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Connections: Puppets Premiere Near Sellout

The Next Installment in the Cutting-Edge Connections Series Proving to Be a Draw

With only two performances scheduled for March 21 and 22, an exciting new intimate venue, and prices starting at just \$25, the world premiere of *Connections: Puppets* is shaping up to be a not-to-be-missed experience.

Two world-renowned choreographers have brought their award-winning and thought-provoking pieces to Ballet Memphis—the first ballet company to ever perform the unique pieces. First is Jane Comfort, pioneer of the avant garde dance movement, and her BESSIE award-winning piece *Underground River*. Called a "risk-taking and profound theatrical tour de force," *Underground River* is an exploration of the rich fantasy life of a girl who appears to the outside world to be unconscious. Singing a cappella songs by Toshi Reagon and interacting with the magical visual creations of master puppeteer Basil Twist, the dancers dwell in a world of magic realism and eccentric beauty unseen by those who wish to make her "well."

The second piece is *Beyond: Portraits of Chinese Women* from choreographer Lily Cai. Cai uses her hybrid vocabulary of traditional Chinese and American modern movement to explore the strength, complexity and inner beauty of the Chinese woman. The dancers, moving with quiet eloquence to Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber, each cradle, support and nuzzle dolls with vast poetic restraint, capture the power of motherhood.

The finale of the night is an original work from Ballet Memphis' own Travis Bradley. Off the heels of his success from February's *Abundance: Art in Motion*, Bradley brings us his version of the *Ugly Duckling*. Sketches of the all-new costumes will be released on the website next week, but the most exciting part of the production is the collaboration with Frank Kane, famous puppeteer/muppeteer/inventor, who has brought life-size marionettes to life for the dancers.

Tickets are just \$25 and \$50 and plenty of free parking surrounds the Clark Opera Memphis Center at Wolf River Parkway. [Click here for your tickets](#) or call the Ballet Memphis Box Office at 737-7322. Don't be left out!

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