

PENNSYLVANIA BALLET

ROY KAISER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 2013–2014 SEASON

50TH ANNIVERSARY

PRODUCTION FACT SHEETS

UPDATED 3.4.13 – ALL PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

JEWELS
[COMPANY PREMIERE]
PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

DATES: October 17-27, 2013
VENUE: Academy of Music
TICKETS: \$30 - \$125; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

Choreography: George Balanchine
Music: Emeralds: Gabriel Fauré (Pelléas et Mélisande, 1898 & Shylock, 1889)
Rubies: Igor Stravinsky (Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra, 1929)
Diamonds: Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky (Symphony No. 3 in D major, Op. 29, 1875)
Running Time: 81 minutes

Details:

Jewels is unique: a full-length, three-act plotless ballet that uses the music of three very different composers. Balanchine was inspired by the artistry of jewelry designer Claude Arpels, and chose music revealing the essence of each jewel. He explained: "Of course, I have always liked jewels; after all, I am an Oriental, from Georgia in the Caucasus. I like the color of gems, the beauty of stones, and it was wonderful to see how our costume workshop, under Karinska's direction, came so close to the quality of real stones (which were of course too heavy for the dancers to wear!)."

Each section of the ballet is distinct in both music and mood. *Emeralds*, which Balanchine considered "an evocation of France — the France of elegance, comfort, dress, perfume," recalls the 19th century dances of the French Romantics. *Rubies* is crisp and witty, epitomizing the collaboration of Stravinsky and Balanchine. *Diamonds* recalls the order and grandeur of Imperial Russia and the Maryinsky Theater, where Balanchine was trained. Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp have written: "If the entire imperial Russian inheritance of ballet were lost, *Diamonds* would still tell us of its essence."

Emeralds

Emeralds, which Balanchine considered "an evocation of France — the France of elegance, comfort, dress, [and] perfume," recalls the 19th century dances of the French Romantics.

Rubies

Influenced by his experiences in America, Balanchine's definitively neoclassical choreography for *Rubies* sends its dancers racing across the stage like lightning to Stravinsky's jazz-inflected piano capriccio.

Igor Stravinsky composed his three-movement Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra, the music for *Rubies*, in 1928-29. He intended it as a vehicle for his own appearances as a concert pianist and as something of a relief from his Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments, which he had written five years before for the same purpose. The Capriccio is, in effect, a second piano concerto. Stravinsky said that as he wrote this score he had in mind Carl Maria von Weber, a composer he

championed; in fact, he quotes Weber in the music. Another of Stravinsky's enthusiasms that affects the *Capriccio* is the cimbalom. Figurations typical of this east European instrument are in evidence at various places in the solo piano part—in certain repeated notes and in the cadenza in the second movement, for example. Balanchine set the second movement as a pas de deux for the principal dancers, and they and a soloist dance with the corps de ballet in various combinations in the outer movements.

Diamonds

With its symphonic Tschaikovsky score, *Diamonds* venerates the regality of Balanchine's classical Russian heritage and the Maryinsky Theatre where he was trained.

Balanchine choreographed *Diamonds* to Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky's Symphony No. 3 in D major, Op. 29. Tschaikovsky composed this work in 1875, just before starting to write *Swan Lake*. It is the only one of his six symphonies in a major key, and it is the only one to have five movements, for it has two scherzos setting off the central *Andante elegiaco*. Balanchine, however, decided to omit the symphony's first movement, deeming it unsuitable for dancing.

World Premiere: April 13, 1967, New York City Ballet, New York State Theater

Pennsylvania Ballet History: This will mark the Company Premiere of Balanchine's full-length *Jewels*. The Company first performed *Rubies* (from *Jewels*) in 1983.

Source: The George Balanchine Trust (Balanchine.com) and New York City Ballet (nycballet.com)

Video clips for reference:

Emeralds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5Op6cZq3UM>

Rubies: <http://www.nycballet.com/Videos/Ballet-Detail-clips/Rubies-excerpt.aspx#.UNN-oM1sauc.email>

Diamonds: <http://www.nycballet.com/Videos/Ballet-Detail-clips/Diamonds-Pas-de-Deux-excerpt.aspx#.UNN1iImbbaY.email>

<http://www.nycballet.com/Videos/Ballet-Detail-clips/Diamonds-finale-excerpt.aspx#.UNN-awoWqRA.email>

GEORGE BALANCHINE'S THE NUTCRACKER™
PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

DATES: December 7-29, 2013
VENUE: Academy of Music
TICKETS: \$20 - \$125; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

Choreography: George Balanchine
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 45th 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.

SERENADE AND OTHER DANCES
PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: *Serenade*
Afternoon of a Faun
Under the Sun Pas de Deux
Petite Mort [Company Premiere]
DATES: February 6-9, 2014
VENUE: Merriam Theater
TICKETS: \$30 - \$125; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

SERENADE

Choreography: George Balanchine
Music: Peter Ilych Tschaikovsky (Serenade for Strings in C, Op. 48, 1880)
Costumes: Jean Lurçat
Running Time: 32 minutes

Details:

The first ballet Balanchine choreographed in America is a romantic work of immense sweep, set to a transcendent Tschaikovsky score.

Serenade is a milestone in the history of dance. It is the first original ballet George Balanchine created in America and is one of the signature works of New York City Ballet's repertory. Balanchine began the ballet as a lesson in stage technique and worked unexpected rehearsal events into the choreography. A student's fall or late arrival to rehearsal became part of the ballet. After its initial presentation, *Serenade* was reworked several times. In its present form there are four movements—"Sonatina," "Waltz," "Russian Dance," and "Elegy." The last two movements reverse the order of Tschaikovsky's score, ending the ballet on a note of sadness. Balanchine had a special affinity for Tschaikovsky. "In everything that I did to Tschaikovsky's music," he told an interviewer, "I sensed his help. It wasn't real conversation. But when I was working and saw that something was coming of it, I felt that it was Tschaikovsky who had helped me."

Serenade is a classic. Premiered in New York in 1934, it has timeless endurance, another in the line of romantic ballets that position women as desirable ephemera. The beauty of this work lies in the match between Balanchine's movement and the lush cascade of Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*. The stately pronouncement of the opening chords is punctuated by the dancers' sudden drop of wrist, and contemplative placement of the arms in a perfect balletic oval, which dissolves in a rush. Dancers skim the space, pausing to cluster briefly in intriguing groups.

The simple yet exquisite costumes, with their delicately drifting tulle skirts, leave an echo of the motion just passed. Males serve a token presence here, only two having any substantial role to support and glorify the ballerinas, and a further four brought on to raise the tragic fallen girl in an apotheosis, borne aloft upstage, followed by a cortege of women gliding on tremulous pointes.

While Balanchine provides no narrative, he exploits occurrences throughout, creating mini-dramas of emotional tension that audiences interpret at will.

World Premiere: The first performance of *Serenade* was on June 10, 1934, by students of the School of American Ballet, at Felix Warburg's estate, White Plains, New York. The first public performance was on December 8, 1934 by the producing company of the School of American ballet at Avery Memorial Theatre in Hartford, Connecticut, and the first professional performance was on March 1, 1935 at Adelphi Theatre in New York by New York City Ballet.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Pennsylvania Ballet first performed *Serenade* in 1969. The Company also performed the piece in 2000 as part of The Kennedy Center's Balanchine Festival, and most recently in March 2007 on a program with the premiere of Matthew Neenan's *Carmina Burana*.

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

Video clip for reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBtzyRzk0UM>

AFTERNOON OF A FAUN

Choreography:	Jerome Robbins
Music:	Claude Debussy
Costume Design:	Irene Sharaff
Set Design:	Jean Rosenthal
Running Time:	11 minutes

History:

Robbins recreates the essence of the music and the themes in the Nijinsky original, *L'Après-Midi D'Un Faun*, for contemporary audiences with this 1953 work that has been called "a miniature masterpiece." The curtain rises on a ballet studio with a singular male dancer at work, captivated by his own appearance in the mirror. A girl slyly enters from the back of the studios, the two only matching glances in the glassy reflection. His instant attraction to her is sealed with a kiss after their dance, which distracts him from his work to the point where he falls asleep on the studio floor.

Vaslav Nijinsky made only four ballets, of which *L'Après-Midi D'Un Faun* was the first, and the only one to survive in the classical repertoire. It is widely regarded as an innovative and extraordinary creation that disregards classical discipline in favor of a style of movement that attempts to mimic the two-dimensional effect of Greek vase paintings and bas reliefs.

Claude Debussy's *Prelude a l'Après-midi d'un Faune* may only be slightly less recognizable than his *Clair de Lune*, but his overall body of work defined "musical impressionism," drawing influence from the paintings and literary works of his contemporaries.

World Premiere: *Afternoon of a Faun* had its premiere by New York City Ballet at New York City Center on May 14, 1954 with Tanaquil Le Clercq and Francisco Moncion performing.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: *Afternoon of a Faun* had its Company Premiere in May 2010 on a program with Balanchine's *Square Dance*, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Requiem for a Rose*, and William Forsythe's *In the middle, somewhat elevated*.

Video clip for reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tX0gxJTGBKM>

UNDER THE SUN PAS DE DEUX

Choreography: Margo Sappington
Music: Michael Kamen
Set Design: Robert Mitchell

Details:

Inspired by the mobiles, toys, and circus sculptures of Alexander Calder, and with sculptural settings by Robert Mitchell, *Under the Sun* depicts the adventures of Corolla, the Sun Child, in a land of mobiles. Created in 1976, this work was a celebration of Calder being named bicentennial artist.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Sappington's *Under the Sun* was commissioned by Pennsylvania Ballet in 1976.

Source: The New York Times (nytimes.com), Milwaukee Ballet (Milwaukeeballet.org)

***PETITE MORT* [COMPANY PREMIERE]**

Choreography: Jiří Kylián
Music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Piano Concerto in A Major KV 488 (Adagio)
Piano Concerto in C Major KV 467 (Andante)
Costume Design: Joke Visser
Lighting Design: Joop Caboort
Running Time: 17 minutes

Jiří Kylián created this ballet especially for the Salzburg Festival on the second centenary of Mozart's death. For his work he chose the slow parts of two of Mozart's most beautiful and popular piano concertos. "This deliberate choice should not be seen as a provocation or thoughtlessness – rather as my way to acknowledge the fact that I am living and working as part of a world where nothing is sacred, where brutality and arbitrariness are commonplace. It should convey the idea of two antique torsos, heads and limbs cut off – evidence of intended mutilation

– without being able to destroy their beauty reflecting the spiritual power of their creator.”

The choreography includes six men, six women, and six foils. The foils have the function to be actual dance partners, and, at times, seem more unruly and obstinate than a partner of flesh and blood. They visualize a symbolism, which is more present than a story line. Aggression, sexuality, energy, silence, cultivated senselessness and vulnerability – they all play a significant part. *Petite Mort*, literally meaning “small death” serves as a paraphrase for orgasm in French and Arabic. Besides light-hearted moments with the foils, Kylián also plays with black baroque dresses, which at times appear to exist separately from the dancers and at others to be molded to their bodies.

World Premiere: *Petite Mort* was given its World Premiere at the Salzburg Festival on August 23, 1991 at the Kleines Festspielhaus, Salzburg, Germany.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: This is the Company Premiere of *Petit Mort*. This is the second Kylián work to enter the repertoire. His *Forgotten Land* had its Company Premiere in June 2013.

Source: American Ballet Theater (abt.org), Pacific Northwest Ballet (pnb.org)

Video clips for reference:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7afrgC5l8I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t0UuHvMI18>

CARMINA BURANA
WITH STRAVINSKY VIOLIN CONCERTO
PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* [Company Premiere]
Carmina Burana
Coppélia [Sub Add-on]
DATES: March 6-16, 2014
VENUE: Academy of Music
TICKETS: \$30 - \$125; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

STRAVINSKY VIOLIN CONCERTO
[COMPANY PREMIERE]

Choreography: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust
Music: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D major (1931) by Igor Stravinsky
Running Time: 23 minutes

Details:

In 1941, Balanchine choreographed *Balustrade* for the Ballet Russe to Stravinsky's *Violin Concerto in D*. When he returned to the score three decades later, he could no longer remember his original choreography. But Balanchine was not at all disturbed by the loss. "What I did then was for then," he said, "and what I wanted to do to this music for our Stravinsky Festival...represented more than 30 years' difference." The new choreography follows the score directly: An opening "Toccata" and a final "Capriccio" enclose two central "Arias," which form contrasting pas de deux for two different couples.

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), born in Russia, is acknowledged as one of the great composers of the 20th century. His work encompassed styles as diverse as Romanticism, Neoclassicism, and Serialism. His ballets for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes included *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring*, and *Apollo*. His music has been used in over 30 ballets originating with New York City Ballet from 1948 through 1987, including *Dances Concertantes*, *Orpheus*, *The Cage*, *Agon*, *Monumentum pro Gesualdo*, *Rubies*, *Symphony in Three Movements*, *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*, *Concerto for Two Solo Pianos*, *Suite from L'Histoire du Soldat*, *Concertino*, and *Jeu de Cartes*.

World Premiere: June 18, 1972, New York City Ballet, Stravinsky Festival, New York State Theater. Original cast featured Karin von Aroldingen, Kay Mazzo, Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, and Peter Martins, with 20 dancers total.

Source: New York City Ballet, nycballet.com

Pennsylvania Ballet History: This is the Company Premiere of *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*.

Video clip for reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZOyIXgVX3E>

CARMINA BURANA

Choreography: John Butler
Music: Carl Orff
Costumes: Rouben Ter-Arutunian
Lighting Design: John Hoey
Running Time: Approx. 55 mins.

History:

Based on 13th century poems and songs, Carl Orff's "secular cantata" was first performed in Frankfurt in 1937. *Carmina Burana* was first performed by the City Center Opera Company on September 24, 1959 at the City Center in New York. The cast included Carmen de Lavallade, Scott Douglass, Glen Tetley, and Veronica Malakar in the principal roles. Pennsylvania Ballet was the first American ensemble to produce Orff's *Carmina Burana* as a ballet in 1966.

The poems on which the music is based were composed by traveling minstrels who decide to abandon their sacred beliefs in favor of all the secular pleasures that life has to offer. The ballet, in five parts, is an abstract re-telling of their experiences. The prologue is a grand introduction of the Wheel of Fortune and its ability to govern the destiny of everything on earth; the first part celebrates the joys of life and nature; and the epilogue returns to the Wheel of Fortune with its power to control and undermine the fate of humanity.

Pennsylvania Ballet History:

Pennsylvania Ballet first presented *Carmina Burana* on November 14, 1966 at the Academy of Music. An audience favorite, *Carmina Burana* became a signature work for the Company and has been performed countless times in its history. The Company last performed it in February 2003. John Butler staged the work for the Company numerous times between 1966 and 1981. He also created several new works for Pennsylvania Ballet during the 1960s and 1970s including *Villon* (1966), *Ceremony* (1968), *Journeys* (1970), and *Black Angel* (1973). Choreographer in Residence Matthew Neenan created a world premiere production of *Carmina Burana* for the Company in March 2007, which was performed again that November at New York City Center and returned to the Academy of Music in March 2010.

COPPÉLIA **[SUBSCRIPTION ADD-ON]**

Choreography: after Marius Petipa
Music: Leo Delibes
Costumes: José Varona
Lighting Design: John Hoey
Running Time: 3 acts in approximately 2 hours 10 minutes, including intermission

History:

Coppélia was first choreographed by Arthur Saint-Léon, who based the story on the tale by E.T.A. Hoffman. It was first presented at the Theatre Imperial de l'Opera in Paris on May 25,

1870. Its first presentation in the United States was at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York on March 11, 1887. It was also introduced in Russia in 1884 with Marius Petipa's version of Saint-Léon's choreography. There have been many versions of *Coppélia* during the last 100-plus years, most major ballet companies worldwide present it.

Coppélia is commonly regarded as ballet's great comedy, just as *Giselle* is thought of as ballet's great tragedy. In addition, according to George Balanchine and Francis Mason's 101 Stories of the Great Ballets, it is said that the czardas and mazurka were first introduced into ballet in *Coppélia* and, from then on, divertissements based on national folk dances became very popular in ballet.

Set in a 19th-century village, a mysterious toymaker named Dr. Coppélius makes a doll, which he names Coppélia. He dreams that one day she will come to life. This timeless story of a young couple in love, battling between worlds of realism and idealism, is simple, charming, and laugh-out-loud funny. Part comedy and part metaphor, this sentimental comic ballet is beloved by audiences everywhere for its pantomime and folk dancing.

Source: George Balanchine and Francis Mason; 101 Stories of the Great Ballets; 1954.

Pennsylvania Ballet History:

Coppélia was first presented by Pennsylvania Ballet in 1978, and has been performed many times since. It is one of Pennsylvania Ballet's most popular works, attracting a large audience every time it is presented. In March 1997, the Company performed *Coppélia* with Dede Barfield and Jodie Gates alternating in the role of Swanilda; Alexei Borovik and Joaquin De Luz sharing the role of Franz; and David Krensing and Jeffrey Gribler sharing the role of Dr. Coppélius. Pennsylvania Ballet also performed *Coppélia* in January 2002 and April 2008. The Company will tour *Coppélia* to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Canada in March 2014.

**DIRECTOR'S CHOICE
PRODUCTION FACT SHEET**

PROGRAM: **WORLD PREMIERE** by Trey McIntyre
Grieg: Piano Concerto by Robert Weiss [Company Premiere]
Franklin Court

DATES: **May 8-11, 2014**

VENUE: **Academy of Music**

TICKETS: **\$30 - \$125; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org**

**WORLD PREMIERE
By Trey McIntyre**

Biography:

Trey McIntyre is one of the most sought after choreographers working today. Born in Wichita, KS, McIntyre has created a canon of more than 90 works for companies such as American Ballet Theatre, Stuttgart Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, New York City Ballet, and Ballet de Santiago (Chile). He served as Choreographic Associate for Houston Ballet from 1989-2008 and Resident Choreographer for Oregon Ballet Theatre, Ballet Memphis, and The Washington Ballet before forming his acclaimed Trey McIntyre Project in 2008 based in Boise, ID.

In 2010 McIntyre was named the United States Artists Wynn Fellow. He has received the Gold Medal of Lifetime Achievement from the National Society of Arts and Letters, two choreographic fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, was named one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" in 2001, one of People magazine's "25 Hottest Bachelors" 2003 and one of Out Magazine's 2008 "Tastemakers." *New York Times* critic Alastair Macaulay said of McIntyre "there's a fertility of invention and a modernity of spirit here that are all Mr. McIntyre's own" and the *Los Angeles Times* said "...there is indeed such a thing as genuine 21st century ballet, and it belongs more to this guy from Wichita than any of the over-hyped pretenders from England, France, or Russia."

Focusing primarily on Trey McIntyre Project, McIntyre spends his time creating works that explore the human experience in transformative and captivating ways by creating a unique culture for audience members to engage with the work.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Most recently, the Company performed Mr. McIntyre's *Peter Pan* in May 2012. The Company also has presented his *Blue Until June*, *Cantilena*, and *Plush*. Mr. McIntyre's early dancemaking was showcased at the Carlisle Project, created by Pennsylvania Ballet founder Barbara Weisberger.

**GRIEG: PIANO CONCERTO
[COMPANY PREMIERE]**

Choreographer: Robert Weiss

Music: Edvard Grieg, Piano Concerto in A Minor (1869)

Costumes: Kerri Martinsen
Running Time: 33 minutes

History:

“Considered to be one his earliest important works, Grieg premiered his ‘Piano Concerto in A Minor’ in 1869 in Copenhagen at the height of the romantic era. He was only 24 years old. I like to think that, although we live in a completely different time and place, there is still the romantic in all of us.” —Robert Weiss

This ballet uses 21 dancers total: 3 lead couples, 3 soloist ladies, and 6 corps couples. A purely romantic ballet, the only scenery is a sheer white curtain that floats in the background.

Source: Carolina Ballet, carolinaballet.com

World Premiere: *Grieg: Piano Concerto* received its world premiere on February 17, 2011 at Carolina Ballet in Raleigh, NC. Carolina Ballet again performed the work in November 2011.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Currently Artistic Director of Carolina Ballet, Robert Weiss served as Artistic Director of Pennsylvania Ballet from 1982-1990. Most recently, the Company performed his *Messiah* in March 2012. This is the Company Premiere of *Grieg: Piano Concerto*. Pennsylvania Ballet will be the 2nd company to present this work.

FRANKLIN COURT

Choreographer: Christopher d’Amboise
Music: Johann Sebastian Bach
Costumes: Frankie Fehr
Running Time: 30 minutes

History:

Considered a highlight within Pennsylvania Ballet’s artistic lineage, *Franklin Court* was the first ballet created for the Company by Christopher d’Amboise, who had recently begun his four-year tenure as Artistic Director. Performed to Bach’s *G Minor Fugue*, marked by truly Baroque sounds of the harpsichord and the Franklin-invented glass harmonica, the re-invention and presentation of *Franklin Court* holds tremendous significance to both Pennsylvania Ballet and Philadelphia’s audiences. Filled with inventive lyricism and a celebratory spirit, the ballet embraces the extraordinary imagination of one Philadelphian who taught the world to see in new and different ways.

Following a remarkable overture performed by a live musician playing the glass harmonica (which produces sounds akin to the sound of a damp finger tracing the rim of a crystal glass) *Franklin Court* unfolds in a series of scenes that catch the spirit of Franklin’s inventions.

The content of *Franklin Court* conveys an abstract reflection of several of Franklin's inventions through movements titled "Bifocals," "Spark," "Swim Fins" and "Electricity." "Bifocals" is a dance in which one couple shadows another, and in "Swim Fins" a dancer is tossed through the air in an illusion similar to the motion of a school of dolphins. *Franklin Court* also includes two duets – "Spark" and "Electricity" – described best by *City Paper* critic Brad Rosenstein as "...18th-century precision shot through with the restless energy of an omnivorous mind and a uniquely American sense of quest." A powerful collage of music and a stunning display of fast, precise choreography that is grand in both scope and spirit contribute to the ballet's final "Fugue." With the full cast dancing in unison, complemented by the dramatic visual effect of the moving scenery overhead, the final moments of the ballet communicate a sense of nobility, inventiveness and elation.

Franklin Court's title refers to the Philadelphia landmark that bears the same name – the Independence National Historic Park attraction that showcases the 54-foot high modern steel-girder structure in the shape of Franklin's last house, which stood on the same site near Third and Market Streets. *Franklin Court's* complicated set features a highly technological display of beams hanging in abstract designs, originally created by the architectural design firm of Venturi, Scott and Associates. At the ballet's conclusion, these pieces come together to form an outline resembling the actual house structure at Franklin Court.

In his notes that appeared in the audience programs of the 1990 world premiere performance, choreographer Christopher d'Amboise communicated his interest with Benjamin Franklin's thirst for invention, and the distinction between invention and discovery. He said, "Of all the Benjamin Franklins – statesman, writer, politician, printer, philosopher – Franklin the inventor fascinates me the most. He understood that invention is not the same as creation; it is the uncovering of what is already there and finding it in a new use. As a choreographer, I try to reveal different uses of movement already inherent in the dancers' bodies. Bach organized melodies of charm and simplicity and then spun them around, forward, backward in dazzling and new ways. He, too, called some of his works, 'inventions'."

Pennsylvania Ballet History:

Franklin Court celebrated its world premiere performance at the Academy of Music on September 12, 1990, and was presented in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the death of Benjamin Franklin. The evening's presentation inaugurated Christopher d'Amboise as the new Artistic Director of the Company.

In 2006, in a fitting tribute to the 300th anniversary of the statesman's birth in 1706, Pennsylvania Ballet presented *Franklin Court* within Philadelphia's city-wide cultural celebration of the inventor's life and achievements, on a program with James Kudelka's *The Firebird*.

A 50TH FINALE
PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

PROGRAM: *In the middle, somewhat elevated*
WORLD PREMIERE by Matthew Neenan
TBD
DATES: June 12-15, 2014
VENUE: Merriam Theater
TICKETS: \$30 - \$125; 215.893.1999 or paballet.org

IN THE MIDDLE, SOMEWHAT ELEVATED

Choreography: William Forsythe
Music: Thom Willems
Running Time: Approximately 30 minutes

History:

Created in 1987 for Sylvie Guillem and other stars of the Paris Opera Ballet, *In the middle, somewhat elevated* is Forsythe at his fierce finest. This is an abstract, muscular piece, with banging, grunting music by Thom Willems. Dancers walk out, burst into movement and then suddenly quit, striding offstage. The one-act ballet begins that way and ends that way; nearly all the interest lies in the dancing and the dancers more than in any perceivable structure.

The ballet takes place on a barren stage with exposed wings, and the sole element of décor, unnoticeable to most audiences, is a small cluster of cherries, hung “in the middle, somewhat elevated.” Nothing remains constant - the dancers shift from downstage to upstage; groupings barely form before they dissolve; exits are both complete and partial, with dancers at times remaining onstage to watch the others; classical steps emerge and then morph into more asymmetrical forms. Bathed in sometimes obscuring lighting designed by Forsythe, the ballet’s nine dancers take an aggressive approach to classicism with an off-kilter edge.

Source: San Francisco Ballet and *The New York Times*.

Pennsylvania Ballet History:

In the middle, somewhat elevated had its Company premiere in May 2010, made possible by a grant from Dance Advance, on a program with Balanchine’s *Square Dance*, Robbins’ *Afternoon of a Faun*, and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa’s *Requiem for a Rose*.

Video clip for reference: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2AAo_1Iz8g

WORLD PREMIERE

By 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, Jeffrey Gribler, 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 by Pennsylvania Ballet (totaling 12 commissions), BalletX, The Washington Ballet, Colorado Ballet, Juilliard Dance, New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute, Milwaukee Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Indiana University, Opera Company of 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 marked 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 Skirball Center and Symphony Space, Jacob's Pillow Festival, The Cerritos Center, Laguna Dance Festival, Spring to Dance Festival in St. Louis, and internationally in Cali, Colombia and Seoul, Korea.

Mr. Neenan was recently named Best Dance Talent by the editors of Philadelphia Magazine's annual "Best of Philly" list. He currently serves on the Dance USA / Philadelphia Advisory board and recently joined the Board of Trustees for National Dance USA in November 2010.

Pennsylvania Ballet History: Matthew Neenan was named Pennsylvania Ballet's first Choreographer in Residence in 2007. This will be Mr. Neenan's 15th commission for the Company.