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BalletX Announces Highly Anticipated 2023 - 2024 Season Featuring Three Series, Outdoor Festival, New Company Dancers and Choreographic Fellow

The upcoming season to feature six world premieres and performances from acclaimed choreographers for an unforgettable season in the company's hometown Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA (July 18, 2023) – [BalletX](#), Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet company, today announced its highly-anticipated 2023-2024 Season bringing three seasonal series to its home at the Wilma Theater, expanding its outdoor performance at the TD Pavilion at the Mann Center with BalletX's Outdoor Festival, and bringing world class performances to Bryn Mawr College this upcoming winter for the company's first ever suburban show. Across four exhilarating performances in the company's hometown of Philadelphia, BalletX will debut six world premieres on its stage and welcome two new company dancers alongside a new Choreographic Fellow to strengthen BalletX's mission of prioritizing the creation of new works by new voices.

"BalletX is thrilled to begin yet another exciting season with talented guest choreographers and fun new updates to our series, including the Festival at the Mann," says **Christine Cox, Artistic & Executive Director of BalletX**. "From six world premieres including one from our friend and BalletX co-founder Matthew Neenan, this season is sure to be special one for the company and all those in the audience alike."

BalletX's 2023 – 2024 Season will welcome three series at the Wilma Theater including:

- Fall Series at The Wilma Theater (October 18 - 29) featuring a special world premiere from Matthew Neenan co-founder of BalletX, as well as a Philadelphia premiere from Jamar Roberts along with Jennifer Archibald's *Exalt*.
- Spring Series at The Wilma Theater (March 6-10) featuring world premieres from Nicola Wills and Jennifer Archibald with the return of Jodie Gates' *Beautiful Once*, 2017.

- Summer Series at The Wilma Theater (July 10-21) sharing world premieres from choreographers Loughlan Prior and Stina Quagebeur, as well as the return of Amy Hall Garner's *Switching the Groove*, 2023.

Additionally, BalletX will return to TD Pavilion at the Mann Center for the BalletX Festival at the Mann Center on April 26-27 featuring work by talented choreographers Houston Thomas and Takehiro Ueyema. The company will invite guests to attend BalletX's family-friendly pre-show, celebrating the power of the community with performances, live music, art, and a beautiful view of the Philadelphia skyline.

To kick-off the upcoming 2023 – 2024 season, BalletX welcomes new talent including company dancers Itzkan Barbosa, a former dancer with Miami City Ballet and NY Theater Ballet, as well as Lanie Jackson, formerly a company member and faculty at Ballet Virginia. New Choreographic Fellow Nicola Wills will join BalletX under the mentorship of Jennifer Archibald whose work will be featured throughout the season. Launched in 2016 with lead support from the Wyncote Foundation, BalletX's Choreographic Fellowship unites one emerging artist each season with a distinguished choreographer who serves as a mentor. Together they both will create World Premieres on the BalletX dancers. As one of the only programs in the nation that focuses on choreographic development in ballet, the Fellowship strengthens BalletX's mission by prioritizing the creation of new works by new voices.

Please see full bios and 2023-2024 BalletX Season details including Series descriptions below. For tickets and more information, please visit www.balletx.org.

Subscriptions go on sale July 12, 2023, with early bird pricing available through August 11, 2023.

About BalletX

Based in Philadelphia, BalletX is one of the nation's premier contemporary ballet companies, whose dancers were named "among America's best" by *The New York Times*, commissions choreographers from around the world to create dance that is "fresh, inclusive, and connects to what people want" (*Philadelphia Citizen*). Led by Artistic & Executive Director Christine Cox, BalletX creates extraordinary dance experiences that inspire human connection through live performances, dance education in Philadelphia public schools, free community pop-ups, and more. In addition to virtual works, main-stage performances and international touring, the company offers free community pop ups, dance classes, artist Q&As, open rehearsals and in-school dance education designed to bring audiences closer to dance. To learn more about BalletX's programming and dancers, visit BalletX.org and follow the company on social media.

About The Wilma Theater

The Wilma creates living, adventurous theater. The Wilma engages artists and audiences in imaginative reflection on the complexities of contemporary life. It presents bold, original, rigorously crafted productions that represent a range of voices, viewpoints, and styles. Established in 1973 as The Wilma Project, the Wilma challenged the Philadelphia cultural community to create theatrical productions of

original material and to develop local artists. From 1973 through 1979, the Wilma dazzled the Philadelphia public by presenting work with renowned avant garde theater artists, including the Bread & Puppet Theatre, Mabou Mines, Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company, The Wooster Group, Ping Chong & the Fiji Company and Spalding Gray.

About the Mann Center for the Performing Arts

As one of the foremost outdoor music centers in the country, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, a leading non-profit organization, has a historical legacy of artistic excellence as a world-class entertainment destination presenting premier artists, now in association with Live Nation Entertainment. Each summer season, renowned symphony orchestras, iconic rock stars, and the latest touring artists in indie rock, hip hop, R&B, and pop take the stage here. The Mann is the summer home of The Philadelphia Orchestra and has presented critically acclaimed performers in every decade since the 1930s. Located in the heart of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, the Mann hosts more than 200,000 visitors annually. Signature concert experiences are surrounded by Philadelphia's stunning skyline and include seats beneath the Mann's acoustically acclaimed TD Pavilion; picnics, blankets, and music under the stars on its Great Lawn or at the top of the hill at the Skyline Stage; and dining in Crescendo, the venue's spectacular tented restaurant. In addition, the Mann's Education & Community Engagement Program reaches tens of thousands of young people annually through free programming and educational initiatives as well as its virtual Mann Music Room. For more information, visit MannCenter.org.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Photos, bios and video are available for publication at BalletX.org/pressroom.

About BalletX 2023 – 2024 Series & New Dancers Welcomed this Season

BalletX Fall Series at The Wilma **October 18 – 29, 2023**

Fall Series will run from October 18 – 29, 2023 at BalletX's home theater, the Wilma. The series will feature a special world premiere from Matthew Neenan co-founder of BalletX, as well as a Philadelphia premiere from Jamar Roberts along with Jennifer Archibald's *Exalt*.

Co-founder of BalletX, Matthew Neenan is recognized as "one of America's best dance poets" by *The New York Times*. He has choreographed on major companies including New York City Ballet, Philadelphia Ballet, and Pacific Northwest Ballet, and returns to BalletX this fall with a world premiere featuring live music by composer and classical guitarist, Michael Poll.

Returning to BalletX for his third work on company, Jamar Roberts is known for his "mesmerizing choreography" (*Dance Magazine*). This piece was co-commissioned with the Vail Dance Festival and features the music of Philip Glass, as performed by Brooklyn Rider. Roberts was a dancer and Resident

Choreographer with Alvin Ailey and has created work for Complexions and New York City Ballet, among others.

The Fall Series will also include Jennifer Archibald's *Exalt* (2022) which has been toured across North America, receiving standing ovations from enthusiastic audiences. The piece inspired by club culture and praised by *Dance International* for its "drama, grit, and swagger," fuses house music and global dance tracks to challenge the boundaries of classical ballet.

BalletX in the 'Burbs

December 1 – 2, 2023

BalletX will perform its first ever suburban show at Bryn Mawr College this upcoming winter. Performances for this show include works from world class choreographers including *Umoja* from Tiler Peck, *Credo* by BalletX co-founder Matthew Neenan, *Fancy Me* from Caili Quan and *Scenes View 2* by Jorma Elo.

BalletX Spring Series at The Wilma

March 6 – 10, 2024

Spring Series will also take place at The Wilma Theater, running from March 6 - 10, 2024 featuring world premieres from Nicola Wills and Jennifer Archibald with the return of Jodie Gates' *Beautiful Once*, 2017.

BalletX welcomes back Jennifer Archibald for the Spring Series with a special world premiere. Archibald is the founder and director of Arch Dance Company, Resident Choreographer of Cincinnati Ballet, and a lecturer at Columbia and Yale Universities. This world premiere marks the beginning of a two-year commission culminating in a full-length ballet in BalletX's 2024-2025 season.

Spring Series will also feature a world premiere from BalletX's 2024 Choreographic Fellow, Nicola Wills. Wills has danced with Queensland Ballet, Ballet Dortmund, and Royal Ballet of Flanders, and was selected for the BalletX Fellowship from over 55 international applicants. Mentored by Jennifer Archibald, her world premiere will explore the intersection of order and chaos to find what lies behind social constructs.

Jodie Gates's *Beautiful Once*, 2017 returns to the stage once again with BalletX. Praised by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for its "beautiful partnering, clean lines, symmetrical patterns," the piece features original music by Academy Award-nominated composer Ryan Lott of Son Lux. Gates is the Artistic Director of Cincinnati Ballet, Founding Director of the USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, and Founder and Artistic Director of the Laguna Dance Festival.

BalletX Festival at the Mann

April 26 – 27, 2024

BalletX returns to TD Pavilion at the Mann from April 26 - 27, 2024 for its Community Dance Festival, featuring work by talented choreographers Houston Thomas and Takehiro Uyema. The company invites guests to attend BalletX's family-friendly pre-show celebrating the power of the community with performances, live music, art and a beautiful view of the Philadelphia skyline.

Emerging choreographer Houston Thomas will share his world premiere at the Mann Center. Thomas, a choreographer and former soloist with the Dresden Semperoper Ballet, has created works for the New York Choreographic Institute, American Ballet Theatre's Studio Company, Hamptons Dance Project, Marcelo Gomes, Kanako Fujimoto, and Ballet San Antonio. This will mark Thomas's first world premiere on BalletX.

The festival will also feature Takehiro Ueyama's *Heroes, 2019*. Set to *The Chairman Dances* by composer John Adams, *Heroes* is inspired by the citizens who played a crucial role in Japan's recovery after World War II, weaving a timeless story of dedication and perseverance in the face of extreme adversity. Born and raised in Tokyo, Ueyama is a former dancer with Paul Taylor Dance Company and founder of TAKE Dance.

Summer Series at The Wilma

July 10 – 21, 2024

To finish out the 2023-2024 season, BalletX will once again return to the Wilma from July 10-21, 2024 to share world premieres from choreographers Loughlan Prior and Stina Quagebeur, as well as the return of Amy Hall Garner.

Award-winning Choreographer in Residence at Royal New Zealand Ballet, Loughlan Prior will bring his piece to the stage at the Wilma. Described by *DANZ* as "a creative tour de force," his 2020 BalletX dance film, *Scribble*, was featured on PBS's *Great Performances*. Prior's new work explores the 1772 Macaroni Scandal, the first public debate on homosexuality, and features costumes by Emma Kingsbury and an original score by Claire Cowan.

In addition, BalletX will share a world premiere by Stina Quagebeur. Quagebeur whose work has been hailed as "original and memorable" by *Dance Tabs*, is an Associate Choreographer of English National Ballet and has created 19 works on the company. Her work has been performed at the Alvin Ailey Theatre, Sadler's Wells, London, The Joyce Theatre, and more. This ballet will mark her choreographic debut on BalletX.

BalletX is thrilled to welcome back Amy Hall Garner's *Switching the Groove* to the intimate stage at the Wilma. The piece originally premiered on BalletX at the Mann in 2023, and was praised by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for its "large movements and crisp footwork." A graduate of The Juilliard School, Garner has been commissioned by New York City Ballet, Miami City Ballet, and Paul Taylor Dance Company, among many others.

New Dancers for the 2023-2024 Season

Itzkan Barbosa

Former dancer with Miami City Ballet and NY Theater Ballet, Itzkan Dzul Barbosa recently joined BalletX for the 2023-2024 season. Barbosa has performed contemporary and aerial dance with Dzul Dance and is a Principal Artist with Verzola Ballet. She trained at Ballet Academy East in NYC and MCB where she was

the lead role in Balanchine's "Walpurgisnacht" Ballet and "Serenade" Waltz Girl. Barbosa began classical ballet training at age two at the USC Dance Conservatory and the Center for Dance Education with Carolina Ballet, where she performed several roles including Odette in "Swan Lake". Itzkan has studied Summer Intensive Trainings at CPYB, ABT, SFB, Barcelona Dance Center and was awarded a full scholarship with the Paris Opera Ballet. Itzkan has been highlighted by the Adrienne Arsht Center Mural Project in Miami, FL, painted by Brazilian Artist Eduardo Kobra.

Lanie Jackson

From Dallas, Texas, Lanie Jackson began her pre-professional dance training with the Dallas Ballet Company under the direction of Judy and Brent Klopfenstein. This is Jackson's first season with BalletX. Jackson danced the principal roles in many classical ballets and originated principal roles in new ballets by choreographers such as Jason Fowler and Silas Farley. Performing internationally, she traveled to Austria for the *Stars of Tomorrow: Young! Tanzsommer* dance festival and to Montréal, Quebec, Canada for the Regional Dance America national festival. Jackson graduated from The Juilliard School in 2021 under the Artistic Direction of Alicia Graf Mack and Mario Alberto Zambrano. There she performed new works by choreographers such as Gentian Doda, Andrea Miller, James Whiteside, and Matthew Neenan. Most recently, she was a company member and faculty at Ballet Virginia, under the direction of Lydia Roberts Coco, where she performed Dwight Rhoden's *Evermore*, and principal roles in classical ballets and works.

2023–2024 Choreographic Fellowship

Launched in 2016 with lead support from the Wyncote Foundation, BalletX's Choreographic Fellowship unites one emerging artist each season with a distinguished choreographer who serves as a mentor. Together they both will create World Premieres on the BalletX dancers. As one of the only programs in the nation that focuses on choreographic development in ballet, the Fellowship strengthens BalletX's mission by prioritizing the creation of new works by new voices. This year's Choreographic Fellow is Nicola Wills with Mentor Jennifer Archibald.

From Adelaide, South Australia, Nicola Wills completed her training at Terry Simpsons Dance Studios. In 2009, She graduated from Annesley College with Honors and won the Silver Medal at the RAD Genee competition in Singapore. After completing a two-year traineeship with the Queensland Ballet Professional program, she joined Ballet Dortmund in 2012, before moving to Belgium in 2013 to dance with the Opera Ballet Vlaanderen (FKA: Royal Ballet of Flanders). Wills has performed pieces by and worked with choreographers such as William Forsythe, Crystal Pite, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, AkramKhan, Johan Inger, Alexander Ekman, Pina Bausch, Jiří Kylián, Ohad Naharin and many more. Wills is currently studying a part-time bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of South Australia. During her time in the Ballet van Vlaanderen, she created 8 stage works and 2 dance films for the company's in-house choreographers' program. In 2021, Her piece 'The Glass Ceiling', won her the National Youth Ballet of Hamburg production prize in the 35th Hannover Choreographic competition, with Gerard Davis highlighting her as a 'New Name to Watch' in the Dance Europe 2021 Critics Choice awards. In 2023, she will be completing her first full-length production with the Kennesaw State University summer choreographic residency in the US and is commissioned to create work for the Gent Festival program in

Belgium. Her duet 'Two People in Love Never Shake Hands' has been selected to compete in the 37th Hannover Choreographic competition and will also be performed in the International Dance Gala in Genoa, Italy.

Single tickets for BalletX's upcoming season will be on sale beginning September 6th.