

# CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE, INC.

POWER. PASSION. PURPOSE.



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CityDance Ensemble presents *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, an original interpretation of the Bard's ageless poems combining dance, literature, and music

*A three-act concert featuring two acts of Sonnets and one act of On a Train Heading South, the company premiere of Brenda Way's statement on global warming*

**Washington, DC**—In a collaborative concert that blends dance with literature, theater, music, and a discerning interpretation of ideas both old and new, CityDance Ensemble presents *Shakespeare's Sonnets* on **March 7, 8 & 9** at the **Lansburgh Theatre**. Partnering with actors from the **Shakespeare Theatre Company**, the program devotes two acts to the ageless poems of the Bard as interpreted through movement and music. The final act of the program departs from the verse and views of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to focus on an imminent concern of today—global warming—with the company premiere of **Brenda Way's** acutely relevant *On a Train Heading South*.

The concerts take place **Friday, March 7 at 8pm** and **Saturday, March 8 at 8pm**, and **Sunday, March 9 at 7pm** in the **Lansburgh Theatre**, 450 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, DC. Tickets are priced at \$35 and \$20. Tickets are available in person at the **Lansburgh Theatre Ticket Office** (610 F Street NW, Washington, DC), online at [www.HarmanCenter.org](http://www.HarmanCenter.org), or by phone at **202.547.1122**. A limited number of reduced-price seating may be available for \$15. Call 202.547.1122 for information.

As an artistic partner with the Shakespeare Theatre Company, CityDance Ensemble created its adaptation of the Sonnets in partnership with Shakespeare Theatre Company Resident Assistant Director **Stephen Fried** and four actors who will play an integral role in the performance. The two acts dedicated to the Sonnets feature choreography by CityDance Artistic Director **Paul Gordon Emerson**, CityDance Rehearsal Director and Choreographer-in-Residence **Christopher K. Morgan**, and company member **Ja'Malik**.

“It is rare that artists of the three disciplines of dance, music, and acting can find a home under one program, but this concert gives us that opportunity,” notes Emerson. “The Sonnets fire the

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imagination and give blood to the heart, and for an artist, those are elemental words, the foundation upon which songs are written and dances made.”

Emerson’s choreography for the program features original music written and performed live by local artists **Matt Jones** and **Amikaeyla Gaston**. Morgan’s *So Foul a Lie*, based on five of the 154 Sonnets, centers on the themes of love and mortality, while Ja’Malik’s *Broken Prayers* is an abstract tableau based on passages from Sonnets 1-17 that hearken the prayers of the old world as seen through the nature and prayers of the new world.

CityDance closes the program with *On a Train Heading South*, a brave ensemble piece choreographed in 2005 by Brenda Way, Artistic Director of the dance company ODC/San Francisco. Inspired by the crisis brought about by the melting of the polar ice caps, *On a Train Heading South* explores human complacency and collective denial in the face of global warming and its implications. Developed in collaboration with composer **Jack Perla** and stage and light designer **Alexander V. Nichols**, the choreography is accented by the melting of 12 giant ice blocks hovering above the stage.

“*On a Train Heading South* is such a profound, important piece that it belongs on any program, regardless of theme,” comments Emerson. “The nature of the work involving melting blocks of ice, complex staging, and great theatricality makes it a natural fit for the Lansburgh Theatre.”

Ms. Way and the entire 10-member company of ODC/San Francisco spent a week in Washington, DC teaching and rehearsing the 27-minute piece with the members of CityDance Ensemble. This collaboration marked the first time that Ms. Way licensed one of her works to another dance company.

Concurrent with CityDance Ensemble’s March 7-9 concert weekend is a performance by more than 70 young students from the **CityDance DREAM program** during half-time of the **Washington Wizards** game on March 8 at the **Verizon Center**. Returning for the third year by invitation from **Washington Sports & Entertainment**, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from several local elementary schools will showcase the talent they have developed throughout the year-long after-school program run by CityDance Ensemble’s **Early Arts** outreach education division. The converging of these two events demonstrates CityDance’s commitment to both performance and education, with dance students and professionals alike performing simultaneously just blocks away from one another.

### **About CityDance Ensemble, Inc.**

CityDance Ensemble, Inc. is the parent organization to **CityDance Ensemble**, an award-winning contemporary repertory dance company; **Early Arts**, an arts outreach program for youth serving more than 25,000 students each year; **CityDance Education Centers**, facilities committed to excellence in dance training for youth and adults; and **FilmWORKS**, a creator and presenter of dance-on-camera. The mission of CityDance Ensemble, Inc. is to advance the appreciation for and participation in the art of dance through excellence in performance, education, film, and artistic innovation.

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