



## **Ballet Austin's 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial New American Talent/Dance Puts Audience in the Driver's Seat**

**WHO:** Ballet Austin  
**WHAT:** 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial *New American Talent/Dance*  
**WHEN:** February 17-19, 2012  
**WHERE:** Dell Hall at The Long Center for the Performing Arts  
**TICKETS:** \$15 - \$74 at [www.balletaustin.org](http://www.balletaustin.org), 512.476.2163  
Ballet Austin Box Office at 501 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

**AUSTIN, TX – January 4, 2011** – Once every two years, Ballet Austin asks audience members to turn ON their cell phones for the performance. That time has returned as Ballet Austin's 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial *New American Talent/Dance* takes The Long Center stage February 17-19, 2011.

The latest installment in this national choreographic competition brings the country's most compelling young American dancemakers together to showcase their latest world premieres in a competitive arena. Three finalists compete for over \$24,000 in cash prizes awarded by an industry-renowned jury and the audience itself, voting by text message. In the end, an overall Jurors' Award winner and runner up prizes are handed out, in addition to daily Audience Award prizes.

This year's finalists for Ballet Austin's 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial *New American Talent/Dance* are **Gregory Dolbashian**, Founder of The DASH Ensemble, **Loni Landon**, Founder of Loni Landon-projects, and **Bradley Shelver**, Artistic Director of Bradley Shelver Contemporary Dance Theater. In a first-time twist of fate, all three choreographers are based in New York City. The three finalists are currently in the process of completing 40-hour choreographic residencies with Ballet Austin Company dancers and artistic staff.

---

***Ballet Austin's New American Talent/Dance has been hailed by the Austin American-Statesman as "one of the more innovative programming ideas in dance" with the Austin Chronicle declaring, "...there's no dance showcase or competition quite like this in North America."***

---

"*New American Talent/Dance* is born out of Ballet Austin's commitment to foster new talent, among both dancers and dancemakers," says Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin's Artistic Director and creator of the event. "It serves as a platform for choreographers to develop their craft in an environment that gives them access to some of the best production facilities, staff and dancers in the industry."

Selected as jurors for 2012's competition are internationally renowned dance experts **Anik Bissonnette**, Artistic Director of the L'ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE DE BALLET DU QUÉBEC; **Molly Lynch**, Assistant Professor of Dance in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts at the University of California, Irvine, Founder and Artistic Director of the National Choreographers Initiative, and former Artistic Director for Ballet Pacifica (1988–2003); and **Zachary Whittenburg**, former dancer and current writer including Dance editor of *Time Out: Chicago*.

When it began in 2006, Ballet Austin's *New American Talent/Dance* forged a then unheard of model in this country: investing in American choreographers by giving them significant studio time with world-class dancers and artistic staff, along with major cash prizes as decided upon by a nationally renowned jury and a live voting audience.

Winners and previous finalists of *New American Talent/Dance* include Thaddeus Davis, Thang Dao (Thang Dao Dance Company), Victor Kabanjaev, Sidra Bell (Sidra Bell Dance New York), Dominic Walsh (Dominic Walsh Dance Theater), Nelly van Bommel (NØA DANCE), KT Nelson (ODC Dance), and Amy Seiwert (Resident Choreographer, Smuin Ballet).

[\*\*DOWNLOAD FULL BIOGRAPHIES ON THE JURORS AND FINALISTS HERE.\*\*](#)

###

#### **About Stephen Mills, Artistic Director**

Known for his innovative and collaborative choreographic projects, Stephen Mills has works in the repertoires of companies across the US and around the world. From his inaugural season as Artistic Director in 2000, Mills attracted attention from around the United States with his world-premiere production of *Hamlet*, hailed by *Dance Magazine* as "...sleek and sophisticated." *The Washington Post* recognized Ballet Austin as "one of the nation's best-kept secrets" in 2004 after Ballet Austin performed Mills' world premiere of *The Taming of the Shrew*, commissioned by and performed at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The Company was first invited to perform at Kennedy Center in January of 2002 with the Mills production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and at The Joyce Theater (NYC) in 2004. In 2005 after two years of extensive research, Mills led 13 organizations through a community-wide human rights collaboration that culminated in the world premiere work *Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project*, after which the Austin Anti-Defamation League awarded Mills its 2006 Humanitarian Award.

In 1998 Mills was the choreographer chosen to represent the U.S. through his work, *Ashes*, at the *Rencontres Chorégraphiques Internationales de Seine-Saint-Denis* in Paris. Most recently, Mr. Mills was awarded the Steinberg Award, the top honor at the *Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur* International Choreographic Competition for *One/The Body's Grace*.

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 Hong Kong Ballet, American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, The Atlanta Ballet, The Milwaukee 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, The Sacramento Ballet, and Dance Kaleidoscope. He has worked in collaboration with such luminaries as the eight-time Grammy Award-winning band Asleep at the Wheel, Shawn Colvin, and internationally renowned flamenco artist José Greco II.

--More--

## **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**

Ballet Austin  
501 West Third Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

Box Office: 512.476.2163  
Academy: 512.476.9150  
Butler Community School: 512.476.9150  
General info: 512.476.9151

**PRESS CONTACT:** LuAnn Glowacz [luann.glowacz@balletaustin.org](mailto:luann.glowacz@balletaustin.org); 512.476.9151, ext. 101  
**IMAGES:** Contact LuAnn for access to a downloadable image library  
**WEB:** <http://www.balletaustin.org/atb/natd.php>

**Production Sponsors** Lazy 8 Ranch, Ernst & Young, The Shubert Foundation, Marriot Courtyard Downtown  
**Season Underwriter** Austin Ventures  
**Season Sponsors** Vintage IT Services, The Ampersand Agency, Reavis Rehab and Wellness Center, Inc., Get Page One, YNN  
**Media Sponsors** KVUE, *Austin American-Statesman*, MAJIC 95.5  
**Education Underwriter** JPMorgan Chase Foundation

*This project is funded in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division, by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts, and by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.*