

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jill Goddard, 617.456.6236, jgoddard@bostonballet.org

Sarah Gledhill, 617.456.6264, sgledhill@bostonballet.org

BOSTON BALLET ANNOUNCES 2017–2018 COMPANY ROSTER OF 65 DANCERS REPRESENTING 16 NATIONALITIES NINE DANCERS RECEIVE PROMOTIONS

August 14, 2017 (BOSTON, MA) – Boston Ballet Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen has announced the 2017–2018 season roster. A total of 65 dancers make up the Company roster, with 55 in the main company and 10 in Boston Ballet II (BBII), Boston Ballet’s second company.

Six Boston Ballet dancers received promotions for the upcoming season, and three have been promoted from BBII to the main Company. Sixteen nationalities are represented, with dancers hailing from Albania, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Finland, France, Georgia, Italy, Japan, Paraguay, South Korea, Spain, and the U.S. Thirty-five percent of the Company are BBII alumni, and 22 percent are Boston Ballet School alumni.

“With every new season, I have the opportunity to shape the Company by promoting great talent from within, and welcoming new dancers from all over the world,” said Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen. “This season’s repertoire represents some of the finest choreographers of dance history and today. I am excited to see how they challenge our dancers and entertain our audiences.”

Boston Ballet welcomes Derek Dunn (Glen Burnie, Maryland) as a soloist, and Jessica Burrows (Stouffville, Canada), Daniel Durrett (Cincinnati, Ohio), Chyrstyn Fentroy (Los Angeles, California), Patric Palkens (Lewistown, Montana), Michael Ryan (Houston, Texas), and Haley Schwan (Dearborn, Michigan) as artists of the Company. Olivia Behrmann (Indianapolis, Indiana), Caroline Buckheit (Naples, Florida), Tyson Clark (Somerville, Massachusetts), Thomas Davidoff (Atlanta, Georgia), August Generalli (Chestnut Ridge, New York), and Catherine Livingston (Davidson, North Carolina) join as members of BBII.

Nissinen also announced the following promotions for the 2017–2018 season: Paul Craig (Manistee, Michigan), Patrick Yocum (Souderton, Pennsylvania), and Junxiong Zhao (Chongqing, China) have been promoted to principal dancer; Roddy Doble (Southbury, Connecticut) has been promoted to soloist; and Hannah Bettles (DeLand, Florida) and Lawrence Rines (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) have been promoted to second soloist. Sage

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Humphries (Seal Beach, California), Graham Johns (Glen Ridge, New Jersey), and Abigail Merlis (Westport, Connecticut) have been promoted from BBII to artists of the Company.

NEW COMPANY DANCERS

Derek Dunn of Glen Burnie, Maryland, joins Boston Ballet as a soloist. Dunn began his training at Edna Lee Dance Studio in Maryland, later studying at The Rock School for Dance Education. He joined Houston Ballet in 2012 and was promoted to soloist in 2016. Dunn has received several awards at the Youth America Grand Prix, was named one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" in 2014, and was featured on the cover of *Pointe* magazine in 2016.

Jessica Burrows of Stouffville, Canada, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. Burrows trained at Canada's National Ballet School and became an apprentice with the National Ballet of Canada in 2009. She joined Hong Kong Ballet as a member of the corps de ballet in 2010 and was promoted to coryphée in 2015.

Daniel Durrett of Cincinnati, Ohio, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. Durrett trained at the Cincinnati Ballet Otto M. Budig Academy. He joined Houston Ballet II in 2013 and became an apprentice with Houston Ballet in 2015, and was promoted to corps de ballet in 2016. Durrett has received awards at the Indianapolis International Ballet Competition (2015) and Youth America Grand Prix (2013).

Chyrstyn Fentroy of Los Angeles, California, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. Fentroy began training with her mother, Ruth Fentroy, before studying at Joffrey Ballet School in New York on scholarship. She danced with Dance Theatre of Harlem for five years. Fentroy was featured on the cover of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" issue in 2015, and received the Princess Grace Honoraria Award in Dance in 2016.

Patric Palkens of Lewistown, Montana, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. Palkens has trained at the Municipal Theatre Ballet School in Santiago, Chile; Pacific Northwest Ballet; Ballet Chicago; and Orlando Ballet II. In 2011, he joined Cincinnati Ballet, where he was quickly promoted to soloist and later senior soloist for the 2012–2013 season. He returned to Cincinnati Ballet as a principal dancer after spending a year with Salzburg Ballet in Austria.

Michael Ryan of Houston, Texas, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. He began his training at the Ballet Academy of Texas, and was invited to train at Orlando Ballet School on scholarship in 2006. He continued his dance training at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Academy, later joining Houston Ballet II in 2012. In 2014, Ryan was a finalist at the Prix de Lausanne and joined Houston Ballet as a member of the corps de ballet.

Haley Schwan of Dearborn, Michigan, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. She began her training at the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington D.C., and later studied at the Vaganova Ballet Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia. She joined Staatsballett Berlin from 2010 to 2016, and in 2017, she performed with Twyla Tharp's 50th Anniversary Tour and Emery LeCrone Dance.

Olivia Behrmann of Indianapolis, Indiana, joins as a member of Boston Ballet II. She began dancing at age 7. Prior to enrolling in Boston Ballet School, Behrmann trained at Central Indiana Academy of Dance and Indiana Ballet Conservatory. Behrmann came to Boston Ballet School as a trainee for the 2016–2017 school year. She received first place in the senior classical division at the Youth America Grand Prix semi-finals in Indianapolis in 2014 and 2015.

Caroline Buckheit of Naples, Florida, joins as a member of Boston Ballet II. Buckheit began dancing at age 3 in Naples. She attended her first summer program at the Cecchetti Council of America's program in Holland, Michigan. Buckheit later attended Boston Ballet School's Summer Dance Program in Newton, Massachusetts. In 2015, she was invited to attend the year-round Pre-Professional Program, and she became a Boston Ballet School Trainee in 2016.

Tyson Clark of Somerville, Massachusetts, joins as a member of Boston Ballet II. He began his dance training at Mary Flynn Murphy Dance Studio in Somerville and the Gold School with Project Moves Dance Company in Brockton, Massachusetts. Clark began training with Boston Ballet School from 2008 to 2011 and returned in 2015 as a Boston Ballet School Trainee. In 2016, he received the Princess Grace Foundation Dance Scholarship Award and the Chris Hellman Dance Award.

Thomas Davidoff of Atlanta, Georgia, joins as a member Boston Ballet II. He began his training with Susan Jaffe and Risa Kaplowitz in Princeton, New Jersey. He later studied at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School and Atlanta Ballet. Following a summer intensive at The School of American Ballet in New York, Davidoff was invited to train there year-round. He became a Boston Ballet School Trainee in 2016. He was a Princess Grace Award Nominee in 2016 and placed among the top 12 senior men at Youth America Grand Prix 2017.

August Generalli of Chestnut Ridge, New York, joins as a member of Boston Ballet II. He began his training at Petrov Ballet in Waldwick, New Jersey and later trained at Ellison Ballet's Professional Training Program in New York. In 2015, Generalli won the gold medal at Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) Boston and the bronze medal at Indianapolis International Ballet

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Competition and went on to win the silver medal at YAGP Boston and the bronze medal for pas de deux at YAGP New York in 2016.

Catherine Livingston of Davidson, North Carolina, joins as a member of Boston Ballet II. She started her classical ballet training at age 11 at Piedmont School of Music and Dance under the direction of Rebecca and Daniel Wiley. During the summer, she trained at American Ballet Theatre in California, Houston Ballet, The Juilliard School, and Colorado Ballet.

COMPANY PROMOTIONS

Paul Craig of Manistee, Michigan, started his training with Deb Knight at the Conservatory of Dance and with Jefferson Baum at the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. At age 14, he toured with Blue Lake International Exchange Program to Germany, Italy, and France. He later received a scholarship to train at Virginia School of the Arts. Craig was awarded the Virginia School of the Arts Merit Award and the Dean's Award. In 2006, he trained in Boston Ballet School's Trainee Program. He joined Boston Ballet II in 2007, was promoted to corps de ballet in 2008, to second soloist in 2014, to soloist during the 2015–2016 season, and to principal dancer in 2017.

Patrick Yocum of Souderton, Pennsylvania, began his ballet training in Pennsylvania, and after graduating high school, he continued his training with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School before joining Boston Ballet's Trainee Program. Yocum joined Boston Ballet II in 2009. He joined the corps de ballet in 2011, was promoted to soloist in 2015, and to principal dancer in 2017. He has toured with Boston Ballet to locations in the U.S. and Europe, including Spain, Helsinki, Finland; London, England; New York; and Washington D.C.

Junxiong Zhao of Chongqing, China, began his training at age 11 with Shanghai East Ballet School in Shanghai, China. In 2010, he began training at The Washington School of Ballet under Kee Juan Han and Carlos Valcárcel, and a year later, he joined The Washington Ballet Studio Company. In 2012, he joined Ballet Arizona, dancing many roles including those in *Cinderella*, *La Bayadère*, and *Romeo & Juliet*. Zhao joined Boston Ballet as a corps de ballet member in 2014 and was promoted to second soloist in 2015, soloist in 2016, and principal dancer in 2017.

Roddy Doble, of Southbury, Connecticut, began his training at the School of Performing Arts in New Milford, Connecticut. In 2005, Doble attended the American Ballet Theatre Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School, as well as its 2005 and 2006 Summer Intensives in New York. Doble joined the American Ballet Theatre Studio Company in 2006. He was promoted to apprentice with American Ballet Theatre in 2007 and to the corps de ballet in 2008. Doble joined Boston Ballet in 2013 and was promoted to second soloist in 2014 and soloist in 2017.

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hannah Bettes of DeLand, Florida, began her training at the Central Florida Ballet School in 2007, and in 2010 she joined the Patel Conservatory as a new artist. In 2012, she joined The Royal Ballet School (RBS), where she was named a Nadia Nerina Scholar. During her time at RBS, she danced with The Royal Ballet, performed at Buckingham Palace, and worked with world-renowned choreographers. Bettes joined Boston Ballet as a corps de ballet member in 2015 and was promoted to second soloist in 2017. She has been featured in *Dance Spirit* and *Pointe* magazines.

Lawrence Rines of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, trained at the School of American Ballet and The Rock School for Dance Education. Rines has participated in summer intensives at Ellison Ballet, The Kirov Academy of Ballet, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Miami City Ballet, The School of American Ballet, and The Royal Ballet School. Rines joined Boston Ballet II in 2009. He joined Boston Ballet as member of the corps de ballet in 2011 and was promoted to second soloist in 2017.

Sage Humphries of Seal Beach, California, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. She has trained with Terri and Anthony Sellars, Michael and Kristine Houston, Ariel Serrano, and Ramona De Saa. Humphries was a Denver Youth Grand Prix Winner at the Youth America Grand Prix Denver Semi-Finals in 2015. She joined Boston Ballet II in 2016.

Graham Johns of Glen Ridge, New Jersey, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. Johns began dancing at age 12 with Elaine Kudo, Diane Orio, and Buddy Balou. In 2010, he enrolled at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and continued his dance training in tandem with his academics. He was invited to Boston Ballet School's Trainee Program in 2014, and joined Boston Ballet II in 2016. He is a graduate of Phillips Academy, the recipient of the 2014 Phillips Academy Dance Prize, and a National YoungArts Foundation Winner.

Abigail Merlis of Westport, Connecticut, joins Boston Ballet as an artist of the Company. She trained at Westport's Academy of Dance, French Academie of Ballet, and privately with Christina Fagundes in New Canaan, Connecticut. After attending Boston Ballet School's Summer Dance Program in 2014, Merlis was invited to the Trainee Program on scholarship. She joined Boston Ballet II in 2016.

For full biographies, please visit bostonballet.org.

###

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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 54-year history of promoting excellence and access to dance.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Meredith 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 providing exceptional dance education and ballet training to students across three studios in Boston, Newton, and the North Shore. Led by Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Director Margaret Tracey, the School reaches more than 5,000 students (toddler to adult) each year through its four core programs: Children's Program, Classical Ballet Program, Adult Dance Program, and Pre-Professional Program.

Boston Ballet's Department of Education and Community Initiatives (ECI) provides programming, events, and activities that connect the community to dance. ECI reaches more than 4,000 individuals in Boston, North Shore, and the surrounding communities each year through Citydance, ECI on Location, Adaptive Dance, and other community programs.

For more information, please visit bostonballet.org.

Boston Ballet gratefully acknowledges the following institutional partners:

Boston Cultural Council
The Boston Foundation
Klarman Family Foundation
Massachusetts Cultural Council
National Endowment for the Arts