

Guest artist, dance faculty member bring Bach to life

PREVIEW

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FOR THE POST

Two distinguished and accomplished music and dance artists will perform a rare and complex piece at 8 p.m. tonight and Saturday night at The Ridges Auditorium.

Guest artist Mark Haim will be accompanied by **ENTERTAINMENT** School of Dance Music Director Andre Gribou in an original dance piece choreographed to Johann Sebastian Bach's *The Goldberg Variations*.

The entire 250-year-old piece is about 80 minutes long and encompasses over 90 pages of keyboard sheet music. *The Goldberg Variations* is 30 solo variations, ranging from one to 10 minutes, and each is a miniature dance within itself. The piece is a work in progress for Haim and Gribou; they will perform 15 variations.

Haim and Gribou met last spring at the American Dance Festival, where they discovered their common appreciation for Bach's composition.

Haim said he had always wanted to make a dance to the piece, partly as a challenge to himself. Although he usually choreographs for groups, he decided to make the work a solo, to give himself a chance to dance. He

started working on it two years ago, but due to the complexity of the arrangement, he never really considered performing it with live accompaniment. Gribou made such a feat possible.

"Andre is one of few who has (*The Goldberg Variations*) in his repertoire and experience in playing for dancers," Haim said.

This weekend's performance will last about 45 minutes and will be followed by a discussion with the audience.

"We'd love to have people stay and talk. Invariably there will be questions," Haim said.

He also described a section of the work that involves audience participation. "I don't move at all — the audience has to come up on stage and move me around," Haim said. "I would love for people to come and move me around. And they're welcome to come in costume."

Gribou feels the event is something that any kind of audience would enjoy. The complexity of the piece makes it "like running a marathon," in the sense that not everyone can or wants to watch every step, but that it is a very exciting and unusual experience to see.

As a guest artist, Haim has been in Athens for a week, teaching classes at all levels to dance majors. Both Haim

and Gribou recognize the importance of having outside guests who have performed professionally teach students. "I'm a different person, giving much the same input (as the permanent faculty) from a different perspective," Haim said. "It validates information."

Gribou added that it helps for outside guests to tell the students that they're doing well. Haim had a very positive reaction to the dance majors he has worked with here.

"I think the students are very talented, open, and responsive," Haim said.

Haim received a 1996 National Endowment for the Arts Choreographers Fellowship for *The Goldberg Variations*. He attended the Dance Division of the Juilliard School on an honorary scholarship and graduated with a bachelor of fine arts degree in 1983. Since then, he has performed and choreographed throughout the world, earning acclaim, grants, and awards.

Gribou has been School of Dance music director since 1990, and previously served on the faculties of The Juilliard School, Trinity College and New York University, as well as an extensive professional career, which, among other honors, earned him a 1992 Emmy nomination for Outstanding Musical Composition.