

PENNSYLVANIA BALLET

ROY KAISER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 2011 - 2012 SEASON

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Photos available upon request

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Pennsylvania Ballet Principal Dancer Riolama Lorenzo to Retire

To end 15-year career with performance of Matthew Neenan's *Keep* Sunday, February 12 at the Merriam Theater

Philadelphia, PA (January 10, 2012) – Pennsylvania Ballet Principal Dancer Riolama Lorenzo has announced she will retire after 15 years on stage, with a performance of Matthew Neenan's *Keep* on Sunday, February 12 at 2 p.m. at the Merriam Theater at 250 South Broad Street.

"Riolama is a ballerina of breathtaking artistry and astounding skill," Artistic Director Roy Kaiser said. "She will be truly missed by our Company and our audience."

Born in Havana, Cuba, Riolama Lorenzo began her ballet training with her mother, Maria Eugenia Lorenzo, and at the Martha Mahr School of Ballet. At age 14, Ms. Lorenzo was chosen to study at the Harid Conservatory in Boca Raton, Florida. In 1993, Ms. Lorenzo received the renowned Princess Grace Award and continued her dance training at New York City Ballet's prestigious School of American Ballet. The following autumn she became an Apprentice with New York City Ballet and joined the company in Spring 1995.

In September 2002, Ms. Lorenzo joined Pennsylvania Ballet as a member of the Corps de Ballet and was promoted to Soloist in September 2003 and to Principal in March 2005. Her featured roles in the classical repertoire include Odette/Odile in Christopher Wheeldon's *Swan Lake*, Sugarplum Fairy in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*, Carabosse in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and the title roles in *Giselle*, *Cinderella*, *The Firebird*, and Roland Petit's *Carmen*. She has also danced leading roles in Paul Taylor's *Company B*, Jerome Robbins's *The Concert*, George Balanchine's *Serenade*, Peter Martins's *Fearful Symmetries*, and Mauro Bigonzetti's *Kazimir's Colours*.

Ms. Lorenzo holds a Bachelor of Science in Health Science from the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. She has had an article published in the Journal of Early Childhood Education on a movement program she developed for preschoolers, some with physical and developmental disabilities. She and husband Javier Lasa are parents to a four-year-old boy and six-month-old girl. Upon her retirement from the stage, Ms. Lorenzo looks forward to spending more time with her family.

Neenan's *Keep* was especially selected by Ms. Lorenzo to be her final performance. *Keep* joins Neenan's *11:11* and William Forsythe's *The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude* on the program *Pushing Boundaries: Forsythe & Neenan*, February 9-12 at the Merriam Theater. Tickets are available online at paballet.org, by phone at 215.893.1999, and in person at the Kimmel Center Box Office.

Founded in 1963 by Balanchine student and protégée Barbara Weisberger, **Pennsylvania Ballet** is one of the nation's leading ballet companies. Headquartered in Philadelphia, the Company's annual local season features six programs of classic favorites and new works, including the Philadelphia holiday tradition, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*. For more information, visit paballet.org or call 215.551.7000.

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