



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 22, 2009
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Two Ohio Companies, One Beloved Ballet: BalletMet Columbus, Cincinnati Ballet present *Swan Lake*

COLUMBUS, OH—BalletMet Columbus begins its 32nd season with the most beloved classical ballet of all time. BalletMet and the Cincinnati Ballet bring to the stage as never before *Swan Lake*, **Oct. 16-18, 2009**, with more than 50 dancers from both companies filling the stage of the majestic **Ohio Theatre in downtown Columbus**. *Swan Lake* embodies the grace and grandeur of classical ballet with love, magic, Tchaikovsky's enduring score, and the most celebrated roles in the classical repertory, brought to life in this limited engagement.

Swan Lake is the story of a prince who falls in love with a beautiful woman, cursed by an evil sorcerer to live by day as a swan woman. The original production premiered in 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. BalletMet and the Cincinnati Ballet will present the full length production as staged by BalletMet Artistic Director Gerard Charles and Cincinnati Ballet Artistic Director Victoria Morgan and Associate Artistic Director Devon Carney. Much of the choreography is based on the Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov 1895 version. More than 50 professional dancers from BalletMet and the Cincinnati Ballet will dance in the production, plus more than 20 children from the BalletMet Dance Academy.

This production marks the third collaboration between BalletMet and the Cincinnati Ballet. The companies previously danced together in *Jewels* (2003) and *Stars and Stripes* (2006). *Swan Lake* will be presented at the Aronoff Center for the Arts in Cincinnati the weekend following its run in Columbus.

"*Swan Lake* is a true classic and carries with it a rich tradition of outstanding performances," said BalletMet Artistic Director Gerard Charles. "We are fortunate to have the opportunity to join with the Cincinnati Ballet to present this ballet in spectacular style."

THE STORY

ACT I: Prince Siegfried and guests gather to celebrate his coming of age. His mother, the Queen, offers him a crossbow as a birthday gift. She tells him that he must soon choose a bride. Siegfried reluctantly agrees. His friends urge Siegfried to join them on their hunt for swans.

ACT II: The evil sorcerer, Baron von Rothbart, lurks within the forest. He rules over the lake filled with young maidens he has held captive under a spell that transformed them into swans. Siegfried is about to shoot a swan when she transforms into beautiful woman – it is Odette, queen of the swan maidens. Siegfried is enchanted. Odette shares that the swans are under the spell of von Rothbart. The spell can only be broken by love. Siegfried promises eternal love to Odette, who warns that if the vow is broken all will be lost.

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ACT III: A grand ball is in process at the castle. Many princesses arrive to capture the Prince's favor, but Siegfried keeps his vow to Odette and accepts no one. Suddenly, von Rothbart appears disguised as a noble with his daughter, Odile, who has been bewitched to look like Odette. Siegfried declares his love for Odile, whom he believes to be Odette. Von Rothbart reveals himself and Odile. Siegfried realizes he has broken his oath, dooming Odette to remain a swan.

ACT IV: Odette flees back to the lake where the swans attempt to console her. Siegfried begs Odette to forgive him. They are interrupted by von Rothbart and a fight ensues. Rather than live apart, Odette and Siegfried throw themselves from a high rock into the lake. Von Rothbart's spell is broken and the swan maidens are freed. The spirits of Odette and Siegfried are together.

THE ARTISTS

Gerard Charles was named BalletMet Columbus' Artistic Director in 2001, having served as Interim Artistic Director and Associate Artistic Director for the previous three seasons. Trained at the Royal Ballet School in London, Charles danced professionally for Ballet International in London, Milwaukee Ballet and BalletMet. Upon retiring from the stage, he served as Ballet Master for BalletMet (1987-91) and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (1991-95), returning to BalletMet as Ballet Master. Charles is the recipient of an NEA Choreography Fellowship and has created works for BalletMet including *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Nutcracker* and *Aladdin*.

Victoria Morgan serves as Artistic Director and CEO of the Cincinnati Ballet. Morgan sits on the board of *Dance Magazine* and the national membership organization Dance/USA, has served on the NEA evaluation panel, was presiding judge for the 2005 New York International Ballet Competition, and was a judicator for the Benois de la Danse Awards Gala in Moscow, Russia, in April 2006. Morgan came to Cincinnati Ballet after nearly a decade as resident choreographer for the San Francisco Opera. Previously, she was a principal dancer for San Francisco Ballet and Ballet West. Morgan graduated Magna Cum Laude with an MFA from the University of Utah.

Devon Carney, Cincinnati Ballet Associate Artistic Director, began his training in New Orleans. He danced his first leading roles with the New Orleans Ballet. In 1978, Carney joined Boston Ballet, where he was promoted to principal in 1986. Carney has served as Ballet Master for Boston Ballet (1998-2003) and Artistic Director of Boston Ballet Summer Dance Program (1994-2003). Teaching credits include Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. Choreography credits include Boston Ballet, BalletMet Columbus and Cincinnati Ballet.

PERFORMANCES AND TICKETS

| FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Oct. 16 • 8pm | Oct. 17 • 8pm | Oct. 18 • 2pm* |

*Audio description available. Reservations required: 614.229.4848.

Tickets are \$29-\$66 and can be purchased through CAPA (614.469.0939), Ticketmaster (800.982.2787, ticketmaster.com) or balletmet.org. Group discounts available through BalletMet (614.586.8665). College students with ID can purchase \$15 Student Rush tickets at the theater beginning two hours prior to showtime. Students age 13 to 18 can purchase \$5 High Five vouchers at any Kroger Ticketmaster location.

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POST-PERFORMANCE TALK Oct. 16, Ohio Theatre

BalletMet's Artistic Director Gerard Charles, guest artists and cast members discuss this historically significant work. Following the performance.

SENIOR DRESS REHEARSAL Oct. 16, 11am, Ohio Theatre

Sneak preview open to patrons ages 55 and up. \$17.

SPONSOR SUPPORT: BalletMet Columbus receives support for its annual performance season from The Columbus Foundation, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, the Ohio Arts Council, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Classical 89.7 WOSU-FM and Time Warner Cable. Season partner is OSU Medical Center Sports Medicine. *Swan Lake* media partners are WBNS 10TV and Sunny 95. Senior Dress sponsor is WMNI.

ABOUT BALLETMET COLUMBUS: BalletMet Columbus, renowned for its versatility and innovative repertory, ranks among the nation's 15 largest dance companies, and its Dance Academy ranks among the five largest professional dance-training centers. Since its inception in 1978, BalletMet has added 147 company premieres to its repertoire and produced 122 world premieres. It has also developed DanceReach, a series of educational and outreach programs that serve 20,000 people annually, as well as a scholarship program that provides tuition for youth based on financial need or talent.

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