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An Educational Collaboration of Arts • Industry • Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 10, 2008
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Dracul: Prince of Fire
The Crucible's 10th Anniversary Fire Ballet Fundraiser

Probably the most unique dance performance to be seen in the Bay Area – an amalgam of classical and modern dance, the fire and industrial arts, stunning athleticism and powerful music – *Dracul: Prince of Fire* is a show not to miss. Classical ballet dancers eat fire, a pas de deux is performed in the air; and a monstrous dragon starts the action in a nightmare-like industrial setting.

Conceived and directed by Michael Sturtz, choreographed by Victor Kabaniaev, with stage direction by Mark Streshinsky, *Dracul* is a dark tale of passion, fire, blood and undying love. The original story is a prequel to every vampire legend ever told, and a cautionary tale of seduction and power. With sly references to iconic pop culture moments, Sturtz tells the ominous story of Dracul, Dracula's father. The gigantic set weighs over ten tons; designed by Benjamin Carpenter and fabricated by artisans working in cement, metal, repurposed materials and fire, it creates a scene unlike any other theatrical experience. Phillip Feeney's dynamic score gets a new treatment by music director Scott Sterling to accentuate the chilling story. The result is a hot-blooded ballet that bites back!

Dracul is performed at The Crucible, where forges roar and sparks fly. "This is probably the most collaborative piece we've done so far," says Michael Sturtz, "It's our third fire ballet, and we're working with an incredibly diverse group of performers, trying things that even we have never done before." Trained in Russia, Mr. Kabaniaev has created over forty works and taught at ballet companies around the world, recently receiving the Grand Award at Dance Under the Stars Choreography Festival for his brilliant pas de deux, "Duet," performed by Tina Kay Bohnstedt, also of the Diablo Ballet, and Ethan White of Smuin Ballet. With *Dracul*, Ms. Bohnstedt makes her second appearance in a Crucible fire ballet playing the principal female role; renowned aerialists, Brett Womack and Alyssa Marx join the company, creating dance excitement in every dimension.

This combination of classical technical artistry and push-the-envelope creativity makes for a breathtaking performance.

"Bohnstedt's extraordinary technical capacities are reflected in Kabaniaev's choreography; lucky is the woman able to propel her toe shoes along the trajectory these two artists have jointly set in motion."

-- Renee Renouf, Ballet.co (reviewing "Duet")

"A real standout as comfortable spinning on a rope and flying through the air as any I've seen, Womack is simply breathtakingly phenomenal."

-- Linda Ayres-Frederick, SF Bay Times (reviewing "And If We Shadows" 2008)

Ballet dancers don't often get the kind of challenge a Crucible production offers, where it's critical to not only execute perfect pirouettes, but also to not extinguish the pyrotechnics. "Last year in *Firebird*, I danced with a flaming tutu," says Bohnstedt, "So this year, I feel much more secure working with fire and the stage mechanics and exploring different skills."

Dracul runs January 7-10 and 14-17, at 8:30 PM. The Gala performance, on Saturday the 17th, includes a pre-performance catered reception, exclusive performances, an opportunity to mingle with the cast and a champagne toast to The Crucible's 10th Anniversary. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.thecrucible.org>

The Crucible is a non-profit arts education center that fosters a collaboration of arts, industry and community, teaching and showcasing fire, metal, glass and light art in the East Bay since 1999. Dedicated to the creative use of fire and light, The Crucible is known for its innovative and stunning public events and fundraisers, uniting artists from diverse disciplines.

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