

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2015

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CAROLINA BALLET ESTABLISHES BOYS' BALLET CLASS
The Robert Weiss Boys' Scholarship Program at The Raleigh School of Ballet

RALEIGH, NC --- Carolina Ballet is very pleased to announce the launch of The Robert Weiss Boys' Scholarship Program that will offer a boys ballet class starting in fall 2015 for aspiring young dancers ages 8 to 12. "This is something I have thought about doing for a long time," explains artistic director Robert Weiss. "Every year when we hold the auditions for *Nutcracker*, we get only a handful of young boys. Therefore I hope, if we can grab the boys' interest early enough, they will not only want to be in the *Nutcracker* but also pursue dance for many years to come."

The audition to be accepted into the program will be held on Sunday, April 19 at 5:00pm at The Raleigh School of Ballet (RSB), 3921 Beryl Road in Raleigh. The program offers a full tuition scholarship for one season, September to May. Students will have the option to withdraw after December 31, 2015. The class will meet on Mondays, at 6:00pm starting in September. The boys selected for the program are required to audition for Carolina Ballet's *Nutcracker*, and participate in the 2015 production, if accepted.

This scholarship program will be taught by Carolina Ballet soloist Yevgeny Shlapko with support from several other male dancers with the company. Mr. Shlapko came to Carolina Ballet as a member of the corps de ballet from the School of American Ballet in New York City in the fall of 2007. He was promoted to soloist in 2011 and has danced many principal roles in Carolina Ballet productions as well.

The classes will be held at the RSB studio on Beryl Road. RSB will manage the day to day logistics including registration, parent communication and, jointly with Carolina Ballet, the curriculum. Former Pennsylvania Ballet soloist and current RSB director, Mary LeGere says, "It has been part of our mission to introduce boys to ballet and we are pleased to partner with Carolina Ballet in this exciting new program."

The Raleigh School of Ballet was founded in 1984 to provide professional training in classical ballet. Carolina Ballet has four RSB trained dancers within its roster: Lindsay Purrington, Ashley Hathaway, Sarah Newton and Kathleen Black. RSB students, including several boys, are or have been members of major ballet companies including New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Stuttgart Ballet and Dutch National Ballet.

Carolina Ballet is the Triangle area's professional ballet company, founded in 1998 under the leadership of artistic director Robert Weiss. Weiss is a former principal dancer with New York City Ballet and former artistic director of Pennsylvania Ballet.

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