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**CINCINNATI BALLET ANNOUNCES RARE  
MID-SEASON PROMOTIONS FOLLOWING SUCCESS OF  
*THE SLEEPING BEAUTY***

*Senior Soloist Sarah Hairston, fresh off the success of her lead-role performance as Princess Aurora, is promoted to Principal Dancer; Liang Fu is promoted to Soloist*

Cincinnati – Cincinnati Ballet announces today it has promoted **Sarah Hairston** from Senior Soloist to Principal Dancer. Hairston has been with Cincinnati Ballet since 2001. Additionally, **Liang Fu**, whose delayed visa approval garnered an outpouring of community support this summer, has been promoted from Corps de Ballet member to Soloist. Mid-season promotions are rare for Cincinnati Ballet, and this announcement is a direct result of outstanding performances by two very talented, strong dancers.

**Sarah Hairston, Principal**

Cincinnati Ballet Associate Artistic Director **Devon Carney** first saw Sarah Hairston dance when she was 12 years old.

At that time, Carney was the Artistic Director for Summer Programs at Boston Ballet. Hairston was a young dancer who returned every summer through her teens to study ballet.

“The summer when Sarah was around the age of 16 or 17, I felt she was strong enough, so I taught her *The Sleeping Beauty* pas de deux. Little did I know where we would end up a decade later: Me coaching her in the full-length production, and her dancing the lead – in Cincinnati.”

Both Carney and **Victoria Morgan**, Cincinnati Ballet CEO and Artistic Director, remember back to the opening night of Cincinnati Ballet’s *Dracula*, October 31, 2008. Then-Principal Kristi Capps (who retired at the end of the 2009-10 season) sprained her ankle at the very end of the final dress rehearsal, which meant that Hairston had to dance the principal role on opening night.

“She saved the show,” says Carney. “It was her first time dancing the lead role. The pressure of dancing the lead on opening night is just something you can’t imagine. It was baptism by fire. And she did a phenomenal job.”

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“In terms of Sarah’s evolution as a dancer, I saw a big shift in Sarah when she had to step into the lead on that opening night of *Dracula*,” says Morgan. “It was her confidence.”

Hairston progressed through the company to the role of Senior Soloist. This fall, she performed as Princess Aurora in matinee productions of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

“Aurora is one of the most difficult ballet roles,” says Morgan. “You have to have nerves of steel to take on that balance in the *Rose Adagio* and not break.” The *Rose Adagio* is a famous dance that requires Aurora to balance unsupported *en pointe* for an extended period of time, while a series of suitors offers her their hands in marriage.

“Being a principal is not just about superior facility, technique, natural ability and determination. Sarah has all of that and more: a strong sense of confidence,” says Victoria Morgan, Cincinnati Ballet CEO and Artistic Director. “Watching her dance, you can see her thoughtfulness and consistency. She imbues every movement with value and importance, reaching deeper to perfect her technique.”

Hairston joins Janessa Touchet as Cincinnati Ballet’s only female Principals. The company has three male Principals: Cervilio Amador, Oğulcan Borova and Anthony Krutzkamp.

### **Liang Fu, Soloist**

In addition to Hairston, Cincinnati Ballet also promoted Liang Fu, a Chinese dancer who joined Cincinnati Ballet in 2008.

“Fu came to us two years ago and has grown, and time and again he has proven his value as a potential leading dancer with our company,” says Carney. “The decision to promote him is a direct result of that. He did a fantastic job with *The Sleeping Beauty* as one of the most frequently featured male dancers.”

“Fu trained at the Beijing Dance Academy, a highly acclaimed ballet school, and has a superb talent,” says Morgan. “He has a really clean, easy, buoyant plie. He dances with so much ease – he makes it look almost *too* easy, he’s so fluid. Our contemporary choreographers love his lightening-quick mind-body responses.”

Fu experienced a moment of uncertainty when his visa renewal application was initially rejected this summer. But the community – the media, political leaders and audience members alike – rallied and sent letters to the Immigration Office on his behalf, and the visa was ultimately renewed.

“The community support was so moving. We saw such a strong rally for Fu,” says Victoria.

Fu joins Gema Diaz and Dawn Kelly as a Soloist. Nine dancers dance in the Corps de Ballet. Cincinnati Ballet Company has 24 dancers, six CBII dancers and three Trainees.

## **Reference: Cincinnati Ballet Dancer Ranks**

- Principal (Cervilio Amador, Oğulcan Borova, Sarah Hairston, Anthony Krutzkamp, Janessa Touchet)
- Senior Soloist (Zack Grubbs)
- Soloist (Gema Diaz, Liang Fu, Dawn Kelly)
- Corps de Ballet (Danielle Bausinger, Joshua Bodden, Courtney Connor, Selahattin Erkan, Courtney Hellebuyck, Stephen Jacobsen, Jill Marlow, Maizyalet Velázquez, Kelly Yankle)
- New Dancer (James Cunningham, Jacqueline Damico)
- Apprentice (Kayleigh Gorham, Samuel Jones, Abigail Maruna, Kevin Terry)
- CBII (Erin Crall, Travis Guerin, Sara Hays, Grace Reeves, Thomas Caleb Roberts, Nicole Voris)

## **Sarah Hairston**

Sarah Hairston, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, joined Cincinnati Ballet in 2001 and was promoted to soloist in 2006, and most recently promoted to Senior Soloist in 2009 and Principal in 2010. Before joining Cincinnati Ballet she danced with Boston Ballet. Hairston's ballet training includes Calvert Brodie School of Dance under Ann Brodie, North Carolina School of the Arts under Melissa Hayden and Warren Conover and Boston Ballet under Tatiana Legat and Devon Carney. During the summer of 1998, Hairston was selected to study with the Hungarian National Ballet in Budapest, Hungary. Some of Hairston's favorite roles include Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Marie in Val Caniparoli's *Nutcracker*, the principal role in Val Caniparoli's *Lambarena*, Aurora, Carabosse and Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Coquette in Balanchine's *La Sonnambula*, Myrtha in *Giselle*, and the Emeralds principal in Balanchine's *Jewels*, Mina Murray in *Dracula*, Tiger Lily in *Peter Pan*, and the solo girl in Jessica Lang's *Le Belle Danse*. During the summer of 2007, Hairston was invited to dance the Temple solo in Cincinnati Opera's production of *Aida*. Hairston was also invited by Victoria Morgan to dance Winter Fairy from *Cinderella* with Ballet Hawaii. Hairston is a teacher in Cincinnati Ballet Otto M. Budig Academy and also a teacher at the Annaliese Von Oettingen School of Ballet. Hairston credits her family and teacher Ann Brodie for being an inspiration in her life. When she is not dancing she enjoys spending time with her dog, Dakota.

## **Liang Fu**

Liang Fu was born in Qing Dao, China. He began his dance education in one of the world's most prestigious ballet institutions, the Beijing Dance Academy, under the direction of Cao Jing Rong. After graduating from the Academy in 2001, he accepted an invitation to join the Singapore Dance Theater (SDT), where he danced until 2006. During his years with SDT, he performed many solo and principal roles in the company's classical and contemporary ballets. His repertoire there included works by Marius Petipa, Jiri Kylian, Ohad Naharin, August Bournonville, Choo San Goh, and many other world famous choreographers. In 2003, he was invited to perform at the celebrated Gala of Benois de La Danse Competition at Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Russia. Following this honor, he went on to win first prize at the Asia Pacific International Ballet Competition 2005 in Tokyo, Japan. He joined Universal Ballet Company in Seoul, Korea in 2007. In the short period of time spent there, he enriched his repertoire with works by Oleg Vinogradov and Vassili Vainonen, among several other choreographers. Fu joined Cincinnati Ballet in 2008. This is his third season with the company.

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## **About Cincinnati Ballet**

Since 1963, Cincinnati Ballet has been the cornerstone professional ballet company of the region, presenting a mix of important classical full-length ballets and an adventurous, vibrant mix of repertory ballets, regularly with live orchestral accompaniment. Cincinnati Ballet's mission is to inspire hope and joy in our community and beyond through the power and passion of dance. Our mantra is "Everybody dances." To that end, Cincinnati Ballet presents exhilarating performances, extensive education outreach programs (including professional lecture-demos, residencies, scholarship programs and student matinees), and offers top level professional ballet training at Cincinnati Ballet Otto M. Budig Academy, which enjoys an enrollment of more than a thousand participants in multi-level programs across two studio campuses. BRAVO! is the Ballet Resource and Volunteer Organization committed to the financial stability and the artistic excellence of Cincinnati Ballet.

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The Children's Nutcracker Luncheon is sponsored by Pampers and Kroger.

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