

# SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## SMUIN ANNOUNCES 2024/25 SEASON

FEATURING WORLD PREMIERES BY JENNIFER ARCHIBALD AND  
AMY SEIWERT, THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF MATTHEW NEENAN'S  
*THE LAST GLASS*, WORKS BY TREY MCINTYRE AND MORE

Performances September 13, 2024, to June 8, 2025,  
in San Francisco, Walnut Creek, Mountain View, and Carmel

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (30 April 2024) — **Smuin Contemporary Ballet** has announced a sensational lineup for its 31st season, co-curated by departing Smuin Artistic Director **Celia Fushille** in concert with incoming Artistic Director **Amy Seiwert**, who will take the helm in July. Highlights of the season include a World Premiere by nationally acclaimed choreographer **Jennifer Archibald**. The spring will bring another thrilling World Premiere, choreographed by Seiwert, and her first as Smuin's Artistic Director. The company will also present irresistible pop ballets by two of the hottest names in choreography: the Bay Area Premiere of **Matthew Neenan's** *The Last Glass*, with a soundtrack by indie-rock band Beirut; and **Trey McIntyre's** *Wild Sweet Love*, an ode to the ups and downs of love set to a range of music from Mendelssohn to Queen. Additional works announced for the season include the return of Seiwert's powerful *Renaissance* danced to the music of Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble, **Michael Smuin's** sensuous *The Eternal Idol*, and **Rex Wheeler's** spirited *Sinfonietta*. **Smuin's** *The Christmas Ballet*, a beloved Bay Area tradition, returns during the holiday season to spread cheer with its signature mixed repertoire of classical ballet and contemporary dance. Smuin's programs will be presented from September 13, 2024, through June 8, 2025 in San Francisco, Walnut Creek, Mountain View, and Carmel. For subscriptions (\$96-\$240) or more information, the public may call (415) 912-1899 or visit [www.smuinballet.org](http://www.smuinballet.org). Single tickets (\$25-\$119) will be available in August.

Smuin's 2024/25 season will honor the past and embrace the future, featuring choreographers selected for their singular creative voices, speaking the language of ballet in their own unique ways. This quality, says Seiwert, is "essential to the evolution of the art form. Sharing in the spirit of the works created by our founder, Michael Smuin, these artists create work that reflects and connects to contemporary sensibilities." The company's repertoire continues to push the boundaries of ballet with a vision to innovate.

In chronological order, the 2024/25 season programming is as follows:

### Dance Series 1

**World Premiere** by Jennifer Archibald

*The Last Glass* by Matthew Neenan, set to music by Beirut

*Renaissance* by Amy Seiwert, set to recordings by Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble

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In its thrilling season opener, Smuin introduces its audiences to two renowned choreographers. Globally in-demand dancemaker Jennifer Archibald will create a World Premiere in her first project with Smuin. Archibald, the founder and Artistic Director of the Arch Dance Company and Program Director of ArchCore40 Dance Intensives, was appointed as the first female Resident Choreographer in Cincinnati Ballet's 40-year history. She has choreographed for the Ailey II, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet West, Grand Rapids Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, and BalletX, among others. Matthew Neenan, declared "one of the most appealing and singular choreographic voices in ballet today" by *The New York Times*, will also make his Smuin debut in *Dance Series I*. His character-driven *The Last Glass*, a theatrical work set to intensely lyrical music by the indie-rock band Beirut, will showcase the stunning versatility of Smuin's artists. Neenan is the co-founder of BalletX, the resident dance company of the Wilma Theater and one of the nation's preeminent contemporary ballet companies. His award-winning choreography has been featured and performed by companies across the country, as well as internationally in Cali, Colombia and Seoul, Korea. Rounding out the program is Amy Seiwert's *Renaissance*, which will return to the Bay Area following its New York premiere at The Joyce Theater in July. This striking work is complemented by an empowering a cappella soundtrack by Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble, the acclaimed Oakland-based group specializing in the techniques of traditional and contemporary Balkan, Slavic, and Caucasian vocal styling. Inspired by the 2019 Women's Wall protest in India, one of the largest gender equity protests in history, the piece was warmly greeted by critics. The *San Francisco Chronicle* described *Renaissance* as "a wonderfully liquid" new work that "showed off the dancers' athleticism, lyrical grace, expressiveness and ensemble cohesion," hailing the piece as "Dynamic. Inventive, sinuous. Renaissance has a certain grave and timeless feel to it."

### **Dates/Locations**

**September 13-15, 2024:** Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View

**September 27-28, 2024:** Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek

**October 11-20, 2024:** Cowell Theater, 2 Marina Blvd., San Francisco

## **Smuin's The Christmas Ballet**

Choreography by Michael Smuin and guest choreographers

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*. The LGBTQ+ Night performance of Smuin's irrepressible holiday classic will also return December 20, featuring fun twists and a special guest appearance by Lady Camden (of "RuPaul's Drag Race"), with a portion of the proceeds benefiting local non-profit organizations.

### **Dates/Locations for Smuin's The Christmas Ballet**

**November 23-24, 2024:** Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek

**December 5-8, 2024:** Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View

**December 13-24, 2024:** Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA, 700 Howard St., San Francisco

## Choreography Showcase

Smuin continues its inspiring tradition of encouraging company dancers to explore their creativity in its *Choreography Showcase*, an opportunity for audiences to experience a treasure trove of stunning world premieres ranging from humorous to heartfelt. Inspired by Michael Smuin's commitment to developing choreographic talent from within the company, the *Choreography Showcase* provides the time, space, and dancers for Smuin artists to dive deeper into their choreographic passions, opening the door for artistic growth across the field. Due to popular demand, the showcase will be presented over two weekends for the very first time, in the intimate setting of Smuin's home base in Potrero Hill.

### Dates/Locations for Smuin's Choreography Showcase

**February 14-23, 2025:** Smuin Center for Dance, 1830 17 St, San Francisco

## Dance Series 2

**World Premiere** by Amy Seiwert

*Wild Sweet Love* by Trey McIntyre, set to a medley of pop tunes

*Eternal Idol* by Michael Smuin, set to Chopin's F Minor Piano Concerto

*Sinfonietta* by Rex Wheeler, set to Boris Tchaikovsky

Smuin's 2024/25 season finale will be defined by new premieres and treasured favorites. Artistic Director Amy Seiwert creates a World Premiere, her first at the helm of Smuin, and her 13th ballet for the company. Trey McIntyre returns to Smuin with the Bay Area premiere of *Wild Sweet Love*, a vivid work set to a medley of popular artists including Queen, The Zombies, and The Partridge Family. Hailed by *The New York Times* as "one of the most important choreographers working today," McIntyre's works have long been favorites in Smuin's repertory. The company has commissioned two works from McIntyre including the hit *Oh, Inverted World*, and groovy Summer of Love celebration *Be Here Now*. Smuin has also presented two of McIntyre's other works: *The Naughty Boy* and *Blue Until June*. Completing the program is a pair of favorites: Michael Smuin's Rodin-inspired *The Eternal Idol*, originally choreographed for American Ballet Theatre superstars Cynthia Gregory and Ivan Nagy in 1969, and Smuin alum Rex Wheeler's sprightly *Sinfonietta*. Smuin's *The Eternal Idol*, a sensuous pas de deux set to the slow movement of Chopin's F Minor Piano Concerto, is a wistful imagining of Auguste Rodin's sculptures of "The Kiss" and "The Eternal Idol." Meanwhile, Wheeler's *Sinfonietta* is a cheerful neoclassical ballet for five couples, set to the playful arrangement for strings of the same name by Boris Tchaikovsky. Originally from London, Wheeler is a multi-faceted drag performer, actor, producer, and choreographer. His drag alter ego, Lady Camden, was a fan favorite and the runner up on Season 14 of "RuPaul's Drag Race." Wheeler has since performed all over the world and continues to choreograph and produce performances and events as both Rex and Lady Camden.

### Dates/Locations for Smuin's Dance Series 2

**April 25 - May 4, 2025:** Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA, 700 Howard St., San Francisco

**May 23-24, 2025:** Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek

**May 29 - June 1, 2025:** Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View

**June 7-8, 2025:** Sunset Center, San Carlos Street at 9th Ave., Carmel-by-the-Sea

## ABOUT SMUIN

For more than 30 years Smuin has expanded the boundaries of contemporary ballet, engaging and delighting audiences with uncommon physicality and expression. Founded in San Francisco in 1994 by

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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. As Artistic Director since 2007, Celia Fushille has maintained 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. For the company's 2023/24 season, Amy Seiwert joined Fushille as the company's new Associate Artistic Director. At the conclusion of the 2023-2024 season, Fushille will step away from her role, becoming Artistic Director Emerita, and Seiwert will continue to lead Smuin in bold and creative ways for the next decade and beyond.

*All programs are subject to change.*

## FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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**PHOTOS:** For high-res photos, please visit: <https://cbpr.co/press/smuin24-25/>