

# PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET

PETER BOAL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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## **Pacific Northwest Ballet Appoints Emil de Cou as new Music Director/Principal Conductor**

**To conduct *Cinderella* and *Giselle* during PNB's 2010-2011 Season,  
and assume position full-time in July 2011.**

**Seattle, WA** – Pacific Northwest Ballet Artistic Director Peter Boal has announced that Emil de Cou will be joining the company as PNB's new Music Director/Principal Conductor. Currently the Associate Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, DC), Mr. de Cou will conduct the PNB Orchestra during the 2010-2011 season performances of *Cinderella* (February 4 – 13, 2011) and *Giselle* (June 3 – 12, 2011). He will join the company full-time at the start of PNB's 2011-2012 season.

Mr. de Cou, who guest-conducted performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Coppélia* during PNB's 2009-2010 season, replaces former Music Director/Conductor Stewart Kershaw, who retired in the fall of 2009. The position has been held in the interim by PNB Conductor/Pianist Allan Dameron. Mr. Dameron will continue in his role as Acting Music Director during the upcoming season, while working in close collaboration with Mr. de Cou throughout the year prior to Mr. de Cou's official start in July, 2011.

"It is with great pleasure that we engage Emil de Cou as PNB's new Music Director," said Mr. Boal in his announcement. "Emil brought out the best in our orchestra during the audition process and demonstrated a true understanding of the needs of musicians and dancers, composers and choreographers. His experience, gracious manner, and masterful ability to lead our remarkable orchestra make him the ideal choice. Please join me in congratulating Emil and welcoming him to PNB."

"The Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra is extremely happy to welcome Emil de Cou to the PNB family as our Music Director," added Matthew Kocmierski, chair of the PNB Orchestra committee and a member of the Music Director search committee. "His ability to guide the orchestra and to weave the intricate path of both standing out musically while accompanying and enhancing the multiple facets of the modern ballet world was made clear to us all during the search process. A ballet conductor is one of the most difficult and rare commodities to find, demanding an exceptional degree of technical mastery, maturity, and selflessness to engage, enhance, and inspire the various artists and artistic disciplines involved. The ability to effortlessly and seamlessly turn on a dime, to respond and add to individual and collective inspiration, and to make every performance a unique and exciting event is at the heart of ballet. We are convinced that he will lead us to great heights of artistic excellence in this most collaborative of art forms. As a long-term partner within PNB, the orchestra was fully engaged in the difficult process of selecting the new Music Director,

our second since the PNB Orchestra was formed, and we are truly delighted with Peter's choice."

"Working with Peter Boal and his amazingly talented dancers, musicians, and staff last season was a total and absolute joy, so I'm very excited and honored to be joining the Pacific Northwest Ballet as their Music Director," said Mr. de Cou. "Ballet brings together music, dance, and the visual arts in a synthesis, providing a uniquely rich emotional experience for our audiences. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to work with Pacific Northwest Ballet and the wonderful PNB Orchestra in this most magic of all art forms."

**Emil de Cou** has been associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra for the past eight seasons, and an active participant in a wide range of National Symphony performances and events since his debut at Wolf Trap in 2000. He has led the orchestra on residency tours in nine states, in subscription concerts at the Kennedy Center and on the lawn of the Capitol. In 2005, Mr. de Cou took up his newly-created position as NSO @ Wolf Trap Festival Conductor. (Of his Tchaikovsky evening, *The Washington Post* declared "*de Cou's rapport with the orchestra was at its usual high level, his attention to detail as impressive as always... The sound was, in turn, lush and intensely energetic.*") This Labor Day weekend, he will once again be conducting the NSO in its Labor Day Capitol Concert on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol Building, a performance he has been leading annually since 2002.

He has appeared as guest conductor with many leading orchestras, including those of Philadelphia, Chicago, Houston, Saint Louis, Detroit, Montreal, Boston Pops, Minnesota, Denver, Portland, and San Francisco, where he also served as Principal Pops Conductor. He was acting music director for the San Francisco Ballet and conductor of American Ballet Theatre for eight seasons conducting performances at Lincoln Center as well as national and international tours.

Mr. de Cou's performance of the ballet *Othello* was aired on *Great Performances* on PBS. The soundtrack, by Academy Award winning composer Elliot Goldenthal, was recorded by Mr. de Cou for Varèse Sarabande; among his other recordings is a disc entitled *Debussy Rediscovered* for Arabesque, which includes previously unrecorded works by Debussy.

Mr. de Cou made his Carnegie Hall debut as guest conductor for the New York Pops, and also appeared at the gala tribute to Beverly Sills at Lincoln Center with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and a stellar roster of soloists. His innovative concerts at the Wolf Trap Pavilion have included the first screenings of *The Wizard of Oz* with the score performed with live orchestra, the first-ever live Twitter program notes (Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*) and live in-time podcast for a concert called "Fantastic Planet." In 2008 he conducted the first performance of "Rodgers & Hammerstein at the Movies."

As part of his work as musical consultant for NASA, Mr. de Cou has conducted several successful collaborations with the nation's space agency, most recently on July 18, 2009 "Salute to Apollo, the Kennedy Legacy" at the Kennedy Center in honor of the 40th anniversary of the moon landing. The sold-out, multi-media performance included film excerpts, narration by Buzz Aldrin, and performances with Denyce Graves, Chaka Khan, and the US Army Chorus.

In 1985 Mr. de Cou was hired by Mikhail Baryshnikov to be the conductor of American Ballet Theatre, and in 1994 joined the staff of San Francisco Ballet, completing his tenure there as acting music director in 2001. He has also conducted for New York City Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Netherlands Dance Theatre, Hong Kong Ballet, National Ballet of Holland,

Ballet Met, Oakland Ballet, and worked with such dance luminaries as Agnes DeMille, Margot Fonteyn, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Jiri Kylian, Frederic Franklin, Kenneth MacMillan, Christopher Wheeldon, Carla Fracci, Cynthia Gregory, Fernando Bujones, Natalia Makarova, Suzanne Farrell, Helgi Tomasson, Julio Bocca, and Gelsey Kirkland.

Mr. de Cou was born in Los Angeles and studied with Daniel Lewis at the University of Southern California. He was the subject of a documentary on National Public Radio and was chosen from 200 candidates to study in Leonard Bernstein's master class at the Hollywood Bowl. He makes his home in San Francisco and Sarasota.

**Pacific Northwest Ballet**, one of the largest and most highly regarded ballet companies in the United States, was founded in 1972. In July 2005, Peter Boal became artistic director, succeeding Kent Stowell and Francia Russell, artistic directors since 1977. The Company of nearly fifty dancers presents more than 100 performances each year of full-length and mixed repertory ballets at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall in Seattle and on tour. The Company has toured to Europe, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada, and throughout the United States, with celebrated appearances at Jacob's Pillow and in New York City and Washington DC. Pacific Northwest Ballet's commitment to live music and high performance standards has been a priority from the beginning. The Company has been praised for its diverse, stimulating, and challenging repertoire of music – performed by the 50-strong PNB Orchestra – that ranges from the great ballet scores of Tchaikovsky, Delibes, and Stravinsky to new works by John Adams, Philip Glass, and Arvo Pärt to American classics by Leonard Bernstein, William Bolcom, George Gershwin, and Jerome Kern.

The highlight of PNB's 2010-2011 season will no doubt be the world premiere staging of the classic *Giselle*. This production marks the first time an American company has revived ballet's great tragedy based on original material researched by Stepanov dance notation expert, Doug Fullington, in collaboration with leading *Giselle* scholar Marian Smith. Other season highlights include the return of Jiri Kylian's *Petite Mort* paired with the PNB premiere of *Sechs Tänze (Six Dances)*, both from Kylian's "Black and White" series; company premieres of works by Jerome Robbins and Alexei Ratmansky; an all-Tharp program; a world premiere by Mopey choreographer Marco Goetze; Kent Stowell's magical *Cinderella*; and the return of PNB's renowned production of George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Special events in addition to the subscription season include the holiday classic, Kent Stowell and Maurice Sendak's *Nutcracker*; as well as the Family Matinee production of *Pinocchio*. For further information, visit [www.pnb.org](http://www.pnb.org).

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