



Graham Lustig, Artistic Director

Inspiring the Community since 1965

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MEDIA CONTACT: Lisa Mezzacappa

510-708-2530 // mezzacappa.projects@gmail.com

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

**OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY PRESENTS
JANGALA
A FAMILY-FRIENDLY BALLET BY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, GRAHAM LUSTIG
INSPIRED BY SOUTH INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE
AND BASED ON *THE JUNGLE BOOK*
MARCH 10 & 13, 2018**

Saturday March 10, 2:30pm

Skyline High School Performing Arts Center
12250 Skyline Blvd., Oakland

Tuesday March 13, 7:00pm

Castro Valley High School Performing Arts Center
19501 Redwood Rd, Castro Valley

In-school performances also offered to hundreds of schoolchildren in the Castro Valley and Oakland Unified school districts, for free or at reduced cost

Oakland, CA, January 16, 2018 – Oakland Ballet Company presents the Bay Area premiere of *Jangala*, a dance theater work by Artistic Director, Graham Lustig, on March 10 and 13, 2018 at venues in Oakland and Castro Valley. *Jangala* is a family-friendly performance inspired by Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, that fuses contemporary ballet with movement vocabulary from the south Indian classical form, *bharatanatyam*. The dance follows the story of a lost boy, Mowgli, who is adopted by a pack of wolves and must use his wits to survive in the wild. Lustig has transplanted the action to a modern city, re-imagining the animal characters and their costumes for the urban jungle of contemporary India, complete with disco nightclubs, construction sites, and junkyards inhabited by feral dogs.

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2201 Broadway, Suite 206 • Oakland, California 94612
866.711.6037 / 510.893.3132 • info@oaklandballet.org • www.oaklandballet.org

Federal tax id #94-3395450

Jangala features a cast of 11 female and five male dancers, and the lead role of Mowgli is danced by **Sanchit Babbar**, an alumnus of the Ailey School (a 2015 graduate of the school's Scholarship Program) who was born and raised in New Delhi. The recorded music score mixes upbeat *bhangra* and Bollywood music with classical *ragas* and folkloric music from across India.

The company is joined by guest artist, *bharatanatyam* dancer **Nadhi Thekkek**, who dances the role of Mowgli's human mother, Messua. Thekkek's Bay Area company, **Nava Dance Theatre**, will begin the performance with a newly commissioned narrative dance work in the *bharatanatyam* tradition, created especially for these performances and featuring live music.

Educational Programs

Educational performances of *Jangala* are scheduled for East Bay schoolchildren at Skyline High School Performing Arts Center on Thursday–Friday, March 8–9 at 9:30am and 11:30am, and at Castro Valley High School Performing Arts Center on Tuesday March 13 at 9:30am and 11:30am. School performances include an introduction both to ballet and to *bharatanatyam*, and conclude with a Q&A session with the artists. All matinee student performances of *Jangala* are offered free of charge to students in Oakland Title 1 area public schools; \$7 for all other students.

About Artistic Director Graham Lustig

Since he joined as Artistic Director in 2010, a position which became full-time in the 2016/17 season, Graham 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 organizational stability. For eight 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 Midsummer Night's Dream* (2017); *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). *Luna Mexicana*, Lustig's dance celebration of the Day of the Dead, made its highly successful Oakland premiere in 2016 and has become a fall tradition.

In collaboration with several East Bay school districts including Oakland, Castro Valley, Dublin, Hayward, Livermore, New Haven (Union City), Pleasanton, and San Leandro Unified

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School Districts, under Lustig's watch Oakland Ballet has expanded its educational outreach program, *Discover Dance*, to provide educational arts programs to more than 24 area schools annually. Educational events such as in-school assemblies, open rehearsals and student matinees reach more than 15,000 local school children each year.

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.

About The Guest Artists

Nadhi Thekkek and Nava Dance Theatre

Nadhi Thekkek studied *bharatanatyam* under Smt. Sundara Swaminathan, Artistic Director of Kala Vandana Dance Company. She also spent six years under the guidance of teacher and mentor Smt. Padmini Chari, Director of Nritya School of Dance, and is currently under the guidance of Sri A. Lakshmanaswamy of Nrityalakshana (Chennai) and returns to India regularly for training and performance.

Nava Dance Theatre is a San Francisco Bay Area *bharatanatyam* dance company, formed in 2012, which uses classical south Indian dance as a medium for artistic reflection and discovery. Nava's resident choreographers and company dancers believe that *bharatanatyam*, while classical, is a modern medium that can be used to discover and understand both traditional and contemporary themes. The company was recently in residence with the CounterPulse Performing Diaspora Residency/Commissioning Program, and has also presented performances at the National Steinbeck Center, Salinas; San Francisco Ethnic

Dance Festival; American Indian Foundation Gala, San Francisco; Sangam Arts, San Rafael; and Mbongui Square, San Francisco.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Jangala* on Saturday, March 10 at 2:30pm at the **Skyline High School Performing Arts Center** range from \$15-50, available at BrownPaperTickets.com beginning February 1. Tickets for the Tuesday, March 13 performance at 7pm at the **Castro Valley High School Performing Arts Center** range from \$15-50, available at oaklandballet.org beginning February 1. Discounts are available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

What: Oakland Ballet Company Presents *Jangala*
When: Saturday March 10, 2:30pm
Where: Skyline High School Performing Arts Center
12250 Skyline Blvd., Oakland, CA 94619
Tickets: Tickets range from \$15-50, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. Tickets are available at BrownPaperTickets.com beginning February 1.
Contact: Contact Oakland Ballet for more information at info@oaklandballet.org or 510-893-3132
Description: Oakland Ballet Company presents *Jangala*, a family-friendly performance inspired by Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, that fuses contemporary ballet with south Indian classical and contemporary dance. With special guests, Nava Dance Theatre. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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What: Oakland Ballet Company Presents *Jangala*
When: Tuesday March 13, 7:00pm
Where: Castro Valley High School Performing Arts Center
19501 Redwood Rd, Castro Valley, CA 94546
Tickets: Tickets range from \$15-50, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. Tickets are available at www.oaklandballet.org beginning February 1.
Contact: Contact Oakland Ballet for more information at info@oaklandballet.org or 510-893-3132.
Description: Oakland Ballet Company presents *Jangala*, a family-friendly performance inspired by Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, that fuses contemporary ballet with south Indian classical and contemporary dance. With special guests, Nava Dance Theatre. For more information, visit www.oaklandballet.org.

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