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An Educational Collaboration of Arts • Industry • Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Now In Rehearsals
Dracul: Prince of Fire
The Crucible's 10th Anniversary Fire Ballet Fundraiser

In a cavernous facility in West Oakland an unlikely group of performers are beginning to create something quite special. Classical ballet dancers practice working with fire while aerialists learn to perform arabesques at ground level; a gymnast perfects her grand jetes and blocks out a sequence with the fight director, while technicians discuss the finer points of fire effects and aerial rigging. Even the stage director had learned how to eat fire. Rehearsals are underway for The Crucible's 10th Anniversary Fire Ballet, *Dracul: Prince of Fire*.

Conceived and directed by Michael Sturtz and choreographed by Victor Kabaniaev, it's a dark tale of passion, fire, blood and undying love. The story is a prequel to the vampire legend and a cautionary tale of seduction and power. Sturtz incorporates sly references to iconic pop culture moments while telling the ominous story of Dracul, Dracula's father. More than ten tons of metal has been used to build the monstrous set; 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. Music Director, Scott Sterling, gives Phillip Feeney's dynamic score a new treatment that accentuates the chilling story. The result is a hot-blooded ballet that bites back!

Dracul will be performed in The Crucible's 56,000 square-foot studio space, where forges roar and sparks fly. "This production is probably the most collaborative piece we've done so far," says Michael Sturtz, "This is our third fire ballet, and we're working with an incredibly diverse group of artisans and 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. Ms. Bohnstedt makes her second appearance in a Crucible fire ballet playing the principal female role, and renowned aerialists, Brett Womack and Alyssa Marx join the company, creating dance excitement in yet another dimension. Read what the critics have to say:

"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

"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)

Proceeds from the event help support The Crucible's art education programs. *Dracul* runs January 7-10 and 14-17 with performances Wednesday through Saturday each week. Performances on January 7th and 8th are designated as Ballet-for-All; as part of The Crucible's commitment to keep art accessible for all, tickets for these nights are \$35 in advance (\$30 for Crucible members), \$40 at the door. There will be a special press preview performance on Monday, January 5th, where performers and production staff will be available for interviews and photography.

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The Crucible 1999-2009 – Celebrating a decade of flames.

The Gala performance, set for 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. Advance tickets for this special fundraiser are \$150. Tickets for remaining performances range from \$45 to \$65. Visit www.thecrucible.org for details and to purchase tickets.

About The Crucible

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. The Crucible offers more than 700 classes to over 5,000 students annually in everything from bronze casting to neon, welding to glass working, blacksmithing to fire dancing. 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. For more information, visit <http://www.thecrucible.org>

For calendar editors:

What: Fire Ballet (A theatrical spectacle fusing classical ballet and music, acrobatics and aerial performance with fire and industrial arts; this is truly ballet for today's audiences.)

When: January 7-10 and 14-17, 2009. All performances begin at 8:30PM
Grand Gala: Saturday, January 17th Reception 6:30 – 8:00PM
(No entry or seating after performance begins; no photos or recording devices please)
Special Press Preview Performance: Monday, January 5th Interviews & Photo Opportunities

Who: Designed and produced by Michael Sturtz
Choreographed by Viktor Kabaniaev of the Diablo Ballet
Stage Direction by Mark Streshinsky
Music Direction by Scott Sterling
Fight Direction by Jonathan Rider
Principal performers: Brett Womack, Tina Kay Bohnstedt, Ethan White, Alyssa Marx, Sadie Henderson, Simon Chaban, Breonna Noack, Kerri Kresinski, Noel Dellofano and more blazing talent.

Where: The Crucible

1260 Seventh Street, Oakland, CA 94607
2 blocks from W. Oakland BART

Tickets on sale now:

24/7 through our on-line box office: www.thecrucible.org
Studio Box Office: Monday & Wednesday 12-7PM; Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 12-4PM
GROUP DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

Photos: Available on request or call for photographer's access.

Preview & Interview Options:

Special Press Preview Performance: Monday, January 5th Interviews & Photo Opportunities for the Press
If you would like to attend this preview performance or any of the main performances of this one-of-a-kind event, please let us know. If you would like to interview performing artists, Crucible faculty or staff members, contact Jan Schlesinger at 510-444-0919, Ext. 109 jan@thecrucible.org

