



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CORNISH COLLEGE OF THE ARTS RECEIVES \$10,000 TO RESTAGE BILL EVANS MASTERPIECE

SEATTLE, WA – Cornish College of the Arts recently received a \$10,000 grant for the reconstruction of choreographer Bill Evans' *Mixin' It Up*, set to music by the jazz pianist Bill Evans, to be performed in the Fall of 2007. The award is being made possible by American Masterpieces: Dance, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts, which is administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts with Dance/USA. *Mixin' It Up* will be staged during a three-week residency that will include master classes and community outreach activities.

Mixin' It Up will be restaged by the Cornish Dance Department in collaboration with the Cornish Music Department. Cornish Dance Theater (the Dance Department's undergraduate performing ensemble) will perform to compositions by jazz pianist Bill Evans, performed live by Cornish music students. Former Bill Evans Trio drummer Joe La Barbera will be a visiting artist in the Music Department, enabling both Music and Dance students to learn about this collaborative work from its originators.

The residency will celebrate choreographer Bill Evans' influence on the evolution of modern dance in the Pacific Northwest and at Cornish College of the Arts. Evans has choreographed over 200 dances and his works have been performed by the Bill Evans Dance Company (BEDC), as well as the Repertory Dance Theater, Ballet West, Ririe-Woodbury, Pacific Northwest Ballet, American Ballet Theater, and Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers. At its height in the 1970's, the Bill Evans Dance Company toured the United States extensively, attracting many young dancers to Seattle. An entire generation of Seattle choreographers either performed with the BEDC or initially moved to Seattle to study with Evans, including Wade Madsen, Pat Graney, Llory Wilson, Christian Swenson, Gail Heilbron and Shirley Jenkins. Subsequent generations of Seattle choreographers studied or performed with these artists, carrying the Evans legacy into the 21st century.

The Evans legacy has continued at Cornish in Evans-based technique classes taught by faculty member Wade Madsen, a former member of the BEDC. Performing Evans' choreography will allow contemporary Cornish students to enhance their existing training in the Evans Technique, experience the relationship of Evans' class vocabulary to his choreographic language, and create a personal connection to their artistic heritage.

Mixin' It Up was premiered in Seattle in 1979. It was Evans' second collaboration with the renowned jazz ensemble, the Bill Evans Trio. *Mixin' It Up* is a collage in six sections that includes excerpts from other Evans' masterworks (*Five Songs in August* [1972]), *Jukebox* [1974]) as well as new choreography created specifically for this dance. In this work Evans crystallized a personal movement vocabulary and, with inspiration from the jazz musicians, began to interweave set choreography and improvisational structures. For the first time he integrated modern dance, vernacular jazz and rhythm tap, a fusion that has become a hallmark of his most recent work.

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About Cornish College of the Arts:

Cornish College of the Arts provides aspiring artists with the educational opportunities to become professionals in their fields. The College offers Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Art, Dance, Design, Performance Production and Theater, and a Bachelor of Music degree. It is one of three private colleges in the United States focusing on both the performing and visual arts, and the only college of its kind in the Northwest. The College is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design and has a national reputation for its faculty, curriculum, and student performance and exhibition opportunities.

Since its founding by Nellie Cornish in 1914, Cornish College of the Arts has contributed to the nation's cultural and intellectual heritage through its alumni and faculty. Historically, these figures include choreographers and dancers Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Syvilla Fort and Bonnie Bird; composer John Cage; painters Mark Tobey, William Cumming, and William Ivey; photographer Imogen Cunningham; educator Calvin B. Cady and broadcaster Chet Huntley, to name just a few. More recently these figures are joined by Brendan Fraser (film actor), Patrick Haskett (painter), Steve Jenson (sculptor), Paul Owen Lewis (illustrator), Lois Rathvon McCarter (dancer/choreographer), Evyind Kang (violinist), Jarrad Powell and Joshua Kohl (composers). And, the College continues to represent the Northwest's largest concentration of professional artists dedicated to instruction.

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