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Media Contact:

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Editors: Images are available upon request.

NextMove Dance presents
Company Wang Ramirez in the Philadelphia debut of *Monchichi*
A full-length dance theater work, March 15-18

(Philadelphia, PA) Company Wang Ramirez premieres its' innovative dance theater work, *Monchichi*, a unique fusion of contemporary dance, ballet, hip hop, tango and martial arts. It is performed and created by company artistic directors, Honji Wang, a classically-trained dancer of Korean descent, and Sébastien Ramirez, a Frenchman with Catalonian roots and self-taught B-Boy and hip hop virtuoso. Five performances are scheduled March 15-18 at the Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA.

Performances take place Thursday, March 15 at 7:30pm; Friday, March 16 at 8:00pm; Saturday, March 17 at 2:00pm and 8:00 pm; and Sunday, March 18 at 3pm. Tickets are \$20-\$62 and can be purchased in person at the Prince Theater Box Office, by phone 215-422-4580 or online <http://princetheater.org/next-move>.

Monchichi, a 55-minute work, creates the stunning portrait of a new, urban, mobile intercultural couple filled with humor and passion. Set to music composed by Ilia Koutchoukov aka Everydayz with additional music by Carlos Gardel, Alva Noto, Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, *Monchichi* opens with a scene suggesting Adam and Eve with the couple slowly becoming aware of one another and their differences. The sparse tree set by Ida Ravn and Cyril Mulon's dramatic lighting design provide an atmosphere reminiscent of a 21st century Garden of Eden or a vignette from "Waiting for Godot." In subsequent sections, Wang & Ramirez explore the communication challenges one faces between intercultural families - a mix of German, French, Spanish, Korean and English with voiceovers and spoken words in these languages. Costumes by Wang feature everyday clothing such as a suit coat, sneakers, jeans, pants, tops, skirts and a scene with Wang performing hip hop rooted moves in heels and a blond wig. The work combines mysterious characters, jaw-dropping moves (i.e. mid-air spins, dislocated robotic limbs, freezes, partnering), amazing technical precision (Ramirez's interactions with Wang), acrobatic showmanship, and a fusion of dance genres resulting in a new form of Urban Tanztheater (Dance Theater). Tanz notes, "it is quite simply Tanztheater at its best, living poetry with thoughtful images and humorous skits.

Ramirez states, "We are always experimenting with our way of dancing, moving, and creating together. What it means to do certain moves with a certain intention, how this will be seen and understood by the audience. We constantly search to develop the techniques we have mastered into a new growth that becomes our own form. It's a life of exploring and it keeps us constantly moving..." <http://writingaboutdance.com/interview/interview-wang-ramirez/>

In addition to the performances, Company Wang Ramirez will be offering two outreach activities. Honji Wang will conduct a master class on Wednesday, March 14 at 1pm, Koresh Dance Center, 2002 Rittenhouse Street and two post-performance chats that will take place after Friday's 8pm and Saturday's 2pm performances.

About Company Wang Ramirez

Since the creation of Company Wang Ramirez, Honji Wang and Sébastien Ramirez have produced and choreographed dance-theatre pieces winning them awards and accolades, such as the New York Bessie Award and the nomination for the Rolex Mentor & Protégée Arts Initiative Program. Acclaimed by the international audience, the company is invited to perform in major theatres and festivals, such as Théâtre de la Ville, La Villette and Théâtre National de Chaillot (Paris), Sadler's Wells (London), Apollo Theater (New York), Mercat de les Flors (Barcelona), and receives the support of important international co-producers. Wang & Ramirez developed a conceptual dance performance for the opening celebration of the arts space MADE in Berlin. In 2015, they contributed to the creation phase in New York City and choreographed for the live show of Madonna's Rebel Heart Tour 2015/2016. In 2016, Sadler's Wells invited them to direct and perform a dance to Nitin Sawhney's album *Dystopian Dream*. Wang & Ramirez never cease to deepen their quest of finding new choreographic languages with means of expression built on technical virtuosity, poetry, humor and the questioning of human identities. They encourage and explore strong artistic collaborations with artists from different fields.

Honji Wang is a dancer, choreographer and artistic director born and raised in Germany of Korean parents. Her dance language is an abstraction of hip hop dance and has influences of earlier martial arts and ballet training. She is recognized as an artist who brings contemporary and hip hop together in an exceptionally organic fashion. Together with Sébastien Ramirez, Honji Wang received the Bessie Award 2013 as "Outstanding Performer" following the presentation of *AP15* at the Apollo Theatre in New York. Their work *Monchichi* was one of the 2017 Bessie Award nominees for "Outstanding Production" following its performance at BAM Fisher. Wang was invited to Madonna's final auditions in New York, where her outstanding performance earned her an invitation to tour and perform for the Rebel Heart Tour. She was invited as a guest artist to perform a duo with acclaimed British choreographer Akram Khan titled *The Pursuit of Now*, which was accompanied by well-known pianist Shahin Novrasli. She also collaborated with the avant-garde female flamenco dancer Rocío Molina in the duet *Felahikum* as well as with New York City Ballet principal dancer Sara Mearns in the duet *No.1*.

Born in the south of France, **Sébastien Ramirez** is an internationally-renowned dancer, choreographer and artistic director. Ramirez specializes in the use of aerial work as well as choreographic rigging development. Since the foundation of his company, he developed a new vision of space and choreography, bringing hip hop dance to a wider and new audience. Following the presentation of *AP15* at the Apollo Theatre in New York, Sébastien Ramirez and Honji Wang received the Bessie Award 2013 as "Outstanding Performers." Their work *Monchichi* was one of the 2017 Bessie Award nominees for "Outstanding Production" following its performance at BAM Fisher. Ramirez contributed to the creation phase of Madonna's Rebel Heart Tour in New York City and choreographed for her live show. He also conducted a personal training on floorwork movement for the creation of Akram Khan's solo *DESH*. Ramirez was also invited by Sadler's Wells as one of the five choreographers of *RIOT OffSpring*, a unique dance piece performed to Igor Stravinsky's iconic *The Rite of Spring* played by Southbank Sinfonia.

Major funding for the 2017/18 season of NextMove Dance is provided by William Penn Foundation. NextMove Dance receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency and from the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. Additional funding is received from BB&T and Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation.

NextMove Dance

Artistic Director Randy Swartz created the first annual dance series in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre in 1970. In 1983, he launched the Dance Celebration series at the Annenberg Center for a 32-year run and initiated a new annual series at the Prince Theater in October 2015. Dance Affiliates, renamed NextMove Dance, is recognized as one of the nation's finest dance presenters. Known internationally for award-winning presentations for almost four decades, NextMove Dance provides a wealth of opportunities for the Delaware Valley community to interact with the artists through talk-backs, master classes, artistic collaborations, workshops, children's programs and much more. Visit www.nextmovedance.org

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