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April 18, 17

## **CULLBERG BALLET VISITS THE USA FOR A NIGHT OF MATS EK'S MATERPIECES**

Washington, D.C.

The Cullberg Ballet travels to the United States to present “Emergence,” a collection of Mats Ek’s most popular works as part of their 50th anniversary season at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on April 29, 2017. Tickets start at \$30 and can be purchased at [kennedycenter.org](http://kennedycenter.org).

“Emergence” features three of Ek’s popular contemporary works: *Smoke*, *The Apartment*, and *På Norrbotten*. *Smoke* is a three-part series that explores the complexities of a developing relationship between a man and a woman through long sweeping movements, quirky gestures, and even speech. Utilizing an oversized table, Ek uses this prop as a foundation to explore the male dancer’s inner frustrations as he leans helplessly on the table’s legs, pulling himself up carefully on the edge and then dropping down to the ground. Shortly after the man discovers the woman, he does away with his downcast demeanor and the two engage in a powerful duet filled with high and sustained leg lifts, equal weight sharing, and expansive upper bodies. Like all of Ek’s work, the story lies within the movement. As the duo’s relationship progresses, their partnering becomes more intricate and unique. Beginning with simple partnered backbends as the man supports his partner, they progress into partnered rolls on the floor and horizontal lifts accented with moments of total release as they violently shake their limbs.

*The Apartment*, a duet between a man and a woman, explores the concepts of both proximity and isolation within the same space. The couple battles abrasiveness with fluidity as they move in and out of unison with one another. Once again Ek utilizes simple props to help convey the story, imploring a door, couch, and an oven on the stage. The work begins centered around the door as the woman contemplates entering. Her hesitation leads the couple into a compelling duet as they glide seamlessly across the floor, often pausing in somewhat awkward explorations of each other’s bodies. The dancers flow effortlessly between strong ballet technique and low, grounded movements characterized by modern dance.

Ending the show on a theatrical high note, *På Norrbotten* features rich character dance complemented with bright and vivid costumes. Vastly different from the deep emotional explorations of both *Smoke* and *The Apartment*, *På Norrbotten* lightheartedly highlights the vibrant aspects of Swedish culture. Characterized by high jumps, a fluid torso, and animated facial expressions, the dancers move seamlessly in and out of ballet, folk dance, and pedestrian movements to create a high energy performance that the audience is sure to enjoy.

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