



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
9.5.13

MEDIA CONTACT: Kate Crowder
Public Relations and Promotions Coordinator
804.344.0906 x246
kcrowder@richmondballet.com

RICHMOND BALLET ANNOUNCES NEW HIRES, PROMOTIONS, FOR 30th ANNIVERSARY SEASON **Richmond Ballet and Richmond Ballet II welcome new faces**

RICHMOND, VA – Richmond Ballet is pleased to announce that both Marty Davis of Los Angeles, California, and Elena Bello of Jersey City, New Jersey, have been invited to join the Ballet’s professional company for the 2013-14 season. Lauren Archer, Jesse Lyon, Melissa Robinson and Sarah Joan Smith will join the ranks of Richmond Ballet II, the Ballet’s second company, this season.

Marty Davis joins Richmond Ballet after six years with the Kansas City Ballet. He began his training at the age of seven in Los Angeles, California, under the tutelage of Meridith Baylis. At 13, Davis was invited to continue his training with Philip and Charles Fuller while attending Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. Davis has also attended summer intensive programs through San Francisco Ballet and Boston Ballet, where he was invited to take part in the school’s rigorous trainee program. Davis joins his brother Trevor, currently entering his fourth season with the professional company, in Richmond.

Elena Bello served as an apprentice with Richmond Ballet for two seasons, and danced with Richmond Ballet II for one year before her recent promotion. Growing up in Jersey City, New Jersey, Bello was first exposed to dance through the National Dance Institute program. Bello received her training at the School of American Ballet in New York before moving to South Carolina to attend the South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities.

Richmond Ballet II members hail from far and near. Lauren Archer, originally from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, received her training at the Academy of Ballet and Theatre Arts and at the Ellison Ballet Professional Training Program in New York City. Prior to joining Richmond Ballet II, Archer danced as member of Tulsa Ballet II. Jesse Lyon, who hails from France, joins Richmond Ballet II after graduating from the Washington School of Ballet, where he danced under the direction of Kee-Juan Han. Though beginning his ballet training at 18 years of age, Lyon has been a recipient of the Rebecca Wright & Estelle Denis scholarship which allowed him to continue his ballet studies in Washington. Melissa Robinson of Sykesville, Maryland, graduated from the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, DC. Before becoming a member of Richmond Ballet II, Robinson was invited to join Richmond Ballet as a trainee in 2010. Sarah Joan Smith attended the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and joins Richmond Ballet II after performing as a trainee with Boston Ballet and Boston Ballet II.

“These six beautiful artists have harmonized wonderfully with the energy, versatility and authenticity of Richmond Ballet,” says Jerri Kumery, Ballet Master at Richmond Ballet. “Their passion and commitment to their art form is not only seen and felt in their movement, but also in their eyes, and in hearts throughout the company. It is always so exciting to see new careers beginning and being supported by the pillars of the company.”

With this season’s additions, Richmond Ballet carries a roster of 24 professional dancers hailing from locales as far away as Brazil and as close to home as Richmond itself. Now entering its landmark 30th season as a professional company, Richmond Ballet has grown from a small ensemble of twelve dancers in 1984 to a company now recognized both nationally and internationally for the strength of its dancers and for its culture of cultivating new ballets while preserving classic traditions.

Today, the Ballet reaches over 100,000 people annually across the Commonwealth and beyond, and boasts an expansive repertory that includes full-length classics as well as 57 original works from 20 choreographers from around the world. The Ballet's scope also includes a school, The School of Richmond Ballet, that serves more than 700 students annually, and many outreach programs, including the celebrated *Minds In Motion* program. The organization operates from a state-of-the-art training and performance center on Canal Street, developed in 2000 under the direction of founding Artistic Director, Stoner Winslett, and the Ballet's Board.

Richmond Ballet gratefully acknowledges the support of its 30th Anniversary Season sponsors:

Altria Group, Arts and Cultural Funding Consortium (City of Richmond, Hanover County and Henrico County), E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Crowne Plaza, Delta Air Lines, National Endowment for the Arts, Richmond Ballet Choreographers' Fund, Virginia Commission for the Arts, as well as West Broad Audi.

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

###

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 30th professional season, Richmond Ballet's mission is to "awaken and uplift the human spirit, both for audiences and artists."