

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

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A media kit of photos and drone video footage are available at [pbt.org/Open-Air-Media-Kit](http://pbt.org/Open-Air-Media-Kit).

**Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Announces Achievement of Live Music Appeal at Launch Party for “Open Air”**

*Funds Will Ensure Live Orchestra Performances for 50 Years and Beyond, a Milestone Achievement for PBT Under Outgoing Executive Director Harris Ferris*



Artist: Yoshiaki Nakano | Photo: Duane Rieder

**PITTSBURGH, PA** – Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT) is pleased to announce that its \$6 million Live Music Appeal, which was launched at the start of the organization's 50th season in 2019, has been achieved. This momentous occasion, which was accomplished under the leadership of outgoing Executive Director Harris Ferris, ensures that the PBT Orchestra will provide live music at PBT performances for the next 50 years and beyond.

“When this important campaign appeal was announced in the fall of 2019 no one could have predicted that within 6 months the season would be closing due to COVID-19,” says Harris Ferris. “I am proud to announce that friends of PBT can rest assured that the current level of orchestral music will continue to be a part of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre’s annual season.”

Since 2010, a single individual, who has chosen to remain anonymous, has been instrumental in supporting two to three programs every season with the PBT Orchestra. In support of PBT’s Live Music Appeal, this same individual pledged a \$3 million gift to double every donation made to live music since the appeal was launched in October 2019. “We are deeply grateful for the anonymous donor’s support, along with several leading foundations who contributed to this goal, including The Hillman Foundation, Hilda M. Willis Foundation, Heinz Endowments, Audrey Hillman Fisher Foundation and so many other organizations and individuals,” Ferris says.

The announcement of this achievement will be formally recognized at tonight’s launch party of *Open Air: A Series in Celebration of the Performing Arts*. *Open Air* is being hosted this year in a picturesque setting overlooking the beautiful Allegheny River in Sharpsburg, due to the generosity of and partnership with The Mosites Company, who own the 52-acre property. The property stretches along 1.5 miles of shoreline between the Borough of Sharpsburg and O’Hara Township.

The Mosites Company is leading the transformational development of the site into a mixed-use wellness community and regional waterfront destination that will reconnect Sharpsburg, O’Hara, Greater Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to this mostly inaccessible stretch of unique, former-industrial riverfront and deliver economic development to the area and region. To that end, they are working in close collaboration with *Live Work Learn Play* an international real estate development and advisory firm that specializes in conceiving, planning, developing and activating dynamic, large-scale, mixed-use communities and places.

“Hosting *Open Air* and working with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre is a reflection of The Mosites Company’s ongoing commitment to cultivating and expanding our positive community partnerships,” says Susan Mosites Bicket. “It reinforces our desire for this beautiful waterfront site to become a hub of arts, culture, recreation and community gathering, while integrated into the fabric of this special riverfront community we are creating.”

Both *Open Air* and the success of the PBT’s Live Music Appeal come at the end of Harris Ferris’ successful 15 year tenure as executive director of PBT, during which he fostered a harmonious relationship with the PBT Orchestra. The completion of the Live Music Appeal is a remarkable crowning achievement in Ferris’ legacy at PBT.

“The musicians of the PBT Orchestra are deeply grateful to the donors and patrons of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre for believing what we have always believed: great ballet deserves great live music. We look forward to being an integral part of PBT every season for many years to come,” says PBT Orchestra Oboist Cynthia Anderson.

“This transformational gift of 50 years’ live music both delivers on our mission of creating extraordinary ballet experiences and ensures organizational sustainability,” says PBT Board Chair Mary McKinney Flaherty. “This would not be possible without Harris’s vision; the financial support of our anonymous donor, leading foundations and numerous individuals; and, of course, the skill and artistry of all of our amazing PBT Orchestra musicians.”

*Open Air* runs Thursday, June 9 through Sunday, June 12 at a new location this year on the Allegheny Riverfront in Sharpsburg (1 19th Street, Sharpsburg). For more information, visit [pbt.org/openair](http://pbt.org/openair). *Open Air: A Series in Celebration of the Performing Arts* is made possible thanks to The Mosites Company, the Gaming & Economic Development Tourism Fund, and Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD). State Representative Sara Innamorato has also been a key supporter of this year’s series. PBT was able to invest in the Stageline(R) SAM450 mobile stage thanks to generous support from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust, Jack Buncher Foundation and Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

### **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.