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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series Continues with
BalletBoyz - Direct from London in Their Rhode Island Premiere
*The U.K.'s Hottest Contemporary Dance Troupe***

PROVIDENCE, RI – FirstWorks' Artistic Icons Series hosts British dance phenomenon **BalletBoyz®** in their return to the U.S. on **January 31, 2016 at The Vets**. BalletBoyz, one of the most original and innovative companies in contemporary dance, thrill audiences and critics with their distinctive style: no tutus, just pure athleticism. The brainchild of two former Royal Ballet dancers Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, BalletBoyz are characterized by muscularity, ferocity, grace and elegance.

BalletBoyz dance their way across the Atlantic and onto the FirstWorks stage after winning virtually every dance award that Great Britain has to offer. The all-male troupe fuses spectacular dance with stunning music and film. The ten, energetic young dancers comprising this company were hand-picked during open auditions. Taking a page from the story behind Broadway musical *Billy Elliot*, the dancers come from varied dance backgrounds with different training, all displaying natural, unharnessed talent that unleashes daring lifts and feisty body-contact partnering.

"The hugely-popular BalletBoyz have changed the landscape of dance. Their sensational, explosive approach to classic ballet starts with raw talent and gives audiences an adrenaline rush performance," said Kathleen Pletcher, Executive Artistic Director, FirstWorks. "We are thrilled to bring what is new in dance from across the pond to Rhode Island for the first time!"

Style, excitement and muscular grace are on display with two commissions from leading British choreographers. *Mesmerics* is choreographed by the highly acclaimed Christopher Wheeldon (Artistic Associate at The Royal Ballet) to music by legendary American composer Philip Glass. Set to electronic duo Raime's simmering score, *The Murmuring*, choreographed by rising talent

Alexander Whitley, is a powerful work that pulses at the threshold between nature and society, melding film, music and dance

FirstWorks' Artistic Icons series features a carefully curated selection of artists who are leaders in their genres. Selected for their importance to the artistic landscape, these performers also reflect a level of mastery that is unsurpassed in their respective fields. Building Providence's position as a cultural and creative center, FirstWorks brings extraordinarily talented artists – who are usually seen only in larger cities around the world – to engage with local artists, students, and audiences.

Doors will open at 6:45 p.m. for JumpStart activities in The Vets' lobbies. The evening begins with a bang with Rhode Island's Doppelganger Dance Collective, a performance project built by Shura Baryshnikov and Danielle Davidson, as well as young musical ensembles from the FirstWorks Arts Learning program.

Tickets are on sale now for **BalletBoyz**. Tickets start at \$38 with a special offer on select tickets purchased as a group of four. The Friends & Family offer provides a savings of 20% on \$58, \$48, and \$38 tickets for groups of 4 with the code BALLE4. All prices include a \$3 restoration fee. Tickets are available online at first-works.org and at The Vets Box Office: 401-421-ARTS.

Note to editors

On February 1, 2016 at 10:30 a.m., BalletBoyz will be performing an edu-matinee for FirstWorks Arts Learning students at The Vets. This matinee gives students and educators a first-hand look into key areas of dance skills including technique, ballet, movement, choreography, film, music, costume and lighting. If you are interested in attending this session, please contact sabrina@first-works.org.

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks' purpose is to build the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of our community by engaging audiences with world-class performing arts and education programs. Launched in 2004, FirstWorks festivals and programs have attracted more than 285,000 participants. The FirstWorks Arts Learning Program works with over 30 public and charter schools across Rhode Island to provide students, particularly those from underserved communities, direct connection with world-class performing artists.

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