

SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**SMUIN'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREAT
"THE CHRISTMAS BALLET"
RETURNS TO STAGES, PERFORMING LIVE AROUND THE BAY**

**Shows in Walnut Creek, Mountain View, Carmel, and San Francisco
November 19-December 26, 2021**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (28 October 2021) — Smuin Contemporary Ballet announces its first live, in-theatre performances in nearly two years with the welcome return of *The Christmas Ballet*, a longtime Bay Area favorite heralding the holidays. Offering something for everyone, the joyous program features two acts packed to the brim with breathtaking classical ballet and festive contemporary numbers, set to holiday tunes and incorporating ballet, tap, jazz, and swing. Time-honored favorites will return, along with the unveiling of two new surprises choreographed by Smuin alumni Rex Wheeler and Emmy-winning dancemaker Ben Needham-Wood. The first act, Classical Christmas, features dancers costumed in snow-white ensembles performing flawless ballets celebrating the season. The Cool Christmas second act brings a red-hot costume change along with a medley of lively modern numbers, including the iconic "Santa Baby" featuring a 42-foot long feather boa. "Sheer joy...the finest toast to the season," declared the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The program will also be offered virtually—with an exclusive "Santa Baby" segment featuring archival footage of Artistic Director Celia Fushille—available from Thanksgiving through Christmas. *The Christmas Ballet* will tour the Bay Area, beginning with shows in Walnut Creek (November 19-20), continuing in Mountain View (December 2-5), Carmel (Dec 10-11), and wrapping up with San Francisco (December 16-26). Tickets for in-person performances (\$25-\$99) are available by calling the individual venues (*see below for details*) or visiting www.smuinballet.org. Streaming tickets (\$29) will be available in mid-November.

THE CHRISTMAS BALLET 2021 EDITION

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The Christmas Ballet premiered in 1995 and has long been a festive tradition for Bay Area dance lovers across the Bay Area. Along with a return to Michael Smuin’s original pieces, the company will unwrap new surprises from Smuin alumni Rex Wheeler and Emmy-winning dancemaker Ben Needham-Wood. This season’s edition of *The Christmas Ballet* also features the return of Smuin alum **Weston Krukow**, a dancer and Emmy Award-winning choreographer. Krukow will join the Company for its holiday program only, performing in all shows touring the Bay Area. Krukow spent his time post-Smuin on national and international tours of *An American in Paris* and has also led Broadway Jazz dance classes as part of Smuin’s virtual class program. “It will be a joy to have Wes on our stages once again. I’m delighted to welcome him back in Smuin’s long-awaited return to the theater!” said Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille.

The first act, Classical Christmas, will unveil “Excelsis,” a new trio from Smuin alum Rex Wheeler set to “Gloria in excelsis deo” by Vivaldi, as well as traditional favorites such as Michael Smuin’s “Bach Magnificat” and “Wassail.” A collaboration between Smuin artists Maggie Carey, Ian Buchanan, Max van der Sterre, and Tess Lane called “Winter Wonder” will also make its mainstage premiere after its creation last season, in which the piece was performed virtually for audiences.

The Cool Christmas second act features a spirited medley of contemporary festive numbers. Smuin alum and Emmy Award-winning choreographer Ben Needham-Wood will present an all-new swing duet, and former Smuin Choreographer-in-Residence Amy Seiwert will premiere “What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve?” on the mainstage, a piece that was also presented virtually in 2020. Among favorites returning to the stage are Smuin’s sultry “Christmas in New Orleans” and the spirited tap dance “Bells of Dublin,” as well as a charming sock-hop in “Winter Weather” and dancing conifers in “Droopy Little Christmas Tree.” Also on the bill is Smuin’s iconic “Santa Baby” featuring the “world’s longest feather boa.”

This year’s program will also be offered as a virtual on-demand streaming option available from Thanksgiving through Christmas. Additionally, the streaming version will offer an exclusive “Santa Baby” segment featuring archival footage of Artistic Director Celia Fushille in the role she originated.

THE CHRISTMAS BALLET 2021 EDITION
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ABOUT SMUIN

For more than 25 years Smuin has pushed the boundaries of contemporary ballet within a distinctly American style, engaging and delighting audiences with 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. Artistic Director since 2007, Celia Fushille has celebrated Michael Smuin's legacy while enriching the company's impressive repertoire by collaborating with inventive choreographers from around the world, commissioning world premieres, and bringing new contemporary choreographic voices to the Smuin stage.

Daily Newspaper sponsor for Smuin's 2021/2022 season is the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

For Calendar Editors:

WHAT: Smuin Contemporary Ballet announces its first live, in-theatre performances in 18 months with the welcome return of *The Christmas Ballet*, a longtime Bay Area favorite heralding the holidays. Offering something for everyone, the joyous program features two acts packed to the brim with breathtaking classical ballet and festive contemporary numbers, set to holiday tunes and incorporating ballet, tap, jazz, and swing. Time-honored favorites will return, along with the unveiling of two new surprises choreographed by Smuin alumni Rex Wheeler and Emmy-winning dancemaker Ben Needham-Wood. The first act, Classical Christmas, features dancers costumed in snow-white ensembles performing flawless ballets celebrating the season. The Cool Christmas second act brings a red-hot costume change along with a medley of lively modern numbers, including the iconic "Santa Baby" featuring a 42-foot long feather boa. The program will also be offered virtually—with an exclusive "Santa Baby" segment featuring archival footage of Artistic Director Celia Fushille—available from Thanksgiving through Christmas.

TICKETS: For single tickets to live performances (\$25-\$99) or more information, the public may call (415) 912-1899 or visit www.smuinballet.org. Streaming tickets (\$29) will be available in mid-November.

DATES & LOCATIONS:

THE CHRISTMAS BALLET 2021 EDITION
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<p>WALNUT CREEK: November 19-20, 2021 7:30pm Fri 2pm Sat</p>	<p>Lesher Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek (925) 943-7469 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$99)</p>
<p>MOUNTAIN VIEW: December 2-5, 2021 7:30pm Thurs 7:30pm Fri 2pm & 7:30 pm Sat 2pm Sun</p>	<p>Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts 500 Castro Street, Mountain View (650) 903-6000 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$99)</p>
<p>CARMEL: December 10-11, 2021 7:30pm Fri 2pm Sat</p>	<p>Sunset Center San Carlos Street at 9th Avenue, Carmel (831) 620-2048 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$67-\$87)</p>
<p>SAN FRANCISCO: December 16-26, 2021 7:30pm Thurs, Dec. 16 7:30pm Fri, Dec. 17 2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Dec. 18 2pm Sun, Dec. 19 7:30pm Tues, Dec. 21 2pm Wed, Dec. 22 2pm & 7:30pm Thurs, Dec. 23 2pm, Fri, Dec. 24 2pm Sun, Dec. 26</p>	<p>Yerba Buena Center for the Arts 700 Howard Street (415) 912-1899 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$99)</p>

Discounts available for students and groups of 10 or more.

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PRESS: Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Media may download high-res photos at <http://cbpr.co/press/smuinxmas21>