



BALLET AUSTIN



***GRIMM TALES* PRESS REPORT
PREPARED BY CULTURAL COUNSEL**

BY THE NUMBERS

Total Combined Circulation: 4,147,177,953

Total Press Hits: 30

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GRIMM TALES



COVERAGE SNAPSHOT



PRESS COVERAGE

PRESS COVERAGE

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

March 27, 2019

Mayhem and Murder Star in a Fairy Tale Ballet

By Kelly Crow

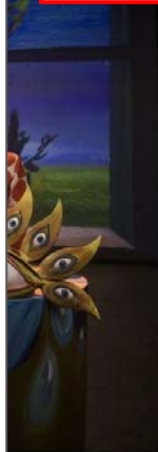


"Grimm Tales," a ballet opening Friday in Austin, Texas, has queens and dwarves and a frog-kissing princess—but doesn't end happily ever after.

The Ballet Austin production is based on tales from the Brothers Grimm and inspired by the gritty drawings of Natalie Frank, an artist who has spent the past eight years exploring the gruesome scenarios behind "Snow White," "Cinderella" and other folk stories.

Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin's artistic director, choreographed the ballet and commissioned a score from composer Graham Reynolds. Ms. Frank shaped the look of the production and created 35 drawings for the sets. Some drawings are animated and will be projected on to

The Ballet Austin production is based on tales from the Brothers Grimm and inspired by the gritty drawings of Natalie Frank, an artist who has spent the past eight years exploring the gruesome scenarios behind "Snow White," "Cinderella" and other folk stories.



asked artist Natalie Frank, center, to paint, to design costumes for the ballet. Ms. Hoffman is a costume headpiece Frank painted for "The Frog King"—a story

Ms. Hoffman saw an exhibit at the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, Texas, that explored the Brothers Grimm's universe. Between 1812



"Grimm Tales." Top left, an image for "The Frog King"; bottom left, a drawing for "Snow White."

asked Ms. Frank to draw a carnivalesque scene. She was a "dream come true" for Mr. Hoffman, and met his first

her Grimm series to call the term "fairy tale." She's rough her new gallery



ing Tuesday's rehearsal of



Austin's rehearsal on Tuesday. From left: Elise Peñoles and Ian J. Renner play the daughter.



the daughter, Ian J. Renner, plays his father.

ies. In "The Frog King," a woman is warned to be wary of a frog, who is in and pluck out the golden bird, fatally



man decapitates her to marry her. Ms. Hoffman and pluck out the golden bird, fatally

for. The dwarves are the cabaret act



Based on the tale of Snow

"Grimm Tales," a ballet opening Friday in Austin, Texas, has queens and dwarves and a frog-kissing princess—but doesn't end happily ever after.

INSTAGRAM

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wsj • A murdered boy resurrected as a golden bird and a wart-covered frog-turned-prince star in a new ballet inspired by one artist's kaleidoscopic take on the gruesome side of fairy tales.

"Grimm Tales," a @balletaustin production that premiered this past weekend, is based on stories from the Brothers Grimm and shaped by the gritty drawings of @nataliegwenfrank, who has spent years exploring the sinister scenarios behind "Snow White," "Cinderella" and other folk tales.

"Sex, beauty, power—some of these stories sound like they could be a great Netflix series," said Ballet



PRESS COVERAGE

WWD

January 15, 2019

Costume Designer Constance Hoffman, Artist Natalie Frank Team for 'Grimm Tales' Ballet

By: Kristen Tauer



Like many popular classical ballets, Ballet Austin's newest production is plucked from the world of fairy tales.

But fairy tales aren't synonymous with idealism, and "Grimm Tales," a full-length ballet making its debut March 29, explores the dark and often horrific side of Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm's 19th-century stories.

inspired by an exhibition of aptly titled "Grimm Tales." Frank's feminist voice of the Grimms'

can as women's oral tales, and desires, at a time where progressive," says Frank of her set of dancers: the bodies, tales aren't traditional."

onstage projections and designer Constance Hoffman, collaborating on the textile each element — including stitching the various parts.

top in Brooklyn, it's quickly a friendship over the course of creation of this scope, rooted in the experience of discomfort



and WWD invited her to work on the project. I was sure that her involvement would

isn't somehow intruding, to find my own paintings and drawings that Frank's to suggest that Frank design the I asked the question again, I said, "want me to do this?" she adds. The tensions of myself as well as of Natalie to make sure that we each had our

to watch the company's dancers approach to the costumes. Through

made this first set, and every thing, and I realized when translated onstage."

ing from a still image when go of specific details in the

to them, an audience can't see. "The idea of aggregation, and making room for the

"Snow White" and "Juniper tree." The darkness of the out the female characters. es, lending a topical quality

we're beginning the ballet I found a lot of humor to production for children.



by Constance Hoffman, Lexie Moreland/WWD

[constance-hoffman-artist-natalie-frank-grimm-tales-ballet-austin-12](#)

Ballet Austin artistic director and choreographer Stephen Mills was inspired by an exhibition of New York-based artist Natalie Frank's work and accompanying book, aptly titled "Grimm Tales." Frank's colorful drawings underscore the provocative nature and feminist voice of the Grimms' stories, an element that has also been adapted into the world of ballet.

PRESS COVERAGE

artnet® news

October 4, 2018

Artist Natalie Frank's Dark Spin on the Brothers Grimm Is Being Transformed Into a New Ballet

By: Sarah Cascone



Natalie Frank, drawing for The Frog King (Grimm Tales), 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Natalie Frank's deliciously dark fairy tale drawings, the stars of her critically acclaimed 2015 show at New York's Drawing Center, are being transformed into a new ballet. Grimm Tales will debut in March at Ballet Austin and will feature a new score by Graham Reynolds and original choreography by Stephen Mills, paired with sets and costumes designed based on Frank's work.

The seeds for the show were planted when "Natalie Frank: The Brothers Grimm"—which has also inspired a book, Natalie Frank: Tales of the Brothers Grimm—traveled to the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas. Mills, a choreographer for the Ballet Austin, is also an

arranging with his partner to purchase a set of her "Grimm" museum.

ooking for new narratives." Mills told artnet News, noting that artists Trenton Doyle Hancock and Michael Smith. "I was there meone came up to me and said 'wouldn't these be wonderful

r multiple reasons. The ballet, of course, has a long history of fairy tales, and many artists have helped bring dance Rauschenberg collaborated extensively with the Merce and Pablo Picasso made sets and costumes for the Ballets

ong fan of ballet, with a love instilled by her mother from a fruitful point of inspiration for her work in the past. In 2017, minatrixes for the erotic paintings in "Natalie Frank: Dancers Hoffman Gallery.



the decision wasn't difficult. "I was like 'oh my God, that's old artnet News.

r ballet staged thanks to Ballet Austin's Butler New a \$3 million philanthropic gift that will allow the company years. (This type of generosity in the performing arts is," Mills noted.)

's drawings have this very sensual and sexual and violent slyly reflects the original tales, which were not as sanitized added.



Grimm Tales, rendering. Courtesy of Ballet Austin.

werful, and I loved discovered their female-driven roots," on the women in tales, and their capacity to be evil,

ography that draws on a wide range of dance of background." Mills admitted.) The story will drop, with Frank's vibrantly colored drawings sive environment designed by George Tyspin.



son (2015–14). Courtesy of the artist.

g roughly 30 new pieces for the production. A agal, who famously designed the sets and

igher Constance Hoffman, were particularly in the figure, but with these, the figure is the selpo replicate the effects of the gouache and

Natalie Frank's deliciously dark fairy tale drawings, the stars of her critically acclaimed 2015 show at New York's Drawing Center, are being transformed into a new ballet. Grimm Tales will debut in March at Ballet Austin and will feature a new score by Graham Reynolds and original choreography by Stephen Mills, paired with sets and costumes designed based on Frank's work.

PRESS COVERAGE

artnet® news

March 31, 2019

How Can a Simple Drawing Become an Epic Fairy-Tale Ballet? Artist Natalie Frank Describes Her Process

By Rachel Corbett



you start to
usual, it's
he Nutcracker
emporary ballet,

and set design
her drawings
l, the Frog

might wear.
ered historical
I loved this image

our
Constance
costume
if I knew
elate on
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ea about
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's robe.

ed from our drawings and his
most of the elements of the
ons here are intended to mimic
would feel touched and shaped by

the king, who perhaps
Juniper Tree costumes

rog nature. We wanted
princess—are mere
ones.
h, such as the crowns,
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an extender that made it
ized that much of the
more contrast of light

dimensional life
light. We are
ch. 21. Natalie
of New York's

There's a longstanding tradition of artists collaborating with ballet companies, from Picasso's Cubist sets for the Ballets Russes to Chagall's costumes for the Magic Flute and Firebird. But rarely does an artist's work inspire an entirely new ballet, as it did this past weekend when the the Austin Ballet premiered Grimm Tales, a production based on drawings by the New York-based artist Natalie Frank, who also created many of the resulting performance's visual elements.

PRESS COVERAGE

Galerie

April 2, 2019

Natalie Frank Lends Her Dark Feminist Vision to a New Production of Ballet Austin

By Abby Ronner



Artist Natalie Frank is most well-known for a series of portraits she did of the happily-ever-after Grimm Brothers tales in favor of their more sinister roots and female power. In Grimm Tales, a collaboration with Ballet Austin that debuted last weekend, Frank's vision is given new life in the sets and costumes in this production that reimagines three Grimm Brothers fairy tales through a feminist lens.

ballet combines the choreography of Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin's artistic director; the music of composer Graham Reynolds, who has scored many of Richard Linklater's films (and collaborated with Mills on previous shows); and the costume design of Tony Award-nominated and New York-based costume designer Constance Hoffman, to achieve a captivating, and at times disturbing, experience.



and, specifically, a Ring cycle," Frank says. "Such visual imagery in my work has been of great interest to me."



Frank has been decapitated by his wicked stepmother as the stepmother chops him and apparently sharp—one nicked the audience as Frank's animated drawing of the dancers.

Without one element overshadowing the other, the production challenges Frank and the dancers within this liminal space. What makes the production so compelling is Frank's paintings as they provide a more holistic understanding of the fairy tales.



territory for Frank. Her work often explores themes of "sex and violence come to explore these themes from new perspectives." "This has all taught me about the importance of the stage that is viewable and accessible to allow unfolding through both

With Frank's drawings as a backdrop, the Grimm Tales ballet combines the choreography of Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin's artistic director; the music of composer Graham Reynolds, who has scored many of Richard Linklater's films (and collaborated with Mills on previous shows); and the costume design of Tony Award-nominated and New York-based costume designer Constance Hoffman, to achieve a captivating, and at times disturbing, experience.

PRESS COVERAGE

COOL HUNTING

April 1, 2019

Grimm Tales at Ballet Austin

By Thomas High



Grimm Tales at Ballet Austin is a hyper-stimulating visual experience wherein Natalie Frank's compelling drawings and Stephen Mills' contemporary choreography demand equal attention.

of Art, Veronica
NYC to see the
they were shown

works to come
telling the dark
of the Disney
production and

is that would be
ed by Graham
s. "The idea of
" she says. "I'm
the figure is the
er's thunder or



on. Scene and
set design and
into 3D forms.
e another, the

at the creative
r, Snow White
nger for power
slation by Jack



h character danced by Oliver
sts around the body of The
role of the woman dancer is
with little agency. This story
s to the Frog King. When she
nds that she sees it through.

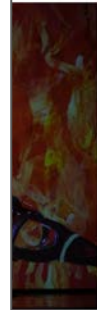
he themes of consent and its
The Princess rejects the
splattering him dead to reveal



the violent battle between
g kiss" of the prince, and
he seven dwarfs. As the
and Snow White (danced
dwarfs work tirelessly to
that finally allows her to



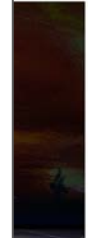
r to physically support
s her languid body moves.
is forced to wear red-hot
antic as she is thrown and



is a scene of romance
mentioned juniper
o of her blood soaks
he tree gives her a
f an overfilled heart.
ers the stepmother



gh her attempts to secure
e apex, the stepmother
her chest. The trembling
able, as she assists her
her to eat. The daughter,
ik scarf and returns them



the stage. His
poe in tandem,
pmother with a

emporary ballet
points of hunger
ngli of Disney's
lupied with the
nose creates an
customized to in
experience.

PRESS COVERAGE

Glasstire {Texas visual art}

April 20, 2019

Natalie Frank's Grimm Fairy Tales in Austin

By Sean J. Patrick Carney



In the new feature-length dance work *Grimm Tales*, Ballet Austin artistic director Stephen Mills has

onymous dance



ter and voltaic
lude well-known
olden Hairs. But
pulate Disney's
inal, subversive
Wilhelm Grimm
roles, frequently
counts reading
Grimm at the
ark, sexual, and

in a 2015 solo
body of work,
romanticized.
an expanded
Art Museum in
others Grimm,
he Blanton that
tion.

ted in 2015 on Belle Redux, a dark
scrim, crisp projections of Frank's
Occasionally animated, the drawings
and his live music ensemble in the



Tony-nominated designer Constance
er out to bring her indelicate Grimm
White is particularly clever. Darting
hunting camo, the Huntsman is
the vindictive Queen resembles an
le entendre on the Latin epithet. The
id body about, before being slain and
ids. From the colors and textures in
painted, to Hoffman's Hessian rags
it feels an awful lot like watching the

descriptive. Dancers coil and
with convincing surprise or
a dreamy quality to their
skin to our own, but having
y a little bit softer. Without
raction means. The women,
ther in *The Juniper Tree* is
im into a savory pie that his
been, is as exciting to watch



early pieces recalled the
nd "allegorized" wartime
ron Hey's abstract work
anal, and wryly obnoxious
nd being a little garish to
in conversation with Mike
ation" of Johanna Spyri's
imes and Sue de Beer's
di 2 from 1999-2000).



Gallery, all from 2016, are
pair of the dances — from
Room. Where Frank's
er works are scenic, and
s that appear projected at
they ought to be calmer,
on stage in front of them
them closely. Every work
ndscape *Frog King*. Lora
bused for the ballet, there
n't on the gallery's walls,
ore autonomous Grimm
station from an ambitious

s, or prurient side, Grimm
ous translations — from
gular American culture's
stade — and how that

ave gaps in the
hearing as they
hat many of us

018
in March 29-31.

Grimm Tales levels a pointed critique at patriarchal tropes in stories that many of us grew up with, and in doing so, manages to have a hell of a lot of fun.

PRESS COVERAGE

YAHOO!

LIFESTYLE

January 15, 2019

Costume Designer Constance Hoffman, Artist Natalie Frank Team for 'Grimm Tales' Ballet

By Staff Writer



But fairy tales aren't synonymous with idealism, and "Grimm Tales," a full-length ballet making its debut March 29, explores the dark and often horrific side of Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm's 19th-century stories.



October 4, 2018

Ballet Austin to Premiere GRIMM TALES

By: Staff Writer



Choreographer Stephen Mills and Ballet Austin are pleased to present the world premiere of Grimm Tales, a full-length work inspired by the visual art of Natalie Frank. Debuting March 29-31, 2019 at The Long Center for the Performing Arts in Downtown Austin, Grimm Tales is a contemporary reimagining of the nineteenth-century fairy tales-provocative, uncensored versions of childhood standards. Tickets are currently on sale.

Grimm Tales presents three classic stories from the translations of scholar Jack Zipes: The Frog King, Snow White, and The Juniper Tree. Though these stories have most often been presented in a family-friendly manner, they were originally studies in the grotesquerie of everyday life,

Choreographer Stephen Mills and Ballet Austin are pleased to present the world premiere of Grimm Tales, a full-length work inspired by the visual art of Natalie Frank.

new drawings, as well as animations, to serve as backdrops for the ballet. These are in addition

PRESS COVERAGE

DANCE

magazine

April 16, 2019

The Endowment That Funds New Ballets Forever

By Jennifer Stahl



As much as audiences might flock to Swan Lake or The Nutcracker, ballet can't only rely on old war horses if it wants to remain relevant. But building new full-lengths from scratch is expensive.

So where can companies find the money?

Ballet Austin's biggest longtime donors, Dr. Ernest C. and Sarah G. Butler, have one answer: the Butler New Choreography Endowment. Three years ago, they gave \$1 million into a designated fund, allowing Ballet Austin to draw on the dividends every year, which average about \$100,000 (depending on the stock market). That money is earmarked

for the development of new ballets by the company's choreographer in residence, currently artistic director Stephen Mills.

The \$3 million remains invested, so that it can keep earning interest to fund more



Butler," explains Sarah Butler, describing how their initial donation will continue to support new works in perpetuity. "It relieves Stephen of the constant burden of having to fund the expenses of costumes, music, sets—all the facets of developing a new ballet."

Other dance companies have various forms of endowments, but this one is specifically for new ballets.

The first work to result from the Butlers' gift premiered last month: Mills' Grimm Tales, inspired

The onstage was a thrill. "It was funny. It was sad. It was touching. It reached our audience here in Austin in just amazing



It always be quite so successful, and she's okay with that. It's a part of life. The new ballet could be rejected or it could give money. But if you're doing it in the form of an endowment, so if you have a loss, you just go ahead and you do

The ballet is slated for Ballet Austin's 2022-23 season.

[https://www.balletaustin.org/2019/04/16/butler-new-choreography-endowment-2634328339.html?rebellitem=5#rebellitem=5](#)

The first work to result from the Butlers' gift premiered last month: Mills' Grimm Tales, inspired by the drawings of visual artist Natalie Frank. Because of the endowment, Ballet Austin was able to collaborate with Frank to build fantastical new costumes and sets, and Mills also commissioned composer Graham Reynolds to write an original score.

PRESS COVERAGE

whitewall

April 3, 3019

Natalie Frank and Ballet Austin's "Grimm Tales"

By Katy Donoghue



Last weekend, Ballet Austin performed the world premiere of "Grimm Tales," a collaboration with artist **Natalie Frank**. **Stephen Mills** choreographed the full-length piece, inspired by the artist's drawings of *The Frog King*, *Snow White*, and *The Juniper Tree*.

Revolving around the theme of hunger—physical, sexual, and literal—New York-based Frank created over 30 drawings to work from with costume designer **Constance Hoffman** set designer **George Tsypin**.

Earlier this spring, *Whitewall* caught up with Frank to hear more about bringing the "Grimm Tales" to life.

Let Austin come about?

of Ballet Austin, approached me. We had stor at the **Bianton Museum of Art. Sarah** dment to do new collaborations. The first day Stephen said, "Would you like to do

les to life would be amazing. And he und Constance Hoffman, who works a lot —I remember watching the opening to talked about what we envisioned and I



into costumes and set designs?

tion. The sets are projections of about 35

Edward Carey, the writer and artist, to original stories. They are all unified by the eral hunger. And the production is definitely

?

hat we loved from the Grimm's. I've always a strong heroine, humor, sexuality, hilarious d be a great way to start the ballet. And we of the darkest of Grimm's fairy tales. And in

in a saccharine ending, so we have her taken some liberties in terms of feminist e female characters to do what they want to

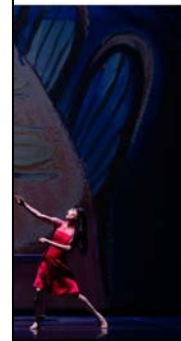


take back to the studio?

way to a ballet performance?

alis were how my initial drawings tail-oriented, at first. That amount of ment and in three dimensions. So it r—what information do you need to

ow. My work here is meant to support en probably the biggest lesson.



Revolving around the theme of hunger—physical, sexual, and literal—New York-based Frank created over 30 drawings to work from with costume designer Constance Hoffman set designer George Tsypin.

PRESS COVERAGE

ELEPHANT

April 22, 2019

The Visual Artists Designing for the Stage

By Philomena Epps



exas, the Ballet
Frank. In recent
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Ballet Russes,
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felt it was an
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, futurism and
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mmunities (the



ses in 1913. A century later, over 150
In 1930, the original choreographer
m dancer Martha Graham, who had
returned to the score with her own
sion and release now known as the
primal intensity of human experience
her sets, usually favouring an empty
Noguchi for Frontier (1935). He would
symbolic rather than decorative to



pany would go on to become
Merce Cunningham. In 1953,
he similarly embodies Bowlt's
irms". Over seven decades,
s visual artists, composers,
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June Paik, Yvonne Rainer,
Dean.

ography dance could exist
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founded on "carte-blanche
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painting, collage, fabric and



k with Cunningham. They
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lash in 2002, or Wayne
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ative installation for "+/-"
cross-pollination across



designer Stevie Stewart
rtle angle, with Chanel
hers forming bonds with
for Anne Teresa De
Alexandra Bachetzis's
s relationship with Gery
s and artists has become
e of Codes in 2014 and
ative installation for "+/-"
cross-pollination across

seems that this

Over the last weekend in March at the Long Center in downtown Austin, Texas, the Ballet Austin presented Grimm Tales, a performance inspired by the work of Natalie Frank. In recent years, the painter has been responding to the original, gruesome fairytales and giving them a subversive feminist twist.

POINTE

February / March 2019

Mixed-Media Premieres Take the Stage

By Chava Lansky

CALL BOARD



Mixed-Media Premieres Take the Stage

Literature, painting, and music come together at Nashville Ballet and Ballet Austin. The winter is new medium-blending full-length ballets.

February 8–10, Nashville Ballet presents *Attitude: Lucy Negro Redux*, choreographed by artistic director Paul Vasterling and based on Caroline Randall Williams' 2015 book of poetry *Lucy Negro, Redux*. In a collaboration investigating the theory that the mysterious Dark Lady to whom William Shakespeare dedicated many of his sonnets was actually a black historical figure known as Lucy Negro. Featuring an original score by Rhiannon Giddens, with spoken word performed live by Williams, Vasterling's ballet explores Shakespeare's romantic ideals from the point of view of the Dark Lady. *Attitude: Lucy Negro Redux* is running from February 8–10, while director Stephen Mills dives into the dark, uncensored side of three of the world's best-loved fairy tales.

After 20 Years, Forsythe Creates a New Ballet for an American Company

In 1998, choreographer Mark Forsythe returned back to the U.S. after the revolutionary choreographer's first decade in Europe. Now, after a partnership with the company, Forsythe will add to his repertoire with a new full-length work from an American repertoire for the opening new work, *Booker T. Washington*. Forsythe's program, March 7–11 features the world premiere of *Booker T. Washington* for an American company in a piece that has been adapted as the film *Booker T. Washington* in the North American premiere of *Booker T. Washington*.



Natalie Frank's drawings show another side of the Brothers Grimm's stories



Mixed-Media Premieres Take the Stage

Literature, painting, poetry and music come together at Nashville Ballet and Ballet Austin this winter in new, medium-blending full-length ballets.

February 8–10, Nashville Ballet presents *Attitude: Lucy Negro Redux*, choreographed by artistic director Paul Vasterling and based on Caroline Randall Williams' 2015 book of poetry, *Lucy Negro, Redux*. In it, Williams investigates the theory that the mysterious Dark Lady to whom William Shakespeare dedicated many of his sonnets was actually a black historical figure known as Lucy Negro. Featuring an original score by Rhiannon Giddens, with spoken word performed live by Williams, Vasterling's ballet explores Shakespeare's romantic life from the point of view of the Dark Lady (danced by Kayla Rowser) while focusing on themes of love, otherness and equality.

In Ballet Austin's *Grimm Tales*, debuting March 29–31, artistic director Stephen Mills dives into the dark, uncensored side of three of the world's best-loved fairy tales: "Snow White," "The Frog King" and "The Juniper Tree." Mills' ballet is inspired by visual artist Natalie Frank's vividly colored drawings, which focus on the feminist interpretations of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's infamous stories. The ballet will feature new artwork by Frank and music by composer Graham Reynolds.

—Chava Lansky



From top: Rosalie O'Connor, Courtesy Boston Ballet; Heather Thorne, Courtesy Nashville Ballet; Jordan Moore, Courtesy Ballet Austin

PRESS COVERAGE

PAPER CITY.

March 1, 2019

Spinning Tales

By Lisa Collins Shaddock



SPINNING TALES

BY LISA COLLINS SHADDOCK



Natalie Frank, *Drawing for Grimm Tales - The Frog King, 2018*

Once upon a time, Stephen Mills, artistic director of Ballet Austin, was presented with a special gift: a grant that would fully endow the creation of a new full-length contemporary dance. However, there was one condition: Everything must be entirely new, from the music and choreography to the costumes and design, even the narrative itself.

Mills set off on an extensive search for the elusive fruit of inspiration — a spark that would ignite his vision. One fateful day at the Blanton Museum of Art, he happened upon an exhibition of drawings entitled “Natalie Frank: The Brothers Grimm.” Enchanted by the works — depictions of the age-old fairy tales that were at once gruesome, aggressive, vibrant, and fantastic — he knew he had to find the artist.

Born in Austin but based in New York City, Natalie Frank, an internationally acclaimed painter and

published author with degrees from Yale and Columbia, had accomplished much in her career. But she dreamed of seeing her work brought to life in a new way. When she and Mills met, they immediately clicked and embarked on a collaboration in which their artistic worlds would collide.

The resulting work, titled *Grimm Tales*, makes its world premiere this month at the Long Center for the Performing Arts in a multisensory performance that Ballet Austin has labeled “viewer discretion advised.” This is not your typical fairy tale — but even the 200-year-old stories that inspired Frank and Mills have many unexpected sides to them. The two consulted with fairy-tale expert Edward Carey to develop the narrative, peeling back the layers of hundreds of stories penned by the Brothers Grimm before selecting three to interpret in the performance: *The Frog King*, *Snow White*, and *The Juniper Tree* — the latter, a lighthearted tale about a young boy who is decapitated by his

stepmother then cooked into a stew.

Many are surprised by the horrific nature of the original tales, but what initially drew Frank to explore them in her work is an even lesser-known fact: They were all originally told by women. “These were oral tales passed by women from generation to generation and used as a space to talk about their daily life, anxieties, and fears, all capped by the conventions of their time,” she says. “I loved imagining how these tales would reverberate if they were reclaimed by women.”

Along with select works from her exhibition that will be incorporated into the show, Frank has created more than 30 new drawings to be used as backdrops, as well as animated and projected at different points of the performance. She’s also worked closely with the show’s costume designer, Tony Award-nominated Constance Hoffman, to replicate her hand in pastel and gouache on custom textiles, creating a hand-drawn feel throughout the entire production.

In addition to Frank, Hoffman, and Carey, Mills has assembled a remarkable team of collaborators for the project, including composer Graham Reynolds, set designer George Teypin, and, of course, the dancers. As for the choreography, Mills’ approach is to keep refining up until the curtain draws. When he spoke, he was still determining what style would best express the narrative. “It will not be classical in nature. There may or may not be pointe shoes — we’ll play it by ear,” he says, finally declaring. “You can’t really tell a story about decapitation en pointe.”

Grimm Tales, March 29 – 31, at the Long Center for the Performing Arts, 701 W. Riverside Dr., Austin, ballaustin.org

“It will not be classical in nature. There may or may not be pointe shoes — we’ll play it by ear. You can’t really tell a story about decapitation en pointe.” — Stephen Mills

PRESS COVERAGE

PAPER CITY.

March 19, 2019

Dark Fairy Tales Take Ballet Austin to a Fantastical New World — Viewer Discretion Advised

By Lisa Collins Shaddock



... Grimm Tales, makes its world premiere on March 29th at the Long Center for Performing Arts in a multi-sensory performance that Ballet Austin has labeled “viewer discretion advised.”

Along with select works from her exhibition that will be incorporated into the show, Frank has created more than 30 new drawings to be used as backdrops, as well as animated and projected at different points of the performance.

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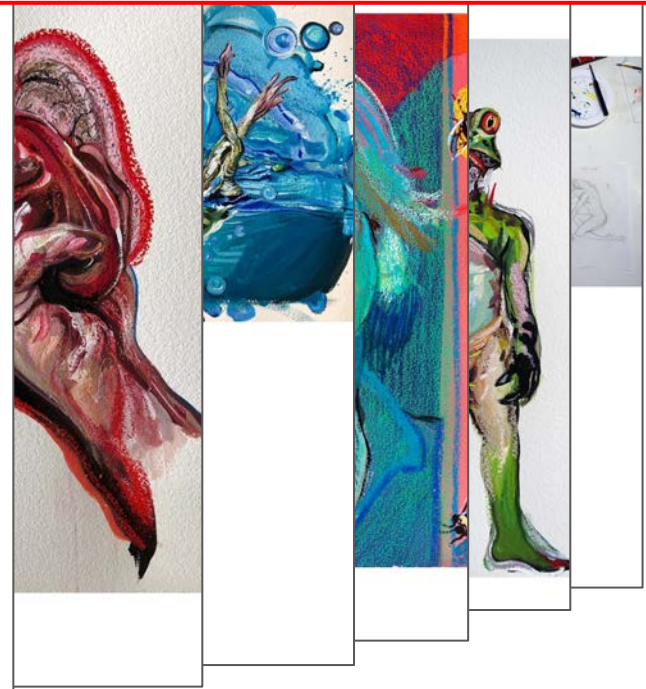
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And, reader, it will likely be your own hunger for beauty – for the well-wrought arts of dance, image, music, and storytelling – that drives you to experience Ballet Austin's Grimm Tales, at least once upon a time, in this thriving city by a river.

ARTS & CULTURE





Brutally Frank

In Ballet Austin's *Grimm Tales*, Stephen Mills and company embody an artist's fabulous vision

BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER

Once, in a thriving city by a river, there was a company of dancers who brought to their fine stage many stories of life to their times. The company was called Ballet Austin, and the man who created most of the company's dances – and certainly the most ambitious and well-received of those dances – was named Stephen Mills.

One day while viewing a series of paintings in a New York, which were maybe ten years "The Brothers Grimm" film, the space was large and are robust. And when I was talking about the things, I thought a good dance. And someone someone who I didn't know you've seen Ballet Austin and age that I do – and the next, like a good ballet? And I see you, yes, I think it would... well, Ballet Austin will sit the Grimm Tales – about of dance, presented one one immersion, and with the strength of artist

But of course ballet – and dance in general – relies heavily on music, and so Mills must engage the participation of a third collaborator. Fortunately, he's already established a working relationship with one of the city's most acclaimed (and prolific) composers: Graham Reynolds, of Golden Arm. The first time they worked together, back in 2007, it was to create a ballet based on Houston artist Donald Doyle Hencock's weird and complex body of work.

"With Theodor's work," says Reynolds, "it was a mythology he'd created since he was 7 years old – and we were doing a chapter within that mythology. With Natalie, she's taking the Grimm tales and doing a visual reinterpretation of them, and we're taking those to those stories and using her visual world to make a ballet. The biggest challenge is to create music that has the looseness and openness that I like. Usually we improvise and there's flexibility to what we do – but we can't improvise with a set

dialogue back and forth about it, whether they needed to be darker or lighter."

"Stephen and I have done so many projects since that first one that, ah," Reynolds pauses a beat, "communication at single, I guess?"

And the communication is also successful, it seems, for all concerned in this enterprise. "Stephen is the consummate artist and leader," says Frank.

"He's an empoverer of artists," agrees Reynolds.

"I've never worked with the many talented people on one project," says Frank. "And it's been a fever dream to bring these wonderful tales to life – as if right out of my drawings – with all of the color and heat and violence of the untranslaid versions."

"These Grimm stories are so dark," says Reynolds. "And in modern times, we get to – uh, where the purple cinema?"

"Barney?" suggests your reporter.

Reynolds offers a crumb between a smile and a grimace. "Barney, yeah," he says, "where kids' stories were super-productive. And, meanwhile, with the internet, kids see the whole scope of what the world really is. And there's something about the Grimm tales, about that god, that just resonates. I can't imagine someone a hundred years from now doing a Barney ballet, you know?"

But someone – the trio we've highlighted here, and the dancers of Ballet Austin – is doing a Grimm. Reinhold's ballet, this week-end, abetted in their sublime industry by costume designer Ocarina Hoffman, set designer George Trappin, and others – with the whole narrative scheme financed by writer Edward Casey.

It is a very wonder that fabric are where we get the word fabulous from? And of course they're often more than mere customary language for the kindergartners set.

"I didn't want to just tell children's stories," says Mills. "And when there's stories were originally being told, there was a lot of hunger around the world. And I thought, well, there are different ways to think about hunger – not just in get for food, nutrition. And we chose these stories because they reflect ancient hunger, and hunger for beauty, and hunger for power. It's that sort of emotional and psychological perspective that drives these stories."

And, reader, it will likely be your own hunger for beauty – for the well-wrought arts of dance, image, music, and storytelling – that drives you to experience Ballet Austin's Grimm Tales, at least once upon a time, in this thriving city by a river.

◆ Grimm Tales next March 28-31, 8 p.m., 8pm, Sun., 3pm, at Dell Hall in the Long Center, 701 W. Riverside. For more information, visit www.balletaustin.org.

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Austin American-Statesman

March 29, 2019

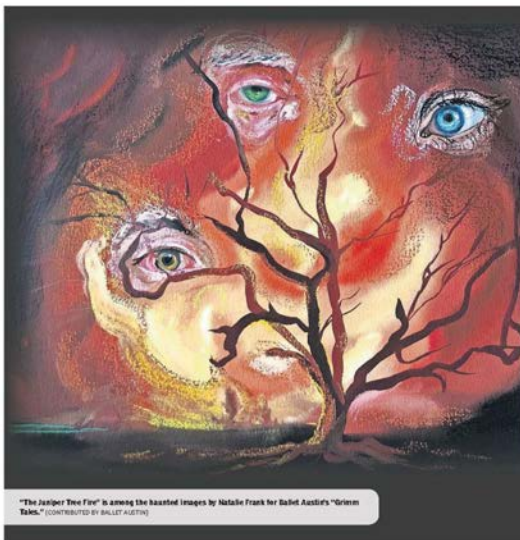
Into the heart of darkness with Ballet Austin's 'Grimm Tales'

By Michael Barnesz

T12 Friday, March 29, 2019 Austin American-Statesman

ARTS

Into the heart of darkness with Ballet Austin's 'Grimm Tales'



Stephen Mills finds inspiration in Natalie Frank's art

By Michael Barnesz
mbarnes@statesman.com

Art, of course, inspired the ballet. The three dances in Ballet Austin's "Grimm Tales," which plays March 29-31 at the Long Center for the Performing Arts, do in fact borrow their storylines from the more than 200 fairy tales collected by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm in the early 19th century.

Nevertheless, director Stephen Mills actually came to the material, not by reading them, but through the skill, technical art of Natalie Frank, the Austin-born artist who gave three and would be in New York City.

Director Michael Barnesz of Art curator Veronica Roberts, who set up "Natalie Frank: The Brothers Grimm" at the Austin museum in 2015, shared copies of the

See GRIMM, T13

"The Juniper Tree" is among the haunting images by Natalie Frank for Ballet Austin's "Grimm Tales." (CONTRIBUTED BY BALLET AUSTIN)

GRIMM

From Page T12

artist's dreamily symbolic images with Mills in advance of the exhibition.

"I loved them so much," Mills says. "I visited her show at the Drawing Center in New York to see them in person—I think there were 30 of them. I don't remember how many precisely—but I was struck by how much narrative content she could fit into one frame. And her unabashed use of color."

Frank's figurative artwork, full of potential and kinetic energy, haunted the memory of the dance maker.

"They caused me to think more deeply about these stories that we have been surrounded by since childhood," Mills says. "The stories are really dark. I wanted to tell the real stories, not the versions that children get today."

Not just an inspiration, Frank became a true partner in the creation of "Grimm Tales."

"Her hand has been in every bit of the process," Mills says. "She was integral in choosing the scenic and costume collaborators and bringing in novelist, visual artist, and playwright Edward Carey from the University of Texas faculty as a dramaturg (artistic advisor). Together, we had to decide which stories to tell, how they were to relate to each other, and how they would be cohesive."

Along the team and "This show without recom older.

The sequence is episodic; the tales are not interwoven as they are in the Stephen Sondheim musical, "Into the Woods."

"We thought about it, but then why not just do 'into



Dancers rehearse the "Snow White" portion of "Grimm Tales," a new work from Ballet Austin. Ashley Lynn Sherman is Snow White with woodsman/dwarves Kevin Mardock, Waters, from left, James Fuller and Paul Martin. (CONTRIBUTED BY ANNE MARIE BLOODGOOD)

Austin American-Statesman Friday, March 29, 2019 T13

The Woods'?" Mills says and laughs. "The sequence of the tales go from the lightest to the darkest."

In fact the last, "The Juniper Tree," contains themes of cannibalism, child abuse and murder, hence the age recommendation.

Mills and his creative team ran into some unusual problems putting together this premiere, the first commissioned by the Butler New

Ballet Austin's 'Grimm Tales'

When: 8 p.m. March 29-30, 3 p.m. March 31.

Where: Long Center, 701 E. Riverside Drive.

Cost: \$24 to \$89.

Information: balletaustin.org, 512-476-2163.

piece, and more like a dance. Ultimately, if it's a costume parade, just do a costume parade."

"Grimm Tales" was originally scheduled for spring 2018, but Mills wanted more time to work with Reynolds on the score. And the whole team wanted to get everything just right for the debut of the Butler Endowment, created with a \$3 million donation from Ernest and Sarah Butler. It produces

ballet thing. Nothing wrong with that genre; it's just not my thing right now. The Butler's gift allows me not to have to worry about that. In the end, we always package our shows up and let's make like everybody else. See what comes of it."

"In 'The Frog King,' the frog promises to fetch a favorite ball from a well if the princess takes him home and lets him eat at her table and sleep in her bed."

Like other Mills creations, Ballet Austin hopes that "Grimm Tales" will eventually hit the road.

crews produced more than 20 costumes and projections to invent the animated environments.

At least Mills had the previous experience of the 2008 ballet, "Cult of Color: Call to Color," another fantastical

what not to do," Mills says. "There's a line to draw in order to facilitate the dancing. Beautiful as I thought that world would was, it was problematic in terms of movement. 'Grimm Tales' is less about being an art performance

hit the road. "I hope that other ballet companies will be interested in it," Mills says. "I don't start with that in mind, but rather with what I am interested in making. I didn't want to cop out and do that children's

inheritance. "The overarching theme of work is hunger," Mills says. "We all hunger for something. 'The Frog King's' sexual 'Snow White' is about beauty, and 'The Juniper Tree' is about power."

Austin American-Statesman

March 29, 2019

Art Exhibits, Shows and Plays in Austin, March 22-28

By Staff Writer

114 Friday, March 29, 2019 Austin American-Statesman

ARTS

ART EXHIBITS, SHOWS AND PLAYS IN AUSTIN, MARCH 22-28

Theater & dance

"30 Friends." Telling the story of an unnamed Ukrainian town devastated by Russia, rebuilt by its inhabitants and exploited by its offspring, "30 Friends" produced by the University of Texas' New Theatre, is an exploration of education, legacy and creation that asks what it means to be British, rebuilt and turn 30. 7:30 p.m. Sunday; 2 p.m. Saturday. Free. J. Lomen Weisberg Drama Building, 2001 E. 22nd St., theathreofaustin.org/aust/30-friends.

"Antigone." Salvage Vanguard Theater takes on this contemporary translation of the classic Greek dramatic tale. "How do we care for the dead and how do we grieve amidst crisis?" The play was translated and strangely remapped by classical scholar and award-winning poet Anne Carson. 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday through April 6. \$15-\$20. Dougherty Arts Center, 1118 Barton Springs Road, salvagetheater.org.

"The Book Club Play." Don't act surprised by delightful behavior by your favorite characters in this original new play. Why should book clubs be different from all the other small group humans belonging to, such as families and sports teams? According to Different Stages, "It's all clashing egos, hidden agendas, things unspoken, and even though it's 'book books' — dry words on dry paper — we know someone, inevitably, is going to get punched in the face." 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, 5 p.m. Sunday through April 11. \$11-\$19. Santa Cruz Theatre, 1908 East Seventh St., differentstages.org.

"Cable in the Car." Based on the hit film, director Leonardo DiCaprio, this big, bright spectacle relates the high-flying adventures of con artist Frank Abagnale Jr. as he follows his dreams while running from the



Artist Natalie Frank's new exhibit at Lora Reynolds Gallery features feminist reinterpretations of the Grimm fairy tales she previously explored. "Keyhole Snow White" was created in 2018. (Contributed by Lora Reynolds)

Dorothy Van Soest. 4 p.m. Sunday. The mystery writer speaks and signs "Death, Unchartered," BookWoman, 5502 N. Lamar Blvd., A-105.

Jennifer Dallas. 7 p.m. Monday. The novelist speaks and signs "The Spectator," BookPeople, 603 N. Lamar Blvd.

Greg Shapiro. 7 p.m., Tuesday. The poet speaks and signs "More Poems About Buildings and Food," BookWoman, 5502 N. Lamar Blvd., A-105.

Joe B. Lansdale. 7 p.m. Wednesday. The Texas writer speaks and signs "The Elephant of Surprise," BookPeople, 603 N. Lamar Blvd.

Melvin Mervin. 7 p.m. Thursday. The actor and director's book author speaks and signs "Mugshot Bathroom: A Story of Bananas, Belonging, and Being Yourself," BookPeople, 603 N. Lamar Blvd.

Art

Art for the People. "Art of Celebration: Art for the People's latest exhibit features the works of 55 artists in all mediums, including ceramics, mosaics, sculpture and watercolor, with each one exploring all types of celebration, from the way animals look and play to the beauty of humans inside and out. Noon to 6 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday through April 27. 2712 S. First St., 512-761-4761, artforthepeople-gallery.com.

Big Medium. "No Me Chido Do Not Forget Me!" The new exhibit presents stories told by eight local, established Latino artists, including Francisco Duran and Josevera Almada. Through art, music, poetry and food, these stories build a narrative about migration, displacement, family, memories and the importance of belonging. Noon to 6 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday through

BookWoman. 7 p.m. Saturday. The cartoonist speaks and signs "Yes, I'm Not in This: The Heinous Truth about Life in a Hijab." Malvern Books, 613 W. 29th St., 512-421-2067, malvernbooks.com.

See ARTS, T15

FBI. Frank's escapades promise a night of high-energy dance numbers in this musical comedy. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 2 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday through April 7. \$15-\$22. 820 S. Austin Ave., Georgetown, georgetowntheatre.com.

"Crime and Punishment." Penick Theatre presents a new, award-winning adaptation of Dostoevsky's masterpiece using only three actors. As a police inspector investigates a gruesome murder, we journey through the mind of a criminal. What did he do? Why did he do it? And what would you be capable of in certain circumstances? 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, 5 p.m. Sunday through April 6. \$15-\$30. Ground Floor Theatre, 975 Springdale Road No. 127, penicktheatre.org.

"A Doll's House, Part 2." In 1879, Henrik Ibsen wrote one of the most controversial plays of all time, "A Doll's House," in which Nora walks out on her husband

and children with a feminist twist. The production will be directed by Nathan Latta. 7 p.m. Friday, the northern author speaks and signs "How to Be a Captain Without Any Captain," BookPeople, 603 N. Lamar Blvd., 512-471-5050, bookpeople.com.

Janet Meyer, Patrice Sarath and Nancy Tompkins. 5 p.m. Get ready. The authors speak and sign "Pura Chocolate," "Big Scream" and "Temper," respectively. BookPeople, 603 N. Lamar Blvd., 512-471-5050, bookpeople.com.

Anne Mariccia. 5:30 p.m. Saturday. The debut novelist speaks and signs "Red Brick," BookWoman, 5502 N. Lamar Blvd., A-105, 512-472-2105, bookwoman.com.

Ilana Katers. 7 p.m. Saturday. The cartoonist speaks and signs "Yes, I'm Not in This: The Heinous Truth about Life in a Hijab." Malvern Books, 613 W. 29th St., 512-421-2067, malvernbooks.com.

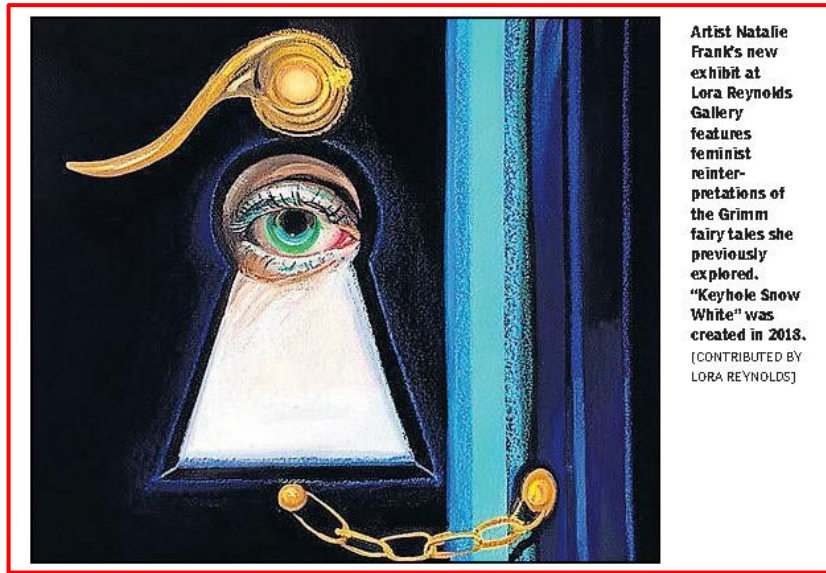
Library calendar

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Artist Natalie Frank's new exhibit at Lora Reynolds Gallery features feminist reinterpretations of the Grimm fairy tales she previously explored. "Keyhole Snow White" was created in 2018. (CONTRIBUTED BY LORA REYNOLDS)

PRESS COVERAGE

THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

March 29, 2019

Ballet Austin's Grimm Tales Gets Brutally Frank

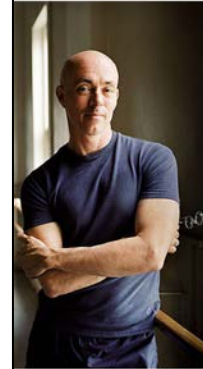
By Wayne Alan Brenner



...ver, there was a company of dancers who brought to their fine
...eir times. The company was called Ballet Austin, and the man
...ompany's dances – and certainly the most ambitious and
...was named Stephen Mills.

...es of paintings in one of the city's more progressive museums,
...ew work of ballet for his company, a work based on the paintings
...ing illustrations of tales that had long ago been gathered by the
...y a former inhabitant of the city: Natalie Frank.

Blanton," says Mills. "And, earlier, I'd seen her show at the
...fich was maybe 30 drawings. When 'The Brothers Grimm' came
...arger and the show was more robust. And when I was standing
...ught it would make a good dance. And someone came up to me
...ut I guess they've seen Ballet Austin and some of the things that
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Stephen Mills

...people on one project," says Frank, "and it's been a
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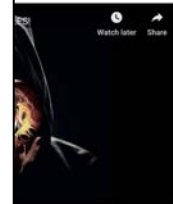
...d the dancers of Ballet Austin – is doing a
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...eauty – for the well-wrought arts of dance,
...experience Ballet Austin's Grimm Tales, at

...n, 3pm, at Dell Hall in the Long Center, 701
...austin.org



<http://theaustinchronicle.com/2019/03/29/ballet-austins-grimm-tales-gets-brutally-frank/>

And so, this weekend, Ballet Austin will offer to the world its Grimm Tales – short narrative works of dance, presented one after another, sans intermission, and vibrantly alive with the strengths of artist Frank and choreographer Mills.

PRESS COVERAGE

austin360

April 1, 2019

Ballet Austin converts 'Grimm Tales' into a tour de force

By Michael Barnes



Put together three masterful artists — Stephen Mills, Natalie Frank and Graham Reynolds — at the peak of their inventiveness and skill and you end up with a tour de force like Ballet Austin's "Grimm Tales."

For much of the 80-minute show, the eye attempts take in Frank's enormous, shifting images, originally drawn in gouache and pastels, now projected in intensely saturated colors on a scrim

TRIBEZA

AUSTIN CURATED

March, 2019

Dancing In The Dark

By Anne Bruno



With just three performances starting on Friday, "Grimm Tales," the inaugural work commissioned by the Butler New Choreography Endowment, promises to be one of the year's highlights in performing arts.

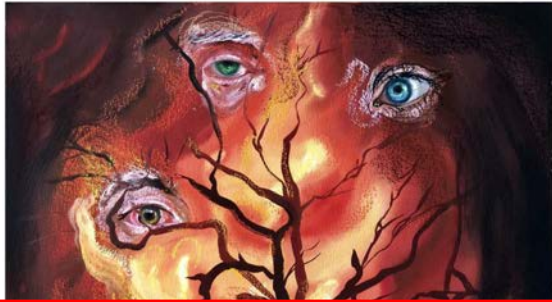
PRESS COVERAGE

austin360

March 27, 2019

Once upon a 'Grimm' fairytale: Ballet Austin debuts art-inspired dance

By Michael Barnes



Frank's figurative artwork, full of potential and kinetic energy, haunted the memory of the dance maker.

"They caused me to think more deeply about these stories that we have been surrounded by since childhood," Mills says. "The stories are really dark. I wanted to tell the real stories, not the versions that children get today."

SIGHT LINES

Arts,
Culture,
News
& Ideas

March 23, 2019

Ballet Austin dances a vivid, unsettled version of Grimms' Fairy Tales

By Jeanne Claire van Ryzin



Natalie Frank, drawing for "The Frog King" for Ballet Austin's "Grimm Tales." Mixed media on watercolor paper.

"Grimm Tales" is the first new production to arrive the auspicious of Ballet Austin's Butler New Choreography Endowment, a fund based on a \$3 million gift from Austin philanthropists Sarah and Ernst Butler that provides support for the company to commission a new ballet every three years.

PRESS COVERAGE



March 1, 2019

Does Ballet Austin's 'Grimm Tales' Have a Happily Ever After?

By Sarah Thurmond



Grimm Tales, premiering March 29-31, revolves around the theme of hunger in three of the fairy tales, The Frog King, Snow White, and The Juniper Tree.



March 29, 2019

'Grimm Tales' at Ballet Austin

By Amanda Salinas



Ballet Austin is putting on its newest world premiere production based on stories most people have known since they were kids. It's a project that's been two years in the making.

PRESS COVERAGE

ACTX

ARTS AND CULTURE TEXAS

February 27, 2019

THE ACTX TOP TEN: MARCH 2019

By Nancy Wozny



1) Jonas Wood at the Dallas Museum of Art

Ballet Austin presents the world premiere of Stephen Mills's *Grimm Tales*, commissioned by the Butler New Choreography Endowment, and inspired by the visual art of Natalie Frank, with an original score by Graham Reynolds, March 29-31 at the Long Center.

ARTNEWS

March 28, 2019

Salon 94 Now Represents Natalie Frank

By Claire Selvin



The artist recently created 35 drawings—some of which are animated—for the sets of the Ballet Austin's production "*Grimm Tales*," which will run from March 29 to 31. She also collaborated with Constance Hoffman on costumes for dancers in the ballet.

PRESS COVERAGE

austin360

March 26, 2019

Things to do in Austin the weekend of March 28-31

By Arianna Auber



2. "Grimm Tales" at Lora Reynolds Gallery

The new, vibrantly colored drawings in this show flesh out where the stories left off, forming the basis for this weekend's "Grimm Tales," a Ballet Austin ballet inspired by Frank's drawings. Each one takes as inspiration key moments from the Grimm stories.

