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Who Will Be Milwaukee's Top Choreographer?
Milwaukee Ballet to Host International Choreographic Competition

MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee Ballet is set to host its second international choreographic competition March 22-25, 2007 at the historic Pabst Theater. Milwaukee Ballet's Artistic Director Michael Pink has chosen three talented choreographers from around the world to showcase their chosen piece before Milwaukee audiences. The winner will be offered a contract for a future commission to create an original work for the Milwaukee Ballet.

Milwaukee will be among the first to witness the evolving new talent in international ballet production. The "Second Genesis International Choreographic Competition" will include three Milwaukee premieres choreographed by Nelly van Bommel, Josef Hajzer and Viktor Plotnikov, all making their Milwaukee debut.

"The opportunity to have three premieres created for our dancers is very exciting as well as very stimulating for the audience and artists. I like the idea of having choreographers compete and am confident the dancers will work hard to help their performance win," said Pink. "This is probably the closest our art form gets to being a sport!"

A panel of respected judges, hand picked by Pink, will select the best of these three works. The panel includes Wendy Perron, editor of Dance Magazine; Bruce Marks, artistic director of Orlando Ballet, Martin Fredmann, director of Japan Grand Prix; Sid Smith, dance critic for the Chicago Times; Gerard Charles, artistic director for Ballet Met; and Claire Bataille, representing Hubbard Street Dance.

The competition will work as follows. Each choreographer will be given a dance team of eight performers to create a 20 minute work. The dancers and choreographer will then have three weeks, a total of 90 rehearsal hours, to make their piece ready for the panel of judges and the audience.

First place will receive \$2,500 and the opportunity to create a new work for the company in the 2007-2008 season. Second prize will be awarded \$1,000 and the third prize \$500. The audience favorite will also receive \$500.

Tickets to the “Second Genesis International Choreographic Competition” are \$20 - \$80 and can be purchased by calling the Milwaukee Ballet ticket office at (414) 902-2103, or buying online at www.milwaukeeballet.org. Tickets are also available by calling the Pabst Theater box office at (414) 286-3663 or by visiting the Pabst Theater Web site at www.pabsttheater.org. The competition will run Thursday, March 22 through Saturday, March 24 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday March 25 at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

MEET THE FINALISTS:

A native of France, Nelly van Bommel is the artistic director of NOA Dance Company, a contemporary dance company in New York City. Her work has been produced by several major festivals and venues, including Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, Dance Theater Workshop, The Alvin Ailey Studios, and the Joyce SoHo Theatre. Ms. Van Bommel’s work will also appear at the annual Association of Performing Arts Presenters in New York City in January 2007.

Jozsef Csaba Hajzer is currently a professional dancer at the State Theatre Hagen in Germany. He trained with the Hungarian Dance Academy and the School of American Ballet. Throughout his career, Mr. Hajzer has worked with companies throughout Europe and the United States. This will be Mr. Hajzer’s choreographic debut in the United States.

Viktor Plotnikov, a rising choreographer on the international scene, will also create a piece for the competition. He was invited to create works for the famed Bolshoi Ballet, and won the Choreography Prize at the 2005 Helsinki International Ballet Competition. Originally from the Ukraine and U.S. resident for the last 15 years, Mr. Plotnikov is making his choreographic debut in the Midwest.

ABOUT THE MILWAUKEE BALLET:

Founded in 1970, the Milwaukee Ballet Company strives to inspire its audiences to think within and beyond traditional ballet through the presentation of quality performances and the implementation of educational opportunities. With an annual operating budget of \$5 million, the Milwaukee Ballet Company presents more than 40 performances to 70,000 people each year. For more information about the Milwaukee Ballet, call (414) 643-7677 or visit the Milwaukee Ballet online at www.milwaukeeballet.org.

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