

BALLET SAN JOSE SILICON VALLEY NEWS
Dennis Nahat, Artistic / Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March, 2005
MEDIA CONTACT

Lee Kopp, Publicity (408) 288-2820 x 210

Ballet San Jose Announces Spring Rep
Rarely Performed SHINJU Highlights Varied Program

(March 1, 2005, San Jose, CA) Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley will present a spring repertory program of dance entitled, "Love and Power", March 31st through April 3rd at San Jose Center for the Performing Arts in downtown San Jose. Featured on the varied program are two dances by BSJSV Artistic Director Dennis Nahat and a rarely performed piece from Michael Smuin.

Michael Smuin's SHINJU is a Japanese 'Romeo and Juliet style tragedy' set to a custom-composed score by Paul Chihara with brilliantly creative costumes by Willa Kim. Dennis Nahat's CANNONADE is pure rapid-fire energy danced to Johann Sebastian Bach's Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor. Nahat's youthful and joyous QUICKSILVER, is choreographed to Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, opus 25.

The Company Premiere of SHINJU marks the third of Michael Smuin's dances that Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley has produced in the last three seasons, following STRAVINSKY PIANO PIECES in 2003-04 and the stunning recreation of THE TEMPEST in 2002-03. (TEMPEST and SHINJU both are from the same creative team of Smuin, Chihara, and Kim.) The ballet is based on "Shinjū Ten No-Amijima (The Opening of One's Heart) written by 18th Century Japanese playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon, considered the Shakespeare of Japanese theatre. The play is based on a romantic and tragic Japanese legend thousands of years old. The theme of the ballet revolves around two lovers, whose match is thwarted by sinister, metaphysical forces. They chose to commit double suicide as the most powerful way to express their love, disrobing to the waist and plunging daggers into each other, releasing streamers of red ribbon from their bellies.
(SHINJU contains partial nudity.)

Michael Smuin conceived the idea for SHINJU on a visit to Japan, during which he became enthralled with the Japanese culture, particularly Noh theatre and Kabuki dance. The original score by UCLA music professor Paul Seiko Chihara is a mixture of ancient Japanese court music (wind

instruments, wood blocks and vocal chanting) with modern Western orchestration. It uses an electronic score on top of the traditional music form.

Dennis Nahat's CANNONADE set to Bach's Piano Concerto No 1 in D minor and with costumes designed by the late David Guthrie, was choreographed in 1982 in just six days. Its name commemorates its rapid-fire creation and the pure energy in the two allegro sections that open and close the piece, with movements as rapid as gunfire. The steps are fast but flowing. "Unlike classical ballets which emphasize technical feats," says Nahat, "CANNONADE doesn't show how difficult they are. The steps must be performed freely; as free as America. It's difficult to be free. But when you are, it feels wonderful."

Nahat's QUICKSILVER is set to Felix Mendelssohn's Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Opus 25. "Mendelssohn composed his first piano concerto very quickly," says Nahat, "almost off the top of his head, when he was very young. First it goes in one direction, and then another. It is very youthful. The dancers must move as fast as the music suggests." Everything about the ballet is contemporary--the silver sculpture hovering in the background, the shiny white costumes by Guthrie, and the intricate movements. It is fast-paced, athletic and strong, with unrestricted movements. Yet, the Andante for three women is graceful and lyrical. The finale, however, rockets the ensemble into a whirling finish. (The piece was choreographed during the Olympics and Nahat was inspired by the grandeur of the meets.)

Combined into Ballet San Jose's spring repertory program, these three diverse dances define the words, "Love and Power." Tickets are available through the Ballet Box Office at (408) 288-2800, TicketMaster, or online at www.balletsanjose.org. Prices are \$22 to \$68 with discounts available for students, seniors, and groups. Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley's final offering of the season is a repertory program of four pieces entitled, "The Grand Finale", May 5-8. A discount of 25% is being offered for single ticket buyers who purchase both programs as a mini-subscription. (This discount is available through the Ballet Box Office only, Monday through Friday, 10am to 5pm.)

End