

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CONTACT:** Laura Grimes, laura@theportlandballet.org, 971.322.9452**The Portland Ballet presents 'Up Close'**Pre-professional Career Track dancers star
in iconic ballets and showcase their choreography**DETAILS****UP CLOSE****Dates:** June 7-8, 2019**Times:** 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday**Where:** The Portland Ballet Studio Theatre, 6250 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland, OR 97239**Tickets:** Start at \$10**Information:** theportlandballet.org or 503-750-3157**Discounts:**

- **Group discount:** 10 or more tickets will receive 10% off
- **Good deals:** Limited Arts Card and Arts for All tickets

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Portland Ballet presents *Up Close*, featuring George Balanchine's iconic *Concerto Barocco*, August Bournonville's classic *Le Conservatoire*, and *Plant Dreams Deep*, a tapestry of new work choreographed by the Career Track dancers with Josie Moseley.

The showcase is a rare chance to see the academy's superbly trained pre-professional Career Track dancers in an intimate setting, with only 80 seats available per show. We highly recommend reserving spots early.

Launched in 2015, The Portland Ballet's Career Track program offers well-trained, advanced dancers with professional intent a setting that simulates a professional company experience. Students participate in an intense and personal learning environment with a rigorous schedule that requires about 25 to 30 hours of work a week. In addition to classes, rehearsals and performances, dancers receive supportive one-on-one evaluation and coaching in technique, performance skills and goal setting, as well as tools for auditioning, injury prevention, cross training and nutrition.

Three concerts will take place June 7-8, 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, at The Portland Ballet Studio Theatre, 6250 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland, Ore. Tickets start at only \$10. Information: theportlandballet.org or 503-750-3157.

PROGRAM***Concerto Barocco* (1st movement)****by George Balanchine, staged by John Clifford, music by Johann Sebastian Bach**

Two dynamic leads echo a double violin concerto in this quintessential Balanchine ballet that began as an exercise for School of American Ballet and was first performed in 1941. It was one of three ballets on the program at New York City Ballet's first performance in 1948. Clifford, TPB artistic advisor and choreographer who staged the piece, was founder and artistic director of the original Los Angeles Ballet, and a former principal dancer and choreographer with New York City Ballet. He

is widely considered to be Balanchine's choreographic protégé. TPB founder and artistic director Nancy Davis, who studied at School of American Ballet, has danced *Concerto Barocco* many times, first at age 14. She describes performing it as exhilarating because it's technically challenging as well as athletic and aerobic, a test of stamina, all set to Bach's beautiful *Concerto in D minor for Two Violins*. She says, "*Concerto Barocco* is a special honor to us as it is the first ballet that we have received from New York City Ballet. That brings the total number of Balanchine ballets in TPB's repertoire to ten, with nine ballets granted by the George Balanchine Trust."

Le Conservatoire (Pas d'école divertissement or The Dancing School)

by August Bournonville, staged by Michelle Davis, music by Holger Simon Paulli

Bournonville created this ballet for The Royal Danish Ballet in 1849, taking inspiration from his five years at the Paris Conservatoire, training with the great ballet master Auguste Vestris. The divertissement re-creates a ballet class with challenging exercises, displaying some of the basics of the Bournonville style: rigorous, quick footwork contrasted with light, graceful arm movements. TPB faculty member Michelle Davis, who staged the ballet, became familiar with Bournonville's style first during her early years when she trained in Dallas, Texas, under the direction of former Danish dancers Flemming and Vivi Flindt, and later as a professional dancer in Copenhagen at The Royal Danish Ballet, where the Bournonville tradition is its core calling card.

Plant Dreams Deep

by The Portland Ballet's Career Track dancers with Josie Moseley, music by Meredith Monk

Inspiration for the tapestry of individual works came after a long conversation between the dancers and Ellis Stemple, who spent nearly a year at Standing Rock and the standoff about granting access to the Dakota Access Pipeline on ancient tribal land. Circles, lines, and key repetitive phrases seamlessly weave and tie together personal choreography that bring to life movements and stories shared by Stemple – Native American hand gestures, tales told by elders, and some of the fierce, even violent confrontations. Dancers who created pieces have their own voices, but with clarity, patience, and generosity, they learned to give it to the others, and as everyone takes up each other's voices, they form a stronger harmony. Embodying Stemple's experience and the eventual end of the standoff, that unison is underscored by tension as it's quietly turned on its side. A fracturing happens, and then a breaking off, first visually and then kinesthetically. Dramatic moments seize attention, but it's the silent spaces in between that need to be heeded.

THE PORTLAND BALLET

The Portland Ballet, a dance academy in Portland, Oregon, is committed to fostering the future of ballet by building the next generation of dancers and audiences. Founded in 2001, TPB is shaped by the vision, artistic experience, and family-centered sensibility of the founding directors. **Artistic Director Nancy Davis** and **Executive Director Jim Lane** trained at the School of American Ballet and enjoyed distinguished professional careers in companies throughout the U.S. After retiring as principal dancers of the Los Angeles Ballet – where their partnership onstage led to a marriage and family off the stage – they moved to Portland, Oregon, and founded The Portland Ballet.

Graduates have carried TPB's reputation for excellence into professional companies and conservatory programs around the world. TPB alumni have gone on to dance with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Houston Ballet, Boston Ballet, Miami City Ballet, Saint Louis Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Ballet West, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Royal Swedish Ballet, Eugene Ballet, Batsheva Dance Company, Maryinsky Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, and other professional companies.

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