

# SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## SMUIN CONTEMPORARY BALLET UNVEILS ORIGINAL WORKS BY COMPANY ARTISTS IN SMUIN'S CHOREOGRAPHY SHOWCASE

March 5 - 14, 2021

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (18 February 2021) — **Smuin Contemporary Ballet** continues its inspiring tradition of encouraging company dancers to explore their creativity in its *Choreography Showcase*, an opportunity for audiences to experience a treasure trove of stunning world premieres ranging from humorous to heartfelt. This season, eleven Smuin artists will step into the spotlight as dancemakers, creating fifteen original works that will be brought to life on stage by their fellow company members. Filmed on-location at the Smuin Center for Dance in San Francisco, the showcase will offer never-before-seen pieces in a variety of dance styles and musical selections, plus celebrated highlights from prior showcases, streamed directly to audiences at home. Each program will be followed by a virtual Q&A on Zoom, during which audience members can discuss the artistic process with each show's performers, choreographers, and Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille. Smuin's *Choreography Showcase* will stream online **March 5-14**. For tickets (\$25 single tickets or \$60 all-access pass to all nine performances) and more information, the public may visit [www.smuinballet.org](http://www.smuinballet.org).

Among the artists who will be setting new works on their fellow dancers: **Terez Dean Orr** and **John Speed Orr**, husband-and-wife duo whose shelter-at-home dance films were called "exuberant" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*; **Cassidy Isaacson**, who recently premiered "Loss" and "Chemistry" in Smuin's *Long disDANCE Love* program; and **Tessa Barbour**, who has created acclaimed works for Smuin's annual *The Christmas Ballet*. Also on the bill are works by Smuin artists **Ian Buchanan** and **Brennan Wall**, who premiered their first-ever choreographic pieces in Smuin's *Choreography Showcase* during its 2019-20 season, and exciting new works by dancers **Mengjun Chen**, **Maggie Carey**, **Ricardo Dyer**, **Tess Lane**, and **Max van der Sterre**.

## SMUIN CHOREOGRAPHY SHOWCASE

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Also on the program are eight revivals of pieces from prior choreography showcases, including ballets by talented company alumnae **Ben Needham-Wood**, an Emmy Award-winning choreographer for his documentary “BaseBallet: Into the Game”; **Nicole Haskins**, currently the Trainee Program Manager for Ballet Idaho; and **Rex Wheeler**, who has created works for organizations across the country, including *Sinfonietta* and *Take Five*, which premiered on Smuin’s mainstage.

Smuin artists will rehearse and perform in three safe social “pods,” dubbed Opal, Topaz, and Sapphire, performing as follows:

### **Opal**

*7:30pm, Friday, March 5*

*4pm, Sunday, March 7*

*4pm, Saturday, March 13*

The Opal pod features the Choreography Showcase debut of Smuin artists Terez Dean Orr, John Speed Orr, Tess Lane, and Max van der Sterre, all of whom will perform as dancers as well as choreographers. Each will create a new work, with Terez Dean Orr submitting two - both a duet and a group number. The new works will be complimented by celebrated highlights from past choreography showcases, including revivals of Nicole Haskins’ and Weston Krukow’s *Remember When* (2015), Jane Hope Rehm’s *Change Me None* (2012), and Rex Wheeler’s *Come-On-A-My-House* (2018). Each program will be followed by a virtual Q&A on Zoom, with the dancers and choreographers, and Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille.

### **Topaz**

*4pm, Saturday, March 6*

*7:30pm, Thursday, March 11*

*7:30pm, Saturday, March 13*

The Topaz pod includes Smuin dancers Cassidy Isaacson, Brennan Wall, Lauren Pschirrer, Mengjun Chen, and Brandon Alexander. Isaacson and Wall will each premiere two new works and a co-

## SMUIN CHOREOGRAPHY SHOWCASE

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creation. Chen makes his Choreography Showcase debut with a duet for Isaacson and Alexander. The program also includes a revival of Ben Needham-Wood's *Where They From?* (2016). Each program will be followed by a virtual Q&A on Zoom, with the dancers and choreographers, and Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille.

### **Sapphire**

7:30pm, Saturday, March 6

7:30pm, Friday, March 12

4pm, Sunday, March 14

Featuring Smuin artists Maggie Carey, Ian Buchanan, Tessa Barbour, and Ricardo Dyer, the Sapphire pod will showcase new works choreographed by all of its artists, including a tap duet for Carey and Dyer, created by Barbour. The program also includes three revivals: Barbour's *Letting Go* (2018), Darren Anderson's *Kiss-Kiss* (2014), and Nicole Haskins' *There's Rosemary* (2017). Each program will be followed by a virtual Q&A on Zoom, with the dancers and choreographers, and Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille.

### **ABOUT SMUIN**

For more than 25 years Smuin has pushed the boundaries of contemporary ballet by presenting works that engage and delight audiences with their uncommon physicality and expression. Founded in San Francisco in 1994 by Tony and Emmy award-winning choreographer Michael Smuin, the company is committed to creating work that merges the diverse vocabularies of classical ballet and contemporary dance. Since 2007, Artistic Director Celia Fushille has built on Michael Smuin's legacy by creating her own vision and expanding the company's repertoire. Fushille has invited numerous choreographers to create works that highlight the Smuin artists' extraordinary versatility, presenting pieces that are unique, joyful, athletic, and inventive. In 2008, Fushille formalized the tradition started by Smuin's founder of encouraging the creative voices of its dancers, by allowing time and resources to its artists to create the company's first-ever Choreography Showcase. Since then, the opportunity has repeated annually or biennially, and several of the works developed in the Showcase process have now seen mainstage premieres at Smuin.

### **For Calendar Editors**

**WHAT:** **Smuin Contemporary Ballet** continues its inspiring tradition of encouraging company dancers to explore their creativity in its *Choreography Showcase*, an

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opportunity for audiences to experience a treasure trove of stunning world premieres ranging from humorous to heartfelt. This season, eleven Smuin artists will step into the spotlight as dancemakers, creating original works that will be brought to life on stage by their fellow company members. Filmed on-location at the Smuin Center for Dance in San Francisco, the showcase will offer never-before-seen pieces in a variety of dance styles and musical selections, plus celebrated highlights from prior showcases, streamed directly to audiences at home. Each program will be followed by a virtual Q&A on Zoom, during which audience members can discuss the artistic process with each show's performers, choreographers, and Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille.

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$25 single tickets or \$60 all-access pass to all nine performances) and more information, the public may visit [www.smuinballet.org](http://www.smuinballet.org).

**WHEN:** **March 5-14, 2021**

### ***Opal***

*7:30pm, Fri, Mar 5*

*4pm, Sun, Mar 7*

*4pm, Sat, Mar 13*

### ***Topaz***

*4pm, Sat, Mar 6*

*7:30pm, Thurs, Mar 11*

*7:30pm, Sat, Mar 13*

### ***Sapphire***

*7:30pm, Sat, Mar 6*

*7:30pm, Fri, Mar 12*

*4pm, Sun, Mar 14*

**WHERE:** **Streaming online**

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**PRESS:** Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co.  
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**PHOTOS:** For high-res photos, please visit:  
<https://cbpr.co/press/smuinshowcase2021>