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HOUSTON BALLET ANNOUNCES 2018/2019 SEASON

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HOUSTON, TEXAS [February 9, 2018] — Houston Ballet Artistic Director, Stanton Welch AM, announces the company's 2018/19 Season, an enthralling collection of works to delight every audience. Returning to the Wortham Theater, the season begins with Welch's spectacular production of *The Nutcracker*. Houston Ballet highlights the season with a World Premiere by Welch, *Sylvia*, a mythological love story, co-produced with The Australian Ballet. Ben Stevenson's treasured *Coppélia* returns, along with Ronald Hynd's comical ballet, *The Merry Widow*, and Welch's lavish *Marie*. The season also includes **ROBBINS: A Centennial Celebration**, featuring *Fancy Free* and *The Concert (or the Perils of Everybody)*, as well as a Houston Ballet Premiere, *The Cage*. An exciting evening titled, **PREMIERES**, features two Houston Ballet Premieres, Aszure Barton's *Come In* and Jiří Kylián's *Dream Time*, and a World Premiere by 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," says 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. Houston Ballet is thrilled for the return of beloved classics *Coppélia*, *The Merry Widow*, and *Marie*. Our mixed repertory programs, **ROBBINS: A Centennial Celebration** and **PREMIERES**, will be captivating and strong performances for all audiences."

Season ticket packages are available by calling the Box Office at 713.227.ARTS(2787) or by visiting houstonballet.org. Full 2018/19 season programming includes:

World Premiere

Sylvia (2019)

Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Léo Delibes

Co-produced with The Australian Ballet

Feb. 21 – March 3, 2019

Stanton Welch AM 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 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

We're thrilled to join ballet companies around the world in celebrating the 100th anniversary of Jerome Robbins' birth. In our first of three diverse pieces, we welcome 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 our brilliant female dancers as they transform into a troupe of abstract insect-like creatures who hunt down their male prey. With our final Robbins piece, *The Concert (or the Perils of Everybody)*, we bring 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 our 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*, we're pleased to welcome him back to Houston Ballet 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 our tradition of bringing Jiří Kylián's ground-breaking works to Houston like *Petite Mort*, we're 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.]

***Coppélia* (1992)**

Choreographer: Ben Stevenson OBE, after Arthur Saint-Leon | Music: Léo Delibes

May 17 – 26, 2019

We're 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 our 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.]

***The Nutcracker* (2016)**

Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Nov. 23 – Dec. 29, 2018

We officially return to our home at the Wortham Theater with Stanton Welch AM's joyous production of *The Nutcracker*. Join us for this holiday celebration as we open 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]

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.

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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