

COLORADO CONSERVATORY OF DANCE TO PRESENT WORLD PREMIERE BALLET

Renowned Choreographer Dominic Walsh Brings "Cinderella and the Evil Stepmother" to the Pinnacle Stage

(DENVER, CO, March 2, 2020) Colorado Conservatory of Dance (CCD) is thrilled to present the world premiere of Dominic Walsh's "Cinderella and the Evil Stepmother" Saturday, May 9 at 1:00 and 6:30 at the Performing Arts Complex at Pinnacle Charter School, 1001 W. 84th Ave., Denver. This new imagining of the classic fairy tale will provide seasoned dance-goers with an opportunity to witness an important new entry in the canon of American contemporary ballet, while also allowing entire families to experience the magic of live dance performance for the first time in an affordable way with ticket prices beginning at \$8.00 for children and \$19.00 for adults.

One of the most beloved tales of all time gets a bold new exploration under the leadership of Walsh, formerly the Artistic Director of the critically acclaimed Dominic Walsh Dance Theatre of Houston. In "Cinderella and the Evil Stepmother," Walsh has chosen to feature the "story surrounding the story" by diving into the backstories of some typically marginalized characters—particularly the role grief and isolation play in the development of the "evil" stepmother's cruelty towards the title character. Walsh also introduces new characters entirely in what promises to be a performance filled with emotion, creativity, and ingenuity.

Walsh says, "I've taken a few liberties that I thought could contribute to the core of the story. I have created the role of the wishing Tree/Court Jester, a tree Cinderella plants at the grave of her mother who serves as a messenger and protector to Cinderella, an element from the Grimm's version who acts as a narrator/fate figure. He also serves as a fairy godmother energy, as does Cinderella's future self. I like the idea of Cinderella finding magic and empowerment from her higher self or her fully realized self. The spirit of Cinderella's mother is another prominent character as are the older stepsisters. I was also interested in giving the stepmother a deeper backstory and journey. Her story is a look at grief and the destruction it can cause to one's person. Lastly, along with the drama I wanted to make sure there was plenty of romance and humor to round it all out and we are having a great time in rehearsals bringing the laughs to the production."

"Cinderella and the Evil Stepmother" is a project of CCD's elite Studio Company, comprised of pre-professional dancers between the ages of 12-21, and also featuring a number of other CCD advanced students in the ensemble. For most of the dancers, the process of creating an entirely new ballet is a new one. The title role is played by Blythe Truhe, who notes "this process is different from CCD's performance of *The Nutcracker*, because each individual motion is created in front of your eyes. You have the opportunity to witness the choreographic process and can have a deeper understanding of why each decision is being made. I hope that Dominic Walsh's interpretation of this classic tale will allow audiences to witness a more humanized version of each of the characters. The choreography showcases each character's emotions through complex movement, in such a way, that the audience will feel each second on stage with the dancers." Fellow cast member Lucinda Zastrocky adds, "My hope is that the audience leaves feeling a bit more human—that they will treat everyone with love and kindness. Because sometimes we don't know what a person's real story is."

In addition to the performances listed above, CCD is especially proud to offer its signature "Sensory-Friendly" performance of the ballet on Friday, May 8 at 6:30 PM. Building on its expertise from its groundbreaking *Ballet Expressions* program, which uses dance to build critical developmental skills and physical strength & flexibility for children with challenges ranging from cerebral palsy to Down syndrome, the Conservatory has developed a revolutionary theatre-going experience for people with special needs. For the sensory-friendly performance, the conservatory alters the "typical" house rules, fostering the opportunity for audiences with special needs family members to feel welcomed in a theatre setting. The performance looks and feels identical to others on the

calendar offered to the general public, but allows for authentic reactions among its audience members that may otherwise be seen as distracting in a typical theatre setting. Specifically, sound levels are adjusted to a moderate, consistent level to avoid surprises or distractions; house lights are left up to prevent total darkness; special needs “guests of honor” are encouraged to bring manipulatives into the theatre and may react to the story on stage in ways that feel correct to them (including standing, walking around, taking breaks, etc.); and seating is limited to no more than half the house to ensure each audience member has adequate space around them. With support from key sponsors such as the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), the Conservatory is able to offer tickets to the sensory-friendly performance at no charge to audience members with special needs and only \$10.00 for accompanying family members.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT: *Cinderella and the Evil Stepmother*, a world premiere original ballet by Dominic Walsh

WHO: Colorado Conservatory of Dance

WHEN: May 9 (1:00pm and 6:30pm)

Special “Sensory-Friendly” Performance on May 8 (6:30pm)

WHERE: Performing Arts Complex at Pinnacle Charter School
1001 W. 84th Ave., Denver, CO 80260
(West of I-25 at 84th Ave. and Huron St.)

TICKETS: Adult: \$26 prime | \$22 standard | \$19 value
Senior: \$24 prime | \$20 standard | \$17 value
Teen: \$15 prime | \$14 standard | \$13 value
Child: \$10 prime | \$9 standard | \$8 value
Sensory Friendly Performance: \$10 general admission | Guest of Honor FREE

To order tickets please visit <https://ccdance.org/cinderella/> or call 303.466.5685

For exclusive photo and interview opportunities with Dominic Walsh or cast members, e-mail or call CCD Communications Coordinator Rachel Long at rlong@ccdance.org or 303.466.5685.