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HOUSTON BALLETT PREPARES FOR AN INCREDIBLE 2018/2019 SEASON

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HOUSTON, TEXAS [August 27, 2018] — Houston Ballet is back in full force to rehearse for the upcoming season and celebrate its triumphant return home to the Wortham Theater Center. The 2018/19 Season promises an enthralling collection of works to delight every audience, beginning with Stanton Welch AM's *The Nutcracker* in November. Also gracing the stage this season will be classic story ballets such as Ben Stevenson's *Coppélia*, Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow*, Welch's beloved *Marie* and the much-anticipated world premiere of Welch's *Sylvia*. The season also includes two mixed-repertory productions: *ROBBINS: A Centennial Celebration*, honoring the iconic Jerome Robbins, and *PREMIERES*, which includes works from Aszure Barton and Jiří Kylián along with a World Premiere from recent Tony Award winner Justin Peck.

"We have a very exciting year ahead with many Houston Ballet Premieres and two World Premieres," says Artistic Director, Stanton Welch. "Having premieres in our repertoire allows our company to continuously grow and improve. I am proud of our company for achieving exhilarating, diverse performances year after year, and I look forward to sharing the 2018/19 Season with our audiences."

"Houston Ballet's 2018/19 Season will be an unforgettable year," adds Executive Director, Jim Nelson. "We have been through so much as a company, and we look forward to returning to our home venue, the Wortham Theater."

All tickets, mini packages, and full-season subscriptions are available by calling the Box Office at 713.227.ARTS(2787) or by visiting houstonballet.org.

Full 2018/19 Season programming includes:

***The Nutcracker* (2016)**
Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Nov. 23 – Dec. 29, 2018

Houston Ballet officially returns to its home at the Wortham Theater with Stanton Welch AM's joyous production of *The Nutcracker*. Join Houston Ballet for this holiday celebration as it opens the 2018/19 season with beloved characters from this timeless classic set to Tchaikovsky's splendid score. Gather your family and friends and join Clara in holiday revelry as she journeys from her home on Christmas Eve, through a magical Christmas tree, and into the whimsical Kingdom of Sweets, accompanied by her Nutcracker Prince. [Houston Ballet's performances of *The Nutcracker* sponsored by: Houston Methodist, ConocoPhillips, United Airlines, Shell, Bank of America, H-E-B, Apache, Baker Botts, and Macy's]

Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance
Nov. 30, 2018 at 7:00pm

Houston Ballet will present *Jubilee of Dance*, a one-night-only event showcasing the amazing talents and full range of company members in excerpts of signature works and beloved classics. This year's *Jubilee of Dance* will also feature a new work choreographed by principal Melody Mennite and celebrate principal Ian Casady's 20th anniversary with the Company. [Special thanks to Margaret Alkek Williams for endowing this annual gala performance]

World Premiere
Sylvia (2019)
Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Léo Delibes
Co-produced with The Australian Ballet
Feb. 21 – March 3, 2019

Stanton 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 projections by Houston Ballet's favorite Wendall K. Harrington, whose delicious designs were featured in Stanton Welch's *The Nutcracker*. [Houston Ballet's performances of *Sylvia* sponsored by: Chevron]

ROBBINS: A Centennial Celebration

Fancy Free (1944) | Choreographer: Jerome Robbins | Music: Leonard Bernstein
Houston Ballet Premiere
The Cage (1946) | Choreographer: Jerome Robbins | Music: Igor Stravinsky
The Concert (or the Perils of Everybody) (1956) | Choreographer: Jerome Robbins | Music: Frédéric Chopin
March 7 – 10, 2019

Houston Ballet is thrilled to join ballet companies around the world in celebrating the 100th anniversary of Jerome Robbins' birth. In its first of three diverse pieces, Houston Ballet welcomes back Robbins' *Fancy Free*, a delightful glimpse into the lives of three sailors on leave during one hot summer night in 1940s New York City. The unique blend of Robbins' iconic Broadway style and balletic grace in *Fancy Free* helped launch his career and inspire the Broadway musical *On the Town*. Stanton Welch AM has specifically selected *The Cage*, a lesser-known Robbins work that features Houston Ballet's brilliant female dancers as they transform into a troupe of abstract insect-like creatures who hunt down their male prey. With Houston Ballet's final Robbins' piece, *The Concert (or the Perils of Everybody)*, it brings back one of the great comedic ballets of all time. [Houston Ballet's performances of *ROBBINS: A Centennial Celebration* sponsored by: Chevron]

PREMIERES

Houston Ballet Premiere
Come In (2006) | Choreographer: Aszure Barton | Music: Vladimir Martynov
Houston Ballet Premiere
Dream Time (1983) | Choreographer: Jiří Kylián | Music: Tōru Takemitsu
World Premiere
To Be Announced (2019) | Choreographer: Justin Peck | Music: TBA
March 21 – 24, 2019

The range of Houston Ballet's dancers is on display in a program made up entirely of premieres. After the triumph of her World Premiere *Angular Momentum* created in 2012 for Houston Ballet, Aszure Barton returns with *Come In*, a contemporary work for fourteen male dancers. Following the tremendous response to Justin Peck's *Year of the Rabbit*, Houston Ballet is pleased to welcome him back to create a World Premiere for the company. Look forward to seeing his approach, which is always energetic, current, and focused on the power of the music. Continuing Houston Ballet's tradition of bringing Jiří Kylián's ground-breaking works to Houston like *Petite Mort*, it's pleased to present Kylián's *Dream Time*. As part of the choreographer's iconic repertoire at Nederlands Dans Theater, this ballet captures the power of dance to transcend time and communicate across all barriers, beautifully danced to a gorgeous score by the legendary Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu. [Houston Ballet's performances of *PREMIERES* sponsored by: Riviana Foods, Inc.]

Academy Spring Showcase
April 26-27, 2019

Featuring the gifted young dancers of the renowned Houston Ballet Academy, the annual Academy Spring Showcase offers a glimpse into the bright future of the professional company. Hundreds of dancers grace the stage in a display of remarkable artistry, from beloved classical styles to innovative contemporary movements, all while showcasing the high level of training and technique instilled by the Academy. Join us for one of these exceptional performances that will have you falling in love with ballet all over again as you enjoy the inspiring showcase and envision the future of Houston Ballet.

***Coppélia* (1992)**

Choreographer: Ben Stevenson OBE, after Arthur Saint-Leon | Music: Léo Delibes
May 17 – 26, 2019

Houston Ballet is excited to bring back *Coppélia*, a Houston Ballet treasure created by former Artistic Director Ben Stevenson OBE. The story follows charismatic young lovers, Franz and Swanhilda, as they encounter the dollmaker Dr. Coppélius and his creation, the beautiful Coppélia. This lighthearted three-act story ballet, with colorful and charming costume and scenic designs by the legendary Desmond Heeley and a magical score by Léo Delibes, has long been a family favorite for Houstonians of all ages. [Houston Ballet's performances of *Coppélia* sponsored by: The Wortham Foundation, Inc.]

***The Merry Widow* (1975)**

Choreographer: Ronald Hynd | Music: Franz Lehár
May 31 – June 9, 2019

The Merry Widow returns to Houston Ballet with a delicious cocktail of witty and intriguing characters based on the famous 1905 operetta by Franz Lehár. Choreographed by longtime friend to the company and esteemed British choreographer Ronald Hynd, this lavish story ballet is filled with rich music and sweeping drama as decadent lives intertwine in early 20th century Europe. When a secret romance is uncovered between Count Danilo and the glamorous, wealthy widow Hanna Glawari (a former peasant girl who's transformed herself into high society), their homeland and its aristocracy plot to preserve their love affair while also saving themselves and the principality of Pontevedro from bankruptcy. With gorgeous costume and scenic designs by the acclaimed Roberta Guidi di Bagno, *The Merry Widow* is sure to enthrall audiences with its humor and grandeur. [Houston Ballet's performances of *The Merry Widow* sponsored by: ConocoPhillips and The Wortham Foundation, Inc.]

***Marie* (2009)**

Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Dmitri Shostakovich, arranged by Ermanno Florio
June 14 – 23, 2019

History becomes HERstory as *Marie* returns to the Wortham in grand fashion to close Houston Ballet's 2018/19 season. The past unfolds in Stanton Welch AM's dramatic retelling of France's infamous young monarchs, Marie Antoinette and King Louis XVI. This three-act ballet chronicles the Queen's tragic life in a time of immense social and political strife for the people of France. Beautifully designed by Kandis Cook, *Marie* is elegant and extravagant, poignant and powerful, and follows one woman's complex struggle to protect her family, friends, and nation. With compositions from Shostakovich's rich body of work, *Marie* has been performed internationally and remains an example of Welch's powerful blend of storytelling, artistry, and choreography. [Houston Ballet's performances of *Marie* sponsored by: Sidley Austin LLP and The Wortham Foundation, Inc.]

ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET

Houston Ballet has evolved into a company of 60 dancers with a budget of \$33 million, making it the country's fifth largest ballet company. With a state-of-the-art performance space built especially for the company—also the largest professional dance facility in America—Houston Ballet's \$46.6 million Center for Dance opened in April 2011, with an endowment of just over \$74.1 million (as of July 2017).

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 makers such as Christopher Bruce, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Trey McIntyre, Julia Adam, Edwaard Liang, and George Balanchine. Executive Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the company, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the company's General Manager for more than a decade.

Houston Ballet has toured extensively both nationally and internationally. Over the past fifteen years, the company has appeared in renowned theaters in London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and in cities large and small across the United States.

Houston Ballet's Education and Community Engagement Program reaches more than 60,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy teaches more than one thousand students every year, and approximately 50 percent of the current company was trained by the Academy.

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

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