

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TERRENCE S. ORR
PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

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**High-res photos available upon request*

**Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Dance Theatre of Harlem Join Forces for August
Wilson Center Performances**

Mixed Repertory Program Marks PBT's First With Another Professional Company



PITTSBURGH, PA (February 2017) – Onstage March 16-26, at the August Wilson Center, BNY Mellon presents Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Dance Theatre of Harlem for a mixed bill production celebrating the diversity of talent and styles in American ballet.

The collaboration marks PBT's first known main-stage partnership with another professional ballet company. The production is presented in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Dance Council and Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and is made possible with support from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Benter Foundation and Richard E. Rauh. Additional community partners include Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Point Park University and the University of Pittsburgh.

With five works on each eclectic program, the audience will see dance from choreographers, including Glen Tetley, Dwight Rhoden and Robert Garland, and hear music from artists, such as Johannes Brahms, Aretha Franklin, James Brown and Pittsburgh native Billy Strayhorn.

Each company will perform signatures from its own repertoire, and the two troupes will collaborate on a staging of the bravura "Black Swan Pas de Deux" from "Swan Lake." The Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra will perform the Billy Strayhorn hits of PBT's "StrayLifeLushHorn" for all shows.

The performance run will feature two alternating programs. PBT's "StrayLifeLushHorn" and "Ave Maria," and the collaborative staging of the "Black Swan Pas de Deux" will appear on each. DTH will perform two selections for each performance, rotating from a total of four works.

"I am thrilled to have Dance Theatre of Harlem and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre share the stage at the August Wilson Center in March. I hope that this collaboration between two companies can be a model for a future in which the conversation about art is compelling and inclusive," said Virginia Johnson, DTH artistic director. "Dance Theatre of Harlem is committed to using the art form of classical ballet to transform lives. I am so pleased to work with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre to bring first-hand experiences of this power to schools and community centers across the city."

Artistic directors Terrence S. Orr, of PBT, and Johnson, of DTH, first had the opportunity to collaborate over 30 years ago. Johnson was a principal dancer when Orr staged "Fall River Legend" and "Graduation Ball" at DTH.

"It's an honor to have this opportunity to collaborate with Virginia again," Orr said. "This is the first time we've joined forces with another company, and it's an honor to do it with one of the very best."

The companies themselves were both founded in 1969 – during a golden age in American dance.

PBT's founders were on a mission to bring Pittsburgh cultural opportunities on par with major metro areas like New York.

And in New York City, Arthur Mitchell and Karel Shook were inspired to start a school that would offer children – especially in Mitchell's home community of Harlem – the opportunity to train in dance and the allied arts. The first African American to be a permanent member of a major U.S. ballet company, New York City Ballet, Mitchell continued to break barriers with his own organization. From a successful school, DTH soon grew into a professional company featuring a roster of diverse, exceptional dancers. Today, DTH tours extensively throughout the United States and abroad with a continued commitment to inclusivity in dance.

"I think this performance makes a strong statement about the diversity of talent that we have in ballet and how much richer that makes our art. We think it's really important to continue this

conversation in Pittsburgh, both through our performances together and also the educational programming we're developing in conjunction with it," Orr said.

The nine-performance run kicks off with a Private Performance and Preview Party at 6 p.m. Thursday, March 16. Event tickets start at \$150 and are available at www.pbt.org. Proceeds benefit PBT's Community Youth Scholarship program, an accessibility initiative that awards need-based scholarships to talented students between the ages of 5 and 8.

The run continues Friday, March 17, through Sunday, March 26. Tickets start at \$28, and are available at www.pbt.org, 412-456-6666 or by visiting the Box Office at Theater Square.

EXTENDING THE PARTNERSHIP BEYOND THE STAGE

In addition to the performances, PBT and DTH will partner on a lineup of educational programs designed to engage with children and community members in neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh.

Programs range from master classes for dance students to discussions and demonstrations at local schools. Highlights include "informance" demos and discussions at Point Park University (4 p.m. March 21) and the University of Pittsburgh (4 p.m. March 22) and a panel on diversity in dance presented at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, March 19, at the August Wilson Center as part of the Cultural Trust's Pittsburgh Humanities Festival. For a complete list of programs, please visit www.pbt.org/performances/dth.

PBT also convened a committee of nearly 50 community members who are committed to advancing diversity in the arts and have been instrumental in shaping the vision for the engagement events that will complement the program.

The committee is co-chaired by PBT Trustee Dr. Melonie Nance and Dr. Umamaheswar Duvvuri – PBT School parents – as well as Ann and Leroy Metz, also a PBT trustee. Committee members represent organizations like Vibrant Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Dance Council, the YWCA and Hill Dance Academy Theatre and bring expertise in the arts, education, media and business.

PROGRAM LINEUP

Program 1

Sat., March 18 | Thurs., March 23 | 2 p.m. Sat., March 25 | Sun., March 26

- "Brahms Variations" (Performed by DTH)
- "Ave Maria" (Performed by PBT)
- "Black Swan Pas de Deux" (Performed by PBT & DTH)
- "Dialogues" (Performed by DTH)
- "StrayLifeLushHorn" (Performed by PBT)

Program 2

Fri., March 17 | Sun., March 19 | Fri., March 24 | 8 p.m. Sat., March 25

- "New Bach" (Performed by DTH)
- "Ave Maria" (Performed by PBT)
- "Black Swan Pas de Deux" (Performed by PBT & DTH)
- "StrayLifeLushHorn" (Performed by PBT)
- "Return" (Performed by DTH)

SHOW TIMES

- Thursday, March 16, at 7 p.m. – Private Performance & Preview Party
- Friday, March 17, at 8 p.m. (Program II)
- Saturday, March 18, at 8 p.m. (Program I)
- Sunday, March 19, at 2 p.m. (Program II)
- Thursday, March 23, at 7 p.m. (Program I)
- Friday, March 24, at 8 p.m. (Program II)
- Saturday, March 25, at 2 p.m. (Program I)
- Saturday, March 25, at 8 p.m. (Program II)
- Sunday, March 26, at 2 p.m. (Program I)

THE REPERTOIRE

"Brahms Variations" performed by Dance Theatre of Harlem

Choreography: Robert Garland | Music: Johannes Brahms | Lighting: Roma Flowers | Costumes: Pamela Allen Cummings

Choreographer Robert Garland says his elegant "Brahms Variations" is inspired by Louis XIV, "French patron of the arts and grandfather of the ballet canon. Arthur Mitchell was a big persona in my life, a Harlem version of the French Monarch. So, the ballet is, in part, Louis the XIV's court meeting Harlem swag."

"Dialogues" performed by Dance Theatre of Harlem

Choreography: Glen Tetley | Music: Alberto Ginastera | Costumes: John MacFarlane | Lighting: Alex Fabozzi | Staging: Augustus van Heerden, Keith Saunders & Kellye Saunders

Master choreographer Glen Tetley's dynamic and sensual exploration of opposites – *Dialogues* – was created for Dance Theatre of Harlem to Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera's powerful Piano Concerto (Op. 28) in 1991. Virtuositic in scope, *Dialogues* is a terrific vehicle for a new generation of company dancers.

"New Bach" performed by Dance Theatre of Harlem

*Choreography: Robert Garland | Music: J. S. Bach Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV 1041
Lighting: Roma Flowers | Costumes: Pamela Allen | Premiere: 1999, City Center, NYC*

"New Bach" is an expression of post-modern, urban neoclassicism with infusions from the popular dance vernacular. "Prejudices are sophisticatedly acquired tastes that destroy innocence ...and it is through dance that man has the possibility to find himself again." - Karel Shook (from *Elements of Classical Ballet Technique*, 1977)

"Return" performed by Dance Theatre of Harlem

*Choreography Robert Garland | Music Aretha Franklin and James Brown | Lighting Roma Flowers
Costumes: Pamela Allen-Cummings | Choreography: Robert Garland | Premiere: 1999, City Center, NY*

A rousing blend of the elegance of classical ballet and the gritty drive of soul music, *Return* is a quintessential DTH ballet. To songs of Aretha Franklin and James Brown, Garland pushes the boundaries of ballet technique, incorporating vernacular movement from the African American experience. From pas de bourrée to the Cabbage Patch, ballonné to the bump, the ballet fulfills DTH's idea of what it means to be "classically American."

"Ave Maria" performed by PBT

*Choreography, Costumes & Set Design: Dwight Rhoden | Music Giulio Caccino |
Lighting: Michael Korsch (2005); Robert Hand (2008) | Premiere: 1995*

Originally an excerpt from "The Grapes of Wrath (1995)," "Ave Maria" is a passionate pas de deux for a male and female dancer. The physical choreography juxtaposes spirituality and sensuality while Michael Korsch's spare lighting heightens the introspective atmosphere. In 2002, *Dance Magazine* wrote, "Rhoden's dancers dive headfirst into an innovative vocabulary of shapes, body undulations, and warp-speed movement phrases, risky jumps, falls, and slides."

"StrayLifeLushHorn" performed by PBT with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra

Choreography: Dwight Rhoden | Music: Billy Strayhorn songs, "Schwiphti," "Far Eastern Weekend," "Tonk," "Lush Life," "Something to Live For," "Rain Check," "Chelsea Bridge," "Take the A Train" | Music Arranged by: Dr. John Wilson | Vocalist: Kim Nazarian | Costume Design: Miho K. Morinoue | Lighting Design: Michael Korsch | Premiere: May 2000, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Dwight Rhoden's "StrayLifeLushHorn" is set to nine Billy Strayhorn selections, ranging from his well-known works to those more obscure and orchestral in nature. In preparation for its 2000 PBT world premiere, Rhoden chose pieces from each era of the Strayhorn and Duke Ellington relationship to show the range and nuance of the body of work. The Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra,

with vocalist Kim Nazarian, will accompany Rhoden's contemporary, stylistic approach to "merging the music and movements of today and yesterday."

"Black Swan Pas de Deux" performed by PBT and DTH

Music Peter I. Tchaikovsky | Choreography Marius Petipa

Originally created in 1877, "Swan Lake" ranks among the most enduring of classical ballets. The Act III Pas de Deux – or the Black Swan Pas de Deux as this selection is popularly known – is a showcase for bravura technique, including Black Swan Odile's famous 32 fouettés. In this collaborative staging, DTH dancers will perform the entre and adagio and PBT will perform the variations and coda on March 16, 18, 23, 25 (matinee) and 26; and on March 17, 19, 24, 25, (evening), PBT will perform the entre and adagio and DTH will perform the variations and coda.