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**HOUSTON BALLET PRESENTS Sparrow: A Triple Bill Celebrating**

**The Timeless And The Contemporary, June 12 - 22, 2025**

**PHOTOS & VIDEOS:** [[LINK HERE](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/edk1v3dqv9zvcp6qgotcr/ANVYwdN6V12kb_vjuVBv2P8?rlkey=c16t50bb1bldrro3iaths6y9u&st=eweptrh2&dl=0)]

**HOUSTON, TX – May 2025 –** Prepare to be captivated as Houston Ballet announces its last program of the season, *Sparrow: A Triple Bill,* an enthralling showcase of three one-act ballets by esteemed choreographers spanning generations. This exquisite production celebrates George Balanchine, Houston Ballet Artistic Director Emeritus Ben Stevenson O.B.E., and Artistic Director Stanton Welch AM, each contributing to a dazzling evening of dance artistry.

“Our final series of the season offers exciting challenges for our dancers, as they move between the crystalline precision of Balanchine's iconic Theme & Variations, the evocative poetry in Stanton Welch’s Sparrow, and the beautiful serenity of Ben Stevenson’s Four Last Songs.” said Julie Kent, Artistic Director at Houston Ballet. “It’s a powerful testimony of the depth of range within our repertoire and of the inspiring versatility of our artists."

The program features:

**Sparrow**

Choreographer: Stanton Welch AM | Music: Simon & Garfunkel

Energetic, vibrant, and heartwarming, Stanton Welch’s *Sparrow* brings the iconic music of Simon & Garfunkel to life on stage in an uplifting celebration of '60s culture. Featuring timeless hits like “Cecilia” and “Scarborough Fair,” the ballet blends nostalgic charm with bold, contemporary choreography. Dancers embody the era in deep jewel-toned turtlenecks and slim corduroy bell-bottoms, adding visual texture to the rhythmic movement.

Premiering in 2022, *Sparrow* is a rare male-centered ballet, spotlighting 19 men and just five women—an unconventional structure that challenges traditional casting norms and highlights the strength and dynamism of its male ensemble with several standout solos.

**Four Last Songs**

*Choreographer: Ben Stevenson O.B.E | Music: Richard Strauss*

Set to the sweeping, operatic score by Richard Strauss, *Four Last Songs* is a deeply emotional reflection on the journey of life and the inevitability of letting go. Stevenson’s choreography weaves narrative, music, and visual poetry into a work of profound resonance—described by SFGATE as “ineffably moving.” Each of the four movements serves as a meditative ceremony of farewell, capturing the universal human experience of love, loss, and acceptance.

Returning to Houston Ballet’s stage for the first time since 2007, this poignant work follows the recent revival of Stevenson’s *Sleeping Beauty*, honoring the enduring legacy of Ben Stevenson. The performance features live accompaniment by acclaimed soprano Nicole Heaston, adding a powerful vocal dimension to this stirring ballet.

**Theme and Variations**

*Choreographer: George Balanchine | Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky*

*Theme and Variations* is a brilliant display of classical ballet at its most intricate and refined. Set to the final movement of Tchaikovsky’s Suite No. 3 in G major—a series of 12 variations that build to a triumphant polonaise—Balanchine’s choreography is both technically demanding and visually majestic. The ballet begins with a corps of twelve women and a principal couple, gradually unfolding into a grand, layered arrangement of solos, pas de deux, and ensemble

sections.

Originally choreographed in 1947 for Ballet Theatre, this work exemplifies Balanchine’s deep musicality and reverence for classical form, transforming each variation into a study of elegance, precision, and symmetry. Last performed by Houston Ballet in 2016, *Theme and Variations* returns to the stage as a celebration of tradition reimagined through the lens of one of ballet’s most innovative choreographers.

**Performance Details**

Underwritten by Hallie Vanderhider, this triple bill highlights Houston Ballet’s commitment to honoring tradition while embracing the creative spirit of today. Performance details are as follows:

Schedule: 7:30 p.m. on June 12, 14, 20 & 21, 2025

2 p.m. on June 15 & 22, 2025

Venue: Wortham Theater Center

501 Texas Avenue, Houston, TX 77002

Tickets: Visit[www.houstonballet.org](http://www.houstonballet.org)

**ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET**

With over 50 years of rich history, Houston Ballet has evolved into a company with a budget of $37.6 million and an endowment of $97.5 million (as of June 2023), making it the country’s fourth-largest ballet company. Its $46.6 million state-of-the-art performance space, the Houston Ballet Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance opened in April 2011. In addition, Houston Ballet's reach is global, touring theaters in Dubai, London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Tokyo and more.

Australian choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003. Welch has choreographed 43 new works for Houston Ballet during his tenure while ensuring the growth of the Company’s repertoire by presenting works from George Balanchine, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, John Neumeier, and Jerome Robbins. Welch continues the legacy of Houston Ballet being a choreographic Eden by commissioning over 30 works from world-renowned choreographers including Aszure Barton, Trey McIntyre, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and Justin Peck. Julie Kent joined Welch as Artistic Director in 2023, after serving as Artistic Director of The Washington Ballet from 2016 – 2023 and following a storied career as a Principal ballerina of American Ballet Theatre - the longest-tenured dancer in ABT’s 85-year history. 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 85,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy trains more than 1,000 students every year, producing more than 60 percent of the extraordinary artists that comprise Houston Ballet’s current Company. For more information on Houston Ballet, visit [houstonballet.org](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.houstonballet.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7CALee%40houstonballet.org%7C64e1cc87723949d1a10408dc32704e3b%7C96ffe6484e0e4d839e7a0b72af0ac187%7C0%7C0%7C638440705143801451%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=VlLWJ3L1c7HffofHZEmSzSNXbtA4wnnmnjGzrK9zMKE%3D&reserved=0) ###