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**The Portland Ballet
Celebrates Balanchine's 'Who Cares?'
in its Spring Concert**

DETAILS

What: The Portland Ballet Spring Concert 2017 – *Who Cares?*

Dates: May 26-27, 2017

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$5-\$35

Venue: Lincoln Performance Hall, 1620 SW Park at Market

Information: theportlandballet.org or 503.750.3157

Program:

- *Who Cares?* (highlights) – choreography by George Balanchine, staged by John Clifford, music by George Gershwin
- *Les Sylphides* – choreography by Michel Fokine, music by Frédéric Chopin and Alexander Glazunov
- *Festival Russe* – choreography by Tom Gold, music by various Russian composers
- *Abandon All Plans* – choreography by Lane Hunter, music by Hans Zimmer, Amiina, Zoe Keating, and Loney Dear

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Portland Ballet will feature highlights of George Balanchine's *Who Cares?* in its Spring Concert May 26-27 at Lincoln Performance Hall at Portland State University. The mixed-repertoire program of four short works explores a variety of genres and styles, ranging from classical to contemporary, and will showcase the skills of TPB's advanced Youth Company and Career Track dancers.

TPB commissioned Portland choreographer Lane Hunter to create a new work, *Abandon All Plans*.

The concert will also commemorate **the Ballets Russes** with Michel Fokine's *Les Sylphides* and Tom Gold's *Festival Russe*. This year marks the 100th anniversary that the legendary ballet troupe performed in Portland. Ballets Russes, founded by Sergei Diaghilev and based in Paris, toured all over the world 1909-1929. It was known for its high technical quality and masterful star dancers, including Balanchine, Vaslav Nijinsky, and Anna Pavlova. It also engaged leading artists of its time and encouraged ground-breaking collaborations among different artistic genres, commissioning music composers including Igor Stravinsky, Claude Debussy, and Sergei Prokofiev, and visual artists and designers including Pablo Picasso, Coco Chanel, and Henri Matisse.

Who Cares? is playful yet technically challenging, and the company will perform several excerpts featuring both groups and soloists. It is important to TPB to have a Balanchine ballet on the program every season, and TPB has not done *Who Cares?* for many years. TPB is one of the few schools in the United States with ties to The George Balanchine Trust, giving its students rare learning and performing opportunities. Choreography is by Balanchine, staging is by John Clifford, and music is by George Gershwin.

Les Sylphides, choreographed by Michel Fokine with music by Frédéric Chopin and Alexander Glazunov, appears classical now but it was revolutionary when it was first performed in 1909 because it did not have a plot. It contains elements of both Petipa classics and of landmark ballets that came later, such as Balanchine's *Serenade*. The Ballets Russes performed *Les Sylphides* in Portland when it was on tour in 1917.

Festival Russe is a new addition to TPB's repertoire that also celebrates the tradition of the Ballets Russes by using music from several early 20th century Russian composers. Tom Gold, formerly a soloist with New York City Ballet, choreographed it on Ballet Academy East, a prominent school in New York City. Gold will come to Portland in May to work with the dancers.

Abandon All Plans is a new work that challenges TPB's classically trained dancers with swirly, organic movements and group partnering sequences. **Lane Hunter**, who created it, is an inventive choreographer who worked with TPB most recently during its 2016 Summer Ballet Intensive. He performed for many years for BodyVox, creating numerous original works, and his choreography has been seen as far away as Beijing. A Portland native, Hunter earned a BFA in Dance from Brigham Young University, was a member of Kim Robards Dance in Colorado, worked on Renaissance Cruises, and performed on music videos for Blues Travelers and Michael Jackson.

The Portland Ballet, led by artistic directors Nancy Davis and Anne Mueller, nurtures young dancers from age three to 22. TPB students are trained with professional intent by a faculty that includes some of the nation's finest dancers and choreographers, with experience at companies such as the National Ballet, the original Los Angeles Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Royal Danish Ballet, Trey McIntyre Project and BodyVox. Professionally produced performance experience is at the core of TPB training. TPB graduates have gone on to professional dance careers with companies such as Grand Rapids Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Sacramento Ballet, Houston Ballet, St. Louis Ballet, Royal Swedish Ballet, Batsheva, LEV, Ballet Memphis and Ballet West.

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