



For Immediate Release

**ALL IN THE FAMILY**  
**COMPANY STEFANIE BATTEN BLAND RETURNS TO NEW YORK CITY FOR**  
**PERFORMANCES AT SYMPHONY SPACE, MAY 22 & 23**  
**SEASON FEATURES NEW YORK PREMIERE,**  
**MUSIC BY ED BLAND AND FILMS BY GUILLAUME LE GRONTEC**

For Company Stefanie Batten Bland's Symphony Space debut, May 22 & 23, the bi-continental choreographer Stefanie Batten Bland taps into the treasure chest of her family's talent. Music is contributed by her father, legendary jazz composer and musician Ed Bland; the dance films are by her husband, the award-winning French filmmaker Guillaume Le Grontec, and the choreography is by the former Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company principal herself. No wonder the evening in which the dance and film are theatrically united, is entitled *All In The Family*. The performances take place in the Peter Jay Sharp Theatre at Symphony Space.

"The Polished Hoes," a tribute to Bland's own racially mixed background including her great grandmother, "the darkest of the family," and her eldest brother, a former heroin addict, expresses Bland's faith in the power of intimacy and human love to help mitigate pain. Taking place in a courtyard with hanging drying clothes, the dance, a duet between Bland and Raphaël Kaney Duverger, is accompanied by original music by Jean-Philippe Barrios, along with Lambarena Gabon rhythms and selections from Bach, James Brown, and Louisiana Creole music.

"Beneath our Feet...," set to music by Ed Bland and Jean-Philippe Barrios, is a light, at times playful meditation that moves from earth to air and back again with the greatest of ease.

"Apart One Word or Two," which combines music by Frederick Chopin and Cliff Martinez, has the five performers dancing through shadows and moving in and out of light to create shifting stage patterns, alternately calling attention to small gestures and the full dancing body.

**MORE**

Threaded through the evening, the three dance-for-camera films, choreographed by Bland and directed by Le Grontec, are shown on disposable screens and paper curtains designed to invite interaction with the live dancers. "34<sup>th</sup> Street," a New York rooftop solo for Bland, which uses music by Ed Bland, was shown at festivals in South Africa and Brazil. "Playground Love," a quartet of solos for Bland, Julie Bour, Ayo Janeen Jackson and Desmond Richardson, is set to music by Air. It was most recently shown at the 2009 Sans Souci Film Festival, as was "Shoplift," which is performed by Andréa Bescond and Grishka Caruge, and set to music by Mychael Danna.

The curtain for both Symphony Space performances is at 8pm. Tickets are available at the Symphony Space box office for \$26, or \$31 the day of the show. Tickets are \$21 for Symphony Space members and students with valid ID. Tickets are available by calling 212-864-5400 or online at [www.symphonyspace.org](http://www.symphonyspace.org). Symphony Space is located at 95<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway.

###

042109

## BIOGRAPHIES

### All In The Family

#### **Stefanie Batten Bland (Choreographer, Artistic Director Company Stefanie Batten Bland)**

A native New Yorker, who now splits her time between Paris and New York, Stefanie Batten Bland began her dance studies at The Joffrey School, where she was awarded a scholarship to participate in the Joffrey's training program. She also studied at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center before moving with her family to Los Angeles. She graduated from the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, where she was honored with the Sunny Brown Foundation Award. She then attended SUNY Purchase on scholarship before beginning to dance professionally as a member of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, where she spent several seasons as a soloist. In addition, she performed with Sean Curran, Douglas Dunn and Kevin Wynn. She has been a guest artist with Lar Lubovitch Dance and with Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal. Her European experiences also include performances with Compagnie Linga and French choreographers Angelin Preljocaj and Georges Momboye, for whom she served as artistic assistant and performs 'the chosen one' in his renowned ballet "The Rite of Spring." Her initial work as a choreographer was awarded first prize for young choreographers at the Festival Fontainebleau in 2004. The Biennale Nationale de Danse du Val-de-Marne selected Ms. Bland to open the evening "Rendez Vous de la Danse" and "Les Plateaux." In New York City she was selected to participate in the 2005 Joyce Soho Presents, a series created to encourage young choreographic talent. The Joyce then chose Ms. Bland for their Spring 2006 Season. Ms. Bland has choreographed for the Mu Terminal Conservatory in Budapest and her works have been performed in Prague, Brussels, Spain, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Denmark, France and the United States.

Her commercial choreography includes luxury ads for Guerlain perfums and Van Cleef & Arpels jewelry, as well as the musicals "Soweto" about the release of Nelson Mandela; and "Looking for Josephine—New Orleans Forever," which recently played to sold-out houses at the Paris Opéra Comique in Paris.

**MORE**

Her cinematic dance shorts with collaborators Guillaume Le Grontec (cinematographer) and Ed Bland (composer) have been recognized with inclusion in the Alexander Onassis Foundation choreography competition, the Thessaloniki film festival in Greece, Dança em Foco dance cinema festival in Rio de Janeiro, FMB Dance Umbrella of South Africa and the Sans Souci dance film festival in Colorado. She was guest artist of Ohio University of 2008 and Guest Artist at Middle Tennessee State University MTSU 2009.

### **Guillaume Le Grontec (Cinematographer)**

Born in Grand Duché in Luxembourg in March 1975, Guillaume Le Grontec grew up in Paris. Le Grontec regularly skipped class, translating what he saw into images, forecasting his career as a photographer and filmmaker. At 16 he began work as an assistant photographer and began to experiment in studios throughout Paris. After learning the principles of photography, he began to explore filmmaking. He started to work with a super 8mm camera, a gift given to him by his brother. The gift of this camera would be an important part of his career. Le Grontec was admitted to the "Ecole de Realisation Audiovisuelle de Paris," and graduated three years later majoring in "Film Image." From that point forward, he began to work with well-known directors in photography for both film and commercials. Outside of work, he was intent to stay focused on his personal projects. In 2001, Le Grontec met Stefanie Batten Bland who remains very influential in his work today and they began to collaborate on a series of creative projects. Since 2001, the couple has produced 10 films that have been shown around the world. Today Le Grontec lives between Paris and New York. In addition to working as a director of photography, Le Grontec directs films for dance for Bill T. Jones, Jan Fabre and of course for his wife, Stefanie Batten Bland.

### **Ed Bland (Composer)**

Considered by some Hip-Hoppers to be the great-grandfather of Hip-Hop because of the confrontational quality of his musical and film work, Ed Bland has made his mark in several fields. In concert music, Ed Bland's "Piece For Chamber Orchestra" was called, "An amazing tour de force in terms of relentless energy and build-up of tension . . . a fascinating strong piece," by Gunther Schuller, American composer/conductor/author; and "Original and fresh," by Bruce Creditor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Among the groups that have performed Bland's works are the Baltimore, Detroit, Memphis, and St Louis Symphonies, the Chicago Civic Orchestra, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

In the late 1930s in Chicago, Ed Bland began music as a jazz protégé, eventually composing atonally, using Schoenberg's 12-tone system. In 1959, he produced the first Hip-Hop film, "THE CRY OF JAZZ." Willard Van Dyke, pre-eminent American film documentarian and head of the Film Division of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, said that "THE CRY OF JAZZ" predicted the riots of the 1960s and 70s in American cities. Ed Bland's synthesis of three canons of music – Western, Jazz, and West African drumming – made it possible for him to work as composer, producer, arranger, and orchestrator in the recording, and film industries.

In the '90s, after years of composing, arranging and producing in the record industry, many of Bland's works were sampled by Hip-Hop Artists, among them Fat Boy Slim and Cypress Hill, that led to sales in excess of 30 million CDs. Recently, Bland's work has been borrowed by Beyoncé Knowles who sampled Bland's 1968 Soul R&B classic, "Skunk Juice" as the basis of her single, "Creole," and by Atari Games, who sampled Bland's 1969 Soul R&B work, "A Gritty Nitty."

After 20 years of composing and orchestrating for film and TV in Los Angeles, Ed Bland now lives in Smithfield, VA, where he is finishing a percussion dance suite entitled "Penderecki Funk."