

PENNSYLVANIA BALLET

ANGEL CORELLA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 2014–2015 SEASON

For Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Ballet Presenting Two Masterpieces - *Prodigal Son* and *Polyphonia* as well the World Premiere of Mathew Neenan's *Shift to Minor*

Philadelphia, PA (January 15, 2015) – [Pennsylvania Ballet](#) and Artistic Director Angel Corella present the biblical story of George Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*, the modern and intricate *Polyphonia* and the world premiere of *Shift to Minor* by Matthew Neenan for the first program of the year, February 5-8 at the Merriam Theatre, supported by ALGER.

"I'm proud to explore these internationally known masterpieces with the phenomenal dancers of this Company," said new Artistic Director Angel Corella. "The amazing choreography guides our movements, but these works give our dancers the opportunity to explore the characters and visually and emotionally share the stories with the audience."

Set to Sergei Prokofiev's original score, George Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* is a moving masterpiece that tells the well-known biblical story through touching dramatic scenes and soaring acrobatic movement. Dancers [Alexander Peters](#) and [Jermel Johnson](#)* will bring the character of the prodigal son to life as they are challenged to share their emotions with the audience in order to portray the anger, sexuality, and desperation the son experiences.

Christopher Wheeldon's striking and stripped-down *Polyphonia* is a modern-day masterpiece that experiments with traditional ballet, resulting in inventive steps and duets. With an adventurous choice in composer György Ligeti, *Polyphonia's* musical score is a complex and twisted arrangement that becomes romantic and elegant with Wheeldon's precise and nearly mathematical choreography.

To round out the performance, Choreographer in Residence Matthew Neenan, presents, *Shift to Minor*, his 16th commissioned World Premiere with the Company. The work, inspired by Mozart's *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K.219*, showcases the Pennsylvania Ballet's Solo Violinist Luigi Mazzocchi. The performance, featuring 15 dancers, highlights two quintets that come together to share the story from an aristocratic point of view of how groups and cliques work and the way one can get ahead in life by knowing the right people.

* *Casting is subject to change*

"I look forward to premiering this work, as it is one my largest symphony commissions with the Pennsylvania Ballet in recent years," said Choreographer in Residence, Matthew Neenan. "I've used this work as an opportunity to push the dancers I've worked with in the past and to get to know what the new dancers are made of."

The performances at the Merriam Theatre run:

- Thursday, February 5 at 7:30pm
- Friday, February 6 at 7:30pm
- Saturday, February 7 at 2:00pm
- Saturday, February 7 at 8:00pm
- Sunday, February 8 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.

About Pennsylvania Ballet

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, call 215.551.7000 or connect with us on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to go behind the scenes at any time.

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Pennsylvania Ballet's season sponsors include DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, The Sporting Club at the Bellevue, and US Airways.

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