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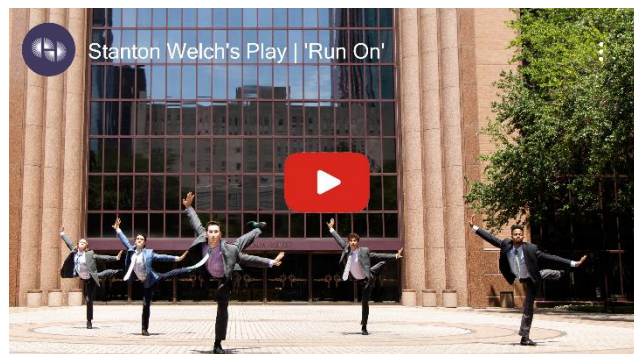


HOUSTON BALLET PRESSES PLAY ON NEW DIGITAL WORK



HOUSTON, TEXAS [September 15, 2021] — As Houston Ballet prepares to take the Wortham Theater Center stage again for the first time in 18 months, it unveils a new digital project, *Play*, that gives fans a sneak peek at one of its upcoming performances. Stanton Welch took the “Run On” movement from his iconic *Play*, originally created in 2004 and set to music by Moby, to the streets of Houston for this latest digital creation.

"Much of *Play* is about capturing the daily grind and frustrations of the white-collar worker and it felt fitting to bring this piece off the stage and into streets and office buildings of Houston while our downtown was still hauntingly quiet," says Connor Walsh, Houston Ballet Principal Dancer. "Ironically the same mindless routines that the piece pokes fun at are a part of that sense of normalcy that we've all missed during the pandemic."



The new digital work is available for free on Houston Ballet's social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). It features 26 Houston Ballet dancers that are dressed in business suits. The project was filmed at six locations: Houston Ballet's Center for Dance, Fish Plaza in front of the Wortham Theater Center, Allen's Landing, Lyric Garage, Market Square Tower and on Preston Street in Downtown Houston.

“It was actually a pretty massive undertaking because of the amount of locations and the detailed shot list,” says Walsh. “I look forward to seeing the final product when it’s released.”

The release of the digital project also comes with the announcement that audiences can expect to see the excerpt from *Play* onstage during the Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance, September 30-October 3. Both the digital project and in-person performances of *Play* are dedicated to Jesse “Jay” H. Jones II. His indelible leadership has meant a great deal to Welch, who is pleased to dedicate *Play* in Jones’ honor. To learn more about *Play* or to see it onstage, visit houstonballet.org.

ABOUT HOUSTON BALLETT

With more than 50 years of rich history, Houston Ballet returns to its home stage at the Wortham Theater Center for its 2021-2022 season with a company of 59 dancers. With a budget of \$33.9 million and an endowment of \$79.2 million (as of June 2019), it is America’s fifth largest ballet company. Its \$46.6 million state-of-the-art performance space, Houston Ballet Center for Dance, opened in April 2011. Houston Ballet’s reach is global, touring in renowned theaters in Dubai, London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and more.

Houston Ballet attracts prestigious leaders in dance. Australian choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003, raising the level of the company’s classical technique and commissioning works from dance legends such as Julia Adam, George Balanchine, Aszure Barton, Christopher Bruce, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Edwaard Liang, Trey McIntyre and Justin Peck. Executive Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the organization, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the Company’s General Manager for more than a decade.

Beyond its stage presence, Houston Ballet maintains a strong foothold in continuing to foster a love for dance in future generations. Its Education and Community Engagement program reaches more than 70,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy trains more than 1,000 students every year, producing more than 64 percent of the elite athletes that comprise Houston Ballet’s current Company.

For more information on Houston Ballet, visit houstonballet.org.

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