

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TERRENCE S. ORR
PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

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**High-res photos available upon request*

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Presents North American Premiere of Deane's 'Romeo and Juliet'

'Romeo and Juliet' Marks PBT Season Finale April 21-23, at the Benedum



PITTSBURGH, PA (March 2017) – In the company's 2016-2017 Season finale, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT) will present the North American premiere of Derek Deane's dramatic "Romeo and Juliet" with the PBT Orchestra in five performances April 21-23, at the Benedum Center.

The production features opulent costume and scenic designs by Roberta Guidi di Bagno, a native of Italy, and new lighting designs by Michael Korsch. Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Music Director and Conductor, Charles Barker will lead the PBT Orchestra in Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev's famous score.

Deane originally choreographed his interpretation of Shakespeare's tragic love story in 1998 for English National Ballet's in-the-round production at Royal Albert Hall. In 1999, Deane recreated the production for the traditional proscenium stage, which is the version PBT will introduce to North American audiences this spring.

Deane's is a classic reading of Shakespeare's story of star-crossed lovers designed in the decadent aesthetic of Renaissance Verona. Standout settings are the moonlit balcony scene and the eerie crypt with its somber procession of candle-bearing monks.

Many credit Prokofiev's score for cementing "Romeo and Juliet's" place among the major works in the ballet repertoire. The intense, richly varied music is particularly famous for its character portraits and an emotional range that contains notes of both tenderness and brutality.

Prokofiev composed the score in 1935, though it wasn't performed as a ballet until 1938. Three suites and 10 piano pieces extracted from the score were the first to reach the public. Although it was intended for the Kirov ballet, "Romeo and Juliet" premiered instead in Brno, Czechoslovakia (now in the Czech Republic) in 1938. It didn't debut in the Soviet Union until the Kirov staged it in 1940.

NPR's Ted Libbey, author of its "Listener's Encyclopedia of Classical Music," says "Romeo and Juliet" is one of the most beautiful scores of the 20th century, and certainly one of the greatest compositions for the ballet stage, on a par with the great Tchaikovsky ballets."

The nuance of the music and drama of the story set the scene for expressive dancing that demands both technical and emotional intensity from its performers.

"I think Derek lends a certain authenticity to the dancing and the acting that make the drama of this story very human and personal to the people dancing it," said Terrence S. Orr, PBT artistic director. "His staging of 'Romeo and Juliet' is sweeping and theatrical, but it also reminds us why the themes of this 16th-century story remain so relevant today."

"Romeo and Juliet's" dancing follows its own character arc from the rapturous first encounter to their tragic reunion in the crypt. The choreography also capitalizes on the physicality of the male dancers in dueling scenes between the Montagues and Capulets and raises tensions with frenzied sword-fighting sequences.

In addition to the character development of Romeo and Juliet, roles to watch include the fiery Tybalt and stony Lady Capulet, spotlighted in a heartrending reaction to the death of her nephew.

Tickets for "Romeo and Juliet" start at \$28, and are available at www.pbt.org, by calling 412-456-6666 or visiting the Box Office at Theater Square. Groups of 8 or more can save up to 50 percent on tickets by calling 412-454-9101 or emailing groupsales@pittsburghballet.org.

Performance Times

- Friday, April 21, 2017 – 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday, April 22, 2017 – 2:00 p.m.
- Saturday, April 22, 2017 – 8:00 p.m.
- Sunday, April 23, 2017 – 12:00 p.m.
- Sunday, April 23, 2017 – 4:30 p.m.

About Derek Deane

Derek Deane trained at the Royal Ballet School from 1970 to 1972 and was invited to join the professional company at age 18. He was promoted to soloist, principal and finally to senior principal dancer by 1982. He danced most of the major roles in the Royal Ballet's classical repertoire and in works by the most important choreographers of the 20th century. He began choreographing during his performing career, creating ballets for the Royal Ballet, Sadler's Wells Ballet and Birmingham Ballet. After retiring from the stage, he worked independently as an international teacher and choreographer and, in 1990, became resident choreographer and assistant director at Ballet di Roma in Italy. Deane returned to England and from 1993 to 2001 was artistic director of the English National Ballet (ENB). He premiered new productions of major classical works, including "Giselle," "Swan Lake," "The Sleeping Beauty," "Paquita" and "The Nutcracker," as well as his own original works. He pioneered ENB's hugely successful "in the round" productions: His arena version of "Swan Lake" has been seen by over 750,000 people worldwide. His "Alice in Wonderland," "Swan Lake" and "Strictly Gershwin" were at the time the highest-earning productions in the company's history and had record-breaking attendance. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire for Excellence in Dance in 2000. Deane created three world premieres for PBT: "Hungry Heart . . . We All Have One!" (2004), "Simply Simon" (2005) and "Anything Goes!" (2006). In February, PBT reprised his "Alice in Wonderland" at the Benedum Center. His most recent work, "Hamlet," had its world premiere at Shanghai Ballet in 2016.