



For Immediate Release

**TWO ONE-ACT DANCE WORKS OF
POWER AND PASSION TO BE PRESENTED:
CARMEN SUITE AND
THE PAINTINGS OF DIEGO RIVERA AND FRIDA KAHLO IN MOVEMENT
A CO-PRESENTATION OF PENINSULA BALLET THEATRE AND
ENSAMBLES BALLET FOLKLÓRICO DE SAN FRANCISCO
SATURDAY, APRIL 1 AT 7 P.M. & SUNDAY, APRIL 2 AT 3 P.M.**

Tickets Now on Sale online peninsulaballet.org

San Mateo, Calif. (February 24, 2023) — **Peninsula Ballet Theatre's** 55th anniversary season continues with two one-act dance works to be presented April 1 and 2 at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center: ***Carmen Suite***, the premiere of PBT Artistic Director **Gregory Amato's** ballet about the notorious Iberian gypsy and *femme fatale* -- set to the fiery musical score of Russian (Soviet) iconoclast composer, **Rodion Shchedrin**; and ***The Paintings of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Movement***, a highly colorful dance interpretation of some of the great artworks of this Mexican power couple, as conceived and choreographed by revered ethnologist and **Ensamble Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco** Artistic Director, **Zenón Barrón**. Dancers from the two companies will be appearing in both works.

"For our spring season program, we landed on the idea of two women of power and passion, and an opportunity to work with our colleague Zenón Barrón," said PBT Executive and Producing Director **Christine Leslie**. "Two stories of women, one fictional, one real but both immortalized, told through dance and music that will spark your passion, touch your heart and inspire your courage."

Carmen Suite

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 between our Spanish Gypsy Carmen; her lover and soldier Don José; and the highly attractive *torero*, Escamillo – but in Amato's gender-bending interpretation, Escamillo is modeled after celebrated and real-life female 19th century bull-fighting matador, Maria Isabel Atienzer (Maribel). All three characters must face a choice between the prospect of love, or the security and comfort of familiarity; only tragedy can ensue. ¡Ole!

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 highly 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. Amato's production is a fresh attempt to interpret this popular and provocative love triangle set to Shchedrin's controversial score.

The Paintings of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Movement

Following its initial premiere in 2012, this encore presentation, which has been condensed into one act, is an analysis of the works of celebrated husband and wife artists, 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.

Fueling the creativity and development of this work are the lives of Rivera and Kahlo, who were emblematic figures in Mexico's political development during the early to mid-20th century. While Rivera's work is known for portraying the political revolution of that era distinguished by his commissioned murals, Kahlo's numerous self-portraits and paintings are indicative of her life experiences and have been hailed as insightful and provocative. Some of these works of art epitomize the couple's experiences while in the United States, including San Francisco from 1930-34, and are reflected in the curated dances.

Tickets, \$30, \$45 and \$60, are now available for purchase online via peninsulaballet.org. The performance schedule is Saturday, April 1 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 2 at 3 p.m. The San Mateo Performing Arts Center is located at 600 North Delaware Street, San Mateo; free and ample parking is available on-site.

Later in the PBT season, the company will present the **2023 Peninsula International Dance Festival**, a two-day performance showcase of outstanding world dance and music companies and soloists residing in the Bay Area, July 15 and 16, San Mateo Performing Arts Center. Festival artists and complete programming details will be announced in May.

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Please connect for feature interviews, artwork and performance credentials.