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AMERICAN CHOREOGRAPHER WILLIAM FORSYTHE OF FRANKFURT BALLET TO RECEIVE WEXNER PRIZE

REVOLUTIONARY FORCE IN DANCE TO VISIT WEXNER CENTER IN FALL TO ACCEPT PRESTIGIOUS \$50,000 AWARD

**“There is nobody to compare to Forsythe. He will be remembered as
ballet’s Mozart.”—*Dance Europe***

American-born choreographer **William Forsythe**, director of the highly regarded Frankfurt Ballet, will receive the 10th **Wexner Prize**. The \$50,000 Prize is awarded to a contemporary artist who has been consistently original, influential, and challenging to convention.

William Forsythe is widely considered one of the most important dance artists of our time, on a par with such giants in the dance world as George Balanchine. A revolutionary thinker and artistic provocateur, Forsythe has set new standards internationally for ballet and modern dance companies alike. His Frankfurt Ballet (known as Ballett Frankfurt abroad) has attracted the top dancers in the world, and the company’s rare concerts in the U.S. have been occasions for pilgrimages by a faithful following.

“Forsythe is a towering figure in his field, equally acclaimed for his daring and his virtuosity,” says Sherri Geldin, Wexner Center director. “He is an undisputed revolutionary who has altered the formal and conceptual terrain of dance, yet he has never lost touch with the pure physical joy of dancing.”

Leslie Wexner, chair of the Wexner Center Foundation Board of Trustees and founder of Limited Brands, commented, “We are pleased to award the 10th Wexner Prize to groundbreaking choreographer William Forsythe. A vanguard artist with roots in classical technique, Forsythe joins past Wexner Prize winners in leaving a vital cultural legacy in his wake.”

The Prize will likely be awarded in the fall of 2002; watch for further updates on events and dates. See the attached document for more information on the Wexner Prize.

news release

ABOUT WILLIAM FORSYTHE

Born in New York City in 1949, William Forsythe first captured the attention of the dance world as a company member with the Joffrey Ballet. In 1973, he relocated to Germany to dance with the Stuttgart Ballet. He also began to choreograph there, and commissions quickly followed from noted European companies such as the Basel Ballett, the Deutsche Oper Ballett in Berlin, the Paris Opera Ballet, and Nederlands Dans Theater.

Upon taking the helm of the Frankfurt Ballet in 1984, Forsythe fully developed his radical signature style, one that expands upon traditional ballet vocabulary to explore the limits of the body. Brashly stylish and physically demanding, Forsythe's work features rapid, hyperextended dance phrases. His productions often convey images of conflict, violent beauty, and stark contrast, but he is also noted for poetic insight into human relations, with sweeping passages of tenderness to balance the hard edges. In December 2001, *The New York Times* called his choreography "tough, elegant, incisive, and usually rooted in ballet virtuosity, demanding highly trained classical dancers.... There is no mistaking the contemporary energy that anyone from Mick Jagger to current rappers would recognize. At his best Mr. Forsythe fuses this energy and the dancers' physical attack with a strong structural concept."

In addition to his work in Frankfurt, Forsythe has created new work for the New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, The Royal Ballet Covent Garden, and the Royal Swedish Ballet, among many others. He is also closely involved with the development of text, lighting design, set design, and costumes, and has created several installations and site-specific artworks. Longtime collaborators include composer Thom Willems, architect Daniel Liebeskind, fashion designer Issey Miyake, visual artist Cara Perlman, and poet and classicist Anne Carson. In 1999, Forsythe became the director of TAT at the Bockenheimer Depot, a performance space in a converted tramway depot in Frankfurt, where he commissions new work and presents international artists. Among his awards and honors are a Bessie Award for choreography in 1988, several Laurence Olivier Awards, the Commandeur des Arts and Lettres in France, and many other international prizes; see attached sheet for a select list of awards.

Forsythe is also considered a pioneer in his application of new digital media for dance instruction, creating the first CD-ROM program to familiarize dancers with his dance vocabulary and radical technique.

WEB SITES

For more information on Forsythe and the Frankfurt Ballet, visit **www.frankfurt-ballett.de**.

For more on the Wexner Prize, visit **www.wexarts.org/ctr** and click on Wexner Prize.

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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PRAISE FOR WILLIAM FORSYTHE AND FRANKFURT BALLET

“Forget the theories and watch the movement. That is often the best advice for looking at William Forsythe’s brainy, off-center choreography, and it seemed at the heart of the lusty ovation Mr. Forsythe’s Ballett Frankfurt received.”

—*The New York Times*

“The choreography is tough, elegant, incisive and usually rooted in ballet virtuosity, demanding highly trained classical dancers.”

—*The New York Times*

“There is nobody to compare to Forsythe. He will be remembered as ballet’s Mozart, creating movement of such complex dexterity that it seems the whole history of the art form has been heading towards this moment....the extent of his detail, the speed of his dynamics and the humanity inside his choreography does stand apart.”

—*Dance Europe*

“Pina Bausch and William Forsythe...are the two most influential choreographers in Europe today....(they) have a kind of stagecraft that our own, more classical choreographers never dreamed of.”

—*The New Yorker*

“...the world’s most innovative ballet ensemble...turns the audience on as surely as if it were spraying caffeine.”

—*Village Voice*

“While there’s something punk rock about Forsythe’s lusty and aggressive phrasing, he’s no anarchist. As the poetic *Quintett* attests, there’s also real delicacy to be found. And it’s all exhilarating.”

—*Time Out New York*

SELECT LIST OF PRIZES AND HONORS FOR WILLIAM FORSYTHE

Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production for “Enemy in the Figure” at Sadler’s Wells Theatre, London, 1999

Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance at Sadler’s Wells Theatre, London, 1999

Evening Standard Award for Outstanding Production for “Enemy in the Figure,” 1999

Commandeur des Arts and Lettres (France), 1999

New York Times Best Ballet of the Season for “The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude,” San Francisco Ballet, 1998

Grand Prix International Video Danse for “Solo,” 1996

1st Prize for Multimedia Installation “Improvisation Technologies,” New Voices, New Visions, Lincoln Center, 1996

Olivier Award for “In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated,” Royal Ballet, 1992

Chevalier des Arts et Metiers, 1991

Bessie Award for Choreography, 1988

Deutscher Kritikerpreis, 1988

Isadora Duncan Award for “New Sleep,” 1987

Harlekin Preis der Stadt Frankfurt, 1986