



For Immediate Release

BALLETS TO SURPRISE
**JAMES SEWELL BALLET PRESENTS THREE NEW YORK
PREMIERES AT THE JOYCE THEATER, APRIL 4-9**

A ballet that finally gives Garrison Keillor’s radio detective, Guy Noir, a physical presence; a ballet that draws on yoga and Qigong; and yet another that can be set to different music. Expect to see classical ballet transformed when the James Sewell Ballet performs at The Joyce Theater, April 4–9. All three ballets are New York premieres.

In “Guy Noir: The Ballet,” Sewell, who collaborated with Garrison Keillor on the double entendre-filled script, has the radio detective—who like Sewell and Keillor, lives in Minnesota—dressed in a trench coat and hat, and chomping on a cigar. The suspicious C.E.O. of the ACME Tulle Company initiates a dance contest that threatens to turn deadly. Among the cast of characters is a chainsaw wielding diva, a femme fatale and a polka duo swinging a lumberjack saw. Look for a pink power drill, safety goggles, hammers and other tools that would send shivers through traditional tulle-fitted ballerinas. Keillor reads the hilarious script on tape. The jazz score includes music by Rich Dworsky and The Guy’s All-Star Shoe Band and others.

Sewell’s imaginative explorations of the mutability of ballet, its ability to seamlessly combine with other movement forms, is dramatically visible in “Anagram.” Although choreographed and performed to Franz Schubert’s “Sonata for Arpeggione and Piano in A minor,” “Anagram” was designed as a series of sections connected through improvisation in order to accommodate other scores when needed. The ballet is filled with sensual movement that

MORE



**JAMES SEWELL BALLET
ADD ONE**

unexpectedly changes shape with the flick of an ankle —shifting from ballet to more contemporary movement—that ensures surprise.

“Involution,” is an abstract ballet that examines the flow of energy within the body and the transforming quality that the conscious control of that energy can provide. It draws on concepts of yoga and Qigong from Sewell’s personal explorations of energy work in the body. One meaning of “involution” is that of the natural evolution of the soul back toward spirit. Using dance metaphors, this ballet tries to express the evolutions of individuals and a small culture—how they evolve from fractured individuals into a place of unified being.

Born into a family of musicians, James Sewell began his dance training at the Children’s Theatre Company School in Minneapolis. He studied violin for nine years before beginning to train in ballet at the age of 15. After just two years, he moved to New York where he studied at the School of American Ballet (SAB) and with David Howard. He danced with ABT II, the apprentice company of American Ballet Theatre, before joining the Feld Ballet, where he was a principal dancer for six years. As a dancer, he also performed as a guest artist with ballet and modern dance companies such as New York City Ballet, Zvi Gotheiner and Dancers, Denishawn and Martine van Hamel’s New Amsterdam Ballet. George Balanchine created a role on him for the Dance in America television production of “L’enfant et les Sortilèges.”

Since beginning to create ballets in 1982 as an SAB student, Sewell has choreographed more than 50 works, nine for which he also composed the music. In 1990, he founded James Sewell Ballet in New York, before moving his company in 1993 to Minnesota, where it is currently based.

Recently, he has been integrating improvisation into his ballets. He has collaborated with Chris Aiken and Kirstie Simson, masters in the improvisation dance form, and in 2002, received the Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship to explore the intersections between improvisation and ballet.

More than a dozen companies in the United States and Taiwan have

MORE

**JAMES SEWELL BALLET
ADD TWO**

performed Sewell's works. The New York Choreographic Institute selected him to work with SAB students in 2001, and again this year. Other special projects and commissions have included "Musical Toys," accompanied by pianist Andreas Haefliger, for the Minnesota Orchestra; "Passions" and "Schoenberg Serenade," ballets commissioned for the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; "Amahl and the Night Visitors," produced with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra; choreography for the Minnesota Opera's production of "Aida"; "Nutcracker: The Untold Story" for the Minnesota Orchestra's NotesAlive!™ video series; "Metamorphosis," commissioned by the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus; "Awedville," commissioned by the Wharton Center for Performing Arts in East Lansing, Michigan; and the Guthrie Theater's 2005 production of "She Loves Me." Sewell and his company will fulfill a commission from the Minnesota Orchestra set to Bartók's "Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta" in September.

Prior to its season at The Joyce, James Sewell Ballet performed in Rochester, MN (February 4); St. Paul, MN (February 17–18); and Thomasville, GA (February 26–27). The company will also appear in Portsmouth, NH (March 11); Rochester, MN (March 23); and Cedar Rapids, IA (March 31). After The Joyce Theater engagement, the troupe will return to the State Theatre in Minneapolis, MN (April 20–23), before heading to Reykjavik, Iceland (May 5–6).

The evening curtain for James Sewell Ballet at The Joyce Theater is at 8pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and at 7:30pm on Thursday and Sunday. There will also be 2pm matinees on both Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$40, and are available at the box office, by calling JoyceCharge at 212-242-0800, or online at www.joyce.org. The Joyce Theater is located at 175 Eighth Avenue at 19th Street.

###

This activity is made possible by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.