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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Alabama Ballet Closes its Exciting 2010-2011 Season with a Mixed Bill of *American Masterpieces*

Birmingham, AL – Alabama Ballet follows up its five-star production of *Giselle* with a collection of works by legendary choreographers Agnes de Mille, Antony Tudor and the Ballet's own Roger Van Fleteren. *American Masterpieces* opens on Thursday, April 28 in the Sirote Theatre of UAB's Alys Stephens Center, and closes on Sunday, May 1.

Agnes de Mille's *Three Virgins and a Devil* and *The Other* will be performed, along with Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden*. Never before seen in Alabama, these pieces were chosen because of Artistic Director Tracey Alvey's vision for the company to add accessible works to the repertory that will provide new challenges for the dancers and enable Southern dance audiences to transition from the classical story ballet to more abstract choreography. Associate Artistic Director Roger Van Fleteren's long association with American Ballet Theatre and his work there with both Agnes de Mille and Antony Tudor provides a link between the company's Alabama based dancers and the iconic choreography. Van Fleteren's *Be Major* completes the program.

Agnes de Mille is most well-known for her Tony award-winning choreography for Broadway blockbusters like *Oklahoma*, *Carousel* and *Brigadoon*. She also worked extensively with ballet companies like Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, on which she choreographed the ever popular *Rodeo* to music by Aaron Copeland. For American Ballet Theatre, de Mille set her final piece titled *The Other* among many others. *The Other*, set to selections from Franz Schubert's vast repertoire of art songs and piano interludes, features some of the most intricate and beautiful partnering of de Mille's career and a haunting story of the elusive and seductive nature of the unknown. The original cast included ABT stars Victor Barber, Amanda McKerrow and Alabama Ballet Associate Artistic Director Roger Van Fleteren.

Three Virgins and a Devil offers a sharp contrast. Based on a comedic story by Boccaccio, the choreography depicts three novices on their way to join a convent when, one by one, they are tempted away by a mischievous devil. Ottorino Respighi's *Antiche danze ed arie* provides a musical background that enhances the character driven choreography.

Rosemary Johnson, DMA in Piano Performance and Executive Director of the Alabama Dance Council, and tenor T. Alan Taylor will perform live accompaniment for *Three Virgins and a Devil* and *The Other*.

Lilac Garden, with choreography by Antony Tudor and music by Ernest Chausson, is considered a "psychological ballet." The story centers on a young woman who is forced to marry an older man she does not love. She meets her lover in the lilac garden of a country estate to say their final farewells and begin her new life as a wife. Its premiere in 1936 caused a sensation, as it marked the first time dancers appeared onstage in Edwardian-era street clothes, and not as fairies, princesses, or swans. Tudor is ranked with George Balanchine, de Mille and Jerome Robbins as one of the greatest choreographers of the twentieth century.

American Masterpieces is sponsored by Jane Comer, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Alabama State Council on the Arts. The Alabama Ballet is proud to partner with the Birmingham Botanical Gardens for this production. By using the code BBG, \$10 from each ticket sold will go to the Botanical Gardens and their mission to enhance life by connecting people with plants.

To order tickets, call UAB's Ticketing Center at 205.975.2787 or visit www.alabamaballet.org.

Performance Times:

Thursday, April 28 at 7:30 pm

Friday, April 29 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, April 30 at 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm

Sunday, May 1 at 2:30 and 7:30 pm

UAB's Alys Stephens Center, Sirote Theatre

For tickets, call 205.975.7287 or visit www.alabamaballet.org.

The Alabama Ballet is the state's premiere professional ballet company. The company has achieved national prominence as one of only six ballet companies in the world permitted by the Balanchine Trust to perform Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*TM. The Alabama Ballet promotes the development of classical and contemporary ballet through high quality performance, dance education and community outreach. Education and outreach activities include CityDance, which provides 16 weeks of dance training for youth from the city of Birmingham and Jefferson County. The Alabama Ballet is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.