

# NEVADA *Ballet* THEATRE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NEVADA BALLET THEATRE PRESENTS *AMERICAN MASTERS*, FEATURING ACCLAIMED GUEST ARTISTS AND FOUR LAS VEGAS PREMIERES

**LAS VEGAS, NV (Monday, March 2, 2009)** – Nevada Ballet Theatre is thrilled to present *American Masters*, an evening of works by contemporary choreographers Christopher Wheeldon, James Canfield and Val Caniparoli, who continue to shape the dance scene in America. The program includes four Las Vegas premieres and performances by distinguished guest artists Wendy Whelan, Albert Evans and Sébastien Marcovici, who are principal dancers with the New York City Ballet (NYCB). This powerful program will be presented on Friday, April 10 at 8 pm and Saturday, April 11 at 2 pm at UNLV's Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall, 4505 S. Maryland Parkway. Ticket prices range from \*\$25 - \$75, and can be ordered by calling (702) 895-ARTS (2787) or by visiting [www.nevadaballet.com](http://www.nevadaballet.com).

Whelan, a principal dancer for New York City Ballet since 1991, is one of the world's most esteemed ballerinas, known for her versatility and bold, modern approach. Evans, a principal dancer since 1995, and the Paris born Marcovici, a principal dancer since 2002, have enjoyed distinguished careers as well, garnering them worldwide audience and media acclaim.

"We are very fortunate to have the incomparable Wendy Whelan, Albert Evans and Sébastien Marcovici join us as we present the works of three master choreographers," said Executive Director Beth Barbre. "These will be performances to remember in Las Vegas."

These exceptional artists will perform *Liturgy* and *After the Rain (pas de deux)*, two critically acclaimed works by choreographer Christopher Wheeldon. A former Royal Ballet and NYCB dancer as well as NYCB's first resident choreographer, Mr. Wheeldon's works are now featured in the repertoire of the world's leading ballet companies. *Liturgy*, a spiritually-inspired duet, is set to Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* for violin, strings and percussion and will be performed by Whelan and Evans. Wheeldon's romantic ballet *After the Rain* features Whelan with Marcovici in a pas de deux from the ballet's second movement. Touted as "rich in feeling," it is set to Arvo Pärt's hypnotic "Spiegel Im Spiegel."

In addition, the company will present two works by newly appointed Artistic Director, James Canfield. *Up is* an imaginative work set to seven different versions of Richard Rodgers' famous ballad, "Blue Moon." Artists range from the soulful sounds of jazz artist Billie Holiday, to the country and alternative rock sounds of The Cowboy Junkies, and even the Doo Wop sounds of the Marceles. *Neon Glass Pas de Deux*, a unique collaboration between composer Philip Glass and renowned glass sculptor, Dale Chihuly, brings together the grandeur of dance, music and visual art in a single ballet. The New York Times declared this work "choreographically fascinating."

The finale is Val Caniparoli's *Lambarena*, a celebration of life's diverse energy and the universality of music and rhythm. Combining the classicism of Bach with traditional African songs, as well as classical ballet with African dance, this captivating work won the hearts of Las Vegas audiences when it was presented by the Company in 2007.

"*American Masters* has something for everyone," remarks Artistic Director James Canfield. "Music lovers will excite to the contemporary stylings of composers Philip Glass and Arvo Pärt, while dance aficionados will witness some of the world's most striking choreography to date – coupled with African dance and rhythms...nothing could be more educating, elevating and entertaining than this program."

### **\*SPECIALLY PRICED BALCONY SEATS AVAILABLE!**

Nevada Ballet Theatre is offering special \$25 Balcony Seats for *American Masters*. Call the UNLV Box Office at (702) 895-ARTS (2787) for more information.

### **MEDIA**

For interview opportunities, please contact Jenn Kratochwill at [jkratochwill@nevadaballet.com](mailto:jkratochwill@nevadaballet.com). photos are available upon request.

## **GROUP SALES**

Corporations and organizations are encouraged to bring their staff and employees to a performance of *American Masters* as a unique gift or to sponsor underserved youth groups. Groups of 15 or more will enjoy fantastic savings! Book your group by contacting the UNLV Performing Arts Center Box Office at (702) 895-ARTS (2787).

## **ABOUT NEVADA BALLET THEATRE**

Under the direction of Artistic Director James Canfield, Nevada Ballet Theatre, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the largest professional ballet company and dance academy in the state. Committed to the highest artistic standards, dancers for the 30 member company have been recruited from around the world and include artists with international performing experience. This classically-based company is at home in an eclectic repertory, moving easily from the classics to the high-energy contemporary ballets. The mission of Nevada Ballet Theatre is to educate and inspire regional, statewide and national audiences and vitally impact community life through professional company productions, dance training and education and outreach. Beginning in 2011, Nevada Ballet Theatre will be a resident company in the new world-class Smith Center for the Performing Arts.

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## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Guest Artist Bios:**

#### **WENDY WHELAN**

Wendy Whelan was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, where at the age of three she began taking dance classes with Virginia Wooton, a local teacher. At age eight she performed as a mouse with the Louisville Ballet in its annual production of *The Nutcracker*. Joining the Louisville Ballet Academy that year, she began intense professional ballet training. In 1981 she received a scholarship to the summer course at the School of American Ballet (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet, and a year later, became a full-time student there. In 1984, Ms. Whelan danced as an apprentice with New York City Ballet. Ms. Whelan became a member of New York City Ballet's corps de ballet in January 1986. She was promoted to the rank of soloist during the 1989 spring season and to the rank of principal dancer in the 1991 spring season.

#### **ALBERT EVANS**

Albert Evans was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He began his ballet training at Terpsichore Expressions in Atlanta. In 1986, he was awarded a full scholarship to the School of American Ballet (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet. Mr. Evans was made a member of New York City Ballet's corps de ballet in the spring of 1988, and was immediately given leading roles in two American Music Festival ballets: William Forsythe's *Behind The China Dogs*, and Eliot Feld's *The Unanswered Question*. He was promoted to soloist in the spring of 1991, and to principal in the winter of 1995.

#### **SÉBASTIEN MARCOVICI**

Born and raised in Paris, France, Sébastien Marcovici began his ballet training at age eight with local teachers, and at age 12 he enrolled at the School of the Paris Opéra Ballet. During the summer of 1993, while studying with Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux and Patricia McBride at the Chautauqua School of Dance, Mr. Marcovici was invited by Ballet Master in Chief Peter Martins to take Company class with New York City Ballet at Saratoga Springs. In November of 1993, he was invited to join New York City Ballet's corps de ballet. Mr. Marcovici was promoted to the rank of soloist in 1998 and to principal dancer in May 2002.

### **CHOREOGRAPHER BIOS:**

#### **CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON - Choreographer for *Liturgy, After the Rain***

Christopher Wheeldon, the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company, is one of today's top ballet choreographers. He has created works for many of the world's leading ballet companies, and his awards include the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center, the London Critics' Circle Award, the American Choreography Award, the Olivier Award, and the Dance Magazine Award.

Wheeldon founded Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company in 2007 with the goal of introducing a new spirit of innovation to classical ballet. Morphoses is a Guest Resident Company at both at Sadler's Wells in London and New York City Center and has also performed at the Vail International Dance Festival.

Wheeldon was born in Yeovil, Somerset, England. In 1991 he joined The Royal Ballet, and also that year, he won the prestigious Gold Medal at the Prix de Lausanne competition. In 1993, Wheeldon was invited to become a member of New York City Ballet, where he was promoted to soloist in 1998. He retired from dancing in 2000 to concentrate on his choreographic work. From 2001 to 2008, he was NYCB's first Resident Choreographer.

Among Wheeldon's notable works for NYCB are *Polyphonia*, *Carnival of the Animals*, *After the Rain*, *An American in Paris*, and *The Nightingale and the Rose*. He choreographed *Continuum* for San Francisco Ballet, *Tryst* and *DGV (Danse à Grande Vitesse)* for The Royal Ballet, a full-length *Swan Lake* for Pennsylvania Ballet in 2004, and *Misericors* for the Bolshoi Ballet in

2007, and his works have entered the repertoires of other major companies. For Morphoses' inaugural season, Wheeldon choreographed two new works: *Fools' Paradise* and *Prokofiev Pas de Deux*. He also choreographed ballet sequences for the 2000 feature film *Center Stage*, collaborated with director Nicholas Hytner on the 2002 Broadway production *Sweet Smell of Success*, and created "Dance of the Hours" for The Metropolitan Opera's production of *La Gioconda*.

**JAMES CANFIELD – Choreographer for *Up, Neon Glass Pas de Deux***

James Canfield, founding artistic director of Oregon Ballet Theatre from 1989-2003, was born in Corning, New York, and received his early dance training at the acclaimed Academy of the Washington School of Ballet under the direction of Mary Day.

Mr. Canfield was a member of the Washington Ballet in Washington D.C., the Joffrey II Dancers in New York City and the Joffrey Ballet under the direction of Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, where he danced an extensive repertoire of works by Jiri Kylián, Agnes de Mille, John Cranko and William Forsythe among others.

In 1986, he left the Joffrey Ballet to become the Artistic Director of Pacific Ballet Theatre, and once the company combined with Ballet Oregon, Mr. Canfield was appointed Artistic Director of the new Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT) in 1989. There, he choreographed numerous ballets for the year-round company and established the School of Oregon Ballet Theatre in order to provide the best classical training to dancers throughout the Northwest. For the last three years, he has participated in the Northwest Professional Dance Project in Portland, Oregon.

**VAL CANIPAROLI – Choreographer for *Lambarena***

Val Caniparoli's versatility has made him one of the most sought after American choreographers in the United States and abroad. He has contributed to the repertoires of more than 35 dance companies, including Pacific Northwest Ballet, Boston Ballet, Northern Ballet Theatre, Pennsylvania Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Ballet West (Resident Choreographer 1993-97), Washington Ballet, Israel Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Atlanta Ballet, State Theatre Ballet of South Africa and Tulsa Ballet, where he has been Resident Choreographer since 2001.

Caniparoli is most closely associated with San Francisco Ballet, his artistic home for over 30 years. He began his career under the artistic directorship of Lew Christensen, and in the early 1980s was appointed Resident Choreographer of San Francisco Ballet. He continues to choreograph for the company under Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson.

Born in Renton, Washington, Caniparoli opted for a professional dance career after studying music and theatre at Washington State University. In 1972, he received a Ford Foundation Scholarship to attend San Francisco Ballet School. He performed with San Francisco Opera Ballet before joining San Francisco Ballet in 1973. More than 30 years later, he continues to perform with the company as a Principal Character Dancer.