

SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

AMY SEIWERT / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SMUIN CONTEMPORARY BALLET CELEBRATES THE SEASON WITH “THE CHRISTMAS BALLET”

**Shows in Walnut Creek, Mountain View, and San Francisco
November 23 – December 24, 2024**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (24 October 2024) — Smuin’s joyful holiday tradition returns to “Drive the Grinches away!” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). A seasonal delight, *The Christmas Ballet* spreads yuletide cheer with its signature showcase of classical and contemporary dances set to delightfully festive tunes. With the surprise unwrapping of new treats each year, this celebratory medley incorporates a variety of dance styles including ballet, jazz, swing, and more. *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. Smuin’s holiday spectacular was declared “A treat from start to finish” by *SFGate* and “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. **Smuin’s *The Christmas Ballet*** will tour the Bay Area, beginning with shows in Walnut Creek (November 23-24), continuing in Mountain View (December 5-8), and wrapping up with San Francisco (December 13-24). Tickets (\$25-\$119) are available by calling the individual venues (*see below for details*) or visiting 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 Artistic Director Amy Seiwert, company artist Brennan Wall, and Smuin alum Rex Wheeler. The first act, Classical Christmas, will unveil a world premiere by Seiwert, in addition to traditional favorites such as Michael Smuin’s “Bach Magnificat,”

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“Gloucestershire Wassail,” and “Licht bensch’n”. The Cool Christmas second act will feature the premieres of Wall’s “Last Christmas” and Wheeler’s “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” as well as a spirited medley of contemporary festive numbers including Michael Smuin’s tropical “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. Critics and audiences alike have cheered the playful program, calling it “Sharply danced with a side of silly,” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) and “Top-notch. Enchanting.” (*San Francisco Examiner*)

The **LGBTQ+ Night** performance of Smuin’s irrepressible holiday classic on December 20 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 company 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.

Smuin will host a pre-show talk at 1:15pm prior to the Saturday matinees at each venue. Led by the company’s artistic staff, audiences will enjoy insights into the program and creative process behind the ballets. Smuin will also provide accessibility offerings for *The Christmas Ballet* including an ASL-interpreted performance (7:30pm, Saturday, December 21), a pre-show haptic tour (12:45-1:00 pm, Wednesday, December 18), and performance with audio description (2:00pm, Wednesday, December 18). For more information, visit smuinballet.org.

ABOUT SMUIN

Smuin Contemporary Ballet thrives on diverse views and dance styles to create art that is original, evocative, and entertaining. Founded in San Francisco in 1994 by Tony and Emmy Award-winning choreographer Michael Smuin, the company is committed to sharing its passion for dance through performances, classes, and community engagement. From 2007-2024, Artistic Director Emerita Celia Fushille sustained Michael Smuin’s legacy while enriching the company’s repertoire by collaborating with choreographers from around the world, commissioning world premieres, and

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bringing new choreographic voices to the Smuin stage. Now at the helm, Artistic Director Amy Seiwert continues to lead Smuin in bold and creative ways.

Daily Newspaper sponsor for Smuin’s 2024/2025 season is the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

For Calendar Editors

WHAT: Smuin’s joyful holiday tradition returns to “Drive the Grinches away!” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). A seasonal delight, ***The Christmas Ballet*** spreads yuletide cheer with its signature showcase of classical and contemporary dances set to delightfully festive tunes. With the surprise unwrapping of new treats each year, this celebratory medley incorporates a variety of dance styles including ballet, jazz, swing, and more. ***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. Smuin’s holiday spectacular was declared “Sheer joy...the finest toast to the season” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and “A treat from start to finish” by *SFGate*. The LGBTQ+ Night performance of Smuin’s irreplaceable 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:

WALNUT CREEK: November 23-24, 2024 2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Nov. 23 2pm Sun, Nov. 24	Leshar Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek (925) 943-7469 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$30-\$105)
MOUNTAIN VIEW: December 5-8, 2024 7:30pm Thurs, Dec. 5 7:30pm Fri, Dec. 6 2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Dec. 7 2pm Sun, Dec. 8	Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts 500 Castro Street, Mountain View (650) 903-6000 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$31-\$104)

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SAN FRANCISCO: December 13-24, 2024 7:30pm Fri, Dec. 13 2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Dec. 14 2pm Sun, Dec. 15 2pm & 7:30pm Wed, Dec. 18 7:30pm Fri, Dec. 20 (<i>LGBTQ+ Night</i>) 2pm & 7:30pm Sat, Dec. 21 2pm Sun, Dec. 22 2pm Mon, Dec. 23 2pm Tues, Dec. 24	Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA 700 Howard Street, San Francisco (415) 912-1899 or www.smuinballet.org Tickets (\$25-\$119)
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Discounts available for students and groups of 10 or more.

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PRESS: Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co.
650-687-7830 | steph@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Media may download high-res photos at <https://cbpr.co/press/smuinxmas24/>