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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****MEDIA ALERT****BalletX Announces 2018-19 Season****Three Series, Seven World Premieres, including a New Full-Evening Ballet****WHAT:**

BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet company, announces its 2018-19 Season. The company, led by Artistic and Executive Director Christine Cox, will commission seven world premieres, including a new full-evening ballet, further expanding its repertory of over 65 works. Choreographers handpicked by Cox for the season include Marguerite Donlon, Nicolo Fonte, Lil Buck, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Cayetano Soto, Sonya Tayeh, and a 2019 Choreographic Fellow, to be selected from a competitive field of international candidates. BalletX continues its long-standing residency at The Wilma Theater, where its season unfolds over the course of three series – *Fall Series 2018* (Nov. 28-Dec. 9), *Spring Series 2019* (Mar. 6-17), and *Summer Series 2019* (Jul. 10-21). Subscriptions go on sale June 1 with Single Tickets available in the fall.

"This season's choreographers reflect and expand on the cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity of our dancers and our city," says Cox. "It's how we connect with audiences and create compelling dance and immersive storytelling that resonates."

***Fall Series 2018*** kickstarts BalletX's season with world premieres by three choreographers: Marguerite Donlon, Cayetano Soto, and Sonya Tayeh. **Marguerite Donlon** is an Irish-born choreographer based in Berlin, internationally recognized for her commitment to raising awareness of environmental issues, such as ocean plastics pollution, in her work. She danced with the English National Ballet and Deutsche Oper Berlin before serving as the ballet director of Donlon Dance Company at Saarländisches Staatstheater from 2001-2013. As a choreographer, she's created on dance companies worldwide, including Nederlands Dans Theater 2, the Stuttgart Ballet, Berlin Ballet, and Bolshoi Ballet. Donlon founded and curated the international dance festival N.O.W. Dance Saar, and

remains active in educational outreach, founding the youth dance project iMove.

**Cayetano Soto** is a Barcelona-based choreographer whose work has been performed on companies around the world, including Royal Ballet of Flanders, Balé da Cidade de São Paulo, and Companhia Nacional de Bailado. He was appointed the Resident Choreographer of Ballet BC for three seasons in 2015, and served as mentor to BalletX's 2017 Choreographic Fellow, Tommie-Waheed Evans, on a program, which featured the U.S. premiere of Soto's *Schachmatt* – a work that has become part of the company's signature touring repertory alongside another Soto ballet, 2013's *Malasangre*.

**Sonya Tayeh** is a Los Angeles- and New York-based choreographer whose Detroit roots remain an inspiration to her work. Her choreography has appeared on Martha Graham Dance Company, Malpas Dance Company, and Los Angeles Ballet. Tayeh has choreographed for international pop music stars, including Miley Cyrus, Florence and the Machine, and Kyle Minogue. She is perhaps best known for her Emmy-nominated work on Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance*, and as choreographer on the recently announced, Broadway-bound musical adaptation of Baz Luhrmann's 2001 Oscar-winning film, *Moulin Rouge*.

***Spring Series 2019*** features world premieres by choreographers Lil Buck, Nicolo Fonte, and 2019's Choreographic Fellow. BalletX welcomes Memphis jookin' superstar **Lil Buck** to Philadelphia for the first time to create a world premiere, featuring the music of Jon Batiste, Juilliard-trained New Orleans jazz prodigy and band leader of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. Damian Woetzel, the Artistic Director of Vail Dance Festival, is a longtime advocate of both BalletX and Lil Buck, and helped facilitate the collaboration. Lil Buck's work combines elements of jookin' with ballet – a style that he developed during his time at New Ballet Ensemble – and includes his signature footwork, which has been described as pointe technique in sneakers. Lil Buck first rose to prominence in a viral video capturing his impromptu rendition of *The Dying Swan*, accompanied by Yo-Yo Ma. He went on to dance with Madonna in Super Bowl XLVI's halftime show, eventually joining her on two world tours, in addition to performing with the cast of Cirque du Soleil in the show *Michael Jackson: One*. Lil Buck's iconic *iPhone 7* and

*Lexus* commercials established further widespread recognition of his unique dance moves, and his collaborations with Mikhail Baryshnikov and Benjamin Millepied have generated crossover appeal in the ballet world. He and Miami popping dancer Jon Boogz are currently touring their first evening-length show, *Love Heals All Wounds*.

**Nicolo Fonte** returns for his third work with BalletX, following his previous critically-acclaimed full-evening ballets, 2013's *Beautiful Decay* (recently revived by BalletX in 2017) and 2015's *Beasts*. Fonte has created works for such prestigious companies as Dutch National Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Perm Tchaikovsky Ballet, and Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, among many others, and is currently Resident Choreographer with Ballet West and Oregon Ballet Theatre. Fonte will serve as the mentor to BalletX's soon-to-be-announced **2019 Choreographic Fellow**, overseeing a work to also premiere at *Spring Series 2019*. The Choreographic Fellowship is made possible by generous support from David Haas and Wyncote Foundation.

**Summer Series 2019** sees the return of Columbian-Belgian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa for a new, evening-length ballet, inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*. Universally adored by children and adults alike, and translated into over 250 languages worldwide, Saint-Exupéry's classic novella follows an aviator downed in the desert who encounters a mysterious Prince from a faraway asteroid pining for a single rose. The story – part parable, part fable – derives from Saint-Exupéry's lifelong love for his wife and muse, Consuelo, and his experiences flying mail routes in Africa and South America (including an actual crash landing in the Sahara Desert outside Cairo), before serving as a pilot in the French Air Force during World War II. Lopez Ochoa has created four previous works on BalletX: 2016's René Magritte-inspired *Bonzi* (in collaboration with the experiential art shop Klip Collective), 2011's *Castrati* and *Bare*, and 2008's *Still@Life*. Versatile and prolific, she has choreographed on over fifty dance companies worldwide, including Dutch National Ballet, Ballet Nacional Dominicano, English National Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, San Francisco Ballet, and New York City Ballet. Her recent work *Ecdysis* was named "Best premiere of 2017" by *Dance Europe*. U.S. publisher *Dance Magazine* included her interpretation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* in its "Best of Dance 2017."

Season subscriptions to BalletX's 2018-19 Season are available June 1<sup>st</sup>. Single Tickets go on sale this fall. Visit online at <http://www.balletx.org/>, by phone at 215-546-7824, and in person at The Wilma Theater Box Office, 265 S. Broad Street.

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

**WHEN:** *Fall Series 2018*

Wednesday, Nov. 28, 8pm

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

Thursday, Nov. 29, 8pm

- Post-Show Q&A with choreographers

Friday, Nov. 30, 8pm

Saturday, Dec. 1, 2pm

Saturday, Dec. 1, 8pm

Sunday, Dec. 2, 2pm

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 8pm

Thursday, Dec. 6, 8pm

- Young Xers Night, 7:00PM

Friday, Dec. 7, 8pm

Saturday, Dec. 8, 2pm

Saturday, Dec. 8, 8pm

Sunday, Dec. 9, 2pm

*Spring Series 2019*

Wednesday, Mar. 6, 8pm

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

Thursday, Mar. 7, 8pm

- Post-Show Q&A with choreographers

Friday, Mar. 8, 8pm

Saturday, Mar. 9, 2pm

Saturday, Mar. 9, 8pm

Sunday, Mar. 10, 2pm

Wednesday, Mar. 13, 8pm

Thursday, Mar. 14, 8pm

- Young Xers Night, 7:00PM

Friday, Mar. 15, 8pm

Saturday, Mar. 16, 2pm

Saturday, Mar. 16, 8pm

Sunday, Mar. 17, 2pm

### ***Summer Series 2019***

Wednesday, Jul. 10, 8pm

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

Thursday, Jul. 11, 8pm

- Post-Show Q&A with choreographers

Friday, Jul. 12, 8pm

Saturday, Jul. 13 2pm

Saturday, Jul. 13, 8pm

Sunday, Jul. 14, 2pm

Wednesday, Jul. 17, 8pm

Thursday, Jul. 18, 8pm

- Young Xers Night, 7:00PM

Friday, Jul. 19, 8pm

Saturday, Jul. 20, 2pm

Saturday, Jul. 20, 8pm

Sunday, Jul. 21, 2pm

#### **PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES:**

World premiere choreography, dance, stage production, and music

#### **INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:**

Christine Cox, Tara Keating, BalletX Dancers, Marguerite Donlon, Cayetano Soto, Sonya Tayeh, Lil Buck, Nicolo Fonte, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa

#### **ABOUT BalletX:**

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. Since the company's founding, BalletX has expanded its repertoire to include 65 world premieres by over 30 internationally renowned artists, including Matthew Neenan, Jodie Gates, Trey McIntyre, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, and Darrell Grand Moultrie. BalletX presents three annual performance series as the resident dance company of The Wilma Theater in

Philadelphia and has performed at such prestigious festivals as Vail Dance Festival in Colorado, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Massachusetts, and The Joyce Theater and City Center in New York City. April 2018 marks the soft opening of BalletX's Center for World Premiere Choreography, the company's new 5,000 square foot studio and administrative home in Philadelphia. Conceived as a place of innovation, creation, inclusion, and education, BalletX's Center for World Premiere Choreography sets the stage for the company's next decade of dance making. For more information, visit [www.balletx.org](http://www.balletx.org).

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