



Ballet Austin announces
New American Talent/Dance Juror, Audience Selections

WHO: Ballet Austin
WHAT: Juror, Audience Picks for *New American Talent/Dance* Choreographic Competition
WHEN: March 25 – April 4, 2010
WHERE: AustinVentures StudioTheater at the Butler Dance Education Center
501 West Third Street, Austin, Texas 78701

AUSTIN, TX – Ballet Austin today announces the juror and audience selections for prizewinners in their just completed, third annual *New American Talent/Dance* choreographic competition. The national contest brings the country's most compelling American dance-makers together in Austin to showcase their latest world premieres in a competitive arena. 2010 jurors were Alicia Adams—Vice President of International Touring, Kennedy Center; Julie Nakagawa—Artistic Director/Co-founder, DanceWorks Chicago; and Paul Vasterling—Artistic Director, Nashville Ballet.

Dominic Walsh (Houston) was awarded \$6,000 for *The Whistling* by the jurors and then \$500 for each of the six performances that audiences voted him their favorite—via text message. Walsh also received an additional \$500 for being the overall audience favorite, making him the largest prizewinner, taking home \$9,500.

Nelly van Bommel (New York City) was also awarded \$6,000 by the jurors and then \$1,000 total for the two performances of her *Fanfarnèta*, that audiences chose her as their favorite. **KT Nelson** (San Francisco) was awarded \$3,000 by the jurors for her work "When Love Is Hard," and took home another \$500 for her audience favorite win.

Months ago, Ballet Austin initiated the project by calling out to the national dance community for choreographer contestants. The jurors then culled the national pool of entrants to three choreographers on the cusp of their own creative breakthrough. Finalists each completed a 2-week choreographic residency with Ballet Austin company dancers and then returned to Austin to premiere their work on stage for Ballet Austin at the AustinVentures StudioTheater in Austin, Texas.

Ballet Austin also launched an evocative and lively Twitter conversation in which participants were entered to travel to *New American Talent/Dance* finalists' home cities to dance and learn with the choreographers. People entered to win by answering a simple

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question. "I Love Dance Because ____" (using the hash tag #ILoveDanceBecause)
Details: www.balletaustin.org/atb/natd2010-jetblue.php

Going into closing weekend of the production, critics said:

- **"Smart, funny, and rich."** - *Austin American-Statesman*
- **"Just like a new baby, new art needs a little push." "This weekend, the audience will have the last word, American Idol style."** - *CultureMap, Houston*
- **"...sheer joy, energy and humor"** - *The Austin Chronicle*

FINALIST BIOS

KT Nelson, San Francisco, CA

Ms. Nelson joined San Francisco's ODC Dance 1976 while attending Oberlin College and is now the Co-Artistic Director. She danced with the company from 1976 to 1997. Since 1976, Nelson has choreographed more than 54 works as well as composing and commissioning numerous scores. She has been awarded the Isadora Duncan award (San Francisco's highest dance honor) three times: in 1987 for Outstanding Performance, in 1996 for Outstanding Choreography, and in 2001 for Sustained Achievement. She has received 10 Isadora Duncan nominations in all categories. Nelson's collaborators have included Bobby McFerrin, Geoff Hoyle, Kim Turos, Gina Leishman, Rinde Eckert, Marcelo Zarvos, Zap Mama and Linda Bouchard. She has been a guest choreographer for Mikko Nissinen when she danced with San Francisco Ballet, Diablo Ballet, Ballet Met and Maximum Dance. In 2002, Nelson received the California Dance Educators Association's Artist Award for outstanding artistry, creativity, outreach, and dedication to the field of dance.

Nelly van Bommel, New York City, NY

Since the inception of her company 'nøa dance' in 2004, Ms. van Bommel has presented four acclaimed New York City seasons. Her work has been featured in France, Taiwan and in the US in major festivals and venues including The Alvin Ailey Citigroup Theater, Dance Theatre Workshop, Symphony Space, P.S. 122, Jacob's Pillow, Pabst Theatre, and Joyce SoHo. Born in France to Dutch parents, Ms. van Bommel received her training at the *Académie de Danse Claudie Plaçais-Rocher* and the *Centre National de la Danse* in Paris. In addition to her performing career, Ms. van Bommel also attended *Université de Paris VIII -Sorbonne* (France) and graduated with an MA in Comparative Literature. In 2002, Ms. van Bommel moved to NYC thanks to a fellowship from the Conseil Régional d'Ile de France. Ms. van Bommel is a co-founder of the Reverb Dance Festival, and she has received recent commissions from Milwaukee Ballet, CorbinDances, Springboard Danse-Montréal, Neuberger Museum of Art, and Purchase College Conservatory of Dance. John Rockwell of *The New York Times* wrote, "Nelly van Bommel

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has talent, a sense of passion and intensity...and a quirky sense of humor [...] She seems to be working her way smartly up the American dance ladder." Nelly was most recently recognized in Dance Magazine's January 2010 issue as one of the "25 to Watch".

Dominic Walsh, Houston, TX

Mr. Walsh began dancing in Elgin, Illinois with Lisa Boehm and joined Houston Ballet in 1989 and danced there until 2004. In 1998, he created *Flames of Eros*, when Mr. Stevenson invited him to choreograph on Houston Ballet. This work won the Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography. He continues to set and create works for other companies most recently including, Ballet Florida, ABT Studio Company, Asami Maki Ballet Tokyo, New National Theatre, Tokyo, and Sarasota Ballet of Florida. In 2002, he formed Dominic Walsh Dance Theater, a Houston-based contemporary ballet company. In May 2006, Mr. Walsh created *Romeo & Juliet*, his first full-length, multi-sensory production that received praise from *Dance Magazine*. In 2007, he premiered a new full-length ballet, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, for New National Theatre, Tokyo and a full-length *Sleeping Beauty*. In July 2008, he won a Princess Grace Award for Choreography for *Mozart*. 2009-10 marks his first season as "Resident Choreographer" of Sarasota Ballet of Florida.

ABOUT BALLET AUSTIN

Stephen Mills, Artistic Director

Mr. 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. He has worked in collaboration with such luminaries as the eight-time Grammy Award-winning band, Asleep at the Wheel, and Shawn Colvin. In addition to his work as a choreographer, Mr. Mills is committed as a master teacher to developing dancers. He has been a teacher at many pre-professional academies including Goucher College; Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing Arts in Dallas; The Virginia School of the Arts; The New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts; Stephens College and Point Park College in Pittsburgh. Mr. Mills also serves on the Board of Trustees of the national dance service organization, Dance USA.

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

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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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