



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

José Mateo Ballet Theatre announces long-term plan to grow Dorchester School and Dance for World Community as the organization prepares to launch a national search for Mateo's successor as Artistic Director of the Performance Company.

CAMBRIDGE, MA (January 24, 2018) - After 32 years of serving as sole choreographer for the ballet troupe he created, Director José Mateo is redefining his role within the broader mission of Ballet Theatre of Boston, Inc., d/b/a Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre. With support from his board of directors, Mateo will be temporarily putting the performance company's repertory concerts on hold to concentrate his energies on the other two pillars of the organization he also directs: the **School** – with studios in Dorchester and Cambridge where he oversees a faculty of 17 instructors – and **Dance for World Community**, a set of ongoing community programs that culminates with an annual Festival in Harvard Square. Now in its tenth year, the indoor/outdoor **Festival** is the area's largest dance event, presenting over 70 performance groups and drawing nearly 20,000 people annually.

“The consistent growth of the **Dance for World Community Festival** over the years for me has been a demonstration of our organization's potential to reposition the role of dance – in all its forms, not just ballet – in the Greater Boston area. I am excited by the opportunity to explore new ways to expand the value that dance can bring to our communities and to extend our reach to audiences that have been traditionally overlooked,” said Mateo.

The plan for the shift has been under discussion for more than five years. In 2013, the board of directors, under the leadership of Rick Shea, created the Legacy and Succession Planning Committee to address the ways in which the organization would have to prepare if it were going to successfully preserve a lasting legacy of Mateo's contributions beyond his creative life and pave the way for a smooth transition of leadership in the future.

Community Chair Ellen Porter Honnet said, “José may likely be remembered primarily for his ballets but we feel it's at least as important that he leave a legacy that upholds his models for an inclusive school and transformative community programs that have impacted so many individual lives and on the culture of the landscape as a whole. The committee believes that a successful transition will require that the presentation of repertory work be put on hold to allow the organization to more effectively implement its plan to grow the School – with an

increased focus on the Dorchester studio – and strengthen the support for **Dance for World Community.**”

One of the area’s most prolific choreographers, Mateo is the recipient of the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Commonwealth Award for Achievement, the state’s highest honor in the arts. The challenge to find his successor – or successors – is compounded by Mateo’s unusually broad scope of responsibilities and multiplicity of roles, from costume designer for the performance company, director and instructor for the school and head of multiple ongoing community programs.

Preparations for a national search for a new Artistic Director of the performance troupe will begin this fall. Meanwhile, the company will complete its 2018 Winter/Spring season and continue its annual performance of *The Nutcracker* at the Cutler Majestic and Strand Theatres, under Mateo’s direction until a new artistic director is hired. Mateo will continue as Director of the School and **DWC.**

José Mateo Ballet Theatre will continue programming at The Sanctuary Theatre presenting curated programs featuring some of the local dance groups that have performed in the **Dance for World Community Festivals** over the years. Mateo sees these programs as a necessary component of DWC’s mission and believes they will help vitalize an inclusive dance community that has historically found it difficult to access affordable performance space and develop sound marketing and audience building capability.

Mateo added, “I look forward to showcasing other talent from our diverse, dance-rich community and especially the new work by younger choreographers that our presentations will inspire.”

José Mateo Ballet Theatre will present its **10th Annual Dance for World Community Festival** on Saturday, June 9. Details for other activities during **DWC Festival Week** will be forthcoming.

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JOSE MATEO BALLET THEATRE’S MISSION IS TO:

- Create new ballets of excellence that are stimulating and culturally relevant to diverse audiences;
- Create an innovative approach to ballet training that welcomes diversity, and ensures unanimous participation and achievement by all students;
- Create sustainable, inclusive and engaging outreach programs that make ballet accessible to participants of all racial, cultural and economic backgrounds;
- Reposition the role of dance in our culture and expand its purpose in the education of youth and enrichment of community locally and beyond.