

SACRAMENTO BALLET

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SACRAMENTO BALLET ANNOUNCES TIIT HELIMETS AS NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Sacramento, CA [March 25, 2026]– After an international search, the Sacramento Ballet Board of Directors is thrilled to announce **Tiit Helimets** as the organization’s new artistic director. Tiit brings decades of experience as an internationally renowned dancer, choreographer, and artistic visionary.

Born in Estonia, Tiit began his professional dance career with Estonian National Ballet. He later danced with Birmingham Royal Ballet, and spent two decades as a Principal Dancer at San Francisco Ballet, dancing iconic works by choreographers including George Balanchine, Frederick Ashton, Rudolf Nureyev, Kenneth MacMillan, William Forsythe, and John Neumeier. Known for his technical precision, emotional depth, and commanding stage presence, Helimets brought to life roles including Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Albrecht in *Giselle*, for which he earned the Isadora Duncan Dance Award.

Beyond his performance career, Helimets has built a dynamic portfolio as a teacher, choreographer, and arts leader. He has served as a guest répétiteur and faculty member with institutions including the Paris Opera Ballet, Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, Staats Ballett Berlin, and Philadelphia Ballet School, coaching dancers across all levels with a focus on musicality and artistic integrity. His choreographic work includes a newly staged *Giselle* (2025), alongside numerous original works for professional companies and training programs.

“Helimets brings a rare combination of artistic excellence, global perspective, and genuine authenticity to the role,” said Alyssa Paoletti, Board President of Sacramento Ballet. “We are thrilled to welcome a leader whose perspective and ambition will elevate Sacramento Ballet in meaningful and exciting ways.”

Tiit shared: “I feel incredibly fortunate to step into this role with Sacramento Ballet. I’m grateful to the Board for their trust, and I hold a deep respect for the artists and leaders who have shaped this company. That history matters — not as something to preserve unchanged, but as something we carry forward with responsibility. I am impressed by the company's level of work, but also the honesty behind it, the willingness to search, to try, and to give fully. I’m truly looking forward to leading the work ahead in service of the Sacramento community, while supporting the artists who are central to everything we create.”

Helimet’s passion for ballet, deep commitment to accessibility and inclusion, and collaborative leadership style aligns with the Board’s vision for the organization that builds on the legacy of the past and embraces an optimistic, thriving future.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Since 1954, Sacramento Ballet has been a beacon of artistic excellence in the California Capital Region, delivering world-class dance performances, education, and community outreach programs. A cornerstone of Sacramento’s cultural community, its mission is to enhance the human condition through dance and to make it accessible to everyone.

As the region’s only dance company to maintain a roster of professional dance artists, Sacramento Ballet captivates thousands of patrons each year with its enthralling performances and community outreach events. Unique among local arts organizations, Sacramento Ballet welcomes internationally renowned dancers and choreographers to live and create groundbreaking artistic works right here in our beautiful city, and serves as a representative of California’s thriving cultural scene on national and international stages.

Sacramento Ballet is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, funded by ticket sales and individual donations, as well as contributions from corporate, foundation, and government entities. This vital support enables the company to present unparalleled, world-class programming that inspires and uplifts, while expanding the reach of the artform through educational and outreach initiatives.

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Photo by Erik Tomasson

