



CANADA'S ROYAL
WINNIPEG BALLET

ANDRÉ LEWIS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASPER FOUNDATION GRANTS NEARLY TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND TO CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

Generous donation made in support of live music

WINNIPEG – September 10, 2018. The Asper Foundation has made a three-year \$195,000 commitment to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB), ensuring live music is performed at the Canadian premiere of the RWB's *The Wizard of Oz*. As Live Music Benefactor, the Asper Foundation will support hiring the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) for two additional productions over the RWB's next two seasons. The WSO has accompanied the RWB for 60 of the organization's 79 years.

This generous investment ensures that the artists of the WSO and the RWB continue to work together in a venture that nurtures the careers of Winnipeg artists and creates a stronger, more deeply-woven arts and culture community in Winnipeg.

"Music and dance has been part of our lives forever," **said Asper Foundation Chair, David Asper.** "We recognize the power and importance of the orchestra's live music role in the magic of RWB performances and are very happy to be able to support its continuity."

The first show funded by this generous contribution will be the RWB's 79th season's new creation: *The Wizard of Oz*. Fusing the fundamental techniques of classical ballet with the vibrant and eclectic energy of a modern piece, *The Wizard of Oz* promises to be a whimsical, lively romp through a timeless story brought to life through dance.

"The Royal Winnipeg Ballet is grateful for the Asper Foundation's support", **said RWB Chair Don Leitch.** "Through their gift, The Asper Foundation ensures that the tradition of live music continues to be part of the Winnipeg performances of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet. In the spirit of partnership, they are supporting two of our community's icons and are bringing culturally rich experiences to our community."

About The Royal Winnipeg Ballet

Founded in 1939, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet holds the double distinction of being Canada's premier ballet company and one of the oldest ballet companies in North America. Under the artistic direction of André Lewis, versatility, technical excellence and a captivating style are the trademarks of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, qualities that have garnered both critical and audience acclaim. RWB's superlative standards keep the Company in demand across North America. In addition to the Company, the RWB is home to the RWB School, consisting of both a professional division which trains young artists for a professional career in dance, and a recreational division which provides classes to over 1,500 students each week.

About The Asper Foundation

The Asper Foundation was established in Winnipeg in 1983 to build upon the philanthropic objectives of Israel Asper and the Asper family. It undertakes and develops major initiatives in the areas of Jewish charity as well as culture, education, community development and human rights locally, nationally and internationally.

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