MIAMI CITY BALLET

GEORGE BALANCHINE'S
A Midsummer Night's Dream

30th ANNIVERSARY
Dear Friends,

There has been a lot written about Miami City Ballet’s reimagining of George Balanchine’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and, from my perspective, perhaps too much. The simple truth is that I wanted to demonstrate the universality of Balanchine’s choreography (and Shakespeare’s sublime play) by revealing them in a new and richly suggestive setting. Both the play and the ballet follow the romantic adventures and misadventures, quarrels and reconciliations, of two pairs of mortal lovers as well as of Oberon and Titania, the King and Queen of the fairies. And so it is at heart a ballet about the transforming power of love. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* premiered in 1962, and two years later the New York City Ballet chose it to open its first repertory season at the just-built New York State Theater at Lincoln Center.

Mr. Balanchine, a true genius, was famous for working fast, producing many of his ballets in days, not months, but it took him over 20 years to assemble a cohesive score to supplement Mendelssohn’s famous Midsummer incidental music (including the famous “Wedding March”), which was not nearly long enough for an evening-length work. Though Mr. Balanchine once said that it was Mendelssohn’s music that inspired him to create the ballet, he was also familiar with Shakespeare’s play from an early age. As a child he had appeared as an elf in a production in St. Petersburg, and he could (and did!) recite portions of the play by heart in Russian.

A number of years ago, while serving as the executive director of The George Balanchine Foundation, I began thinking of a new approach to this narrative masterpiece, one that would of course preserve the integrity of the choreography while highlighting new aspects of the entire dramatic experience. Later, when I moved to Miami to head MCB, the possibility of such a reimagining started to become more real. An extraordinary leadership gift from Claudia and Steven Perles provided the spark that set this major undertaking in motion.

My first step was to secure the blessing of The George Balanchine Trust. Next I reached into the international artistic community to identify artists for this reimagining. To my surprise and delight I found two with close ties to Miami: Michele Oka Doner for original sets and costumes and Tarell Alvin McCraney for dramatic direction. Together, they transferred Shakespeare’s magical Athenian forest, where fairies and sprites manipulate humans, to our surrounding waterways with their rich marine life, creating an estuary where these otherworldly activities take place - all the while remaining loyal to those three geniuses: Shakespeare, Mendelssohn and Balanchine.

For me, narrative ballets link literature, music and design to dance, attracting more audiences and families to experience the art form. Just think of what Balanchine accomplished with his revelation of *The Nutcracker*! How many people have been introduced to this art form through *The Nutcracker*? How many people have become engaged in the arts through it? How many lives changed by it? My hope is that the same thing will happen in South Florida through our lovingly reconsidered *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

This has been a labor of love for all of us at Miami City Ballet, where we are committed to keeping Balanchine’s incomparable legacy alive. I hope and believe you will be entranced by the beauty of this new production, and will come to love this ravishing ballet as all of us do who have lived with it for so many years - and in my own case, danced in it so happily for more than two decades! Lastly, a heartfelt “thank you” to the artistic, production and administrative staff at MCB, but especially to our extraordinary dancers.

Warmly,

[Signature]

Lourdes Lopez, Artistic Director
A Midsummer Night’s Dream

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Message from the Chairman

Our 30th Anniversary Season is filled with daring new premieres, virtuosic bravura and MCB’s special brand of intrepid spirit.

We are setting new precedents for donor and audience engagement throughout our communities - and far beyond. Our closest friends and family continue to renew their investment in Miami City Ballet’s work. In addition, new national funders are now supporting MCB’s stature as a leading ballet company in the country and on the international stage. Our Board of Trustees is committed to reaching deep into our communities and touching young lives through the power of the performing arts.

This season, we will witness extraordinary work onstage - culminating with a historic, only-in-South Florida reimagining of Balanchine’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. And offstage, we have launched a groundbreaking new model for arts education and outreach in underserved communities - Ballet Bus, a year-long scholarship program in partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Superintendent Alberto Carvalho which represents a transformative opportunity for young people from all backgrounds.

It is this type of synergy - audience enthusiasm, community engagement and artistic innovation - that makes Miami City Ballet and our dancers front page news. Please know how much we appreciate your support of our courageous and beloved ballet company.

Enjoy the magic of live performance. There is nothing in the world quite like it.

Susan D. Kronick, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Message from the Executive Director

The most successful arts organizations are those that evolve and remain relevant. Miami City Ballet is no exception. From our very beginning as a fledgling company in 1985 to the present, MCB’s artistry has resonated with audiences in Florida, the United States and internationally.

Our 30th season reflects MCB’s strong Balanchine foundation while introducing audiences to innovative new works and choreographers, an essential part of remaining relevant. Company and world premieres provide new opportunities for dancers to grow as artists and for audiences to experience dance from a new perspective and aesthetic.

Miami City Ballet at 30 has entered a new chapter. New leadership has infused the organization with a vitality and exuberance that is clearly evident on the stage. The organization has turned the corner, financially, and philanthropic investment in our shared vision underlines a new sense of stability and confidence in our future.

Let us not forget the very reason we are here: to bring audiences the finest in classical ballet, train future generations of dancers and reach deep into our community and beyond to transform young lives through the power and magic of the performing arts. Our success has been predicated on the loyalty and generosity of many of you who are in the today’s audience. Whether you have been with us for one year or 30, all of us at MCB thank you for your belief in this very special company and for bringing us to a place of prominence among ballet companies nationally.

All the best,

Michael Scolamiero, Executive Director
MIAMI CITY BALLET

THE COMPANY

Artistic Director
Lourdes Lopez

Executive Director
Michael Scolamiero

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Roma Sosenko

Ballet Masters
Joan Latham - Arnold Quintane

Principal Conductor - Gary Sheldon
Music Advisor/Company Pianist - Francisco Rennó

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Simone Messmer - Renato Penteado - Kleber Rebello - Reyneris Reyes

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Didier Bramaz - Jennifer Lauren - Callie Manning

Soloists
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Miami City Ballet salutes the tremendous philanthropy of individuals who make our work possible.

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Robin Woodard

*Deceased
Miami City Ballet is honored and humbled to dedicate the 30th Anniversary Season to the memory of our friend, R. Kirk Landon.

Kirk Landon was a beloved friend to Miami City Ballet, an esteemed Board Member and a tremendous supporter.

He served on our Board for many years, providing invaluable leadership, wisdom and an unwavering sense of optimism.

Kirk created and led the New Beginnings Campaign, making a leadership gift to launch one of the most successful fundraising campaigns in MCB’s history.

His leadership and tenacity, his fearless spirit, and above all, his remarkable philanthropy have shaped the course of Miami City Ballet for decades.

Kirk believed in the transformative power of the performing arts, and his love for Miami City Ballet was inspiring to us all. He celebrated our every step, and he absolutely adored our dancers.

We honor Kirk, we salute him, and we will always remember this special man whose impact on Miami City Ballet is everlasting.
We salute the generosity of those individuals who have made a gift above and beyond their annual contribution in support of our landmark 30th Anniversary Season. Miami City Ballet celebrates 30 years of exceptional dance with you and because of you!

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Miami City Ballet’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is made possible by the extraordinary philanthropic investment of the following individuals, foundations, and community leaders. Thank you.

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If you feel there has been an omission or error in our recognition of your generosity, please accept our sincere apologies, and contact development@miamicityballet.org
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The Company is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. Miami-Dade County support is provided by Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners with additional support provided by the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs program, and the Cultural Arts Council. Palm Beach County support is provided in part by the Board of County Commissioners, the Tourist Development Council and the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County. Broward County funding is provided in part by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners as recommended by the Broward Cultural Council.
Miami City Ballet salutes our corporate partners who make each season possible through their support in the amount of $10,000 or more.
Visionary largesse and extraordinary philanthropy - a historic moment in ballet history made possible by two long-standing supporters, believers and fellow dreamers - whose generosity will ripple through this community and far beyond for generations to come, as A Midsummer Night’s Dream is performed to the delight of thousands.
GEORGE BALANCHINE'S

A Midsummer Night's Dream

(Balanchine/Mendelssohn)

- Adrienne Arsht Center / March 18 - 20
- Kravis Center / April 1 - 3
- Broward Center / April 9 - 10

Claudia and Steven Perles, Title Sponsors

Kleber Rebello as Oberon in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Photo © Alberto Oviedo.
Michele Oka Doner

Michele Oka Doner is an internationally acclaimed artist whose work is fueled by her lifelong study and appreciation of the natural world. Born and raised in Miami Beach, her father was engaged in civic and political life throughout her childhood as a judge and then Mayor of Miami Beach. For the past year Oka Doner has been creating original costume and scenic designs that take their inspiration from life on the ocean floor surrounding Miami. This rich biodiversity inspired her to reimagine the ballet *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and set it underwater. The initial concept came from a collection of rarely seen specimens belonging to the Marine Invertebrate Museum at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science at the University of Miami. Oka Doner was allowed to photograph the jars of sea creatures, which now form the basis for her 155 original costume designs, as well as for the original set and projected video backdrop, which will include original images of rarely seen deep water specimens. This collaboration with MCB represents Oka Doner’s first experience with theatrical set design and designing original costumes for a major theatrical production.

Oka Doner’s artwork has been acquired by major museums and private collections in the United States and Europe, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Whitney Museum in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Art, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at the Louvre, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York, the FIU-Wolfsonian in Miami Beach, and the Victoria and Albert in London. Oka Doner is renowned for her numerous public art installations, including “A Walk on the Beach” at the Miami International Airport (1995-2009), extending over a mile-long concourse of dark terrazzo inlaid with bronze and mother of pearl. Over 25 million travelers a year have experienced this iconic work. Other installations include “Radiant Site” at the Herald Square subway station in New York City; “Flight” at the Ronald Reagan International Airport in Arlington, Va.; three United States courthouses: in Greeneville, Tenn., Gulfport, Miss. and Laredo, Texas; the Criminal Justice Center in Philadelphia; as well as public libraries in Sacramento, Calif. and Evanston, Ill. Last year, Oka Doner created “Micco”, a large scale, award winning sculpture that graces Doral City Hall Park.

Photo © Bruce Weber.
Tarell Alvin McCraney

Miami-born-and-raised playwright, screenwriter, director and actor, best known for his acclaimed trilogy, “The Brother/Sister Plays,” which include “The Brothers Size,” “In The Red And Brown Water,” and “Marcus, or the Secret of Sweet.” Other plays include “Head of Passes,” “Choir Boy,” “Wig Out!” and “Run, Mourner, Run.”

He is the recipient of a MacArthur “Genius” Grant, the Whiting Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, the Evening Standard Award, the New York Times Outstanding Playwright Award, the Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, the Windham Campbell Award, and a Doris Duke Artist Award. He was the International Writer-in-Residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company from 2008-2010, and a former resident playwright at New Dramatists. He is an ensemble member of Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, a resident artist at the Public Theater in New York, and a member of Teo Castellanos/D-Projects in Miami.

McCraney is a graduate of the New World School of the Arts, the Theatre School at DePaul University and the Yale School of Drama, as well as the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Warwick. He recently joined the University of Miami (UM) as Professor of Theatre and Civic Engagement as part of a three-year program, in partnership with UM, Miami-Dade County and the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center.
MCB’s landmark 30th Anniversary Season comes to a crescendo with a new production of Balanchine’s enchanting full-evening ballet, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Shakespeare’s timeless tale of love, illusion and reconciliation. With a fairytale cast, Felix Mendelssohn’s glorious music, 24 children and six vocalists, spectacular new sets and costumes, and Miami City Ballet’s breathtaking dancers, A Midsummer Night’s Dream is a dazzling spectacle for families and audiences of all ages. Reimagined by two international artists with ties to Miami - dramatic direction by Tarell Alvin McCraney and original sets and costumes by the celebrated artist Michele Oka Doner - this new Dream takes its inspiration from South Florida’s surrounding waterways while always remaining true to Shakespeare, Mendelssohn and Balanchine.

All Shakespeare’s famous characters are here: Oberon and Titania, the feuding King and Queen of the Fairies; the two pairs of muddled lovers; poor confused Bottom, who is magically transformed into an ass (in our version, a manatee); Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, who comes through the forest accompanied by her hounds (in our version, seahorses) to marry Theseus, ruler of nearby Athens; and of course the mischievous sprite Puck, who presides over the confusions and resolutions of the fiendishly intricate plot - Puck, who in the play speaks the famous line that perhaps most clearly reflects Shakespeare’s view of the characters he has brought to life, “What fools these mortals be.”

With so much of Balanchine’s great reputation based on his abstract (or black-and-white) ballets - The Four Temperaments, Agon, Symphony in Three Movements - it’s easy to forget that he was also a supreme storyteller (just think of his Nutcracker). Somehow he makes this ultra-complicated story crystal clear - you’re never for a moment at a loss as he unfolds this infinitely touching, charming and hilarious drama. And then, following the long first act, he gives us an elegant divertissement, with Theseus’ court becoming the setting for a formal exhibition of classical dance (it opens with Mendelssohn’s famous “Wedding March”) and at the heart of which is one of Balanchine’s most subtle and persuasive pas de deux.

On a personal note: In the original production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, the central role of Oberon was created on our Founding Artistic Director, Edward Villella, and during her 24 years at New York City Ballet, our current Artistic Director, Lourdes Lopez, danced Helena, the Act II pas de deux, and - early on - one of Hippolyta’s hounds!

Choreography - George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Music - Felix Mendelssohn, Overture and Incidental Music to A Midsummer Night’s Dream, op. 21 and 61 (1826, 1842); Overtures to Athalie, op. 74 (1845), The Fair Melusine op. 32 (1833), The First Walpurgis Night, op. 60; Symphony No. 9 for strings; Overture to Son and Stranger, op. 89 (1829)

Staging - Sandra Jennings

Scenery & Costume Design - Michele Oka Doner

Lighting Design - John Hall

Projection Design - Wendall Harrington

Dramaturgy - Tarell Alvin McCraney
ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM MICHELE OKA DONER

Opening image: Port of Miami underwater, 2014

Coral Castle, Act II, reimagined from a vintage photograph taken by Hans Hannau, early 1940s. Located in Miami-Dade County, Coral Castle has become a part of Miami’s mythic landscape.

Costume designs and sets are based on the extraordinary archive of marine specimens at the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School. Housed in the Marine Invertebrate Museum, almost a million creatures are cared for and investigated by Professor Nancy Voss, who kindly gave her permission for their use.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

COSTUME CREDITS

Costume Design Liaison - Carole Divet Harting
Fairies, Titania and Butterfly headpieces by Maria Morales
Act II - Halsey Onstage
Additional Costume Design - Travis Halsey and Rachel Coyle
Corps, Divertissement headpieces by Maria Morales

SCENIC CREDITS

Design Assistant - Carlos Rodriguez
Draperies furnished & constructed - I. Weiss Theatrical Solution
Scenic painting - Scenic Art Studios
Properties construction - Michael Amico
Projection programming - Paul Vershbow
University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School, the Nancy Voss Collection

Act I - Near an estuary on a Midsummer Eve
Act II - At the court of Theseus

MCB premiere: March 18, 2016, Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, Miami, FL.

The performance of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, a Balanchine® Ballet, is presented by arrangement with The George Balanchine Trust and has been produced in accordance with the Balanchine Style® and Balanchine Technique®, Service Standards established and provided by the Trust.

Miami City Ballet would like to acknowledge Miami City Ballet School students who appear in this production.

Underwater photo costumes, courtesy of Haydée Morales, are not based on Michele Oka Doner’s original designs for A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Chase Swatosh and Jennifer Lauren as Lysander and Hermia in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Photo © Alberto Oviedo.