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PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

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Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Company Reunites for County Parks Summer Series

The program, airing Aug. 16 on the CW and social media, marks the first instance of an AGMA union ballet company performing together since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



PITTSBURGH, PA (July 14, 2020) - Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT) company dancers reunited at Hartwood Acres after months of working remotely to film a performance for the Allegheny County Parks Summer Concert Series sponsored by BNY Mellon. The episode, featuring a new adaptation of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” will air on Pittsburgh’s CW network and on social media on Aug. 16, 2020.

In bringing together the entire PBT company, along with staff and videographers, PBT became the first ballet company in the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) to perform together since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This is a challenging time for our members and the arts, so we are thrilled that AGMA and PBT were able to work together to find a way to make this project happen,” Len Egert, national executive director of AGMA, said. “AGMA and PBT worked collaboratively in early June to develop safe work protocols for PBT dancers. In a week’s time, we developed a plan with guidance from AGMA’s medical experts that allowed the PBT company to gather together, in person, safely. PBT is the first AGMA company to be able to bring its entire workforce together on contract since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.”

PBT’s adaptation of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” was conceived and choreographed remotely by PBT company dancers Tommie Lynn Kesten, Jessica McCann, Kurtis Sprowls and Cooper Verona under the direction of Artistic Director Susan Jaffe. Dancers learned choreography via Zoom prior to filming and performed throughout the Hartwood Acres campus following strict safety protocols.

Dancers remained socially distanced throughout the filming, with the exception of those who have been cohabitating throughout the pandemic. Crew and artists were given health screenings prior to filming, masks were worn at all times outside of performance and surfaces were regularly cleaned with commercial cleaner throughout the shoot, among other safety precautions followed.

“We are very excited to see the final product,” said Egert. “Seeing our artists doing what they love once again brings us great joy.”

“A Midsummer Night’s Dream” will be part of a nine-concert series of local artists televised on Pittsburgh’s CW network on Sunday night’s at 7 p.m. through Sept. 6. Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre will air on Sunday, Aug. 16 with special guest the Pittsburgh Opera. The performance will be posted on the Allegheny County Parks Facebook page and YouTube channel after broadcast.

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.