



Media Contact
Josh Olmstead
Marketing & PR Specialist
267-303-6831
jolmstead@balletx.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BalletX *Spring Series 2017* at The Wilma Theater, Apr. 26-May 7
Featuring the company premiere of Cayetano Soto's *Schachmatt*, the return of Matthew Neenan's *The Last Glass* (2010), and a World Premiere by Choreographic Fellow Tommie-Waheed Evans

WHAT: On April 26 through May 7, BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet and resident dance company of The Wilma Theater, presents 13 performances of its *Spring Series 2017* at The Wilma Theater. Since its 2005 inception, BalletX has built a repertory of 61 world premieres, leading *The New Yorker* to describe the company as "a place of choreographic innovation." In recent years, BalletX has enhanced its commitment to innovation by instituting the Choreographic Fellowship, a program aimed at pairing an emerging choreographer with an established mentor in the field to create world premiere work on BalletX dancers. *Spring Series 2017* will feature works by this year's Choreographic Mentor, Cayetano Soto and Fellow, Tommie-Waheed Evans, as well as the return of Matthew Neenan's *The Last Glass* (2010).

"I am looking forward to this performance series because it features a new work by Choreographic Fellow and Philadelphia native, Tommie-Waheed Evans. He is a rising star in our community and it will be a thrill to present his work on the company alongside Cayetano Soto and Matthew Neenan," says Christine Cox, Co-Founder, Artistic & Executive Director of BalletX.

Cayetano Soto is a Barcelona-based choreographer whose work has been performed on companies around the world, including Nederlands Dans Theater, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Balé da Cidade de São Paulo, Companhia Nacional de Bailado, and Aspen Santa Fe Ballet. Soto was appointed the resident choreographer of Canada's Ballet BC in 2015. He is serving as BalletX's 2017 Choreographic Mentor to Tommie-Waheed Evans, and his work *Schachmatt* will be presented by BalletX for the first time in the United States. Soto told the *Vancouver Sun* that *Schachmatt* ("checkmate" in German) reflects his own battle between thinking and feeling when he's creating new work, explaining "sometimes you listen to your brain, sometimes to your heart... for me, it's like a game." Following *Schachmatt's* world premiere on Ballet BC in November 2016, *The Georgia Straight* described the piece as, "a nonstop parade of fun... there were flashes of Cabaret and Sweet Charity, offset by a soundtrack that spanned French postwar ballads, cheesy mambos, groovy '60s dance beats, and even Peter Gunn."

Matthew Neenan has been named "one of the strange originals of American ballet" by *The New York Times*. Since co-founding BalletX with Christine Cox in 2005, his choreography has been performed by companies around the country, including Pennsylvania Ballet, Opera Philadelphia, The Washington Ballet, Ballet West, Juilliard Dance, and New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute. BalletX welcomes the return of Neenan's *The Last Glass*, which originally premiered on the company in 2010, and has since toured the country, with performances most recently at the 2016 Vail International Dance Festival, World Music/CRASHarts at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art, and Portland Ovations, Maine. Drawing inspiration from the wild street-parade sound of American indie-rock band Beirut, *The Last Glass* is a ballet that slowly awakens like a city, part mysterious pageant and part raucous celebration. *The Boston Globe* commended *The Last Glass's* "flurry of idiosyncratic solos and duets that ranged from playfully flirtatious to sexy and contentious," and *The New York Times* praised the work's "startling spontaneity and urgency," a quality Neenan will amplify by re-casting all ten BalletX dancers in different roles this time around.

Tommie-Waheed Evans was already quite accomplished in his dance education and work with Philadelphia-based dance troupe PHILADANCO! when he was selected as BalletX's 2017 Choreographic Fellow. Now with the fellowship opportunity underway Evans says, "It's totally changed me and the way people see and respect my work. I know this is a serious platform to be placed on, and I'm humbled and excited about it." BalletX's Choreographic Fellowship, currently in its 2nd year with ongoing support from the Wyncote Foundation, is an opportunity for emerging artists to expand their experience and further develop their unique voices under the mentorship and guidance of established choreographers. Regarding the creation of a world premiere work under mentor Cayetano Soto, Evans says, "I'm a huge fan of his work. A good mentor is a gift from the universe, and I'm looking forward to a mentor committed to navigating me out my 'comfort zone' to make something extraordinary happen." Evans plans for a world premiere with movement inspired by the images of contemporary video artist Bill Viola.

For a closer look at the *Spring Series 2017* production, BalletX invites audiences to various audience engagement programming events, known as *The X-Process*. Starting with a pre-show *Conversations with the Artists* on opening night, audiences are also welcome to attend a *Post-Show Q&A* with the artists after the Thursday, April 27 evening performance.

Tickets to *Spring Series 2017* at The Wilma Theater are available online at www.balletx.org, by phone at [215-546-7824](tel:215-546-7824), or in person at the Wilma box office at 265 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

VISUALS: Contemporary ballet, music, costumes, stage production

WHO: Christine Cox, Tara Keating, Cayetano Soto, Matthew Neenan, Tommie-Waheed Evans, BalletX dancers

WHEN:

Wednesday April 26, 8:00 PM

Pre-Show Q&A with Artistic Collaborators, 7:00 PM

Thursday April 27, 8:00 PM

Post-Show Q&A with Choreographers

Friday April 28, 8:00 PM

Saturday April 29, 2:00 PM

Saturday April 29, 8:00 PM

Sunday April 30, 2:00 PM

Sunday April 30, 7:00 PM

Wednesday May 03, 8:00 PM

Thursday May 04, 8:00 PM

Friday May 05, 8:00 PM

Saturday May 06, 2:00 PM

Saturday May 06, 8:00 PM

Sunday May 07, 2:00 PM

WHERE: The Wilma Theater, 265 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

ABOUT: BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet, unites distinguished choreographers with an outstanding company of world-class dancers to forge new works of athleticism, emotion, and grace. Founded in 2005 by Christine Cox and Matthew Neenan, and now under the direction of Cox as Artistic & Executive Director, BalletX challenges the boundaries of classical ballet by encouraging formal experimentation while preserving rigorous technique. The company is committed to producing new works of the highest quality and integrity that bring the combined visions of choreographers and dancers to life and cultivate in audiences a collective appetite for bold, new dance. For more information, visit www.balletx.org.