

Subject: FPNB PR: Pacific Northwest Ballet announces all-digital 2020-21 season

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For Immediate Release

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DANCE HAPPENS EVERYWHERE: Pacific Northwest Ballet Announces New All-Online Line-Up for 2020-2021 Season.

With performances in McCaw Hall on indefinite hold, PNB's 48th season – including world premieres by Penny Saunders, Jessica Lang, Donald Byrd, Alejandro Cerrudo, and Edwaard Liang – evolves to an online format, with audiences being treated to a year of on-demand dance from the comfort and safety of home. Digital access to the full season line-up starts at \$190.

August 18, 2020, SEATTLE, WA— As the old proverb goes, “Necessity is the mother of invention.” In light of current restrictions on public gatherings and the opportunity to perform in McCaw Hall on hold, Pacific Northwest Ballet Artistic Director Peter Boal and Executive Director Ellen Walker have announced that the company is shifting gears and moving forward with a fully-digital dance-card of new works and greatest hits for PNB’s 2020-2021 season. The online line-up includes a mix of world premieres from choreographers Donald Byrd, PNB Resident Choreographer Alejandro Cerrudo, Jessica Lang, Edwaard Liang, and Penny Saunders, and audience favorites such as *Roméo et Juliette* and *Coppélia*. (Conspicuously absent is the beloved holiday classic, *George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker*®). Under current COVID conditions, which include restrictions to PNB School’s operations, it is impossible to stage PNB’s most popular production in 2020, but plans are afoot to offer a digital experience of the cherished story ballet this December. Stay tuned for further details.)

Mr. Boal’s plans for the season are predicated on opportunities for artists, artistic ingenuity within COVID-driven confines, access for audiences, and securing a future for PNB. The line-up will feature a combination of high-definition videos of new works rehearsed, performed, and filmed under conditions to ensure the well-being of the artists and production teams; and archival videos of story ballets and works that wouldn’t be possible to perform during the pandemic. Bonus content specially curated for each program will include interviews, additional dance works, and the premiere of a site-specific work created by PNB Company member Amanda Morgan. Programs will be delivered to email inboxes so that patrons will be able to access and enjoy the show in the comfort and safety of their own homes. Subscriptions, starting at \$190, are available through the PNB Box Office by calling 206.441.2424 or online at PNB.org. (E-tickets for single programs may also be purchased on an individual basis, beginning Tuesday, September 8. PNB subscribers who have already renewed their subscriptions for the 2020-21 season will automatically receive the digital season and a tax-deductible receipt for the balance, if applicable. See “Subscription Information” and “F.A.Q.s” below for more info.)

“I love to plan a season, which is a good thing because I’ve done so about ten times just in the last few weeks!” stated Mr. Boal. “But on the other side of a myriad number of challenges is a season unlike any we’ve ever imagined, and I hope everyone will join us on this journey down an unfamiliar but exciting new path.” For the opening program, Mr. Boal is showcasing a treasure trove of solos and socially-distanced gems; everything from Odette’s *Swan Lake* variation to Marco Goecke’s moody masterpiece *Mopey*. None of the opening program’s offerings will be archival footage: Each work will be rehearsed and performed by PNB dancers days before their release. Elsewhere in the season, PNB will premiere new works by Donald Byrd, PNB Resident Choreographer Alejandro Cerrudo, Jessica Lang, Edwaard Liang, and Penny Saunders, along with works by George Balanchine, Jean-Christopher Maillot, Susan Marshall, Alexei Ratmansky, Twyla Tharp, and Christopher Wheeldon.

"This season is uniquely challenging," said Ms. Walker. "The live performance experience is central to our business model and our mission. Producing a season exclusively online requires us to plan everything through the priorities of keeping our workforce safe and creating as much as possible within extremely limited resources. But it's also an opportunity to reimagine the future of PNB and re-evaluate everything we do. We are learning and growing along the way, and gaining valuable insights into what our community needs from us. The fact remains that performing arts businesses are not sustainable until the return to live performances: 75% of PNB's budget traditionally comes from ticket sales and tuition for students of PNB School. 25% alone usually comes from *The Nutcracker*. We are counting on our friends and supporters to invest in what we are able to offer under these acute circumstances."

"The board is pleased with Peter and Ellen's decision," said Aya Hamilton, Chairman of PNB's Board of Trustees. "We knew early on that the 2020-21 season would provide substantially more challenges to us than the one we just concluded. We feel confident we've made the right decision—the smart decision. PNB exists to serve our community and while we do it in a variety of ways, every way is being impacted financially. The board is committed to emerging on the other side of this pandemic in a fiscally solid state so that we may all unite and celebrate together in McCaw Hall and beyond as soon as possible. To do this we ask our community to come along with us for our 2020-21 digital season."

Subscriptions starting at \$190 give patrons access to an entire season of dance. Subscription benefits include additional bonus content (including a site-specific work created by Company member Amanda Morgan), specially curated and commissioned by PNB to inform the "mainstage" presentations. (Previously-renewed 2020-21 subscriptions will be applied toward the digital season.) Subscriptions may be purchased by contacting the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424 or online at PNB.org/DigitalSubscription. All programming and dates are subject to change. For further details, see "SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION" and "F.A.Q.s," below.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET'S 2020-21 DIGITAL SEASON LINE-UP

(Programming and schedule subject to change: *Each program will be available for viewing for approximately five days following its release date.*)

Rep 1 – Release date: October 8, 2020

***Dances at a Gathering* (Excerpt)**

Music: Frederic Chopin

Choreography: Jerome Robbins

***F O I L* (Excerpts)**

Music: Nadia Boulanger

Choreography: Eva Stone

***One Body* (PNB Premiere)**

Music: John Kennedy

Choreography: Albert Evans

***Swan Lake* (Excerpts)**

Music: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreography: Kent Stowell

Staging: Francia Russell (after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov)

***Jewels* (Excerpts)**

Music: Gabriel Fauré, Igor Stravinsky, and Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreography: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Mopey

Music: C.P.E. Bach and The Cramps

Choreography: Marco Goecke

The Calling

Music: Anonymous

Choreography: Jessica Lang

***The Trees The Trees* (Excerpt)**

Music: Kyle Vegter

Choreography: Robyn Mineko Williams

***Red Angels* (Excerpt)**

Music: Richard Einhorn

Choreography: Ulysses Dove

Bonus subscription benefits include an interview with Jessica Lang, and the Emmy Award-winning film *Two by Dove*. (See “Subscription Information, below, for more details.)

Rep 2 – Release date: November 12, 2020

World Premiere

Choreography: Penny Saunders

Waterbaby Bagatelles (Excerpt)

Music: 20th-century bagatelles

Choreography: Twyla Tharp

Kiss

Music: Arvo Part

Choreography: Susan Marshall

World Premiere

Music: Clara Schumann and Robert Schumann

Choreography: Jessica Lang

Bonus subscription benefits include Penny Saunders’ film *Brown Eyes*, an interview with Twyla Tharp by Peter Boal, and the world premiere of a site-specific work choreographed by Amanda Morgan. (See “Subscription Information, below, for more details.)

George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker® – December, 2020

NOTE: Not part of the 2020-21 Digital Subscription.

Music: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreography: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Costume & Scenic Design: Ian Falconer

A special video presentation of PNB’s holiday classic, *George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker®*, will be available in the coming months. Stay tuned for details.

Roméo et Juliette – Release date: February 11, 2021

Music: Sergei Prokofiev

Choreography: Jean-Christophe Maillot

Bonus subscription benefits include Jerome Robbins’ *West Side Story Suite*, introduced by Justin Peck, choreographer of the new *West Side Story* movie remake. (See “Subscription Information, below, for more details.)

Rep 4 – Release date: April 1, 2021

World Premiere

Music: John Adams

Choreography: Donald Byrd

Bound To (PNB Premiere)

Music: Keaton Henson

Choreography: Christopher Wheeldon

World Premiere

Choreography: Alejandro Cerrudo

Bonus subscription benefits include Alejandro Cerrudo’s *Little mortal jump*, and an interview with Mr. Cerrudo. (See “Subscription Information, below, for more details.)

Coppélia – Release date: May 6, 2021

Music: Léo Delibes

Choreography: Alexandra Danilova and George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust (after Petipa)

Bonus subscription benefits include an interview with Alexandra Danilova by Edward Villella (“Live from Lincoln Center,” 1978), interview with designer Roberta Guidi di Bagno, and archival release of George Balanchine’s *Serenade* introduced by Francia Russell. (See “Subscription Information, below, for more details.)

REP 6 – Release date: June 10, 2021

Silent Ghost

Music: Dustin Hamman, King Creosote & Jon Hopkins, Ólafur Arnalds, and Nils Frahm
Choreography: Alejandro Cerrudo

Pictures at an Exhibition

Music: Modest Mussorgsky
Choreography: Alexei Ratmansky

World Premiere

Music: Oliver Davis
Choreography: Edwaard Liang

Bonus subscription benefits include an interview with Alexei Ratmansky by Wendy Whelan, an archival release of Edwaard Liang's *Distant Cries*, and a curator-led tour of Abstract Expressionist work at Seattle Art Museum. (See "Subscription Information, below, for more details.)

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscriptions to PNB's digital season start at \$190 and may be purchased through the PNB Box Office by calling **206.441.2424** or online at **PNB.org/DigitalSubscription**.

Subscriptions include on-demand access to six online performance events with a mix of new and archival videos over the course of PNB's season, plus:

Five Minute Call: A peek backstage at the artists preparing for the performance

Ballet Talk: An informal introduction to each performance discussing choreography, music and more with Doug Fullington

Meet the Artist: Artistic Director Peter Boal with company dancers in a lively conversation about the works

Additional interviews with artists, photo essays, links to supplemental music, and access to additional footage of dance works plus an original site-specific work created by rising choreographer Amanda Morgan.

Single tickets (\$29 performance only, or \$39 including the added benefits enjoyed by subscriptions) will be available for purchase from the PNB Box Office starting September 8.

F. A. Q.s

What is a digital season?

PNB's 2020-21 season will showcase a combination of new work, videos of past performances, and conversations with dancers and artists, all streamed online for subscribers. Additional bonus content and opportunities will be available as a subscription benefit.

So we won't be seeing these performances in McCaw Hall at Seattle Center?

Due to current restrictions on public gatherings, PNB is unable to feasibly accommodate audiences in McCaw Hall at this time. Performances will be filmed on stage, then streamed and accessed through a paywall for subscribers. Pending, well, everything, we are hoping to welcome audiences back to McCaw Hall for our 2021-22 season.

What about *The Nutcracker*?

Given the number of dancers, musicians, stagehands, and PNB School students* involved, and current restrictions on public gatherings, it won't be possible to welcome audiences back to McCaw Hall in 2020 for the region's most popular holiday tradition, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®. Patrons who subscribe to PNB's season will be given first access to purchase a special video presentation of the classic holiday ballet, to be announced.

*Approximately 200 students from PNB School (including 50 Professional Division students) are cast each year in *The Nutcracker*. PNB School has shifted its program to online instruction for the 2020-21 school year due to COVID restrictions.

How will subscribers access these videos?

Emails with access information for digital content will be sent to subscribers prior to each program, which will be available for 24-hour on-demand viewing for several days (specifics to be announced.)

How long will videos be accessible?

Each program will be available for on-demand viewing online for approximately 100 hours, Thursday through Monday. Specific details of viewing availability may vary and will be announced.

I'd already subscribed thinking we'd be back to normal by September. What do I do now?

Patrons who have already renewed for the 2020-21 season are automatically subscribed to the digital season. Amounts above \$190 will be credited as a tax-deductible donation. If they are not interested in the 2020-21 digital season, they may request a refund, or convert the payment into a donation or gift certificate.

With no McCaw Hall performances this season, will 2019-20 subscribers be able to keep their seats for the presumptive 2021-22 season?

Subscribers who have renewed for the 2020-21 digital season should be sent an invoice for the 2019-20 seats they had when renewals go out for PNB's 2021-22 season; however at this time we don't know what sort of social-distancing measures will be required for theaters in the future, or the number of performances of each program PNB will be able to offer when we return to live performances. We can promise that 2019-20 subscribers will have priority access to seats in McCaw Hall when we are able to offer them again.

Are these subscriptions tax-deductible?

Payments in excess of the fair market value of the \$190 digital subscription are deductible for federal income tax purposes.

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Everything is subject to change. For further information, please visit PNB.org.

