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EDWAARD LIANG, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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## The Washington Ballet Launches Its 50th Anniversary Season and a Defining New Chapter

**The appointment of veteran arts executive Doug Singleton as Executive Director, the election of Luanne Adams as Chair of the Board of Directors, and the launch of Artistic Director Edwaard Liang's landmark anniversary season signal a defining moment in the history of one of the nation's premier dance institutions.**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — As The Washington Ballet prepares to celebrate its 50th Anniversary Season, the institution is entering a defining new chapter. The appointment of veteran arts executive **Doug Singleton** as Executive Director, the election of **Luanne Adams** as Chair of the Board of Directors following the leadership of outgoing Chair **Jean-Marie Fernandez**, and Artistic Director **Edwaard Liang's** anniversary season together reflect a shared vision for the future of one of the nation's premier dance institutions.

The convergence of these milestones presents a rare opportunity to shape the future of an institution whose artistic and educational legacy has influenced the nation's capital for more than eight decades. Built upon the artistic excellence of The Washington Ballet and the educational foundation of The Washington School of Ballet, the Company enters its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year with aligned leadership and a sharpened sense of purpose, ready to challenge itself, deepen its impact, and expand what is possible.

"This anniversary is much more than a celebration of our history," said outgoing Board Chair **Jean-Marie Fernandez**. "It is an opportunity to prepare this remarkable institution for its future. Throughout our Executive Director search, the Board sought not simply an experienced executive, but the right partner for Edwaard and the right leader to help realize The Washington Ballet's long-term vision. Doug's strategic leadership, collaborative spirit, and extraordinary record of organizational growth made him the clear choice, and the Board's unanimous vote reflects our confidence in the future we will create together."



Fernandez added, "I am deeply grateful to Management Consultants for the Arts (MCA) for guiding a thoughtful and comprehensive national search and to every member of our Executive Director Search Committee for their dedication, wisdom, and commitment throughout this important process."

Singleton joins The Washington Ballet after nearly three decades with Charlotte Ballet, including more than twenty years as Executive Director, and brings a lifelong commitment to the field of dance. Throughout his career, he has worked closely with artists, educators, and administrators to strengthen the infrastructure that supports dance as both an art form and a community resource. During his tenure in Charlotte, he helped transform the company into one of the nation's leading repertory companies by expanding community engagement, strengthening professional training, increasing national visibility, and securing the organization's permanent home. He also led a \$60 million comprehensive campaign supporting artistic investment, expanded facilities, and artist housing, while increasing annual ticket sales by 354 percent and charitable contributions by 222 percent. A nationally respected arts leader, Singleton served as Chair of Dance/USA and is widely recognized for his ability to cultivate the advancement of artistic ambition and institutional strength together.

For Artistic Director **Edwaard Liang**, who joined The Washington Ballet in 2023, this moment represents the beginning of a collaborative partnership designed to elevate every aspect of the organization.

"Every great ballet company is built on partnership," Liang said. "Artistic vision can only flourish when it is supported by exceptional leadership, engaged trustees, dedicated staff and faculty, generous supporters, and a community that believes in the power of the arts. Doug brings a combination of strategic expertise, collaborative leadership, and genuine respect for the artistic process. Together with Luanne and our Board of Directors, we have an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen an institution that honors its legacy while embracing the future with confidence, creativity, and ambition."

Singleton said he was drawn to The Washington Ballet because of its unique combination of extraordinary artistry, educational leadership, and civic impact.



"The Washington Ballet is much more than a performing company. Together with The Washington School of Ballet, it is an institution that shapes artists, enriches communities, and inspires audiences through the power of dance. I have long admired Edwaard's artistic vision and the remarkable work taking place across the organization. I am honored to join this team as we write the next chapter of this incredible institution together."

That next chapter begins on stage. The five productions that make up the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrate the Company's history while looking confidently toward its future through world premieres, beloved classics, and works that reflect the creativity and ambition of Artistic Director Edwaard Liang.

"This Company has always been a picture of our city, reflecting the resilience, beauty, and energy of DC. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we aren't just celebrating the foundation we've built; we are pushing the boundaries of what dance can mean," said **Edwaard Liang, Artistic Director of The Washington Ballet**. "This season is a homecoming. It is a dialogue between our classical heritage and the bold future of dance in D.C. It is a milestone that invites reflection, but for me, it's also a compass pointing us toward the future. When I look back at the path The Washington Ballet has traveled, I see more than just a timeline of performances; I see the stories of our city written in motion."

### THE WASHINGTON BALLET'S 2026/27 ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Spanning five productions across some of Washington's most celebrated stages, the 2026/27 Season features *Go-Go 50*, *The Nutcracker*, the world premiere of Edwaard Liang's *Dracula*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Made in Washington: 50th Season Finale*, and celebrates the choreographers who helped define The Washington Ballet's artistic identity, while introducing the artists and ideas that will shape its next chapter.

"Fifty years ago, The Washington Ballet was boldly founded by Mary Day, growing out of the beloved Washington School of Ballet," said **Luanne Adams, Board Chair of The Washington Ballet**. "I wish Mary Day could witness the dazzling company that has evolved over the past half century. She would have loved the dynamic, exquisite, and transcendent ballet that Artistic Director Edwaard Liang brings to our stage. As we celebrate this milestone season, our goal is to share the joy of ballet across as wide a swath of Washington, D.C., as possible, bringing together ballet lovers—longtime and new—to experience the magic of this art form."



## 2026/27 SEASON PERFORMANCE DETAILS

### Go-Go 50 (4 performances)

**October 30 – November 1, 2026, at Warner Theatre**

Opening The Washington Ballet's 50th Anniversary Season, *Go-Go 50* celebrates two landmark anniversaries: 50 years of The Washington Ballet and 50 years of Go-Go music. The mixed repertory program combines works by choreographers who are connected to TWB's history, along with a world premiere inspired by a musical tradition that remains central to Washington, D.C.'s cultural identity.

#### ***Blue Until June***

Choreography by Trey McIntyre | Music by Etta James

Created for The Washington Ballet in 2000, *Blue Until June* is a contemporary ballet set to recordings by Etta James that uses a series of interconnected scenes to examine themes of love, longing, and human connection.

#### ***Configurations***

Choreography by Choo San Goh | Music by Samuel Barber

Created by The Washington Ballet's first resident choreographer, Choo San Goh, the pas de deux from *Configurations* is known for its musical precision and contemporary approach to classical ballet.

#### ***The Art of War***

Choreography by Edwaard Liang | Music by Michael Torke

Inspired by the movement and discipline of calligraphy, *The Art of War* translates the visual language of brushwork into choreography.

#### ***World Premiere, Title TBD***

Choreography by Chanel DaSilva | Music by Black Alley

Marking a shared 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary milestone for The Washington Ballet and Go-Go, this world premiere centers on a collaboration between choreographer Chanel DaSilva and Washington-based Go-Go artists, Black Alley. The immersive work places the music and dance traditions in direct dialogue, inviting audiences to participate more actively than in a traditional ballet performance.



**The Nutcracker (34 performances)**

**November 28 – December 27, 2026, at Warner Theatre**

Choreography by Septime Webre | Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

As the nation commemorates its 250th anniversary, The Washington Ballet's D.C.-based production of *The Nutcracker* offers a distinctly American interpretation of the holiday classic, weaving together local landmarks, historical references, and seasonal tradition. Featuring performers from both the professional company and The Washington School of Ballet, the production remains a cherished holiday tradition in the nation's capital.

**Dracula (World Premiere) (9 performances)**

**February 12 – 21, 2027, at Harman Hall**

Choreography by Edwaard Liang | Music by Oliver Peter Graber

From the mind of Edwaard Liang, this world premiere tells an original story centered on the man behind the monster. Through a newly imagined narrative and original score, the production examines the character of Dracula from a new perspective, bringing humanity to an infamous legend. By exploring the complexities behind one of literature's most recognizable figures, the ballet offers a fresh interpretation of a timeless story. The production also features participation from students of The Washington School of Ballet.

**Romeo & Juliet (4 performances)**

**May 14 - 16, 2027, at The National Theatre**

Choreography by Edwaard Liang | Music by Sergei Prokofiev

Created by Artistic Director Edwaard Liang, this production of *Romeo & Juliet* combines classical storytelling with a contemporary choreographic approach. Through detailed characterizations, expansive ensemble scenes, and realistically staged combat, the ballet offers a fresh perspective on Shakespeare's enduring tragedy. Students from The Washington School of Ballet join the company to bring this fairy tale to life.

**Made in Washington: 50th Season Finale (1 performance)**

**June 10, 2027, at Wolf Trap**

Closing The Washington Ballet's 50th Anniversary Season, this finale celebrates the company's history of creating and championing original work in the nation's capital. The program brings together three ballets developed for The Washington Ballet by choreographers whose artistic voices have helped shape the organization across different eras. Spanning nearly three decades



of creative history, the evening reflects the company's longstanding investment in new choreography and artistic collaboration.

***Blue Until June (reprise)***

Choreography by Trey McIntyre | Music by Etta James

Created for The Washington Ballet in 2000, *Blue Until June* is a contemporary ballet set to recordings by Etta James that uses a series of interconnected scenes to examine themes of love, longing, and human connection.

***Wunderland***

Choreography by Edwaard Liang | Music by Philip Glass

Inspired by the image of a town contained within a snow globe, *Wunderland* combines abstract choreography, evolving ensemble formations, and a distinctive visual landscape in one of Edwaard Liang's signature works.

***Juanita y Alicia***

Choreography by Septime Webre | Music Selections by Various Cuban Composers

Drawing on the spirit of Havana and the memories that connect generations, this vibrant ballet transforms personal history into a moving celebration of culture, family, and home.

The Washington Ballet enters its 2026/27 season with an uncommon degree of alignment across its artistic, executive, and governance leadership. Season subscriptions are on sale now. Single tickets will go on sale in early Fall. For more information and to secure seats, visit [WashingtonBallet.org](http://WashingtonBallet.org) or contact the Box Office at (202) 677-5190.

**About The Washington Ballet and The Washington School of Ballet**

For more than 80 years, The Washington School of Ballet has shaped generations of dancers through exceptional training and a commitment to artistic excellence. Founded in 1944 by the legendary Mary Day, the School is one of the nation's premier ballet training institutions, serving more than 1,000 students annually across its Northwest and Southeast campuses while engaging thousands more through adult classes, community programs, and initiatives that make dance accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Founded in 1976, The Washington Ballet is the professional ballet company of the nation's capital. Under the artistic leadership of Edwaard Liang, the Company presents a dynamic repertoire of



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beloved classics, contemporary masterworks, and newly commissioned works that inspire audiences throughout the Washington metropolitan region and beyond.

As the Company celebrates its 50th Anniversary Season, the institution looks ahead with renewed purpose—leveraging eight decades of educational excellence and five decades of artistic achievement while expanding its impact through performance, training, and service to the community.

### Press Contact

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