



For Immediate Release

PENINSULA BALLET THEATRE ANNOUNCES 55TH ANNIVERSARY

**World Premiere of Gregory Amato's *Carmina Burana* with Masterworks Chorale, Ragazzi Boys Chorus, Pacific Sticks Percussion Ensemble
Launches New 2022-23 Season September 24 and 25;
Expanded Programming Features Productions of Ballet Classics, Hip-Hop Dance, Broadway Musical Theatre and Summer Peninsula International Dance Festival**

Tickets Now on Sale; www.peninsulaballet.org

2022-23 Season Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXRN8phBbxs>

San Mateo, CA (August 10, 2022) — **Peninsula Ballet Theatre (PBT)** today announced details of its 55th anniversary reflecting the company's evolving programming of presenting classical and contemporary ballet programs alongside dynamic hip-hop dance productions, popular works from the Broadway musical theatre canon, and a summer festival of outstanding international dance and music.

The 2022-23 season gets underway September 24 and 25 with the world premiere of PBT Artistic



Carmina Burana's "Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi;" credit Stefan Cohen

Director **Gregory Amato's** fully staged production of Carl Orff's epic cantata, *Carmina Burana*, presented in collaboration with three San Mateo-based performing arts organizations, **Masterworks Chorale, Ragazzi Boys Chorus, Pacific Sticks Percussion Ensemble** and three Bay Area vocal soloists. Performances will be given at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center.

The season continues with a thrilling *Hip-Hop Halloween* holiday program, October 29 and 30 featuring high-voltage hip-hop dancers from **Tribe** and **Poise'n**; and just in time for the Christmas season, two very popular family versions of the *Nutcracker* - *Classical Nutcracker* and *Hip-Hop Nutcracker* - presented December 16-18 at Redwood City's Fox Theatre.

In the spring of 2023, the company will return to the San Mateo Performing Arts Center with a double bill of two one-act dance works beginning with the premiere of Amato's *Carmen Suite* set to Rodion Shchedrin's iconic score paired with **Zenón Barrón's** folkloric dance tribute to Mexican artists **Diego**

Rivera and Frida Kahlo April 1 and 2; followed by a new production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Tony Award-winning musical, *Evita*, directed by **Gary Stanford, Jr.**, May 19 and 20 at Redwood City's Fox

Theatre; and concluding with a summer festival of international dance and music showcasing the Bay Area's talented multi-cultural dance community, July 15 and 16, San Mateo Performing Arts Center.

Christine Leslie, Peninsula Ballet Theatre's Executive and Producing Director said, "Our 55th anniversary is about new artistic initiatives, new collaborations and new possibilities as we present a season of impactful and imaginative works. While we will continue to present traditional classical ballet works, we will move ahead with our successful presentations of hip-hop dance, Broadway musical theatre and a summer showcase of the Bay Area's extraordinary community of world dance companies. We find ourselves at an intersection of uniting tradition with innovation and believe this evolving programming will resonate with Bay Area audiences."

***Carmina Burana*, September 24 and 25, 2022 / San Mateo Performing Arts Center**



Carmina Burana's "Roasted Swan" Stuck Sanders and Ensemble; credit Stefan Cohen

Inaugurating Peninsula Ballet Theatre's 55th anniversary season, the company will unveil Gregory Amato's fully realized theatrical production of *Carmina Burana* featuring the company's dancers in a first-time collaboration with the **Masterworks Chorale; the Ragazzi Boys Chorus; the Pacific Sticks Percussion Ensemble**; soprano **Shawnette Sulker** and tenor **Corey Head**; baritone soloist to be announced. Masterworks Chorale conductor **Dr. Bryan Baker** will lead the performances.

Commenting about his upcoming premiere, Amato said, "I take my inspiration for *Carmina Burana* from Heironymus Bosch's famous triptych from the late 15th Century, "The Garden of Earthly Delights" and its robust representation of humanity. The dance movement is ritualistic, sensual and ominous reflecting the formidable music."

Carl Orff's towering masterpiece from 1937, *Carmina Burana* – "Songs of Beuren" – remains one of the most iconic and instantly recognizable works of the 20th Century. Conceived as a theatrical cantata for orchestra, adult and children's chorus, three vocal soloists and movement, *Carmina Burana* is based on a collection of 24 spiritual and carnal songs and poems authored by anonymous 13th Century medieval monks and minstrels.

Sung in Latin, Orff's magnum opus begins with the now-famous percussion downbeat and chorus powerfully singing "O Fortuna," an ode to the wheel of fortune that determines the ever-changing fate of man. Orff's compelling score offers simple orchestration, rich melodies and harmonies combined with a driving rhythmic percussion to give the music a primeval, visceral character – arguably adding to the work's popular and enduring appeal.

The evening will begin with a short program of mixed repertory dances by Amato along with premieres by choreographers **Aline Carili** (*Expresse*) and **Marika Brussel** (*Pandora*).

***Hip-Hop Halloween*, October 29 and 30, 2022 / Redwood City's Fox Theatre**

Back by popular demand, the Halloween season gets underway with three performances of a thrilling and spooky *Hip-Hop Halloween*, a 90-minute work first introduced to Bay Area audiences in 2019.

Conceived, directed and choreographed by **Stuck Sanders**, with additional choreography by **Alee Martinez, Vincent Hwang, Ninja Sutton** and **Francis Tyrell**, the production features artists from **Tribe** and **Poise'n**.



*Hip-Hop Halloween dancers;
credit Cory Weaver*

The action-packed narrative follows trick or treating kids to a graveyard and a haunted house where they meet up with classic monsters including Frankenstein, Dracula, the Wolf Man and zombies galore, all while highlighting authentic street styles of hip-hop performed to customized beats by the group's own musical engineers.

Sanders said, "There are many different forms of movement when it comes to hip-hop, and what better way to tell those stories than with the Halloween holiday. Custom Moves with Custom Beats. This show is everything hip-hop and everything Halloween. A must see!"

Classical Nutcracker, December 16 and 17m, 2022 / Redwood City's Fox Theatre

Continuing its annual holiday tradition, PBT will present two performances of Amato's *Classical Nutcracker* ballet opening Friday evening December 16 and repeated December 17 matinee. Join the Stahlbaum children on a heartwarming adventure on Christmas Eve as Fräulein Drosselmeyer brings to life a cast of delightful characters and entrancing tales from a very magical book.

PBT's Amato said, "For my version of *Classical Nutcracker*, I have concentrated primarily on the pure joy of dance in this holiday favorite, expressing the wonderment and possibilities of childhood imagination." Danced to Tchaikovsky's grand lyrical score, Peninsula Ballet Theatre's *Classical Nutcracker* will surely enchant audiences of all ages with its magic and beauty."

Hip-Hop Nutcracker, December 17 and 18m, 2022 / Redwood City's Fox Theatre

Opening December 17 and repeated Sunday December 18 matinee, PBT will offer the highly entertaining family-friendly ***Hip-Hop Nutcracker*** choreographed by **Stuck Sanders**. Adapting E.T.A. Hoffmann's traditional Victorian narrative to a more contemporary beat, this refreshed *Hip-Hop Nutcracker* is set to Tchaikovsky's familiar score but skillfully overlaid with industrial rhythms allowing for a sizzling display of solo and ensemble work. Featuring hip-hop artists from **Tribe** and **Poise'n**.

Nutcracker Sweets and Sugar Plum Tea / Peninsula Ballet Theatre Studio One, San Mateo



Kelley Hashemi as Sugar Plum Fairy

Peninsula Ballet Theatre will offer *Nutcracker Sweets*, December 3, 4, 10 and 11, an abridged version of both the full-length *Classical Nutcracker* and *Hip-Hop Nutcracker*, a reimagining of the holiday story perfectly tailored for young audiences (ages 3 to 6) and families. Performed by members of the PBT Conservatory along with artists from the professional company, these 50-minute performances will be presented in the company's intimate Studio One Theatre.

Complementing the *Nutcracker Sweets* offerings will be the return of ***Sugar Plum Tea*** on December 4 and ***Hip-Hop Nutcracker Tea*** December 10 at the company's special

holiday Tea Room. The public is invited to this ticketed event to have tea and array of yummy tea sandwiches, fruit, and sweet treats with Clara, the Sugar Plum Fairy and all of their friends from the Land of Sweets!

Double Bill: *Carmen Suite* and *The Paintings of Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo in Movement* / San Mateo Performing Arts Center

***Carmen Suite*, April 1 and 2, 2023**

Artistic Director **Gregory Amato's** reimagined *Carmen* is set to Soviet-era composer **Rodion Shchedrin's** "iconoclastic but highly entertaining retelling of Georges Bizet's opera," scored for strings and battery of percussion instruments. This one-act ballet recounts the familiar operatic love triangle among our Iberian Gypsy Carmen, her lover and soldier Don Jose, and the highly attractive torero, Escamillo – but in Amato's gender-bending interpretation, Escamillo is modeled after celebrated female matador, Maria Isabel Atienzer (Maribel). *Olé!*

Shchedrin's score from 1967 was originally created for Cuban choreographer Alberto Alonso's one-act ballet, *Carmen*, starring Shchedrin's wife and prima ballerina assoluta, **Maya Plisetskaya**. The work bowed at the Bolshoi Theatre but soon met great opposition by the Soviet cultural ministry and was assailed as an insult to Bizet's original score, let alone Alonso's erotic choreography. Though the work has been alternately condemned and highly praised over the years, Shchedrin's score has arguably remained his most popular musical work – and his most curious.

***The Paintings of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Movement*, April 1 and 2, 2023**

The second half of the evening's double bill will feature an analysis of the works of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, which unearths elements inherent in Mexican culture that are deeply rooted in class differences. Director **Zenón Barrón** interprets these into the language of dance in this selection of traditionally based choreographies by focusing on specific elements within the paintings. Featuring dancers from **Ensembles Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco** and dancers from Peninsula Ballet Theatre.

***Evita*, May 19 and 20, 2023 / Redwood City's Fox Theatre**



The company's spring season continues with the multi-award-winning musical, *Evita*, presented for three performances May 19 and 20, at Redwood City's Fox Theatre. Popular Bay Area actor and director **Gary Stanford, Jr.**, will make his company debut staging this production featuring choreography by **Gregory Amato**. While casting will be announced at a later date, the production will feature Argentinean star tango couple **Maxi Copello** and **Raquel Makow**.

Evita, from composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyricist Tim Rice, originally opened in London in 1978 to great success and one year later, opened pre-sold out on Broadway in 1979 with a stellar cast starring Patti LuPone, Mandy Patinkin and Bob Gunton. The plot is told entirely through song and dance recounting the life of Argentina's notorious Eva Peron, a young film actress, model who comes to meet and marry rising military general, Juan Peron. When General Peron gets elected president, Eva becomes the most powerful woman in all of South America, despised by the Argentinean elites but regarded by

the poor as a saint. The celebrated musical score is best known by Evita's powerful and iconic ballad, "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina."

Peninsula International Dance Festival, July 15 and 16, 2023 / San Mateo Performing Arts Center



Melissa Cruz Flamenco

Building on the success of the recently launched **Peninsula International Dance Festival**, the company will present a brand new, curated version of the festival showcasing the extraordinary and exuberant talent of the Bay Area's rich multi-cultural community. Details of public auditions for interested dance companies will be announced this fall and artists selected for the 2023 festival will be revealed by spring.

Carlos Carvajal, PBT Artistic Director Emeritus and former Co-Artistic Director of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, commented "This newly imagined world dance and music festival is truly a cultural jewel which expresses in dance and song exactly what our society is desiring so intensely at this time – equity, diversity and inclusion."

Tickets for the 2022 fall season programs are now on sale at www.peninsulaballet.org. Single tickets are priced at \$65, \$45 and \$35; discounts of \$5-off for seniors (age 65+) and juniors (age 18 and below). All programs and casting for the '22-23 season are subject to change.

Peninsula Ballet Theatre gratefully acknowledges the support of the **San Mateo County Arts Commission, NetSuite, Concar Enterprises, Google**, and the **David and Lucile Packard Foundation**.

###

Press Contact: Jon Finck, publicist Jonfincksf@gmail.com / +1 415 577 1323

Please connect for feature interviews, photographs/video and press credentials.

The 2022-23 season calendar is attached with repertory, performance dates and venues.