



Graham Lustig, Artistic Director

Inspiring the Community since 1965

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY PRESENTS SPRING GALA

**Saturday May 19, 2018 at the Bellevue Club, Oakland**

**Black tie event includes cocktail reception, silent auction, spring season performance highlights, dancing, and dinner overlooking Lake Merritt**

Oakland, CA, April 6, 2018 – Oakland Ballet Company presents its annual Spring Gala fundraiser event on Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 6–10pm at the elegant Bellevue Club overlooking scenic Lake Merritt in Oakland. The evening is hosted by ABC7 news reporter, **Cheryl Jennings**, in what has become an Oakland Ballet tradition, and includes a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception; an informal performance featuring highlights from the company's spring season, *Scene and Heard*; a sumptuous three-course dinner catered by the Bellevue Club; and a silent auction offering items such as vacation packages, tickets to local sporting and cultural events, luxury goods, and local services. New auction items this year include breakfast for two with Mayor Libby Schaaf, including a private tour of Oakland's City Hall; and lunch with Dave Kaval, president of the Oakland A's, followed by a behind-the-scenes tour of the Oakland Athletics' new Jack London Square offices. Guests may also bid to win a cameo role in the company's annual *Nutcracker* production at the Paramount Theatre this December. For the second year, attendees are invited to dance with members of Oakland Ballet following dinner, with live music provided by Little Jonny and the Giants. The annual gala is an opportunity for ballet lovers to participate in Oakland's thriving cultural landscape, by supporting Oakland Ballet's mission to keep world-class ballet accessible and relevant to diverse East Bay audiences. **Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf** serves as Honorary Chair.

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“On behalf of the Oakland Ballet Company, we are delighted to invite the East Bay community to our annual gala,” said Jennifer Minore and Dana Zuber, Co-Chairs of the Gala Committee. “The gala fundraiser is what makes the Company’s vibrant Discover Dance educational programs possible, allowing us to grow our in-school performances and student matinee performances.”

This year’s fundraiser directly supports a range of educational and artistic activities that reach into all corners of the East Bay. Educational programs presented in conjunction with the Company’s annual production of Graham Lustig’s *The Nutcracker* serve more than 15,000 schoolchildren annually through both in-school performances, and the Discover Dance education program. This June, the Company presents four performances of the spring repertory program, *Scene and Heard*, and the fourth annual edition of the local dance celebration, East Bay DANCES.

The 2018 Gala is sponsored by Bridge Bank, US Bank, and *Diablo Magazine*.

**Oakland Ballet Company’s 2018 Spring Gala Committee**

Libby Schaaf, Mayor of the City of Oakland, Honorary Chair  
Jennifer Minore, Co-Chair  
Dana Zuber, Co-Chair  
Jeannine Ballaci  
Abraham Castro  
Monica Forneret  
Deborah Gerstel  
Dale Marie Golden  
Catherine Haley  
Marlene Henderson  
Jayne Modean  
Carolyn Rinetti  
Jeanette Robinson

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**ABOUT OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY'S  
2018 SPRING SEASON, *SCENE and HEARD***

Oakland Ballet Company's 2018 spring season, *Scene and Heard*, features five newly-commissioned works by choreographers **Bat Abbit, Antoine Hunter, Michael Lowe, Danielle Rowe** and company Artistic Director, **Graham Lustig**. The new commissions add to the company's rich history of narrative ballets, from founding director Ronn Guidi's presentations of repertoire associated with the Ballets Russes as well as his own works, through to current director Lustig's creations *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Luna Mexicana, and Jangala*. Each choreographer will create a new 10- to 15-minute narrative dance, set on a subset of the company's 10 dancers. The performances are Thursday–Saturday, May 31–June 2, at 7:30pm, plus a matinee on Saturday June 2 at 2:30pm, in Laney College's Odell Johnson Performing Arts Center.

In addition, the company presents the fourth year of its popular community dance celebration, ***East Bay DANCES '18***, on Sunday June 3 at 4pm, also at Laney College. This year the program will include performances by **AXIS Dance Company, Ballet Folklórico México Danza, d'Naga, Jubilee American Dance Theatre, Linda Steele II, Marika Brussel, Savage Jazz Dance Company, Shabnam Dance Company** and **Urban Jazz Dance Company**. Bringing together an array of groups working in classical, folk, popular and contemporary dance styles, *East Bay DANCES '18* is a catalyst to connect diverse corners of the East Bay dance community, and to help develop new and broader audiences for a range of dance genres.

**TICKETS**

Tickets for Oakland Ballet's Spring Gala on Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 6–10pm at the Bellevue Club are priced at \$200; tables of 10 are \$2,500. All tickets are on sale now, online at [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org); by phone at 510-893-3132; or by mailing a check to Oakland Ballet Company at 2201 Broadway, Suite LL17, Oakland CA 94612.

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Tickets for Oakland Ballet's *Scene and Heard*, from Thursday–Saturday, May 31–June 2, at 7:30pm, plus a matinee on Saturday June 2 at 2:30pm, in Laney College's Odell Johnson Performing Arts Center range from \$30-50 with discounts available for seniors and children. Tickets for *East Bay DANCES '18* on Sunday, June 3 at 4pm, also at Laney College, are \$25 general admission, \$20 for seniors, \$15 for children and students. Tickets for all performances are on sale now at [www.OaklandBallet.org](http://www.OaklandBallet.org) and online Brown Paper Tickets, and are also available at the door.

### **ABOUT OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY**

For more than 53 years, Oakland Ballet Company has inspired the East Bay community and beyond by keeping the art of ballet exciting, relevant and accessible, primarily through the presentation of works of the Diaghilev repertoire and modern masterpieces. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Graham Lustig since 2010, the Company has renewed its commitment to artistic excellence with imaginative programs that engage contemporary audiences—through close relationships with living choreographers, the commissioning of new works, innovative collaborations with diverse artists and communities, and compelling educational programs that cultivate the next generation of dance lovers.

A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet Company's 53-year legacy has been engagement with the community. Oakland Ballet's *Discover Dance* outreach program features educational programs at East Bay schools; educational in-theater performances; free performances throughout the community at events such as the Oakland Art Murmur and Oakland Dance Festival; ticket donations to season performances; and scholarships to company training programs.

*Oakland Ballet's 2017-2018 season sponsors include Chevron, California Arts Council, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, Clorox, The Lynn and David Kravis Family Foundation, Snider and Associates, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Matson, TMG Partners, Alameda County Arts Commission, Bridge Bank, Union Bank, the Oakland A's Community Foundation, and Douglas Parking.*

## **CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE**

- What:** Oakland Ballet Company presents its Spring Gala Fundraiser
- When:** Saturday, May 19, 2018, 6:00–10:00 p.m.
- Where:** The Bellevue Club, 525 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610
- Tickets:** Tickets start at \$200, on sale now, online at [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org); by phone at 510-893-3132; or by mailing a check to Oakland Ballet Company at 2201 Broadway, Suite 206, Oakland CA 94612.
- Description:** Oakland Ballet Company's Spring Gala Fundraiser features a cocktail reception, dinner, silent auction, live music, dancing, and performance highlights, with proceeds supporting the company's spring season, and educational outreach programs.

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