

BALLET *Austin*

Ballet Austin presents Evening-Length, Contemporary *Truth & Beauty/The Bach Project*

World Premiere Choreography by Stephen Mills

with music by J.S. Bach, Phillip Glass and Graham Reynolds

Performed live by The Austin Chamber Music Center, Dr. Michelle Schumann and
Graham Reynolds

- WHO:** Ballet Austin
Choreography: Stephen Mills
Music: J.S. Bach, Philip Glass, Graham Reynolds
Accompaniment: The Austin Chamber Music Center, Dr. Michelle Schumann, Graham Reynolds
- WHAT:** World Premiere: *Truth & Beauty/The Bach Project*
- WHEN:** February 12 - 14, 2010 *Valentine's Weekend*
- WHERE:** Dell Hall at the Long Center for the Performing Arts
- TICKETS:** \$27 - \$77 at www.balleteaustin.org, 512.476.2163
Ballet Austin Box Office at 501 W. 3rd Street

AUSTIN, TX –Valentine's Day weekend 2010, Ballet Austin unveils a world premiere: *Truth & Beauty/The Bach Project*, a new contemporary evening-length ballet featuring a rich musical collaboration from Stephen Mills—his first since the breakthrough collaborative production *Cult of Color: Call to Color* in 2008 with visual artist Trenton Doyle Hancock and Austin composer Graham Reynolds.

This world-premiere dance work in three sections will employ a variety of sensual movement styles with live accompaniment by The Austin Chamber Music Center, Dr. Michelle Schumann (solo and with ensembles) and Graham Reynolds to evoke the painting "Loophole" (2002) by artist Wes Hempel that hangs in Mills' home. In the painting, two men stand on an outcropping of rock amidst choppy waters. One reads from a book called "Truth," the other from a book named "Beauty."

To interpret and perform the music for this production, Mills collaborates with two young, Austin-based classical minds. Dr. Michelle Schumann, artistic director of the Austin Chamber Music Center, will lead an ensemble of 12 players in an interpretation of Bach's *Orchestral Suite #2 in B minor*. Later, Dr. Schumann performs solo piano "Bach's *Aria 1*" from the *Goldberg Variations*, "Arioso" and Philip Glass' "Metamorphosis 1" followed by "Polaris Etoile."

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Of the collaboration, Dr. Schumann says, “Stephen and I have wanted to work together for a number of years now and this feels like the perfect opportunity. We both share an interest in taking iconic themes and presenting them in surprising ways—shattering the ceiling of expectation for artist and audience alike. Together we’re shaping a piece that seamlessly moves from Bach’s music (with its expressively serpentine musical lines) to the minimalism of Philip Glass... back and forth, with attention to the space and mood that is created... almost a mantra of space and time.”

Dr. Michelle Schumann

Dr. Schumann holds a doctorate in piano performance from the University of Texas at Austin. Her extensive experience in chamber music includes performances in international festivals and collaborations with leading ensembles throughout the U.S. Her appearances at Tanglewood, the Banff Festival of Music and Sound, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the New York City Ballet, and the Austin Lyric Opera offer Dr. Schumann a broad perspective of the music community at large.

Graham Reynolds

For the final section, local composer, bandleader of Golden Arm Trio, and co-artistic director of Golden Hornet Project, Graham Reynolds, will be leading a 12-member ensemble—including a string quartet, rhythm section, horns, percussionists, and Reynolds on piano—on a partially raised orchestra lift in his re-imagined Bach’s “Suite in A minor” with his signature percussive style.

About the introduction of Graham Reynolds into the production Mills says, “Since our first collaboration with *Cult of Color: Call to Color*, I knew that I wanted to work with Graham again. Having him interpret Bach and perform the results in his unique way is a catalyst for the choreography that is unique to commissioned music that is performed live.”

Reynolds composes for film, theater, dance, rock clubs and concerts halls with collaborators ranging from film director Richard Linklater to The Rude Mechs theater company to the Austin Symphony Orchestra. As bandleader of the jazz-based but far reaching Golden Arm Trio, Reynolds is currently recording an album of material by Duke Ellington. A recent commission was a piece for choreographed garbage trucks by Forklift Danceworks.

Reynolds reflects on the project, “It was at once humbling, inspiring, challenging and rewarding. Creating music with a work of J. S. Bach as a starting point, I

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couldn't hope to compete. So I didn't try to. What I did try to do, using fragments of his harpsichord *Suite in A Minor*, was to transform, reset, and respond to his ideas in my own voice." He continues, "My first Ballet Austin commission, *Cult of Color: Call to Color*, became an instant personal favorite among my many years of cross-medium collaborations and I couldn't ask for a more generous and inspiring creative partner than Stephen Mills. He and Ballet Austin are such a leading force in Austin arts that I can only consider myself lucky to be along for part of the ride."

The first section of the ballet will also include video projections, inspired both by Hempel's painting, and Mills' experience teaching outdoors at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in 2008.

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 DaytonBallet, 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 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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