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**HOUSTON BALLET ANNOUNCES AN EXCITING PROMOTION  
DURING THE COMPANY'S HOMETOWN TOUR**

*Chun Wai Chan was promoted to Principal dancer on December 23, 2017*

HOUSTON, TEXAS [January 15, 2018] — Houston Ballet has announced that Artistic Director Stanton Welch AM has promoted Chun Wai Chan to Principal dancer. Formally a First Soloist, Chan was promoted on the evening of December 23, 2017 after starring in Stanton Welch's *The Nutcracker* as the Nutcracker Prince. This well-deserved promotion concluded Houston Ballet's performances at the Smart Financial Centre during the company's Hometown Tour.

"Dreams do come true," said Chan. "I have wanted to be a Principal dancer for a long time, but never expected it to happen this soon. Everyone's thoughts and words are the warmest gift for this Christmas."

Chan was born in Guang-Dong, China and received his professional dance training under Guang-Zhou Art School from 2004 to 2010. His honorary awards include 1st place in the 2006 CSTD International Ballet Competition in Australia, Finalist in the 2007 Beijing International Competition, 2nd place in the 2009 National Ballet Competition "Tao Li Cup" in China, Finalist in the 2010 Prix de Lausanne and received a full scholarship to study with Houston Ballet's second company (HBII). While attending HBII in 2011, he was awarded the "Houston Ballet Academy Award." Chan has performed all over the world and in many major cities throughout the United States. He has appeared in the Ninjinsky-Gala XLI in Hamburg, Germany, the 2015 Fall to Dance Festival in New York City Center, and was as a guest artist with Victoria Ballet in 2015 for the role of the Prince in *The Nutcracker*.

**About Houston Ballet**

Houston Ballet has evolved into a company of 59 dancers with a budget of \$33 million (making it the United States' fifth largest ballet company.) With a state-of-the-art performance space built especially

for the company, which is the largest professional dance facility in America, Houston Ballet's \$46.6 million Center for Dance opened in April 2011, with an endowment of just over \$74.1 million (as of July 2017).

Australian Choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003, raising the level of the company's classical technique and commissioning works from dance makers such as Christopher Bruce, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Trey McIntyre, Julia Adam, Edwaard Liang and George Balanchine. Executive Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the company, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the company's General Manager for over a decade.

Houston Ballet has toured extensively both nationally and internationally. Over the past fifteen years, the company has appeared in London at Sadler's Wells, at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Russia, in six cities in Spain, in Montréal and Ottawa, at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in New York at City Center and The Joyce Theater, at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris, at The Arts Center Melbourne State Theatre in Melbourne, Australia, in Los Angeles at The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and in cities large and small across the United States. Houston Ballet has emerged as a leader in the expensive, labor-intensive task of nurturing the creation and development of new full-length narrative ballets.

Writing in *Dancing Times* in June 2012, dance critic Margaret Willis praised Houston Ballet and highlighted the fact that "During his own tenure, (Stanton) Welch has upped the standard and Houston Ballet now shows off a group of dancers in splendid shape. With fast and tidy footwork, they are technically skillful and have strong, broad jumps and expansive, fluid movements. The dancers' musicality shines through their work, dancing as one with elegance and refinement – and they are a handsome bunch too!...if ballet were an Olympic sport, see Houston Ballet well on the way to achieving gold."

Houston Ballet Orchestra was established in the late 1970s and consists of 61 professional musicians who play for Houston Ballet's performances at Wortham Theater Center under Music Director Ermanno Florio.

Houston Ballet's Education and Community Engagement Program reaches over 60,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy teaches over one thousand students every year, and approximately 50% of the current company was trained by the Academy.

For more information on Houston Ballet visit [houstonballet.org](http://houstonballet.org).

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