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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metropolitan Ballet Theatre to add Clarksburg location in Summer 2018

Expansion will allow for extension of exceptional dance education program to the upcounty region.

Gaithersburg, MD, April 19, 2018 – The Board of Directors of Metropolitan Ballet Theatre (MBT) has announced plans to expand the 29-year-old nonprofit arts education organization to Clarksburg this summer. MBT's current home in Gaithersburg will also continue to serve the community. MBT is known for providing the highest caliber of dance education and training, offering professional performing opportunities to its students, and presenting a robust community outreach program. This expansion will allow its programs to more fully serve the upcounty region. While focused on classical ballet education and pre-professional training, MBT also offers training in jazz, modern, contemporary, and hip hop. MBT offers classes for students age 3 through adults.

MBT's newest location will be at 22530 Gateway Center Drive, and will boast over 7000 square feet of space, with three large classroom studios. Students and faculty will enjoy state-of-the-art sprung dance flooring, high ceilings, and integrated audio-visual technology. The new space offers ample parking is very convenient to I-270, Rt 355, the Clarksburg Outlets, and Clarksburg Town Center.

"We are excited to expand into the upcounty region with MBT's well-known, exceptional dance education programs and outreach," says Anita Anderson, President of MBT's Board of Directors. "Our students, faculty, and the community will see significant benefits from this expansion."

MBT Artistic Director Elizabeth Catlett has selected Michelle Bettin as the Academy Director for Clarksburg. "Michelle brings a wealth of professional performing and teaching experience to this position. Prior to joining MBT's permanent faculty last year, she was a guest faculty member with us. She's a wonderful artist to be the Academy Director and hopes to become quite involved in the community through MBT's outreach efforts," says Ms. Catlett.

MBT has received support from local leaders for this expansion. "We are thrilled with the support and encouragement from the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC), as well as the State Legislative team, specifically Senator Brian Feldman, Delegate Aruna Miller, Delegate Kathleen Dumais, and Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo," says Paula Ross, MBT's Executive Director. "The total capital investment for this state-of-the-art facility will exceed half of a million dollars. The State is supporting our effort to expand arts programming into the upcounty through a matching funds bond bill, and AHCMC has recommended this project to the County Council for a similar matching funds grant. The possibility to partner with the County and State, to mutually support arts education and outreach to youth in the upcounty in support of our mission, certainly played a role in our decision to move forward with this project."

The 2018-2019 academic year will mark the first full session of educational programming in MBT's Clarksburg space, but free preview classes and open houses will be held in the new location in late August. MBT will continue to produce two professional ballets annually at the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center at Montgomery College in Rockville; its 30th annual production season will open with *The Nutcracker* in December 2018. For more information about MBT, please contact Paula Ross at 301-762-1757 or visit the website at www.mbtdance.org.

Metropolitan Ballet Theatre, now celebrating its 29th year of dance education and outreach, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts education organization, dedicated to providing arts opportunities to all through exceptional dance education, community outreach, and inspiring performances. MBT's Gaithersburg Academy currently serves over 450 students. MBT is supported in part by the Montgomery County Government and the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County, and the Maryland State Arts Council. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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