

THE PORTLAND

NANCY DAVIS & ANNE MUELLER ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

BALLET

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The Portland Ballet to Expand Further with \$100,000 Grant from Murdock Trust

The M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust has awarded **THE PORTLAND BALLET** \$100,000 -- the full amount requested -- to expand the smallest of its three studios (Studio B) by 400 feet in order to accommodate increased enrollment. The grant award, which coincides with TPB's annual fundraising campaign, includes a challenge match: Murdoch will double every dollar given by individual donors, up to \$25,000. The annual individual-donor campaign now has the capacity to contribute \$50,000 to construction costs of the much-needed expansion.

Just two years ago, TPB re-opened after an expansion that doubled its square footage with a completely new studio and many improvements such as larger dressing and rest rooms, additional office space, a conference room and reception area. Since then, enrollment has steadily grown to 185, an increase of 68 students or 37% since January 2014. In fact, the expansion was so successful that TPB quickly exceeded its five-year growth projections and the need to expand Studio B became acute.

In April 2015, it was announced that Anne Mueller, former principal dancer with Oregon Ballet Theatre, would join Founding Directors Nancy Davis and Jim Lane as Co-Artistic Director. In August, she launched the pre-professional Career Track program. The first cohort of Career Track dancers has begun to travel, conducting lecture-demonstrations throughout the region. The Career Track dancers will perform June 10-11 in a 15th anniversary Studio Theater production that includes three new works, in addition to appearances by TPB alumni currently dancing with professional companies and conservatory programs around the country.

TPB's expanded space and strengthened capacity has allowed it to bring the community to the studio -- in the form of weekday morning dance classes for Wilson High School who choose dance to fulfill their physical education requirement; and to go deeper into the community by offering once-a-week ballet training to the Kukótónón Children's African Dance Troupe in its North Portland space. The Kukótónón program also includes flooring and ballet barres provided by TPB. Last month, TPB filled Lincoln Hall with 500 Portland Public Schools elementary students for a special performance of its Spring Concert.

Murdock awarded its first grant to TPB -- \$70,000 -- two years ago, for the studio's initial, major expansion. That capital campaign raised \$170,000 from foundations and individual supporters on

a very fast trajectory. The \$670,000 construction costs included \$500,000 in support from TPB's landlord.

The current, \$203,000 project is self-funded by TPB with grants, donations and cash reserves. TPB's landlord has pledged not to increase rent for extra footage for the next 13 years. Construction is to take place over the summer, with completion set for the opening of the 2016-17 season on September 6, 2016.

THE PORTLAND BALLET nurtures young dancers from age three to 22. TPB students are trained with professional intent by a faculty that includes some of the nation's finest dancers and choreographers, with experience at companies such as the National Ballet, the original Los Angeles Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Royal Danish Ballet, Trey McIntyre Project and BodyVox. Professionally produced performance experience is at the core of TPB training and TPB is well known for its annual Thanksgiving Weekend production. TPB graduates have gone on to professional dance careers with companies such as Grand Rapids Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Sacramento Ballet, Houston Ballet, St. Louis Ballet, Royal Swedish Ballet, Batsheva, LEV, Ballet Memphis and Ballet West.