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## San Diego Ballet's season opener is world premiere of 'Homegrown'

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San Diego Ballet's world premiere and season opener "Homegrown," is proudly and successfully, delighting audiences. Performances will continue on Saturday, Nov. 11 and Sunday, Nov. 12 at the White Box Live Arts Theater in the Arts District of Liberty Station.

Artistic director and resident choreographer, Javier Velasco, has creatively woven music and dance to celebrate a musical evolution, including San Diego's hometown musical favorites. Nostalgia and elegance combine as one to give a renewed voice to San Diego's homegrown oldies.

Songs date back to the '70s when San Diego's radio station, 101 KGB held a contest in search of the locals' favorite musicians. The 12 winning songs were featured on an album titled "Homegrown." The annual record's success was two-fold, local favorites received more air play and charities were awarded all proceeds.

Velasco has successfully brought Homegrown's classics to "rollicking, frolicking life."

"As a lifelong San Diegan, the music of 'Homegrown' takes me back to high school, listening to the radio in my brother's Chevy Nova," said Velasco. "San Diego seemed much smaller then. Forty years later, the tunes leave me pleasantly surprised. It's tough not to smile when you hear the 'Mission Beach Boogie' or the 'O.B. Bop.'"

Velasco noted that the songs are great to "dance to," describing the experience as a "joy to watch the dancers respond to the groovy tunes of the simple times of 'sitting on a hill in Escondido with a bag full of avocados and bottle full of wine.'"

"I have fond memories of listening to KGB's 'Homegrown' album," he continued. "This year, San Diego Ballet experimented with this intimate series of performances as a love letter to 'America's Finest City.'"

Homegrown will also introduce as choreographer, former San Diego Ballet dancer Matt Carney. "These classic songs naturally come with a sense of nostalgia," said Carney. "And our live musical performances really bring the dances to life with a current feel. Audiences will surely leave singing these songs!"

Carney praised San Diego Ballet dancers as “versatile, dynamic, and stunning.” Performances like “Homegrown” sidle the classics – “The Nutcracker Suite” and “Romeo and Juliet” – with dancers changing “styles for the palette of Velasco's choreography.”

“San Diego Ballet dancers are always entertaining and rhythmic, with tempos ranging from speedy to sultry,” he continued. “San Diego Ballet also has a well-rounded cast that truly reflects the diversity seen in San Diego.”

Grandma's Player Piano songs of the '20s to '40s, even old-time favorites of “Down By the Old Mill Stream” and “Let Me Call You Sweetheart,” will also be featured as live music by Cris O’Byron.

“I'm thrilled to create dance with music that’s in my blood,” said Carney. “I fondly remember singing and dancing with my grandmas to these songs. I look forward to giving tribute to the ladies of the post-Depression. These women inspire me to be strong, resourceful, and respectful in every circumstance. Movements and themes – family, loving, loss, and celebration – are current and nostalgic.”

San Diego Ballet, founded in 1991, is dedicated to bringing the finest quality dance productions to San Diego. Velasco has previously directed and choreographed “Hairspray,” “A Christmas Carol,” “Cabaret” and “Suds” among others. As San Diego Ballet’s current artistic director, he’s created more than 100 original pieces for the company since its inception.

“What makes San Diego Ballet distinct from other artistic organizations is our effort to create works that speak to a Southern California sensibility,” concluded Velasco.

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