



SMUIN CONTEMPORARY BALLET
CONCLUDES 30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH
“DANCE SERIES 2”

FEATURING ELVIS-INSPIRED “TUPELO TORNADO,” A WORLD
PREMIERE BY ANNABELLE LOPEZ OCHOA,
PLUS AMY SEIWERT’S “BROKEN OPEN,” MORE

Shows in San Francisco, Mountain View, Walnut Creek, and Carmel
May 3 – 31, 2024

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (18 March 2023) — **Smuin Contemporary Ballet** concludes its 30th season with *Dance Series 2* this spring, headlined by the World Premiere of the Elvis-inspired *Tupelo Tornado* from international superstar **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa**. This extraordinary new ballet inspired by the life and music of Elvis promises a rollicking work set to a collage of tunes and soundbites from the King of Rock and Roll. Also on the bill is Smuin Associate Artistic Director **Amy Seiwert**’s *Broken Open*, set to a lush score from renowned cellist and composer **Julia Kent**. Kent, who creates music using looped cello, found sounds, and electronics, will perform live at opening weekend performances of *Dance Series 2* in San Francisco. Rounding out the program is Smuin dancer **Brennan Wall**’s vivid and complex *Untwine* set to Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons” reinterpreted by Max Richter, and **Michael Smuin**’s dreamy *Starshadows*, exploring the mystery and beauty of intimate relationships. Smuin’s *Dance Series 2* will tour the Bay Area May 3-31, beginning with shows in San Francisco (May 3-12), continuing in Mountain View (May 16-19) and Walnut Creek (May 24-25), before wrapping up in Carmel (May 30-31). For tickets (\$25-\$89) or more information, the public may call **415-912-1899** or visit smuinballet.org.

Annabelle Lopez Ochoa returns to Smuin for its thrilling season finale, taking on the life and music of Elvis Presley in *Tupelo Tornado*, her first creation for the company. Lopez Ochoa’s profile has continued to skyrocket since Smuin introduced Bay Area audiences to the Colombian-Belgian dancemaker in 2017 with the West Coast Premiere of her critically acclaimed *Requiem for a Rose*, called “Intriguing. Brilliant. A meditation on the nature of love,” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. A globally renowned choreographer who also creates for theatre, opera, and fashion events, Lopez Ochoa has choreographed works for more than 40 dance companies around the world including Dutch National Ballet, Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, The Royal Ballet of Flanders, Ballet National de Marseille, Ballet Hispánico, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ballet Nacional de Cuba, and New York City Ballet, among others.

Revived for *Dance Series 2* is **Amy Seiwert**’s *Broken Open*, which the *San Francisco Chronicle* called “fresh, challenging, and relevant” and “endlessly inventive, fascinating” following its world premiere with Smuin in fall 2015. Seiwert drew inspiration for *Broken Open* from the

Kunsthaus Tacheles in East Berlin, a building where artists sought shelter after the Berlin Wall came down. A place with a grim history, it became a vibrant hub for beauty and expression, representing the idea of “something beautiful born from a scar.” Clad in graffiti stenciled costumes, Smuin dancers bring to life this emotionally stirring work that captures the power of art to transform and heal. A former Smuin dancer, Seiwert was appointed by Smuin Artistic Director Celia Fushille as the company’s first choreographer-in-residence, a post she held from 2008 to 2018. In April 2023, Seiwert was named Smuin’s Associate Artistic Director. She has been named one of “25 to Watch” by *Dance* magazine, and 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.” *Broken Open* is set to a new age score by world-renowned cellist and composer **Julia Kent**, who creates music using looped cello, found sounds, and electronics. Kent will perform live during performances of *Broken Open* during the opening weekend of *Dance Series 2* (see below for details). In addition to several solo albums, Kent has composed several original film scores and music for theatre and dance performances.

Also on the bill is Smuin dancer **Brennan Wall**’s *Untwine* for four couples, set to Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons” reinterpreted by Max Richter. Originally presented in Smuin’s 2021 Choreography Showcase, *Untwine* was expanded from a contemporary pas de deux for its World Premiere on the company’s mainstage in 2022. Wall’s choreography debut was praised by *Critical Dance* for its “myriad of inventive spins,” while *San Francisco Chronicle* called it a “spiraling force of torque.” Wall joined Smuin in 2019 and has performed in various works with the ballet company including the iconic *Santa Baby* role in Smuin’s *The Christmas Ballet*. She studied at Los Angeles Ballet Academy and previously danced with Silicon Valley Ballet as a trainee before joining The New Ballet’s Studio Company. In 2017, Wall joined Ballet de Monterrey under director José Manuel Carreño. She performed in Luis Serrano’s *La Bayadere*, *Swan Lake*, and *Don Quijote*, and danced soloist roles in *The Nutcracker*, Alberto Méndez’s *Phantom of the Opera*, and Diego Landin’s *Shorthand of Emotion*. Closing the 30th season finale is **Michael Smuin**’s dreamy *Starshadows*, one of his earliest works for the company. Choreographed in 1998, *Starshadows* is an evocative adagio set to Ravel’s “Piano Concerto in G Major” for three couples who dance against an inky backdrop punctuated by stars, spotlights, and swirling mist as it explores the mystery and beauty of intimate relationships.

ABOUT SMUIN

For 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. 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 down from her role as Artistic Director. Taking her place will be Amy Seiwert, who has been appointed to take the helm and continue leading Smuin in bold and creative ways.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Smuin Contemporary Ballet** concludes its 30th season with *Dance Series 2* this spring, headlined by the World Premiere of the Elvis-inspired *Tupelo Tornado* from international superstar **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa**. This extraordinary new ballet inspired by the life and music of Elvis promises a rollicking work set to a collage of tunes and soundbites from the King of Rock and Roll. Also on the bill is Smuin Associate Artistic Director **Amy Seiwert**'s *Broken Open*, set to a lush score from renowned cellist and composer **Julia Kent**. Kent, who creates music using looped cello, found sounds, and electronics, will perform live at opening weekend performances of *Dance Series 2* in San Francisco. Rounding out the program is Smuin dancer **Brennan Wall**'s vivid and complex *Untwine* set to Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" reinterpreted by Max Richter, and **Michael Smuin**'s dreamy *Starshadows*, exploring the mystery and beauty of intimate relationships.

TICKETS: For tickets (\$25-\$89) or more information, the public may call 415-912-1899 or visit smuinballet.org.

DATES & LOCATIONS:

<p>SAN FRANCISCO: May 3-12, 2024 7:30pm Friday, May 3* 2pm & 7:30pm Saturday, May 4* 2pm Sunday, May 5* 7:30pm Thursday, May 9 7:30pm Friday, May 10 2pm & 7:30pm Saturday, May 11 2pm Sunday, May 12</p> <p><i>*Julia Kent will perform live at these performances</i></p>	<p>Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA 700 Howard St., San Francisco (415) 912-1899 or smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$89)</p>
<p>MOUNTAIN VIEW: May 16-19, 2024 7:30pm Thursday, May 16 7:30pm Friday, May 17 2pm & 7:30pm Saturday, May 18 2pm Sunday, May 19</p>	<p>Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts 500 Castro Street, Mountain View (650) 903-6000 or smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$84)</p>
<p>WALNUT CREEK: May 24-25, 2024 7:30pm Friday, May 24 2:00pm Saturday, May 25</p>	<p>Leshner Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek (925) 943-7469 or smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$84)</p>

CARMEL May 30-31, 2024 7:30pm Thursday, May 30 7:30pm Friday, May 31	Sunset Center San Carlos Street at 9th Ave., Carmel 831-620-2048 or smuinballet.org Tickets (\$59-\$79)
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Discounts available for students and groups of 10 or more.

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PHOTOS: Media may download high-res photos at <https://cbpr.co/press/30danceseries2>