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## OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY ANNOUNCES 2018/19 SEASON

### ***LUNA MEXICANA***

a Family-Friendly Celebration of the Day of the Dead

plus the world premiere of *VIVA LA VIDA*, a tribute to Frida Kahlo co-created with Ballet Folklorico Mexico Danza

Friday–Saturday, November 2–3 at the Paramount Theatre

### **GRAHAM LUSTIG'S *THE NUTCRACKER***

with live music by the Oakland Symphony

returns to the Paramount Theatre, Saturday–Sunday, December 22–23

### **SPRING REPERTORY SEASON**

Thursday May 30–Saturday June 1, 2018 at Laney College

Celebrating Five Years of **EAST BAY DANCES** Festival

Sunday, June 2, 2018 at Laney College

**Educational programs will reach more than 15,000 East Bay school children this season**

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

Video: [Luna Mexicana](#)

Oakland, CA, September 18, 2018 – Oakland Ballet Company announces its 2018/19 season, including two perennial family favorites, ***Luna Mexicana*** this November 2–3, and **Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker***, on December 22–23; as well as the annual **Spring Repertory Season** from May 30–June 1, 2019, and the latest edition of **East Bay DANCES** on June 2, 2019. The performances highlight the growing 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 by presenting both classic repertoire and fresh new works.

### ***Luna Mexicana and Viva La Vida***

*Luna Mexicana*, a family-friendly celebration of the Mexican Day of the Dead, returns to the Paramount Theatre on Friday November 2 at 7:30pm, and Saturday November 3 at 4pm. This year's program features the world premiere of *Viva la Vida*, a new work co-choreographed by Oakland Ballet Company Artistic Director, Graham Lustig and Martín Romero of Ballet Folklórico Mexico Danza. The dance will celebrate the life and artistry of iconic Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo, using her self-portraits as a springboard to explore the many facets of her personality.

"I wanted to create a work about Frida Kahlo because I am so inspired by her spirit, as an artist of incredible resilience and passion," said Oakland Ballet Company Artistic Director, Graham Lustig. "Her journey as a woman of enormous physical challenges, who refused to be limited or defined by those challenges, is something I was eager to explore through dance."

In addition to *Viva la Vida*, the program includes Lustig's work, *Luna Mexicana*, which 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 dance back to life in the form of teetering skeletons, skirt-swishing ladies, a high flying "deer dancer," and a bride and groom duet.

The program will be presented in two acts with an intermission. The first half of the evening will feature a selection of Mexican contemporary and folkloric dance and music curated by Lustig, including performances by the Aztec ensemble, **Nahui-Ehekatl and Co.** and **Ballet Folklórico Mexico Danza**. Festivities begin in the lobby of the Paramount at 6:30pm, with *ofrendas* on display created by local Latina artists and vendors selling Day of the Dead refreshments such as the sweet *pan de muerto*, tamales and *horchata*. Audience members of all ages are encouraged to attend in Day of the Dead costume.

### **Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker***

A highlight of the holiday season, the ninth annual production of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* returns to Oakland's Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 22 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 23 at 1pm. Oakland Ballet's *Nutcracker* has been widely praised for refreshing the holiday classic with smart choreography, clever storytelling and vibrant sets and costumes. This season marks the 47th year that Oakland Ballet has presented a production of the Nutcracker in the East Bay. As in

previous years, Tchaikovsky's iconic score is performed live by the **Oakland Symphony**, under the direction of Michael Morgan; the **Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir** joins the orchestra for the Snow Scene. Each year, the production features more than 40 young Bay Area dancers aged 7 to 17, in the 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.

Several related ticketed events offer ballet audiences opportunities to interact with Oakland Ballet dancers in a festive holiday setting, and support the *Nutcracker* performances. **Sweet Dreams Parties** follow the 1pm matinee performances on Saturday, December 23 and Sunday, December 24 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 22 evening performance in the Mezzanine of the Paramount Theatre. The reception will include champagne, hors d'oeuvres and desserts, in the company of Oakland Ballet dancers and artistic staff.

### **Spring Repertory Season**

The program for Oakland Ballet Company's Spring Repertory Season will be announced in early 2019. Performances are planned for Thursday–Saturday, May 30–June 1, 2019 at 7:30pm, and Saturday June 1 at 2:30pm in the Odell Johnson Performing Arts Center, Laney College, Oakland.

### **East Bay DANCES '19**

East Bay DANCES '19, Oakland Ballet Company's fifth annual community dance celebration, is planned for Sunday, June 2 at 4pm in the Odell Johnson Performing Arts Center, Laney College. An assortment of area dance companies will offer short performances as part of the popular program, with members of Oakland Ballet performing excerpts of spring season repertory alongside the invited groups. Bringing together an array of groups working in classical, folk, popular and contemporary dance styles, *East Bay DANCES '19* is a catalyst to connect diverse corners of the East Bay dance community. This year's participants will be announced in spring 2019.

### **Educational Programs**

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. Special student performances of *Luna Mexicana* will take place on October 18 at San Leandro High School Performing Arts Center; October 26 at Amador Valley High School; October 30 at Castro Valley Center for the Arts; and November 2 in the Paramount Theatre. The Paramount Theatre student matinee performance of *Luna Mexicana* is offered free of charge to students in Emeryville and Oakland Unified Title 1 schools thanks to generous underwriting by various benefactors; \$10 for all other students. The City of San Leandro is also hosting a free performance of *Luna Mexicana* for all San Leandro residents on Thursday, October 18 at 6pm at San Leandro High School Performing Arts Center.

As in past seasons, on-site educational performances of Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* will be held in 8-10 East Bay elementary schools, in partnership with the Oakland Unified School District on December 13, 14, 17 and 18. Additionally, 2500 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* on Friday, December 21. 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.

This winter, Oakland Ballet Company launches a new education initiative, called *You Can Dance!*, an in-school dance residency program from January through March, 2019, in three Oakland public schools. The Walter and Elise Haas Fund is supporting this pilot version of the program, which the company plans to expand in coming seasons. *You Can Dance!* is an exciting complement to the company's robust *Discover Dance* education program, as it provides students with a deeper, more experiential engagement with the art of dance.

### **Ticket Information**

Tickets for *Luna Mexicana* on Friday, November 2 at 7:30pm and Saturday, November 3 at 4pm in the Paramount Theatre are \$22-55, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. For the November 3 performance, Silver Sponsor tickets, priced at \$100, include VIP seating and a post-performance Meet the Artists reception at the Paramount Theatre; Gold Sponsor tickets, priced at \$200, include Silver Sponsor benefits, plus dinner at Agave Uptown restaurant.

General admission tickets for Graham Lustig's *The Nutcracker* on Saturday, December 22 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 23 at 1pm, in the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, are priced from \$24-97. A 15% discount is available for tickets purchased before November 1. Tickets for the Sweet Dreams

children's parties following the 1pm matinees at the Paramount Theatre on Saturday, December 22 and Sunday, December 23, are \$15. Tickets for the Encore champagne reception at the Paramount Theatre following the 5pm performance on Saturday, December 22, are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under.

Tickets for all Paramount Theatre performances are on sale now, available at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com) (service fees apply) or in person at the Paramount Theatre Box Office. Ticking information for Oakland Ballet's Spring Repertory production and for East Bay DANCES '19, will be announced in January.

### **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 *Scene and Heard* (2018); *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. *Jangala*, inspired by Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, had its West Coast premiere in March 2018.

Under Lustig's watch and in collaboration with several East Bay school districts including Oakland, Castro Valley, Dublin, Hayward, Livermore, New Haven (Union City), Pleasanton, and San Leandro Unified School Districts, 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 54 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 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; ticket donations to season performances; and scholarships to company training programs.

*Oakland Ballet’s 2018/19 season sponsors include:* Chevron, US Bank, the Walther and Elise Haas Fund, California Arts Council, the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, the City of Emeryville, Clorox Company Foundation, the David and Lynn Kravis Family Foundation, Snider and Associates, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, the Bernard Osher Foundation, Matson, Douglas Parking, and TMG Partners.

**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

**What:** Oakland Ballet Presents *Luna Mexicana: A Day of the Dead Celebration*  
**When:** Friday, November 2 at 7:30pm and Saturday, November 3 at 4pm  
**Where:** Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA  
**Tickets:** Tickets are \$22-55, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. Tickets are available online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://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](http://www.oaklandballet.org).

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**What:** Oakland Ballet Presents Graham Lustig’s *The Nutcracker*, with the Oakland Symphony  
**When:** Saturday, December 22 at 1pm and 5pm, and Sunday, December 23 at 1pm  
**Where:** Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland, CA  
**Tickets:** Tickets are priced from \$24-97, with discounts available for seniors, children 12 and under, and groups of 10 or more. Tickets are available online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://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 22–23. For more information, visit [www.oaklandballet.org](http://www.oaklandballet.org).

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