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## MORDANCE REIMAGINES ROMEO AND JULIET FOR ITS SIXTH SEASON

**New York, February 25, 2019-** [MorDance](#) embarks on their sixth season of innovative and inspiring ballet-making by presenting their first full-length story ballet, ***R+J Reimagined***. An ensemble of eleven dancers will be joined by six musicians to breathe new life into the classic drama, **May 9-11 at the Baryshnikov Arts Center**.

Artistic director and choreographer Morgan McEwen will again collaborate with Ben Gallina, enlisting his talents to compose new works arranged amidst favorite moments from Sergei Prokofiev's iconic score. Furthermore, the company is ecstatic to again be joined by lighting designer Becky Heisler.

When asked about mounting this new project, Ms. McEwen states, "I'm excited to tackle a classic tragedy. I will draw upon Shakespeare's dramatic poetic structure while developing, constructing, and choreographing my original version. I look to breathe new life and depth into this timeless tragedy through powerful choreography that employs the athleticism and prowess of my exceptional group of dancers. The team of artists and production staff I have behind this project are fiercely talented. I know we will produce a bold, compelling, and unparalleled work, while continuing to stay connected to my classical ballet roots and voice.

My impetus for *R+J Reimagined* really came out of my love for this ballet and my desire to do more with it than has been done in many of the original versions of the ballet. Ben and I began talking about this about a year ago and we both really have a similar love for certain portions of the Prokofiev score and I hope to really highlight those poignant moments. Ben was so wonderful during our production of *Fats Waller's Rhythm* with seamlessly blending the music of Fats Waller with his own compositions, really paying homage to him while making exciting new music. The idea of doing this again for *R+J* is so thrilling.

There's been a lot of historical research done. I've been so captivated by the history of the story of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and the folktales that precipitated it as well as the history of Prokofiev's score and the history of the ballets that have been made. In this research I've tried to meld and give more depth to each of the characters. I've been looking for answers to questions large and small, from 'Where did the feud between the Montague's and Capulets begin?' to 'What was the nurse's name?' In finding, or not finding, answers to my questions I have developed more modern interpretations to these characters and this is evident in the choreography."

McEwen further emphasizes the importance of her place in New York City's dance community as a female artistic director and choreographer. "Female choreographers, as well as female artistic directors, are a minority in the dance community. It is my hope to be the change I want to see in my community," she states. "I look to provide artists with a safe work environment where they feel supported as artists and humans, thus allowing them to grow and thrive in their art form. It is also a desire of mine to support more diversity and inclusion in our art form, something that is lacking in many ballet companies across the country. MorDance is proud to say we have some of New York's top female talents amidst our management, production, and artistic ranks. My partnership with lighting designer Becky Heisler is one I truly cherish. Our artistic voices are so compatible and working with her is really an exciting experience but to also be able to partner with another female artist who is a minority in her field too, that feels very special."

### PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Thursday, May 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m.

### TICKETS AND VENUE INFORMATION

Tickets to MorDance's Season VI performance of R+ J Reimagined are \$38.00, \$27.00 for students and seniors. Tickets may be purchased in advance at <https://mordance.ticketleap.com/rj/>.

The Baryshnikov Arts Center is located at 450 West 37th Street in Manhattan's Hudson Yards neighborhood. It is accessible by the A/C/E trains at 8th Avenue, the 1/2/3 trains at 7th Avenue, and the 7 train at 11th Avenue.

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### ABOUT MORDANCE

Morgan McEwen, ballerina turned artistic director, launched MorDance in January of 2013. This young company, with dancers from some of the world's most prestigious companies, has playfully leapt to the edge of the classical ballet world. MorDance explores athleticism as part of its aim to modernize and innovate, while honoring the grace and beauty of classical ballet. MorDance premiered at Manhattan Movement and Arts center on May 3, 2013. The company has been invited to perform at numerous festivals, including Dance at Socrates, Counterpointe Project, and Sounds of the City. In 2014, MorDance helped The Sheen Center open their doors by being the first company to perform in their brand new black box theater. The company was then named the Sheen Center's 2016 resident dance company. MorDance has also been granted residencies at The Silo at Kirkland Farm, Mana Contemporary, CUNY Dance Initiative, and Kaatsbaan International Dance Center. Artistic Director, Morgan McEwen, has been commissioned as a choreographer to create new works on Eglevsky Ballet and Columbia Ballet Collaborative, as well as to choreograph La Traviata for the New York Opera Exchange.