

For Immediate Release

A “Modern Dance Ballet” for the 21st Century Receives World Premiere at Temple University

Philadelphia, PA -- “What future does ballet have as an art of modern expression?” The question posed by *New York Times* writer Alastair Macaulay receives one answer in the form of *Crystallina*, a new “modern dance ballet” to be premiered at Temple University in Philadelphia on April 29 and 30, 2011 at 7:30 PM in Tomlinson Theater. But the ballet is also “modern” in exactly the way the innovative collaborations of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes were in Paris a century ago: original music, dance, and set designs are being created especially for the occasion.

Part of the Philadelphia International Festival on the Arts, *Crystallina* is the first major work to be composed, choreographed, designed, and performed by Temple music, dance and visual arts faculty and students. This project is also the university’s first full-scale dance performance with orchestra—the Temple University Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Luis Biava.

The university commissioned faculty composer Richard Brodhead and dance faculty members Joellen Meglin, Kun-Yang Lin and Jillian Harris to create a contemporary ballet based on founder Russell Conwell’s now famous “Acres of Diamonds” speech as part of its 125th anniversary in 2009.

“We wanted to create a collaborative work whose narrative is rooted in tradition, yet interpretable in contemporary terms,” said Brodhead. “Temple’s ‘founding story’ has both of these wonderful qualities.” Meglin’s scenario reconceives the story as an archetypal tale of journey, with a woman at the center and the foreign lands not so much places as states of mind.

Brodhead's music has been described as "wondrously sculpted and shaped" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*). His orchestral, vocal, and chamber works have been written for such organizations as Network for New Music, the Momenta Quartet, the Lions Gate Trio, and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society.

Meglin's choreography has been described as "basically classical in structure, but interspersed with almost irreverent contemporary motion . . . as if the dancers were melodic themes come alive" (*Miami News*) and "imaginatively whimsical" (*Omaha World-Herald*).

Lin has been proclaimed as a "theatrical visionary" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), and his work has been described as a "distinctive blend of traditional and Western dance [with] the dark, bold force of a woodcut print" (*New York Times*).

Harris, who will dance as Crystallina, sharing the stage with 25 dance majors, is the recipient of numerous awards and tours nationally and internationally.

Each "psychological world" that Crystallina visits will have a vivid visual identity overseen by Paul Sheriff, an award-winning graphic artist on the Tyler faculty.

Also on the program is Stravinsky's Pulcinella, suite for orchestra, featuring visuals by composer Maurice Wright and performed by the Temple University Symphony Orchestra.

Crystallina

April 29 and April 30

7:30 PM

Tomlinson Theater

NW corner, 13th and Norris Streets

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Tickets: \$20 general admission / \$15 students and senior citizens / \$10 with Dance USA Philadelphia Dance Pass / \$5 with student OWLcard

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