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Graham Lustig selected to guide Oakland Ballet

Mary Ellen Hunt, Robert Hurwitt
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Lustig to lead oakland ballet

After a yearlong search, the 45-year-old **Oakland Ballet** has announced that **Graham Lustig** is the company's new artistic director. The British-born Lustig previously directed New Jersey's **American Repertory Ballet** but stepped down last spring when the company restructured.

A former dancer with the **Dutch National Ballet** and **Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet**, Lustig says he respects the legacy and estimable **Ballets Russes**-era repertoire built by Oakland Ballet founder **Ronn Guidi** - who resurrected the company in 2007 before departing last year. But Lustig says he also hopes to showcase new works by West Coast choreographers and build community partnerships with local institutions like Mills College, where the Oakland Ballet will rehearse this fall.

Lustig, who directed ARB for 11 years, blends a distinctive sense of contemporary with classical in his own choreography, which West Coast audiences will see for the first time when Oakland Ballet mounts his production of "Nutcracker" this Christmas.

- Mary Ellen Hunt

'The arabian nights' return

Mary Zimmerman's inventive "The Arabian Nights," one of the hottest shows of the 2008-09 season, is coming back. **Berkeley Repertory Theatre**, which presented its extended run then, is bringing back Zimmerman's adaptation of "The 1001 Nights" as a holiday special for 24 performances, Dec. 11-30, on its Thrust Stage. For tickets or information, call (510) 647-2949 or go to www.berkeleyrep.org.

- Robert Hurwitt

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