

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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BOSTON BALLET PRESENTS NORTH AMERICAN COMPANY PREMIERE OF WILLIAM FORSYTHE'S FULL-LENGTH *ARTIFACT*

LAUNCH OF FIVE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INTERNATIONALLY-ACCLAIMED CHOREOGRAPHER

January 10, 2017 (BOSTON, MA)—Boston Ballet proudly begins its five-year partnership with world-renowned choreographer William Forsythe with the North American company premiere of his full-length ballet *Artifact*. Forsythe revolutionized ballet; he “fundamentally changed the way we look at, and think about, classical dance” (Roslyn Sulcas, *Dance Magazine*). *Artifact* has been hailed as “a masterpiece, a work that definitively shows this choreographer as the most influential practitioner of the art form since Balanchine” (Roslyn Sulcas, *The New York Times*). *Artifact*, Forsythe’s ode to ballet, is accompanied by an original piano composition by Eva Crossman-Hecht, “Chaconne from Partita No.2 in D Minor” by J.S. Bach, and a sound collage by Forsythe. He also designed the lighting, sets, and costumes for this extraordinary production. *Artifact* runs February 23–March 5, 2017 at the Boston Opera House.

“There’s an incredible energy with Forsythe in the building,” said Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen. “It is truly an honor to have him here, working with our dancers and creating in our studios. And it will be a treat for Boston audiences to see this work, and others, over the next five years. *Artifact* is one of those rare, fully immersive experiences that just blows you away.”

Forsythe’s monumental, four-act work has been inspiring both performers and audiences since its premiere in 1984. Originally choreographed for Ballet Frankfurt, *Artifact* was Forsythe’s first full-length ballet created for the company shortly after he became artistic director. *Artifact* is a ballet about ballet; “a viscerally thrilling celebration of classical dance and a demonstration of the way that Mr. Forsythe has extended that vocabulary and changed our expectations of what a ballet can be” (Roslyn Sulcas, *The New York Times*). His inspiration for *Artifact* stems from the foundations of classical ballet technique and the historic roots of the art form. In *Artifact*, Forsythe experiments with various structures of dance—large ensemble sections involving 30 dancers, smaller groups, and pas de deux—while also building on the foundational elements of technique: tendus and classical port de bras. He

ingeniously and unexpectedly bends and expands these basic motions in dizzying, architectural patterns and combinations. Over the last 30 years, Forsythe has made revisions and refinements to *Artifact*; the version Boston Ballet will perform contains an entirely new men's dance in the last act of the ballet.

Three characters: the Woman in Historical Costume, the Man with the Megaphone, and a Woman in Gray move amongst the corps de ballet. Nicholas Champion, who has performed the role of Man with the Megaphone since the ballet's 1984 premiere, will perform February 23–26. Richard Siegal will debut in the role March 2–5. Dana Caspersen will perform the role of Woman in Historical Costume for the full run. The Woman in Gray leads dancers through a series of improvised gestures and arm movements, which influence portions of the improvised piano accompaniment. The Man with the Megaphone and the Woman in Historical Costume communicate like ballet, with permutations of a limited vocabulary: Inside/Outside, I/You, He/She/They, Always/Never, Remember/Forget, See, Say, Hear, Think, Step, Do, Rocks, Dirt, Sand, Soot, and Dust that hint at complex developing relationships.

"The relationship of the three special figures in *Artifact* will hold a distinct, personal significance for each individual who participates in this performance experience," said stager and former Ballet Frankfurt dancer Noah Gelber. "It will mean something special to each dancer on stage, to each audience member, even to each of the three figures themselves."

Bach's "Chaconne from Partita No. 2 in D Minor" formed the basis of the work and serves as the accompaniment for the second act. When Forsythe first choreographed *Artifact*, Juilliard-trained Eva Crossman-Hecht was his rehearsal pianist, and she composed the rest of the score based on Ferruccio Busoni's transcription of Bach's "Chaconne." Portions of Crossman-Hecht's score require improvisation based on the themes and style of the Bach "Chaconne." *Artifact* will be accompanied by Margot Kazimirska (February 23–25) and Boston Ballet Senior Principal Solo Pianist Freda Locker (February 26–March 5). In addition to the choreography, Forsythe designed streamlined costumes, sets, and dramatic lighting for *Artifact*—all of which work together with the music to establish the ballet's mesmerizing atmosphere.

William Forsythe is "widely recognized as one of the most important choreographers working today" (Roslyn Sulcas, *The New York Times*), and his work has been performed by virtually every major ballet company in the world. Forsythe danced with the Joffrey Ballet and Stuttgart Ballet, where he was appointed Resident Choreographer in 1976. He spent the next seven years of his career creating new work for Stuttgart and companies around the world. In 1984, he began a 20-year tenure as director of Ballet Frankfurt. He later served as the director of The Forsythe Company—a new, independent ensemble based in Dresden and Frankfurt am Main—which he directed from 2005 to 2015. Forsythe's work continues to be commissioned by the world's most prestigious companies, and he regularly gives lectures and workshops at universities and cultural institutions around the world. He is an Honorary Fellow at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London and holds an Honorary Doctorate from The

Juilliard School. Forsythe is a Professor of Dance and Artistic Advisor for the Choreographic Institute at the University of Southern California Glorya Kaufman School of Dance.

Boston Ballet established a five-year partnership with Forsythe in 2016. In addition to presenting reprised works from the Company's current Forsythe repertoire, Boston Ballet will add at least one of his works to its repertoire each year, resulting in the richest collection of Forsythe ballets in the United States. Nissinen and Forsythe will work together to select the programming for Boston Ballet, and the legendary choreographer and his assistants and staggers will work directly with the Company. Boston Ballet first presented Forsythe's *Love Songs* in 1989. Since 2002, Mikko Nissinen has grown Boston Ballet's Forsythe repertoire by four additional works: *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated* (2002, 2005), *The Vile Parody of Address* (2008 Night of Stars), *The Second Detail* (2011, 2012, 2014), and *The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude* (2015, 2016).

Related Events

A special BB@home performance titled "Focus on Forsythe" will highlight Forsythe's vast body of work and choreographic process. The Company will perform excerpts of *Artifact* following a discussion between Forsythe and Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen. BB@home takes place on February 10, 2017 at 7:30 pm at Boston Ballet's South End headquarters.

On February 15, Boston Ballet will stream rehearsal of *Artifact* with Forsythe on Facebook Live. For more details, visit [facebook.com/bostonballet](https://www.facebook.com/bostonballet).

The 2017 performances of Artifact were made possible by generous gifts from a sponsorship circle including Donna and Michael Egan and Andrea and Frederick Hoff.

The Company expresses its deepest gratitude to Lisa and Tom Blumenthal for their extraordinary support of William Forsythe and his partnership with Boston Ballet.

All performances of *Artifact* take place at the Boston Opera House (539 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111):

Thursday, Feb 23 at 7:30 pm

Friday, Feb 24 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, Feb 25 at 1 pm

Saturday, Feb 25 at 7:30 pm*

Sunday, Feb 26 at 1 pm

*Post-show talk with Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and artists

Thursday, Mar 2 at 7:30 pm

Friday, Mar 3 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, Mar 4 at 1 pm

Saturday, Mar 4 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, Mar 5 at 1 pm

Tickets start at \$35. For more information, visit bostonballet.org or call 617.695.6955.

Artifact is approximately 2 hours with one intermission.

Artifact

Choreography: William Forsythe

Music:

Part I: Eva Crossman-Hecht

Part II: J.S. Bach: Chaconne from Partita No.2 BWV 1004 in D-Minor, performed by Nathan Milstein
Part III: Sound Collage by William Forsythe
Part IV: Eva Crossman-Hecht

Stage, lighting, and costume design: William Forsythe
Text: William Forsythe
Staging by: Kathryn Bennetts, Noah Gelber
Pianist: Margot Kazimirska, Freda Locker

About Boston Ballet

Since 1963, Boston Ballet's internationally acclaimed performances of classical, neo-classical, and contemporary ballets, combined with a dedication to world class dance education and community initiative programs, have made the institution a leader in its field, with a 53-year history of promoting excellence and access to dance.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Meredith Max Hodges, the Company maintains a diverse repertoire, ranging from full-length ballets to new works by some of today's finest choreographers. Boston Ballet's second company, Boston Ballet II, is comprised of dancers who gain experience by performing with the Company and independently, presenting special programs to audiences throughout the Northeast.

Boston Ballet School, the official school of Boston Ballet, has a long-standing dedication to providing exceptional dance education and ballet training to students across three studios in Boston, Newton, and the North Shore. Led by Director Margaret Tracey, the School reaches more than 5,000 students (toddler to adult) each year through its four core programs: Children's Program, Classical Ballet Program, Adult Dance Program, and Pre-Professional Program.

Boston Ballet's Department of Education and Community Initiatives (ECI) provides programming, events, and activities that connect the community to dance. ECI reaches more than 4,000 individuals in Boston, North Shore, and the surrounding communities each year through Citydance, ECI on Location, Adaptive Dance, and other community programs.

For more information, please visit bostonballet.org.

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