*-Announcement*

March 25, 2008

**ABT Announces Voices and Visions: The Altria/ABT Women's Choreography Project**

**Choreographic Initiative to Support New Commissions for ABT II and Mentoring Workshops for ABT Dancers**

In an effort to identify and nurture female choreographers, American Ballet Theatre and Altria Group, Inc. have launched Voices and Visions: The Altria/ABT Women’s Choreography Project. This multi-year project, generously funded by Altria Group, Inc., will include annual commissions by emerging female choreographers, as well as a series of training and mentoring workshops open to female members of ABT and ABT II. The Altria/ABT Women’s Choreography Project was announced today by ABT Artistic Director Kevin McKenzie.

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Training and Mentoring Workshops: American Ballet Theatre will offer Training and Mentoring Workshops, beginning September 2008, open to all female members of ABT and ABT II. The Workshops, led by **Stephen Pier**, Choreographic Mentor at the Juilliard School, will focus on developing choreographic structure and the creative process with studies on intention, theme, phrase, music, style, partnering and overall form, as well as analysis of existing ballets. Participating dancers will progress at their own rate from brief, highly defined studies to larger works of greater complexity and scope. Staff members from ABT’s music and production departments will also participate in the Workshops to offer their insights on other elements of ballet productions.

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The Training and Mentoring Workshops are designed to help promising choreographers, regardless of their level of previous experience, create works-in-progress to be shared during organized studio showings of their work with other members of the Company. At the conclusion of the Workshops, participants will be invited to design an independent study, working closely with **Pier** and other mentors to delve more deeply into the art form. Dancers who wish to pursue further study will then be able to explore their choreography by creating original work on students from The Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School and ABT’s Summer Intensive program.

The goal is to encourage potential choreographers to explore the art of choreography more deeply in subsequent years and offer opportunities to female members of ABT to choreograph future works for ABT II.

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“The Altria/ABT Women’s Choreography Project is integral to American Ballet Theatre’s mission and its ongoing commitment to commissioning new works,” said Kevin McKenzie. “By encouraging women’s voices in choreography, we hope to strengthen the art form, as well as the ranks of future choreographers.”

“Providing a fertile environment and supportive structure for researching and developing the choreographic creative process is an absolute necessity to the life of our art form,” said **Stephen Pier**. “This is an incredible innovative opportunity and it will be exciting to see what develops from it.”

For more information on Voices and Visions: The Altria/ABT Women’s Choreography Project, please contact Wes Chapman, ABT II Artistic Director, at wchapman@abt.org.