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MINDS IN MOTION FINAL PERFORMANCE *THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH*

RICHMOND – Celebrating its 18th year, Richmond Ballet’s *Minds In Motion* will present its end-of-the-year performances May 3-5 and for the first time in its history, the free culminating performances will be held at the beautiful Carpenter Theatre at Richmond CenterStage. Free tickets will be available one hour before each performance on a first come, first serve basis at the Carpenter Theatre Box Office.

The *Minds In Motion* students from 18 area elementary schools will be performing *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and will be joined on stage by dancers from the professional company. This year, *Minds In Motion* has partnered with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities on an anti-bullying theme working with both *Minds In Motion* Teaching Artists and the fourth grade faculty at the participating schools. The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success by addressing prejudices, in all forms, in order to improve academic achievement, increase workplace productivity, and enhance local trust.

Richmond Ballet’s acclaimed outreach program, *Minds In Motion*, teaches fourth-grade students discipline, dedication, and self-awareness by leading them through a series of choreographic movements that are then expanded upon to create a dance performance. Teaching Artists and accompanists from Richmond Ballet join the students at their schools for a 45-minute dance class each week, where they work to turn pedestrian movements and steps into choreography that tells a story.

“One of the things we’re most proud of is the way our program correlates so well with the academic curriculum,” says Education and *Minds In Motion* Director Cat Studdard. “It helps the students learn their regular requirements in a completely new way that helps them retain the information more effectively. It’s in their bodies, as well as their minds.”

One thousand four hundred students will perform over the course of the weekend at the Carpenter Theatre. The show-stopping opening and finale are always powerful moments. “There’s rarely a dry eye at that point,” says Studdard. “It’s a celebration of learning, as well as dance. For some students, *Minds In Motion* is their first or only window into the dance world. We want to establish an appreciation for the arts at this young age, and know this experience will be something they remember for the rest of their lives.”

PERFORMANCE DATE AND TIMES

FRIDAY, MAY 3	7:00PM
SATURDAY, MAY 4	11:00AM
SATURDAY, MAY 4	4:00PM
SATURDAY, MAY 4	7:00PM
SUNDAY, MAY 5	2:00PM
SUNDAY, MAY	5:00PM

All performances of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* take place at the Carpenter Theatre at Richmond CenterStage located at 600 East Grace Street in Richmond, Virginia. **Free tickets** will be available one hour before each performance on a first come, first serve basis at the Carpenter Theatre Box Office.

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Richmond Ballet, The State Ballet of Virginia, is dedicated to the education, promotion, preservation and continuing evolution of the art form of ballet. Richmond Ballet strives to keep meaningful works of dance alive and to produce and foster new works that remain true to these values. Now in its 28th professional season, Richmond Ballet's mission is to “awaken and uplift the human spirit, both for audiences and artists.”