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CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS
WILLIAM FORSYTHE'S ACCLAIMED BALLETT FRANKFURT
IN FOUR WEST COAST PREMIERES JUNE 3 – 5

**ZELLERBACH HALL IS FIRST STOP ON
FINAL AMERICAN TOUR BEFORE COMPANY DISBANDS IN AUGUST**

BERKELEY, April 30, 2004 – Internationally renowned for his daring and groundbreaking choreography, American-born **William Forsythe** brings his iconoclastic **Ballett Frankfurt** in four West Coast Premieres to Zellerbach Hall after a 15 year absence, **Thursday - Saturday, June 3 - 5 at 8:00 p.m.** The Cal Performances' engagement marks the beginning of the modern dance company's final American tour. The performance, including *The Room as it Was* (2002), *Duo* (1996), *(N.N.N.N.)* (2002), and *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000), has been hailed "the best program" Forsythe has ever brought to the United States, by Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times*, "stunningly and methodically structured to build into intricacy and complexity." With the closing of Ballett Frankfurt set for August 2004 due to the city's fiscal problems, this is the last chance for Bay Area audiences to see Forsythe's innovative and sometimes highly controversial work performed by the company who helped create it.

WILLIAM FORSYTHE

William Forsythe, voted the best choreographer in the world by 33 critics from 15 different countries in 2001, was born in New York City and studied ballet at Jacksonville University, Florida and later at the Joffrey Ballet School. In 1973, he joined Germany's famed Stuttgart Ballet as a dancer and choreographed his first work for the company in 1976. Over the years, Forsythe made numerous ballets for the Stuttgart Ballet and for other leading companies including Basel Ballet, Munich Ballet, Deutsche Opera Ballet in Berlin, Joffrey Ballet and Netherlands Dance Theater. Because of demand, he stopped performing in 1980 to concentrate solely on freelance choreographing. In 1984, Forsythe became artistic director of Ballett Frankfurt after creating *Gänge*, his first full-length work for the company. With his new

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ensemble, he set out to create works which were removed from conventional ballet and to build a new audience while rapidly phasing out the traditional ballet repertoire. In 1999, Forsythe began developing, site-specific work for Ballett Frankfurt at the Brockenheimer Depot (TAT), a performance space housed in a converted tramway depot, and was subsequently named managing director of TAT as well as the Ballett Frankfurt. While some of his dances have aroused deeply divided passions among dance-lovers, when it comes to originality and intellectual force, his work has few equals in the world. Forsythe continues to stage pieces for companies around the globe including the New York City Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, The Royal Ballet, Covent Garden, and the Paris Opéra Ballet, among others, and is starting up a new, yet unnamed, cutting-edge company with a dramatically smaller budget under the sponsorship of the cities of Frankfurt and Dresden. The new company will include many current Ballett Frankfurt dancers.

BALLETT FRANKFURT

With the appointment of William Forsythe as artistic director in 1984, the former Frankfurt Ballett received a new name: **Ballett Frankfurt**. Developing a new structure and his own athletic, forceful style, Forsythe began to build the company's reputation not only in Frankfurt, but far beyond the borders of the city through extensive touring all over the world. Along the way, the unconventional ensemble became a magnet for dancers worldwide, forming a multi-lingual corps with different attributes of physicality and personality—not a company of clones. Referring to the troupe as a “choreographic collective”, Forsythe has come to rely heavily on the input of its 37 “astonishing dancers” (*The Village Voice*). The former theater buildings, destroyed during World War II, were rebuilt in the decades after the war and combined into one theater complex which now comprises an opera house (1369 seats), a playhouse (712 seats) and a chamber theater (192). The company performs on the stages of the opera and the playhouse, as well as in the Brockenheimer Depot.

PROGRAM

The works that make up Ballett Frankfurt's June 3 - 5 program, dating from 1996 to 2002, spotlight Forsythe's powerful deconstruction of ballet with rhythms that “call up Jackie Chan: dizzying displays followed by strike and freeze” (*The Village Voice*). Two smaller, more

intimate pieces, *Duo* and (*N.N.N.N.*), surrounded by two longer dances, *The Room as it Was* and *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, feature bare-bones sets, costumes and lighting designed by Forsythe and music by long-time collaborator Thom Willems, and require stunning flexibility and speed of the dancers. In *The Room as it Was*, the only work with women performing on pointe, eight dancers move in and out of a series of duet- and trio-encounters, using sounds such as a breath, a slap or a stomp to mark time. *Duo*, danced with an academic air at the apron of the stage, is composed for two women moving in and out of ballet classroom positions, their hands carving up time and space, distant music appearing and vanishing. Forsythe turns his attention to a quartet of men in (*N.N.N.N.*), keeping the dancers in constant connection underscored by flashes of music. The title refers to an image of the dancers with interlocking arms that reminded Forsythe of the letter “N” – each dancer representing a character. Throughout the dance the men slip in and out of perplexing shapes, flinging arms and folding joints. *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, the only dance with a set, begins with the roar of twenty tables being scraped across the stage by a pack of dancers who proceed to hurtle themselves above, below and across the metallic staging ground. With Willems’ music beginning softly and ending in rage, the dance becomes an intense finale for the evening and for Ballett Frankfurt.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Ballett Frankfurt** on **Thursday – Saturday, June 3 – 5 at 8:00 p.m.**, in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$38.00, \$48.00 and \$64.00**. Performance tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday – Saturday, June 3 - 5 at 8:00 p.m.

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

Dance

Ballett Frankfurt

William Forsythe, director

Program:

N.N.N.N. (2002): music by Thom Willems; choreography by William Forsythe
(West Coast Premiere)

One Flat Thing, reproduced (2000): music by Thom Willems; choreography by William
Forsythe (West Coast Premiere)

The Room as it Was (2002): music by Thom Willems; choreography by William Forsythe
(West Coast Premiere)

Duo (1996): music by Thom Willems; choreography by William Forsythe
(West Coast Premiere)

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