

# SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

AMY SEIWERT / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## TEN WORLD PREMIERES UNVEILED IN SMUIN'S CHOREOGRAPHY SHOWCASE LONGTIME COMPANY TRADITION AIMS TO FOSTER NEXT GENERATION OF CREATIVE LEADERS

February 14-23, 2025

San Francisco, CA (17 January 2025) – **Smuin Contemporary Ballet's Choreography Showcase** continues its tradition of supporting company artists in exploring their creative voices. This thrilling opportunity for audiences to experience never-before-seen world premieres by first-time and rising dancemakers was inspired by founder Michael Smuin's commitment to developing choreographic talent. The premieres unveiled in the Choreography Showcase range from humorous to heartfelt, featuring a variety of dance styles and musical selections. The ten Smuin artists who will set new works on their fellow dancers include: AL Abraham, Tessa Barbour, Jacopo Calvo, Maggie Carey, Julia Gundzik, Cassidy Isaacson, Marc LaPierre, Shania Rasmussen, Yuri Rogers, and Brennan Wall. Presented at the Smuin Center for Dance, these intimate performances will provide audiences with an invaluable glimpse at the rising choreographic voices within the company. "Choreography is a honed skill that takes practice, mentorship, and training," says Smuin Artistic Director Amy Seiwert, now a nationally acclaimed choreographer, as well as a former dancer. "Creating dance requires resources that aren't always easy to access, such as skilled dancers and a dedicated space. Opportunities are rare in the ballet field but so important in fostering the next generation of creative leaders." Smuin will also host pre-show talks and post-show Q&As, in which audiences will enjoy insights into the program and creative process behind the ballets (*see schedule below*). Smuin's **Choreography Showcase** will be presented **February 14-23** at the **Smuin Center for Dance**, 1830 17th Street, San Francisco. Tickets (\$35-\$55) and information are available at [smuinballet.org](http://smuinballet.org) or by calling (415) 912-1899.

Smuin's **Choreography Showcase** is an initiative that puts the artistic reins into the hands of its dancers, providing them with the time, space, and talent to develop their choreographic skills. Artistic Director Emerita Celia Fushille formalized the tradition by launching the company's first-ever Showcase in 2008. Since then, the opportunity has repeated annually or biennially, with several of the works developed in the Showcase process adapted for mainstage premieres at Smuin. Experiences such as these are uncommon, particularly in the field of ballet, as they are logistically and financially difficult to organize. Smuin's Choreography Showcase is open to any company artist, many of whom are often choreographing for the very first time. For others, it is a chance to dive deeper into their developing choreographic passions. The dancer, now in the choreographer role, has the responsibility not just of finding music and creating the steps, but also managing schedules and their peers, communicating their vision, and coaching it through to fruition. They also learn to collaborate on lighting, stagecraft, and costumes. Though some dancers discover they prefer performing to choreographing, they still benefit from a changed perspective. "We are investing in our dancers to become stronger collaborators," says

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Seiwert. “The experience is incredibly valuable as they gain an understanding of what it takes to create a piece, and strengthens their skill set as a dancer working on premieres by other creators.” Seiwert hopes to continue evolving the program to establish a fertile ground for emerging artists.

### **Pre-Show Talks & Post-Show Q&As**

Smuin will host pre-show talks at 1:15pm prior to each Saturday matinee. Led by the company’s artistic staff, audiences will enjoy insights into the program and creative process behind the ballets. A post-show Q&A with the choreographers will also take place immediately following the performances on February 14, 16, and 21. A virtual Q&A on Zoom will take place Wednesday, February 19, from 6:00-6:45 pm.

### **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 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:**

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**WHEN:** **February 14 - 23, 2025**  
Friday, Feb. 14 at 7:00pm\*\*  
Saturday, Feb. 15 at 2:00pm\* & 7:00pm  
Sunday, Feb. 16 at 2:00pm\*\*  
Thursday, Feb. 20 at 7:00pm  
Friday, Feb. 21 @ 7pm\*\*

Saturday, Feb. 22 @ 2:00pm\* & 7:00pm  
Sunday, Feb. 23 @ 2:00pm

*\*Pre-show talk offered at 1:15pm*  
*\*\*Post-show Q&A to follow performance*

**WHERE:** **Smuin Center for Dance**  
1830 17th Street, San Francisco

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$35-\$55) or more information, the public may call 415-912-1899 or visit [smuinballet.org](http://smuinballet.org).

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**PRESS:** Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co., [steph@cb-pr.com](mailto:steph@cb-pr.com)

**PHOTOS:** Media may download high-res photos at <https://cbpr.co/press/choreographyshowcase2025/>