



**Ballet Austin presents the work of
Twyla Tharp set to the music of the Talking Head's David Byrne
in this year's *Director's Choice* production.**

WHO: Ballet Austin
WHAT: Production: Director's Choice/Golden
WHEN: February 15, 16, 17 at 8 pm; February 18 at 2 pm
WHERE: Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Avenue,
TICKETS: \$18 - \$64 at 1.866.4.GETTIX, balletaustin.org, or in person
710 Congress Ave. (*IronStone Bank building*) 10 am - 4 pm weekdays

AUSTIN, TEXAS – This February, dance and music superpowers converge on the intimate stage of the Paramount Theatre for four performances of artistic bliss with Ballet Austin's production of *Director's Choice/Golden*.

Each season, Ballet Austin presents contemporary dance in its annual *Director's Choice* production. For its Golden 50th Anniversary Season, the company tops itself by bringing to Austin for the first time, *The Golden Section*, from dance legend Twyla Tharp featuring the music of David Byrne of the Talking heads, together with works from Artistic Director Stephen Mills and a world premiere from choreographer Gina Patterson.

The production comes not only in the middle of Ballet Austin's 50th anniversary season, but at a time when Austin is entering a new echelon of arts status – boasting worthy venues, organizations, and world-class productions. Considering the realization of the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center and Butler Dance Education Center as well as Ballet Austin's record-breaking production of *The Nutcracker* in December 2006, it is apparent that Austin's premier ballet company – and larger arts scene – are maturing.

One sign of our cultural coming-of-age is the New York-Austin transplant, Shelley Washington. A former dancer and now repetiteur for Twyla Tharp's company, Washington worked on the 1981 premiere of Tharp's *The Catherine Wheel*: the heralded work of dance/theater from which *The Golden Section* is excerpted. She has chosen Austin as her home-base and will be setting the selection for Ballet Austin's February production. Washington studied with Tharp, prior to being invited to join Twyla Tharp Dance Company in 1975. She is preparing to revisit Tharp's masterpiece on the Paramount stage. Audiences can expect a thoughtful and authentic presentation of the heralded work, and as always world-class production by Ballet Austin.

Director's Choice/Golden:

Twyla Tharp's Choreography to the Music of David Byrne
Stephen Mills Choreography to the Music of Squirrel Nut Zippers
Gina Patterson's Choreography to the Music of Michael Nyman & Alberto Iglesias



TWYLA THARP: *The Golden Section*

Music by David Byrne

Created as the culminating segment of *The Catherine Wheel*, a full-program piece of dance/theater, *The Golden Section* was choreographed by dance icon Twyla Tharp to four separately named musical compositions by David Byrne. In Tharp's words, "the dancers stormed the stage with a new, positive energy" and anything that wasn't sheer dancing "disappeared into a harmonious wash of light, costumes, music and movement." Dressed in dancer/athlete get-ups of burnished golds, as if they were all Olympic champions, the seven male and six female dancers sail, soar, and tear through the air of the stage's golden, glowing light.

"Both artists, and here they are unquestionably that, masterfully crosscut fragments of emotion through music and movement." THE NEW YORK TIMES on Tharp and Byrne

Twyla Tharp is an unparalleled American dancer and choreographer. She has choreographed more than one hundred twenty-five dances, five Hollywood movies, directed and choreographed two Broadway shows (including the hit *Movin' Out* with collaborator Billie Joel), written two books and received one Tony Award, two Emmy Awards, and seventeen honorary doctorates. Her company, Twyla Tharp Dance, was founded in 1965 and has been touring internationally to critical acclaim since 1999.

David Byrne is a Grammy Award, Academy Award and Golden Globe winning musician best known as a founding member and the principal songwriter of the New Wave band Talking Heads.

Shelley Washington - Shelley Washington studied with Twyla Tharp at Wolftrap Academy, American University, prior to being invited to join Twyla Tharp Dance Company in 1975. She had previously danced as a member of the Maratha Graham Dance Company. A graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy, Washington furthered her training at the Juilliard School. In 1977 she performed in the film *Hair* and in 1985 in *Singin' in the Rain* on Broadway and served as Dance Captain for that production. In 1987 she was honored with a Bessie Award for Outstanding Performance.

STEPHEN MILLS: *5 Flights Up*

Music by Squirrel Nut Zippers

5 Flights Up is a short work to the music of Squirrel Nut Zippers. Mills' ballet is made in five sections which fall out as two duets, a quartet and two full group sections. The music has a 1920's style to it and the dance follows a rather vaudeville track. It's a non-narrative piece but has lots of humor. Mills comments, "It's fairly quick and a little sexy." Dayton Ballet commissioned the work in 1996. Since then, Ballet Austin has performed it once in 1999.

Stephen Mills has created more than 40 works for companies in the United States and abroad. His ballets are in the repertoires of such companies as The Atlanta Ballet,



Washington Ballet, Cuballet in Havana, Cuba, BalletMet Columbus, The Dayton Ballet, The Sarasota Ballet of Florida, Ballet Pacifica, Dallas Black Dance Theater, The Louisville Ballet, The Nashville Ballet, Fort Worth/Dallas Ballet and Kaleidoscope. Mr. Mills has performed with a wide variety of companies, including Harkness Ballet and The American Dance Machine.

Squirrel Nut Zippers was a platinum-selling U.S. Jazz band formed in 1993, who applied punk's DIY aesthetic to early 20th century American popular music.

GINA PATTERSON: *Red Line* (World Premiere)

Music by Michael Nyman from the soundtrack of *The Piano*

And music by Alberto Iglesias from the soundtrack of *Talk to Her*

Red Line is Patterson's non-linear, abstract work that explores the nature of limits.

Treating the question of where the line is for each of us, the world premiere piece seeks to push the extremes of emotionality, sensuality, and physicality. The space is defined and limited by barriers both permanent and ephemeral, real and imagined. Nine dancers will confront these barriers in seven sections with music by Michael Nyman and Alberto Iglesias.

Gina Patterson joined Ballet Austin in 1988, dancing principal roles in both classical and contemporary works. Ms. Patterson has appeared on stages around the world including Canada, Iceland, Greece, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and France. In 1996, she was invited to join Ballet Florida, returning to Ballet Austin in 2000 where she continues to perform principal roles. Ms. Patterson has been hailed as a choreographer of "startling originality" (Back Stage) and "a standout on the soul front" (Sun-Sentinel). Her first work, *Insideout*, presented at the Ballet Builder's Showcase in New York and the Vth International Dance Festival in Miami, was commissioned by Ballet Florida and is now in the repertoire of Ballet Austin.

Michael Nyman is an English minimalist composer, pianist, librettist and musicologist, perhaps best known for the score for Jane Campion's award-winning 1993 film *The Piano*. Alberto Iglesias is a Spanish composer who wrote the music for several Spanish films, mostly from director Pedro Almodóvar (*Talk to Her*). He also was nominated for an Oscar with his soundtrack for the film *The Constant Gardener*.

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About Ballet Austin

Ballet Austin is one of the preeminent dance companies in the United States. Under the leadership of artistic director Stephen Mills, whose experience includes choreography and directing both classical and contemporary ballets, Ballet Austin has adopted a unique blend of classical dance with innovative style and movement. Ballet Austin Academy, the Company's classical ballet school and the 4th largest classical ballet academy in the United States, teaches students from 3-years and older. Ballet Austin Academy rehearses and administers the twenty member professional company, which is employed thirty-four weeks a year, to dance in five different main-stage productions under Stephen Mills' direction.

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