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# News Release

**THEATRE BALLET**

2015-2016 Season

Brigham Young University

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**Artistic Director**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ballet makes audiences princesses and princes at Pre-show Party**

Come meet ballet's best-loved princesses and princes in an enchanted evening of classical favorites.

Brigham Young University's Theatre Ballet brings childhood dreams to life in their unique show, *Fairy Tales and Fantasy*, at   (place)   on   (date)   at   (time)  . Theatre Ballet also cordially invites all to attend their pre-show Prince and Princess Party where the young and young-at-heart can dress as princes and princesses, meet the ballet company, and take pictures right before this family-friendly performance.

*Fairy Tales and Fantasy* is a night of highlights from the stage's most popular and successful ballets. The dancers will delight audiences with favorite scenes from *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White*, *Paquita* and *Alice in Wonderland*. BYU's critically acclaimed ballet company brings these stories to life, stepping onto the stage as if right out of the storybook. *Fairy Tales and Fantasy* is filled with both classic and original choreography from one of the largest, most successful dance programs in the country. As the curtains finally close on a perfect storybook ending, audiences will wish the performance could go on happily ever after.

As Theatre Ballet's Artistic Director, Shani Robison brings over 20 years of professional experience to the company. Robison is an associate professor of dance at Brigham Young University, and she teaches beginning to advanced ballet technique, pointe, and variations. She also choreographs two to three new contemporary and classical works each year for the BYU Theatre Ballet and BYU Ballet Showcase Company. Three of Robison's works, *African Winds* in 2008, *Concealed* in 2009, and *Interrupted Impulse* in 2012 were given the distinct honor of being selected to be performed in the Gala Concert of the American College Dance Festival Northwest Region. The company has recently achieved full member status in Regional Dance America/Northwest Region, the premiere national organization for regional and pre-professional ballet companies. Robison innovatively draws

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from her expertise to enhance the caliber of Theatre Ballet and opens up classical and contemporary experiences that offer the student performers a strong education in the art form.

“The quality goes up every year; they are strong artistic dancers,” said Associate Professor of Dance Sandra Allen, describing the appeal of the company. “We have men who are doing some extremely fine work. Many of the girls come from a professional background. It certainly does give us a strong program.”

Robison’s focus has been to provide entirely unique experiences for the talented performers of Theatre Ballet. “I am working to expand the company’s repertoire as we bring in guests that will expose these dancers to the most exciting ballet opportunities that are rarely offered at the university level,” Robison said.

Amanda McKerrow and John Gardner, two of the most famous American Ballet Theatre principal dancers in recent history, worked with the ensemble in 2007 and 2009. Amanda McKerrow said of Robison’s program and performers, “These are professionals in the true sense of the word.” John Gardner praised BYU’s Theatre Ballet as a program at “a high level” where “everyone is respectful of each other.” Professional choreographers Ihsan Rustem, Duncan Cooper, and Garrett Smith have set new contemporary ballet works on the company within this last year.

Robison received a BA in dance in 1995 and her Master’s of Arts with a Performance/Choreography emphasis in 1999 from BYU. Robison has done pedagogical research focusing on transformational learning in the ballet technique class and other teaching concepts. Robison presented her pedagogical research at the CORPS de Ballet International Conference in Toronto at the National Ballet School of Canada in 2006, and she presented again in New York City in 2010. Also, Robison has presented her creative research at CORPS de Ballet, International conferences in Aspen, CO (2008), Texas Christian University (2009), Jacob’s Pillow in Massachusetts (2012), and at Towson University (2015). Robison has presented creative works and taught at American College Dance Association Festivals in 2008, 2009, and 2012 and also presented research at the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science in Cleveland, OH in 2008.

Theatre Ballet originates in the Department of Dance of the College of Fine Arts and Communications at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. It is one of the largest university dance programs in America with around 350 students enrolled in ballet classes alone each semester. The ballet program runs with a complete curriculum that supports two performing companies. The faculty includes three full-time ballet faculty members, six adjunct faculty members. BYU is one of the nation's largest private universities with an enrollment of 30,000 students from throughout the United States and 100 foreign countries.

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