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### PENNSYLVANIA BALLET

#### COMPANY HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

Since its inception in 1963, Pennsylvania Ballet has been at the forefront of dance in America and is widely regarded as one of the premier ballet companies in the nation. The School and Company were established by Barbara Weisberger, a Balanchine protégé, through a Ford Foundation initiative to develop regional professional dance companies.

During its first decade, the Company forged the unique identity for which it is still known today: a diverse classical repertoire with a Balanchine backbone performed by versatile dancers whose energy and exuberance are the Company's enduring signature. A leader in the regional ballet movement of the 60s, the Company performed in the national spotlight for the first time in 1968 at City Center in New York — a highly successful debut that led to a decade of national touring, appearances on PBS' acclaimed Dance in America series, and a stint as the official company of the Brooklyn Academy of Music during the 1970s. From 1987 to 1989, Pennsylvania Ballet forged an alliance with Milwaukee Ballet in an unprecedented venture to create one company. The new organization, with 43 dancers and a greatly expanded repertoire, was the first in the country to offer its dancers year-round employment.

In 1994, the trustees of Pennsylvania Ballet selected its first homegrown Artistic Director, Roy Kaiser. A former company member hired in 1979 by Barbara Weisberger, and brought to artistic proficiency by Benjamin Harkavy and Robert Weiss (Artistic Directors of the Company from 1972-1982 and 1982-1990, respectively); Mr. Kaiser rose through the ranks from Corps de Ballet to Soloist to Principal by 1990. Following his retirement from the stage in 1992, Mr. Kaiser became Principal Ballet Master and Associate Artistic Director under Christopher d'Amboise until being named to his current position.

The premier classical ballet company in the Philadelphia region, Pennsylvania Ballet is currently comprised of 40 dancers. The artistic staff and dance studios are housed in the Sherman Mills development in the East Falls section of Philadelphia, with the administrative staff offices in Center City.

Drawing its audiences from throughout the tri-state region, Pennsylvania Ballet presents a season of six productions in Philadelphia, including a new production of the holiday spectacular, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*, balancing classic ballets with new works that challenge the dancers and attract a diverse audience. The Company also tours throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as in other locations in the Northeastern U.S. Under the artistic leadership of Roy Kaiser, the Company is committed to presenting new works, recently naming Matthew Neenan Choreographer in Residence to demonstrate its commitment to the art form. During the Company's storied history, it has commissioned original ballets from such choreographers as Merce Cunningham, Christopher d'Amboise, Trey McIntyre, Matthew Neenan, Kevin O'Day, David Parsons, Val Caniparoli, Christopher Stowell, Dwight Rhoden, Meredith Rainey, Kirk Peterson, and Lynne Taylor-Corbett, as well as the 40th Anniversary commission of *Swan Lake* by Christopher Wheeldon.



Over the past several years, Pennsylvania Ballet has enhanced its artistic integrity while continually increasing its reach and strengthening its foundation through creative programming; initiatives such as the Family Matinee Series and Prologue Lecture Series; and educational outreach programs such as Accent on Dance. In 2002, Pennsylvania Ballet II, the Joyce and Herbert Kean Trainee Program was formed as a pre-professional training company and as an additional component for outreach programs. From *Giselle* to *Rodeo*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to *Company B*, and *Serenade* to the signature *Carmina Burana*, Pennsylvania Ballet has continued to stretch its own boundaries, reinforcing its reputation for artistic excellence and technical virtuosity, and fulfilling its mission to present the best in American dance to Philadelphia audiences.

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A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping, wavy, horizontal bands. The top band is a light gray color, and the bottom band is a dark red color. The bands overlap in the center, creating a darker red area. The overall shape is reminiscent of a stylized ribbon or a wave.