

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ballet Vancouver Welcomes Home One of the World's Finest Principal Dancers in Celebration of the Launch of its Debut Season with
—Balanchine's Apollo & Other Works—

Mixed program marks the return of Vancouver-trained Principal dancer—The National Ballet of Canada's Heather Ogden and Principal guest artists from San Francisco Ballet

Vancouver, BC — Ballet Vancouver opens its **2026/27 inaugural season** with a breathtaking triple bill spanning extraordinary artistic range and striking virtuosity in ***Balanchine's Apollo & Other Works***, on stage **September 11, 2026 at 7:30pm** and **September 12, 2026 at 2pm and 7:30pm**, at the **Vancouver Playhouse**.

The program is anchored by internationally acclaimed Principal dancers Heather Ogden of The National Ballet of Canada, and Sasha de Sola and Francesco Gabriele Frola of San Francisco Ballet. It also marks the company debuts of former Royal Winnipeg Ballet Second Soloist Amanda Solheim, former Alberta Ballet dancer Mya Kresnyak, former Royal New Zealand Ballet artist Harry Peterson, former Ballet BC artist Jordan Lang and emerging artist Nathan Bear, and former Ballet Edmonton dancers Paula Cobo Botello and Nolan Fahey. Together, the program traces a journey from classical to contemporary en pointe, bringing pointework — and the tutu — back to the Vancouver stage in a compelling display of the athleticism and artistry that defines Ballet Vancouver.

The mixed program includes one of the most performed and revered works in ballet history, ***Balanchine's Apollo***, a neoclassical staple that has not been performed in Vancouver in nearly four decades; the spellbinding ***Black Swan Pas de Deux***, one of the most iconic scenes from the beloved classic ***Swan Lake***; and the Canadian premiere of Jorma Elo's modern masterpiece ***Slice to Sharp***, originally created for New York City Ballet, and featuring an unexpected pairing of pulsing contemporary ballet movement with romantic Baroque melodies.

"Our first program of our first full season is, in many ways, a homecoming," says Ballet Vancouver Artistic Director Joshua Beamish. "Heather Ogden and many of our new company artists began their training right here in Vancouver before ascending to some of the world's most celebrated stages, and it means so much to welcome them back to the city where their stories began. This program is a statement of what's possible — that Vancouver can be a place where world-class ballet is created, not just admired from afar. For too long, classically-trained dancers in the city have had to leave home to pursue a professional career, and we're proud to be changing that."

Balanchine's Apollo & Other Works opens with the rare opportunity to see Balanchine's ***Apollo***, a neoclassical masterwork that offers a technically rigorous ballet detailing the God of Music's ascent to Mount Olympus, set to a melodic score by Stravinsky. Originally created for Serge Diaghilev's Ballets

Russes before entering the repertoire of New York City Ballet, *Apollo* has been a staple of major ballet companies worldwide for nearly a century — and returns to Vancouver for the first time since Ballet BC performed the work 38 years ago, and the first Balanchine work seen in the city since Miami City Ballet's visit in 2015.

Ballet Vancouver's presentation is staged by Artistic Director Peter Boal of Seattle's Pacific Northwest Ballet, a former New York City Ballet Principal dancer, and features guest Principal dancer Heather Ogden of The National Ballet of Canada — a Richmond Academy of Dance alumna. The Vancouver reprise will also be performed by Jonatan Lujan (Met Opera Ballet, Ballet Argentino, Ballet Zurich) and Stephanie Petersen (formerly of American Ballet Theatre); as well as by Amanda Solheim — a Surrey-raised dancer who recently left her post as Second Soloist with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet to return home and join Ballet Vancouver — alternating with company member Paula Cobo Botello, formerly of Ballet Edmonton.

The program continues with the *Black Swan Pas de Deux*, choreographed by Marius Petipa, widely regarded as one of the most influential choreographers in ballet history. Famous for the ballerina's 32 rapid fouetté turns, this thrilling *Swan Lake* duet will be performed by San Francisco Ballet Principal dancers Sasha de Sola and Francesco Gabriele Frola. Together, they bring a rare convergence of technical mastery and artistic depth — a partnership that promises a performance of extraordinary power and precision that few stages in the world are privileged to witness. Set to Tchaikovsky's electrifying score, the *Black Swan Pas de Deux* is a mesmerizing display of technical brilliance, as the Black Swan seduces Prince Siegfried with her magnetic power.

The program will conclude with the Canadian premiere of Jorma Elo's *Slice to Sharp*, lauded by *The New York Times* as an “exhilarating exercise in flat-out virtuosity.” Elo, the Finnish-born resident choreographer of Boston Ballet, originally created the work for New York City Ballet's Diamond Project — the company's prestigious choreographic initiative for new works. This high-energy ballet pushes its eight dancers to the edge of possibility, as Elo defies expectation by setting his pulsing, frenetic movement to Baroque melodies from Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber and Antonio Vivaldi. Ballet Vancouver's cast is led by Stephanie Petersen and Jonatan Lujan, with full casting to be announced at a later date.

Ballet Vancouver will host pre-show talks ahead of all three performances in the upper lobby of the Vancouver Playhouse, moderated by Pia Lo. Opening night, Friday, September 11 at 6:15pm, will feature Peter Boal, Jorma Elo, Nancy Euverink, and Joshua Beamish; Saturday, September 12 at 1:15pm, will feature Peter Boal and Joshua Beamish; and Saturday, September 12 at 6:15pm, will feature Ainslie Cyopik and Joshua Beamish. (*Ainslie Cyopik danced the role of Terpsichore in Apollo when the ballet was last performed in Vancouver, 38 years ago.*)

For tickets and more information, visit balletvancouver.com

About Ballet Vancouver (balletvancouver.com)

Ballet Vancouver Performance Series is a non-profit charitable dance company founded in 2025 and based in Vancouver. The primary mandate of the company is to revitalize Vancouver's access to professional classical, neoclassical, and narrative ballet. Ballet Vancouver will present multiple home

performances annually, in addition to national and international touring. The company's programming will encompass both homecoming performances by locally trained ballet stars, coupled with appearances by renowned international ballet artists and ballet companies. Emerging, diverse local talent will be fostered through outreach programs and choreographic development initiatives.

Ballet Vancouver Artistic Director Joshua Beamish is a leading Canadian and international voice in ballet. He collaborated with New York City Ballet Associate Artistic Director, Wendy Whelan, for Restless Creature and created the debut commissions of ABT Principal Herman Cornejo's Dance Live and New York City Ballet Principal Ashley Bouder's The Ashley Bouder Project. His recent presentations include Lincoln Center, BAM Next Wave, The Joyce Theater, The Guggenheim Museum, and the Royal Opera House/London.

LISTING INFORMATION

Ballet Vancouver presents *Balachine's Apollo & Other Works*

Dates:	September 11 & 12, 2026 at 7:30pm September 12, 2026 at 2pm
Ticket Prices:	From \$45.12 (inclusive of taxes and fees) Student Groups from \$29.40 (inclusive of taxes and fees)
Address:	Vancouver Playhouse 600 Hamilton St, Vancouver
Box Office:	balletvancouver.com
Website:	balletvancouver.com

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