

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Meghan Swartz
Associate Director of Communications
412-454-9117
mswartz@pittsburghballet.org

High-res photos available upon request.

Principal Ballerina to Close 17-year Career with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Julia Erickson to Give Farewell Performance at October Mixed Repertory Program



PITTSBURGH, PA (Feb. 1, 2018) - Julia Erickson, one of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's (PBT) longest-tenured principal dancers, has announced her plans to close her 17-year career with PBT following the company's 2018-2019 Season opener in October.

This season, fans can still look forward to seeing Erickson dance one of her signature roles, Odette/Odile, in PBT's production of "Swan Lake," on stage Feb. 16-25, at the Benedum Center. Erickson will star as Odette/Odile, commonly known as White Swan/Black

Swan, in the 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, performance. She also is premiering original choreography in the "PBT: New Works" program, March 16-25, at the August Wilson Center, and preparing for the lead singing role of Anita in "West Side Story Suite," part of PBT's May 4-6, Jerome Robbins and Leonard Bernstein celebration presented by UPMC. The date of her fall farewell performance will be announced in early October.

"I have treasured my time at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. The rich and rewarding personal and professional relationships I have developed will be with me forever. In this spirit I will relish my last months here with the company in the rehearsal studio and on the Benedum Center stage more than ever," Erickson said. "As bittersweet as my departure is, I will remain connected to all of the people in the community who mean so much to me as I branch out and engage in new opportunities. I am excited to see where this new direction takes me, while knowing that I am forever better because of my time with this organization. I love you PBT and I love you Pittsburgh!"

Erickson joined PBT in 2001, advanced to soloist in 2004 and was promoted to principal in 2009. She has spent the majority of her nearly 20 years as a professional dancer in Pittsburgh.

Following her final bow with PBT, Erickson plans to branch out in Pittsburgh and beyond to explore a new chapter of her career. First up is a summer touring season, including an engagement at the [Joyce Theater](#) in New York City, with Barak Ballet, where she earned [accolades from the Los Angeles Times](#) during guest performances last summer.

“Julia is a smart, charismatic dancer, with versatility and dramatic range that set her apart on stage. She brings a special presence to every role and has gathered an immense following over her years with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. She will be dearly missed by her colleagues in the studio and her fans in the audience,” said PBT Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr. “We are grateful that she has dedicated so much of her career to PBT and we look forward to seeing what’s next for her.”

Erickson grew up in Seattle, and began dancing at Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) School at age seven. She continued training, on scholarship, through the Professional Division where she met her husband Aaron Ingley. She also trained for three summers at San Francisco Ballet School and toured with PNB to Europe and Asia, including performance engagements at the Edinburgh Festival and Sadler’s Wells Theatre. She went on to dance for two seasons with Texas Ballet Theatre before joining PBT in 2001.

With PBT, Erickson has performed the lead roles in classics, including “Swan Lake” (Odette/Odile), “La Bayadère” (Nikiya), “The Sleeping Beauty” (Aurora, Lilac Fairy, Carabosse), “La Sylphide” (the Sylph), and “Le Corsaire” (Gulnare).

As a Balanchine-trained dancer, Erickson also earned principal roles in George Balanchine’s “Theme and Variations,” “Western Symphony,” “Who Cares?,” “Prodigal Son,” “Sylvia Pas de Deux,” “Agon,” “Serenade,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “The Four Temperaments” and “Divertimento No. 15.”

She has danced the roles of Lady Capulet in Jean-Christophe Maillot’s “Roméo et Juliette,” Myrtha in *Giselle*, “An Episode in his Past” in Antony Tudor’s “Jardin Aux Lilas (Lilac Garden)” and the Wife in Jerome Robbins’ “The Concert.” Her contemporary credits also include Paul Taylor’s “Company B;” Twyla Tharp’s “In the Upper Room,” “Nine Sinatra Songs,” and “Octet;” William Forsythe’s “In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated;” and Jiří Kylián’s “Petite Mort” and “Sinfonietta.”

As her frequent partner and colleague of 10 years, Principal Dancer Alejandro Diaz will miss Erickson’s leadership in the company, her positivity in the studio and her exceptional artistry on stage.

“I remember when I first met Julia 10 years ago. One of the very first things that we got to dance together was ‘The Three Musketeers.’ She was very supportive immediately and she’s always

been that way. She has a warmth and an inclusiveness that she just vibrates on an energetic level,” Diaz said. “She has to dance, she has to move. She has a commanding presence on stage, but she also has the ability to be delicate and soft. I think we’re going to see a very beautiful last performance in October. I know that the community will miss her; we will miss her. She is a real artist.”

Throughout her ballet career, Erickson has managed to integrate other professional pursuits. From 2010 until its 2015 hiatus, Erickson and her husband, Aaron Ingley, ran Barre, an all-natural energy bar business that started in her home kitchen and was distributed at Whole Foods retailers nationwide.

She has blogged for the HuffPost, received the Pittsburgh dance community’s BRAZZY Award for outstanding female dancer in 2014 and was one named one of Pittsburgh Magazine’s 40 Under 40 in 2015. She serves on the board of the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation, guest teaches at dance studios regionally and nationally, and is finishing her political science degree at the University of Pittsburgh.

In a 2009 column for Dance Magazine, Erickson wrote, “I dance because each time I walk out on stage I have an opportunity to give the best gift I possibly can, at that moment, to the audience...the very driving forces behind dance — to strive for excellence, to entertain, to tell a story, to express oneself through the creation and sharing of art — are the very attributes that make us human.”