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HB ANNOUNCES ACADEMY DIRECTOR

Houston Ballet announces appointment of Madeleine Onne as Academy Director

HOUSTON, TEXAS [August 2016] - Houston Ballet Artistic Director Stanton Welch AM announces the appointment of Madeleine Onne as Director of Houston Ballet Academy. Ms. Onne will work closely with Mr. Welch to continue the high standard of educational and artistic excellence that the Academy has established over the past 61 years. She will lead the Academy's world renowned faculty, training over 1,000 students each year.

"I'm excited to join the Houston Ballet team as the Academy Director," says Ms. Onne. "The positive, educational atmosphere that Stanton and his team have created makes it clear - Houston Ballet is my new home. I look forward to working alongside Stanton and the Academy staff to advance Houston Ballet's vision of artistic excellence in Houston and abroad."

Born in Stockholm, Ms. Onne established herself in the international dance world as Principal Dancer of the Royal Swedish Ballet (RSB) from 1984 to 2002. There she danced almost all female principal roles in the classical repertoire as well as ballets including Sir Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Manon*, John Cranko's *Taming of the Shrew* and *Onegin*, John Neumeier's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Peer Gynt*, and ballets by George Balanchine, Birgit Cullberg, Goh Choo San, Jiří Kylián, Jerome Robbins, and Antony Tudor.

Ms. Onne's distinguished list of honors include, among others, the prestigious Royal medal *Litteris et Artibus* and The Royal Swedish Opera's Gold Medal of Honour in recognition of her years as a Principal Dancer. She is also one of only five women to have received the title of "Dancer of the Swedish Royal Court" from HRH King Carl XVI Gustaf.

After serving as Artistic Director of RSB for six years, Ms. Onne became Artistic Director of Hong Kong Ballet (HKB). Under her leadership, HKB has embarked on 12 tours to China, Japan, Canada, and North and South America. She commissioned new ballets for the company, and she significantly expanded the company's repertoire to include some of today's most important choreographers such as Alexei Ratmansky, Nacho Duato, Fei Bo, Nils Christie, Krzysztof Pastor and Christian Spuck.

"I am pleased to welcome Madeleine to Houston Ballet as our Academy Director," comments Mr. Welch. "Her extensive background as a performer and her accomplishments as a leader in the international dance world will bring an exciting new outlook to Houston Ballet Academy. As a successful artistic director for two prestigious ballet companies, I can think of no better person to continue the Academy's high standard of educational and artistic excellence. Our students will benefit greatly under her guidance and coaching."

Additionally, Ms. Onne has served on a number of the Swedish government's committees responsible for awarding grants to the arts. She has been invited as a jury member for numerous international ballet competitions across the globe, and founded an off-shoot company of RSB called *Stockholm 59 Degrees North* that has received critical acclaim ever since its debut in 1997.

ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET ACADEMY

Since its founding in 1955, Houston Ballet Academy has provided the highest quality ballet training. The Academy's outstanding faculty includes teachers who have performed with Houston Ballet and other prestigious companies throughout the world. The Academy also includes Houston Ballet II, the second company of Houston Ballet comprised of an array of ballet students from around the world. Houston Ballet Academy also engages over 50,000 local students per year in dance through several Education and Community Engagement programs.

For more information, visit www.houstonballet.org.

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