

PENNSYLVANIA | BALLET

For Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Ballet Kicks-Off the 2017-2018 Season with Two Fall Programs

The Sleeping Beauty begins the season, followed by a premiere filled second program featuring new works by Matthew Neenan and Helen Pickett.

Philadelphia, PA (September 6, 2017) [Pennsylvania Ballet](#) and Artistic Director Angel Corella are proud to open the 2017-2018 season on October 12, 2017 at the Academy of Music with a performance of ***The Sleeping Beauty***, sponsored by PECO. **On Edge**, a program featuring three ballets new to the company, a world premiere by Helen Pickett, supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, *Episode 31* by Alexander Ekman, and a world premiere by Matthew Neenan in his 10th season as choreographer in residence, runs November 9 – 12 at the Merriam Theater.

This season's performance schedule creates a Fall and Spring series encompassing two full length classical ballets, Balanchine classics, contemporary works, world premieres, and the Philadelphia holiday tradition, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®.

[The Sleeping Beauty](#)

The season opens at the Academy of Music with *The Sleeping Beauty*. This full-length ballet originally choreographed by Marius Petipa in 1890, will take on new life as Artistic Director Angel Corella stages the choreography of this classic tale. Follow the journey of Princess Aurora as she is put under an evil curse that can only be broken by a true love's kiss. Beautiful costumes, lavish set designs, new choreography and the mesmerizing Tchaikovsky score will draw audiences into this beautiful journey to happily ever after.

"After the success of *Cinderella* last season, we wanted to kick-off this year with another classic fairy tale dedicated to families and children," said Angel Corella. "I can't wait to stage this version of *The Sleeping Beauty* in a bright and light production that the audiences in Philadelphia will love."

[On Edge](#)

Following Pennsylvania Ballet's season opener is *On Edge* at the Merriam Theater, a program featuring all new pieces to the company with a world premiere by Helen Pickett, *Episode 31* by Alexander Ekman, and a world premiere by Choreographer in Residence Matthew Neenan.

Helen Pickett, one of the foremost choreographers in contemporary ballet, creates her first work on the dancers of Pennsylvania Ballet. The choreography dives into the ideas of physical, sensual and emotional balances of power, negotiating the tipping points of life. Pickett created 30 ballets in the United States and Europe over the last 10 years, was awarded a Fellowship Initiative Grant from the New York

Choreographic Institute, received a Choreographic Residency from Jacob's Pillow, and was one of the first choreographers to receive the Jerome Robbins Foundation's New Essential Works Grant.

"I'm working to create choreography that will reach beyond the stage's edge to land on the audience's skin," said Helen Pickett. "My aspiration is to enfold the audience in a visual musical landscape that makes them feel the piece tangibly, emotionally and physically, so they sit on the edge of their seats."

Created for the graduating class of the Juilliard School in 2011, Alexander Ekman's *Episode 31* includes witty humor, fast-paced timing, and clever transitions. His works have been described as a "unique audience experience that combines different artistic mediums and disciplines," which can be seen in the ballet, tap, and jazz movements that comprise *Episode 31*.

"Philadelphians can expect to have a good time and enjoy themselves with this fun piece," said Fernando Troya, Alexander Ekman's stager. "The dramatic reactions the dancers have with one another are exciting, along with the fast-paced choreography that requires lots of energy, and impressive lighting and sets that truly makes this a breathtaking piece."

This performance will also showcase the 18th world premiere by **Pennsylvania Ballet's Choreographer in Residence Matthew Neenan**. The premiere is inspired by the music of Laurie Anderson, an American avant-garde artist who spans performance art, pop music, and multimedia projects, and will include her 1981 chart topping hit, *O Superman* that explores new technology of that era, like answering machines and electronic sound.

"I'm striving to create something strange and beautiful with this score made up entirely of Laurie Anderson's music. Her music uses a repetition to lull you and then she will suddenly surprise you with a biting lyric or a sudden joke," said Matthew Neenan. "I am doing the same through the choreography. A lot of the music is linked to Laurie's fascination with technology, and how technology reveals our humanity, our tenderness, contradiction, and isolation. In our conversations about what music to use, it was Angel who proposed the music of Laurie Anderson, and I am so glad. The way Laurie's music makes me feel and the way it affects the dancers really feels timely."

"After 10 years as our choreographer in residence, Matthew continues to evolve and expand his artistic horizons while being inspired by our dancers," said Angel Corella. "It's great to see our dancers and Matthew feed-off of each other's emotions and energy to create inspirational work."

[The performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* at the Academy of Music:](#)

- Thursday October 12 at 7:30pm
- Friday October 13 at 7:30pm
- Saturday October 14 at 2:00pm
- Saturday October 14 at 7:00pm
- Sunday October 15 at 2:00pm
- Friday October 20 at 7:30pm
- Saturday October 21 at 12:00pm
- Saturday October 21 at 5:00pm
- Sunday October 22 at 2:00pm

[The performances for *On Edge* at the Merriam Theater:](#)

- Thursday November 9 at 7:30pm
- Friday November 10 at 7:30pm
- Saturday November 11 at 2:00pm

- Saturday November 11 at 8:00pm
- Sunday November 12 at 2:00pm

Tickets are available online at paballet.org or by phone at 215.893.1999, and in person at the Kimmel Center Box Office.

Conversations with Pennsylvania Ballet

Please join us for Conversations with Pennsylvania Ballet, an informal discussion with a dancer, member of the Artistic Staff, or visiting artist talking about their preparations for upcoming performances. This free event will be held on **Monday, October 2 at 6:30pm** and **Monday, November 6 at 6:30pm** at the Philadelphia City Institute Free Library (1905 Locust St, Philadelphia, PA).

Preludes

Ignite your passion for dance with Preludes – Pennsylvania Ballet’s pre-show discussions. Held in the theater prior to most performances, Preludes features an ever-changing roster of company members, artistic and administrative staff, and visiting artists discussing Pennsylvania Ballet’s performances, taking questions, and offering behind-the-scenes insights. Preludes begins one hour prior to show time and is free and open to all patrons holding a ticket for the performance that follows. Preludes is a great way to meet other ballet fans, enhance your knowledge of the art form, and get to know the artists behind Pennsylvania Ballet’s beautiful and thrilling performances. *Please note: Preludes is free and open to all ticket holders for the day listed on the ticket.*

About Pennsylvania Ballet

Founded in 1963 by Balanchine student and protégée Barbara Weisberger, Pennsylvania Ballet is one of the nation’s leading ballet companies. In its most diverse season yet, the Pennsylvania Ballet presents six programs featuring two full length classical ballets, Balanchine classics, contemporary works, world premieres, and the Philadelphia holiday tradition, *George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker*®. For more information, visit paballet.org, call 215.551.7000 or connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) to get a behind the scenes look at our dancers in the studio and onstage.

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Pennsylvania Ballet’s season sponsors include DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, The Sporting Club at the Bellevue, and American Airlines.

Pennsylvania Ballet receives support from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts – a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency – and The Philadelphia Cultural Fund.

Groups of 10 or more get discounts on great seats! Ask about special talks with staff and dancers and dining options near the theater for your group. For tickets and information, contact Group Sales Manager, Arajua Backman at 215.587.6921 or abackman@paballet.org.

Link to downloadable images and photo captions:

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