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**OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY ANNOUNCES
FALL 2016 SEASON**

GRAHAM LUSTIG'S *THE NUTCRACKER*
with live music by the Oakland Symphony, returns to
the Paramount Theatre, Saturday–Sunday, December 17–18

Bay Area debut of new program,
LUNA MEXICANA, a Family-Friendly Celebration of the Day of the Dead,
Tuesday, November 1 at the Paramount Theatre

Related *Nutcracker* events include the Land of the Sweets Tea Party on December 11;
Sweet Dreams Parties on December 17 and 18; a champagne reception on December
17; and extensive outreach activities for schoolchildren

Luna Mexicana matinee performances also offered to thousands of schoolchildren in
Oakland, Hayward, Castro Valley and Pleasanton for free or at reduced cost

Video: [Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*](#)

Video: [Luna Mexicana](#)

Oakland, CA, September 27, 2016 – Oakland Ballet Company announces its fall 2016 performances, including both new and familiar productions that showcase the company's deep engagement with audiences of all ages, and longstanding mission to make ballet inclusive and accessible to the Bay Area's diverse public. A highlight of the holiday season, the seventh annual production of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, returns to Oakland's magnificent

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Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 17 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 18 at 2pm. Conceived and choreographed by Artistic Director Graham Lustig, Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* has been widely praised for refreshing the holiday classic with smart new choreography, clever storytelling and vibrant sets and costumes. As *The Huffington Post* has noted, "Lustig administers a series of tiny astonishments: comic touches, ironic twists to tradition, moments that reveal character or render the music in jewel-like images." This season marks the 45th year that Oakland Ballet has presented a production of the *Nutcracker* in the East Bay.

Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* is achieved through numerous community collaborations. As in previous years, Tchaikovsky's iconic score is performed live by the Oakland Symphony, under the direction of Michael Morgan; local choral group the Mt. Eden Women's Ensemble joins the orchestra for the memorable Snow Scene. In addition, each year, the company's *Nutcracker* features more than 40 young Bay Area dancers aged 7 to 17, in the much-adored roles of snowballs, mice, soldiers and candies, performing alongside the company's professionals. Supplementing the weekend of public performances at the Paramount, the company devotes the entire month of December to community outreach, offering extensive educational programs and in-school performances to thousands of schoolchildren who might otherwise not have access to live performing arts.

Luna Mexicana

For the first time, Oakland Ballet presents Graham Lustig's *Luna Mexicana*, a family-friendly celebration of the Mexican Day of the Dead, on November 1 at 7pm in the Paramount Theatre. The hour-long program features a cast of five female and five male dancers, with festive choreography, vivid costumes, striking makeup and a mix of folkloric and modern Mexican music. Based on traditional Mexican *Día de los Muertos* celebrations, where the living honor the spirits of the dead with offerings of food, music and dance, *Luna Mexicana* tells the story of a young woman whose departed loved ones joyously dance back to life in the form of teetering

skeletons, skirt-swishing girls, a high flying “deer dancer” and a rickety bride and groom duet. As *The Star-Ledger*, New Jersey praised, “Lustig manages to combine a playful attitude with touching reverence for the spirits of the departed.” Audience members of all ages are encouraged to attend in Day of the Dead costume, and prizes will be awarded for the most impressive outfits. Vendors will sell Day of the Dead refreshments such as the sweet *pan de muerto* in the Paramount lobby, and the performance will commence with live mariachi music.

Educational performances of *Luna Mexicana* are scheduled for East Bay schoolchildren at the Paramount on November 1 at 10am; at Chabot College, Hayward on November 2 at 10am; in Castro Valley on November 3 at 10am; and at the Amador Theater in Pleasanton on November 4 at 10am followed by a public community performance at 6pm. All matinee performances of *Luna Mexicana* are offered free of charge to students in low-income (Title 1) area public schools; \$5 for all other students.

Related Events: Graham Lustig’s *The Nutcracker*

Several related ticketed events offer ballet audiences opportunities to interact with Oakland Ballet dancers in a festive holiday setting, and support the *Nutcracker* performances. The company hosts a **Land of the Sweets Tea Party** on Sunday, December 11 from 1:30pm to 4pm at the Berkeley City Club, a “high tea” fundraiser featuring finger sandwiches, desserts, teas and sparkling wine, as well as *Nutcracker* performance excerpts. Holiday gifts will also be available for purchase at the *Nutcracker* Boutique.

Sweet Dreams Parties follow the 1pm matinee *Nutcracker* performances on Saturday, December 17, and the 2pm matinee performance on Sunday, December 18 at the Paramount Theatre, and allow children and families to meet characters from the ballet and enjoy sweets and refreshments. For adult patrons, a post-performance **Encore Reception** is planned following the Saturday, December 17 evening performance in the Mezzanine of the Paramount Theatre. The reception will include champagne, hors d’oeuvres and desserts provided by local

dining establishments, in the company of Oakland Ballet dancers and artistic staff. For more information on any of these events, visit oaklandballet.org.

Fall Educational Programs

Now in its 52nd Season, Oakland Ballet continues to deepen its longstanding commitment to community outreach and access, bringing its **Discover Dance** educational programs to more East Bay students and community members each year. As in past seasons, on-site educational performances of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* will be held in nearly a dozen East Bay elementary schools, in partnership with the Alameda County School District.

Additionally, 2000 free tickets will be distributed to Oakland and East Bay students to attend **Production in Action**, an in-theater educational performance in conjunction with the dress rehearsal of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*. Five hundred free community outreach tickets will be distributed through the Community Access Ticket Service (CATS) organization, reaching hundreds of families, adults, and youth throughout the East Bay who may not otherwise have access to live dance and music performance.

Ticket Information

General admission tickets for Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* on Saturday, December 17 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 18 at 2pm, in the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, are priced from \$25–\$92, and are on sale now. Tickets for the Sweet Dreams children's parties following the 1pm matinee at the Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 19 and the 2 pm matinee on Sunday, December 21, are \$15. Tickets for the Encore champagne reception at the Paramount Theatre following the 5pm performance on Saturday, December 17, are \$20.

Tickets for the Land of the Sweets Tea Party on Sunday, December 11 at 1:30pm at the Berkeley City Club are \$100, \$90 for seniors, and \$65 for children, and are available for



Graham Lustig, Artistic Director

Inspiring the Community since 1965

purchase at 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.

Tickets for *Luna Mexicana* on Tuesday, November 1 at 7pm in the Paramount Theatre start at \$17, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. VIP tickets, including priority seating and post-performance reception, are \$102.

Tickets for all Paramount Theatre performances are available at ticketmaster.com (service fees apply) or in person at the Paramount Theatre Box Office.

Venue Information

Oakland's Paramount Theatre, built in 1931, is a National Historic Landmark and one of the finest remaining examples of Art Deco design in the United States. The Paramount is located at 2025 Broadway between 20th and 21st streets in downtown Oakland, California, just 500 feet from the 19th Street BART Station. In addition to its own outdoor parking lot adjacent to the theater, the Paramount is surrounded by three major parking facilities.

The Berkeley City Club, located at 2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley CA, is a historic hotel and social club designed by architect Julia Morgan, blocks away from the University of California, Berkeley campus.

About Artistic Director Graham Lustig

This season, Oakland Ballet Company celebrates the full-time appointment of Graham Lustig as Artistic Director. Since he joined the company as Artistic Director in 2010, a position which was seasonal until this summer, Lustig has revitalized Oakland Ballet Company and helped the organization reclaim its position as a leading San Francisco Bay Area arts institution and first-rate dance company. Lustig's stewardship has brought the company long-term vision and a reputation for nurturing community-based programming, deep audience engagement, and

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Graham Lustig, Artistic Director

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organizational stability. For seven seasons, Lustig has presented his critically-acclaimed production of *The Nutcracker* at Oakland's Paramount Theatre, as well as an annual spring season rooted in contemporary works, including *A Cappella: Our Bodies Sing* (2016); the 50th anniversary program, *Five Decades of Dance* (2015), which won an Izzie Award; *Oakland-esque* (2014), *Diaghilev Imagery* (2013) and *Forwards!* (2011). In collaboration with Oakland Unified School District, under Lustig's watch Oakland Ballet has expanded its educational outreach program, Discover Dance, to provide educational arts programs to more than a dozen area schools annually. Educational events such as in-school assemblies and open rehearsals reach more than 5,000 local school children each year.

Trained at the Royal Ballet School in London, Lustig danced with the Dutch National Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet before embarking on a freelance choreographic career that has included operas, ballets and musicals. He serves as a founding member of the Artists Committee of Americans for the Arts, and has served numerous times on the Dance and Policy Committee of the National Endowment for the Arts.

About Oakland Ballet Company

For more than 50 years, Oakland Ballet Company has inspired the East Bay community and beyond by keeping the art of ballet exciting, vibrant 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 seek to engage contemporary audiences—through close relationships with living choreographers, the commissioning of vibrant new works, innovative collaborations with diverse artists and communities, and compelling educational programs that cultivate the next generation of dance lovers.

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Oakland Ballet was founded in 1965 by Ronn Guidi, and gained international recognition through its historical reconstructions of ballets from the legendary Ballets Russes of Serge Diaghilev; its mounting of classic works of Americana; and its creation of innovative contemporary choreography. In 2000, Ronn Guidi retired and Karen Brown succeeded him as Artistic Director. Brown continued Oakland Ballet's commitment to performing great works of classical ballet, and focused especially on the work of local and contemporary choreographers. Since then, Oakland Ballet Company has brought its mix of contemporary and classic programs to the Oakland and East Bay communities and continued its longstanding partnership with Michael Morgan and the Oakland Symphony.

A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet Company's 50-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 2016-2017 season sponsors include Chevron, Bridge Bank, the Clorox Company, US Bank, Bank of America, Matson, Wells Fargo, Alameda County Arts Commission and Douglas Parking. Oakland Ballet's Luna Mexicana sponsors include Bridge Bank, California Council on the Arts, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and Calavera.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

What: Oakland Ballet Presents *Luna Mexicana: A Day of the Dead Celebration*
When: Tuesday, November 1 at 7pm
Where: Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA
Tickets: Tickets start at \$17, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. Tickets are available online at www.ticketmaster.com or in person at the Paramount Theatre box office.
Description: Oakland Ballet presents *Luna Mexicana*, a family-friendly celebration of the Mexican Day of the Dead, with dancing, costumes, live music and holiday treats. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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- What: Oakland Ballet Presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, with the Oakland Symphony
- When: Saturday, December 17 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 18 at 2pm
- Where: Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA
- Tickets: Tickets are priced from \$25–\$92, with discounts available for seniors, children 12 and under, and groups of 10 or more. Tickets are available online at www.ticketmaster.com or in person at the Paramount Theatre box office.
- Description: Oakland Ballet presents Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*, a beloved East Bay holiday tradition, with three magical performances featuring live music by the Oakland Symphony, this December 17–18. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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- What: Oakland Ballet Company's Land of the Sweets Tea Party
- When: Sunday, December 11 at 1:30pm
- Where: Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley CA
- Tickets: Tickets are \$100, with discounts for children and seniors, available at 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 presents the Land of the Sweets Tea Party, an elegant "high tea" featuring refreshments, Nutcracker ballet excerpts, and live music, with proceeds supporting the 2016 production of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker*.

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