

# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **SUSAN JAFFE** **PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE**

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **From Strength to Stronger: Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in Strong Financial Position as Executive Director Harris N. Ferris Prepares for Life Beyond PBT**

*After 16 years of leadership, Ferris will take his final bow with PBT at the end of the organization's fiscal year.*



**PITTSBURGH, PA (Feb. 15, 2022)** – After more than a decade and a half of leadership, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT) Executive Director Harris N. Ferris announced this morning that his tenure will come to a close at the end of the organization's fiscal year this June. Ferris will continue to work with PBT in a special advisory role through the end of 2022 and will remain a lifetime supporter of the organization. PBT has engaged Management Consultants for the Arts to launch a national search for PBT's next executive director, starting in the upcoming weeks.

Ferris' hard work and dedication leave the organization and Artistic Director Susan Jaffe on track for continued success for PBT's next chapter.

Under his leadership since 2006, the organization flourished as he doubled the annual operating budget from \$6 million to \$12 million. During his time as executive director, Ferris fostered a harmonious relationship with the PBT Orchestra and forged productive partnerships with PBT's board of directors, sponsors, donors and artistic directors, including current Artistic Director Susan Jaffe. Over the course of his 16 years at PBT, he also expanded the company's national and international profile and fortified its financial position, eliminating an accumulated deficit and bolstering cash reserves.

"I am eternally grateful to Harris for the groundwork he has laid for PBT's strength as an organization," says Artistic Director Susan Jaffe. "It has been a pleasure to work alongside him and I look forward to carrying the torch for PBT in partnership with our board and staff as we look ahead to another successful chapter."

Key accomplishments during Ferris' 16-year tenure include:

- Establishing a successful “Say it with Music Campaign” to restore the much-loved PBT Orchestra shortly after he began in 2006, jump-starting a historic period of financial stability for continued artistic growth
- Completing a \$21.2 million capital campaign to construct the 14,000-square-foot Byham Center for Dance, which includes the Terrence S. Orr Studio and Catharine and John Ryan Studio, as well as the Hilda and Dr. Freddie Fu Dance and Sports Conditioning Center, a state-of-the-art Pilates studio. In addition the campaign built endowment and innovation funds for repertory, education and scholarship programs
- Establishing the Community Youth Scholarship in partnership with the PBT School and PBT Education Team, which works to expose children to dance at an early age and provide need-based scholarships for young students with talent and drive
- Leading the nation in innovative digital programming in collaboration with Susan Jaffe when the coronavirus pandemic struck in 2020 and made PBT the first to acquire a \$1 million outdoor mobile stage during the height of the pandemic

“Harris’s innovation, passion, and vision have transformed PBT during his long and successful tenure. He has led the organization to new heights: expanding PBT’s facilities, ensuring financial stability, enabling the organization to bring the magic of the dance to the community through the pandemic with the outdoor stage, and closing in on the promise of live music for 50 years to come,” says PBT Board Chair Mary McKinney Flaherty. “Harris’s energy is contagious and I have learned so much from working with him. I look forward to seeing what Harris will accomplish next and am grateful for all the gifts he has given to the organization. PBT will be able to achieve so much more in the coming years because of the strong position in which he leaves us.”

Today, PBT has vast opportunities and significant resources in place for investment in future success thanks to Ferris’ guidance and exceptional fundraising and partnership building abilities. Ferris’ many accomplishments for PBT will conclude on June 30, 2022, which simultaneously marks the end of a three-year Live Music Appeal that has allowed audiences to enjoy the experience of the incredible PBT Orchestra while offsetting expenses to fund it. Currently, PBT has raised \$4.5 million of the \$6 million goal, the completion of which is one of Ferris’ key goals before he departs.

“I am grateful for the many triumphs that PBT has achieved over the course of my tenure,” says Ferris. “It has been an honor to have been entrusted with a leadership role in shaping the destiny of this magnificent organization. It will be a pleasure to now step aside and join the chorus of those cheering for PBT from beyond, even as I place my energies into new ventures.”

After concluding his work with PBT, Ferris looks forward to expanding his private practice as a certified Hanna Somatic Educator and focusing on his long-term passion of inspiring movement across the region for holistic health and well-being. “My gratitude and good wishes extend to all and especially to all those who have come before and who will follow in a commitment to the strength and vitality of our fearless and beautiful PBT,” Ferris says.

### **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.