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Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Announces 2019-20 Dancer Roster

~ New dancers complete the Company for the 50th anniversary season ~

MILWAUKEE – July 22, 2019 – Artistic Director Michael Pink announced Milwaukee Ballet’s 2019-20 roster of dancers, which includes one promotion and six new artists.

Milwaukee Ballet welcomes Catherine Conley, Harold Cueto, Daniela Maarraoui, Marko Mikov, Benjamin Simoens and Andy Sousa as Artists.

“As we step into the Company’s 50th Anniversary, I sought out promising young dancers with the technique and artistry to usher us into a new era,” said Pink. “I’m very excited about what I’ve seen in these six dancers, and I think all of them will make an impression in the Company.

The six new dancers will arrive in Milwaukee Ballet’s new Baumgartner Center for Dance in September 2019 to prepare for the Company’s 50th anniversary season, opening with *Coppélia*.

Pink also promoted Randy Crespo to Leading Artist. Since joining Milwaukee Ballet in 2016, Crespo has danced as Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, Harker in Michael Pink’s *Dracula* and James in *La Sylphide*.

“Randy’s talent and memorable performances have made him a favorite with our patrons. I’m pleased to reward his commitment with this promotion,” said Pink.

Crespo is one of 18 dancers returning to Milwaukee Ballet, including:

Leading Artists: Randy Crespo, Marize Fumero; Annia Hidalgo; Davit Hovhannisyan, Patrick Howell, Nicole Teague-Howell

Artists: Parker Brasser-Vos, Josiah Cook, Elizabeth Harrison, Marie Harrison-Collins, Garrett Glassman, Alana Griffith, Itzel Hernandez, Kristen Marshall, Barry Molina, Lizzie Tripp, Lahna Vanderbush, Ransom Wilkes-Davis

More than one-third of the dancers in the Company in 2019-20 are graduates of Milwaukee Ballet II, the organization’s second company.

Leading Artist Timothy O’Donnell retired from dancing full-time and will stay with the Company as a Leading Character Artist, Resident Choreographer and Ballet Master for Milwaukee Ballet II.

Additionally, Artist Erik Johnson retired to pursue his higher education while Artists Christina Dennis, Luis Mondragon and Isaac Sharratt will dance with new Companies in the upcoming season.

New Dancers

Catherine Conley, Artist

Catherine Conley comes to Milwaukee Ballet from the Cuban National Ballet, where she danced as the

only foreign-born dancer in the Company. In Havana, Conley performed in the corps of *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella* and *The Magic Flute*. She also danced as Swanhilda in *Coppélia* and appeared in *Napoli* and *The Nutcracker* with the Civic Ballet of Chicago. Conley danced in the exclusive ENBC and CBC exchange between National Ballet School of Cuba and the Civic Ballet of Chicago.

Harold Cueto, Artist

Harold Cueto comes to Milwaukee Ballet from the Cuban National Ballet where he has danced since graduating from the National Ballet School of Cuba in 2016.

Daniela Katerina Maarraoui, Artist

Daniela Katerina Maarraoui trained with the Joffrey Academy of Dance, where she appeared with the Company in Christopher Wheeldon's *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*, as well as *Giselle* staged by Lola de Avila. Maarraoui has also danced as a guest artist with Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Semperoper Ballet and the International Ballet Competition Gala of 2016.

Marko Mikov, Artist

Born in Skopje, Macedonia, Marko Mikov comes to Milwaukee Ballet from San Antonio Ballet, where he danced as the principal male in George Balanchine's *Rubies*. He previously danced with Gelsey Kirkland Ballet and Macedonian Opera and Ballet. As a guest artist, he performed in Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and on a tour with a combined Madrid Ballet and Croatia Ballet.

Benjamin Simoens, Artist

Benjamin Simoens recently graduated from Juilliard School where he performed the work of Twyla Tharp, Jerome Robbins and José Limon, among others. Simoens spent his summers training at San Francisco Ballet, and was the winner of the National YoungArts Foundation Winner in Dance/Ballet in 2014.

Andy Sousa, Artist

Andy Sousa comes to Milwaukee Ballet from Cleveland Ballet, where he danced as the Arabian Principal in *The Nutcracker* and appeared in *Don Quixote* and *Le Corsaire*. Sousa has also danced with Florida Classical Ballet, Classical Ballet Company of Sinaloa Mexico and Cuban National Ballet.

The 2019-20 Season

Milwaukee Ballet celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2019-20. The Company opens the season with the first full-length ballet it ever presented, *Coppélia*, and continues with *The Nutcracker*, *Ballet Russe Reimagined*, *PUSH*, and Michael Pink's *Peter Pan*.

Milwaukee Ballet will also move into its new home, the Baumgartner Center for Dance, in September 2019.

About Milwaukee Ballet

Milwaukee Ballet was founded in 1970. Led by Artistic Director Michael Pink, Milwaukee Ballet transforms lives and connects communities through inspiring performance, community engagement,

education and training. Milwaukee Ballet hosts an international company of dancers and is one of the few companies in the nation to maintain its own orchestra. Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is the only professional dance school in the Midwest accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance. Milwaukee Ballet's award-winning Community Engagement department serves nearly 40,000 people in Southeastern Wisconsin each year through original, interactive programs. Milwaukee Ballet celebrates its 50th Anniversary in the 2019-20 season. The Company will move into the new Baumgartner Center for Dance in September 2019.

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Note to editors: Interviews with Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Michael Pink and headshots are available upon request.