

BALLET *Austin*

Ballet Austin's Stephen Mills Premiering New Work for Jacob's Pillow Gala Opening

WHO: Ballet Austin's Stephen Mills, Artistic Director
WHAT: World Premiere for Jacob's Pillow Season Gala Opening
WHEN: Saturday, June 14, 2008 – Gala Opening at 5: 00 pm, Performance at 6:30 pm
WHERE: The Ted Shawn Theatre, Jacob's Pillow 358 George Carter Road, Becket, MA

AUSTIN, TX – On June 14, Ballet Austin Artistic Director Stephen Mills will premiere a work at Jacob's Pillow, the longest-running dance festival in the United States. As part of the festival's gala opening, Mills has been selected as the sole choreographer to create and present a piece to help launch the revered dance institution's 76th season. Mills' premiere will be featured alongside a performance by Garth Fagan Dance, Keigwin + Company, and a rare solo appearance by choreographer and dancer Bill T. Jones.

Each year Jacob's Pillow selects an accomplished choreographer, known for fresh, innovative work, to mentor and guide young dancers while preparing them to premiere the work at the festival's opening gala celebration. J.R. Glover, the Director of Education for Jacob's Pillow Dance, comments, "Mr. Mills is an exemplary artist as both a teacher and dancemaker and the Pillow is excited that he accepted our invitation to be the 2008 gala choreographer for the Ballet Program."

Mr. Mills has chosen to use several music selections by the group Radio Tarifa for the new work, entitled *Argelina*. The piece includes eleven men and eleven women, selected from auditions held worldwide. The dancers study with such prestigious companies as Boston Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, Julio Bocca Argentina Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and more.

Known for his innovative and collaborative choreographic projects, Stephen Mills has works in repertoires of companies across the country and around the world. From his inaugural season as Ballet Austin's Artistic Director in 2000, Mills attracted attention with his world-premiere production of *Hamlet*, hailed by *Dance Magazine* as "...sleek and sophisticated."

For Mills' debut in New York City's renowned Joyce Theater in 2005, *The New York Times* wrote that he can "...innovate by using the body in ways that depart from balletic convention." Mills was also awarded the Steinberg Award, the top honor at Quebec's *Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur* International Choreographic Competition for *One/The Body's Grace*.

Stephen Mills works and lives in Austin, Texas, serving as Artistic Director of Ballet Austin since 2000. From the 34,000 sq ft Butler Dance Education Center, located in downtown Austin, he has worked with the company's artistic, executive, and administrative teams under the same roof with the professional company, the apprentices, costume shop, Academy and popular Community School since the fall 2007 opening.

The dynamic facility also houses the AustinVentures StudioTheater, an in-house black box theater at which this past April, Ballet Austin debuted Mills' *Cult of Color: Call to Color*. This inaugural production was a remarkable collaboration with visual artist Trenton Doyle Hancock and composer Graham Reynolds and drew international attention and critical acclaim.

Ballet Austin's 2008/09 season opener features an artistic partnership performing with The Suzanne Farrell Ballet at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in early October immediately followed by performances in Austin at the Long Center for the Performing Arts.

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Ballet Austin's 2008/09 Season

- Oct 24-26, 2008: *Inaugural Season Opener* at The Long Center for the Performing Arts
- Dec 6-23, 2008: *The Nutcracker* at The Long Center for the Performing Arts
- Feb 13-15, 2009: *Hamlet* at The Long Center for the Performing Arts
- Mar 26-Apr 5, 2009: *Austin Ventures Studio Theater Project*
- May 8-10, 2009: *Cinderella* at The Long Center for the Performing Arts

About Ballet Austin

As distinctive and dynamic as the city it calls home, Ballet Austin welcomes audiences near and far to participate in its "classically innovative" vision for the democratization of dance. With a rich history spanning five decades, acclaimed productions, and one of the nation's largest classical ballet academies, the organization is poised for an even greater future. From their new home at the Butler Dance Education Center and Community School in downtown Austin, Ballet Austin and artistic director Stephen Mills actively engage the community, dancers, and audiences alike. *The New York Times* proclaims Ballet Austin "a company with big ambitions" originating work that is "absorbing."

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