



# Oakland Ballet Company

*Celebrating Dance for Over 45 Years*

Graham Lustig, Artistic Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Lisa Mezzacappa

*Lisa Mezzacappa Projects: Arts Programming and Communications*

510-708-2530 // [mezzacappa.projects@gmail.com](mailto:mezzacappa.projects@gmail.com)

PHOTOS: <http://oaklandballet.org/wp/photos/>

## **OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY PRESENTS SPRING GALA**

**Black tie event includes live and silent auction, season preview highlights, and 3-course dinner overlooking Lake Merritt**

**Saturday May 3, 2014, 6:30-10:00pm**

### **The Bellevue Club**

525 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610

Oakland, CA, March 14, 2014 – Oakland Ballet Company presents its annual fundraiser gala event on Saturday, May 3, 2014 from 6:30-10:00 p.m. at the elegant Bellevue Club overlooking scenic Lake Merritt in Oakland. The evening, emceed by Cheryl Jennings of ABC7, includes a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception; an informal performance featuring highlights from the company's spring season program, *Oakland-esque*; a 3-course dinner catered by the Bellevue Club; a live auction with auctioneer Steve Haworth; and a silent auction featuring luxury goods, local services, autographed items by members of the Golden State Warriors, and gift baskets featuring specialties from an assortment of Oakland neighborhoods. This year, guests may bid in the live auction to underwrite costume renovations for the company's acclaimed production of *Graham Lustig's The Nutcracker*, including a new head for the Nutcracker prince; and as in previous years, guests may also bid to win a cameo role in the company's annual *Nutcracker* production at the Paramount Theatre in December 2014. The gala is an opportunity for East Bay arts lovers to support and participate in Oakland's thriving cultural landscape, by helping Oakland Ballet fulfill its mission to keep world-class ballet accessible and relevant to diverse Oakland communities. The fundraiser supports the Company's annual *Nutcracker* production; its ongoing "Discover Dance" educational and community outreach program; and this year's spring repertory season, *Oakland-esque*. For the third year, Oakland Mayor Jean Quan serves as Honorary Chair. East Bay Sotheby's International Realty is a major gala sponsor. Tickets for the intimate evening start at \$150, of which \$100 is tax-deductible, and are available 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. The Bellevue Club is located at 525 Bellevue Ave, Oakland CA.

"On behalf of the Oakland Ballet Board of Directors, I am very excited to announce our annual gala to support our spring production, *Oakland-esque*," says Roz Perazzo, President and Chair of the Board of Directors. "Artistic Director Graham Lustig has master-minded an amazing collaboration of diverse

2201 Broadway, Suite 206 • Oakland, California 94612

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Federal tax id #94-3395450



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artists who are creating new works inspired by the thriving cultural and arts community of Oakland. A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet's mission is to provide accessible programs to a broad range of people in the East Bay community. The gala fundraiser enables us to offer affordable ticket prices, and supports our extensive educational outreach efforts."

## **Oakland Ballet Spring Gala Honorary Committee**

Mayor Jean Quan, Oakland

Mayor Jac Asher, Emeryville

Vice Mayor Ruth Atkin, Emeryville

Dominica C. Anderson, ESQ., Managing Partner, Duane Morris LLP

Mark Attarha, East Bay Sotheby's International Realty

Feddie Avner, Entercom Communications

Sunny Bostrum

Kevin Brown

Barbara Dickinson, Alameda County Office of Public Defenders, Juvenile Division

Matthew Dixon, MD, Chief of Surgery, Kaiser Oakland Medical Center

Joyce Gordon, Joyce Gordon Gallery

Judge Joseph Gruber

William Hynes, President, Holy Names University

Maja Kunzi, Bank of the West

Lisa Magnani

John Mardikian

Michael McAfee, ED.D., Senior Director, PolicyLink

Nahid Nassiri, East Bay Sotheby's International Realty

John Protopappas, President & CEO, Madison Park Financial

Gloria Taylor, President Emeritus, American Association of University Women, CA

Anian Tunney, The Grubb Company

## **ABOUT OAKLAND BALLET'S SPRING SEASON, *OAKLAND-ESQUE***

Oakland Ballet Company's spring season program, *Oakland-esque*, is a portrait in dance of the cultural and natural wonders of Oakland featuring new works by esteemed local choreographers, in collaboration with area composers, musicians, dance companies, visual artists and street dancers.

Four world-premiere dance works by choreographers **Sonya Delwaide**, **Molissa Fenley**, **Robert Moses** and Artistic Director **Graham Lustig** feature Company dancers with special guest performers from Oakland's groundbreaking **AXIS Dance Company** and the turf dancers from the popular Oakland street dance crew the **Turffeinz**, with music ranging from grass-roots Oakland hip-hop, to classic Oakland funk, to a new percussion score by area cellist/composer **Joan Jeanrenaud**, performed live by Mills College alumnae. As a company grounded in the cultural life of Oakland for nearly 50 years, Oakland Ballet continues its longstanding support of artistic work of, about, and for the city, asking each choreographer to present their personal artistic vision of Oakland, from fast-moving urban pop culture to historical roots to the meditative splendor of the regional parks. Oakland painter **Sam Renaissance** brings his bold and vibrant vision of city life to the production's costumes and scenery.

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Performances of *Oakland-esque* are Friday May 16 at 8pm; and Saturday May 17 at 2pm and 8pm in Downtown Oakland's Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts, 1428 Alice Street. General admission tickets are on sale now, priced at \$35 (\$30 seniors/\$20 ages 17 and under and college students). For more information and to purchase tickets visit [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org) or call (510) 893-3132.

## **ABOUT OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY**

For nearly fifty years, Oakland Ballet Company has maintained its commitment to inspiring the East Bay community and beyond by keeping the tradition of ballet exciting, vibrant and accessible, mainly through the presentation of works of the Diaghilev repertoire and modern masterpieces. 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. Oakland Ballet closed in 2006, but was revived in 2007 with Guidi returning as Artistic Director. Since its rebirth, Oakland Ballet Company has brought its classic mix of drama and family classics to the Oakland and East Bay communities and continues a longstanding partnership with Michael Morgan and the Oakland East Bay Symphony.

A cornerstone of Oakland Ballet Company's legacy has been engagement with the community. Oakland Ballet's "Discover Dance" community outreach program features educational programs at East Bay schools; educational in-theater performances; free performances throughout the community, such as the Oakland Art Murmur and Oakland Pride Festival; ticket donations to season performances; and scholarships to Oakland Ballet training programs. In 2010, Oakland Ballet Company welcomed Graham Lustig as Artistic Director. Lustig's career as a dancer, artistic director and choreographer parallels Oakland Ballet's tradition of presenting historically vibrant work while championing new choreography.

Oakland Ballet's spring season is supported by Chevron, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, the San Francisco Foundation, Bank of America, Clorox, the East Bay Community Foundation, the Matson Foundation, Wells Fargo, Kaiser Permanente, Shorenstein Properties, Cypress Security, Highland Partners, Recology, Signature Development Group and Webcor Builders.

## **CALENDAR EDITOR, PLEASE LIST:**

**WHAT:** Oakland Ballet Company Spring Gala  
**WHEN:** Saturday May 3, 6:30-10:0pm  
**WHERE:** The Bellevue Club, 525 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610  
**TICKETS:** Tickets start at \$150 (\$100 of which is tax deductible) and are available online at [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org), by phone at 510-893-3132, or by mailing in a check to Oakland Ballet Company at 2201 Broadway, Suite 206, Oakland, CA 94612

**DESCRIPTION:** Oakland Ballet Company's spring gala features a dinner, silent and live auction and live performance highlights, with proceeds supporting the company's spring repertory production, *Oakland-esque*.

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