

# OREGON **BALLET** THEATRE

ANNE MUELLER / INTERIM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## M E D I A R E L E A S E

A N I G H T O F N E W W O R K S F O R O R E G O N B A L L E T T H E A T R E

**March 28, 2013 – Portland, OR**

Throughout OBT's history, the programs in the Newmark Theater have been among the most fertile in the creation of new ballets. In that spirit, *American Music Festival* brings us three new works, two world premieres and one West Coast premiere, in an ambitious program that spans a wide spectrum of our country's musical genres. The three works are not only diverse musically; they represent the distinctly different styles of each of these accomplished dance makers, providing an artistically satisfying challenge to the artists of this company. Pontus Lidberg's new work immerses us in a world of hypnotic liquidity, while Trey McIntyre explores the territory of the American pioneer spirit, with its characteristic grit, determination, and hope. Matthew Neenan infuses virtuosic technique with humanism. Together these works will take the audience on quite a journey through the galaxy of contemporary ballet and modern music.

Portland favorite Trey McIntyre returns with his first OBT commission since *Just* in 2006 and this will be Portland's introduction to choreographic luminaries Matthew Neenan and Pontus Lidberg.

These collaborations were made possible by Rainy Day Productions, White Bird and the Robbins New Essential Works program. This project is also supported in part by a grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust: Oregonians sustaining, developing and participating in our arts, heritage and humanities.

### **DATES AND TIMES**

American Music Festival premieres Thursday, April 18, 2013 at 7:30 pm and runs for eight performances through Saturday, April 27, 2013. For complete show times, go to [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org).

### **TICKET PRICES**

Tickets start at \$23.00. Visit [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org) or dial 503.2.BALLET (222.5538) for tickets.

- For those 35 and under there is the chance to "**pay your age**" for a seat at any performance of American Music Festival. "Pay Your Age" tickets can be purchased **via phone or in person only**; night of the Performance purchases are **cash only** and must be purchased no later than 30 minutes prior to the performance. This is limited to one (1) ticket and does not include handling and service charges.

### **About Stream**

Choreography: Pontus Lidberg

Composer: Ryan Francis

Costume Designer: Reid Bartelme

Pontus Lidberg commissioned the music for his ballet from Portland-born, Juilliard graduate Ryan Francis. **The collaboration of an original score and new choreography developed together makes this world premiere doubly exciting.** Sponsored in collaboration with White Bird Dance, Lidberg experimented with partnering and patterns for his new ballet at [OBT Exposed](#) in Director Park this past summer. Upon returning to Portland this spring the choreography has blossomed

into a gorgeous moving sculpture full of sinuous counter-balancing and interesting partnering, offset beautifully by Reid Bartelme's costumes.

*"[Lidberg] sublimates the academic language of ballet, dissolving it into knotty partnering that manages, by and large, to avoid the churning clichés of much contemporary movement in the form. It is refreshing to see a ballet embracing the virtues of restraint."* — Claudia La Rocco, New York Times

### **About *Robust American Love***

Choreography: Trey McIntyre

Composers: Fleet Foxes

Costume Designer: Melissa Schlachtmeyer



Principal Dancer Alison Roper and Soloist Lucas Threefoot in rehearsal for Trey McIntyre's *Robust American Love*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

Trey McIntyre has a special way with popular music. He's made magic with soundtracks ranging from Preservation Hall Jazz Band to the Shins, proving, as The Times-Picayune wrote, "that one can make great art by responding honestly to such unlikely musical material as Puff the Magic Dragon."

When McIntyre was approached to make a ballet to popular music for an American music-themed program, he settled on Seattle-based Fleet Foxes. Attracted to their sense of Americana, their music is suggestive of wide-open spaces and canyons, and their old-style lyrics and poetry. McIntyre chose pre-Civil War America as a context for his piece entitled *Robust American Love*, to **explore ideas of pioneering a brand new place, of toughness and optimism, and of being connected to the land.** Melissa Schlachtmeyer's designs capture that sense of tradition forging into the

expansive frontier. The effect allows the costumes to dance on their own, almost separately from the dancers.

*"Trey McIntyre is a bright light, a brainy ballet choreographer whose best works fuse visceral physicality with a deep and true humanism."* — Laura Bleiberg, Los Angeles Times

Trey McIntyre's piece was made possible by Rainy Day Productions.

### **About *At the border***

Composer: John Adams

Choreography: Matthew Neenan

Costume Designer: Martha Chamberlain



Principal Dancers Yang Zou and Haiyan Wu rehearse Matthew Neenan's *At the border*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

Matthew Neenan's *At the border* will be a West Coast premiere. Its score is by Pulitzer Prize winner John Adams, who has composed extensively for opera and whose minimalist music often attracts choreographers. The presence of Adams' music rounds out the American Music Festival theme. The title of the piece was inspired by the music itself. "Hallelujah Junction is a tiny truck stop on Route 49 on the Nevada-California border," shares Adams, "not far from where I have a small mountain cabin." **The choreography for *At the border* develops core ideas that blend classical technique with humanistic movement that makes it very relatable.**

*"[the dancers] absolutely sparkled in At the border, filling a bare stage with insouciant energy, arcing jumps and far-flung limbs. Vitality radiated from the red- and blue-clad dancers"* —The Las Vegas Dance Insider

### **About the choreographers:**

#### **Pontus Lidberg**

Pontus Lidberg has been making dances for stage and film since 2000. Raised in Stockholm, Sweden, Lidberg began training in 1987 with Kungliga Svenska Balettskolan, the Royal Swedish Ballet School. From 1996-2003, he danced with Kungliga Operan, Den Norske Opera & Ballett, Le Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, and The Göteborg Ballet. Since 2000, Lidberg has created over 35 works and has been commissioned to develop new works for several international dance companies.

In 2003, he formed Pontus Lidberg Dance to support the development and production of his independent projects. Since forming Pontus Lidberg Dance, he has developed projects for both the stage and film. His second film, *The Rain* (2007), received numerous prestigious awards in the United States and internationally. The group made its US debut with *Faune* (2010) at NY City Center's Fall for Dance Festival in 2011. Recently, Lidberg produced *WITHIN* (Labyrinth Within), during his tenure as Resident Artistic Director of Morphoses. Set to an original composition from David Lang, *WITHIN* premiered in June 2012 at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Beckett, MA) followed by a five-city tour in Sweden and a run at The Joyce Theater in New York City.

#### **Trey McIntyre**

Trey McIntyre is one of the most in-demand choreographers working today. McIntyre has created a canon of more than 80 works for companies such as Stuttgart Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, New York City Ballet, Ballet de Santiago (Chile) and Trey McIntyre Project. McIntyre has served as resident choreographer for Oregon Ballet Theatre, Ballet Memphis and The Washington Ballet. He has received many grants and awards, including two choreographic fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Choo-San Goh Award For Choreography, was named one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" in 2001, one of People magazine's "25 Hottest Bachelors" in 2003 and one of Out magazine's 2008 "Tastemakers." In 2004, McIntyre established his critically acclaimed Trey McIntyre Project, a dance company that allows him to continue his artistic and creative relationships with a select group of high-caliber dancers. In the summer of 2008, Trey McIntyre Project launched as a full-time company operating out of Boise, Idaho. In its first year as a full-time company, Trey McIntyre Project toured to more than 25 cities across the world.

#### **Matthew Neenan**

Matthew Neenan's choreography has been featured and performed by the Pennsylvania Ballet (totaling 13 commissions), BalletX, The Washington Ballet, Colorado Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Milwaukee Ballet, Juilliard Dance, New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute, Sacramento Ballet, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Indiana University, Opera Company of Philadelphia, and LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts (NYC), among others. He has received numerous awards and grants for his choreography. In 2008, he received a fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. This marks his fourth time receiving the PCA fellowship. In October 2009, Matthew was the grand-prize winner of Sacramento Ballet's Capital Choreography Competition and was also the first recipient of the Jerome Robbins NEW Program Fellowship for his work *At the border* for Pennsylvania Ballet.

In 2005, Neenan co-founded BalletX with fellow dancer Christine Cox. BalletX had its world premiere at the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival in September 2005 and is now the resident dance company at the prestigious Wilma Theatre. BalletX has toured and performed Neenan's

choreography in New York City at The Skirball Center, Symphony Space and Central Park Summerstage, Vail International Dance Festival, Jacob's Pillow, The Cerritos Center, Laguna Dance Festival, Spring to Dance Festival in St.Louis, and internationally in Cali, Colombia and Seoul, Korea.

### **ABOUT OREGON BALLET THEATRE**

Founded in 1989, OBT is the state's largest full-time professional ballet company, dedicated to creating and preserving the art of ballet through the highest quality performance, training and educational programming. Appointed to Interim Artistic Director in 2012, Anne Mueller has provided both artistry and leadership to OBT since 1996. Under her direction, OBT is committed to producing compelling and diverse works that consistently inspire and entice audiences. Annually, OBT offers eleven experiential arts education programs for youth and adults, as well as a professional ballet school for students, ages 4-18. Through all the programs it offers, OBT reaches over 130,000 members of the community each year. For more information about OBT go to: [www.obt.org](http://www.obt.org).