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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BALLET AUSTIN ANNOUNCES 2023/24 SEASON FEATURING A WORLD PREMIERE, CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED FAVORITES, AND BELOVED CLASSICS

AUSTIN, Texas (April 21, 2023) – Ballet Austin announces their upcoming 2023/24 season, featuring five spectacular productions. The season opens with an exploration of passion, deceit, and revenge in **Stephen Mills' *Hamlet***. Celebrate the magic of the holiday season in December with the **61st Annual Production of *The Nutcracker***. Valentine's Day weekend treats audiences to ***TRIAD: Three Bold Dances***, featuring George Balanchine's neoclassical ***Concerto Barocco***, Amy Seiwert's contemporary ***Renaissance***, and Stephen Mills' dive into existentialism in ***CARBON53***. March spotlights the **World Premiere of Stephen Mills' *POE / A Tale of Madness***, commissioned through the generosity of the Butler New Choreography Endowment. The season concludes over Mother's Day weekend with one of the most beloved classical ballets of all time, ***The Sleeping Beauty***. Season ticket packages are available now, followed by single ticket sales beginning **July 17**.

A CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED FAVORITE

The season begins in September with Stephen Mills' critically acclaimed production of ***Hamlet***, a contemporary, bold rendition of Shakespeare's timeless tale of revenge, grief, and love. Set to the richly textured music of American composer Philip Glass, Stephen Mills' ***Hamlet*** features costumes inspired by designer Giorgio Armani, visually arresting sets, and a gripping portrayal of one of the greatest tragedies of all time. Heralded by *Dance Magazine* as "...sleek and sophisticated..." ***Hamlet*** is one of Stephen Mills' most licensed and traveled works, performed both nationally and internationally.

AN ICONIC HOLIDAY TRADITION

From the twinkling lights, whirling snowflakes, and sparkling beauty of the exquisite sets and costumes comes the heart-warming story of young Clara and her nutcracker. Bringing the magic of the holiday season, the **61st Annual Production of *The Nutcracker*** remains Austin's longest-running live production. Experience the enchantment of the holiday season with this beloved and enduring story, featuring live accompaniment of Tchaikovsky's enchanting score performed by the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

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A BOLD TRIPLE-BILL

Three mesmerizing dance works come to the stage just in time for Valentine's Day in **Triad: Three Bold Dances**. The beauty of George Balanchine's neoclassical ballet, **Concerto Barocco**, combines with a contemporary work by choreographer Amy Seiwert, titled **Renaissance**, and the rich modernism of Stephen Mills' **CARBON53**.

Concerto Barocco was originally featured in New York City Ballet's inaugural performance in 1948. This neo-classical ballet from the George Balanchine Trust is considered a personification of Bach's music: "see the music, hear the dance." Following on her success from **HER STORIES**, choreographer Amy Seiwert returns with a thrilling Austin premiere, **Renaissance**. Set to the music of Kitka, a women's a cappella vocal ensemble, Seiwert's **Renaissance** explores music from Eastern European traditions, as it honors the strength of community and women standing together. **CARBON53** explores the concept of repetition, the "carbon copy." Set to music of contemporary composers Philip Glass and Steve Reich, Stephen Mills poses the question, "Are we not all carbon copies of our ancestors?"

SECOND WORK OF THE BUTLER NEW CHOREOGRAPHY ENDOWMENT

The Butler New Choreography Endowment, a transformational \$3 million gift from Sarah and Dr. Ernest Butler established in 2016, supports in perpetuity the creation of major dance works by Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin's Sarah & Ernest Butler Family Fund Artistic Director, and his successors. Following the unprecedented success of Stephen Mills' *Grimm Tales* in 2019, the first ballet commissioned by the Butler New Choreography Endowment in collaboration with nationally-acclaimed visual artist Natalie Frank, the 2023/24 season features the **World Premiere** of **POE / A Tale of Madness** as the second creation funded by this endowment.

Stephen Mills explores the haunted life and fascinating works of Edgar Allen Poe in this new dance work. With a newly commissioned score for full symphony orchestra by award-winning composer Graham Reynolds and libretto by Shawn Sides, co-producing artistic director of Rude Mechanicals, this new work will explore one of Mills' much-loved authors, bringing a sampling of Poe's masterpieces to life.

A BELOVED CLASSIC

To close the 2023/24 season, Ballet Austin awakens the beloved fairy tale of **The Sleeping Beauty** with four performances over Mother's Day weekend. Tchaikovsky's fabulous and familiar score comes to life in one of the most memorable classical ballets of all time, also featuring live accompaniment by the Austin Symphony Orchestra. Designed and constructed in England, this gorgeous production features exquisite sets, glittering costumes, and familiar storybook

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characters like Puss-in-Boots and Little Red Riding Hood. With romance, royalty, fairies, and more, Marius Petipa's enchanting ballet is a Mother's Day treat that is sure to be cherished.

2023/2024 Season

Stephen Mills' *Hamlet*

Dates | September 15-17, 2023

Concept & Choreography | Stephen Mills

Music | Philip Glass

The Nutcracker

61st Annual Production

Dates | December 2-23, 2023

Concept & Choreography | Stephen Mills

Music | Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Live Accompaniment | Austin Symphony Orchestra

TRIAD: Three Bold Dances

Dates | February 16-18, 2024

Choreography | George Balanchine, Amy Seiwert, Stephen Mills

Music | Johann Sebastian Bach (Balanchine), Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble (Seiwert), Steve Reich & Philip Glass (Mills)

Live Accompaniment | Austin Symphony Orchestra

Stephen Mills' *POE / A Tale of Madness*

Commissioned by the Butler New Choreography Endowment.

Dates | March 22-24, 2024

Concept & Choreography | Stephen Mills

Music | Graham Reynolds (commissioned)

Libretto | Shawn Sides

Live Accompaniment | Austin Symphony Orchestra

The Sleeping Beauty

Dates | May 10-12, 2024

Choreography | Marius Petipa

Music | Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Live Accompaniment | Austin Symphony Orchestra

TICKETS ON SALE

Season ticket packages are **on sale now**, with single ticket sales beginning **July 17th**. Visit balletaustin.org to reserve seats online, or contact Ballet Austin's Ticketing Services Team at

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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 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

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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.

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