



MEDIA CONTACT
Inna Heasley
215.280.4824
publicity@balletX.org

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***PROLIFERATION OF THE IMAGINATION*, a World Premiere**
BalletX and The Wilma Theater collaborate in a new interdisciplinary production
April 12-24, 2011

PHILADELPHIA, PA: BalletX, the resident dance company of The Wilma Theater, joins artistic forces with the Wilma for the first time to premiere *Proliferation of the Imagination*, an inter-disciplinary production combining ballet, spoken word and live music. Inspired by the surrealist theater pioneer Guillaume Apollinaire and developed by Wilma Dramaturg/Literary Manager **Walter Bilderback** and BalletX Co-Artistic Director, choreographer **Matthew Neenan**, *Proliferation of the Imagination* previews on **Tuesday, April 12**, opens on **Wednesday, April 13**, and plays through **Sunday, April 24, 2011** at The Wilma Theater, as part of the Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA).

Encouraged by the PIFA theme of “the spirit of artistic experimentation and uninhibited creativity in Paris 1910-1920”, Bilderback-Neenan’s production of *Proliferation of the Imagination* reinterprets Guillaume Apollinaire’s *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (The Mammaries of Tirésias), with a surprise twist.

Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) is an innovator in the theater of the absurd, a poet who took part in all avant-garde movements in French literature at the beginning of the 20th century. His *Les mamelles de Tirésias* is “perhaps the most important French play of the period between 1910-1920, full of enthusiasm and sheer joy. He invented the word ‘surrealism’ to describe this play,” said Walter Bilderback. The play was staged in Paris in 1916 and tells a story of a housewife, Thérèse, who changes sex and lets her breasts float upwards as toy balloons.

“We chose this play because it is a very strange, surrealistic piece of work, a fantasy, a farce, it’s fun and silly, colorful and witty, and a little crazy, with a dark undertone,” comments Matthew Neenan.

“*Proliferation of the Imagination* is truly a collaborative effort: not really a musical, or a play, or a dance piece. It’s a mix of everything, where we use the best of everyone’s talents.”

Walter Bilderback adds: “I don’t think it will look like anything most Philadelphia audiences have ever seen, especially the way we’re trying to combine dancers, actors and musicians. I think audiences will be surprised at how amazingly fresh and unconventional Apollinaire is, despite being nearly a century old.”

The Cast and Design Team:

BalletX dancers: Jaime Lennon, Tara Keating, Anitra N. Keegan, Matthew Prescott, Colby Damon, and welcoming Gabrielle Lamb (New York, NY) in her debut with the company.

The Wilma Theater actors: Mary McCool (as Thérèse/Tirésias) and Luigi Sottile (as The Husband).

Musicians: Composer Rosie Langabeer (accordion and keyboard), Josh Machiz (double bass), Jesse Sparhawk (harp), performing live on stage.

Original music by Rosie Langabeer; Set design by Obie Award winner Steven Dufala; Costume design by Maiko Matsushima; Lighting design by Drew Billiau.

Performance Times:**

Tuesday April 12 8:00PM Preview
Wednesday April 13 8:00PM Opening night*
Thursday April 14 8:00PM
Friday April 15 8:00PM
Saturday April 16 8:00PM
Sunday April 17 2:00PM
Tuesday April 19 8:00PM
Wednesday April 20 8:00PM
Thursday April 21 8:00PM
Friday April 22 8:00PM
Saturday April 23 8:00PM
Sunday April 24 2:00PM

**Reviewing members of the press are invited to attend opening night and may reserve tickets by contacting Inna Heasley at publicity@balletx.org.*

Run time: approximately 60 minutes, with no intermission.

**Special Events at The Wilma Theater will accompany the production and provide audiences with the opportunity to engage with the artists:

Inside the Mind of a Dancer

Saturday, April 16, at 2:00 PM

Free public interactive lecture-demonstration for ages 8 and up, exploring the process of movement creation, with BalletX Co-Artistic Directors Christine Cox and Matthew Neenan.

Onstage Conversations with production team and the cast members, following the show:

Thursday, April 14

Thursday, April 21

Tickets and Information: General \$35, Senior \$30, Students \$25. Call 215.546.7824, WilmaTheater.org, or at The Wilma Theater Box Office, 265 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia. For more information visit BalletX.org.

BalletX

Founded in 2005, BalletX produces original choreography that expands the vocabulary of classical dance for all audiences. Its goal is to redefine ballet and bring it into the new century. While firmly rooted in rigorous, classical ballet training and technique, BalletX brings a contemporary sensibility to

the art form, infusing its work with a new vision of athleticism, emotion and intimacy. For more information visit BalletX.org or call 215.917.1513.

The Wilma Theater

The Wilma Theater exists to present theater as an art form, engaging artists and audiences in an adventure of aesthetic philosophical reflection of the complexities of contemporary life. The theater accomplishes its mission by producing thoughtful, well-crafted, productions of intelligent, daring plays that represent a range of voices, viewpoints, and production styles. For more information visit WilmaTheater.org or 215.546.7824.

PIFA

Proliferation of the Imagination was funded in part by and presented in partnership with the Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA), a three-week festival inspired by the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, showcasing creativity, collaboration and innovation throughout Philadelphia's artistic and cultural communities. In homage to the artistic energy of Paris 1910-1920, PIFA celebrates works from that era and new creations inspired by the brashly innovative spirit of the period. The festival was made possible by an extraordinary grant from Philadelphia philanthropist Leonore Annenberg, whose vision for a city-wide celebration of the arts shaped its philosophy and programming. PIFA takes place April 7-May 1, 2011. For more information visit PIFA.org or call 215.790.5800.

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