

# PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET

PETER BOAL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Gary Tucker  
206. 441.2426  
[gtucker@pnb.org](mailto:gtucker@pnb.org)

## **How to Cook a Ballerina: Pacific Northwest Ballet's Kari Brunson Announces Departure to Pursue Restaurant Career**

**Seattle, WA** – In an emotional announcement to the Company, corps de ballet member Kari Brunson announced yesterday that after nine years of dancing, she will be leaving Pacific Northwest Ballet, effective immediately, to pursue a career in the food industry. Brunson, who for two years has been documenting her experiences as a self-taught cook – and food photographer – in her food blog [Anticiplate](#), will be apprenticing in the kitchens of renowned Seattle chef and restaurateur Ethan Stowell.

During the PNB dancers' recent summer break, Brunson interned at Stowell's newest restaurant, **Anchovies & Olives**, and documented the experience in a second blog, [Summer Spoon](#). That experience led Stowell to offer her the chance-of-a-lifetime opportunity to apprentice at his restaurants.

"I never thought I would find anything in my life that would satisfy my soul like ballet," said Brunson in her announcement. "Yet, after working in the Anchovies & Olives kitchen over the summer, I realized that I had found a new love. The same parts of me are fulfilled: the preparation before the 'show,' the 'performance,' and most importantly, the spontaneous creativity. I know I have a massive amount of hard work ahead of me to start a new profession, and I am excited for this challenge."

Ethan Stowell was named one of the "Best New Chefs" of 2008 by *Food & Wine* magazine; however, he made his debut on the Seattle food scene a few years earlier, with his first restaurant **Union** ("Best New American Restaurants," *Travel + Leisure*, December 2004). His second venture, **Tavolàta**, was chosen as one of the top ten "Hottest New Restaurants" by *Bon Appétit* (June 2007) and he has most recently opened in quick succession the popular and acclaimed **How to Cook a Wolf** and **Anchovies & Olives**. Mr. Stowell is the son of PNB Founding Artistic Directors Kent Stowell and Francia Russell.

**Kari Brunson** is from Salem, Virginia. She trained at Southwest Virginia Ballet, the School of American Ballet, and Pacific Northwest Ballet School. She joined Pacific Northwest Ballet as an apprentice in 2002 and was promoted to corps de ballet in 2003. At PNB she has originated leading roles in Kiyon Gaines' *M-Pulse* and Susan

Stroman's *TAKE FIVE ... More or Less*. She has also danced leading roles in George Balanchine's *Emeralds*, *Rubies*, and *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*; Ulysses Dove's *Vespers*; William Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced*; Susan Marshall's *Kiss*; Jerome Robbins' *The Concert* and *Fancy Free*; Kent Stowell's *Nutcracker* (Peacock); and Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs*. Featured roles have included George Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco*, *The Four Temperaments*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *La Valse*; Todd Bolender's *Souvenirs*; Trisha Brown's *Spanish Dance*; William Forsythe's *In the middle, somewhat elevated*; Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow* and *The Sleeping Beauty*; and Kent Stowell's *Swan Lake*.

"I have known Kari Brunson since she was a slightly awkward, sweet student of mine at the School of American Ballet in New York," said PNB Artistic Director Peter Boal. "Arriving at PNB, I found something very compelling about Kari on stage. I took a chance on her with Susan Marshall's *Kiss* that I have never regretted. Her stage presence exuded rare confidence, making her a favorite with audiences. She became a first-rate dancer on all fronts, one that we will most definitely miss. We wish her all the best in the world of culinary arts and know that we will keep her as a dear friend of PNB."

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Pacific Northwest Ballet corps de ballet dancer Kari Brunson in Susan Stroman's *TAKE FIVE ... More or Less*.  
Photo © Angela Sterling.

**PNB Publicity Contact**

Gary Tucker, Media Relations Manager

Tel: 206.441.2426 / E-mail: [gtucker@pnb.org](mailto:gtucker@pnb.org) / Website: [www.pnb.org/press](http://www.pnb.org/press)

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET**  
**301 Mercer Street Seattle, WA 98109 206.441.9411**  
**Box Office: 206.441.2424 [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org)**