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News Release

**KAREN KAIN TO MENTOR CHOREOGRAPHER ROBERT BINET
IN 2017 GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

March 9, 2017 – OTTAWA (Canada) – Canada's National Arts Centre (NAC) is delighted to announce that **Karen Kain**, the Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada and one of the most gifted dancers of her era, has chosen to mentor the choreographer **Robert Binet** through the 2017 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program.

Made possible with support from The Keg Spirit Foundation, the program allows past recipients of the Governor General's Performing Arts Award, Canada's highest honour in the performing arts, to give back to the next generation. Through the program, Robert Binet will further develop his 2015 work *Orpheus*, which will be part of a future season of The National Ballet of Canada.

Karen Kain (1997 National Arts Centre Award, 2002 GGPA Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement) is acclaimed as one of the most gifted, elegant and versatile classical dancers of her era, and one of Canada's most committed arts advocates. She is currently the Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada.

One of the most exciting choreographers of the new ballet generation, **Robert Binet** was appointed Choreographic Associate of The National Ballet of Canada in 2013 following 18 months as Choreographic Apprentice of The Royal Ballet (London, UK), a position created specifically for him.

(Full biographies can be found at the bottom of this release.)

"Robert Binet is a gifted artist and choreographer," said Karen Kain. "I am truly looking forward to working with him on this incredibly exciting new work."

"Karen Kain has been a huge support in my career so far and I am thrilled and honoured to have the opportunity to work more closely with her," said Robert Binet. "She is someone I have looked up to all my life and have immense respect for, so to be mentored by her is incredibly exciting. Karen's artistic insights and guidance will be invaluable to me as I continue to develop *Orpheus*, a new work I am creating for The National Ballet of Canada. I am very grateful to The Keg Spirit Foundation for this opportunity."

A unique partnership between the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation, the National Arts Centre and The Keg Spirit Foundation, the GGPA Award Mentorship Program is designed to offer creative guidance to talented mid-career artists, and serves as an investment in future Canadian artistic achievement.

Each year, a past laureate of the Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award is invited to select a professional artist (or artists) to share, learn and grow from the experience and insight of their mentor. In addition to receiving artistic guidance and an honorarium, each protégé is recognized during the GGPAA celebrations in Ottawa, which culminates with the star-studded GGPAA Gala at the NAC.

The Governor General's Performing Arts Awards and the National Arts Centre Foundation are deeply grateful to The Keg Spirit Foundation, which has generously supported the Mentorship Program for nine consecutive years. Established in 2001, The Keg Spirit Foundation supports organizations that mirror the mentorship that The Keg Steakhouse + Bar has provided to hundreds of thousands of young staff for more than 40 years. In that time, more than \$8 million has been raised for more than 300 charities across North America.

"Mentorship is incredibly important to achieving success in any industry," said David Aisenstat, President and CEO of The Keg Steakhouse + Bar, and Chairman of The Keg Spirit Foundation. "We are thrilled that the incomparable Karen Kain will be working with an exciting artist like Robert Binet through the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program in the coming year."

ABOUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS

Created in 1992, the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are Canada's highest honour in the performing arts. This year's laureates for Lifetime Artistic Achievement are **Jean Beaudin, Michael J. Fox, Brigitte Haentjens, Martin Short** and **Yves Sioui Durand**. This year **William H. Loewen** will receive the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts.

On June 28, the laureates will receive their awards at a special ceremony and reception at Rideau Hall. And on June 29, the National Arts Centre will host a star-studded gala featuring superb performances, evocative film portraits by the **National Film Board**, and personal tributes by guest stars. The Gala marks the first event in the "new" National Arts Centre, after its architectural rejuvenation. The NAC will host its Grand Re-opening two days later on July 1, 2017.

This year the Awards Gala will be live streamed by broadcast partner CBC/Radio-Canada on cbc.ca and radio-canada.ca as part of their 2017 programming. In addition, CBC/Radio-Canada will air a one-hour special presentation of the Gala, on both CBC and Ici Radio-Canada Télé, on June 30, 2017 at 9 p.m. EST.

PARTNERS

The National Arts Centre is proud to produce the 2017 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala in partnership with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Foundation. The Awards are presented with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The GGPAAF gratefully acknowledges **Birks** as Presenting Sponsor of the GGPAF Gala. Grateful thanks also go to the GGPAF Gala's National Committee of volunteers, led by Honorary Chair Suzanne Rogers.

GALA TICKETS

Tickets for the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Gala on Thursday, June 29, 2016 go on sale to the general public on Thursday, March 9, 2017, at 12 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time at the NAC Box Office and through Ticketmaster, 1-888-991-2787 or www.ticketmaster.ca.

ABOUT THE NAC

The National Arts Centre collaborates with artists and arts organizations across Canada to help create a national stage for the performing arts, and acts as a catalyst for performance, creation and learning across the country. A home for Canada's most creative artists, the NAC strives to be artistically adventurous in each of its programming streams: the NAC Orchestra, English Theatre, French Theatre and Dance, as well as the *Scene* festivals and *NAC Presents*, which showcase established and emerging Canadian artists. The organization is at the forefront of youth and educational activities, offering artist training, programs for children and youth, and resources for teachers in communities across Canada. The NAC is also a pioneer in new media, using technology to teach students and young artists around the globe by creating top-rated podcasts and providing a wide range of NAC Orchestra concerts on demand. The NAC is the only bilingual, multidisciplinary performing arts centre in Canada, and one of the largest in the world.

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BIOGRAPHIES

KAREN KAIN

Karen Kain (1997 National Arts Centre Award, 2002 GGPAF for Lifetime Artistic Achievement) is acclaimed as one of the most gifted, elegant and versatile classical dancers of her era, and one of Canada's most committed arts advocates. She is currently the Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada. Ms. Kain was born in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1951 and trained at Canada's National Ballet School. She joined the corps de ballet of The National Ballet of Canada in 1969 and was promoted to principal dancer in 1971 after her

sensational debut as the Swan Queen in Swan Lake. For the next 25 years she enjoyed a remarkable international career, performing many of ballet's greatest roles with such companies as Paris Opéra Ballet, Roland Petit's Le Ballet de Marseilles, the Bolshoi Ballet, London Festival Ballet and Vienna State Opera Ballet. She also developed a close creative partnership with Rudolf Nureyev and often performed with him. A favourite of some of the world's most prominent choreographers, she premiered many new and important works during her time as a dancer. Ms. Kain retired from dancing in 1997 and took up the position of artist-in-residence, then artistic associate with The National Ballet of Canada. She was named Artistic Director in 2005. Among other distinctions, Karen Kain is a Companion of the Order of Canada, an Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de la France, and a recipient of the Cartier Lifetime Achievement Award and the International Society for the Performing Arts' Distinguished Artist Award.

ROBERT BINET

One of the most exciting choreographers of the new ballet generation, Robert Binet was appointed Choreographic Associate of The National Ballet of Canada in 2013 following 18 months as Choreographic Apprentice of The Royal Ballet (London, UK), a position created specifically for him. Mr. Binet was born in Toronto in 1991 and trained at Canada's National Ballet School. He has created several works for The National Ballet of Canada and The Royal Ballet, as well as works for New York City Ballet, the Dutch National Ballet's junior company, the Estonian National Ballet, the German National Youth Ballet, the Genée International Ballet Competition and more. In 2015, he spoke and presented excerpts of his work *Orpheus* at TEDxToronto. His most recent work for The National Ballet of Canada is the immersive ballet *The Dreamers Ever Leave You* (2016), inspired by the art of Lawren Harris and coproduced with the Art Gallery of Ontario. It followed the world premiere of *Terra Incognita*, a site-specific ballet featuring dancers from top international ballet companies, for Mr. Binet's project-based company Wild Space. Upcoming projects include a full-evening work for Theatre Ballet Moscow.