NEW YORK CITY BALLET ANNOUNCES DIGITAL SEASON

World Premiere by Choreographer Kyle Abraham to be Filmed Onstage at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center For Online Release Beginning April 8

Spring Gala on May 5 to Feature a World Premiere by NYCB Resident Choreographer and Artistic Advisor Justin Peck and Choreography by NYCB Co-Founding Choreographers George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins Specially Filmed On Location at the David H. Koch Theater


Annual Luncheon Benefit on March 9 to Celebrate NYCB Principal Dancers Maria Kowroski, Gonzalo Garcia, and Ask la Cour Who Will Give Their Farewell Performances with NYCB During the 2021-22 Season

The Season Will Also Include Additional Episodes of City Ballet The Podcast and the Return of NYCB’s Popular Interactive Educational Programs: Ballet Essentials Movement Workshops for Teens and Adults Ballet Breaks Movement Workshops for Children Signature Steps, a NYCB-Focused Ballet Class for Intermediate to Advanced Level Dancers and Access Workshops for Children, Teens, and Adults with Disabilities

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New York City Ballet announced today that in advance of its planned return to live performances at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in September 2021, the Company is planning to create several new works and special programs, many of which will be specially filmed onstage at the Koch Theater, for online release from February through May 2021.
Highlights will include a World Premiere by choreographer Kyle Abraham, his third collaboration with NYCB, which will be created during a residency at the Kaatsbaan Cultural Park in Tivoli, New York. For the filming of the ballet, Abraham will collaborate with Ryan Marie Helfant, an award-winning filmmaker who was one of several cinematographers who lensed the visual album Black is King, directed by Beyoncé. Abraham’s new work will be released on Thursday, April 8 and will be available for streaming for two weeks.

NYCB Resident Choreographer and Artistic Advisor Justin Peck will also create a new work, a solo for NYCB Principal Dancer Anthony Huxley, for an online World Premiere as part of the Company’s virtual Spring Gala on Wednesday, May 5. The Spring Gala program will also feature choreography by NYCB co-founding choreographers George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins specially filmed for the occasion. Following the May 5 Spring Gala virtual event, which will feature special perks and exclusive content for ticket buyers, the program will also be available for streaming for two weeks beginning Thursday, May 6.

“As the Company continues to plan for our return to the Koch Theater stage in September for the start of the 2021-22 performance season, we will once again present a series of digital programs with much of the content newly filmed in our theater at Lincoln Center,” said NYCB Artistic Director Jonathan Stafford. “That glorious venue, NYCB’s home since 1964, has been dark for nearly a year, and to see the theater begin to reawaken with NYCB’s wonderful dancers performing new works by Justin Peck and Kyle Abraham, as well as iconic masterpieces by George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, is going to be a thrilling experience for all of us.”

“Creating new work has been a hallmark of NYCB since its inception and to be able to continue that tradition, even now during the ongoing pandemic, is extremely meaningful,” said NYCB Associate Artistic Director Wendy Whelan. “The ability to bring a number of our artists back to the theater at this time to work with Justin and Kyle is very exciting, and I can’t wait to see the results.”

“We are so pleased to virtually share these performances with our donors and audience members who have been incredibly supportive of NYCB during the past year,” said NYCB Executive Director Katherine Brown. “In addition to the performances of new works and NYCB classics, the Company will also present more than 30 podcasts, workshops, and ballet classes for people of all ages and abilities over the next few months. Since the pandemic began all of our digital offerings have been enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people around the world, many of whom are experiencing NYCB for the first time ever.”

The 2021 digital season will begin with a three-part series called “Three Sides of Balanchine,” which will explore three works by the legendary choreography that demonstrate Balanchine’s narrative, classical, and neoclassical traditions—Prodigal Son, Theme and Variations, and Stravinsky Violin Concerto.
The series will begin on Monday, February 22, and for the following three weeks NYCB will launch new episodes of *City Ballet The Podcast*; original “Inside NYCB” presentations, hosted by Principal Dancer Russell Janzen and featuring onstage rehearsal sessions and conversations with NYCB artists; and finally, full performance streams of the three landmark works, created over a span of more than 40 years.

The first week of the series, launching Monday, February 22, will explore *Prodigal Son*, a narrative work from 1929; the second week, launching Monday, March 1, will look at *Theme and Variations*, a virtuosic classical showpiece from 1947; and the final week of the series, launching Monday, March 8, will focus on *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*, a neoclassical masterpiece from 1972.

On Tuesday, March 9, NYCB will present a digital version of its Annual Luncheon benefit, which will celebrate NYCB Principal Dancers Maria Kowroski, Gonzalo Garcia, and Ask la Cour, who are scheduled to give their farewell performances with NYCB during the 2021-22 performance season. This special virtual program will be hosted by NYCB board member Donya Archer Bommer, who will moderate a conversation with each of the dancers. The program will also include several short performance excerpts from each dancer’s extraordinary career with NYCB.

The digital season will also include additional all-new episodes of *City Ballet The Podcast*; six *Ballet Essentials* interactive repertory workshops for teens and adults; six *Ballet Breaks* movement workshops for children; six *Signature Steps*, one-hour ballet classes designed for intermediate and advanced level dancers; and twelve *Access Workshops* for people with disabilities—six for children and six for teens and adults.

For updates and further information on how to view each of these presentations visit nycballet.com/digitalseason.

**NYCB DIGITAL SEASON**

**February 22 through March 11 – THREE SIDES OF BALANCHINE**

**Week 1:** NYCB explores *Prodigal Son*, a narrative work which was created in Paris in 1929 for Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes to a score by Sergei Prokofiev. *Prodigal Son* is the second oldest work by Balanchine that is still performed today, the oldest being *Apollo* created in 1928. The week of programming will begin on Monday, February 22, with the launch of a “Hear the Dance” episode of *City Ballet The Podcast*, hosted by former NYCB dancer Silas Farley who will interview Edward Villella, the legendary dancer and artistic director who first performed the title role of *Prodigal Son*, coached by Balanchine, in a 1960 revival of the work for NYCB.

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On Tuesday, February 23 at 8pm (EST), the first of three “Inside NYCB” presentations will look at the role of The Siren, the leading female role in *Prodigal Son*, featuring a rehearsal and conversation with Principal Dancer Maria Kowroski, who has performed the role for many years; NYCB Repertory Director Lisa Jackson; and corps de ballet member Christina Clark, who will be learning the role as part of this special program hosted by NYCB Principal Dancer Russell Janzen.

On Thursday, February 25 at 8pm (EST), NYCB will launch a digital stream of a previously filmed performance of the complete *Prodigal Son* featuring NYCB Principal Dancers Daniel Ulbricht and Teresa Reichlen in the leading roles. The *Prodigal Son* "Inside NYCB" presentation and full performance stream will be available online through Thursday, March 4.

**Week 2:** NYCB explores *Theme and Variations*, the classical showpiece that Balanchine created for Ballet Theatre (now American Ballet Theatre) in 1947 to a score by Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky, which is also the fourth and final movement of *Tschaikovsky Suite No. 3*, created by Balanchine for NYCB in 1970. The week of programming will begin on Monday, March 1, with a “See the Music” episode of *City Ballet The Podcast*, hosted by NYCB Music Director Andrew Litton, who will discuss Tschaikovsky’s score for the ballet.

On Tuesday, March 2 at 8pm (EST), the Company will present an “Inside NYCB” presentation, hosted by Janzen, focusing on a virtuosic male solo from *Theme and Variations* through a conversation and rehearsal session with NYCB Principal Dancers Andrew Veyette and Joseph Gordon, both of whom have performed the ballet’s principal male role, and Repertory Director Kathleen Tracey.

On Thursday, March 4 at 8pm, NYCB will launch a digital stream of a previously filmed performance of *Theme and Variations* featuring Tiler Peck and Andrew Veyette in the principal roles. Both the *Theme and Variations* “Inside NYCB” presentation and performance stream will be available through Thursday, March 11.

**Week 3:** NYCB explores *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*, the neoclassical masterpiece that Balanchine created for the opening night of NYCB’s legendary Stravinsky Festival in 1972. The week of programming will begin on Monday, March 8, with a “Hear the Dance” episode of *City Ballet The Podcast*, for which Farley will interview former NYCB principal dancer Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, who originated the leading male role in the ballet’s “First Aria.”

On Tuesday, March 9 at 8pm (EST), Janzen will host the third and final “Inside NYCB” presentation of the “Three Sides of Balanchine” series with a look at one of the female solos from *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* featuring a conversation and rehearsal session with Principal Dancer Sara Mearns and Soloist Claire Kretzschmar, both of whom have performed the leading female role in the ballet’s “First Aria,” and Repertory Director Rebecca Krohn.

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On Thursday, March 11 at 8pm, NYCB will launch a digital stream of a previously filmed performance of Stravinsky Violin Concerto featuring Sterling Hyltin, Ask la Cour, Sara Mearns, and Taylor Stanley in the leading roles. Both the Stravinsky Violin Concerto “Inside NYCB” presentation and performance stream will be available through Thursday, March 18.

All episodes of City Ballet The Podcast are available at podcast.nycballet.com and on all platforms where podcasts are available. “Inside NYCB” presentations and performance streams for the “Three Sides or Balanchine” will be available free-of-charge for one week only on NYCB’s YouTube channel (YouTube.com/nycballet) and website (nycballet.com). For more information visit nycballet.com/digitalseason.

March 9, 2021 – ANNUAL LUNCHEON

For the 2021 Annual Luncheon, a fund-raising benefit that typically takes place at the Koch Theater each winter, NYCB will present a virtual version of the event at 1pm on Thursday, March 9.

Titled “A Parting Pas de Trois” the one-time only program will feature conversations with three NYCB Principal Dancers who will be retiring from the Company during the 2021-22 performance season: Maria Kowroski, Gonzalo Garcia, and Ask la Cour.

For the luncheon program each dancer will perform an excerpt from a work closely associated with their careers with NYCB, as well as participate in a conversation with NYCB Board Member Donya Archer Bommer, which will also feature performance clips from their extraordinary careers with the Company. Chairs for the event are: Lauren Duff, Kira Faiman, Heather Hoyt Georges, Brynn Putnam, Pauline Reyniak, Danielle Taubman, and Melissa Vlak.

Ticket buyers for the virtual Annual Luncheon event will receive a home delivery of food and beverages prior to the event, and will also be invited into breakout rooms following the program for a special opportunity to talk with Kowroski, Garcia, and la Cour. For information on purchasing tickets for the virtual Annual Luncheon, visit nycballet.com/special-events or contact the NYCB Special Events Department at (212) 870-5585.

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April 8, 2021 – KYLE ABRAHAM WORLD PREMIERE

Choreographer Kyle Abraham will create a new work that will be filmed onstage at the David H. Koch Theater and released online on Thursday, April 8. This collaboration, which will be created during a residency at the Kaatsbaan Cultural Park in Tivoli, New York, marks the third time that Abraham, the founder and director of the acclaimed modern dance company A.I.M., has worked with NYCB. He previously created The Runaway (2018) and the film Ces noms que nous portons, a solo for NYCB Principal Dancer Taylor Stanley that was co-produced with Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and filmed on the Lincoln Center campus last summer.

During the month of February, Abraham and eight NYCB dancers—Stanley, Lauren Lovette, Claire Kretzschmar, Sebastian Villarini-Velez, India Bradley, Jonathan Fahoury, Christopher Grant, and KJ Takahashi—will travel to Kaatsbaan for a three-week residency. Abraham and the dancers will work in a COVID-compliant residence bubble involving regular testing and other medical protocols to ensure that the participants can collaborate together in a safe environment during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The safety guidelines are being supervised and monitored by Dr. Wendy Ziecheck, who has provided similar expertise for a number of dance organizations since the pandemic began.

Abraham will co-direct the filming of his work with Ryan Marie Helfant, an award-winning filmmaker who has contributed cinematography to the visual albums Black is King (directed by Beyoncé) and When I Get Home (directed by Solange). Helfant’s numerous credits include music videos featuring artists such as Alicia Keys, Lil Nas X, and Vince Staples, and commercial work for Apple, Gucci, and Rimowa, among many others. For New York City Ballet, Helfant previously directed the Company’s 2018-19 season promotional campaign film.

The new work by Abraham will be available online for two weeks, through Thursday, April 22; visit nycballet.com/digitalseason for more information.

May 5, 2021 – SPRING GALA and JUSTIN PECK WORLD PREMIERE

NYCB will present its first-ever virtual gala on Wednesday, May 5, which will feature all-new film captures of new and existing work from NYCB’s repertory, filmed on location at the David H. Koch Theater. Highlighting the program will be a World Premiere by NYCB Resident Choreographer and Artistic Advisor Justin Peck, who is creating a solo work for NYCB Principal Dancer Anthony Huxley set to a string quartet arrangement of Samuel Barber’s Adagio for Strings. This special program will also include excerpts of works by George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins newly filmed for the occasion.

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For tickets to the May 5 Spring Gala event, which will include special perks and exclusive content, please contact the NYCB Special Events department at (212) 870-5585. Following the May 5 Spring Gala event, the performance will also be available online for two weeks, from Thursday, May 6, through Thursday, May 20; visit nycballet.com/digitalseason for more information.

**Podcasts and Education Workshops**

**City Ballet The Podcast**

In addition to the three episodes of City Ballet The Podcast that explore *Prodigal Son*, *Theme and Variations*, and *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* as part of the “Three Sides of Balanchine” series, NYCB will present two additional “New Combinations” episodes of the podcast series, which will be hosted by NYCB Associate Artistic Director Wendy Whelan. The first “New Combinations” podcast episode will launch on Monday, April 5, and focus on the new work by Kyle Abraham; the second will launch on Monday, May 3, and focus on the new work by Justin Peck.

All episodes of City Ballet The Podcast are available at podcast.nycballet.com and on all platforms where podcasts are available.

**Ballet Breaks Workshops**

NYCB’s Education Department will once again present Ballet Breaks, a series of interactive movement workshops for children ages 3 through 8. Each of the 30-minute workshops will be taught by a NYCB dancer who will lead participants through a warm-up and movement combinations inspired by iconic works from NYCB’s repertory. Live music accompanies all workshops, which are powered by Zoom.

The 2021 Ballet Breaks Workshops will take place on Saturday mornings from 11am to 11:30am (EST) on the following dates: February 27 (*The Four Seasons*), March 6 (*Who Cares*?), March 13 (*The Sleeping Beauty*), May 8 (repertory TBA), May 15 (repertory TBA), and May 22 (repertory TBA).

Suggested registration fees for Ballet Breaks online are $8 per workshop, which includes the live experience only, or $12 per workshop, which also includes a link to a digital recording of the workshop that will be active for three weeks following the live event. For those unable to pay a registration fee, participation in the live Ballet Breaks workshops will also be available free of charge. For more information visit nycballet.com/balletbreaks.

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**Ballet Essentials Workshops**

NYCB’s Education Department will also present six *Ballet Essentials* movement workshops for teens and adults. The one-hour workshops are powered by Zoom and led by NYCB dancers and pianists who will take participants through a ballet warm-up and choreography inspired by works in NYCB’s repertory. The workshops will take place Monday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30pm (EST) on the following dates: February 22 (*Prodigal Son*), March 1 (*Theme and Variations*), March 8 (*Stravinsky Violin Concerto*), May 3 (repertory TBA), May 10 (repertory TBA), May 17 (repertory TBA).

Suggested registration fees for *Ballet Essentials* online are $10 per workshop, which includes the live experience only, or $15 per workshop, which also includes a link to a digital recording of the workshop that will be active for three weeks following the live event. For those unable to pay a registration fee, participation in the live *Ballet Essentials* workshops will also be available free of charge. Visit nycballet.com/balletessentialsonline for more information.

**Signature Steps**

NYCB’s Education Department will also offer *Signature Steps*, virtual ballet classes for intermediate to advanced level dancers who have a minimum of five years of training, technical proficiency, and a comprehensive understanding of barre and center work. These classes will move at a quick pace and include complex exercises.

The hour-long sessions will be taught by a different NYCB dancer each week and will focus on the qualities that make New York City Ballet unique, including George Balanchine’s signature aesthetic. Each class will be powered by Zoom and will feature live music. For the 2021 digital season, six classes will be offered on Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm to 7:30pm (EST) on the following dates: February 24, March 3, March 10, May 5, May 12, and May 19. There is a registration fee of $30 per class, which includes a link to a digital recording of the session that will be active for three weeks following the live event. For more information visit nycballet.com/signaturesteps.

**Access Workshops for People with Disabilities**

Online versions of the Company’s *Access Workshops*, designed especially for people with disabilities, will also be offered by the NYCB Education Department. In these interactive movement workshops, powered by Zoom, NYCB dancers will lead participants through a warm-up and choreography inspired by iconic ballets from NYCB’s repertory.

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Six one-hour Access Workshops for teens and adults will take place on Thursday evenings from 6pm to 7pm (EST) on the following dates: February 25 (Prodigal Son), March 4 (Theme and Variations), March 11 (Stravinsky Violin Concerto), May 6 (repertory TBA), May 13 (repertory TBA), and May 20 (repertory TBA). The Company will also present six 45-minute Access Workshops for children ages 4 through 12 which will take place on Saturdays from noon to 12:45pm on the following dates: February 27 (The Four Seasons), March 6 (Who Cares?), March 13 (The Sleeping Beauty), May 8 (repertory TBA), May 15 (repertory TBA), and May 22 (repertory TBA). Registration is free for all Access Workshops with an optional fee of $10 (children’s workshops) and $15 (teen and adult workshops) for those who would like a link to a digital recording of the workshop that will be active for three weeks following the live event. For more information on Access Workshops visit nycballet.com/accessworkshops and nycballet.com/childrensaccessworkshops for more information.

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