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HOUSTON BALLET RETURNS TO LIVE PERFORMANCES AT ITS HOME THEATER WITH THE MARGARET ALKEK WILLIAMS JUBILEE OF DANCE

HOUSTON, TEXAS [September 28, 2021] — Houston Ballet prepares to take the stage at its home theater, Wortham Theater Center, for the first time in 18 months. The Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance opens Houston Ballet's 2021-2022 season and marks the return to in-person performances on September 30.

"We are overjoyed that the time has finally arrived for us to return to our home theater," says Stanton Welch AM, Houston Ballet Artistic Director. "Live theater is an irreplaceable experience that we are excited to share with our community once again. Our annual Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance showcases Houston Ballet's full range of talent and is the perfect way to celebrate our return to the Wortham Theater Center stage."

Traditionally a one-night-only annual event, The Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance is extended to five incredible performances. The program features three headliners by Welch, *Divergence*, *Play* and *In Good Company*, in addition to a rotating selection of pas de deux and solo performances from beloved ballets. Welch's 1994 *Divergence* stands the test of time as a striking and dramatic ballet with bold Vogue inspired costumes to match. *Play* is a fan favorite that mirrors city life to the tune of Moby. *In Good Company* comes to life off-screen as Welch brings his 11-part digital work set to music by The Dead South to the stage for the first time.

This year's program also celebrates Principal Dancer Melody Mennite's 20 years with Houston Ballet. Mennite began her journey with Houston Ballet in its Academy as a student, and she joined the professional company in 2001. In her career, she has not only danced many iconic works and had roles created on her, but she has choreographed works for Houston Ballet and other professional companies.

"This is a time in my life and my career where celebrations feel much larger to me than they have before—larger in the sense that I can acknowledge and respect the tremendous collaboration it takes to create a moment like this Jubilee," says Melody Mennite, Houston Ballet Principal Dancer. "In my own career, my path has been paved by the generosity,

time and care from so many people. This anniversary is not only a celebration of my individual contributions but also of all of theirs from this large community that has supported me for 20 years.”

The program runs September 30-October 3, and tickets start at \$25 per person. To learn more about The Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance or purchase tickets, please visit houstonballet.org.

ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET

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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