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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MIAMI CITY BALLET PRESENTS *A DANCE FOR HEROES*
Inspired by and dedicated to first responders and essential workers
Friday, May 8 at 8pm



Miami, FL – Miami City Ballet (MCB) will present the world premiere of *A Dance for Heroes* on the company's [Facebook](#) page **Friday, May 8, 2020 at 8:00pm EST**. MCB Artistic Director **Lourdes Lopez** personally commissioned the new work inspired by and dedicated to the first responders and essential workers that have worked with uncompromising courage and grace throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Artistic Director Lourdes Lopez tapped 24-year-old choreographer, **Durante Verzola**, to create *A Dance for Heroes* as a tribute to the frontline workers who are making unimaginable sacrifices. She says, "We have watched in awe, as our first responders, nurses, doctors, fire rescue departments, mail carriers, grocery store clerks, janitors, and countless essential workers perform incredible acts of courage. They have shown us what grace, bravery and dedication truly look like. We want to honor them and to thank them for all they are doing. Dance, at its core, is a celebration of life, vitality, resiliency and beauty of the human spirit. This is our way to celebrate

and acknowledge the very community members that have supported us throughout the years. All of us at MCB are here for them just as they have been here for us.”

Durante Verzola adds, “I really wanted to show the dancers being very generous with all of their movements, holding nothing back, and taking risks, just as all of our essential workers are during this time. The music paired with the work has an uplifting pulse throughout that feels integrated into the movements with the dancers to create something that is hopeful and beautiful. Full of love and full of vitality.”

A Dance for Heroes stars MCB principal dancers Jennifer Lauren and Renan Cerdeiro as well as MCB School Pre-Professional students Taylor Naturkas and Erick Rojas. It was created digitally with all dancers learning the choreography remotely and filmed separately. *A Dance for Heroes* is set to Flemish/Belgian composer Wim Mertens’ uplifting and inspirational song, “Often a Bird.”

Verzola is a choreographic wunderkind with ties to Miami. He trained at and graduated from MCB School and after creating thrilling works for the School’s pre-professional dancers, Lopez commissioned Verzola to create an all new work which will premiere as part of the company’s upcoming 35th anniversary *Ablaze* program. Along with Verzola, *Ablaze* features world premieres by choreographers Jamar Roberts and Claudia Schreier who are all creating new works inspired by and in celebration of the Magic City’s vibrant arts and cultural communities.

Subscription renewals for the 2020/21 35th anniversary season are on sale now at www.miamicityballet.org.

To see MCB’s world premiere of *A Dance for Heroes* be sure to follow MCB’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/miamicityballet.

Media inquiries, please email communications@miamicityballet.org or call Amber Dorsky at 305.929.7000 ext. 7189.

ABOUT MIAMI CITY BALLET

Miami City Ballet, celebrating its 35th anniversary season, has a diverse roster of 53 dancers and a repertoire of more than 130. As one of the most renowned ballet companies in the country, Miami City Ballet performs for nearly 125,000 patrons annually during its South Florida home season in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and tours to major cities domestically and internationally, including recent visits to New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles and Paris.

Miami City Ballet School, the official school of Miami City Ballet, is one of the most respected ballet training academies in America. The School trains students, ages 3-18 year-round and grants more than \$650,000 in scholarships annually.

Miami City Ballet’s Community Engagement programs and initiatives touch the lives of more than 14,000 young people, seniors and community members, annually.

Executive Director Tania Castroverde Moskalenko and Artistic Director Lourdes Lopez lead the company. Lopez was recently awarded the prestigious Dance Magazine Award in 2018 and was named one of “The Most Influential People in Dance Today.” She is on the Ford Foundation Board of Trustees, the first artist to ever serve on its Board.

Miami City Ballet was founded in 1985 by Miami philanthropist Toby Lerner Ansin and Founding Artistic Director Edward Villella. It is headquartered in Miami Beach, FL, at the Ophelia & Juan Js. Roca Center, a facility designed by renowned architectural firm, Arquitectonica.

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Major funding for Miami City Ballet is provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, a national foundation with strong local roots, investing in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. The Foundation’s goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which they believe are essential for a healthy democracy.

Major funding is also provided by the Ford Foundation, working with visionaries on the frontlines of social change worldwide.

Miami-Dade County support is provided by the Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Mayor, and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners.

Support for Miami City Ballet in the Palm Beaches is generously sponsored in part by the Board of County Commissioners, the Tourist Development Council and the Cultural Council for 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 and Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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