

SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SMUIN CONTEMPORARY BALLET ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF AMY SEIWERT AS NEW ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (5 April 2023) — San Francisco-based **Smuin Contemporary Ballet**, poised to celebrate its 30th Anniversary, has announced that **Amy Seiwert** will be joining leadership of the company next season as Associate Artistic Director. A Smuin alumna and one of the West Coast's most dynamic dancemakers working today, Seiwert will collaborate with Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille to develop and deliver Smuin's innovative programming, hone exciting new choreographic voices, and support the company's artists. As Associate Artistic Director, Seiwert will also oversee and facilitate day-to-day artistic operations while assisting Fushille in maintaining the company's vaunted production standards. Said Fushille, "We are thrilled to have Amy join us as Smuin's Associate Artistic Director next season. We've been wanting to grow our artistic team and Amy is uniquely suited; she knows the company, having worked directly with our founder Michael Smuin as a dancer and developing choreographer, and later as our Choreographer in Residence." Added Fushille, "Amy's skills and talents complement our plans for expansion, outreach and community engagement made possible by the recent acquisition of our permanent home. Her national reputation as a choreographer makes her an ideal candidate to be a part of Smuin's next 30 years. We welcome Amy back to her artistic home at Smuin."

Amy Seiwert enjoyed a 19-year performing career dancing with Smuin, the Los Angeles Chamber Ballet, and Sacramento Ballet. Says Seiwert, "When I moved to San Francisco in 1999 to join Smuin, I had no idea how much Michael Smuin and Celia Fushille would affect my life. As a choreographer, the doors Michael opened for me were instrumental. Celia continued that support when she named me Choreographer in Residence, upping my national profile as a dancemaker and offering me exponential growth with a creative home that allowed me to continually explore my craft with the exceptional Smuin artists. They both have greatly influenced who I am as an artist, and I am thrilled and honored to formally rejoin the Smuin Artistic Team."

Seiwert's first eight years dancing with the company were under Michael Smuin's leadership, who also encouraged her development as a choreographer. She created her first piece for Smuin, *Short Ride*, during its 10th anniversary season in 2003-2004. She danced one additional year under Artistic Director Celia Fushille, who then appointed Seiwert as Smuin's first Choreographer-in-Residence, a

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post she held from 2008 to 2018. Named one of “25 to Watch” by *Dance Magazine*, her first full evening of choreography was named one of the “Top 10” dance events of 2007 by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Other awards include a Bay Area Isadora Duncan Dance Award “IZZIE” for Outstanding Choreography and a “Goldie” from the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*. Among Seiwert’s works performed to acclaim by Smuin are *Dear Miss Cline* set to the music of Patsy Cline, *Falling Up*, *Renaissance*, *Been Through Diamonds*, *Broken Open*, *Objects of Curiosity*, *But now I must rest*, *The Melting*, *Revealing the Bridge*, *Soon These Two Worlds*, *Requiem*, and her latest World Premiere, to be unveiled in Smuin’s upcoming Dance Series 2 performing April 28 – May 28 in San Francisco, Walnut Creek, and Mountain View. Her signature choreography has been met with consistent acclaim, described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “keeping founder Michael Smuin’s legacy of unabashed showmanship alive.” *Dance Tabs* also noted, “Seiwert is known for crafting dance that investigates the possibilities within ballet vocabulary, often upending expectations of what ballet is or can be in the process.” The *Bay Guardian* declared “She is quite possibly the Bay Area’s most original dance thinker.”

Through her work as a choreographer, Seiwert has captured a reputation for pushing the boundaries of dance, collaborating with artists of other disciplines, and experimenting with dance in all its various forms and expressions from a classical base, making her an invaluable voice in the Bay Area dance community and throughout the country. While still a dancer, Seiwert received her first choreographic commission in 1999 from the Carolina Ballet. The same year, she competed in the Festival des Arts Choreography Competition and won, securing a residency for herself and her dancers the following summer. She continued to present choreography on a per-project basis until the premiere of “lessness” in 2004, when she formed her own company. Incorporated in 2011 as Amy Seiwert’s Imagery, this lively company has reflected Seiwert’s commitment to create and present work of excellence and influence, driving ballet’s evolution by nurturing environments for creative risk-taking, partnering with diverse collaborators, and mentoring emerging leaders in the field. In demand across the country, Seiwert was also an Artist in Residence at ODC Theater from 2013-15, the first National Artist in Residence with New York’s Joyce Theater in 2017, and was in residence at the Kennedy Center for the Arts in 2021. Her works have been performed in the repertoires of Smuin, ODC/Dance, AXIS, Ballet Austin, BalletX, BalletMet, Robert Moses’ KIN, Washington Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Oakland Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Colorado Ballet, Louisville Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Dayton Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet, among others

For nearly 30 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. Now at the helm of Smuin is Artistic Director Celia Fushille, who

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will be joined for the company's 2023-2024 season by Associate Artistic Director Amy Seiwert. Artistic Director since 2007, 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. The company will launch its 30th anniversary season in the fall of 2023, with programs touring to San Francisco, Mountain View, Walnut Creek, and Carmel. For more information, visit smuinballet.org.

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