

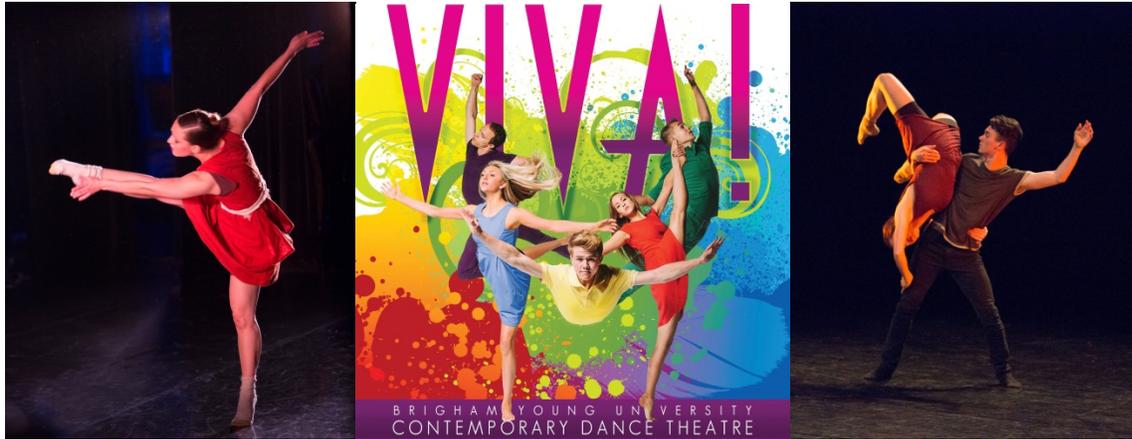


# News Release

2016-2017 Season

# CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

Performing Arts Management  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Contemporary Dance Theatre's New Show, *VIVA!*

Brigham Young University's Contemporary Dance Theatre is unveiling their new show *Viva!* in the 2015- 2016 performance season. It explores human emotions and moments through moving, visual art accompanied by uplifting and meaningful music. *Viva!*, which serves to seek and discover the depth of the importance of coming to know ourselves and those around us, will be performed at (place) on (date) at (time).

Through expression and representation, the dancers perform numbers that are great in technique and direction. Lighting, setting, props, and costumes play a significant part in the compositions, where it all ties together to bring a frame of symbolism to the audience. Contemporary Dance Theatre draws on a new perspective that can be reached through people from all walks of life. Coming straight from Broadway,

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this is **Nathan Balsler's** second show as artistic director of Contemporary Dance Theatre. With his professional background, he has helped the group grasp a new and creative approach to the contemporary dance genre. Being inspired by other prestigious choreographers, such as the **nationally-recognized Peter Chu and Ihsan Rustem**, Contemporary Dance Theatre creates a show that is remembered and discussed long after finale music fades.

The group implements audience favorites within their new show. This includes *Fling Flang Flung*, which captures the nostalgia of days gone by, and *Rapture*, Nathan Balsler's own choreography that portrays the happy encounters and love of those closest to us. *Viva!* also incorporates new choreography, such as *Forming In*, that plays with **physical awareness and a range of movement influenced by tempo**, and *I Lived*, an anthem to life that encourages the audience to be brave and face their fears.

### **THE GROUP**

Company members are not only known for their sparkling and dramatic performances, but also for their teaching abilities within schools and community centers. Whether they are on stage or in a school surrounded by inquisitive children, these young artists strive to celebrate the best in humankind through dance. BYU has one of the largest dance departments in the U.S., and consequently takes pride in sharing its love of the performing arts through traveling groups such as Contemporary Dance Theatre.

Since its founding in 1974, the company **has performed in the Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Argentina, Chile, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, Turkey, Israel, South Africa, and Australia**. Contemporary Dance Theatre has toured in the Eastern United States and was selected twice by the American College Dance Festival to perform at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

In November 2013, Contemporary Dance Theatre was **the first non-Asian international university dance group** to be invited to perform at the **Chun Hua Qiu Shi Festival** at the **National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China**. In summer of 2015, Contemporary Dance Theatre toured the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, and Germany. In Prague, they participated in the **New Prague Dance Festival** in which they won the **Grand Prix Award** given to the best overall group. The company also participated in workshops **taught by prestigious university professors** and did outreach programs in which they shared, with children and adults alike, the positive feeling that comes with dance. In 2016, the group will visit cities in Utah, California, and Nevada.

Contemporary Dance Theatre originates in the Department of Dance of the College of Fine Arts and Communications at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. BYU is one of the nation's largest private universities with an enrollment of 30,000 students from across the United States and 100 foreign countries.



## THE DIRECTOR

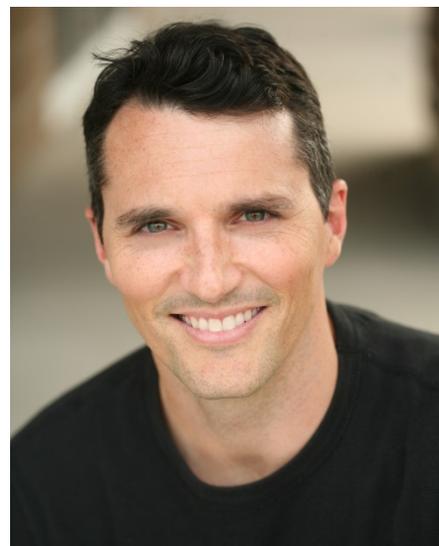
Brigham Young University welcomes home **Broadway performer** and contemporary dance artist, **Nathan Balser** as director and choreographer the BYU Contemporary Dance Theatre. This season Balser is premiering his second BYU production, *Viva!*.

Balser works with the students at Brigham Young University as both a teacher and a mentor in the dance department. His experience on national and international stages provides an extensive background upon which he can draw both creative measures and practical technique to educate BYU's dancers.

Balser performed as a member of internationally-known **Repertory Dance Theatre**, a company dedicated to representing and preserving dance history, including the world's largest collection of American dance. His work has also put him on stage with world-renowned dancer and choreographer **Molissa Fenley**, as well as **John Malashock** and company; both of whom have choreographed over 70 works.

In addition to his demanding schedule as a performer, Balser continued to develop his own skills as a choreographer. He has developed a significant number of dances which have been **performed internationally**. He also helped in the organization and development of the Utah Conservatory of the Performing Arts, a studio dedicated to **training and encouraging up-coming performing artists**. Balser impresses upon his students the desire and motivation to be dance artists of the future and to continue the high performance standards of the group. **He brings that same drive to expand the vision of Contemporary Dance Theatre** by providing a blended showcase of art and entertainment that lifts and shares a touching message to audiences worldwide.

Balser graduated from Brigham Young University in 1998 with a degree in Therapeutic Recreation, after which he went on to receive a master's degree in Fine Arts from the University of Utah. In addition to his contemporary dance experience, he has performed in many Broadway productions, and performed in four consecutive **Tony Award** shows. His casting credits place him alongside famous musical theatre actresses **Kristen Chenoweth**, **Allyson Janney**, and **Cheyenne Jackson**. Experience from *9 to 5: The*





*Musical, Damn Yankees, and Legally Blonde* add to his musical theatre repertoire. He strives now to teach his students what he believes to be the most important lesson he learned under the national spotlights: professionalism. This work ethic is reflected not only in his teaching methods but in the **technique and discipline** of his students.

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## PERFORMANCES

*VIVA!*

## CONTACTS

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*Tickets and more information available at: <http://pam.byu.edu>*