



Ballet Austin II's World Premiere Staging of *Hansel and Gretel* Set for February 25

***Whimsical ballet by choreographer Nelly van Bommel enchanting for both
the young and young at heart***

WHO: Ballet Austin II
Choreography: Nelly van Bommel
WHAT: *Hansel & Gretel World Premiere*
WHEN: February 25 & 26; March 3 & 4
2 pm & 4:30 pm
WHERE: AustinVentures StudioTheater
at Ballet Austin's Butler Dance Education Center
501 West Third Street, Austin, Texas 78701
TICKETS: \$15

AUSTIN, TX – January 24, 2012 – Ballet Austin II — Ballet Austin's second company — debuts *Hansel and Gretel*, February 25-26 and March 3-4 at AustinVentures StudioTheater at Ballet Austin's Butler Dance Education Center. For children as young as 3 and their family members, Ballet Austin II's staging of *Hansel and Gretel* brings a playful spirit to the classic Grimm's fairy tale with new choreography by Nelly van Bommel.

"It's a high-energy, modern twist on the classic that speaks on many different levels," says Ballet Austin Assistant Artistic Director Michelle Martin. "It's animated, funny, and edgy. I'm certain parents will be every bit as entertained as their children."

In 2010, van Bommel competed as a finalist in Ballet Austin's *New American Talent/Dance* choreographic competition (set to return to The Long Center stage in February), winning two Austin Critic's Table Awards for *Fanfarnèta*, a folk-tale inspired piece. The whimsical energy of her work promises to be a perfect match for this beloved children's story.

A Family Dance Workshop is scheduled for Sunday, February 12, 2-3:30 pm, giving participants a chance to see excerpts and create choreography with the help of Ballet Austin II dancers. For tickets and more information, visit www.balletaustin.org

About Ballet Austin II

Established in 1999, Ballet Austin II is Ballet Austin's second company and apprentice program. Performing with the main company in larger productions, Ballet Austin II dancers also maintain their own repertoire and have performed and toured internationally in original works such as *Quiet Imprint* by Thang Dao (*New American Talent/Dance* finalist in 2008) and *Strange Shadows* by

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Jennifer Hart. Other choreographers represented in the Ballet Austin II repertoire include Stephen Mills, George Balanchine, and Nick Kepley.

Apprentices are contracted with Ballet Austin II for up to two years, during which time they receive artistic guidance, career management counseling, and job placement assistance. Ballet Austin II apprentices are recruited through Ballet Austin's Summer Intensive Program and the year-round trainee program. Nearly 70 percent of the main company's current roster includes graduates of Ballet Austin II. Additionally, former Ballet Austin II dancers have joined the ranks of both ballet and modern dance companies, including Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Smuin Ballet, Nashville Ballet, Dayton Ballet, Washington Ballet, Nai-Ni Chen, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, Ballet Met, Kansas City Ballet, Kim Robards Dance Company, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater, Wideman/Davis Dance and Thang Dao Dance.

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, a commitment to creating access to programs and one of the nation's largest classical ballet academies, the organization is poised for an even greater future. From their home at the Butler Dance Education Center 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."

CONTACT INFORMATION

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