjoy distinct stylings from choreographers such as George Balanchine, Trey McIntyre and Houston Ballet Principal Dancers Melody Mennite and Connor Walsh. Accompanying the visually stunning performances, audiences will hear iconic scores from famous composers such as Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Leo Delibes, in addition to works set to sounds from music legends like David Bowie.

“Our subscribers and supporters are as thrilled as we are to return to live performances in September, and we’re counting on the community’s continued financial support as we return after two back-to-back crises,” says Jim Nelson, Houston Ballet Executive Director.

Full season subscriptions for the 2021-2022 season are on sale now online at houstonballet.org. Patrons in need of assistance purchasing a subscription may call Houston Ballet’s Box Office at 713.227.ARTS(2787). Full season packages start at \$95 and include *Jewels*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Pretty Things*, *Originals* and *Sylvia*. Patrons who purchase season subscriptions now may also purchase add-on ballets, offering priority seating to *The Nutcracker* and Academy Spring Showcase ahead of single tickets buyers. Houston Ballet will continue to follow the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and City of Houston as it plans its return to live events.

Houston Ballet’s 2021-2022 season is generously sponsored by: Bank of America, Baker Botts L.L.P., ConocoPhillips, H-E-B, Houston Methodist, KPRC, Shell Oil and United Airlines.

The 2021-2022 season programming lineup includes:

Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance

Sept. 30 – Oct. 3, 2021

As integral to Houston's art scene as its namesake and endower, the Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance is an annual celebration of the range of talent within Houston Ballet's professional company. These one-of-a-kind performances throughout Houston Ballet's rich history have included an array of beloved moments from iconic ballets alongside world premiere works. This year's program will also celebrate Principal Dancer Melody Mennite's 20th anniversary with the Company. Houston Ballet's glorious return to the stage will undoubtedly be a can't-miss event.

***The Nutcracker* (2016)**

Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Nov. 26 – Dec. 26, 2021

Bring the family back to the theater to share the joy of Clara's magical journey to the Kingdom of Sweets this holiday season! Stanton Welch's *The Nutcracker* is a grand spectacle of opulence and one of the most splendid versions of this holiday classic ever staged. With hundreds of roles and a myriad of exquisite details that will leave you discovering something new in every performance, Welch's *The Nutcracker* is a positively joyous treat for ballet lovers of all ages. Rejoice in the return of this time-honored tradition!

***Jewels* (1967)**

Emeralds, Rubies, Diamonds

Choreographer: George Balanchine | Music: Gabriel Fauré/ Igor Stravinsky/ Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky

February 24 – March 6, 2022

Houston Ballet's 2021-2022 season glimmers with George Balanchine's *Jewels*. Each of the three acts in this full-length ballet embody their namesake jewel through ambience and the unique musical stylings of their corresponding composer. Balanchine drew inspiration from Claude Arpels' visionary jewelry designs to create his French evocative *Emeralds* set to Gabriel Fauré, delightfully witty *Rubies* that epitomizes his collaboration with Igor Stravinsky and illustrious *Diamonds* set to Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky. The distinct moods of each of these precious gems nods to Balanchine's own spirit and influences. This stunning work of art is welcomed back to the Wortham Theater Center stage for a spring awakening that's sure to sparkle.

***Madame Butterfly* (1995)**

Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Giacomo Puccini, arranged by John Lanchbery

March 10-20, 2022

Stanton Welch's internationally acclaimed *Madame Butterfly* reemerges to captivate audiences once more. With a magnificent score by Puccini, in an arrangement by John Lanchbery, *Madame Butterfly* tells the love story of a beautiful Geisha and a handsome American. Since its premiere, *Madame Butterfly* has become Welch's international signature piece, having entered the repertoires of Houston Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Boston Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet West and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

Academy Spring Showcase

April 29-30, 2022

Houston Ballet Academy is the training ground for some of the world's most elite dancers and choreographers, making the Academy Spring Showcase a first look at the bright future of ballet. These annual performances feature iconic moments from beloved ballets as well as new works created by leading choreographers such as Stanton Welch. Be there for the debuts of the next generation of professional dancers.

Pretty Things

ONE/end/ONE (2011) | Choreographer: Jorma Elo | Music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Hush (2006) | Choreographer: Christopher Bruce | Music: Bobby McFerrin and Yo-Yo Ma
World Premiere
Pretty Things (2022) | Choreographer: Trey McIntyre | Music: David Bowie
May 20-29, 2022

This program of Houston-born ballets showcases Houston Ballet's continued tradition of supporting the world's most respected choreographers, featuring works by Jorma Elo, Christopher Bruce and Trey McIntyre. Elo's *ONE/end/ONE* reflects the dance maker's quirky and unexpected movements to create an atmosphere of playfulness. Bruce's *Hush* is a comic and moving celebration of life set to the music of Yo-Yo Ma and Bobby McFerrin. McIntyre's *Pretty Things*, set to music by David Bowie, features the men of Houston Ballet and explores peacocking behavior among male dancers. Experience this wide collection of choreographic talent, all in one blockbuster performance.

Originals

World Premiere | Choreographer: Melody Mennite
The Young Person's Guide to Orchestra (2014) | Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Benjamin Britten
June 2-12, 2022

Known for innovation and forward thinking, Houston Ballet fosters artists both on and offstage. Originals showcases a returning Houston Ballet original ballet by Stanton Welch and the premiere of a new one-act ballet by Houston Ballet Principal Dancer Melody Mennite. Welch's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* is set to Benjamin Britten's iconic work of the same title, a score written by Britten as a way to educate youth on the art of the orchestra. Created on Houston Ballet in 2014, this large-scale, collaborative piece features the entire Company and the talented musicians of the Houston Ballet Orchestra while demonstrating art's place in our culture and city. Costume designs by Holly Hynes and lighting by Lisa J. Pinkham harmonize with this exquisite work for a truly exhilarating performance. After the great success of her earlier work for the Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance in 2018, Mennite presents her first full commissioned work for the Company, a very important achievement for the 20-year Company member and Houston Ballet Academy alum. Audiences can expect enticing design and thrilling music from the growing choreographer's new work.

***Sylvia* (2019)**

Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Leo Delibes
June 16-26, 2022

After two glorious and critically acclaimed premieres in Houston and Sydney, Stanton Welch's *Sylvia* makes a fierce return to the Wortham Theater Center stage for story ballet bliss. Welch brings his own interpretation to the classic story of the strong mythological heroine, the huntress *Sylvia*, and her love for a mortal shepherd. The ballet follows her journey as she's torn between her duty and her desires. Welch's inspired work will showcase a constellation of figures from Greek mythology woven together in a tapestry of three love stories. This ballet is set to Léo Delibes' famous score and provides an opportunity to see the classic story through Welch's unique and creative narrative. This mythical romance is surrounded by gorgeous costume and scenic designs by world-renowned ballet and opera designer Jerome Kaplan, with lighting design by Lisa J. Pinkham and projections by Houston Ballet favorite Wendall K. Harrington, whose delicious designs were featured in Stanton Welch's *The Nutcracker*.

ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET

With more than 50 years of rich history, Houston Ballet has evolved into a 61-dancer Company with a budget of \$33.9 million and an endowment of \$79.2 million (as of June 2019), making it the country's fifth largest ballet company. Its Center for Dance is a \$46.6 million state-of-the-art performance space that opened in April 2011 and remains the largest

professional dance facility in America. Houston Ballet's reach is global, touring in renowned theaters in Dubai, London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and more.

Houston Ballet attracts prestigious leaders in dance. Australian choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003, raising the level of the Company's classical technique and commissioning works from dance legends such as Julia Adam, George Balanchine, Aszure Barton, Christopher Bruce, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Edwaard Liang, Trey McIntyre and Justin Peck. Executive Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the organization, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the Company's General Manager for more than a decade.

Beyond its stage presence, Houston Ballet maintains a strong foothold in continuing to foster a love for dance in future generations. Its Education and Community Engagement program reaches more than 70,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy trains more than 1,000 students every year, producing more than 50 percent of the elite athletes that comprise Houston Ballet's current Company.

For more information on Houston Ballet, visit houstonballet.org.

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