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The Sarasota Ballet Dancers Join American Guild of Musical Artists

The Sarasota Ballet, their dancers and AGMA enter negotiations for a labor contract.

Sarasota, FL (March 2, 2017) – The Sarasota Ballet announces today that the Company joins the top national ballet companies in America by voting to join the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA).

AGMA represents dancers, singers and stage production staff in dance and opera companies throughout the United States. A secret ballot vote was held based upon mutual agreement between The Sarasota Ballet and AGMA. Based on the results of the election, The Sarasota Ballet has recognized AGMA as the exclusive bargaining representative of the dancers. Negotiations for a first contract are expected to commence within a couple of weeks. “This is an understandable step in the growth of The Sarasota Ballet,” explains Executive Director, Joseph Volpe. More than 90 percent of ballet companies at or above the budget level of The Sarasota Ballet nationally are represented by AGMA.

“We are thrilled to welcome the professional artists from The Sarasota Ballet into the AGMA family. We look forward to establishing industry standards to permit these dancers to reach their artistic and professional goals. We also anticipate a collaborative process with the management of The Sarasota Ballet to help propel this critically acclaimed Ballet company to even higher levels of achievement” states Leonard Egert, National Executive Director of AGMA.

This Season The Sarasota Ballet is celebrating Director Iain Webb's 10th Season. During his tenure the Company has increased the number of programs, added live music, introduced more than 140 ballets and divertissements into the repertoire—including 39 world premieres and 7 American premieres—and launched the Company's tours to such prestigious venues as the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and the Joyce Theater in New York City. "As Margaret Barbieri, Joseph Volpe and I have built the Company to this level, the dancers have decided, given their national recognition, that they wish to be represented by the Guild," says Iain Webb. "From when I arrived in 2007, the dancer's well-being, health and safety has always been a priority."

About The American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA)

The American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) is a labor organization that represents the men and women who create and engage in America's operatic, choral and dance performances across the world. AGMA represents approximately 7500 opera singers, ballet dancers, and production personnel at all principal opera houses and ballet companies in the United States. As it relates to dance, AGMA represents most major ballet companies and several modern companies across the country, from New York City Ballet to San Francisco Ballet. The Union provides forceful advocacy and defense of its members' employment and artistic rights and is affiliated with the AFL-CIO; Branch of Associated Actors and Artists of America. For more information please go to www.musicalartists.org.

About The Sarasota Ballet

Since 1990, the mission of The Sarasota Ballet has been enriching lives, captivating emotions and strengthening the community through the art of dance. Under the leadership of Director Iain Webb, the company's expanded repertoire includes works by world-renowned choreographers such as Sir Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, Christopher Bruce, Dame Ninette de Valois, Twyla Tharp, Antony Tudor, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, John Cranko, Hans van Manen, André Prokofsky, Dominic Walsh, Christopher Wheeldon and Sir Matthew Bourne. Receiving national and international recognition for its diverse repertoire of rarely performed ballets, The Sarasota Ballet received rave reviews during the Sir Frederick Ashton Festival, which highlighted 14 of the famed choreographer's ballets and divertissements in 4 days. In the last five years, The Sarasota Ballet was invited to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. twice, performed in the Fall for Dance Festival at the City Center, and presented a week-long program run at the historic Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. In August 2016, The Sarasota Ballet made their Joyce Theater premiere in New York City featuring an all-Ashton program. For information please go to www.sarasotaballet.org

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