



Ballet Austin II presents
Quiet Imprint
2006 New American Talent/Dance Finalist Returns
To Tell Story of the Vietnam “Diaspora”

WHO: Ballet Austin II
Choreography: Thang Dao
Composer: Trinh Cong Son
Vocalist: Khanh Ly

WHAT: *Quiet Imprint*

WHEN: Saturday, March 6th at 7 pm and Sunday, March 7th at 2 pm

WHERE: Austin Ventures Studio Theater
at the Butler Dance Education Center
501 West Third Street, Austin, Texas 78701

TICKETS: \$15 at www.balletaustin.org, 512.476.2163
Ballet Austin Box Office at 501 W. 3rd Street

AUSTIN, TX—As a direct result of a Princess Grace Foundation Special Project Award, Ballet Austin II presents *Quiet Imprint*: a visiting New York choreographer’s interpretation of personal narratives from the central Texas Vietnamese community. Specifically, the work addresses those dispersed from Vietnam (the “diaspora”) during and following the conflict lasting from 1959 – 1975. The project will culminate in a world premiere dance by Thang Dao, an emerging Vietnamese choreographer and the Audience Choice winner of Ballet Austin’s first biennial *New American Talent/Dance* in 2006.

The world premiere work will depict the arduous journey experienced by the countless displaced Vietnamese men and women who lived through the conflict, particularly those who ended up in Austin. A key component of the project was Dao’s open dialogue with the Vietnamese elders, documenting their journey of exile, and then connecting them with the dancers of Ballet Austin II to allow for folk dance movements and stories to be directly shared. The choreographer worked directly with Women’s Alliance Vietnam’s Education (WAVE) to more directly access the Vietnamese community.

Dao’s production was inspired by, and grounded in, Vietnamese singer Khanh Ly’s soulful and transcendent performances of beloved composer Trinh Cong Son’s music. Ly has long captured the hearts of her audience by conveying the mournful, yet poetic lyrics expressed in Son’s music. The late Trinh Cong Son, who was an iconic figure known as the “Bob Dylan of Vietnam,” wrote many songs for Ly, his close friend and musical muse. For this exceptional production of *Quiet Imprint*, Ly will make a special appearance to perform live with Ballet Austin II.



“We are honored to engage in this cultural experience that is directly reflective of such a rich part of the community we serve,” says Michelle Martin, Associate Artistic Director of Ballet Austin. According to the 2000 United States Census, the Austin-San Marcos area is the seventh densest populated area in Southern metropolitan regions for people of Vietnamese descent.

The 2009 Special Project Award given to Dao by the Princess Grace Foundation funded the *Quiet Imprint* project. The Princess Grace Foundation’s mission is to support emerging artists in theater, dance and film through the awarding of scholarships, apprenticeships and fellowships. This honorary grant is only available to past *Princess Grace Award* winners and Honoraria recipients for uniquely significant projects that advance their artistic development.

In this, Dao’s fourth collaboration with Ballet Austin, the choreographer was in residence at Ballet Austin for 8 weeks, conducting movement workshops as well as interviewing Vietnamese expatriates who fled their homeland to make a new life in and around Austin.

About Thang Dao

Thang Dao is currently the director of Thang Dao Dance Company (TDDC) based in New York City. After receiving the Audience Choice Award for *Stepping Ground* for all four performances in Ballet Austin’s *New American Talent/Dance* choreographic competition, Dao returned to create *Printemps Perdu* for Ballet Austin II. In 2009, he created new work for Boston Conservatory as well as *Mendelssohn Violin Concerto* for Ballet Austin II and was awarded the 2009 *Princess Grace Fellowship Special Projects Award*.

Thang Dao was born in Danang, Vietnam. He received his formal dance education from the Juilliard School and the Boston Conservatory, and he holds a BFA in dance from The Boston Conservatory and an MA from New York University. He danced for the Stephen Petronio Company from 2001-2006 and worked for the Metropolitan Opera and Little Orchestra Society. Dao has presented his works in Boston, New York City, and Austin, with acclaimed reviews by *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and the *Austin American-Statesman*.

About Trinh Cong Son

Trinh Cong Son was a prominent, Vietnamese composer and songwriter with a message of love and humanity. He composed over 600 songs during his lifetime. Nearly every significant Vietnamese performer, past and present, has included his songs in their performance repertoire. Son died on April 1, 2001 at the age of 62. When he died, tens of



thousands of people lined the street to pay tribute to a man that has influenced a generation.

About Khanh Ly

Khanh Ly started her career at the age of fourteen when she won second place on a radio talent search in Saigon. In 1962, five years later, Trinh Cong Son requested that she perform his work, but she refused his offer. Three years later, Ly finally consented and began collaborating with Son and performing his music throughout Vietnam. Son composed activist songs largely in the 60s and 70s, which Ly performed to the troops fighting for peace. In 1969, Ly was sponsored by the Vietnamese Government to perform in Europe, making her the first Vietnamese entertainer to perform in another country. Since then, Ly has performed in the United States, Canada, and Japan. She will travel to Austin to perform for the audiences of *Quiet Imprint*.

About Ballet Austin II

Established in 1999, Ballet Austin II is Ballet Austin's apprentice program and second company. The 10 apprentices, ranging in age from 18-23, are employed for 34 weeks. They perform with the main company in larger productions as well as presenting their own roster of repertoire and educational programming throughout Texas. Choreographers represented in the Ballet Austin II repertoire include Stephen Mills, Gina Patterson and *New American Talent/Dance* finalists Thang Dao, Thaddeus Davis and Viktor Kabaniaev.

Apprentices are contracted with Ballet Austin II for up to 2 years during which time they receive artistic guidance, career management counseling and job placement assistance. Ballet Austin II apprentices are recruited through Ballet Austin's Summer Intensive Program and the year-round Professional Division (Trainee Program). Sixty percent of the main company's current roster includes graduates of Ballet Austin II. Additionally, former Ballet Austin II dancers have joined the ranks of both ballet and modern dance companies, including Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Smuin Ballet, Nashville Ballet, Dayton Ballet, Washington Ballet, Nai-Ni Chen, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, Ballet Met, Kansas City Ballet, Kim Robards Dance Company, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater, Wideman/Davis Dance and Thang Dao Dance.

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