



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

## **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, *Rock-a-Bye*, blends found sound, haunting melody, and live music to paint a portrait of time and fate's impact on a family and its matriarch. The music will be performed live on stage by Langabeer, with musicians Tara Middleton (Sun Ra Arkestra) and Gregg Mervine (West Philadelphia Orchestra). *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, *Situated*, is set to Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*, performed live by Martha Koeneman

(principal pianist, Pennsylvania Ballet). Neenan has revealed the work's narrative comes in the form of a mysterious prop puzzle of chairs, which the dancers engage with and solve together as a variety of vignettes unfold on stage. 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. His piece *Requiem* explores life, love, and loss, and the power of nature. 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.*

New company members Stanley Glover and Anna Peabody join BalletX for *Summer Series 2018* and the 2018-19 Season. Stanley Glover is a 2016 graduate of the University of the Arts. He performed as a principal dancer in Cirque du Soleil's Las Vegas production of *Mystère*, and he was a top 20 contestant in the 11<sup>th</sup> season of the hit show *So You Think You Can Dance*. Anna Peabody is a 2018 graduate of Indiana University. She has studied under Carla Körbes, Norma Pera, and Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux. *Summer Series* also marks the farewell performances of Gary W. Jeter II and Daniel Mayo, following four successful seasons with the company. BalletX is thrilled to welcome back dancer Chloe Perkes, returning to the stage this summer following shoulder surgery earlier this year.

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, Rosie Langabeer

**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).

*BalletX thanks lead season supporters, the William Penn Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, David Haas, Janet & Jim Averill, Al Palmer, Neal Krouse & Liz Knudsen, Barra Foundation, Fierce Advocacy Fund, Michael Soojian & Terry McKissick, Richard & Anna Marie Grossman, Jane Pepper, and Linda & David Glickstein.*