**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Ellen Neiers, PR Manager

eneiers@houstonballet.org | press@houstonballet.org

C: (936) 230-9190



**Houston Ballet Elevates Harper Watters to Principal Dancer**

**Photos & Videos**: [Link [here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/9jc5a55m4ntw80sqs7mbd/APuV2wTab0xVbOTY4lffCZs?rlkey=sylp7sop6fdumf4weicsfr3d3&st=ashwyxvx&dl=0)]

**Houston, TX – March 3, 2025 –** [Houston Ballet](https://www.houstonballet.org/) is proud to announce the promotion of [Harper Watters](https://www.houstonballet.org/explore/dancers/first-soloist/harper-watters/) to Principal Dancer. Formally a First Soloist, Watters was promoted on Saturday evening of March 1, 2025 after starring in Stanton Welch’s *Maninyas* as the Blue Couple. This achievement marks a defining moment in Watters’ illustrious career and the Company's first promotion to principal since 2018, underscoring the exceptional talent and dedication Harper brings to the stage.

Raised in Dover, New Hampshire, Harper's passion for dance was evident from a young age. He began his formal training at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts, a pivotal period that not only honed his technical skills but also fostered his growth as an out-and-proud individual. In 2009, Harper's journey with Houston Ballet commenced when he joined Houston Ballet II, the Company's second company. His remarkable talent and dedication quickly propelled him through the ranks: he advanced to the corps de ballet in 2011, was promoted to demi soloist in 2016, and ascended to soloist in 2017. In 2021, he achieved the position of first soloist.

“Stepping into my audition with Houston Ballet feels like yesterday, but it was the beginning of something so much bigger,” said Harper Watters, Principal Dancer at Houston Ballet. “That day, I felt a sense of humanity and identity that this community has continued to show me, and that feeling has only grown. I’m grateful to be part of Houston Ballet and excited for the journey ahead — expressing myself through dance and sharing that passion with the world.”

Throughout his tenure, Harper has captivated audiences with his performances in a diverse repertoire, including Stanton Welch’s *The Nutcracker* (Prince) and *La Bayadère* (Performer); and Ben Stevenson's *The Nutcracker* (Gopak and Lead Flower), *Don Quixote* (Sancho Panza and Espada), *Giselle,* and *Romeo and Juliet*. He has danced 'Theme 1' in George Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments*, as well as roles in Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*, *Jewels*,and *Ballet Imperial*. Additionally, he performed in the World Premiere of Edwaard Liang's *Murmuration* and created roles in Aszure Barton's *Angular Momentum* and *Come In*; Garret Smith's *Return*; Justin Peck’s *Reflections* and Stanton Welch's *Sylvia* (Apollo), *The Rite of Spring*, and *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra* (Trumpet). Beyond the stage, Harper has become a prominent figure in the dance community through his vibrant social media presence. He has amassed a substantial following on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, where he shares insights into his life as a professional dancer and advocates for authenticity and self-expression.

Harper's promotion to Principal Dancer not only celebrates his artistic achievements but also highlights his role as a trailblazer in the ballet world. His journey reflects Houston Ballet's commitment to nurturing diverse talent and fostering an inclusive environment where artists

can thrive.

As Harper steps into this new role, Houston Ballet eagerly anticipates the continued impact of his artistry, both on stage and within the broader community.

For more information about Houston Ballet and upcoming performances, please visit[www.houstonballet.org](http://www.houstonballet.org).

**ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET**

With over 50 years of rich history, Houston Ballet has evolved into a company with a budget of $37.6 million and an endowment of $97.5 million (as of June 2023), making it the country’s fourth-largest ballet company. Its $46.6 million state-of-the-art performance space, the Houston Ballet Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance opened in April 2011. In addition, Houston Ballet's reach is global, touring theaters in Dubai, London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Tokyo and more.

Australian choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003. Welch has choreographed 43 new works for Houston Ballet during his tenure while ensuring the growth of the Company’s repertoire by presenting works from George Balanchine, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, John Neumeier, and Jerome Robbins. Welch continues the legacy of Houston Ballet being a choreographic Eden by commissioning over 30 works from world-renowned choreographers including Aszure Barton, Trey McIntyre, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and Justin Peck. Julie Kent joined Welch as Artistic Director in 2023, after serving as Artistic Director of The Washington Ballet from 2016 – 2023 and following a storied career as a Principal ballerina of American Ballet Theatre - the longest-tenured dancer in ABT’s 85-year history. Executive Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the organization, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the Company’s General Manager for more than a decade.

Beyond its stage presence, Houston Ballet maintains a strong foothold in continuing to foster a love for dance in future generations. Its Education and Community Engagement program reaches more than 85,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy trains more than 1,000 students every year, producing more than 60 percent of the extraordinary artists that comprise Houston Ballet’s current Company. For more information on Houston Ballet, visit [houstonballet.org](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.houstonballet.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7CALee%40houstonballet.org%7C64e1cc87723949d1a10408dc32704e3b%7C96ffe6484e0e4d839e7a0b72af0ac187%7C0%7C0%7C638440705143801451%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=VlLWJ3L1c7HffofHZEmSzSNXbtA4wnnmnjGzrK9zMKE%3D&reserved=0)

###