

CityDanceEnsemble, Inc.

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For Immediate Release

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CityDance Ensemble Announces Departure of Artistic Director/ Co-Founder Paul Gordon Emerson

WASHINGTON, DC – June 8, 2011 – Paul Gordon Emerson, CityDance Ensemble’s founder and artistic director will step down from his post on June 30, it was announced by Alexe Nowakowski, the organization’s executive director. Emerson’s departure follows the Board’s decision not to renew the professional dancers’ contracts for FY12 due to budget constraints.

Today, CityDance Ensemble continues to operate a successful school and Conservatory program at its Strathmore headquarters, with over 500 students enrolled and many classes waitlisted. And, in the Washington region, the organization’s education and community engagement programs in 30 schools and venues provide free after-school training and summer camp to hundreds of our area’s most at-risk students.

In making the announcement, Nowakowski said, “For the last 15 years, Paul has worked tirelessly to bring some of the finest contemporary dancers and dances to Washington DC – accomplishments for which we are proud. However, funding a full-time professional company is an extremely difficult venture in the best of times and with the recent economic downturn, it is not one we can currently support. At the same time, Paul leaves us with a legacy of two thriving arts education divisions, which are well- positioned for growth, and a commitment to our founding mission of advancing the field of contemporary dance.

“Moving forward, this fall, we will open a 125-seat black box theater in our largest studio at Strathmore, and we will soon announce an artistic component that will enable us to pursue creative endeavors on a project-based scale.”

Founded in 1996, CityDance Ensemble, Inc. is comprised of the **CityDance Center at Strathmore** (North Bethesda, MD), a dance school and Conservatory committed to training young dancers for professional careers; the **CityDance Center at DC Dance Collective** (Washington, DC) specializing in early childhood dance education; and **CityDance Early Arts**, a youth development and arts education program providing free performances, after-school programs, summer camps and in-school arts integration programs to underserved neighborhoods. CityDance has directed the dance program at the Madeira School in McLean, VA since 2003. Until 2011, CityDance Ensemble had a professional company of eight full-time dancers that performed locally and abroad.