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**SMUIN CONTEMPORARY BALLET**

**CELEBRATES THE SEASON WITH**

**“THE CHRISTMAS BALLET”**

**Shows in Walnut Creek, Carmel, Mountain View, and San Francisco**

**November 18 – December 24, 2023**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (30 October 2023) — Smuin’s joyful holiday tradition returns to spread yuletide cheer with its signature showcase of classical and contemporary dances set to delightfully festive tunes. Smuin’s ***The Christmas Ballet*** offers something for everyone: an elegant first act presenting beautiful classical ballet set to beloved carols, followed by the red-hot second act with joyful contemporary numbers set to pop favorites. With the surprise unwrapping of new treats each year, this celebratory medley incorporates a variety of dance styles including ballet, tap, jazz, swing, and more. Smuin’s holiday spectacular was declared “sheer joy…the finest toast to the season” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. This year’s edition will include world premieres by Smuin Associate Artistic Director Amy Seiwert and former Smuin artist Nicole Haskins. The LGBTQ+ Night performance of Smuin’s irrepressible holiday classic will also return December 19, hosted by Lady Camden of “RuPaul’s Drag Race” fame. **Smuin’s *The Christmas Ballet*** will tour the Bay Area, beginning with shows in Walnut Creek (November 18-19), continuing in Carmel (December 1-2) and Mountain View (December 7-10), and wrapping up with San Francisco (December 14-24). Tickets ($25-$119) are available by calling the individual venues *(see below for details)*or visiting [smuinballet.org](http://www.smuinballet.org/).

**Smuin’s *The Christmas Ballet*** premiered in 1995 and has long been a festive tradition for dance lovers across the Bay Area. Along with a return to Michael Smuin’s original pieces, the company will unwrap new surprises from Smuin Associate Artistic Director Amy Seiwert and Smuin alum Nicole Haskins. The first act, Classical Christmas, will unveil a new trio by Seiwert titled “Catalan Carol,” in addition to traditional favorites such as Michael Smuin’s “Bach Magnificat,” “Gloucestershire Wassail,” and “Licht bensh’n”. The Cool Christmas second act will feature the world premiere of “Ring Ting Tingling” by Haskins, as well as a spirited medley of contemporary festive numbers including Michael Smuin’s sultry “Christmas in New Orleans,” a tropical oasis in “Christmas Island,” and dancing conifers in “Droopy Little Christmas Tree.” And fans can rest easy, Smuin’s iconic “Santa Baby” featuring the “world’s longest feather boa” will be back.

The **LGBTQ+ Night** performance of Smuin’s irrepressible holiday classic on December 19 will be hosted by San Francisco drag queen Lady Camden, who rose to international acclaim following her appearance on season 14 of “RuPaul’s Drag Race.” The drag persona of former Smuin artist Rex Wheeler, Lady Camden returns to Smuin for a fabulous evening of fun twists and surprises, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting local non-profit organizations. An afterparty hosted by Lady Camden will follow the performance.

**ABOUT SMUIN**

For 30 years Smuin has pushed the boundaries of contemporary ballet, incorporating diverse dance styles and musical genres. Smuin creates art that is original and evocative, engaging and delighting audiences with works of 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. At the conclusion of the 2023-2024 season, Fushille will step away from her role as Artistic Director and Seiwert will continue to lead Smuin in bold and creative ways for the next decade and beyond. For more information, visit smuinballet.org.

Daily Newspaper sponsor for Smuin’s 2023/2024 season is the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

**For Calendar Editors**

**WHAT:** Smuin’s joyful holiday tradition returns to spread yuletide cheer with its signature showcase of classical and contemporary dances set to delightfully festive tunes. Smuin’s ***The Christmas Ballet*** offers something for everyone: an elegant first act presenting beautiful classical ballet set to beloved carols, followed by the red-hot second act with joyful contemporary numbers set to pop favorites. With the surprise unwrapping of new treats each year, this celebratory medley incorporates a variety of dance styles including ballet, tap, jazz, swing, and more. Smuin’s holiday spectacular was declared “sheer joy…the finest toast to the season” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. This year’s edition will include world premieres by Smuin Associate Artistic Director Amy Seiwert and former Smuin artist Nicole Haskins. The LGBTQ+ Night performance of Smuin’s irrepressible holiday classic will also return December 19, hosted by Lady Camden of “RuPaul’s Drag Race” fame.

**DATES & LOCATIONS:**

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| **WALNUT CREEK:**  **November 18-19, 2023**  2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Nov. 18  2pm Sun, Nov. 19 | Lesher Center for the Arts  1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek  (925) 943-7469 or www.smuinballet.org  Tickets ($25-$99) |
| **CARMEL:**  **December 1-2, 2023**  7:30pm Fri, Dec. 1  2pm Sat, Dec. 2 | Sunset Center  San Carlos Street at 9th Avenue, Carmel  (831) 620-2048 or www.smuinballet.org  Tickets ($25-$99) |
| **MOUNTAIN VIEW:**  **December 7-10, 2023**  7:30pm Thurs, Dec. 7 7:30pm Fri, Dec. 8  2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Dec. 9  2pm Sun, Dec. 10 | Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts  500 Castro Street, Mountain View  (650) 903-6000 or www.smuinballet.org  Tickets ($25-$109) |
| **SAN FRANCISCO:**  **December 14-24, 2023**  7:30pm Thurs, Dec. 14  7:30pm Fri, Dec. 15  2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Dec. 16  2pm Sun, Dec. 17  7:30pm Tues, Dec. 19 *(LGBTQ+ Night)*  2pm Wed, Dec. 20  7:30pm Thurs, Dec. 21  7:30pm Fri, Dec. 22  2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Dec. 23  2pm Sun, Dec. 24 | Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA  700 Howard Street, San Francisco  (415) 912-1899 or www.smuinballet.org  Tickets ($25-$119) |

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 <https://cbpr.co/press/smuinxmas23>