

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET

PETER BOAL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 6, 2009

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Pacific Northwest Ballet Music Director and Conductor Stewart Kershaw Announces Departure

Seattle, WA – In an announcement to the Pacific Northwest Ballet company and orchestra, Music Director/Conductor Stewart Kershaw today tendered his resignation, effective immediately. Mr. Kershaw has been with the company since 1983.

In his announcement, Mr. Kershaw explained that “Please understand that I am now 68, have been a professional ballet conductor for the last 43 years, and recently completed 25 seasons as PNB’s Music Director. It is also exactly 20 years since my efforts to create the PNB Orchestra were rewarded in October 1989.”

Mr. Kershaw continued by stating “In planning my departure from the ballet world I wanted to make my own personal farewell on a high note with music that has always been so very dear to my heart - what better then than Prokofiev's **Romeo & Juliet** as my swan song?”

In a personal note to members of the orchestra, Mr. Kershaw added “Your brilliant and incredibly passionate playing of this masterpiece will remain a constant and indelible memory in my mind as I move on to the next chapter in my life. The recent comment in *The New York Times* that you are ‘perhaps best of all’ ballet orchestras in the USA, not only made me very proud but amply confirmed my own thoughts on the subject. Bravo!”

Born in Oxford, England, Mr. Kershaw was a chorister at Chichester Cathedral and studied at London’s Royal Academy of Music (of which he is a Fellow) and the Conservatoire Nationale in Paris. He was Music Director of Stuttgart Ballet and Paris Opera Ballet, and has held permanent contracts with the Royal Ballet in London as well as at the Opera Houses in Munich and Lyon. He was Principal Conductor for the Kyoto Symphony Orchestra in Japan, and Music Director of the Evansville Philharmonic for nine years. In 1997 Mr. Kershaw was invited to create the Auburn Symphony Orchestra in South King County. He plans to remain as Auburn Symphony’s Music Director.

“I was deeply saddened by the news of Stewart Kershaw’s choice to resign as our principal conductor and music director,” said PNB Artistic Director Peter Boal. “Stewart’s contribution to PNB over the past 25 years has been tremendous. It is

with great pride that we recognize the consistent brilliance of the PNB Orchestra, knowing that we owe its accomplishment to Stewart's guidance and inspiration. Though he will be missed in the pit, we know that his standard of excellence will continue to benefit PNB far into the future."

PNB will begin conducting a search for Mr. Kershaw's replacement.

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