

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET

PETER BOAL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET OPENS 2009-2010 SEASON WITH
JEAN-CHRISTOPHE MAILLOT'S

ROMÉO et JULIETTE

A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGIC MASTERPIECE

Choreography by Jean-Christophe Maillot

Music by Sergei Prokofiev (Op. 64, 1935-36)

September 24 - October 4, 2009

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

321 Mercer Street, Seattle Center

Seattle, WA 98109

September 24 - 26 at 7:30 pm

September 26 at 2:00 pm

October 1 - 3 at 7:30 pm

October 3 at 2:00 pm

October 4 at 1:00 pm

SEATTLE, WA – Glowing reviews and packed houses accompanied Pacific Northwest Ballet's premiere of Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Roméo et Juliette* in the winter of 2008 season. PNB is thrilled to bring back this moving story of the world's most famous star-crossed lovers as the opening production of the 2009-2010 season. This three-act contemporary interpretation of Shakespeare's great love story is "achingly beautiful...like no Romeo and Juliet ballet you've seen before (*The Seattle Times*)."
Roméo et Juliette runs September 24 - October 4 at Seattle Center's Marion Oliver McCaw Hall. Tickets to *Roméo et Juliette* may be purchased by calling the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424, online at www.pnb.org, or in person at the PNB Box Office at 301 Mercer St. (Running time: 2 hours, 30 minutes. Audience Advisory: Content may not be appropriate for young children.)

On opening night of *Roméo et Juliette* (Thursday, September 24), Pacific Northwest Ballet will launch its 2009-2010 season with *Prelude to a Kiss*, two special pre-performance celebrations: a seated "Dinner in Verona" and a separate cocktail party. Admission to either event includes complimentary valet service, and performance tickets are sold separately. For more information, see the "Special Events" section, below.

“Jean- Christophe Maillot pulls together elements that are startling, unexpected, and unconventional to brilliant effect in his contemporary telling of Shakespeare’s classic story,” says PNB Artistic Director Peter Boal. “Through the lens of Maillot’s choreography, the timeless tale and music are wonderfully fresh and deeply moving. Our dancers have never looked better, and are excited to get the chance to revisit this brilliant ballet.”

Sergei Prokofiev's glorious ballet score is frequently called his masterpiece. Its thematic melodies—by turns sweetly tender, sweepingly passionate, hotly fierce and chillingly eerie—provide counterpoint and impart eloquent support to the narrative.

In his version of *Roméo et Juliette*, choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot has taken formal inspiration from the episodic character of Prokofiev's classic score, structuring the action in a manner akin to cinematic narrative. Rather than focusing on themes of political-social opposition between the two feuding clans, this *Romeo and Juliet* highlights the dualities and ambiguities of adolescence. Torn between contradictory impulses, between tenderness and violence, fear and pride, the lovers are caught in the throes of a tragedy that exemplifies their youth and the extreme emotions and internal conflicts that characterize that time of life—a time of life when destiny, more than at any other moment, seems to escape conscious control, and when the inner turmoil occasioned by passions and ideals can sometimes have disproportionate—even fatal—consequences. In evoking this fragile and volatile state of being, scenic designer **Ernest Pignon-Ernest** has created a decor marked by transparency and lightness: a play of simple forms that reveals an underlying complexity of meaning.

Roméo et Juliette was first performed December 23, 1996 by Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo. Costume design is by **Jérôme Kaplan** and lighting design is by **Dominique Drillot**. The production has been staged for Pacific Northwest Ballet by **Gaby Baars**, **Bernice Coppieters**, and **Giovanna Lorenzoni**.

“It’s a remarkable work: Maillot has used elements of classical ballet and modern dance...to meld emotion and movement. Though the men are in tights and the women on point, this is like no “Romeo and Juliet” ballet you’ve seen before: It’s intricate, often achingly beautiful and never simply pretty.”
– Moira MacDonald, *The Seattle Times*

“Seamlessly fusing the vocabularies of ballet and modern dance, it is an astonishing and absorbing view of an old world with all the impetus of the new. It is also a major statement by a newly energized company, which danced with profound commitment, expressive depth and technical brilliance.”
– R.M. Campbell, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

“It’s not so much a ballet as a visual banquet. Maillot’s choreography is exciting and energizing, a feast of styles densely packed together, and the PNB dancers revel in it. This is a performance well worth braving crazy Seattle Center traffic for, several times over.”
– Rosemary Ponnekanti, *The News Tribune*

[Continued]

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Jean-Christophe Maillot was born in 1960 in Tours, France. He studied dance and piano at the Conservatoire National in Tours before joining Rosella Hightower's International School of Dance in Cannes. In 1977, he won the Prix de Lausanne, and in 1978, he was invited to join the Hamburg Ballet, where director John Neumeier created principal roles for him in many works. In 1983, Maillot was appointed choreographer and director of the Ballet du Grand Theatre in Tours, subsequently one of France's National Choreographic Centres. He choreographed some twenty ballets for this company, and in 1985, he founded the festival Le Chorégraphique. In 1992, he was awarded the title of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture, Jack Lang.

In 1993, H.R.H. the Princess of Hannover invited Maillot to become director of Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo. As principal choreographer for a company of fifty dancers, he has continued to make new work. Among his creations for Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo are *Bêtes Noires*, *Home, Sweet Home*, *Dov'è la Luna*, *Vers un Pays Sage*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Recto Verso*, *L'Île*, *Cendrillon*, *Entrelacs*, *Oeil pour oeil*, *La Belle*, *D'une rive à l'autre*, *Miniatures*, *Le Songe* and *Altro Canto*. *Roméo et Juliette* is the first ballet by Jean-Christophe Maillot to enter Pacific Northwest Ballet's repertory.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) was a leading Soviet composer and brilliant pianist. He left Russia in 1918 and lived in Germany and Paris for the next sixteen years, with frequent trips to America for concert appearances. In 1934, he settled in Moscow and composed prolifically until his death. Among his best known works are the ballet scores *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella* and *Prodigal Son*; the opera *The Love for Three Oranges*; the children's classic, *Peter and the Wolf*; the film score and cantata for *Alexander Nevsky*; and the *Classical Symphony*.

The first Soviet performance of *Romeo and Juliet* was given at the Kirov Theater on January 11, 1940. Preceding the first performance there were many disagreements between the choreographer, Leonid Lavrovsky, and Prokofiev. The dancers failed to understand the music; and the orchestra, in a last-ditch effort to avoid a disaster, tried to cancel the performance. Despite so little hope for success, the ballet was well received and has been popular ever since. The Lavrovsky ballet was finally presented by the Bolshoi Ballet on December 28, 1946.

TICKET & SHOWTIME INFORMATION

Roméo et Juliette runs September 24–October 4 at McCaw Hall, 321 Mercer Street. Showtimes are 7:30 pm September 24 – 26 and October 1 – 3, with 2:00 pm matinees September 26 and October 3, and a 1:00 pm matinee on October 4.

Tickets range in price from \$25 to \$160 and may be purchased:

- * By calling the PNB Box Office at **206.441.2424** (Mon.-Fri. 9am–6pm; Sat. 10am–5pm)
- * In person at the PNB Box Office, **301 Mercer St.** (Mon.-Fri. 10am–6pm; Sat. 10am–5pm)
- * Online at **www.pnb.org**
- * 90 minutes prior to each performance at McCaw Hall at 321 Mercer St.
- * Discounts of up to 20% are available for groups of 10 or more by calling **206.441.2416**, emailing **juliej@pnb.org**, or using PNB's **Online Group Builder** at **www.pnb.org**.
- * Discounted senior and student rush tickets may be purchased day-of-show, subject to availability.
- * Money-saving season subscriptions are available now for as little as \$150.

DISCOUNT OFFERS & SPECIAL EVENTS

SEAL IT WITH A “KISS”

Thursday, September 24

Join PNB for *Prelude to a Kiss*, two pre-performance celebrations in the festive splendor of McCaw Hall on opening night of *Roméo et Juliette*. “Dinner in Verona” offers a sumptuous seated dinner in the gorgeous Allen Room and features special announcements from Artistic Director Peter Boal. (Seating is limited.) The “Prelude to a Kiss Cocktail Party” offers revelers the opportunity to savor delicious drinks and delectable hors d’oeuvres and a toast to PNB’s 2009-10 season from the top of McCaw Hall. Tickets (\$200 for dinner, \$75 for the cocktail party) include complimentary valet parking and may be purchased by calling the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424. (Performance tickets sold separately.)

\$15 TICKETS FOR AGE 25 & UNDER

Both Friday performances: September 25 & October 2, 7:30 pm

One ticket for \$15 and two for \$25 for patrons 25 years and younger! To purchase tickets, contact the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424 or visit 301 Mercer Street. This offer is good for September 25 and October 2 performances only. Offer is subject to availability and not valid on previously purchased tickets. Each attendee must present valid I.D. upon ticket retrieval.

TEEN TIX

PNB is a proud participant of Seattle Center’s **Teen Tix** program. Young people 13 to 19 years old can join Teen Tix and purchase tickets to PNB performances and other music, dance, theater and arts events for only \$5. To join Teen Tix or view a list of participating organizations, visit Seattle Center’s Teen Tix webpage at www.seattlecenter.com/teentix.

GROUP SALES

Discounts are also available for groups of 10 or more. For group tickets, please call 206.441.2416, email juliej@pnb.org or use PNB’s Online Group Builder at www.pnb.org. (PNB’s Online Group Builder is available for audience members to gather friends, family and co-workers to see any performance and save.)

FRIDAY PREVIEWS

Repertory Program 1: *Roméo et Juliette* – Friday, September 18, 6:00 pm

The Phelps Center, 301 Mercer Street, Seattle

Join us for an hour-long dance preview led by Artistic Director Peter Boal and featuring PNB dancers performing excerpts from Jean-Christophe Maillot’s *Roméo et Juliette*. PNB Friday Previews offer an upbeat and up-close view of the Company preparing to put dance on stage. Tickets, \$10 each, went on sale July 20 and may be purchased by calling the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424, online at www.pnb.org or in person at the PNB Box Office at 301 Mercer Street.

CONVERSATIONS WITH PNB – FREE

Sunday, September 20, 2:00 pm

Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main Street in Pioneer Square

PNB’s Sunday afternoon series features an hour-long discussion about Jean-Christophe Maillot’s *Roméo et Juliette* with soloist James Moore and principal dancers Lucien Postlewaite, and Olivier Wevers in the casual atmosphere of the Elliott Bay Book Company reading room. All *Conversations with PNB* are **FREE** of charge.

BALLET PREVIEW – FREE

Tuesday, September 22, 12:00 noon

Central Seattle Public Library, 1000 Fourth Avenue, Seattle

Join PNB for a free lunch hour preview lecture at the Central Seattle Public Library. Education Programs Manager Doug Fullington will offer insights about Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Roméo et Juliette*, complete with video excerpts. **FREE** of charge.

PNB LECTURE SERIES & DRESS REHEARSAL

Wednesday, September 23, 2009

Lecture 6:00 pm, Nesholm Family Lecture Hall at McCaw Hall

Dress Rehearsal 7:00 – 9:30 pm, McCaw Hall

Join Artistic Director Peter Boal for an engaging conversation during the hour preceding the dress rehearsal. Attend the lecture only or stay for the dress rehearsal. Tickets are \$10 for the lecture, or \$20 for the lecture and dress rehearsal. Tickets may be purchased by calling the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424, online at www.pnb.org or in person at the PNB Box Office at 301 Mercer Street.

PRE-PERFORMANCE LECTURES

Nesholm Family Lecture Hall at McCaw Hall

Join Education Programs Manager Doug Fullington for a 30-minute introduction to each performance, including discussions of choreography, music, history, design, and the process of bringing ballet to the stage. One hour before performances. **FREE** for ticketholders.

POST-PERFORMANCE Q&A

After the show, skip the traffic and enjoy a post-performance Q&A with Artistic Director Peter Boal and PNB dancers. Immediately following each performance in the Norcliffe Room at McCaw Hall. **FREE** for ticketholders.

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Thanks to Wells Fargo for its Charitable Giving Support of Pacific Northwest Ballet's production of Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Roméo et Juliette*. The 2008 PNB premiere of *Roméo et Juliette* was generously underwritten by Dan & Pam Baty. Pacific Northwest Ballet's 2009-2010 season is proudly sponsored by Microsoft Corporation. Additional season support is provided by Artsfund, the Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, 4Culture - King County Lodging Tax, and Washington State Arts Commission.

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Programming subject to change. For further information, please visit: www.pnb.org.

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