

Ballet Austin presents
Cult of Color: Call to Color

**A New Ballet by Stephen Mills,
Story and Visual Concept by Trenton Doyle Hancock
Original Score by Graham Reynolds**

WHAT: A World Premiere of a Collaborative Ballet Production by Three Visionary Texas-based Artists

WHO: A partnership between Ballet Austin and Arthouse at the Jones Center with additional support from The Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia

WHERE: Austin Ventures Studio Theater
at Ballet Austin's new Butler Dance Education Center
located at 501. W. 3rd Street in downtown Austin, Texas, 78701

WHEN: Apr 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 (8 pm) and Apr 6 and 13 (3 pm), 2008

AUSTIN, TEXAS – April 3 - 13, 2008, Ballet Austin presents *Cult of Color: Call to Color*, a world premiere ballet realized through an exciting collaboration among international award-winning choreographer and Ballet Austin artistic director Stephen Mills, Houston-based contemporary visual artist Trenton Doyle Hancock and nationally acclaimed Austin composer Graham Reynolds. The extraordinary production brings Hancock's mythology to life in a new dimension through this innovative partnership.

Working from concept to development and realization Stephen Mills established a unique creative alliance with Hancock and Reynolds. The trio is currently building the project synergistically, contributing their creativity and expertise to produce something completely fresh—and fearlessly original.

Cult of Color: Call to Color is a chapter in Trenton Doyle Hancock's ongoing artistic mythology. Hancock's paintings, sculpture, individual performances, drawings and prints work together to present Mounds, Vegans and other imaginative creatures who are at the center of the artist's unfolding operatic narrative. Hancock's characters and their dilemmas embody themes of life and death, the struggle between good and evil, love, authority, spirituality and moral relativism. Biblical in scope, mythological in content and comic book in style the story tells of a battle fought between the gentle Mounds and the mutant Vegans. In this chapter we are introduced to Vegan minister, Sesom (Moses spelled backwards) who, like his namesake, offers the possibility of salvation to his unruly and war-like Vegan followers through the intervention of the loving character Painter. And, just as all the Vegans appear to be converted to the goodness of "The Cult of Color" one antagonist, Betto, resists. The ensuing violent struggles for power between these forces of will are at the core of this chapter of Hancock's tale. Balancing moral dilemmas with wit and a musical sense of language and color, Hancock creates a painterly space of psychological dimension. What happens as this aspect of the story unfolds will continue to define and embody Hancock's ongoing universe.

All of this will take place within a theatrical set design by Hancock including a backdrop measuring 17 feet high by 60 feet long (created in collaboration with Philadelphia's Fabric Workshop and Museum). The highly original tale will be told through Ballet Austin's company dancers, who will wear fantastical costumes of Hancock's design. Graham Reynolds' score for *Cult of Color: Call to Color* will be created by layering small acoustic ensembles with sound design and otherworldly effects to capture the spirit of the narrative.

The production will be the inaugural presentation in the dance company's 275-seat performance venue – Austin Ventures Studio Theater – nestled in the new 34,000 square foot Butler Dance Education Center and Community School. The downtown facility is one of only a half dozen in the nation owned and operated by ballet companies.

Stephen Mills, choreographer, artistic director Ballet Austin

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 his debut in New York City's renowned Joyce Theatre in 2005, The New York Times wrote that Mills can "...innovate by using the body in ways that depart from balletic convention." Mr. 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*. With *Cult of Color: Call to Color*, Stephen Mills continues to establish his ground-breaking approach to dance creation.

Trenton Doyle Hancock, visual artist

Trenton Doyle Hancock, the 2007 recipient of the Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize from the Studio Museum in Harlem, has shown in exhibitions nationally and internationally, including the 2000 and 2002 Whitney Biennials. Solo exhibitions of his work have been mounted at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami. He has also shown internationally at the Lyon and Istanbul Biennials. Most recently the solo exhibition *Trenton Doyle Hancock: The Wayward Thinker* was at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh in 2007 and traveled to the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Graham Reynolds, composer

A composer, bandleader, pianist and drummer who works constantly in theater, dance, film, concert halls, and nightclubs – Reynolds entered the international stage in 2006 when he was selected by Richard Linklater to compose the motion picture soundtrack to the animated sci-fi feature film, "A Scanner Darkly." His other compositions include four symphonies, two operas, a violin concerto, more than a dozen one movement string quartets and countless chamber music pieces. Recent commissions include "Ulysses" for the Austin Children's Choir and "The Method Gun" for The Rude Mechanicals. With his performing group The Golden Arm Trio, Graham has composed and produced three award winning albums of cross genre experimental music. Graham is also co-artistic director of the Golden Hornet Project which commissions and produces concerts of new work.

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.”

Tickets for the Apr 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 (8 pm) and Apr 6 and 13 (3 pm), 2008 performances will be on sale March 2008.

Media Contact

Ballet Austin: David Wyatt

Wyatt Brand

david@wyattbrand.com

512.450.4395

For more information, please visit www.balletaustin.org/cultofcolor

#