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Richmond Ballet Documentary “Bridge of Hearts: Road to China” Premieres April 4 on Local PBS Stations

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the company’s epic journey to China.

More information: IdeaStations.org/BridgeofHearts

Richmond, Va. - If dance is the universal language, then members of the Richmond Ballet were certainly speaking, or rather dancing it, during their May 2015 tour of China. The story of that tour, captured on film by Richmond-based humanstory films, became the documentary **“Bridge of Hearts: Road to China,”** premiering April 4 at 9 p.m. on WCVE/WHTJ/WVPT PBS.

“Bridge of Hearts: Road to China” showcases the Company’s performances at the prestigious “Meet in Beijing” Arts Festival as well as its tour stops in Dezhou, Jinan, and Shanghai. The pieces, all meticulously chosen by Artistic Director Stoner Winslett, include *Valse Fantaisie* by George Balanchine, *After Eden* by John Butler, *Swipe* by Val Caniparoli, and *Lift the Fallen* by Chinese-born Ma Cong. Woven throughout the documentary are interviews, sightseeing, and travel footage, with one ballet highlighted in each venue.

Produced in partnership with Richmond Ballet, The State Ballet of Virginia, the film represents the culmination of a deep and far-reaching cultural exchange initiative between Richmond Ballet, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the United States, and the People’s Republic of China. This multi-year effort, in which Company members served as cultural ambassadors, was aptly titled “Road to China.”

“The ‘Road to China’ represented an exciting new horizon for us here at the Ballet,” explains Winslett. “The chance to explore a fascinating culture, so historic and majestic, and of course so different from our own, was an experience I know our dancers will cherish forever.”

“Everyone at Richmond Ballet had to come together to make this journey possible,” says Brett Bonda, the Ballet’s Managing Director. “Situational challenges arose at every turn, but our group of dancers and staff worked together tirelessly, and the experience strengthened us both as an organization and as a family.”

Both Winslett and Bonda are excited for the television premiere of the documentary.

“Viewers will be taken on a wild ride right alongside the dancers, from boarding the 13-hour flight to the final moments before the curtain rises in four major Chinese cities,” says Bonda.

“Dance has a special ability to communicate and connect our souls when words fail us, and at each performance we could feel the joy and fulfillment of our audiences,” reflects Winslett. “This poignant

film is filled with moments of drama, exhilaration, deep emotion, and, of course, beautiful artistry. It is something that I believe will touch all who watch it.”

Watch the local premiere of **“Bridge of Hearts: Road to China”** on WCVE/WHTJ/WVPT PBS on April 4 at 9 p.m.

About the Community Idea Stations:

The Community Idea Stations is the largest locally owned and operated public media company in the region, each week reaching more than 300,000 people throughout central Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley.

WCVE PBS, WCVW PBS, PBS Kids 24/7, lifestyle channel Create TV, and international program channel MHz Worldview serve the Richmond community with television programming.

The Stations serve the Charlottesville community with television programming on WHTJ PBS, WVPT PBS, WCVW PBS, Create TV, MHz Worldview, and PBS Kids 24/7.

The Stations serve the Harrisonburg community with television programming on WVPT PBS, WVPY PBS, Create TV, and PBS Kids 24/7.

WCVE Music provides classical music, jazz, blues, world music, and more for radio listeners in Richmond on 93.1 FM and 107.3 FM (HD2), and also serves radio listeners on 89.1 WCNV in the Northern Neck and on 90.1 WMVE in Chase City.

WCVE News provides *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, as well as NPR talk shows and BBC News on 88.9 (HD1) in Richmond, and also serves radio listeners on 89.1 WCNV in the Northern Neck and on 90.1 WMVE in Chase City.

Additional content for lifelong learners of all ages can be found at IdeaStations.org.

About the Richmond Ballet:

Since its early days as a civic company in the 1950s until its emergence as a professional company in 1984, Richmond Ballet, The State Ballet of Virginia, has flourished as a home for the past, present, and future of dance. In addition to the professional company, the organization is proud to celebrate the strength of the School of Richmond Ballet, now in its 44th year, and community engagement programs including the acclaimed 24-year old *Minds In Motion*. The strong connection between training and performance at Richmond Ballet has resulted in three-quarters of Richmond Ballet’s professional dancers rising through the ranks from the School of Richmond Ballet or Richmond Ballet II to the professional company. That foundation, combined with a repertory that is based on 19th- and 20th-century masterpieces, as well as more than 75 new ballets by contemporary choreographers, gives Richmond Ballet the versatility, dynamic energy, and intense emotion for which it is known. Under the leadership of founding Artistic Director Stoner Winslett, Richmond Ballet continues to further its mission to uplift and awaken the human spirit.

More information can be found at RichmondBallet.com.

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