

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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BOSTON BALLET ANNOUNCES 2016–2017 BOSTON BALLET II ROSTER

NEW PROGRAM *FIRST LOOK* WILL FEATURE PERFORMANCES BY BBII AND SELECT SUMMER DANCE PROGRAM STUDENTS

July 20, 2016 (BOSTON, MA)—Boston Ballet Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen announced the 2016–2017 season roster for **Boston Ballet II (BBII)**, the second company, which will be comprised of 13 dancers. Both new and returning BBII dancers will perform together for the first time in *First Look*, a new program featuring a range of works curated to reflect the main Company's diverse repertoire. Select Boston Ballet School Summer Dance Program (SDP) students will also perform alongside BBII company members in this one-day-only performance. *First Look* takes place on Saturday, July 30 at 3 pm in Boston Ballet's grand rehearsal studio at its South End headquarters, which transforms into an intimate, state-of-the-art black box theater.

"I'm thrilled about the talent joining Boston Ballet II this season," said Associate Director of BBII Peter Stark. "We have dancers joining us who have trained at some of the top schools around the country and across the globe, including many who trained here at Boston Ballet School."

More than 40 percent of BBII dancers are Boston Ballet School (BBS) alumni. New hires joining BBII for the 2016–2017 season from BBS are: **Graham Johns** (Glen Ridge, New Jersey), **Abigail Merlis** (Westport, Connecticut), and **Christian Pforr** (Watertown, Massachusetts) who were hired after completing the Trainee Program. Additional new hires are: **Gabrielle Beach** (St. Petersburg, Florida) of The Royal Ballet School, **Derek Drilon** (Vancouver, Washington) of Joffrey Studio Company, **Thomas Harrison** (New Hope, Pennsylvania) of the American Ballet Theatre Jackie Kennedy Onassis School, **Sage Humphries** (Seal Beach, California) of Sarasota Cuban Ballet School, **Clay Murray** (Hattiesburg, Mississippi) and **Bella Ureta** (Seattle, Washington) of Pacific Northwest Ballet School, and **Gabriela Schiefer** (Tampa, Florida) of School of American Ballet. They will be joined by returning BBII dancers Samuel Ainley (Sacramento, California), Angela Bishop (Hingham, Massachusetts), and Erin O'Dea (San Clemente, California).

"Our Pre-Professional, Trainee, and Summer Dance Programs serve as a pipeline to the main Company," said Director of Boston Ballet School Margaret Tracey. "The high-caliber training prepares students to succeed as professionals, both in Boston and beyond."

Audiences will have an early opportunity to see BBII dancers perform this summer during *First Look*, a new program created in conjunction with the Summer Dance Program. *First Look* features George Balanchine's rarely performed *Haiuff Divertimento*, "an intimate, appealingly human gem" (Sarah

Kaufman, *The Washington Post*). Other program highlights include excerpts from Twyla Tharp's *As Time Goes By*, the "revolutionary" choreographer's first work rooted in classical ballet vocabulary (Brian Seibert, *The New York Times*). A solo from Resident Choreographer Jorma Elo's *Slice to Sharp* and a sampling of classical works: *Tarantella* from August Bournonville's *Napoli* and a pas de deux from Marius Petipa's renowned *La Bayadère*, will complete the program.

About Boston Ballet II

Led by Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Associate Director of BBII Peter Stark, Boston Ballet II (BBII), the second company of Boston Ballet, is a two-year program featuring young, classically trained dancers on the cusp of their professional careers. The troupe of 13 dancers performs extensively with the main Company at the Boston Opera House, in addition to their own touring engagements throughout the Greater Boston community. BBII alumni make up more than a third of the current Boston Ballet roster, and others have gone on to professional careers in numerous American and international companies, including The Royal Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater, American Ballet Theatre, Houston Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, and The National Ballet of Canada.

About Boston Ballet School Summer Dance Program

Summer Dance Program (SDP), a 5-week intensive for serious ballet students, is a stepping-stone to further professional ballet training at Boston Ballet School. Each year SDP students are considered for acceptance into the year-round Pre-Professional Program and Boston Ballet's second company, BBII, both of which are regarded as important entry points to a professional ballet career. Alumni have gone on to join many ballet companies including Boston Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, and New York City Ballet.

Biographies of BBII dancers can be found [here](#). The full 2016–2017 season roster will be announced in August.

Performance Details

First Look

Saturday, July 30 at 3 pm
Boston Ballet Headquarters
Studio 7
19 Clarendon Street
Boston, MA 02116

Tickets are \$55 and can be purchased by calling the Boston Ballet Box Office at 617.695.6955. Tickets for *First Look* are not available for purchase online. More information can be found at <http://www.bostonballet.org/first-look/>.

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 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 6,000 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 www.bostonballet.org.

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