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**MILWAUKEE
BALLET**

MICHAEL PINK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

MILWAUKEE BALLET'S *DRACULA* TO ENRAPTURE AUDIENCES THIS HALLOWEEN

- *The Wildly Popular Production Returns October 26-29 at Marcus Center-*

MILWAUKEE – October 12, 2023 – Milwaukee Ballet will kick off its 2023/24 Season with *Dracula* on Halloween weekend at Marcus Performing Arts Center. This interpretation of Bram Stoker's gothic classic is one of Artistic Director Michael Pink's most lauded productions, with a devoted audience following and rave reviews from around the world.

"*Dracula* has captured the minds of audiences since I first debuted it 26 years ago," says Pink. "It's dramatic, sensual, haunting—everything you expect from ballet and so much more. I'm so pleased to bring it back to Milwaukee, and based on the response we're receiving, audiences are just as excited."

This is the fourth time Pink will have staged *Dracula* in the past year alone. Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, Colorado Ballet, and Tokyo's NBA Ballet all put on this production during the 2022/23 season, continuing its history of touring both nationally and internationally.

In Milwaukee Ballet's upcoming performances, audiences will enjoy Philip Feeney's evocative score played live by Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra. Guest singers from Florentine Opera will also perform in Act III.

This production will mark the retirement of longtime Leading Artist Davit Hovhannisyan, who has performed with the Company for 20 years. This will be his fourth time playing the titular character in *Dracula*, which he considers his favorite role. He will remain with Milwaukee Ballet as Rehearsal Director for the Second Company.

"Milwaukee Ballet has been my second family for decades," says Hovhannisyan. "Everyone I've worked with has been so supportive and has pushed me to become a better artist. I am so grateful to everyone who has been a part of my career, including our incredible audiences."

Pink, who worked closely with Hovhannisyan throughout his tenure at Milwaukee Ballet, reminisces, "Davit's immense talent has been a gift to this Company since he first joined us in 2004. I am delighted that he will remain on staff with Milwaukee Ballet II and am sure that every dancer who comes through the program will benefit from his talent and expertise."

After Hovhannisyan's final bow during the evening performance on Saturday, October 28, the Company will celebrate his retirement with a "Vampire Bash" Halloween party, sponsored by Baird. The event will include drinks, appetizers, dancing, a vampire costume contest, and an appearance by Hovhannisyan himself, along with several other artists. Tickets are open to the public for \$50 and must be purchased separately from performance tickets.

From the first eerie note to the last bloody step, *Dracula* will be an unforgettable experience for new and returning fans alike.

Story Summary

On a visit to Transylvania, Jonathan Harker is witness to a bloody ritual before being taken to Count Dracula's castle. There, he is subject to a horrifying union with the vampire and returns home forever changed. Back in London, Harker's fiancé Mina and friend Lucy are enjoying a party when Dracula appears and seduces Lucy. She is taken to Dr. Van Helsing's sanatorium, where she transforms into Nosferatu, one of the undead. Dracula later returns to corrupt Mina as well, transporting her to a crypt where he will perform a blood mass with his horde of worshippers. Before the ritual is completed, he is staked through the heart by men coming to Mina's aid.

Performance Information

Dracula runs October 26-29 at Marcus Performing Arts Center. Tickets start at \$44 and are available for purchase via the Milwaukee Ballet Box Office at 414-902-2103 or online at milwaukeeballet.org.

The performance schedule is as follows:

- Thursday, October 26, 2023 — 07:30 PM
- Friday, October 27, 2023 — 07:30 PM
- Saturday, October 28, 2023 — 02:00 PM
- Saturday, October 28, 2023 — 07:30 PM*
- Sunday, October 29, 2023 — 2:30 PM

*Tickets for the Vampire Bash are available for all ticketholders to Saturday's evening performance. The event ticket is \$50 and must be purchased separately from the performance ticket. Both tickets are required to attend. Learn more and purchase tickets at milwaukeeballet.org/vampire-bash/

Milwaukee Ballet's 2023/2024 Season is presented by Donald & Donna Baumgartner with support from United Performing Arts Fund, Wisconsin Arts Board, CAMPAC, Milwaukee Arts Board, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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About Milwaukee Ballet

Milwaukee Ballet was founded in 1970. Led by Artistic Director Michael Pink, Milwaukee Ballet creates a rich and diverse community through its inspiring dance performance, education, and outreach. Milwaukee Ballet hosts an international Company of dancers and maintains 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, teaching beginner through pre-professional levels in three locations: Third Ward, Fox Point, and Brookfield. Milwaukee Ballet's award-winning Community Engagement department serves thousands of people in Southeastern Wisconsin each year through original, interactive programs. Milwaukee Ballet is a proud cornerstone member of United Performing Arts Fund and holds a four-star rating from Charity Navigator.

Note to Editors: Interviews with Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Michael Pink and Leading Artist Davit Hovhannisyian, as well as high-resolution images, are available upon request.