

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY ANNOUNCES NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, GRAHAM LUSTIG**

Oakland, CA – Oakland Ballet Company is pleased to announce internationally acclaimed choreographer and teacher Graham Lustig as their new Artistic Director. Mr. Lustig's freelance choreographic career has encompassed more than sixty works in over four continents. After a year of searching, Executive Director, Nicole Levine states: "We are thrilled to welcome Graham Lustig to the Oakland Ballet Company; he is the right person to maintain our commitment to Russian and classical ballets, while also bringing in contemporary works. Our goal is to keep the tradition of ballet vibrant and accessible to the East Bay community." Oakland Ballet Company will kick off the 2010-2011 Season with Chevron returning as its lead sponsor. The Season will feature *Graham Lustig's Nutcracker* and an exciting *Spring Season* featuring local choreographers along with a ballet choreographed by Mr. Lustig.

Graham Lustig states: "There are great possibilities here with the Oakland Ballet Company. My first priority is outreach to the local public schools." Mr. Lustig will continue Oakland Ballet Company's commitment to teaching underprivileged youth theater culture and appreciation for the art of ballet. He plans to grow the company at a steady pace and raise its artistic profile by creating excellence in ballets performed.

Trained at the Royal Ballet School in London, Graham Lustig began his professional career at the Dutch National Ballet in Holland where he quickly rose to the rank of soloist and performed title roles in ballets to include: *Prodigal Son*, *The Green Table* and *Petrushka*. Before embarking on a freelance choreographic career, he danced with the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet in England.

Graham Lustig served as the Artistic Director of American Repertory Ballet (ARB) and ARB's Princeton Ballet School in Princeton, New Jersey for the past 11 years. At ARB, Mr. Lustig introduced numerous new works to the repertoire by choreographing ballets such as, *Graham Lustig's Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Beauty and the Beast – A Gothic Romance* to name a few.

Graham Lustig's choreography has been performed by ballet companies globally. Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times* reviewed Mr. Lustig's ballet *Evening* and

wrote: "The choreography is never less than eye-riveting." Graham Lustig has also directed and choreographed for opera, theatre and film, and worked on the award-winning production of *When She Danced* starring Vanessa Redgrave. In addition, Mr. Lustig is a charter member of the Artists Council for Americans for the Arts and has served numerous times as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Graham Lustig's choreography is contemporary and classical while merging rhythm and form. Segments of his choreography can be viewed on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvjJC9IDfMM> *Nutcracker* and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBLXf7gFS50> *Beauty and the Beast*. A detailed biography on Graham Lustig can be found at [www.OaklandBallet.org](http://www.OaklandBallet.org).

Graham Lustig's career as a dancer, artistic director and choreographer expands and complements Oakland Ballet Company's tradition of presenting historically vibrant works while championing new choreography.

In person interviews with Mr. Lustig will be available August 20 - 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

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