

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## TWO LOCAL DANCERS SELECTED TO PERFORM ONSTAGE WITH BALLET JÖRGEN CANADA THIS FRIDAY

*Company also to lead Master Classes for local dancers on Thursday*

**MEDICINE HAT, AB** – Toronto-based dance company **Ballet Jörgen Canada** will give two local Medicine Hat dancers the opportunity of a lifetime this Friday when they perform ***Cinderella*** at the Esplanade.

Local dancers **Jaimie Kopeck** from the *Hanson School of Dance* and **Kelsey Pocsik** from the *Medicine Hat College Conservatory of Music and Dance* will play the roles of *ballroom attendants*, dancing alongside 15 professional Ballet Jörgen Canada dancers, including Artistic Director and CEO Bengt Jörgen.

Kopeck and Pocsik were selected from a number of local dance students who were nominated by their instructors to submit a short application to Ballet Jörgen Canada. The application asked: *what the dancer loved most about dancing*, and *what the dancer hoped to gain from sharing the stage with Ballet Jörgen Canada*.

“The questions help us to assess the person’s desire to be a dancer – we want them to gain a lot from the experience; being exposed to the workings of a ballet company and a career as a dancer,” says Clea Iveson, Outreach Coordinator and Dancer with Ballet Jörgen Canada.

Runners-up Hannah Nickel and Shannon McCubbin will also get the chance to dance in the Company Class before dress rehearsal on Friday, Feb. 19.

Ballet Jörgen Canada’s extensive Outreach and Educational programming includes working closely with local ballet schools and young dancers wherever they travel. **In Medicine Hat, they will also conduct a free ballet master class on Thursday, Feb. 18 at 4 p.m. in the Esplanade Studio Theatre.** There are still spaces available for local dancers aged 13 and older to take part. Dancers are encouraged to contact their instructors or the Esplanade Education Coordinator at 403.502.8585 to register.

“The educational aspect of these major productions is what really allows the Esplanade to enrich our cultural community,” says Neil Sarjeant-Jenkins, Education Coordinator at the Esplanade. “If the Esplanade Theatre wasn’t here as a venue for professional dance companies, they wouldn’t have a reason to come to Medicine Hat and offer their services to our youth, so we’re glad to be that link.”

Ballet Jörgen Canada, along with Medicine Hat’s Jaimie Kopeck and Kelsey Pocsik, will perform *Cinderella* at the Esplanade Friday, Feb. 19 at 8 p.m. The performance is sold out.

Widely recognized for its innovation, warmth, humor and beauty, Ballet Jörgen Canada is the only major Canadian ballet company with a repertoire exclusively of original works. With over two decades of innovation in creating opportunities for Canadian choreographers and engagement with communities in outreach and educational activities, Ballet Jörgen Canada remains true to the vision of its founders, Bengt Jörgen and Susan Bodie. In addition, Ballet Jörgen Canada’s annual touring brings ballet performances to over 50,000 people from coast to coast in Canada and northern USA sharing the experience of ballet with more communities in Canada than any other dance company. With a ‘hub’ in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and centres in Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo, Ballet Jörgen Canada is truly Canada’s local ballet company.

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For further information, interviews or visuals, please contact:

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