

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Joe Yang 510.642.9121
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS MIAMI CITY BALLET PERFORMING
TWYLA THARP'S *NINE SINATRA SONG* AND *IN THE UPPER ROOM* AND GEORGE
BALANCHINE'S *AGON* FRIDAY–SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26–28 IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

**THE ENGAGEMENT CONTINUES THE MONTHLONG TRIBUTE TO CHOREOGRAPHER TWYLA THARP
THAT CONCLUDES WITH AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE (NOV. 7–11)**

**AN ARRAY OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY EVENTS, INCLUDING A LECTURE AND FILM SERIES,
IS OFFERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FOCUS ON THARP**

BERKELEY, September 17, 2007—**Miami City Ballet**, under the direction of dance legend **Edward Villella**, returns to Berkeley as part of **Cal Performances'** salute to the artistry of choreographer **Twyla Tharp** **Friday & Saturday, October 26 & 27 at 8:00 p.m.** and **Sunday, October 28 at 3:00 p.m.** The company performs two of her most admired works: *Nine Sinatra Songs* (1982) and *In the Upper Room* (1986), set to music by *Philip Glass*. The program also features **George Balanchine's** *Agon* (1957) set to music commissioned from **Igor Stravinsky**. *Agon* is considered one of the great dance works of the 20th century and will be danced by “a jewel of a company” featuring dancers “with sparkling musicality” (*The New York Times*).

The **Miami City Ballet's** engagement continues **Cal Performances'** focus on one of the mavericks of modern dance, **Twyla Tharp**, a phenomenon merging jazz, ballet and modern dance with a penchant for popular culture and a post-modernist flair. In recognition of her vast influence, **Cal Performances** presents three acclaimed American ballet companies dancing key **Tharp** works. The **Miami City Ballet** appearance follows the recent **Joffrey Ballet** visit. **American Ballet Theatre** continues the **Tharp** salute with *Baker's Dozen* and *Sinatra Suite* Wednesday-Sunday, November 7-11.

MIAMI CITY BALLET PROGRAM

Nine Sinatra Songs (1982), one of audiences' favorite **Tharp** works, is a one-act ballet set to songs made memorable by **Frank Sinatra**, including *My Way*, *That's Life*, *One for My Baby* and *Strangers In the Night*. The piece reveals the iconoclastic choreographer at her showboating best,

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“hitting all the emotional beats of the song with the soaring, razz-ma-tazz lifts you might see in an ice-dancing show” (*Washington Post*).

Among Twyla Tharp’s most critically acclaimed works, *In the Upper Room* (1986) is a one-act ballet filled with power, energy and speed. Set to music by **Philip Glass**, it makes use of 13 dancers moving through smoke and light to thrill audiences with what Tharp has described as “fierce, driving and relentless moves.” Reminiscent of earlier Tharp works, it is a face-off between classic ballet and modern dance with some dancers en pointe and others in sneakers, engaged in an eternal conversation.

The 1957 Balanchine classic *Agon*, set to music commissioned from Stravinsky, “... epitomizes Balanchine’s modernism at its height,” wrote *New York Times* dance critic Anna Kisselgoff, who describes Balanchine as a “radical in classical clothing...among the greatest choreographers in the history of ballet and one of the 20th century's most innovative artists.” As to the fruitful artistic mash-up between choreographer and composer, Kisselgoff wrote, “Here were two titans of modern art who shared the same objectivist sensibility. For Stravinsky music was organized sound, and for Balanchine dance was pure movement. ...”

The definitive collaboration of these two Russian émigrés, *Agon*, is a touchstone in modern ballet. Edgy, cool, angular in its structural poses, the ballet contains a memorable *pas de deux*, an intensely dramatic dance conversation between a man and a woman viewed as one of the defining moments of modern ballet.

MIAMI CITY BALLET

Miami City Ballet has grown steadily as one of America’s pre-eminent ballet troupes, a superb exponent of contemporary ballet, stellar in its inspired interpretation of the works of Balanchine. Under the direction of Edward Villella, who formed the ensemble 21 years ago, the company now has a repertoire of 97 ballets, including 13 world premieres that includes Balanchine's masterworks and works by contemporary choreographers such as Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Jerome Robbins, Trey McIntyre, and others.

The dancers of Miami City Ballet are an international mix, drawn from troupes around the globe. The group performed in March 2003 as one of six companies participating in the Kennedy

Center's International Ballet Festival. Former dance critic for the *New Yorker* Arlene Croce wrote on the occasion of the Miami City Ballet's 20th anniversary last year, "no American company stands higher in prestige or has greater claim to serious attention as a potential artistic force."

Miami City Ballet Artistic Director **Edward Villella** did much to popularize the role of the male in dance in the 1960-70s while he performed with the New York City Ballet under the direction of George Balanchine. Behind the scenes, Villella also made a profound impact, accepting the role of Founding Artistic Director of Miami City Ballet in 1985. The company has since then achieved worldwide acclaim as a leading exponent of contemporary ballet and the Balanchine tradition. In recognition of his achievements, President Clinton presented Villella with the 1997 National Medal of Arts. That same year he was named a Kennedy Center Honoree, and was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame and the Dancers' Hall of Fame at the National Museum of Dance in Saratoga in 2004. Villella's long list of honors also includes 12 honorary degrees and anointment as one of "America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures" by The Dance Heritage Coalition.

TWYLA THARP

Twyla Tharp began dance classes when she was four, and soon was studying every kind of dance available: ballet, tap, jazz and modern. Tharp attended Barnard College in New York City, where she was able to study concurrently at the American Ballet Theatre School with many of the masters of modern dance: Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor and Erick Hawkins. Graduating with an art history degree, she resolved to make a career in dance. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in 1963, but left to start her own group in 1965.

Tharp's work combines a classical discipline and rigor with avant-garde iconoclasm, her ballet technique making use of natural movements like running, walking and skipping. If modern dance is supposed to be serious and spiritual, hers is humorous and edgy, dynamic and unpredictable. Tharp and many of her dancers have been invited to collaborate and perform with the major ballet companies, first the Joffrey Ballet with her *Deuce Coupe*, *As Time Goes By* and *Sue's Leg* (to music of Fats Waller) then American Ballet Theatre, where Mikhail Baryshnikov danced the lead role in her *Push Comes to Shove*, which juxtaposed variations by Mozart with rags by Scott Joplin. Her autobiography, *Push Comes to Shove*, was published in 1992. In the same year, she received a

MacArthur Fellowship, one of its so-called genius grants. She continues to work with the world's great ballet companies and to choreograph and direct for film and television. Currently, she is working on a new ballet for Miami City Ballet with Elvis Costello; it will premiere spring 2008.

FOCUS ON TWYLA THARP: HUMANITIES EVENTS

In addition to Twyla Tharp works performed by the Joffrey Ballet, Miami City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, Cal Performances has arranged a variety of related community and campus events. The Osher Long Life Institute (OLLI), an organization on the UC Berkeley campus that provides courses for community members aged 50 and over, offers a fall course titled “**Tharp’s Impact on American Dance**” that features a series of lectures by dance critics and authors, **Elizabeth Zimmer**, former senior editor at the *Village Voice* (Oct. 4); **Janice Ross**, Associate Professor at Stanford (Oct. 25); and **Marcia Siegel**, Tharp biographer and dance critic for the *Boston Phoenix* (Nov. 8). The class includes discounted tickets to performances by the three companies. A film series titled “**Twyla Tharp's Choreography in Film**” will be held at Wheeler Auditorium and includes screenings of *Hair* (Oct. 9); *Ragtime* (Oct. 16); *Amadeus* (Director’s Cut) (Oct. 23); and *White Nights* (Nov. 14).

Marcia Siegel, whose book on Tharp is titled *Howling Near Heaven: Twyla Tharp and the Reinvention of Modern Dance* (2006), will make a second appearance on campus when she gives a lecture on Tharp’s work; this event is co-sponsored by The Faculty Club and the Department of Theater, Dance & Performance Studies (DTPS) (Nov. 9). Lastly, DTPS is reconstructing one of Tharp’s quintessential post-modern work, *Torelli* (1976) with UC Berkeley dance students directed by Lisa Wymore and Shannon Jackson; the performance also includes choreography by Jess Curtis, Kim Epifano and Ariel Osterweis Scott (April 18-27). All of the events are made possible in part by Consortium for the Arts at UC Berkeley.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Miami City Ballet** on **Thursday and Friday, October 26 and 27 at 8:00 p.m.**; and **Sunday, October 28 at 3:00 p.m.** at **Zellerbach Hall** are priced at **\$34.00, \$52.00, \$76.00** and **\$90.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door. Half-price tickets

are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.net.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community Rush Tickets. Rush Tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush Ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush Ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday and Saturday, October 26 & 27 at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 28 at 3:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave, Berkeley

Dance Series: Focus on Twyla Tharp
Miami City Ballet
Twyla Tharp, choreographer
George Balanchine, choreographer
Philip Glass, composer
Igor Stravinsky, composer

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Frank Sinatra, vocals (recorded)

Program:

Nine Sinatra Songs (1982): music sung by Frank Sinatra; choreography by Twyla Tharp

In the Upper Room (1986): music by Philip Glass; choreography by Twyla Tharp

Agon (1957): music by Igor Stravinsky; choreography by George Balanchine.

Tickets: \$34.00, \$52.00, \$76.00 and \$90.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door.

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HUMANITIES EVENTS

Thursday, October 4 & 25 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 8 from 1:45-3:00 p.m.

CLASS

Osher Life Long Learning Institute

Alumni House, UC Berkeley Campus

Program: A class titled “Tharp’s Impact on American Dance” is offered by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Designed for participants aged 50 and above, it features a series of lectures by dance critics and authors and discounted tickets to performances by the Miami City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. For more information go to www.oli.berkeley.edu or call 510-642-9934. Pre-registration is required.

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Tuesday, October 9, 16 & 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 14 at 7:00 p.m.

FILM SERIES

Wheeler Auditorium, UC Berkeley Campus

Telegraph at Bancroft Ave., Berkeley

Program: The film series titled “Twyla Tharp’s Choreography in Film” includes *Hair* (Oct. 9), *Ragtime* (Oct. 16), *Amadeus* (Director’s Cut) (Oct. 23) and *White Nights* (Nov. 14).

Tickets: \$3.00, available at the door.

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Friday, November 9 from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

LECTURE

Faculty Club, Great Hall, UCB Campus

College at Bancroft Way, Berkeley

Program: A talk by Marcia Siegel, Boston Phoenix dance journalist and author of *Howling Near Heaven: Twyla Tharp and the Reinvention of Modern Dance*. This event is presented by Cal Performances in association with The Faculty Club and the Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies. For further information go to <http://theater.berkeley.edu> or call 510-642-9925.

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Friday & Saturday, April 18 & 19 at 8:00 p.m.

Friday & Saturday, April 25 & 26 at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 20 & 27 at 2:00 p.m.

Berkeley Dance Project

Zellerbach Playhouse, UCB Campus

Dana at Bancroft Way, Berkeley

Program: Produced by the Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies, Twyla Tharp's quintessential post-modern work, *Torelli* (1976) is reconstructed with UC Berkeley dance students in a program directed by Lisa Wymore and Shannon Jackson, which also includes choreography by Jess Curtis, Kim Epifano, and Ariel Osterweis Scott. For tickets and additional program information, call 510.642.9925 or go to <http://theater.berkeley.edu>.

– Cal Performances –