

# CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE CROSSOVERS

A PUBLICATION OF CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE, INC.  
SEPTEMBER 2007 • BORN TO RUN • LANSBURGH THEATRE



## AN EVERLASTING KISS *THE BOSS: PART ONE*

We used to have this battle at the radio station about whether Springsteen would last," says CityDance Artistic Director Paul Gordon Emerson of his days working as a disc jockey. "We were totally in two camps—those of us who were just addicted to the guy's music and programmed it constantly, and those who couldn't get past that raspy voice and Jersey persona. I think we know who won that argument," he said with a smile.

As one of those addicted to the music, Emerson has wanted to take on the challenge of Springsteen's music for a long time. But it didn't make sense to him until this season when the chance came to make it a year-long project.

"Springsteen is a street smart guy and a great storyteller, so it just seemed right to launch the piece downtown at the Lansburgh," Emerson notes. "This concert is a beginning—two tracks, including *Born to Run*—that sets the tone for a project that will be built throughout the year and presented in full in June 2008 at the Music Center at Strathmore."

Going into the project, Emerson remarked that he wanted to give the audience, the dancers, and admittedly himself, a chance to have fun and to make something that left everyone smiling and rocking.

"So many of us have incredible Springsteen memories—summers spent following him around the country, songs that defined periods in our lives—and still do," notes Emerson. "I am hoping to capture those memories and feelings and help people discover something new about them."

*(Article continues on back page)*

## IT WAS 1938 AND...

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was in the White House, the nation was four years away from entry into the Second World War and Jim Crow was the way of things, in spirit as well as in law, throughout most of a nation still mired in the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl which was battering the Midwest. Huge parts of the population were on the move, escaping economic and social strife, looking to new cities and new regions for new opportunities. The social conscience of the nation lay in the hands of its artists, and they had something to say. Take, for example, Jane Dudley, choreographer of *Harmonica Breakdown*, which CityDance Ensemble stages this weekend through funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Jane was part of a time and a movement that believed in using art to speak to deep social issues," notes Sheron Wray, the dancer, choreographer, director and artist responsible for preserving *Harmonica Breakdown* and a significant part of Dudley's legacy. "*Harmonica* is a short work—only 3.5 minutes—but it is incredibly dense. There's not a wasted step or moment. It speaks of the journey into which people were being thrown and to the struggles of simply getting on."

"One of the most interesting aspects of *Harmonica* is its use of music. Today blues music is common in dance, but in 1937 it was revolutionary. Jane saw Sonny Terry, the blues harmonica player who composed and performed *Harmonica* at Carnegie Hall. That by itself was revolutionary—a black man playing the blues on the stage of the premiere concert hall in New York. For Jane it was electrifying, and it led her to break another boundary—using blues in her work. These are things we take for granted today, but imagine all this in their time."

Wray attributes the enduring power of a work made 70 years ago to the universality of human struggle. "Whether its about losing your home or losing your PlayStation, everyone can relate to the blues and to the movement it conjures in all of us, whether conscious or unconscious. A work like *Harmonica* taps into this and transports us."

## OF COMPUTERS AND CREEKS: *I CAN HEAR YOU. CAN YOU SEE ME?*

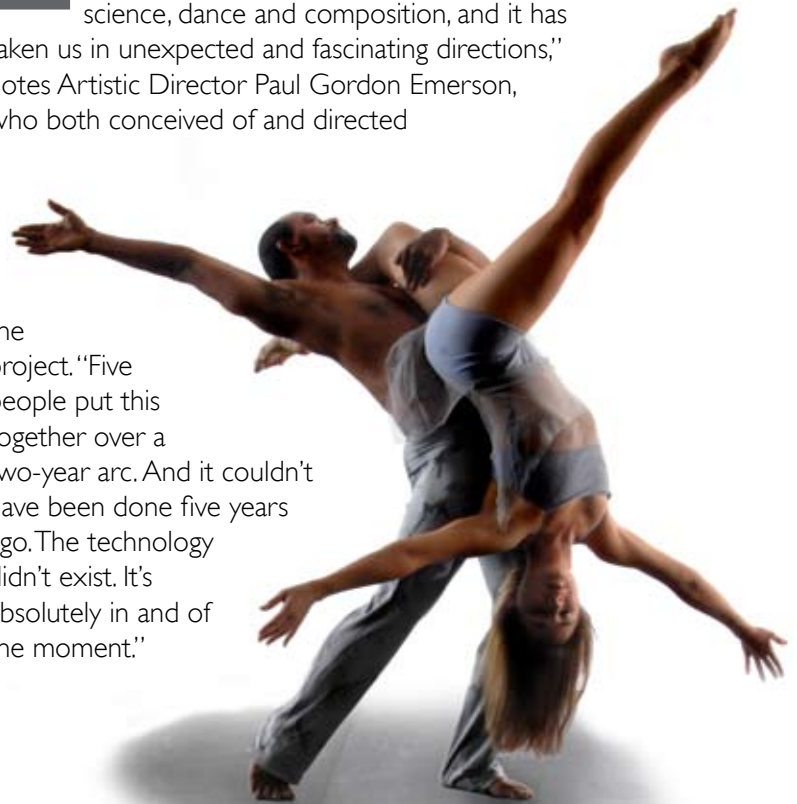
Hiding above the stage at the Lansburgh is a simple security camera mounted to a steel rod. Trailing the camera is a series of cables all the way down to a morass of controllers and devices tied into a Macintosh laptop custom programmed by Princeton PhD candidate Scott Smallwood. Inside that program lie the electronic triggers he has created to an extraordinary suite of sounds captured in Rock Creek Park and reinvented by Frances Thompson McKay, the award-winning head of composition at the Levine School of Music. McKay took a microphone and tape recorder into DC's green heart and came out with a stunning array of sounds—some pure music, some pure environment, and some pure animal—and then put her own unique talent to work on them. The reason: to turn dancers into composers for the piece *I Can Hear You. Can You See Me?*

Smallwood's video camera maps the entire performance stage from above and divides it into 16 squares. Each square is programmed with one (or many) of McKay's sounds, and every time dancer/choreographers Kyra Jean Green and Bruno Augusto move into and around the squares, they trigger those sounds. The result, through set dance steps and improvisation, is the creation of a sound suite that the dancers help define, compose and realize.

"It's a true collaboration between computer science, dance and composition, and it has taken us in unexpected and fascinating directions," notes Artistic Director Paul Gordon Emerson, who both conceived of and directed

the project. "Five people put this together over a two-year arc. And it couldn't have been done five years ago. The technology didn't exist. It's absolutely in and of the moment."

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## IT'S A JUNGLE IN THERE...

### Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books*

Saturday, December 8 & 15, 2007 • 1pm & 4:30pm

Sunday, December 9 & 16, 2007 • 1pm & 4:30pm

Lansburgh Theatre • 450 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW • Washington, DC

Presented by Washington Performing Arts Society

Funded by DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities

Picture, if you will, a giant elephant's head made of Indian stone, a trio of musicians hovering above a leaf-covered floor, and a cast of dancers transformed into wolves, tigers, snakes, and bears. What you see is the world premiere performance of CityDance's original adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books*.

In this colorful new family show, we're breathing life into Mowgli, Baloo, Shere Khan, and other characters from Kipling's classic tales as we take the audience on a wild, wonderful ride of adventure and imagination. Calling upon Kipling's universal themes of friendship, acceptance, and perseverance, *Jungle Books* is an appealing story for the young and young at heart.

A 60-minute show with live music and nonstop action (including flying monkeys), *Jungle Books* is a magical holiday outing for the entire family. With characters leaping, prancing, and pouncing their way across the stage, this enchanting concert will leave you certain that *it's a jungle in there...*

**JUNGLE BOOKS TICKETS**  
\$30 Adults • \$18 Youth (up to age 12)  
[www.wpas.org](http://www.wpas.org) • 202.785.9727

## CLASSES FOR BEGINNERS, PROFESSIONALS & EVERYONE IN BETWEEN

Whether you've been a dancer all your life or need a nudge to get off the couch, CityDance Ensemble has a class for you. With two education centers renowned for their commitment to providing high-quality dance education, CityDance offers an array of classes in multiple styles and techniques for students of all ages and levels.

The CityDance Center at Strathmore—located in the Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, MD—is a space of unprecedented elegance and has quickly become a destination point for dance in the Washington area since its opening in January 2005.

The professional instructors at the Center lead classes for students ages 18 months - 80 years, teaching classes in ballet, contemporary, hip hop, jazz, tap, creative movement, swing, yoga, tai chi, and more. The Center's *Dance For Life* program provides classes designed specifically to challenge older movers and shakers. And the Center trains the professional dancers of tomorrow through its *CityDance Select* program, an intensive pre-professional training program for dancers ages 12 to 18.

The CityDance Center at Mt. Vernon Square—located in downtown DC at the Historic Carnegie Library—offers hip hop and swing classes for adults in association with the National

Music Center. With classes led by local hip hop troupe Culture Shock DC and swing instruction company Gottaswing, the Center gives students an opportunity to take classes infused with the energy and excitement of the District.

For perfection, fitness, or fun, beginners and professionals alike will find that opportunity abounds for the eager learner at either CityDance Center.

**Fall classes begin September 10!**

View schedule and register at  
[www.citydance.net](http://www.citydance.net)

# CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE 2007-2008 SEASON

Join CityDance for its inaugural season as an artistic partner of the Harman Center for the Arts and third season as the resident dance company of the Music Center at Strathmore

**HARMAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS**  
450 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET NW • WASHINGTON, DC

## **Born to Run**

September 7 & 8, 2007

An anthem to youth, adventure, and growing up in America set to the iconic music of Bruce Springsteen

**Tickets:** HarmanCenter.org • 202.547.1122

## **Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Books**

December 8-16, 2007

Kipling's classic tales come alive in this colorful family show

**Tickets:** WPAS.org • 202.785.9727

Presented by Washington Performing Arts Society  
Funded by DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities

## **Shakespeare's Sonnets**

March 7-9, 2008

The ageless poems of Shakespeare interpreted through music & movement

**Tickets:** HarmanCenter.org • 202.547.1122

**MUSIC CENTER AT STRATHMORE**  
5301 TUCKERMAN LN • N. BETHESDA, MD

## **Eclipse** (Part of our In the Studio Series)

October 27 & 28, 2007

A poignant trio by Doug Varone nestled in a concert of striking choreography

**Tickets:** Strathmore.org • 301.581.5100

## **Bold Steps: Warmer** (Part of our In the Studio Series)

April 12 & 13, 2008

Dancers and choreographers tackle global warming and the impact art will have on the issue

**Tickets:** Strathmore.org • 301.581.5100

## **The Songwriters**

June 13, 2008

A program centered around America's great songwriters, including the music of Woody Guthrie in Sophie Maslow's legendary *Folksay*

**Tickets:** Strathmore.org • 301.581.5100



## **AN EVERLASTING KISS**

(Continued from front page)

In choreographing to Springsteen's music, Emerson notes that he's discovered an even greater understanding of the depth in Springsteen's musicality.

"Springsteen's rhythms, tempo changes, and accents lead you into places you wouldn't expect," he observes. "It's not typical rock and roll. From *Asbury Park* to the *Seeger Sessions*, you can find celebration and protest and everything in between."

"So it will be exciting to pull from that 30 year span and take people along for this ride over the season. It's a rock and roll tour of our own that way, and part of the fun will be to have people jump into it with us."

## CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE, INC.

**Artistic Director**  
Paul Gordon Emerson  
**Executive Director**  
Alexandra Nowakowski

**CityDance Center at Strathmore**  
5301 Tuckerman Lane  
North Bethesda, MD 20852  
301.581.5204

**CityDance Center at Mt. Vernon Square**  
801 K Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202.383.1841

**Administrative Offices**  
1111 16th Street NW • Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.347.3909

**CrossOvers Contributing Writers**  
Dina Ghandour  
Paul Gordon Emerson  
Betsy Lundgren