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OAKLAND BALLET COMPANY PRESENTS  
**JANGALA**  
A FAMILY-FRIENDLY BALLET INSPIRED BY SOUTH INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE  
Thursday–Saturday, May 30–June 1

Community Dance Celebration *East Bay DANCES* Returns in its Fifth Year  
Sunday, June 2

Both performances are at Odell Johnson Center for the Performing Arts,  
Laney College, Oakland

In-school performances also offered to hundred of schoolchildren in the Livermore, San Leandro and Oakland Unified school districts, for free or at reduced cost

Oakland, CA, April 17, 2019 – Oakland Ballet Company presents *Jangala*, a dance theater work by Artistic Director, Graham Lustig, from Thursday–Friday, May 30–31 at 7:30pm, and Saturday June 1 at 3pm and 7:30pm in the Odell Johnson Center for the Performing Arts, Laney College, Oakland. *Jangala*, which had its highly successful Bay Area premiere last season, 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*. **Nadhi Thekkek**, Artistic Director of **Nava Dance Theatre**, joins members of Oakland Ballet Company as a guest artist in *Jangala*, and her company opens each performance with a recent work in the *bharatanatyam* tradition. The program also includes the premiere of a new collaborative work by Lustig and Thekkek, which combines the male and female dancers of both companies in an exploration of the movement vocabularies of *bharatanatyam* and classical ballet. To conclude the weekend’s performances, Oakland Ballet Company presents the fifth annual edition of its popular community dance celebration, **East Bay DANCES**, on Sunday June 2 at 4pm, also at Laney College.

## ***Jangala***

*Jangala* 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. In his retelling of the Kipling story, 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. *Jangala* features a cast of 11 female and five male dancers, and the lead role of Mowgli is danced by **Jammie Walker**. 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 reprises her role of Messua, Mowgli's mother. Thekkek's Bay Area company, **Nava Dance Theatre**, will once again begin the performance with a narrative dance work in the *bharatanatyam* tradition. Lustig and Thekkek also premiere a new creation set on both companies' dancers, exploring and extending the traditions of both *bharatanatyam* and classical ballet. Both of these works will feature live music performed by Indian classical musicians.

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

Participants for East Bay DANCES '19, Oakland Ballet Company's fifth annual community dance celebration, include Marika Brussel, A. Spearman & Co., Alyssa Mitchel, Emergence Dance Company, Jubilee American Dance Theatre, Sarah Bush Dance Project, Kathryn Roszak's Danse Lumiere, Shabnam Dance Company, Savage Jazz Dance Company, Ballet Folklorico México Danza, natalya shoaf, and Linda Steele II. This year, an assortment of area dance companies will offer short performances as part of the popular program, with members of Oakland Ballet performing excerpts of company repertory works, *Jazz Vistas* and *Jangala* alongside the invited groups. The program offers subsidized theater space and production facilities for smaller local dance groups, and low-cost tickets for audience members. 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, and to help develop new and broader audiences for a range of dance genres.

## **Community Performances and Educational Programs**

Additional community performances of *Jangala* are planned at the Bankhead Theater at the Livermore Performing Arts Center, on Tuesday, May 28 at 7pm; and at San Leandro High School Performing Arts Center on May 22 at 7pm. Tickets for the Livermore performance are available via the theater website, <https://lvpac.org>. Tickets for the San Leandro performances are free for San Leandro residents, and are available on the City of San Leandro's website.

Educational performances of *Jangala* are scheduled for East Bay schoolchildren at the Bankhead Theater at the Livermore Performing Arts Center on May 28; at San Leandro High School Performing Arts Center on May 22; and at the Odell Johnson Center for the Performing Arts Center at Laney College in Oakland on May 31. School performances include an introduction both to ballet and to *bharatanatyam*, and conclude with a Q&A session with the artists. Oakland matinee student performances of *Jangala* are offered free of charge to students in Oakland Title 1 area public schools; \$7 for all other students.

### ***Jangala* 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.

#### **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 nine 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 *Jazz Vistas* (2019); *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.

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

### Ticket Information

Tickets for *Jangala* on Thursday–Friday, May 30–31 at 7:30pm, and Saturday June 1 at 3pm and 7:30pm in the Odell Johnson Center for the Performing Arts at Laney College, Oakland are \$30-50 for full-priced general admission, \$25 for seniors, and \$20 for children and students, on sale now at [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com). Tickets for *East Bay DANCES '19* on Sunday, June 2 in the Odell Johnson Center for the Performing Arts at Laney College, Oakland are \$25 for general admission, \$20 for seniors, and \$15 for children and students, available at [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com).

### CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

**What:** Oakland Ballet Company Presents *Jangala*  
**When:** Thursday–Friday, May 30–31 at 7:30pm, and Saturday June 1 at 3pm and 7:30pm  
**Where:** Odell Johnson Center for the Performing Arts at Laney College  
900 Fallon St, Oakland, CA 94607  
**Tickets:** Tickets range from \$30-50, with discounts available for seniors, college students, and children under age 18. Tickets are on sale now at [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com).  
**Contact:** Contact Oakland Ballet for more information at [info@oaklandballet.org](mailto: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](http://www.oaklandballet.org).

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**What:** Oakland Ballet Company presents *East Bay DANCES '19*  
**When:** Sunday, June 2 at 4pm  
**Where:** Odell Johnson Performing Arts Center at Laney College  
900 Fallon Street, Oakland  
**Tickets:** Tickets, priced at \$25 general admission (\$20 seniors/\$15 ages 17 and under and students), are on sale now at [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com), and will be available at the door the day of the performance.  
**Description:** East Bay DANCES '19, presented by Oakland Ballet Company, showcases the best and brightest in East Bay dance, featuring an array of local companies working in classical, folk, popular and contemporary dance styles.

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