



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ALERT

BalletX Summer Series 2018 Features Three World Premieres by Penny Saunders, Matthew Neenan, and Andrew McNicol

WHAT:

BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet company, presents *Summer Series 2018* at The Wilma Theater, July 11-22. The company, led by Artistic & Executive Director Christine Cox, will perform three world premieres by award-winning choreographers Penny Saunders, Matthew Neenan, and Andrew McNicol (2018 Choreographic Fellow). The season finale program features original music by Rosie Langabeer and classical selections by Mozart and Mendelssohn, as well as lighting design by Michael Korsch, and costume design by Martha Chamberlain, Reid & Harriet Design, and Marc Eric.

"There's a real collaborative spirit behind *Summer Series*," says Cox. "Penny and Rosie are creating a work interweaving sound and live musicians into the dance's narrative, and Matthew is mentoring Andrew as they both delve into the music of two classical masters."

Penny Saunders and Rosie Langabeer's world premiere collaboration blends found sound, haunting melody, and live music to explore transience and permanence, destiny and free will. *The Arts Fuse* describes Saunders choreography as "wonderfully complex." She won the 2016 Princess Grace Choreographic Fellowship and has created on Hubbard Street Dance, Whim W'him, and Grand Rapids Ballet. Langabeer is a Barrymore Award winner for Outstanding Music and Musical Direction, and co-created Matthew Neenan's *Sunset, 0639 Hours* (2014). Her music has been called "evocative" by *The New York Times* and "atmospheric with great humor" by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Matthew Neenan's new work is set to Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*, performed live by Martha Koeneman (Principal Pianist, Pennsylvania Ballet). The piece introduces a mysterious prop puzzle, which the choreographer and dancers solve together on stage, opening the piece to metaphoric possibilities

beyond what meets the eye, and examining our perceptions of stillness and movement, object and person, conflict and resolution. Neenan co-founded BalletX with Cox, and has created many of the company's signature works, including *The Last Glass* (2010) and *Sunset, 0639 Hours* (2014). His choreography is "fresh, touching, musical, original... He makes dancers look appealing, and he engages audiences," wrote *The New York Times*.

Andrew McNicol's lifelong love of Mozart's *Requiem* and his fascination with the energy, physicality and fast pace of American dance form the underlying inspiration for his world premiere with BalletX. Chosen from a competitive pool of international applicants, he serves as the 2018 Choreographic Fellow under mentor Matthew Neenan. McNicol has created work for The London Olympics, The New York Choreographic Institute, and The Royal Ballet of Flanders. He is described as "talented beyond his years" by *Ballet News*.

The Choreographic Fellowship is made possible by generous support from David Haas and Wyncote Foundation.

The 12-performance *Summer Series* also invites audiences deeper into the world of contemporary ballet through two signature X-Process events: a pre-show Conversations with the Artists on opening night and a post-show Q&A on July 12. BalletX will host Young Xers Night, a pre-show cocktail reception and after party for young dance lovers and professionals, on July 19.

Tickets to BalletX *Summer Series 2018* are available online at <https://www.balletx.org/summer-series-2018/>, 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: Wednesday July 11 8:00 PM

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

Thursday July 12 8:00 PM

- Post-Show Q&A with Choreographers

Friday July 13 8:00 PM
Saturday July 14 2:00 PM
Saturday July 14 8:00 PM
Sunday July 15 2:00 PM

Wednesday July 18 8:00 PM
Thursday July 19 8:00 PM
• Young Xers Night, 7:00pm
Friday July 20 8:00 PM
Saturday July 21 2:00 PM
Saturday July 21 8:00 PM
Sunday July 22 2:00 PM

**PHOTO
OPPORTUNITIES:**

World premiere choreography, dance, stage production, and music

**INTERVIEW
OPPORTUNITIES:**

Christine Cox, Tara Keating, BalletX Dancers, Penny Saunders, Matthew Neenan, Andrew McNicol

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.

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