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Emotion En Pointe:

Richmond Ballet Presents *Swan Lake*

Richmond, Va. -- Joy, sorrow, beauty, haunting mystery – *Swan Lake* is a study in breathtaking contrast, brought to life by the White and Black Swans. Its intensity of emotion has made it the most well known ballet in our time – and this legendary work will take the stage February 8-10, 2013, in Richmond, Virginia.

Richmond Ballet's presentation marks the first time in 8 years that *Swan Lake* has been performed in this city. The ballet's lush Tchaikovsky score will be performed by the Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Scenery and costumes designed by Jens-Jacob Worsaae have been rented from San Francisco Ballet, and two casts of the Swan Queen and Prince will add artistic dimension to the four performances.

"*Swan Lake*, to many, truly defines the art of ballet," stated Stoner Winslett, Artistic Director of Richmond Ballet. "Our production shares lineage with the definitive 1895 staging of the ballet by choreographer Marius Petipa. Our production was set on the company by Nicholas 'Papa' Beriozoff, who learned this version directly from a student of Petipa. As a company, we feel honored to

represent the famed Pepita, and to dance to the rich, dynamic music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky.”

In the story of *Swan Lake*, Prince Siegfried, a spirited hunter, receives a crossbow for his 21st birthday. He and his hunting companions take to the woods, where the Prince encounters a beautiful swan. At nightfall, the swan evolves into Odette, the Swan Queen, who captures his heart. However, an evil sorcerer, Von Rothbart, comes between them.

According to Richmond Ballet Managing Director Brett Bonda, *Swan Lake* is known by dancers as a highly challenging performance. “In fact, it is one of the most challenging ballets for members of the female corps de ballet,” stated Bonda. “A number of the ballet’s solos and pas de deux are even used in competitions.”

Richmond Ballet will perform *Swan Lake* at the Carpenter Theatre at Richmond CenterStage, 600 East Grace Street in Richmond. Times and dates for the performances include:

Friday, February 8, 7:00pm

Saturday, February 9, 2:00pm

Saturday, February 9, 7:00pm

Sunday, February 10, 2:00pm

Richmond Ballet’s Shira Lanyi and Thomas Garrett will dance in the roles of Odette/Odile and the Prince on February 8th at 7 pm and February 9th at 2 pm.

Shira Lanyi was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia. She began her dance training at age 8 with The School of Richmond Ballet and continued her training there through high school. Shira also attended summer programs at Boston Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. After graduating from

high school, Shira joined Richmond Ballet's apprentice program for two years before being promoted into the professional company in 2007. Shira is now enjoying her sixth season in the company.

Thomas Garrett, a native of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, began his training with Dulce Anaya and Laurie Byrd. He attended Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville, Florida. He joined Richmond Ballet as an apprentice in 2003 and joined the company in 2005. Thomas has performed as a guest artist with VOICE Dance Company, has spent the past two summers working with Jessica Lang Dance in New York City, and performed at Jacob's Pillow in the full company debut last July. He is entering his eighth season with Richmond Ballet.

For two other performances – February 9th at 7 pm and February 10th at 2 pm – two guest artists from Australia's Queensland Ballet will star in the leading roles. Huang Jun Shuang (the Prince) and Meng Ning Ning (Odette/Odile) both began their dance careers in China, and have each been the recipient of numerous international awards.

Huang Jun Shuang was trained at the Shanghai Dance School and has danced as a Principal Dancer with both the Houston Ballet and Guangzhou Ballet Theater. Huang won a Senior Gold Prize at the 2009 Helsinki International Ballet Competition in Finland; the Bounty Award at the 2008 Varna International Ballet Competition; junior Silver Prize at the 2006 China National Dance Competition; Special Jury Prize finalist at the 2005 Lausanne International Ballet Dance Competition and was awarded the 2005 Shanghai Art Award for outstanding student. He is currently a Guest Principal Dancer with Queensland Ballet.

Meng Ning Ning joined the National Ballet of China in 1996. She was named one of the National First Class Performers in China in 2004. At the National Ballet of China, Ning Ning danced major and leading roles in many productions, including the Chinese ballets *The Red Detachment of Women*, *Raise the Red Lantern*,

Yellow River, and classical ballets *The Fountain of Tears* by Ben Stevenson, *Le Corsaire*, *Sylvia* by Lycette Darsonval, *Giselle*, *Raymonda* and *Don Quixote* by Rudolf Nureyev. She has also danced the leading role in *Swan Lake* by Natalia Makarova, *Carmen* and *Pink Floyd* by Roland Petit, Balanchine's works including *Who Cares?*, *The Four Temperaments* and *Serenade*, William Forsythe's *In the Middle*, *Somewhat Elevated*, and Rudi van Dantzig's *Four Last Songs*. In 2010, Ning Ning was invited to perform as a guest artist in Queensland Ballet's International Gala, and in 2011 she joined the Company as a Soloist. She was promoted to Principal January 2012.

Tickets for *Swan Lake* start at \$20 and are available through www.etix.com or by calling 1-800-514-3849.

Swan Lake is sponsored by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Hunton & Williams and the Richmond Times-Dispatch. Season sponsors of Richmond Ballet include Altria, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Art Works and Crowne Plaza Richmond Downtown.

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