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RICHMOND BALLET TO CLOSE SEASON WITH CONTRASTS - A FAVORITE AND A NEW WORK

RICHMOND – Richmond Ballet will close its Richmond season with an audience favorite, Ma Cong’s *Ershter Vals*, and *Chasing Cello*, a world premiere by William Soleau. From May 9-19, patrons will have the chance to see the company in the Studio Theatre, located in Downtown Richmond, before their debut at The Kennedy Center on June 4 and 5.

Ma Cong’s moving piece, *Ershter Vals*, had its beginnings in the Richmond Ballet 2009 *New Works Festival* and was finished in the fall of 2010, receiving critical and audience acclaim along the way. *Ershter Vals* features music originating in the Jewish ghettos during World War II, and uses engaging choreography to portray the light people find in relationships and communities, even in the darkest of times. Cong’s captivating ballet weaves folk dance influences with classical technique while carrying a penetrating message of redemption. The professional company performed *Ershter Vals* in London last year and will perform the ballet at The Kennedy Center as part of the *Ballet Across America III* Series on June 4 and 5.

“Richmond Ballet is honored to be representing Richmond, Virginia in The Kennedy Center’s *Ballet Across America* program. *Ershter Vals* is the perfect piece to travel with the company, as it originated here in Richmond for Richmond Ballet. We realize that many of our patrons will not be able to travel with us, so we hope that the Richmond community can come see the ballet before we make the journey to The Kennedy Center in the nation’s capital,” states Artistic Director Stoner Winslett. “We are also excited to give the Richmond community the opportunity to see *Chasing Cello* choreographed by William Soleau.”

Having choreographed six works for Richmond Ballet over the last twenty two years, William Soleau feels that Richmond Ballet is a second home. “I’m comfortable here,” remarks Mr. Soleau. “I’ve watched many of these dancers grow up throughout the years.” His world premiere work, *Chasing Cello*, includes the music of three well known Bach sonatas, and features on stage musicians, cellist Dana McComb and pianist, Joanne Kong. Ms. Kong, University of Richmond’s Director of Accompaniment and Coordinator of Chamber Ensembles, performed on stage during last year’s *Liebeslieder Walzer*. “This is one of the first times I’ve been drawn to a concept before selecting music. I knew I wanted to use the cello,” states Mr. Soleau. “Like Bach’s sonatas, *Chasing Cello* moves from string to string, vibrating between whimsical, energetic allegro movements to very poignant and serious adagios. The dancers are like the strings of the cello, reacting to the emotion of the music.”

Performances of *Ershter Vals* and *Chasing Cello* take place in the Richmond Ballet Studio Theatre at 407 East Canal Street. Tickets are available for purchase in person at the Richmond Ballet box office, by phone at 1.800.514.3849, or online at www.etix.com. Single tickets start at \$20. Tickets for opening night Choreographer’s Club start at \$65 (and include a post-performance reception with the choreographer and Richmond Ballet dancers and artistic staff).

PERFORMANCES

Thursday, May 9	6:30pm
Friday, May 10	6:30pm
Saturday, May 11	6:30pm
Sunday, May 12	2:00pm
Wednesday, May 15	6:30pm
Thursday, May 16	6:30pm
Friday, May 17	6:30pm
Saturday, May 18	6:30pm
Sunday, May 19	4:00pm

The 2012-13 Studio Series is generously sponsored by Altria Group. Studio 4 is also sponsored by Davenport & Company and KPMG. Funding for Richmond Ballet's commission of William Soleau's Chasing Cello was provided by Richmond Ballet Choreographers' Fund.

Richmond Ballet is grateful to the National Endowment for the Arts, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the Crowne Plaza Hotel Downtown Richmond for their continued support.

For more information about Richmond Ballet and its classes and programs, visit www.richmondballet.com or call 804.344.0906

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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 29th professional season, Richmond Ballet's mission is to "awaken and uplift the human spirit, both for audiences and artists."