



Office: 2718A E. 21 Street, Brooklyn, NY 11235
Studio: 4119 Avenue T, Brooklyn, NY 11234
OFFICE 718-891-6199
www.covenantballet.org
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Marla A. Hirokawa

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CONTACT: DAWN WORTMAN, GENERAL MANAGER
718-891-6199 | 718-377-3040 | info@covenantballet.org

COVENANT BALLET THEATRE OF BROOKLYN CONTINUES TO ADVANCE DIVERSITY THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn is pleased to announce two developments in its efforts to advance the mission of providing serious ballet training and diversification in the world of classical ballet. CBT, in partnership with American Ballet Theatre's diversity initiative *Project Plié*, is awarding the Roberta Solomon Ballet Scholarship to Leah Charles, a 10 year old African American dance student from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Leah, who was chosen to receive the scholarship for her outstanding talent, ability and promise, will attend Covenant Ballet Academy for a full 2015-2016 school year with all of her uniforms provided by the ABT *Project Plié*. *Project Plié* is a comprehensive initiative to increase racial and ethnic representation in ballet companies and in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America has introduced ballet to a broad array of children by conducting educational and activity-based master classes in member clubs across the United States. These classes serve to identify gifted children and connect them with ABT certified *Project Plié* Partner teachers and schools in their community like Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn. CBT is pleased to help bring the mission of ABT *Project Plié* to Brooklyn by making the Roberta Solomon Ballet Scholarship available for Leah Charles. Covenant Ballet's scholarship programs are supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

The second development to reach more students with diverse background and from underrepresented communities has CBT collaborating with two Brooklyn high schools in a dance project that will culminate in two dance performances in CBT's Spring Concert at the Leon M. Goldstein Performing Arts Center at Kingsborough Community College. This collaboration is part of CBT's arts-in-education programs. The goal of this exciting collaboration between CBT Junior Company members, several of CBT's professional dance artists and students from Edward R. Murrow and ST. Edmund Preparatory High Schools is two-fold. The first is to provide the high school students a richer, deeper "professional" dance experience outside of the high school, and secondly, to offer role modeling/mentoring for these young dancers as they rehearse with the professional artists. There will be a post-performance evaluation to assess the achievement of this collaboration with the hope of engaging other school partners in the future and expanding the program to benefit more high school students.

COVENANT BALLET THEATRE IS DANCING FOR A DIFFERENCE

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Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn was founded by Marla Hirokawa in 1987 out of a conviction that serious ballet education would do more for the art form and the students than the “recital” school approach. Now a not-for-profit corporation, CBT continues to grow in diverse ways - finding strength in a diverse student population and an equally diverse staff. More information can be found at its website at <http://www.covenantballet.org>.



Marla Hirokawa and Leah Charles

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