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**Pittsburgh Symphony Musicians Gift \$10,000 to Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre
Orchestra Endowment**

Musicians Urge Pittsburghers to Pledge Support for Live Music



From left to right: Harris Ferris, executive director, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre; Cynthia Babin Anderson, PBT Orchestra oboist; Micah Howard, PSO bassist and Orchestra Committee chairman; and Jeremy Branson, assistant principal percussion and vice chairman of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Committee

PITTSBURGH, PA (July 2017) – Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT) is thrilled to announce that the musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra have contributed \$10,000 to the company's

endowment fund for the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Orchestra.

PBT has set a \$4 million goal for the orchestra endowment, which is part of PBT's \$21.2 million capital Campaign for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. The fund will protect the company's current level of orchestra accompaniment and put PBT in position to expand it for the future by building a source of sustainable, long-term funding for annual performances with live music. Fifty musicians comprise the PBT Orchestra, which performs under the baton of Music Director and Conductor Charles Barker.

"The musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra have great pride in our city and its cultural institutions – the heart and soul of any great city," said Micah Howard, PSO bassist and Orchestra Committee chairman. "We believe that live music is essential to the success of all ballet performances, and we hope that our donation will encourage other generous individuals in our city to give in order to bring the orchestra back to all Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre performances."

As it nears the 86 percent mark of its total campaign goal, PBT is working to harness broad community support to invest in the PBT Orchestra. **Community members can join the PSO musicians by pledging their support online at www.pbt.org/support, by calling Lois A. Wholey, PBT director of development, at 412-454-9133 or by mail at 2900 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15201.**

"The musicians of the PBT Orchestra are overwhelmed by the generosity of our friends and colleagues in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for their donation to the live music endowment. The PSO musicians know how important live music is in our city and in our precious performing arts institutions, and they have demonstrated their commitment in a very tangible way by this gesture of support," said Cynthia Babin Anderson, a PBT Orchestra oboist who spoke on behalf of her fellow musicians. "The musicians of the PBT Orchestra are proud to be next-door neighbors in the Cultural District to the extraordinary musicians of the PSO, and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their gift to the ballet to sustain and grow live music."

Since 2006, when financials forced the company to scale back live music in order to stay afloat, PBT has committed to performing with the full PBT Orchestra for two out of five main-stage productions and is often able to feature a live musical ensemble for a third. In recent years, gifts from an anonymous donor have helped sustain this commitment and allowed PBT to add additional orchestra performances for occasions like the company's 45th anniversary season.

This season, PBT is proud to feature the PBT Orchestra for two productions and a total of 12 performances – up from nine performances during the 2016-2017 Season. The PBT Orchestra will perform with PBT for the the Feb. 16-25, run of a redesigned "Swan Lake," set to the famous Tchaikovsky score, and the company's May 4-6, debut in Jerome Robbins' "West Side Story Suite," with music by Leonard Bernstein, and "In the Night," set to Chopin.

With a sizeable endowment, PBT can continue building on these advancements without compromising its fiscal stability.

"This is a powerful pledge of solidarity and leadership from the musicians of the Pittsburgh

Symphony Orchestra, and we hope it will inspire others who believe in the dynamism of live orchestral performance to invest in the exceptional cultural experiences that we are so proud to have in Pittsburgh,” said Harris Ferris, PBT executive director. “Many people don’t know that our ticket sales cover less than 50 percent of our production costs. In order to perform at this level, and keep ticket prices affordable and accessible to our patrons, we rely on individuals, corporations and foundations to invest in our art. Endowment gifts are truly a legacy that continue to give year after year, protecting our art now and for future generations.”

For more information about supporting the PBT Orchestra and the Campaign for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, please visit www.pbt.org/support or contact Lois A. Wholey, PBT director of development, at 412-454-9133 or lwholey@pittsburghballet.org.