

SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SMUIN'S ANNUAL GALA CELEBRATES 30TH SEASON, HONORS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CELIA FUSHILLE

The St. Regis San Francisco
Sunday, March 3, 2024

Plus pre-event "After Hours" for young professionals
Smuin Center for Dance, February 17, 2024

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (31 January 2024) — **Smuin Contemporary Ballet** celebrates its 30th anniversary season with **Smuin's Annual Gala**, hosted by co-chairs **John Konstin** and **Lee D. Baxter** along with Smuin's Board of Trustees and Friends of Smuin host committee. Arts, community, philanthropic, and civic leaders of San Francisco will mingle with Smuin artistic staff and dancers at this grand celebration honoring three decades at the forefront of contemporary ballet. This year's gala will also honor Smuin Artistic Director **Celia Fushille** and her achievements over her 30-year tenure with the company. Beginning with a cocktail reception, the evening will include a gourmet dinner, dessert, and dancing. Guests will also enjoy a thrilling live auction featuring one-of-a-kind gifts and experiences, including an exclusive walk-on role in Smuin's annual "The Christmas Ballet" production. This year's gala will take place following the final performance of "Celebrating Michael Smuin," 2pm, Sunday, March 3, at the Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA. This special added program for the 2023/24 season, dedicated to the company's dynamic late founder, features his swashbuckling story ballet *Zorro!* and Frank Sinatra tribute *Fly Me to the Moon*. All gala attendees will receive premium seating at this performance with their ticket and table purchases. A pre-party for young professionals will also be hosted at the Smuin Center for Dance (*full details below*). **Smuin's Annual Gala** takes place **4:30pm, Sunday, March 3, 2024** at **The St. Regis**, 125 Third Street, San Francisco. For tickets (\$750 - \$1,500 per person, \$7,500 - \$30,000 per table) and more information, the public may contact Smuin at **(415) 556-5000 x100** or visit bit.ly/smuingala2024.

The 2024 edition of Smuin's Annual Gala will honor Artistic Director **Celia Fushille**, recognizing an incredible milestone of thirty years with the company. A founding member of Smuin and its principal dancer for more than 12 years, Fushille has served as Artistic Director of Smuin Contemporary Ballet since 2007. Michael Smuin's singular philosophy to create pieces that merge the diverse vocabularies of classical ballet and contemporary dance has driven the company since its inception in 1994. Building on that foundation, Fushille added her voice to Michael's, creating a unique legacy during her 17-year tenure at the helm. She commissioned over 20 world premieres and curated contemporary classics of renowned choreographers. By expanding the company's repertoire, she ensured that Smuin Contemporary Ballet was at the forefront of creating entertaining, evocative, and original art. She has crafted a vision for the company that stands singular in the field. After completing three decades with Smuin, Fushille will step away as Artistic Director at the conclusion of this season in June 2024.

Live auction items will include rare and memorable experiences including an opportunity to join Smuin in New York (airfare and accommodations included) during its upcoming appearance at The Joyce Theater. A favorite year after year, delectable cakes baked by Smuin artists will also be auctioned off to a lucky few in the audience. Funds raised at **Smuin's Annual Gala** will support the Company in staging its innovative productions around the Bay Area, ensuring the company's productions maintain the signature Smuin sparkle audiences know and love as the company continues to excel in combining classical ballet artistry with the athleticism of contemporary dance.

Smuin will also host an **After Hours** pre-party at its headquarters, an opportunity for Bay Area young professionals who share an interest in ballet to mingle with Smuin's artists and celebrate the company's season. Guests will enjoy small bites from Chicks & Love Pizza and Doodlecakes Bakery while indulging in craft libations from the open bar hosted by Stookey's Club Moderne, before dancing the night away to a playlist curated by company dancers. Smuin's **After Hours** party will be held **7pm, Saturday, February 17** at the **Smuin Center for Dance**, 1830 17th St, San Francisco. For tickets (\$75, \$125) and more information, the public may visit afterhours24.givesmart.com.

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 Associate Artistic Director Amy 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 Contemporary Ballet** celebrates its 30th anniversary season with **Smuin's Annual Gala**, hosted by co-chairs **John Konstin** and **Lee D. Baxter** along with Smuin's Board of Trustees and Friends of Smuin host committee. Arts, community, philanthropic, and civic leaders of San Francisco will mingle with Smuin artistic staff and dancers at this grand celebration honoring three decades at the forefront of contemporary ballet. This year's gala will also honor Smuin Artistic Director **Celia Fushille** and her achievements over her 30-year tenure with the company. Beginning with a cocktail reception, the evening will include a gourmet dinner, dessert, and dancing. Guests will also enjoy a thrilling live auction featuring one-of-a-kind gifts and experiences. This year's gala will take place following the final performance of "Celebrating Michael Smuin," 2pm, Sunday, March 3, at the Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA. This special added program for the 2023/24 season, dedicated to the company's dynamic late founder, features his swashbuckling story ballet *Zorro!* and Frank Sinatra tribute *Fly Me to the Moon*. All gala attendees will receive premium seating for this performance. A pre-party for young professionals will also be hosted at the Smuin Center for Dance on February 17.

WHEN: **Annual Gala:** 4:30pm, Sunday, March 3, 2024
After Hours Party: 7pm, Saturday, February 17, 2024

WHERE: **Annual Gala:** The St. Regis, 125 Third Street, San Francisco
After Hours Party: Smuin Center for Dance, 1830 17th St, San Francisco

TICKETS: Annual Gala:
Tables of 10: \$30,000, \$15,000, \$12,500, \$10,000, \$7,500
Individual tickets: \$1,500, \$1,250, \$1,000, \$750

For more information on sponsorship opportunities, ticket and table purchases, please contact Alicia Tos, Director of Development, at 415-556-5000 x100 or atos@smuinballet.org, or visit bit.ly/smuingala2024.

After Hours Party: \$75, \$125
For tickets and more information, the public may visit afterhours24.givesmart.com.

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PHOTOS: Media may download high-res photos at:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/smuingala2024/>