



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# ***Rite of Spring Concludes Kansas City Ballet 2015-2016 Season***

*ONE WORLD PREMIERE and THREE KANSAS CITY PREMIERES  
for Spring Mixed-Repertory Program:*

*Viktor Plotnikov's new work Vesna with music of Antonín Dvorák,  
Yuri Possokhov's Diving into the Lilacs, Helen Pickett's Petal with music of Thomas  
Newman and Philip Glass and closing the program with Adam Hougland's Rite of  
Spring set to Igor Stravinsky's brilliant musical masterpiece  
May 6-15 at Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts*

KANSAS CITY, MO (April 15, 2016) — The 58<sup>th</sup> season of Kansas City Ballet closes with a mixed-repertory program of four bold and electrifying works in one performance: Viktor Plotnikov's WORLD PREMIERE, *Vesna*, featuring the music of Antonín Dvorák, Yuri Possokhov's *Diving into the Lilacs* including music by Boris Tchaikovsky, Helen Pickett's *Petal* with music of Thomas Newman and Philip Glass and closing the program with Adam Hougland's *Rite of Spring* with the brilliant masterpiece score by Igor Stravinsky. The production will be accompanied by Kansas City Symphony conducted by Kansas City Ballet Music Director Ramona Pansegrau and runs May 6 through 15 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

Artistic Director Devon Carney said: "In continuing my vision to create a season with the broadest range of dance possible, I am thrilled to conclude the 2015-2016 season with this powerful mixed-repertory program. I am particularly pleased to feature the works of resident choreographers from major U.S. companies. Viktor Plotnikov is the Festival Ballet Providence Resident Choreographer, Helen Pickett is Resident Choreographer for Atlanta Ballet, Yuri Possokhov is the Choreographer in Residence at San Francisco Ballet and Adam Houglund is the Principal Choreographer for Louisville Ballet and resident choreographer for Cincinnati Ballet. Our audiences will have a rare opportunity to see these works from significant choreographers never before seen in Kansas City."

## *Rite of Spring* May 6-15, 2016

The spring program will feature all Kansas City premieres, including one World Premiere.

The program will begin with a Kansas City premiere, *Diving into the Lilacs* with choreography by Yuri Possokhov and music of Boris Tchaikovsky (no relation to Peter) from his *Sinfonietta for String Orchestra*. This Kansas City premiere provides a sweeping showcase of lush dancing for three couples and a corps of eight. Possokhov joined the Artistic Staff at San Francisco Ballet as a choreographer in residence after retiring from a highly successful performance career that spanned the globe. His work has been performed both nationally and internationally with companies like San Francisco Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, and Royal Danish Ballet. Possokhov's vibrant *Firebird* was performed by Kansas City Ballet in 2009.

A world premiere, *Vesna*, by Viktor Plotnikov, set to Antonín Dvořák's *New World Symphony* will follow. Known for his more contemporary and intense aesthetic, Plotnikov has been choreographing for Boston Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, the Bolshoi Ballet and others, with considerable success. Plotnikov was a soloist with Donetsk Ballet Company in the Ukraine and held principal dancer positions at Ballet Mississippi and Tulsa Ballet Theatre between 1990 and 1993, before joining Boston Ballet as a principal dancer in 1993, where he performed until 2006.

The spring program continues with *Petal*, by noted and sought-after choreographer, Helen Pickett. *Petal* is known for its gorgeous vivid primary colors and extremely challenging choreography. After dancing with William Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt for more than a decade, Pickett embarked on an amazing and varied career path that not only includes choreography, but also acting and teaching. She has received commissions from: Royal Ballet of Flanders, Ballet West, Boston Ballet, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet and more. Since 2012, Pickett has been Resident Choreographer for Atlanta

Ballet. In 2014, for her ballet, *The Exiled*, she was named Best Choreographer in Atlanta. And in 2015, Pickett premiered her first full-length ballet, *Camino Real*, based on the play by Tennessee Williams.

The spring program will conclude with another Kansas City premiere, *Rite of Spring*, choreographed by Adam Houglan and featuring the music of Igor Stravinsky.

Kansas City Ballet invited **Wendy Whelan**, one of the world's leading dancers, to put her substantial experience to work coaching Kansas City Ballet's leads in the company's premiere of *Rite of Spring*.

Whelan started dancing at the age of 3. In 1984, Whelan joined New York City Ballet, where she was promoted to principal dancer in 1991. She went on to spend 30 years at New York City Ballet, dancing virtually all the major Balanchine roles, and working closely with Jerome Robbins, Christopher Wheeldon, and many others.

In 2009, Whelan was approached by Adam Houglan to be his muse in *Rite of Spring* when it was premiered by Louisville Ballet.

"This ballet was really inspired by her. I was trying to think of something for us to work on and realized she would be perfect for the central figure in RITE."

- Choreographer Adam Houglan

*Rite of Spring* holds an iconic place in the world of ballet, famously inciting riots when it first appeared in 1913 with the Ballet Russes. Angry patrons — bewildered by Stravinsky's strange music and maybe more so by Vaslav Nijinsky's primitive choreography — famously rose up in rebellion several minutes into the performance. Punches were thrown and the police were called in. Artist Valentine Gross Hugo, recalled that "it was as if the theater had been shaken by an earthquake."

Adam Houglan, named one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" choreographers in 2011, has accomplished the challenging feat of making this historical musical milestone accessible to today's audience without depriving it of its punch. He has won The Princess Grace Award for Choreography, The Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, a New York State Council for the Arts Commissioning Grant and was one of *Pointe Magazine's* 10 VIPs of 2006.

Visit [www.kcballet.org](http://www.kcballet.org) for more information about Kansas City Ballet's 2015-2016 season and [www.kauffmancenter.org](http://www.kauffmancenter.org) for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center. High resolution photos of the 2015-2016 season can be found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/67555847@N06/sets/>

## *Rite of Spring*

Kansas City Ballet 2015-2016 Season Closes with Mixed-Repertory Program with *Rite of Spring*  
May 6-15 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

May 6-15, 2016 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts | Music performed by Kansas City Symphony

Presenting Kansas City premieres from Adam Houglan and more....

<i>Diving into the Lilacs</i>	Choreography: Yuri Possokhov	Music: Boris Tchaikovsky
<i>Vesna</i>	Choreography: Viktor Plotnikov	Music: Antonín Dvořák
<i>Petal</i>	Choreography: Helen Pickett	Music: Thomas Newman and Philip Glass

<i>Rite of Spring</i>	Choreography: Adam Houglan	Music: Igor Stravinsky
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Fri., May 6 7:30 p.m.

Sat., May 7 7:30 p.m.

Sun., May 8 2 p.m.

Fri., May 13 7:30 p.m.

Sat., May 14 7:30 p.m.

Sun., May 15 2 p.m.

## Sponsors

Presenting sponsors of *Rite of Spring* are Select Physical Therapy, the William T. Kemper Foundation and the Estelle S. & Robert A. Long Ellis Foundation. *Diving into the Lilacs* is sponsored by Wendy and George Powell.

The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation; Kansas City Ballet Guild; the Missouri Arts Council; The Arts Council of Greater Kansas City, Select Physical Therapy and Hotel Phillips, host hotel of Kansas City Ballet, also are among the many supporters of Kansas City Ballet's 58<sup>th</sup> season.

## SPECIAL EVENT

Springtime in Paris: Riots and Mayhem

May 11 at 7 p.m. – National World War I Museum

This free event will examine the historical, cultural, dance and musical context of the May 29, 1913 dramatic premiere of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, which resulted in a riot. Dr. Matthew Naylor, President and CEO of the National World War I Museum and Memorial, will moderate a conversation with Dr. Ilyana Karthas, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Missouri – Columbia; and Devon Carney, Artistic Director of the Kansas City Ballet. This program is a collaboration between Kansas City Ballet and the National World War I Museum and Memorial.

To RSVP, go here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/springtime-in-paris-riots-and-mayhem-tickets-24593528907>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kansas City Ballet 2015-2016 Season Closes with Mixed-Repertory Program with *Rite of Spring*  
May 6-15 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

## Student Discounts

Student Rush tickets are available for \$15 (with valid ID, one ticket per ID) 90-minutes prior to curtain at all performances based on availability.

## Social Media

Kansas City Ballet's website is mobile and ticket-purchase friendly. Receive daily updates by joining the KCB Fan Page at [www.facebook.com/kcballet](http://www.facebook.com/kcballet) and following @kcballet on Twitter. Follow our blog at [kcballet.org/blog](http://kcballet.org/blog), or on YouTube by visiting [www.youtube.com/kansascityballet](http://www.youtube.com/kansascityballet).

## Belger Footnote Series

Artistic Director Devon Carney and guest artists offer audience members views on the choreography, history, design elements and music prior to each repertory performance. These informal discussions are free for all ticket holders and are held at the theater **one hour prior to curtain** for Kansas City Ballet repertory shows.

# Kansas City Ballet 2016-2017 Season at a Glance

Kansas City Ballet ticket office 816.931.8993

Single tickets for all performances will go on sale Mon., Aug. 15. *The Nutcracker* tickets will go on sale Mon., Aug. 29. Purchase tickets online at [www.kcballet.org](http://www.kcballet.org).

### *Kansas City Dance Day*

Aug. 27, 2016 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity  
Kansas City's 6<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of dance and movement features FREE dance performances, dance and fitness classes, demonstrations and FUN for the whole family.

### *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

October 7-16, 2016 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Choreography: Bruce Wells

Music: Felix Mendelssohn with music performed by Kansas City Symphony

Fri., Oct. 7	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 8	7:30 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 9	2 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 14	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 15	7:30 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 16	2 p.m.

### *The Nutcracker*

Kansas City Ballet 2015-2016 Season Closes with Mixed-Repertory Program with *Rite of Spring*  
May 6-15 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

December 3-24, 2016 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts  
Choreography: Devon Carney  
Music: Peter I. Tchaikovsky with music performed by Kansas City Symphony

Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney presents the critically-acclaimed production of this favorite holiday classic. Presented by Bank of America.

Sat., Dec. 3	2 p.m. (*) & 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 4	1 p.m. & 5 p.m.
Thur., Dec. 8	7:30 p.m.
Fri., Dec. 9	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 10	2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 11	1 p.m. & 5 p.m.
Wed., Dec. 14	7:30 p.m.
Thurs., Dec. 15	7:30 p.m.
Fri., Dec. 16	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 17	2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 18	1 p.m. & 5 p.m.
Wed., Dec. 21	7:30 p.m.
Thur., Dec. 22	2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Fri., Dec. 23	2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 24	1 p.m.

(\*) Sugar Plum Fairy Children's Ball Luncheon

### ***New Moves***

February 16-19, 2017 | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity  
A unique performance event designed to search out, develop and showcase new emerging choreographers both locally, some from within Kansas City Ballet, and from the national dance scene. No subscriptions available for these performances.

Thurs., Feb. 16	7:30 p.m.
Fri., Feb. 17	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 18	2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Feb 19	2 p.m.

### ***The Sleeping Beauty***

March 31-April 9, 2017 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts  
Choreography: Devon Carney after Marius Petipa  
Music: Peter I. Tchaikovsky with music performed by Kansas City Symphony

Fri., March 31	7:30 p.m.
Sat., April 1	7:30 p.m.
Sun., April 2	2 p.m.
Thur. April 6	7:30 p.m.
Fri., April 7	7:30 p.m.
Sat., April 8	2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Sun., April 9                    2 p.m.

### ***Director's Choice***

May 12-21, 2017 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Music performed by Kansas City Symphony

*The Lottery* (Based on Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery") is presented by special arrangement with the children of Shirley Jackson and Literal Media

***Interplay***                                    Choreography: Jerome Robbins                    Music: Morton Gould

***The Lottery***                                    Choreography: Val Caniparoli                    Music: Robert Moran

***Theme and Variations***                    Choreography: George Balanchine                    Music: Peter I. Tchaikovsky

Fri., May 12                    7:30 p.m.

Sat., May 13                    7:30 p.m.

Sun., May 14                    2 p.m.

Fri., May 19                    7:30 p.m.

Sat., May 20                    7:30 p.m.

Sun., May 21                    2 p.m.

## **About Kansas City Ballet**

### ***To make Kansas City a destination for dance***

Founded in 1957, Kansas City Ballet is a 28-member professional ballet company under the leadership of Artistic Director Devon Carney and Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley. The company's mission is to establish Kansas City Ballet as an indispensable asset in its community through exceptional performances, excellence in dance training and quality community education programs for all ages.

Kansas City Ballet is home to Kansas City Ballet School with an enrollment of 1800+ children and adults offering professional training for the career-minded student as well as for those simply seeking a healthy lifestyle.

Through our professional company, our second company (KCB II) and our many community educational and outreach programs, such as Reach Out and Dance (ROAD) we seek to nurture and develop our artists, audiences and students in the values inherent in the creativity, diversity and joy of dance.

Our home, the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity, in conjunction with our Resident Company status at the world-class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, truly has positioned Kansas City as a destination for dance.

Visit [kcballet.org/media/releases](http://kcballet.org/media/releases) for more info.

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