

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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BOSTON BALLET REPORTS A RECORD-BREAKING 2015–2016 SEASON

BEST BOX OFFICE YEAR IN BOSTON BALLET’S HISTORY

DRIVERS OF SUCCESS ROOTED IN BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

July 5, 2016 (BOSTON, MA)—Boston Ballet Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Meredith (Max) Hodges announce the success of the 2015–2016 season, which enjoyed the highest attendance in more than a decade and the most ticket revenue in Boston Ballet’s 53-year history. At \$13.8 million net, it is the best box office year by a margin of \$1.4 million. With fuller houses, the organization also hit a best-ever milestone in capacity sold at 75 percent and a record number of 33 sold out shows (35 percent of this season’s performances). An especially mission-critical achievement, the two mixed repertory programs, entitled *Kaleidoscope* and *Mirrors*, saw record-breaking revenue and high attendance. Both programs finished in the top five for attendance of mixed repertory programs. *Mirrors* is the highest-grossing mixed repertory program in Boston Ballet’s history.

“The most exciting and important result of this season’s success is that more people are experiencing our art form. These results speak to the vitality of our audiences and the strong and growing interest in ballet,” said Max Hodges, Executive Director of Boston Ballet. “The Company’s artistic excellence is the bedrock for strong audience engagement, and this year’s repertoire and performance quality were at an all-time high. I’m pleased to share that these results also reflect the positive impact of a deliberate, data-driven marketing strategy.”

In addition to **artistic excellence**, three key factors drove this year’s success: **dynamic pricing, content-driven strategy**, and **alternating repertoire**. Data-driven decision making about pricing and timing of shows smoothed demand over all available ticket inventory, both increasing revenue and filling houses. A content-driven strategy with a higher investment in social media educated audiences, drove demand, and contributed to lead generation. More access points were provided for audiences with rich, engaging digital content such as behind-the-scenes videos, photos, and interviews. Lastly, this season marked a successful pilot year of a new rotating repertory schedule, which combined *Swan Lake* and *Mirrors* in a five-week run to close the season. Running two shows concurrently enabled Boston Ballet to accommodate high demand for *Swan Lake* with added performances, while simultaneously generating demand for *Mirrors* through positive word-of-mouth. Both *Swan Lake* and *Mirrors* well exceeded their ticket goals, based on comparable programming, by 118 percent and 119 percent respectively.

Under the artistic direction of Mikko Nissinen, the season was acclaimed by audiences and critics alike. The 2015–2016 season brought new works to audiences and expanded Boston Ballet’s diverse collection of repertoire with four Company premieres and two world premieres by former principal dancer Yury Yanowsky and “punk-ballerina” Karole Armitage.

Programming included the “landmark performance” of *Third Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Ballet* by John Neumeier, making Boston Ballet the first North American Company to perform the work (Jeffrey Gantz, *The Boston Globe*), and Mikko Nissinen’s classical *The Nutcracker*, described by Karen Campbell of *The Boston Globe* as “the granddaddy of them all.” John Cranko’s *Onegin* returned after 14 years: a production that showcased “Boston Ballet’s dancers at their best” (Sharon Basco, WBUR’s *The ARTery*). The season continued with a “bright, lively and broadly accessible” mixed repertory program entitled *Kaleidoscope* that brought audiences to their feet night after night with George Balanchine’s *Kammermusik No. 2*, Leonid Yakobson’s *Pas de Quatre*, William Forsythe’s *The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude*, and Leonide Massine’s *Gaîté Parisienne* (Paul Robicheau, *The Improper Bostonian*). The spring season included Mikko Nissinen’s *Swan Lake*, noted as “one of our city’s treasures” by dance critic Iris Fanger (*Patriot Ledger*). The season culminated with the final mixed repertory program, *Mirrors*, described by *New Boston Post*’s Mary Heirholzer as “...a refreshing and brilliant way to end the 2015-16 season, promising exciting possibilities in the season to come”. The program included José Martinez’s *Resonance*; Nobert Vesak’s award-winning pas de deux *Belong*; Yanowsky’s world premiere *Smoke and Mirrors*; and Armitage’s world premiere *Bitches Brew*. Michael Levin of *The Huffington Post* stated, “there is a strong case to be made that Boston Ballet...has not so stealthily ascended to the supreme position of American ballet companies.”

The 2016–2017 season opens October 27, 2016 with the North American premiere of Ivan Liška’s *Le Corsaire*. Tickets are on sale now for subscribers and are available to the general public on September 1. Tickets for Mikko Nissinen’s *The Nutcracker* will go on sale to the public on July 11. For more information, visit www.bostonballet.org or call 617-695-6955.

About Boston Ballet

Since 1963, Boston Ballet’s internationally acclaimed performances of classical, neo-classical, and contemporary ballets, combined with a dedication to world class dance education and community initiative programs, have made the institution a leader in its field, with a 52-year history of promoting excellence and access to dance.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Max Hodges, the Company maintains a diverse repertoire, ranging from full-length ballets to new works by some of today’s finest choreographers. Boston Ballet’s second company, Boston Ballet II, is comprised of dancers who gain experience by performing with the Company and independently, presenting special programs to audiences throughout the Northeast.

Boston Ballet School, the official school of Boston Ballet, has a long-standing dedication to excellence and access. Led by Director Margaret Tracey, the School reaches more than 5,000 students (toddler to adult) each year through Boston Ballet School classes, the Summer Dance Workshop, Pre-professional Summer Dance Program and the Pre-Professional Training held at three studio locations in Boston, Newton, and Marblehead.

Boston Ballet’s nationally-acclaimed education programs include Citydance, Adaptive Dance, and ECI On Location. The programs are offered in partnership with the Boston Public Schools and in communities throughout the city and region.

For more information, please visit www.bostonballet.org.

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