



News Release

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Derek Deane's *Strictly Gershwin* to Make Its Cleveland Premiere in October at Playhouse Square

Presented by Playhouse Square with support from Kulas Foundation

Featuring Tulsa Ballet, Cleveland Ballet, Cleveland Pops Orchestra and Local Independent Artists

[Photos and video from Tulsa Ballet February 2024 production](#)

Cleveland, OH – Derek Deane's *Strictly Gershwin*, originally co-commissioned by Playhouse Square President & CEO Craig Hassall_{AM} during his tenure at the English National Ballet, Royal Albert Hall, and Raymond Gubbay, Ltd., will make its Cleveland debut at Playhouse Square October 3-6, 2024. Featuring the Tulsa Ballet, members of Cleveland Ballet, Cleveland Pops Orchestra, and local independent artists, this distinctly American celebration of song and dance will delight audiences with a performance unlike any they have seen before. This presentation is made possible by support from Kulas Foundation.

"I can't wait to share this incredible production with Cleveland audiences," said Hassall. "*Strictly Gershwin* requires an enormous cast – more than one ballet company can provide on its own, plus a live on-stage orchestra, tap dancers, and singers. This will be an epic collaboration between Cleveland artists and the Tulsa Ballet, and we are so grateful to Kulas Foundation for helping us bring *Strictly Gershwin* here."

Tulsa Ballet Artistic Director Marcello Angelini said, "We are thrilled to be touring *Strictly Gershwin* to Playhouse Square in Cleveland. This is such a prestigious theater complex, one with a rich history and an international reputation. Performing on the stage of the KeyBank State Theatre, a 3200-seat house, will be a magnificent and unforgettable experience for our dancers. I want to thank the leadership of Playhouse Square, especially Craig Hassall and David Greene, for inviting us there."

Strictly Gershwin takes the audience on a journey through the George and Ira Gershwin songbook while recreating the opulent era of big bands, the spectacle of Broadway, the glamour of Hollywood musicals, and the panache of Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, and Ginger Rogers. Featured songs include "Summertime" from *Porgy & Bess*, "Someone to Watch Over Me," "I Got Rhythm," "Strike Up the Band," "An American in Paris," and "Rhapsody in Blue."

Strictly Gershwin will feature more than 55 dancers, a 48-piece orchestra, 11 tap dancers, and four singers. Noted West End composer, conductor, and musical director Gareth Valentine, who arranged the music for *Strictly Gershwin*, will conduct the Cleveland Pops Orchestra.

Tickets for *Strictly Gershwin* will go on sale to the public on this Friday, June 21 at 10 a.m. at playhousesquare.org or by phone at 216-241-6000.

The evening performance of *Strictly Gershwin* on Saturday, October 5 will be part of the Center Stage Benefit presented by Kulas Foundation to raise funds for Playhouse Square's not-for-profit mission and arts education programming. Tickets for the benefit include the performance, a cocktail reception, seated dinner, and a post-show reception with desserts and dancing. Center Stage Benefit tickets may be purchased by contacting Mary Winchester at 216-640-8412.

About Playhouse Square

Playhouse Square, home to the largest Broadway season ticket holder community in North America, is Northeast Ohio's destination for entertainment. A not-for-profit performing arts center, Playhouse Square is a champion of arts education and downtown Cleveland, and proud to be the home of The City Club of Cleveland, Cleveland Ballet, Cleveland International Film Festival, Cleveland Play House, Cleveland State University Department of Theatre and Dance, DANCECleveland, Great Lakes Theater and Tri-C JazzFest.

About Derek Deane

After his training at The Royal Ballet School, Derek Deane went on to join Royal Ballet Company in 1972. Deane was promoted to Soloist in 1977, Principal Dancer in 1980 and then to Senior Principal Dancer in 1982. There, Deane danced some of ballet's most memorable roles, including Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake*; Romeo, Benvolio and Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*; and Prince Rudolf in *Mayerling*. Deane worked with some of the era's most respected choreographers, including Macmillan, Ashton, Balanchine, Van Manen, Neumeier, Tetley, Nureyev, Wright and Bintley. After retiring from the stage, he went on to become the resident choreographer and Assistant to the Director of Teatro Del Opera Di Roma in 1990, before rising to Artistic Director of English National Ballet in 1993. Deane has twice been nominated for Laurence Olivier Awards and was awarded the OBE in Her Majesty The Queen's New Years honors list 2000.

About Tulsa Ballet

Regarded as one of the top ballet companies in North America, Tulsa Ballet has consistently brought the finest works in classical and contemporary dance to the Midwest region since its inception that began in 1956 by husband and wife Roman Jasinski and Moscelyne Larkin, and musician Rosalie Talbott. Now under the leadership of Artistic Director Marcello Angelini, Tulsa Ballet has reached new heights on the stage, while bringing unprecedented recognition to Tulsa and the State of Oklahoma by developing an artistic reputation marked by innovative works with international impact.

About Cleveland Ballet

The exquisite artistry of Cleveland Ballet has been capturing the hearts of patrons in Northeast Ohio and beyond since 2015. Cleveland Ballet is indebted to its legions of supporters who have secured its position as a cultural gem with critical acclaim and continued patronage. Recognized for its commitment to innovation, diversity, and creativity, Cleveland Ballet is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of ballet enthusiasts through the Academy of Cleveland Ballet, its robust outreach program, and accessible programs such as Pay What You Can. Cleveland Ballet is proud to be among the prestigious ranks of a Playhouse Square resident company.

About Cleveland Pops Orchestra

Since its debut performance in 1996, the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, under conductor Carl Topilow, plays the music of Broadway, Hollywood, jazz, rock, and light classics, filling a void in Cleveland's rich cultural arts scene. In addition to its Severance Hall and Playhouse Square concerts, the orchestra performs free concerts in communities throughout northeast Ohio, as well as for musical attractions and events in Cleveland. Its community educational programs feature an in-school residency for students K-3, the Cleveland Pops Youth Orchestra, and an annual young artists competition. Playing to large and diverse audiences, its entertaining concerts create an experience that evokes an upbeat emotional reaction and response. The Cleveland Pops Orchestra is delighted to be part of this exciting production!