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Contact: LuAnn Glowacz

Luann.glowacz@balletaustin.org

512.476.9151, ext. 101

Ballet Austin Awarded Fellowship Initiative Grant From New York Choreographic Institute

AUSTIN, TX – October 10, 2011 – Ballet Austin has been awarded a Fellowship Initiative grant from the New York Choreographic Institute, an affiliate of New York City Ballet, to support the development of new choreography in a studio setting. The choreographer selected for participation is Ballet Austin Academy Instructor Jennifer Hart.

Jennifer Hart came to Ballet Austin from Minnesota Dance Theatre in 2007 and previously trained with Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Maggie Black and Toni Pierce of Alvin Ailey. She danced professionally with Minnesota Dance Theatre, Ballet of the Dolls, L.A. Chamber Ballet and numerous independent choreographers. She has been commissioned for choreography by Minnesota Dance Theatre, the Walker Art Center for its Momentum Series, James Sewell Ballet as part of the Jerome Foundation Grant, Ballet Arts Minnesota's Springboard program, and Metropolitan Ballet in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Hart has also been selected twice by New Choreographers on Point in New York to present work as part of their Ballet Builders series. In the spring of 2007, she choreographed a full-length production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Metropolitan Ballet. Most recently, Hart choreographed works for Ballet Austin II—Ballet Austin's second company/apprentice program—including *Strange Shadows* in 2011 and *Imago* 2010.

Peter Martins, founder and artistic director of the New York Choreographic Institute, states, "The Fellowship is meant to help ballet companies to create an environment in

which a choreographer can develop ideas without the pressure of stage production. The Institute is committed to classical choreographers who will be creating works for the future."

"I look forward to the opportunity to explore the process of creating," adds Hart. "Oftentimes, I make work for a specific project and feel pressured by time constraints and the desire to make something that I think people will like. I'm looking at this process as a way to see what I like, what works and what doesn't work. I'm more willing to throw things out that aren't working and make changes."

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

501 West Third Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Box Office: 512.476.2163
Academy: 512.476.9150
Community School: 512.476.9150
General info: 512.476.9151
Fax: 512.476.3973

IMAGES: luann.glowacz@balletaustin.org for print-ready, password-free images
MEDIA: For interviews, details contact LuAnn Glowacz at 512.476.9151, ext. 101
WEB: <http://www.balletaustin.org>

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