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KATHLEEN BREEN COMBES APPOINTED FESTIVAL BALLET PROVIDENCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Boston Ballet Principal Dancer to retire from stage, transition to administrative leader of New England’s second largest ballet company.

Providence, RI (May 14, 2019) – Festival Ballet Providence (FBP) is pleased to announce it has appointed a new Executive Director, Kathleen Breen Combes. A principal dancer with Boston Ballet since 2009, Breen Combes will retire from dancing next month before transitioning into her new role at FBP in September. FBP Artistic Director Mihailo Djuric made the exciting announcement Monday, May 13 at the Company’s season-ending gala. With over 19 years working in an arts organization both artistically and administratively, Breen Combes brings a unique perspective to the leadership role.

Breen Combes said, “As someone who is deeply passionate about the art form and dedicated to its continued growth and innovation, I’m looking forward to being part of the cultural landscape in Providence and the Festival Ballet community.” Among New England dance companies, Festival Ballet is second only to Boston Ballet in size and repertoire. The Company will begin its 42nd Season in the Fall, continuing its legacy as a Rhode Island institution. “I’m energized and optimistic about the possibilities and I look forward to working with everyone within Festival Ballet to continue creating excellence on stage and bringing transformative dance into New England,” Breen Combes said.

While dancing at Boston Ballet, Breen Combes—originally from Rockville Center, NY—earned multiple academic degrees including a Graduate Certificate in Non-Profit Management from Northeastern University. She gained experience in Development as chair of Boston Ballet’s Young Partners Committee and worked on a Capital Campaign for Boston Ballet School’s new $2.5 million facility in Newton. Additionally, she led negotiations for three collective bargaining agreements with the Company as Union Representative.

Meanwhile, Breen Combes continued to dazzle audiences around the world as a beloved principal dancer respected for her versatility and strength; She was hailed by the The New York Times as a “ballerina of colossal scale and boldness.” Breen Combes’ final performance with Boston Ballet will take place June 9, 2019 at the Boston Opera House. Boston Ballet Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen remarked, “Kathleen has had a wonderful career as a dancer and she is truly an exceptional and versatile American ballerina. It has been a pleasure to watch her growth as an artist throughout her extensive dancing career,” said Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen. “I wish her all the best for this exciting new chapter of her career.”
Djuric, FBP Artistic Director since 1998, has served as acting Executive Director since 2011. Djuric said, “This is an exciting new chapter for all of us and I’m delighted to welcome Kathleen to this role. I have known her for many years, both on and off stage, and I admire the intelligence, creativity and charm she brings to everything she does. I’m grateful for the experience she was able to gain at Boston Ballet both on and off stage and I know she will use her many talents to bring a fresh energy and enthusiasm to this role. I’m thrilled for this bright new chapter for Festival Ballet and the communities we serve.”

Interviews with Breen Combes and Djuric available by request.

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ABOUT FESTIVAL BALLET PROVIDENCE
Festival Ballet Providence (FBP) Rhode Island’s premiere dance company and New England’s second largest ballet company, delights audiences with a diverse repertoire of classical, neo-classical, and contemporary dance. Founded in 1978 and in its 42nd Season, the company has grown to become one of the nation’s top regional ballet companies. Festival Ballet enriches the lives of its audiences, inspiring the community by presenting world-class dance. The Company, made up of approximately 30 full-time professional dancers, performs in three venues in Providence throughout its September-May season. Festival Ballet’s robust outreach and educational programs seek to bring the transformative power of dance to the widest possible audience, employing innovative strategies for bringing dance to schools, libraries, and public spaces throughout our community.

ABOUT KATHLEEN BRENN COMBES
Kathleen Breen Combes, from Rockville Centre, NY, trained at the Fort Lauderdale Ballet Classique, the HARID Conservatory, and The Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. In 2000 she joined the Washington Ballet. She joined Boston Ballet in 2003 and was promoted to second soloist in 2005, soloist in 2007, and to principal dancer in 2009.

Hailed by The New York Times as a “ballerina of colossal scale and boldness” Breen Combes has performed a large and diverse repertoire including the leading roles in the classical repertoire and a large variety of neoclassical and contemporary works, many created specifically for her.

Breen Combes was awarded the Lefkowitz Award for Special Achievement at the New York International Ballet Competition at Lincoln Center in 2003 and she was featured on the cover of Dance Magazine in 2007. In 2012 she was nominated for the prestigious Benois de la Danse award for her portrayal of Juliet in Cranko’s Romeo and Juliet and Titania in Balanchine’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream and was invited to perform at the Bolshoi Theatre. Breen Combes has also performed in numerous galas worldwide.

Breen Combes holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Northeastern University in Communications and Management and a Graduate Certificate in Non-profit Management. She is also Co-Director of Dance YaNOWsky, a 10 member touring company. She has worked at Boston Ballet in the Development and Artistic Administrative departments, was Co-chair of the Young Partners Council from 2011-2013 and was the AGMA Union representative for the company from 2012-2016. She has been featured in and contributed to numerous print articles in Dance Spirit, Pointe Magazine, and Dance Magazine among others. In 2014, Breen Combes created a TedEd video entitled “Rethinking Ballet” and has been a guest speaker at The University of Massachusetts, University of Tokyo, Northeastern University and Harvard University.
ABOUT BOSTON BALLET
Since 1963, Boston Ballet’s internationally acclaimed performances of classical, neo-classical, and contemporary ballets, combined with a dedication to world-class dance education and community initiatives, have made the institution a leader in its field, with a 56-year history of promoting excellence and access to dance.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Meredith (Max) Hodges, the Company maintains a diverse repertoire, ranging from full-length ballets to new works by some of today’s finest choreographers. Boston Ballet’s second company, Boston Ballet II, is comprised of dancers who gain experience by performing with the Company and independently, presenting special programs to audiences throughout the Northeast.

Boston Ballet School, the official school of Boston Ballet, has a long-standing dedication to providing exceptional dance education and ballet training to students across three studios in Boston, Newton, and the North Shore. Led by Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Director Margaret Tracey, the School reaches more than 5,000 students (toddler to adult) each year through its five core programs: Pre-Professional Program, Classical Ballet Program, Children's Program, Adaptive Dance Program, and Adult Dance Program.

Boston Ballet’s Education and Community Initiatives provide programming, events, and activities that connect the community to dance. Community programs reach more than 4,000 individuals in Boston and the surrounding communities each year through Citydance, ECI on Location, workshops, and trainings.