



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **John Neumeier celebrates his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday // In 2013 Hamburg's ballet director looks back at 40 years as head of THE HAMBURG BALLETT**

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, John Neumeier celebrates his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. The director of THE HAMBURG BALLETT was born in Milwaukee/Wisconsin (USA) in 1942. He was educated as a dancer in his hometown, in Copenhagen and at the Royal Ballet School in London and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Theatre Studies from Marquette University / Milwaukee. In 1963 he came to Germany and joined John Cranko's Stuttgart Ballet. In 1969 he became Germany's youngest ballet director in Frankfurt. Soon his choreographies created a stir and were widely noticed. In 1973, August Everding called him to Hamburg. Neumeier worked on his first choreographies while at university and has created more than 150 ballets since, many of them feature-length. Among these are interpretations of ballet classics such as "Illusions – like 'Swan Lake'" and "The Nutcracker", innovative story ballets such as "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Lady of the Camellias", groundbreaking works such as "Third Symphony of Gustav Mahler", "Saint Mathew Passion" and "Nijinsky" as well as ballets with original music scores commissioned, such as recently "Liliom" with music by Michel Legrand.

John Neumeier is the world's most senior ballet director and will celebrate his 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Hamburg in 2013. Since 1973 he has been ballet director and chief choreographer, since 1996 he has also held the post of "Ballettintendant" (Artistic Director) of the Hamburg State Opera. During this time he shaped THE HAMBURG BALLETT and turned the former opera ballet into a ballet company which is known around the world and enjoys an excellent reputation in the dance scene. THE HAMBURG BALLETT will commemorate the occasion with an anniversary season in 2012/2013. It will include a special program of ballets by John Neumeier, an extended edition of the festival "Hamburger Ballett-Tage" in summer 2013, special events and guest companies. Details of the anniversary season will be announced when the season's full program of the Hamburg State Opera and THE HAMBURG BALLETT will be presented in April.

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