

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Katie Drozynski
Media Relations & Content Marketing Manager
kdrozynski@pittsburghballet.org
O: 412-454-9117 C: 412-352-0028

Contact: Saul Markowitz
Markowitz Communications
markowitz.saul@gmail.com
C: 412-977-8517

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **SUSAN JAFFE** PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

New mobile stage debuts at Open Air series at Flagstaff Hill in Schenley Park
Over 20 local performing arts organizations will be part of the two-week series May 18-31, 2021.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - PITTSBURGH, PA (March 24, 2021) – After a year of darkened theaters Downtown, Pittsburgh’s performing artists are stepping out into the light. Thanks to a new mobile stage purchased by the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT), they will debut an “Open Air” series of live, outdoor performances like no other on the lawn at Flagstaff Hill in Schenley Park this May.

PBT and more than 20 arts organizations from around the region will perform outdoors for two weeks of dance, music and theater. With lead sponsorship from BNY Mellon and MSA Safety, “**Open Air: A Series in Celebration of the Performing Arts,**” will bring the performing arts in Pittsburgh to life from **May 18-31* at Flagstaff Hill** in Schenley Park on PBT’s mobile stage, in a safe, socially-distanced outdoor manner.

Susan Jaffe, who took the helm as PBT’s new artistic director just as the pandemic outbreak began, is excited to help lead the charge as Pittsburgh’s performing arts reopen.

“Being new to Pittsburgh, I have been amazed to learn of the breadth and depth of the arts community here,” Jaffe said. “It is a real privilege to be able to share the stage with such a wide range of artists.”

“BNY Mellon is thrilled to help bring live performing arts back to the community in new and innovative ways through Open Air,” said Kenya Boswell, president of the BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania. “We believe that access to the beauty and inspiration of a diverse array of artists will move us collectively forward.”

"PBT's Open Air initiative using its mobile stage is visionary," said Stephanie Sciuillo, Vice President & Chief Legal Officer at MSA Safety. "MSA is proud to partner with PBT to safely return audiences to in-person performances and kickstart the arts scene in our region."

PBT purchased a Stageline SAM450 mobile stage in summer of 2020 with major gifts from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust, the Jack Buncher Foundation and Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. It was used for small-scale Open Air performances by PBT and other local arts organizations at PBT's Strip District campus last September. More than 20 local performing artists and organizations will share PBT's mobile stage this May, including:

- Attack Theatre
- Balfon West African Dance
- High Five Productions
- Hill Dance Academy Theatre
- Hope Academy
- Lemington Gospel Choir
- Kelly Strayhorn Theatre presents Sidra Bell Dance
- Richard Parsakian presents Dance Showcase, featuring, Antonio Brown (Antonio Brown Dance), Kaylin Horgan, James Gilmer, James Manning, Nick Daniels (DANA Movement Ensemble) and Rocker Verastique and Danny Herman
- The Pillow Project
- Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Orchestra
- Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School
- Pittsburgh CLO
- Pittsburgh Cultural Trust
- Pittsburgh Festival Opera
- Pittsburgh Opera
- Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company presents Vanessa German
- Pittsburgh Public Theater
- River City Brass Band
- Shana Simmons Dance
- Staycee Pearl and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre present Open Window, featuring Allie Tiso, Lexi Troianos, Jamie Erin Murphy, Joanna Schmidt, José Pérez IV, Molly Huey, MVMT Duet, Pearlaann Porter, slowdanger and Shana Simmons (Shana Simmons Dance)
- STAYCEE PEARL dance project & Soy Sos
- Tania & Jeff Grubbs
- Texture Contemporary Ballet
- West Hills Symphonic Band

"We're also thrilled, of course, that we get to perform on that stage," Jaffe said. "We have a wonderful lineup with an array of innovative choreographers, as well as classical pieces."

PBT will stage eight performances over the two-week festival, featuring choreography from Anabelle Lopez Ochoa, Azure Barton, PBT Principal Dancer Yoshiaki Nakano and more, as well as excerpts of ballet classics like *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Free seating will be available on the Flagstaff Hill lawn and premium VIP seating will be available for select performances. PBT's full program, a schedule for the series, a list of performing organizations and more information about Open Air: A Series in Celebration of the Performing Arts can be found at pbt.org/openair. Registration for PBT performances will be available to subscribers who have chosen to donate the cost of their ticket to the ballet on March 24, 2021 and to the general public on April 7, 2021.

"Pittsburghers know how to come together as a community," Jaffe said. "There is a resilience, a grit and determination that is so much a part of the character of this region. It is inspiring to be part of the resurgence of the live performing arts."

Additional support for "Open Air: A Series in Celebration of the Performing Arts" is being provided by Citizens Bank, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, Ryan Memorial Foundation and The Rimmel Foundation.

**Dates are subject to change.*

About Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre has been Pittsburgh's premier professional ballet company since 1969. Today, PBT is a nationally recognized ballet company of 30 professional dancers, a training institution for over 1,200 students of all ages, and an incubator for education and accessibility programs in classrooms, libraries and community centers throughout the region. The company performs a wide-ranging repertoire of classical ballets, contemporary masterworks and new commissions in more than 50 performances annually at home and on tour.