PENNSYLVANIA BALLET 2014-2015 SEASON

PRODUCTION FACT SHEETS

OCTOBER PROGRAM PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: Jeu de Cartes

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9

DATES: October 16-26, 2014 VENUE: Academy of Music

TICKETS: \$xx - \$xxx, 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

JEU DE CARTES

Choreography: Alexei Ratmansky

Music: Igor Stravinsky

Designer: Igor Chapurin

Lighting: Damir Ismagilov

Repetiteur: Tatyana Ratmansky

Running Time: 25 mins.

History:

Igor Stravinsky composed *Jeu de Cartes* (*Card Game: A Ballet in Three Deals*) for the first Stravinsky Festival mounted by George Balanchine at the Metropolitan Opera in 1937. In the original version, dancers were costumed to represent the four suits in a deck of cards, and the joker was the central character. Alexei Ratmansky's interpretation is more abstract.

Ratmansky – former artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet and the Artist in Residence at American Ballet Theatre – created *Jeu de Cartes* for the Bolshoi Ballet in 2005, for which he received a 2006 Golden Mask award for Best Choreographer from the Theatre Union of Russia. An artist who was trained in Russia but absorbed the influences of many Western choreographers as a dancer in the West, Ratmansky's choreographic work is world-renowned.

"We are not card-players, there will be no cards in the ballet. The meaning of the original title which we have kept may be interpreted as follows: to dance to music by Stravinsky is always a bit of a gamble – how not to lose count. To compose a ballet for Maya Mikhailovna Plisetskaya*'s birthday is even more of a gamble. We will go for broke!" – Alexei Ratmansky

A cast of seven women and eight men are put through their paces in this non-stop, vigorous, 25-minute work. Through constantly changing partnerships of pas de deux, pas de trios, pas de quatre and multiple groupings of women, men, and both sexes dancing together, Ratmansky seamlessly moves dancers on and off the stage. The energetic and sometimes playful movements maintain the audience's interest throughout. At the end, all dancers fall to the floor in exhaustion only to spring back into action to create a unified group in the work's final ensemble pose. An asymmetrical set and minimalist pastel costumes, all adorned in black satin trim, were designed by Igor Chapurin, one of Russia's leading couture designers.

*a Bolshoi Ballet dancer born in 1925

World Premiere: November 18, 2005 by The Bolshoi Ballet at The Bolshoi Theatre of Russia

Source: Bolshoi.ru/en [The Bolshoi Ballet], nycballet.com [New York City Ballet]

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Pennsylvania Ballet presented the North American premiere of *Jeu de Cartes* in October 2011 on a program with Balanchine's *Raymonda Variations* and *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*.

Video clip for reference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JG3woM3PP5Y

[Company Premiere]

Choreography: Robert Weiss

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven

Costume Design: Kerri Martinsen
Lighting Design: Ross Kolman
Running Time: 1 hr. 12 mins.

Program Notes:

In 1975, as a very young choreographer, I was invited (while on lay-off from New York City Ballet) to Brussels by Maurice Bejart to choreograph a ballet for his company the Ballet of the 20th Century. While there working with the dancers during the day, the company was performing at night. I was taken to an arena of 8,000 people where the company was performing Bejart's 9th Symphony to Beethoven's beautiful music. You can't imagine the thrill I felt when the curtain came in at the conclusion of the performance and all those people, in European fashion, stomped their feet as well as applauded for this amazing work.

Maurice Bejart was a great force in European contemporary ballet and someone for whom I had great respect for his mind and his innovations. Nevertheless, he was not strictly speaking a classical choreographer. I came away from the performance of his interpretation of Beethoven's masterpiece thinking what it would have been like if a classical choreographer had used that music. No one to my knowledge has choreographed the 9th Symphony since Bejart. After listening to the music on and off for 36 years I decided to attempt an interpretation of my own.

I began choreographing the ballet during Carolina Ballet's summer residency in July 2011 and I worked on the piece whenever I had a chance over the next ten months. I found the music to be a great inspiration, with each movement being a ballet in itself. The music has many moods

culminating in the last movement dubbed the "Choral Symphony" which features the famous "Ode to Joy."

-Robert Weiss

Choreographer interview: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB2Ng rj54

World Premiere: May 17, 2012 by Carolina Ballet at Raleigh Memorial Auditorium

Source: Carolina Ballet (carolinaballet.com)

Pennsylvania Ballet History: This is the Company premiere of Robert Weiss' *Beethoven's 9th Symphony.* Currently Director of Carolina Ballet, Mr. Weiss served as Artistic Director of Pennsylvania Ballet from 1982-1990.

Video clip for reference: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB2Ng rj54 (rehearsal)

GEORGE BALANCHINE'S THE NUTCRACKER™ PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

DATES: December 6-31, 2014
VENUE: Academy of Music

TICKETS: \$xx - \$xxx; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

Choreography: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Music: Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky

Costumes: Judanna Lynn
Sets: Peter Horne
Lighting: John Hoey
Repetiteur: Sandra Jennings

Running Time: Two acts in approximately two hours (with one intermission)

History: The original version of *The Nutcracker*, with choreography and story by Lev Ivanov, was first presented at the Meryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, on December 17, 1892. A second version of *The Nutcracker*, with staging by Nicholas Sergeyev after the Ivanov, was first presented in Western Europe by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London on January 30, 1934. This version was first presented in an abbreviated form in the United States by Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at the Fifty-first Street Theatre in New York on October 17, 1940. A third version, with choreography by William Christensen, was first presented in complete form by San Francisco Ballet in 1944.

World Premiere: Based on the story by E.T.A. Hoffman, George Balanchine's version of *The Nutcracker* was first presented by New York City Ballet on February 2, 1954, with Maria Tallchief as the Sugarplum Fairy, and Nicholas Magallanes as Cavalier. The scenery was by Horace Armistead and costumes were by Karinska.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Pennsylvania Ballet has been performing *The Nutcracker* every year since 1968, making this the 46th year of this holiday tradition. From 1968 through the late 1970s, the Company performed a version of Act I choreographed by Oswaldo Riofrancos, with the exception of the snow scene, which was choreographed by Robert Rodham, and the Balanchine version of Act II. From the late 1970s through 1986, Pennsylvania Ballet performed an Act I choreographed by former Artistic Director Benjamin Harkarvy, again with the exception of the snow scene by Rodham, and Balanchine's Act II.

The Company began performing Balanchine's full-length *Nutcracker* in 1987. In 2007, Pennsylvania Ballet unveiled a brand new production of this holiday classic, with over 192 exquisite new costumes and all-new sets. In November 2009, Pennsylvania Ballet performed *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, marking the first time Balanchine's version had ever been performed in the nation's capital. In December 2011, Pennsylvania Ballet presented the international debut of its production of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™* with a seven-performance tour to the National Performing Arts Centre in Ottawa, Canada, which nearly sold out.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: Prodigal Son

Polyphonia

World Premiere [Neenan]

DATES: February 5-8, 2015 VENUE: Merriam Theater

TICKETS: \$xx - \$xxx, 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

PRODIGAL SON

Choreography: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Music: Sergei Prokofiev: Le Fils Prodigue, Op. 46

Costume and Scenic Design: Georges Rouault **Running Time:** 35 minutes

History:

Serge Diaghilev, who founded Ballets Russes in 1911, was a ballet and opera impresario who brought together the best of new music, dance, and visual art in his productions. George Balanchine was hired by Diaghilev in 1924 and created several ballets before the company disbanded in 1929, after Diaghilev's sudden death. Diaghilev commissioned Sergei Prokofiev to write the score and Georges Rouault to design the Fauvist sets and costumes.

The ballet's story comes from the biblical parable, but in his libretto, Boris Kochno added much dramatic material and, to emphasize the themes of sin and redemption, ended the story with the Prodigal's return home. The ballet is deeply religious and Russian in feeling. This is a tale of brash self-assertion, debauchery and repentance and is also a devastating commentary on the dehumanizing nature of modern life. In *Prodigal Son*, Balanchine borrowed movement from the world of gymnasts and circus performers — not to shock gratuitously, but to create a symbolic poetry of the grotesque.

The heart of the matter is communicated through unforgettable visual contrasts: the upright stature and calm, unhurried gestures of the patriarch; the acrobatic bravado of the son, impelled towards freedom; the mechanized, back-to-back scuttlings of the gargoyle-like revelers; the snakelike sensuality of the seductress; and, finally, the sinew-wrenching journey of the Prodigal, on his knees, to the forgiving embrace of his father — that still point of the turning world.

Balanchine's choreography upset Prokofiev, who conducted the premiere. The composer had envisioned a production that was "real"; his concept of the Siren, whom he saw as demure, differed radically from Balanchine's. Prokofiev refused to pay Balanchine royalties for his choreography. However, *Prodigal Son* was enthusiastically received by both audiences and critics, and was one of the first of Balanchine's ballets to achieve an international reputation.

When the ballet was revived by New York City Ballet in 1950, the title role was danced by Jerome Robbins. Its eternal themes, expressive score, and abstract but thoroughly dramatic movement make it as modern, exciting, and powerful today as it was in 1929.

With choreography by the 24-year-old George Balanchine, an original score by Sergei Prokofiev, and a monumental set by Georges Rouault, *Prodigal Son* is the quintessence of an extraordinary epoch in 20th-century dance.

Synopsis:

Scene 1

The Prodigal Son quarrels with his father and departs in the company of his two false friends.

Scene 2

The Prodigal Son meets with a number of acquaintances and takes part in their feasting. A Siren enters and seeks to captivate him with her dancing. His two friends entertain the guests. The Prodigal Son dances with the Siren. She and his friends tempt him to drink to excess until he falls into a stupor. His false friend, the Siren and the guests strip the Prodigal Son of all his possessions. The Prodigal Son, recovered from his debauchery, wakes and bemoans his miserable plight, and then, completely distraught, resolves to return home. When he has departed, his false friends, the Siren and the guests return to parade the plunder taken from the Prodigal Son.

Scene 3

The Prodigal Son, penniless, heartbroken, and exhausted, returns home to be welcomed and forgiven by his father.

World Premiere: Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt, Paris, May 21, 1929

Pennsylvania Ballet History: *Prodigal Son* received its Company premiere in 1989. The Company last performed it in February 2006 on an all-Balanchine program with *Theme and Variations* and *Western Symphony*.

Sources: The George Balanchine Trust (Balanchine.com), New York City Ballet (nycballet.com)

Video clips for reference:

http://www.nycballet.com/Videos/Ballet-Detail-clips/Prodigal-Son.aspx http://www.nycballet.com/Videos/Repertory-Trailers-No-Dates/Prodigal-Son-NO-DATES.aspx

POLYPHONIA

Choreography: Christopher Wheeldon

Music: György Ligeti

Desordre, No. 2 Mesto Parlando, No. 4 Tempo di Valse, Invention, No. 7 Con moto giusto, No. 3 Allegro con spirito, Polyphonic Etude, No. 10

Vivace, No. 2 Hopp ide tisztan, Arc-en-ciel, Capriccio No. 2

Holly Hynes **Costume Design: Lighting Design:** Mark Stanley Staging: Jason Fowler **Running Time:** Approx. 25 mins.

History:

Christopher Wheeldon choreographed *Polyphonia* for New York City Ballet in 2001, a period he describes as pivotal in his career. "Until then I had not been adventurous with my choice of music. I was settling into the Romantic composers. I realized I was following the same pattern over and over, and just going for the safer options.

Polyphonia begins and ends with a presentation of the four couples, and each piece tells a little story. "Even in an abstract work, it's important to create a relationship between the dancers," says Wheeldon.

When he was creating the ballet, Wheeldon says, "My intention was to really make it like a sketchbook, using the Ligeti selections. Daily, we'd get into the studio I'd say to the dancers, 'How do you feel about this one?' and we'd choreograph it. We very much worked together." "Romantic with comic twists," is how Wheeldon describes this piece, set to ten eclectic piano pieces by Ligeti. Its brief sections run the choreographic spectrum from the bold, neoclassic angularity of Balanchine through playful duets, a dreamy waltz, a gentle, plaintive solo to the intense intertwining of one couple. Anchored by dynamic opening and closing ensembles filled with twisting turns, jabs, and quirky hard movements, its eight dances seem to be tearing through the musical fabric. Overhead horizontal lifts, rolls, and pushes off the floor contrast with classical ballet steps. The first of two key duets for the leading principal couple evokes sea creatures swimming, while the second looks like a strange plant growing and closing in on itself. The last horizontal lifts and fade out arrest the movement, frame it, and let it dissolve like a film. Ligeti's polyphony (many individual voices sounding simultaneously) with fleeting references to Stravinsky, Debussy, Kodály and Prokofiev, among others, finds its match in the choreographer's interweaving of ballet and modem dance movement.

World Premiere: New York City Ballet, January 4, 2001, New York State Theater

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Polyphonia had its Company premiere in February 2011 on a program with the Company premiere of William Forsythe's The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude and Twyla Tharp's In the Upper Room, making this the second time it has been presented.

Sources: Morphoses and New York City Ballet (nycballet.com)

Video clip for reference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOhvIlhQo8A

WORLD PREMIERE

Choreographer: Matthew Neenan

Biography:

Matthew Neenan began his dance training at the Boston Ballet School and with noted teachers Nan C. Keating and Jacqueline Cronsberg. He later attended the LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts and the School of American Ballet in New York. From 1994-2007, Mr. Neenan danced with Pennsylvania Ballet where he danced numerous principal roles in works by George Balanchine, John Cranko, Paul Taylor, Peter Martins, Val Caniparoli, Jorma Elo, Lila York, Meredith Rainey, Christopher Wheeldon, and Jerome Robbins. In October 2007, Mr. Neenan was named Choreographer in Residence at Pennsylvania Ballet.

Mr. Neenan's choreography has been featured and performed by Pennsylvania Ballet (totaling 14 commissions), BalletX, The Washington Ballet, Colorado Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Milwaukee Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Tulsa Ballet, Juilliard Dance, New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute, Sacramento Ballet, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Indiana University, Opera Philadelphia, and LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts (NYC), among others. He has received numerous awards and grants for his choreography from the National Endowment of the Arts, Dance Advance funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Choo San Goh Foundation, and the Independence Foundation. In 2006, Mr. Neenan received the New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute's Fellowship Initiative Award. Mr. Neenan's *Carmina Burana, As It's Going,* and 11:11 were performed by Pennsylvania Ballet at New York City Center in 2006 & 2007. In 2008, he received a fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. This marks his fourth time receiving the PCA fellowship. In October 2009, Mr. Neenan was the grand-prize winner of Sacramento Ballet's Capital Choreography Competition and was also the first recipient of the Jerome Robbins NEW Program Fellowship for his work *At the border* for Pennsylvania Ballet.

In 2005, Mr. Neenan co-founded BalletX with fellow dancer Christine Cox. BalletX had its world premiere at the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival in September 2005 and is now the resident dance company at the prestigious Wilma Theatre. BalletX has toured and performed Neenan's choreography in New York City at The Joyce Theater, The Skirball Center, Symphony Space and Central Park Summerstage, Vail International Dance Festival, Jacob's Pillow, The Cerritos Center, Laguna Dance Festival, Spring to Dance Festival in St.Louis, and internationally in Cali, Colombia and Seoul, Korea. In 2010, Mr. Neenan became a trustee member for DanceUSA.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Matthew Neenan was named Pennsylvania Ballet's first Choreographer in Residence in 2007. This will be Mr. Neenan's 16th commission for the Company.

SWAN LAKE PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: Swan Lake

DATES: March 5-15, 2015 VENUE: Academy of Music

TICKETS: \$xx-xxx; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

Choreography: Christopher Wheeldon (after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov)

Music: Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky

Costumes: Jean-Marc Puissant
Sets: Adrianne Lobel
Lighting: Natasha Katz

Running Time: Approximately 2:40 (four acts with two intermissions)

Details:

In commissioning this work especially for its 40th Anniversary Season, Pennsylvania Ballet's goal was to create a signature version of *Swan Lake* that would achieve popular and critical success, attract traditional ballet fans as well as new audience members, and build a lasting legacy in the dance world to be enjoyed by generations to come.

Mr. Wheeldon's choreographic objective was to stay true to the story of *Swan Lake* and retain much of the classical choreography of Ivanov/Petipa (notably the choreography of Ivanov's white swan pas de deux from Act II and Petipa's black swan pas de deux from Act III), while distilling some new and even abstract shapes from its traditional format. Mr. Wheeldon set out to augment Petipa's Acts I and III with original choreography that work cohesively with the traditional elements he retains. Mr. Wheeldon wanted the narrative to be more prominent, and for the story to be found through more dance and movement with less mime. In his own words, creating a new version of *Swan Lake* was like "resetting an old diamond heirloom into a contemporary setting." Attracted to the challenge it posed to incorporate the heritage of the production with original choreography that is drawn from a classical vocabulary, Mr. Wheeldon's goal was to bring a fresh and exciting production to a contemporary audience.

History:

With music by Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky and book by V. P. Begitchev and Vasily Geltzer, *Swan Lake* was first presented at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow on March 4, 1877, with choreography by Julius Reisinger. This incomplete and unsuccessful production was superseded by what has become the definitive production by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. This complete, four-act production was first presented at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on February 8, 1895. It has been established that Petipa staged Act I and most of Act III, and Ivanov staged Act II and Act IV. Multiple versions have been presented since in many countries all over the world.

Source: George Balanchine and Francis Mason; <u>101 Stories of the Great Ballets</u>; 1954, 1968, 1975.

Pennsylvania Ballet History:

This is the largest and most expensive production ever created by the Company, but it is not its first *Swan Lake*. Pennsylvania Ballet has performed several full-length versions of *Swan Lake* (with choreography after Petipa/Ivanov) during its history. The Company also performed George Balanchine's *Swan Lake*, *Act II* in 1994 and 1998.

The Company made its international debut with Christopher Wheeldon's *Swan Lake* in August 2005 at the Edinburgh International Festival. The production had its world premiere at the Academy of Music in June 2004 and was performed by the Company in October 2005 and March 2011. Pennsylvania Ballet dancers performed in the feature film *Black Swan*, released in December 2010.

ROBBINS PROGRAM PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: In G Major [Company Premiere]

The Concert Fancy Free

DATES: May 7-10, 2015 VENUE: Academy of Music

TICKETS: \$xx - \$xxx, 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

IN G MAJOR [Company Premiere]

Choreography: Jerome Robbins

Music: Maurice Ravel: Piano Concerto in G Major (1928-31)

Costume & Scenic Design: Erté

Lighting Design: Jennifer Tipton

Running Time: 22 mins.

Details:

Ravel, at the peak of fame and popularity, had just returned from a triumphant tour of the United States when he began this concerto. Ravel wrote that the work was "a concerto in the strict sense, written in the spirit of Mozart and Saint-Saëns... I had intended to call this concerto a 'Divertissement', then it occurred to me that there was no need to do so because the very title 'Concerto' should be sufficiently clear... In some ways, my concerto is not unlike my Violin Sonata; it uses certain effects borrowed from jazz, but only in moderation."

The ballet features a principal couple and a corps of 6 men and 6 women. It is also known by the title *En Sol.*

Review (exerpt):

In Middle of Winter, a Sunny Day at the Beach, and Death's Shadow By BRIAN SEIBERT

Published: January 22, 2012, The New York Times

When the curtain rises on Jerome Robbins's "In G Major," the first of three works on the "All Robbins" program performed by New York City Ballet on Friday at the David H. Koch Theater, the setting is simple but unmistakable. Stylized designs on the backdrop evoke sun, sea and sky. Young people gambol about in costumes resembling chic bathing wear. We're at the French Riviera, between the wars.

At the dance's premiere during the 1975 Ravel Festival the place and time it evoked weren't so specific. The Riviera designs were contributed by Erté for a Paris Opera Ballet production of the

work later that year and not adopted by City Ballet until 1984. They add a Continental overlay to what is essentially another Robbins portrait of American youth at play. To the sections of Ravel's piano concerto that sound like Gershwin, Robbins responds with the Broadway fun of which he was a master. It's as much "High Button Shoes" as "Les Biches."

The ending is much the same, but the duet in the middle is more distinctive. On Friday, Maria Kowroski and Tyler Angle danced it beautifully. In the ballet's opening section Ms. Kowroski, passed among men, had seemed a bit unsure of her footing, as if really on sand. With Mr. Angle's reliable support the shakiness disappeared. Floating securely on her adagio technique, she remained a little abstracted, yet appealingly so, dazed perhaps by the sun.

Taking a few steps toward Mr. Angle, then a few steps away, those previously unsteady feet of hers turned eloquently ambivalent. Later, when she repeated the pattern on point, plain articulation — Robbins's and Ms. Kowroski's — found another level of expression.

World Premiere: May 15, 1975, New York State Theater, New York City Ballet (original cast: Suzanne Farrell & Peter Martins).

Pennsylvania Ballet History: This is the Company premiere of *In G Major*.

Source: Robbins Rights Trust (jeromerobbins.org), The New York Times (nytimes.com)

Video clip for reference: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRmbB7LMhOs (pas de deux)

THE CONCERT

Choreography: Jerome Robbins

Music: Frederic Chopin, orchestrated by Hershy Kay

Set Design: Saul Steinberg
Costume Design: Irene Sharaff
Lighting Design: Jennifer Tipton

Running Time: 29 mins.

History:

The Concert is a comedic masterpiece in which Jerome Robbins pondered choreographically what people think about when listening to music. The "concertgoers" range from culture snobs to the cigar-chomping business man to women who noisily rummage through their purses and chew gum. As the concert ensues, they perform a series of hilarious vignettes that poke fun at people's imaginations.

The ballet is set at a piano recital, and therefore, a piano is situated onstage. The pianist is more than just a musician – Robbins gave him haughty gestures and a bit of "shtick" in dusting the keys off at the beginning, sending clouds of dust flying.

For this work, Robbins enjoyed uniting serious music with absurd actions. For example, there is a group sequence where the choreography entangles the dancers in increasingly complicated formations and leaves one woman clasping a hand that is no longer attached to an arm or a person. This scene can be interpreted as both absurdist comedy and as a parody of some of the large-scale, grandiose choreography of the 30s and 40s.

World Premiere: New York City Ballet, New York City Center, March 6, 1956

Pennsylvania Ballet History: The Concert was first performed by the Company in April 2005, and most recently in March 2010 on an all-Chopin program.

Video clip for reference: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vILQ3 Tz1XE

FANCY FREE

Choreography: Jerome Robbins **Music:** Leonard Bernstein

Fancy Free; on tape "Big Stuff", sung by Dee Dee Bridgewater

Costume Design: Kermit Love
Scenic Design: Oliver Smith
Lighting Design: Ronald Bates

Running Time: Approximately 29 minutes

History:

In 1944, Jerome Robbins — then a young dancer with Ballet Theatre — choreographed his first ballet, a collaboration with up-and-coming composer Leonard Bernstein. The two wanted to bring a modern American sensibility to ballet, and they hit on the perfect concept: sailors on shore leave in New York City, a common sight in those days. This one-act ballet was first presented by Ballet Theatre in New York with John Kriza, Harold Lang and Jerome Robbins as the three Sailors and Muriel Bentley, Janet Reed, and Shirley Eckl as the three Passers-by.

The premiere performance of *Fancy Free* has become legendary, with two dozen curtain calls for the stunned cast, composer, and choreographer, and raves from the bowled-over critics. *Fancy Free* was the inspiration for a full-length musical, *On the Town*, that was also a great success. The team then transformed that show into the movie of the same name, starring Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra. The ballet is supposed to take place on any hot summer night, on a side street in Manhattan.

Robbins and Bernstein went on to collaborate on another Broadway classic, *West Side Story*. Of course, each man had many subsequent successes; Bernstein became the music director of the New York Philharmonic and a prolific composer and conductor, and Robbins was the creative force behind many enduring Broadway hits, as well as the choreographer of some of New York City Ballet's core works. But it was *Fancy Free* that put him on the map as someone who had a clear eye for creating compelling movement, a deft hand at telling a story, and a creative vision that was unique in the world of theater.

Sources: New York City Ballet (nycballet.com)

George Balanchine and Francis Mason; 101 Stories of the Great Ballets; 1954, 1968, 1975.

World Premiere: Ballet Theatre, April 18,1944, Metropolitan Opera House

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Pennsylvania Ballet presented the Company premiere of *Fancy Free* in October 2003 and most recently in October 2006 on an all-Robbins program.

Video clips for reference:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQxihx9WU k
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9pX6GFyAiY

JUNE PROGRAM PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: O zlozony / O composite [Company Premiere]

World Premiere [Nicolo Fonte]

the second detail [Company Premiere]

DATES: June 11-14, 2015 VENUE: Merriam Theater

TICKETS: \$xx - \$xxx, 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

O ZLOZONY / O COMPOSITE [Company Premiere]

Choreography: Trisha Brown

Music: Laurie Anderson

Costume Design: Elizabeth Cannon

Set Design: Vija Celmins

Lighting Design: Jennifer Tipton

Running Time: Approx. 20 mins.

Title: The title of the piece is taken from Polish poet Czesław Milosz's poem "Ode to a Bird," which begins in its English translation with "O composite,/O unconscious." The poem, recited in a sensual voice in Polish throughout the piece, is also integrated into Ms. Anderson's haunting score. And a bird is even suggested in the choreography. "Zlozony" is a Polish word meaning "complex; composite."

Review:

Classically Modern and Fused With Art

By ALAN RIDING

Published: December 23, 2004, The New York Times

PARIS - The dance lasts a mere 20 minutes, almost a parenthesis in a full evening of modern ballet at the Palais Garnier. And yet, in a different way, "O zlozony/O composite," Trisha Brown's first creation for a classical dance company, represents a remarkable fusion of decades of talent and tradition, not only of choreography, but also of other art forms.

Thus, implicitly sharing the stage here this week with three of the Paris Opera Ballet's top dancers - Aurélie Dupont, Manuel Legris, and Nicolas Le Riche - are two poets, Czeslaw Milosz and Edna St. Vincent Millay; one composer, Laurie Anderson; one painter, Vija Celmins; and of course Ms. Brown, 68, one of the grandes dames of American dance.

At the heart of "O zlozony/O composite," though, is a simple challenge: can classically trained dancers and a post-modern choreographer with no classical background create a work that reflects both traditions yet stands on its own as original and coherent?

By all accounts, the gamble has paid off. Last Friday, in the first of 11 performances through Dec. 31, "O zlozony/O composite" was given an enthusiastic reception. One Paris critic described it as "a major work." Brigitte Lefèvre, director of the opera ballet, said the audience responded with "a wave of love." At the end of the evening, France's Culture Minister, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, named Ms. Brown a commander in the Order of Arts and Letters.

Clearly, moments like this are not accidental. Ms. Lefèvre often invites contemporary choreographers to work here, but until recently Ms. Brown was absent. Finally, last year, she introduced her 1979 "Glacial Decoy" to the opera ballet, while in January 2006, her own company will dance for the first time at the Palais Garnier. But the jewel of the collaboration was to be the new work she has now created for Paris.

For Ms. Brown, the first step was to create a bridge between her choreographic language and that of the three dancers. And for that, she developed an alphabet - literally A to Z - of "simple and pure gestures, reminiscent of the ballet lexicon." These were then organized into sequences by using two poems, St. Vincent Millay's "Renascence" and Milosz's "Ode to a Bird," which serve as kinds of librettos for movement, although not as narratives.

The title of the piece is taken from Milosz's poem, which begins in its English translation with "O composite,/O unconscious." The poem, recited in a sensual voice in Polish, is also integrated into Ms. Anderson's haunting score. And a bird is even suggested in the choreography.

"It became thematic, lightly thematic because I didn't want to be literal," Ms. Brown explained this week in a telephone interview from New York shortly after she returned home from Paris. "I wanted the work to be abstract. But a bird flies past every once in a while. It's not heralded. It's just part of the fabric of the phraseology."

But for the movements (she in fact created three alphabets for each poem), Ms. Brown leaned more on "Renascence." Rather than trying to illustrate the poem, though, she simply used the letters in, say, its first line - A.L.L. I. C.O.U.L.D. S.E.E. F.R.O.M. W.H.E.R.E. I. S.T.O.O.D. - to represent different gestures. "No matter how you scramble those letters, they are still all a family of letters, built like a family of gestures," she said.

In late summer, Ms. Dupont, Mr. Le Riche, and Mr. Legris traveled to New York to work with her in the studios of the Trisha Brown Dance Company. "I didn't know what to expect because her work is fairly far from my universe," Mr. Legris recalled. "But I adapted immediately because I was reassured it wasn't just the intellectual side of dance. There is a true choreographic vocabulary, movements that are very difficult to grasp and are very interesting."

Ms. Brown had prepared some of the work with her own company, but much was developed with the French dancers, in New York and later in Paris. This included Ms. Dupont's work on points as well as some of the aerial work and solos for Mr. Legris and Mr. Le Riche. "That was all work done as a group, and in that sense we participated in the choreography too," Mr. Legris said. "She has a very particular vision of dance, her own universe. But at the same time, she is very open."

Interestingly, in New York, the dancers worked without the aid of music. "It was only choreographic vocabulary, movements, respiration, silence," Mr. Legris said. "That was curious. I usually have a strong rapport with the music. We discovered the music in Paris. Then Trisha had to find her order. It was a bit like an architect's work, not at all like choreography inspired by music."

Yet in the final version, the music contributes powerfully to what even Ms. Brown conceded was a "surprisingly" emotional experience. The backdrop, a large reproduction of a Celmins painting of a starry sky, adds a certain mystery. Elizabeth Cannon's unusual white costumes, inspired by early baseball jackets and the tight-fitting clothes worn by fencers, are anything but classical in appearance, yet seem to work well.

As for the choreography, it is indeed a lyrical hybrid of classical and modern, with movements on both the floor and in the air, on points and with undulating arms.

"Grace and fluidity are the words that are brought to mind by the splendid work done by the choreographer and her three performers," wrote René Sirvin, a dance critic for Le Figaro newspaper. "The poem speaks of a bird, the dancers move like silent sea gulls floating gently across a blue sky. Solos, duos and trios follow each other with harmony and lightness."

The 20 minutes pass quickly. In the current program, "O zlozony/O composite" is preceded by Francine Lancelot's "Bach Suite 2" and Ms. Brown's "Glacial Decoy" and followed by William Forsythe's stirring "Pas./parts." But on this occasion, as Mr. Sirvin noted, it was Ms. Brown's new work - and its fine interpreters - which comprised "the event of the evening."

World Premiere: Paris Opera Ballet, Palais Garnier, Paris, France, December 17, 2004

Pennsylvania Ballet History: This is the Company premiere of *O zlozony / O composite* and the first Trisha Brown work to enter the repertoire.

Sources: Trisha Brown Dance Company (trishabrowncompany.org), The New York Times (nytimes.com)

Video clip for reference: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0-Bev2SOxM

WORLD PREMIERE

Choreographer: Nicolo Fonte

Biography:

Choreographer Nicolo Fonte is known for his daring and original approach to dance. His work has been noted by critics for a unique movement language as well as a highly developed fusion of ideas, dance and design. Born in Brooklyn New York, Fonte started dancing at the age of 14. He studied at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York as well as at the San Francisco Ballet and New York City Ballet Schools while completing a Bachelor Degree of Fine Arts at SUNY Purchase. Upon graduation he danced with Peridance in NYC and later joined Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal, dancing in the works of Balanchine, Tudor, Kudelka and Spaniard Nacho Duato. Fonte subsequently joined Duato's Compañia Nacional de Danza in Madrid and forged a strong identity in the Spanish company for seven years - for both his dancing and his choreography. *En los Segundos Ocultos, (In Hidden Seconds),* one of three ballets Fonte made for the Spanish company, was hailed as a breakthrough work of great impact with the poetic vision of a mature artist and indeed this ballet established his presence on the European dance scene.

In 2000 Fonte retired from performing to devote himself full-time to his choreographic career. Since that time he has created or staged his ballets for The Dutch National Ballet, Houston Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ballet West, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Stuttgart Ballet, The Australian Ballet, The Göteborg Ballet, The Finnish National Ballet, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, The Perm Tchaikovsky Ballet, The Washington Ballet, Ballett Mainz, Ballett Nürnberg, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, TANZ Ensemble Cathy Sharp, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Tulsa Ballet, Ballet British Columbia and Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal.

Fonte received a Choo San Goh award for his 2002 collaboration with Pacific Northwest Ballet, *Almost Tango*, of which R.M. Campbell of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer wrote, "Fonte is a thinker, an architect who creates the new rather than reinvent the old. He is a master of manipulating space and creating relationships". *Almost Tango* was also voted as one of Dance Europe's "Best Premiere's when it was re-staged for The Australian Ballet in 2004.

From 2002 to 2006 Nicolo enjoyed an ongoing creative partnership with The Göteborg Ballet in Sweden, creating and staging numerous works that helped establish the company's distinct profile. While in Göteborg he created his first full-length ballet, based on the life of Tchaikovsky. Widely acclaimed in the international press for Fonte's marriage of narrative skill and a contemporary choreographic language, *Re: Tchaikovsky* appeared on the "Best of 2005" lists of both Ballett-Tanz and Dance Europe. Fonte has also played an important role in the ongoing development of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet as one of that company's most popular guest choreographers. To date he has created seven highly successful works for ASFB that have toured throughout the US and overseas. Nicolo Fonte has recently been named Resident Choreographer for Ballet West, in Salt Lake City starting with the 2012-2013 season.

Pennsylvania Ballet: This is the Company's first commission from Nicolo Fonte.

THE SECOND DETAIL [Company Premiere]

Choreography: William Forsythe
Music: Thom Willems
Costume, Scenic, and Lighting Design: William Forsythe
White Dress Design: Issey Miyake

History:

On February 20, 1991, The National Ballet of Canada unveiled the world premiere of William Forsythe's *the second detail*. The much-heralded premiere was the first Canadian commission for the globetrotting choreographer. One of the most sought-after of contemporary ballet choreographers, Forsythe has broken through the barriers of ballet, challenging traditions and establishing new paradigms. Forsythe began creating *the second detail* on the dancers of the National Ballet in late November 1990, using segments of music specially composed by his long-time collaborator Thom Willems. Each day over a three-week period, tape recordings of new sections of music were flown into Toronto after transatlantic conferences between choreographer and composer. As the movement unfolded in Toronto, so did the composition in Frankfurt.

Forsythe first organized movement thematically, and this was distilled by the dancers into solos, duets and group dances. Familiarity with the vocabulary prompted new movement sequences that were developed by the dancers through improvisational interactions. In one rehearsal, a female dancer was asked to execute a set solo while a male dancer partnered her. The resulting sequence became both a struggle and argument of movement as well as a dazzling new duet. The result on stage varies each time the ballet is performed, giving an added edge to its live performance. Many dance scholars belive that the second detail is a response to, or at least acknowledgement of, George Balanchine's Serenade (1934). Serenade was developed for Balanchine's students, and he freely used the experiences of the class in the development of the piece. One day a student fell in rehearsal and this became incorporated into the final work. Another day a student arrived late to class, so there is a late entrance in the work.

Forsythe's the second detail has a similar "classroom" feel: a certain informality with all 11 dancers on stage throughout, several seated on chairs or standing in the back of the stage while a duet or solo is danced downstage. The movement itself is vigorous, danced en pointe with the dancers stretching and twisting in unconventional ways.

Though an original work, the second detail, like much of Forsythe's choreography, finds its origins in an earlier creation, The Loss of Small Detail. That work was lost in a fire that destroyed the Frankfurt Opera House in the mid-1980s. In 1991, The Loss of Small Detail was reconstructed with the second detail as its final movement. Since its premiere in 1991, the second detail has evolved, as with much of his work, and Forsythe has woven portions of the original ballet into his later creations.

Reviewing the world premiere of *the second detail* in The Globe and Mail, Penelope Reed Doob noted, "dance combinations are half-stated and then abandoned, like an equation that makes no sense. All this is going on full tilt all over the stage, all at once, with no focus, no obvious pattern. It's like a madly undisciplined dance class or a warm-up on the ice before the pairs competition in figure skating, with people showing fragments of great beauty while something equally glorious is going on in other places. There's no front, no back, no presentation to the audience, in this brilliant cacophony of creativity. But neither is there any clutter, for all the movement is in itself polished, virtuosic, finely honed."

Iconoclast, provocateur, poet of the anti-ballet, William Forsythe has proven himself time and again a master of the deconstructivist mode, all the while forging a choreographic world utterly and distinctively his own. *the second detail* is quintessential Forsythe: ballet with attitude, featuring an electronic score and hard-edged, playfully physical choreography.

Sources: National Ballet of Canada (national.ballet.ca); Dance Victoria (dancevictoria.com)

World Premiere: National Ballet of Canada, February 20, 1991, Toronto

Pennsylvania Ballet History: This is the Company premiere of *The Second Detail*.

Video clip for reference: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSXHNPpzdGc