

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Michigan Opera Theatre Establishes Virtual Dance Club

*Monthly "Dance Dialogues" explores various performances, companies,  
led by dance experts*

**DETROIT, Aug. 13, 2020** - Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) has established a virtual dance club to continue to provide dance experiences and education during this time of social distancing. "Dance Dialogues" explores a new performance every month. Members receive a link to watch the performance on their own time, which culminates in a virtual discussion on the third Tuesday of the month, moderated by guest dance experts. The club opens with a comparison of two versions of "Swan Lake," with the discussion taking place Aug. 18, facilitated by dance critic David Lyman.

"Many people who are not familiar with dance are sometimes intimidated by the art form, and we aim to change that through a variety of performances and accessible discussion," said MOT Artistic Advisor for Dance Jon Teeuwissen. "Our guest facilitators are renowned dance experts that include dance critics, dance scholars, artistic directors, choreographers and dancers. Dance Dialogues is a fun, informative club for dance-aficionados and newcomers alike."

The first discussion will compare and contrast the Bolshoi Ballet and the Matthew Bourne versions of "Swan Lake." The ballet classic is the tragic love story between Prince Siegfried and his beloved Odette and their attempt to break the spell that turns her into a swan. Through the deception of the evil sorcerer Baron von Rothbart and his manipulative daughter Odile, the lovers are torn apart forever.

The Bolshoi, based in Moscow, is one of the world's oldest and most respected ballet companies. Bourne is a contemporary choreographer known for his unique interpretations of classical repertoire. The discussion will explore what makes "Swan Lake" an enduring and powerful work.

Upcoming dialogues include Paul Taylor Dance Company, Ballet Hispánico, Merce Cunningham and "The Nutcracker."

For more information visit <https://michiganopera.org/dialogues-dance/>.

Dance activities are made possible with support from Joanne and Richard Brodie, The Maxine & Stuart Frankel Foundation, Marvin, Betty, and Joanne Danto Family Foundation, and Kevin Dennis and Jeremy Zeltzer.

MOT's Fall Season is sponsored by the Ford Motor Company Fund.

### **Schedule**

**Tuesday, Aug. 18, 3 p.m.:**

Subject: "Swan Lake"

Videos: Bolshoi Ballet (traditional) and Mathew Bourne/New Adventures (contemporary)

Guest Facilitator: David Lyman, dance critic

**Tuesday, Sept. 15, 3 p.m.:**

Subject: Paul Taylor Dance Company

Videos: Signature Paul Taylor repertoire

Guest Facilitator: Suzanne Carbonneau, dance scholar; Paul Taylor dancers

**Tuesday, Oct. 20, 3 p.m.:**

Subject: Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with Ballet Hispánico

Videos: "Tiburones" ("Sharks") by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and "Mambo" from "West Side Story" by Jerome Robbins

Guest Facilitator: Eduardo Vilaro, artistic director and CEO, Ballet Hispánico

**Tuesday, Nov. 17, 3 p.m.:**

Subject: Merce Cunningham

Videos: Signature Merce Cunningham repertoire

Guest Facilitator: Bonnie Brooks, dance scholar

**Tuesday, Dec. 15, 3 p.m.:**

Subject: "The Nutcracker"

Videos: New York City Ballet by George Balanchine and Ballet West by William Christensen (oldest US version still performed)

Guest Facilitator: Alastair Macaulay, dance critic

## Moderators

### **Bonnie Brooks**

Bonnie Brooks is a writer, producer, audience dramaturg and retired educator based in Chicago. Her career highlights include work in the Dance Program of the National Endowment for the Arts; serving as managing director of David Gordon/Pick Up Co in New York City, as executive director of Minnesota Dance Alliance in Minneapolis and as executive director of Dance/USA; teaching at UCLA and Columbia College Chicago and chairing the Dance Department at Columbia. She was Legacy Fellow for the Cunningham Dance Foundation on the Legacy Tour of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Prior to creating her own platform for new initiatives, Third Way Projects, she was director and lead curator of the dance presenting series at Columbia College Chicago.

### **Suzanne Carbonneau**

Suzanne Carbonneau is a dance critic and historian whose writings have appeared in *The Washington Post*, the *New York Times* and other publications. She founded and directed the NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Dance, and she has served as Critic-in-Residence at the American Dance Festival and at the Joyce Theater. Carbonneau is a Scholar-in-Residence at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and has also served as the Resident Scholar at the Bates Dance Festival. She regularly writes and lectures for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She holds a Ph.D. from New York University and is a Professor at George Mason University. Her authorized biography of Paul Taylor will be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, and she serves as Artistic Advisor to Paul Taylor American Modern Dance. Carbonneau is a MacDowell Fellow, a Yaddo Fellow, a Bogliasco Fellow and the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship.

### **David Lyman**

David Lyman is a freelance arts writer and former dance reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*. He is the dance and theater writer for *The Cincinnati Enquirer/Cincinnati.com* and is a contributing writer to *Movers and Makers* and *Cincy Magazine*. For nearly a decade, he was a consultant and panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, traveling around the country to evaluate choreographers and dance companies. He is also the author of "Cincinnati Ballet Celebrates 50," a detailed history of Cincinnati Ballet's first 50 years and the English adaptation of "Ballettens kommende superstjerner" ("The upcoming superstars of ballet"), about Konpagni B, the performing company of the School of the Royal Danish Ballet.

## **Alastair Macaulay**

Alastair Macaulay is a British critic and historian of the performing arts, working in London and New York. Between 2007 and 2018, he was chief dance critic of the New York Times. Between 1994 and 2007, he was chief theatre critic of the Financial Times. In 2019, he was a Director's Fellow at the New York University Center for Ballet and the Arts. He has written for numerous other publications, including The New Yorker and the Times Literary Supplement, and was the founding editor of Dance Theatre Journal. He has also written a biography on dance legend Margot Fonteyn and a book of interviews with renowned choreographer Michael Bourne. In 2020, he is curating an online series of ballet masterclasses for New York City Center Studio 5 Live @ Home and lecturing for Dansox, the Oxford (U.K.) society of dance research.

## **Eduardo Vilaro**

Eduardo Vilaro is the CEO and Artistic Director of Ballet Hispánico. He has been part of the Ballet Hispánico family since 1985 as a dancer and educator, after which he began a 10-year record of achievement as Founder and Artistic Director of Luna Negra Dance Theater in Chicago, where he created more than 20 ballets. He has also received commissions from the Ravinia Festival, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Grant Park Festival, the Lexington Ballet and the Chicago Symphony. Vilaro has infused Ballet Hispánico's legacy with a bold and eclectic brand of contemporary dance that reflects America's changing cultural landscape. Born in Cuba and raised in New York from the age of six, he is a frequent speaker on the merits of cultural diversity and dance education.

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## **About Michigan Opera Theatre**

Michigan Opera Theatre, one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971 by Dr. David DiChiera, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. The organization is led by President and CEO Wayne S. Brown and Chairman of the Board Ethan Davidson. Visit the website at [www.michiganopera.org](http://www.michiganopera.org).