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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# BALLETX ANNOUNCES 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON

## 4 series, 7 world premieres, and 10 pop-up performances

**Philadelphia, PA**—BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet and Resident Dance Company of [The Wilma Theater](#), announces its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2015-2016 Season, sponsored by The Knight Foundation. Hailed for possessing "the confidence and artistry of a world-class ballet company" (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*), BalletX has continually pushed the boundaries of contemporary ballet and secured itself as a staple of the Philadelphia arts community. Founded in 2005 by Christine Cox and Matthew Neenan, BalletX has quickly become a company to watch in the national dance scene. In just nine seasons, BalletX has commissioned 58 world premiere ballets by some of today's top choreographers, and the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season continues this forward-thinking programming in new and unexpected ways.

"It is hard to believe just how far this company has come in ten years," says BalletX Co-Founder, Artistic & Executive Director **Christine Cox**. "It seems like only yesterday Matthew and I were producing our first series at the Arts Bank. Now, BalletX has its own home, a talented troupe of dancers, and an enthusiastic and growing fan base. Our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is not only a time of reflection and celebration, but also a chance to look forward and imagine all of the possibilities that lie ahead. The past decade has shaped us as artists, and we wish to thank all of our incredible supporters who helped make this dream come true."

### Fall Series 2015 (November 18-22)

#### **Nicolo Fonte → Full-length World Premiere**

Returning to BalletX after the success of his 2013 full-length ballet *Beautiful Decay*, **Nicolo Fonte** is "a thinker, an architect who creates the new rather than reinvent the old" (*The Seattle Post*). The Resident Choreographer of Ballet West, Fonte has created work for internationally acclaimed companies, including The Dutch National Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Stuttgart Ballet, in addition to being one of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's most popular guest choreographers. His inventive fusion of ideas, movement, and design creates a signature dance language, which is "highly original... and exhilarating to watch" (*Dance Europe*).

For *Fall Series 2015*, Fonte will create an evening-length ballet, inspired by the sociological debate of nature versus nurture. Based on *tabula rasa*, the idea that every person begins as a blank slate from which experiences shape and mold humanity, Fonte will explore the dramatic contrasts of learned behavior and primal human instincts. Incorporating sets by renowned scenic designer and architect **Mimi Lien**, praised for "being able to solve complex problems with visually arresting designs" (*American Theater*), Fonte will pull from the dancers' own poignant, and sometimes humorous, basic human impulses. In this world premiere, he will stretch movement to its expressive limits by integrating a variety of dance genres to investigate the tension between nobility and savageness, and explore the ways in which humans are both nurtured and "of nature".

### Winter Series 2016 (February 10-14)

#### **Trey McIntyre → World Premiere, Choreographic Fellow → World Premiere**

In April 2015, BalletX launched its [Choreographic Fellowship](#), a new program funded by the Wyncote Foundation that gives an emerging choreographer the opportunity to create a new work on BalletX under the mentorship of world-renowned choreographer Trey McIntyre. A nationwide search is currently underway for the inaugural 2016 Fellow, and in early September one choreographer will be selected by an expert panel of dance leaders, including BalletX Artistic & Executive Director **Christine Cox**, BalletX Associate Artistic Director **Tara Keating**, BalletX Co-Founder **Matthew**

**Neenan**, USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance Vice Dean and Director **Jodie Gates**, Joyce Theater Director of Programming **Martin Wechsler**, choreographer and mentor **Trey McIntyre**, and Former New York City Ballet Principal Dancer **Wendy Whelan**. In the months of January and February 2016, the Fellow and McIntyre will work side-by-side to each create a world premiere for BalletX's *Winter Series 2016*.

In his 25-year career, **Trey McIntyre** has created nearly 100 world premiere ballets for leading dance companies around the globe, including American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, and Moscow Ballet Theatre, to name a few. Known for his "fresh unpredictability" (*Dance Magazine*) and distinct contemporary flare within the classical ballet idiom, McIntyre has won countless international awards, including the Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, two NEA grants, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Society of Arts and Letters. A choreographer, filmmaker, and photographer, McIntyre is also the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the prolific multidisciplinary group The Trey McIntyre Project, hailed by critics and audiences alike for its artistic and organizational success. "An excellent craftsman [with a] refreshing openness in his works" (*The New York Times*), McIntyre's recognizable style infuses athleticism and detailed coordinations of the body, with a strong connection to music. Although this is McIntyre's first time creating work for BalletX, he has a long relationship with BalletX Co-Founders Cox and Neenan, stemming from their days dancing with the Pennsylvania Ballet. "It's a lovely, full-circle kind of moment," says McIntyre, "to now be invited to come and make work for a company they created. It is moving to see artists you have worked with in your career evolve and create something as remarkable as BalletX."

### **Matthew Neenan → East Coast Premiere**

*Winter Series 2016* will also feature BalletX Co-Founder **Matthew Neenan**'s work *Show Me*, which will have its world premiere this August at the [2015 Vail International Dance Festival](#). Set to the music of string quintet Brooklyn Rider, *Show Me*, incorporates quirky movements that create an otherworldly community in which couples and quartets move around the stage with ease and lightness. Pulling from the contemporary country western style of Brooklyn Rider's 2013 album *Almanac*, *Show Me* captures the BalletX dancers' idiosyncratic personalities in new and unusual ways, framed within Neenan's inventive movement vocabulary.

### **Spring Series 2016 (April 20-24)**

#### **BalletX 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retrospective**

*Spring Series 2016* marks the celebration of BalletX's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a retrospective program of ten excerpts, one from each year of the company's history, as chosen by the BalletX artistic staff. Showcasing the poignancy and diversity of the company's vast repertoire, this retrospective program will give audiences a snapshot of the vital work BalletX is creating in Philadelphia.

### **Kevin O'Day → World Premiere**

BalletX looks to the future with a world premiere by esteemed choreographer **Kevin O'Day**. After training at The Joffrey Ballet School, O'Day went on to dance with numerous prestigious American dance companies, including The Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and the New York City Ballet. He was a dancer and choreographer with Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project before joining the Frankfurt Ballet under the direction of William Forsythe, which began his extended stay in Germany. Since 2002, O'Day has been the Artistic Director of Kevin O'Day Ballet Mannheim at the Nationaltheater Mannheim, where under his leadership the company has developed an original contemporary repertory, garnering praise throughout Europe and beyond. O'Day's signature movement style blends athleticism, storytelling, and risk into an unexpected melting pot of genres. His daring approach to the creative process has been praised for its clarity of design and for "capturing the spirit of the times in which he lives" (*The New York Times*). His world premiere for BalletX will feature an original composition by **John King**, O'Day's long-time collaborator who has created dozens of critically acclaimed scores for his dances. King's composition will be performed live onstage by acclaimed cellist and Curtis Institute of Music graduate, **Wendy Sutter**, who has been hailed as "one of the greatest cellists of the classical stage" (*The Wall Street Journal*).

### **Summer Series 2016 (July 6-17)**

#### **Collaboration with Gilles Papain → Annabelle Lopez Ochoa (World Premiere), Matthew Neenan (World Premiere)**

*Summer Series 2016* brings together two powerhouse choreographers with Parisian video designer **Gilles Papain** for a technology-infused program that is a first for BalletX. Papain's work, which expertly weaves animation, projection, and design into visually arresting creations, has been featured in film, television, and on stage for acts such as Cirque du Soleil, Nederlands Dans Theater, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, and Celine Dion.

Colombo-Belgian choreographer **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa** is “making a vital impact on contemporary ballet” (*Dance Magazine*) with her abstract, yet virtuosic movement that creates what she refers to as “constructed chaos”. She has choreographed works for theater, opera, and for dance companies around the world such as Pacific Northwest Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Dutch National Ballet, and others, and her past works for BalletX, *Still@Life* (2008) and *Castrati* (2011), have become staples of the company’s repertory. For *Summer Series 2016*, Ochoa and Papain will collaborate to create a new work inspired by the witty sensibilities of surrealist painter Rene Magritte. By exploring the boundaries of imagination, Papain will reflect dreamlike fantasies through interactive videos on movable walls, while Ochoa weaves the dancers in and out of reality.

BalletX Co-Founder **Matthew Neenan** has been hailed as “one of the most appealing and singular voices in ballet today” (*The New York Times*). Neenan’s signature movement style and complex interpretation of music have shaped him into a top American ballet choreographer, creating a large repertory of celebrated works for countless dance companies including Pennsylvania Ballet, Washington Ballet, and Ballet West, in addition having choreographed 16 world premieres for BalletX. His new work for *Summer Series 2016* will feature a geometric projection technique known as “mapping”, wherein Papain will use light to direct blocks of space around the stage. Neenan and Papain will reconfigure space in order to explore movement possibilities and create an evolving landscape of objects and bodies.

### **Pop-Up Performances and The X-Process**

The 2015-2016 Season will also feature **10 Pop-Up Performances** in and around Philadelphia, sponsored by The Knight Foundation. In an effort to expand its reach in the community and utilize the **Portable Dance Floor**, BalletX’s pop-up performances will be free and open to the public, taking place at various landmarks and locations in the Greater Philadelphia area throughout the year. For a complete and up-to-date schedule of Pop-Up Performances, please visit [www.balletx.org](http://www.balletx.org).

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season will also see the continuation of the popular audience enrichment initiative **The X-Process**, which will feature an Opening Night discussion with the artists and collaborators of each series, as well as an interactive lecture with pizza and beer held between the Saturday matinee and evening performances.

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**About BalletX:** BalletX unites world-class choreographers with an outstanding company of professional 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.

**BalletX 2015-2016 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season is made possible through the generous support of:** The William Penn Foundation, Knight Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, The Sporting Club at the Bellevue, Shubert Foundation, Vista at Top of the Tower, AKA Rittenhouse, Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Suzanne Roberts Cultural Development Fund, Leo Model Foundation, Samuel S. Fels Fund, Marathon Grill, Victory Brewing Company, Moore Brothers Wine Company, and Pennsylvania Council on The Arts.

### **BalletX**

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