

PENNSYLVANIA | BALLET

Pennsylvania Ballet Dancers and Students from Overbrook School for the Blind Star in the Premiere of “Live Out Loud” Documentary

Program sponsored by Art-Reach and Pennsylvania Ballet brings dancers and students together to perform an original tap piece

Philadelphia, PA, July 16, 2020 – Pennsylvania Ballet extends its community-led initiative by bringing art and dance to Philadelphia’s blind and low vision students from Overbrook School for the Blind. The two groups of dancers and students use tap dance as a medium to come together in a documentary by Glenn Holsten titled “Live Out Loud,” slated to premiere exclusively on WHYY on July 26 at 4 p.m. EST.

The launch premiere of “Live Out Loud” will commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act to reinforce equality of opportunity and integration for all.

“Pennsylvania Ballet strongly believes in contributing to the community in a meaningful, artistic and imaginative way and we couldn’t think of a better partner than Art-Reach to band together for this program,” said Sarah Cooper, Pennsylvania Ballet’s director of community engagement. “This initiative allowed us to cultivate an environment where dancers and students could bond and engage with the arts. This film is extraordinary, and we can’t wait for our viewers to absorb it and be moved by it.”

Created in collaboration with Art-Reach, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization that connects people with disabilities and low-income communities to the arts, “Live Out Loud” documents the process of six dancers from the Pennsylvania Ballet Second Company and six students from the Overbrook School for the Blind who learn to tap dance for the first time. The film, directed by Glenn Holsten and produced by FreshFly, sheds light on the journey of students and dancers who hail from different backgrounds and undergo 10 weeks of intense rehearsals to create an original tap piece choreographed by Melissa Chasse, a nationally awarded tap and jazz choreographer and school administrator for the Pennsylvania Ballet.

“Dance has an amazing way of implementing itself into people’s lives as the art form creates inspiration in so many different ways,” said Charlie Miller, director of Access Philly at Art-Reach. “We hope that this film strengthens the power of dance and community and the magic it brings with it when everyone comes together with a common purpose of creating art.”

“The opportunities that we receive are usually limited by predetermined ideas on what the capabilities are of our students, but programs like these give them an educational opportunity that ultimately helps them reach their greatest potential,” said Todd Reeves, Overbrook School for the Blind’s executive director and CEO.

“Directing ‘Live Out Loud’ was an absolute labor of love,” said Glenn Holsten, FreshFly’s documentary film director. “What I hope it conveys to audiences is that each and every one of us can learn and grow from shared experiences. The film captures a magical bond between dancers from completely different worlds, as they come together to learn a new art form and create a remarkable performance.”

Deep-rooted in community-led efforts, Pennsylvania Ballet has extended a range of immersive art experiences to groups of people with disabilities across Philadelphia for many years. In

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2016, Pennsylvania Ballet developed Philadelphia's first ever sensory friendly experience of The Nutcracker, in conjunction with Art-Reach. The organizations continued their partnership in 2017 to launch an original modern ballet piece titled "I Am" that paired students with intellectual disabilities from Saint Katherine School and eight dancers from the Pennsylvania Ballet's Second Company. Furthering these efforts, Pennsylvania Ballet partnered with The Associated Services for the Blind to host a five-week ballet class during its 2018 presentation of "Romeo and Juliet."

For more information about Pennsylvania Ballet, please visit Paballet.org and click [here](#) to watch the exclusive trailer for "Live Out Loud."

About Pennsylvania Ballet

Pennsylvania Ballet is one of the nation's premier ballet companies and one of Philadelphia's cultural treasures. Internationally renowned dancer Angel Corella took the reigns as Artistic Director at the start of the 2014/2015 season, bringing the company to a new level of excellence with 45 dancers from around the world and an ever-changing repertoire of works. In addition to its performances on Philadelphia's famed Avenue of the Arts, Pennsylvania Ballet serves more than 17,000 individuals across the Philadelphia region every year with hands-on, high quality arts education activities brought to children and adults alike regardless of socioeconomic background or abilities. For more information visit paballet.org or connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) for a behind the scenes look at our dancers in the studio and onstage.

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