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BALLET AUSTIN'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION OF THE NUTCRACKER SELLS OUT *THE GRACIOUS SUPPORT OF THE AUSTIN COMMUNITY LEADS TO ANOTHER WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON*

AUSTIN, Texas (December 7, 2022) – Ballet Austin is thrilled to announce that for the first time in the history of Ballet Austin's production of *The Nutcracker*, tickets for all 15 performances have sold out. This unprecedented response to this time-honored Austin holiday tradition makes this year's production both the top-selling and top-attended run of all time.

This would not have been possible without the generous support of the Austin community/ Central Texas and their eagerness to share the holiday season with Ballet Austin.

THANK YOU, AUSTIN!

Ballet Austin extends a wholehearted THANK YOU to those across Central Texas supporting this production for six decades, making this 60th Anniversary year one for the record books.

Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin's Sarah & Ernest Butler Family Fund Artistic Director, said, "*Ballet Austin's professional dancers, artistic and administrative staff, crew, Board of Directors and volunteers want to express our gratitude to our community. Through this timeless work, Ballet Austin is honored to be stewards of this Austin holiday tradition. Thank you to our audience members for allowing Ballet Austin to be part of your holidays.*"

It is estimated that over 1.5 million people have seen Ballet Austin's production of *The Nutcracker* since 1962.

THE NUTCRACKER HAS BEEN SEEN BY MILLIONS

The 60th Anniversary Production includes a cast of over 150 people, ranging from Ballet Austin's professional company dancers to students of Ballet Austin Academy. By the time this year's run closes on December 23, *The Nutcracker* will have been performed on the stage at The Long Center for the Performing Arts a total of 18 times for over 33,000 audience

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members.

These 15 performances included Ballet Austin's [Night of Community](#) on December 2nd, sponsored by the Reaud Charitable Foundation, the Seawell Elam Foundation and CapMetro. Night of Community is a special program designed to welcome clients of Central Texas non-profit social service organizations experiencing financial and other challenges. *The Nutcracker* was also performed this year for 8,800 Central Texas elementary school children at The Long Center. As a 501c3 nonprofit organization, Ballet Austin is committed to making art accessible to the community. Ticket prices this year ranged from \$15-\$125. The funds generated support Ballet Austin's mission, including education, scholarship and wellness programs.

As the longest-running production of *The Nutcracker* in Texas, Ballet Austin looks forward to continuing to bring this cherished holiday tradition to audiences for many more years to come.

SPECIAL OPENING NIGHT APPEARANCES

Austin Mayor Steve Adler made a special appearance during opening night of *The Nutcracker* on December 3rd. Joined on stage by Stephen Mills and Cookie Ruiz, Ballet Austin's Executive Director, Mayor Adler read a proclamation honoring Ballet Austin and declaring the date to be "Nutcracker Day" in celebration of the 60th Anniversary.

"I applaud Ballet Austin for reaching this incredible milestone on their 60th Anniversary Production of *The Nutcracker*," Steve Adler, Mayor of Austin said. "Austin residents continue to show overwhelming support for the arts, which is another reason why Austin is such a magical place. The exceptional efforts of Ballet Austin's performers showcase the supreme talent Austin has to offer. Audiences treasure, celebrate and recognize the *Nutcracker* as an important part of who we are.

Mayor Adler presented both Mills and Ruiz with "Keys to the City" in recognition of their service to the city of Austin. This honor, presented to two "trustees of *The Nutcracker*" as Mayor Adler referred to them, recognizes Mills and Ruiz's combined efforts to preserve the magic of the arts to all in the Austin community and their commitment to engaging the community in meaningful conversation through dance. Ballet Austin is honored to have these two amazing individuals at the helm of the organization.

This opening evening on December 3rd was also special for its inclusion of former cast members and their reunion. This invitation was extended to everyone who performed in a production of Ballet Austin's *The Nutcracker* for the past 60 years. Former dancers from every decade, including the first performers in the 1960s, returned to celebrate this milestone with Ballet Austin. Before the performance began, Artistic Director Stephen Mills honored both Ballet Austin former cast members and former cast members from any ballet company's

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production of *The Nutcracker* by asking them to stand and receive a well-deserved round of applause.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Ballet Austin continues the 2022/23 season with three more upcoming productions. *Sarah's Songs*, a collection of three extraordinary dance works in celebration of Austin philanthropist Sarah Butler, will premiere at The Long Center with three performances beginning on February 10 and ending February 12. Following this, *Light / The Holocaust and Humanity Project* will be performed at The Long Center from March 31-April 2. *Light* is a full-length contemporary ballet and Holocaust education partnership that promotes the protection of human rights against bigotry and hate through arts, education, and public dialogue. The season will end with the treasured fairy tale, *Cinderella*, being performed at The Long Center May 12-14.

Tickets are on sale now for all of these productions. Visit balletaustin.org to reserve seats online, or contact Ballet Austin's Box Office at **512.476.2163**, weekdays from noon to 6 p.m. CT for personalized assistance.

ABOUT STEPHEN MILLS

Sarah & Ernest Butler Family Fund Artistic Director

Known for his innovative and collaborative choreographic projects, Stephen Mills has dance works in the repertoires of companies across the United States 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 ballet 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 the Kennedy Center in January of 2002 with the Mills production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and at The Joyce Theater in New York City in 2004. In 2005 after two years of extensive research, Mills led a community-wide human rights collaboration that culminated in the world premiere work *Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project*. In 2006, *Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project* was awarded the Audrey & Raymond Maislin Humanitarian Award by the Anti-Defamation League. In September of 2013, the work made its international debut with a tour in three cities across Israel.

In 1998, Mills was the choreographer chosen to represent the United States through his work, *Ashes*, at Les Rencontres Chorégraphiques Internationales de Seine-Saint-Denis in Paris. Most recently, Mills was awarded the Steinberg Award, the top honor at Le Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur International Choreographic Competition for *One / the body's grace*. Mills

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has created more than 40 works for companies in the United States and abroad. His ballets are in the repertoires of such companies as Hong Kong Ballet, Ballet Augsburg, American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, Atlanta Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, Washington Ballet, Cuballet in Havana, Cuba, BalletMet Columbus, Dayton Ballet, Sarasota Ballet, Ballet Pacifica, Dallas Black Dance Theater, Louisville Ballet, Nashville Ballet, Colorado Ballet, Texas Ballet Theater, 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.

As a dancer Mills performed with a wide variety of companies such as the world-renowned Harkness Ballet and The American Dance Machine under the direction of Lee Theodore. He also performed with the Cincinnati Ballet and The Indianapolis Ballet Theatre before becoming a part of Ballet Austin. Mills has danced principal roles in the Balanchine repertoire, as well as works by Choo-San Goh, John Butler, Ohad Naharin, Vicente Nebrada, Domy Reiter-Soffer, and Mark Dendy.

In addition to his work as a choreographer, Mills is a master teacher committed to developing dancers. He has been invited as guest faculty at many pre-professional academies including Jacob's Pillow, 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 University in Pittsburgh. Mills is a member of the national dance service organization Dance / USA and has served both in leadership roles and on the Board of Trustees for the organization.

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 creation of original artworks, classical ballet instruction, and life-long health and wellness through dance and fitness. With a rich history spanning six decades, acclaimed productions, a commitment to creating access to programs, and a large, classical ballet academy, the organization is poised for an even greater future. From their home at the Butler Dance Education Center in downtown Austin, Ballet Austin and Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin’s Sarah & Ernest Butler Family Fund artistic director, 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.” For additional information on Ballet Austin and to purchase tickets and classes, visit balletaustin.org.

ABOUT OUR SPONSORS

The Nutcracker Production Sponsors

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Night of Community Sponsors

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ATTENTION MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

Arrange interviews, access high-resolution images and videos, by contacting **Victoria Gonzalez** at **956 778 8877** or **Nico Ramsey** at **512 516 0302**, or via e-mail at ba@ecprtexas.com. Did you know Ballet Austin is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization? [Learn more.](#)

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