



Marcello Angelini | Artistic Director

## CONTACT

Bethany Kirby

918.392.5928

Bethany.kirby@tulsaballet.org

tulsaballet.org

### Tulsa Ballet Announces Tour of *Strictly Gershwin* in Cleveland

**June 25, 2024** - Tulsa Ballet is thrilled to announce the invitation to take choreographer Derek Deane's *Strictly Gershwin* on the road to Cleveland's Playhouse Square in October 2024! Five performances are scheduled for October 3-6, 2024, at the KeyBank State Theatre. The company will leave Tulsa September 30<sup>th</sup> and return the week of October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Playhouse Square is one of the world's premier arts districts and the nation's largest performing arts center, outside of New York City. Tulsa Ballet is honored to present this distinctly American celebration of song and dance at one of America's premier cultural institutions.

Tulsa Ballet Artistic Director Marcello Angelini says, "We are thrilled to be touring *Strictly Gershwin* to the Cleveland Playhouse Square. 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 the theater, especially President and CEO Craig Hassall AM and Senior Vice President of Programming David Greene, for inviting us there."

Previous tours have taken the company to New York City, Washington, D.C., and across Europe. Most recently, the company traveled to the Berkshires of Massachusetts to perform at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2023. Touring has helped Tulsa Ballet gain national and international attention, as well as commendation here at home, including earning the title of "Oklahoma Official Cultural Ambassador" in 2007 from then-Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry.

Opening night for *Strictly Gershwin* will be October 3<sup>rd</sup>, with additional performances on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>. The show will feature the full company as well as guest tap dancers and singers. Gareth Valentine will conduct the on-stage orchestra.

"*Strictly Gershwin* is probably the most complex, challenging, organizationally intricate and choreographically difficult piece in our repertory," Angelini says. "Its complexity is due to the fact it was created for a huge cast of about 120 dancers. Even in its reduced proscenium version, it still requires every single member of our main company, our second company and a dozen young dancers from our Trainee Program in order to be performed. And that's just the beginning... And then the show needs four great singers, three lead tap dancers, Gareth Valentine on the orchestra podium, and a 55 musician orchestra."

Tulsa Ballet was the first American ballet company to perform *Strictly Gershwin*, a production that received rave reviews in 2018 and returned in February of 2024 to more acclaim.

Angelini says, "*Strictly Gershwin* tests every single member of the company, from the corps de ballet to the soloists to the principals. Every step, every move, every duet and every solo has to be danced to the highest technical and artistic standards in order to project the essence of the piece. *Strictly Gershwin*

only gets into full focus when danced “on the edge.” I was thrilled with the work of the company in February, when we last performed it. We are charged and eager to show our neighbors in Cleveland what Tulsa can do!”

Touring is made possible in part by support from Tulsa Ballet’s family of donors. Patron opportunities in support of this tour include the opportunity to attend a Bon Voyage event at Studio K the week before and special events in Cleveland for patrons who wish to travel with the company. Tickets for *Strictly Gershwin* at the KeyBank State Theatre are on sale now at [Playhousesquare.org](http://Playhousesquare.org).

## QUICK FACTS

### WHEN AND WHERE:

KeyBank State Theatre | 1519 Euclid Ave. Cleveland, OH 44115

Thursday, October 3	7:30 pm
Friday, October 4	7:30 pm
Saturday, October 5	2:30 pm
Saturday, October 5	7:30 pm
Sunday, October 6	2:30 pm

Marketing photos and video from the February production of *Strictly Gershwin* can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/9o8ycipgyuabddawfru9v/AAXXwTJb86UWRLoLcCX3Alo?rlkey=x6y3uffqfbgetavuit1mmb766&st=24hsyohf&dl=0>

More hi-res images and interview opportunities are available:

Bethany Kirby | Marketing Director  
918.392.5928 | [Bethany.kirby@tulsaballet.org](mailto:Bethany.kirby@tulsaballet.org)