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Media Contact

Hannah Cook
Manager – Marketing and Communications
Direct: (414) 902-2110 | Cell: (262) 599-2507
hcook@milwaukeeballet.org

**MILWAUKEE
BALLET**

MICHAEL PINK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

MILWAUKEE BALLET'S SECOND COMPANY PRESENTS *MOMENTUM*

- *Milwaukee Ballet II stages mixed repertory program in final production with retiring Artistic Director* -

Milwaukee, WI – February 11, 2025 – Milwaukee Ballet's Second Company takes center stage during their annual performance of *Momentum*, a four-piece mixed repertory program. The 22 dancers of Milwaukee Ballet II (MBII) will perform March 1-2 and April 26 at Baumgartner Center for Dance in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward, as well as March 9 at Oak Creek Performing Arts and Education Center.

"The future of ballet is in the hands of rising artists like those in MBII," says MBII Artistic Director Mireille Favarel. "This year's group exceeded my expectations as they prepared these challenging pieces, each of which showcases a different element of their exceptional abilities."

The production will begin with an excerpt from Marius Petipa's *La Bayadère*, a staple of the classical repertoire that has delighted audiences for centuries. Following that will be three world premieres: *Lotus*, an athletic work by Milwaukee Ballet Company Artist Eric Figueredo; *Lumière*, an intimate pas de quatre by MBII Rehearsal Director Davit Hovhannisyanyan; and *Broken Pieces*, an energetic piece by returning Chicago choreographer Kristopher Estes-Brown.

Behind the scenes of this year's production, Favarel is preparing to retire in May. She joined the Company as a principal dancer in 1989, after which she performed all of the major roles in Milwaukee Ballet's repertoire. Taking her final bow in May 2000, she then became Ballet Mistress for the Company, went on to teach for the Academy, and later became Artistic Director for Milwaukee Ballet II.

"It has been a true joy to spend so much of my career at Milwaukee Ballet," says Favarel. "I have treasured each of my roles here, but working with MBII has been a special gift. Seeing many of them go on to succeed in the dance world is a legacy of which I am very proud."

"Mireille's kindness, work ethic, and immense talent have left an indelible mark on the many dancers, students, and coworkers who have been fortunate to advance our art form alongside her," says Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Michael Pink. "She will be greatly missed."

Outside of *Momentum*, Milwaukee Ballet II is an integral part of Milwaukee Ballet. MBII dancers regularly perform in mainstage Company productions, including *The Nutcracker*. Community engagement programs are also a key part of the dancers' experience, as they lead workshops and performances at schools, senior centers, and other local organizations.

Performance Information

Momentum will take place March 1-2 and April 26 at Baumgartner Center for Dance in the We Energies Performance Studio and March 9 at Oak Creek Performing Arts and Education Center. Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased online at www.milwaukeeballet.org or through the Milwaukee Ballet Box Office at 414.902.2103.

The performance schedule is as follows:

- Saturday, March 1, 2:00 PM
- Saturday, March 1, 7:00 PM
- Sunday March 2, 2:00 PM
- Sunday, March 9, 2:00 PM (at Oak Creek Performing Arts and Education Center)
- Saturday, April 26, 2:00
- Saturday, April 26, 7:00

Milwaukee Ballet's 2024/2025 Season is presented by Donald & Donna Baumgartner with support from United Performing Arts Fund, Wisconsin Arts Board, CAMPAC, Milwaukee Arts Board, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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About Milwaukee Ballet II

The Milwaukee Ballet II Company was established in 1978 to nurture and develop gifted young dancers, bridging the gap between student and professional. The dancers build their technical skills and artistry by dancing alongside the professionals of Milwaukee Ballet Company in mainstage productions. These dancers are also featured in their own performances in various Wisconsin venues and studio showcases. Milwaukee Ballet II trainees are a vital part of the award-winning Department of Community Engagement. Graduates of the program are among the ranks of professional companies worldwide.

About Milwaukee Ballet

Milwaukee Ballet was founded in 1970. Led by Artistic Director Michael Pink, Milwaukee Ballet creates a rich and diverse community through its inspiring dance performance, education, and outreach. Milwaukee Ballet hosts an international Company of dancers and maintains its own orchestra. Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is the only professional dance school in the Midwest accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance, teaching beginner through pre-professional levels in three locations: Third Ward, Fox Point, and Brookfield. Milwaukee Ballet's award-winning Community Engagement department serves nearly 30,000 people in Southeastern Wisconsin each year through original, interactive programs. Milwaukee Ballet is a proud cornerstone member of United Performing Arts Fund and holds a four-star rating from Charity Navigator.

Note to Editors: Interviews with Milwaukee Ballet II Artistic Director Mireille Favarel and high-resolution images are available upon request.