

# BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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## BOSTON BALLET PRINCIPAL DANCER MISA KURANAGA NOMINATED FOR BENOIS DE LA DANSE AWARD

APRIL 12, 2017 (BOSTON, MA) — Boston Ballet Principal Dancer Misa Kuranaga has been nominated for the prestigious Benois de la Danse award for her portrayal of Tatiana in John Cranko's *Onegin* and Medora in Ivan Liška's *Le Corsaire*.

"I'm excited to be nominated for a Benois de la Danse award," said Kuranaga. "It is truly an honor to return and share the stage with some of my most talented peers for one of the highest honors in ballet. This will be my third time dancing on the Bolshoi Theatre stage. I performed there when I was a young dancer."

Kuranaga (Osaka, Japan) began her training at the Jinushi Kaoru Ballet School and later continued at the School of American Ballet. In 2001, Kuranaga joined San Francisco Ballet as an apprentice after winning the professional scholarship award at the Prix de Lausanne. In 2003, Kuranaga was offered a corps de ballet position at Boston Ballet. She quickly rose through the ranks after performing the Sylph in August Bournonville's *La Sylphide* as a corps member. She was promoted to second soloist in 2005, soloist in 2007, and to principal dancer in 2009. She has received critical acclaim with the Company for her portrayal of Odette/Odile in Mikko Nissinen's *Swan Lake*, as well as for the role of Juliet in Cranko's *Romeo & Juliet*.

"We are very proud that Misa has received this recognition," said Boston Ballet Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen. "She works hard on every role with Boston Ballet and there's no doubt she deserves it."

The Prix Benois de la Danse celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. The program aims to unite and recognize some of the best dancers, choreographers, and other artists of the ballet world. Winners are selected by an international jury of some of the most influential personalities in ballet. This year, the jury consists of past laureates, including Boston Ballet Resident Choreographer Jorma Elo, who won the prize for best choreography in 2010 for his production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* commissioned by Vienna State Opera Ballet and *Slice to Sharp* for the Stanislavsky Music Theatre.

The Prix Benois de la Danse festival will take place May 30–31, 2017, in its traditional location, the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Russia. Kuranaga joins fellow Company Dancer Kathleen Breen Combes as a nominee for best female dancer. Breen Combes was nominated in 2012 for her portrayal of Juliet in Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet* and Titania in Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

"Being nominated for a Benois de la Danse award is an incredible honor for an artist," said Elo. "It is considered the 'Oscars of dance,' and it is a privilege to serve on the jury as well. I received the prestigious award in 2010 for the best choreography. This year's nominees represent some of the top talent from across the globe coming together to celebrate their incredible artistic accomplishments."

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For additional information about the Benois de la Danse award and gala, please visit <http://www.benois.theatre.ru/>.

### **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 53-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 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](http://bostonballet.org).

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