



**Ballet Austin Presents *Hamlet*
Valentine's Day Weekend at the Long Center**

WHO: Ballet Austin
Choreography by Stephen Mills
Music by Philip Glass

WHAT: *Hamlet*

WHEN: Valentine's Day Weekend
February 13 and 14 at 8 pm, February 15 at 3 pm

WHERE: Dell Hall at The Long Center for the Performing Arts
W. Riverside Drive and S. 1st Street

TICKETS: \$24 - \$74 at 1.512.476.2163, balletaustin.org,
or at Ballet Austin's Butler Dance Education Center
at W. Third and San Antonio Streets, 10 am - 6 pm weekdays

AUSTIN, TX – In 2000, Ballet Austin premiered Stephen Mills' contemporary and distinctive interpretation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, hailed by *The Dallas Morning News* as "dance theater at its best". Since its debut, five other companies around the country (BalletMet in Columbus, Dayton Ballet, Ohio Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, and Milwaukee Ballet) have performed it to rave reviews. Nine years after delighting Central Texas audiences, *Hamlet* returns this Valentine's Day weekend to mesmerize Austin once more.

For its Austin homecoming, this production will once again captivate audiences with its hypnotic arrangement of music from composer Philip Glass, exquisite choreography, stunning sets and high fashion costumes (Armani suits and velvet dresses) – each heightening the excitement, heartbreak and revenge embedded throughout this classic Shakespearean tale.

The story of *Hamlet* and Ophelia brilliantly adapts to Mills' exquisite staging and presents an unusual, enticingly fascinating option to the traditional Valentine's Day celebration. Based on one of Shakespeare's most tragic plays, Ballet Austin's production of *Hamlet* will once again enthrall audiences.

Coupled with exquisite sets and lighting, *Hamlet* delicately blends traditional and contemporary ballet to create a story primarily told through movement and the haunting, percussive and richly textured sound of the music of Phillip Glass.

The Story

BALLET *Austin*

Hamlet is arguably one of the most famous plays in the English language. Likely written in early 1600s, the tragedy is a milestone in Shakespeare's dramatic development. According to most critics, the playwright achieved artistic maturity in this work through his brilliant depiction of the hero's struggle with two opposing forces: moral integrity and the need to avenge his father's murder. Shakespeare's focus on this conflict was a revolutionary departure from contemporary revenge tragedies, which tended to graphically dramatize violent acts on stage in that it emphasized the hero's dilemma rather than the depiction of bloody deeds.

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.

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, 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."

NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

501 West Third Street
Austin, Texas 78701

General info: 512-476-9151
Fax: 512-476-3973

Box Office: 512-476.2163
Academy: 512-476-9151

BALLET *Austin*

IMAGES: <http://media.wyattbrand.com> for print-ready, password-free images

MEDIA: For interviews, details contact David Wyatt at david@wyattbrand.com and
(512) 450.4395

WEB: <http://www.balletaustin.org>

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