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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn celebrates 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with its first Cocktail Caper

**BROOKLYN, NY – 5-Apr-2023** – Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn (CBT) celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with its first Cocktail Caper, a celebratory evening of “dance, drinks, and high jinks,” which took place on Thursday, March 30, at The Riverside Church in New York City.

The event featured live music by the Craig Brann Trio, an open bar and passed hors d’oeuvres, a silent auction, dancing, tributes, and an intriguing and playful new work by CBT Artistic Director and Founder, Marla Hirokawa. CBT also honored board member Frank Pratt and long-time faculty member Mandy Chan for their many significant contributions to CBT. With the help of event sponsors Apple Bank, Grand Prix Dance, Hydr8, Messiah’s Congregation, Skody Scot & Company, Vocational Management Consultants, CBT Alumni Association, and numerous individual donors, CBT exceeded its fundraising goal by nearly 50% and made a host of new friends in the process.

Reflecting on the work that CBT does, Ms. Hirokawa said, “Our alumni live and work all over the U.S. and around the world. They’re artists, they’re scientists, they’re entrepreneurs. They’re immigrants who have become citizens. They’re building families. They’re building their lives. They’re going out into the world, and they’re impacting it at large.

“Anniversaries are a good time to look back and see all that has been accomplished. Celebrating our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary invigorates me and makes me look forward to the next decade and beyond.”

### **About the Honorees**

Mandy Chan (Educational Excellence Award) is originally from Hong Kong and received her BFA in Dance with first class honors from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. In 2000, she was awarded a scholarship from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund to pursue her studies in New York. She received an MFA in dance from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in 2002. She is a certified American Ballet Theater National Training Curriculum teacher. Mandy is also a board member and a registered somatic movement therapist with ISMETA, a certified holistic health counselor, and a certified teacher in Pilates and Yoga. She is a founder of Breathing Heart - Integrative Wellness and Fitness and has her private practice at



Union Square, NYC. Mandy was a ballet instructor at Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn and a principal dancer with the company for 19 years.

Frank Pratt was honored with the Inspired Leadership Award, for his service as a board member and supporter since 2017. Pratt attended Lehigh University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1965 and an MBA in 1966. He served in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1969, including a tour of duty in Korea during his second year. Following his military service, he joined Bear Stearns, where he worked from 1969 to 1978. In 1978 he moved to Morgan Stanley, where he became a managing director and worked until 2003. He is a passionate chess player and enjoys golf, fishing, and travel. Since 2017, he has been a dedicated member of the board of directors of the Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn. He walked in and was honored as a veteran in a performance of CBT's Nisei at the 2014 NYC Fringe Festival.

### **About Covenant Ballet Theatre of Brooklyn**

Since 1987, CBT has invested in the children and families of South Brooklyn, where cultural activities and resources are limited. Artistic Director Marla Hirokawa founded CBT on the conviction that a serious ballet education combined with maximum inclusion is needed to advance the art form, train youth, and improve the lives of those within its embrace. In an accepting yet rigorous environment, CBT fosters the love of dance through pre-professional training in its studios and educational programs in NYC schools, and through dozens of original ballet productions conceived and choreographed by Ms. Hirokawa.

In its 35 years, CBT has trained hundreds of students, age three through adult, who come from CBT's South Brooklyn region as well as all five NYC boroughs and the tri-state area. Under the direction of Ms. Hirokawa, countless students and audience members have had their lives enriched through the unique combination of love for the art form, generosity, rigor and discipline, acceptance, inclusion, and respect for all. It is these qualities that make CBT the unique dance organization that it is today.

CBT alumni have gone on to study at major performing arts high schools in NYC and virtually every major dance school in New York and beyond, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet Hispanico, Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Julliard School, and the School of American Ballet. Many have apprenticed and danced with professional companies such as Martha Graham Company, Suzanne Farrell Ballet, and the Metropolitan Opera. Others have formed their own dance companies and dance schools. They have also leveraged life lessons acquired at CBT to launch successful careers in education, fashion, finance, health care, law, neuroscience, and public relations, among other fields.

For further information, visit [www.covenantballet.org](http://www.covenantballet.org), call 718-891-6199, or email [info@covenantballet.org](mailto:info@covenantballet.org).

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