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New England Foundation for the Arts Awards \$353,000 in Grants Supporting Reconstruction and Restaging of Significant American Dance Works

(BOSTON) - American Masterpieces: Dance (AMD), the dance component of a major initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) administered by New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), has awarded \$353,000 in grants to support the reconstruction and restaging of historically significant American dance work that will tour nationally.

Ten American dance companies received grants this year, ranging in amounts from \$20,000-\$60,000. Projects were selected from a highly competitive applicant pool, and projects include educational and interpretive components such as study guides, student performances, lectures, and exhibitions. Projects will also tour so that the works reach audiences in communities across the U.S. In selecting projects, NEFA considered scale, geographic reach, and the representation of diverse ethnicities and artistic forms, as well as the historic significance of the works.

AMD was launched in December of 2005, and this is the second round of annual grants awarded. The program also offers touring grants to support the presentation of the work created by the reconstruction grants. Touring grant recipients will be announced in July 2008.

AMD College Component (AMDCC) grants are available to colleges and universities, through a program component administered by Dance/USA. AMDCC grant recipients will be announced by Dance/USA in the late fall 2007.

A complete list of projects funded by AMD Reconstruction Grants is included below.

AMD 2007 Reconstruction Grants

Company: CityDance Ensemble, Washington, DC

Choreographer/project title: Sophie Maslow's Folksay

CityDance Ensemble will reconstruct modern dance pioneer Sophie Maslow's 1942 work Folksay. This 26-minute work for eight dancers features two guitarists who play traditional folk songs such as Old Smokey and Sweet Betsy and recite Carl Sandburg's poem The People, Yes.

Company: Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Denver, CO

Choreographer/project title: Katherine Dunham's Ragtime

Ragtime is a work choreographed by legendary dance icon Katherine Dunham set to Scott Joplin's King of Ragtime. Dunham's imaginative choreography garnered critical praise for dramatic staging and integrating the ragtime strut and West Indian style dances. Ragtime, a section of the opera Treemonisha, offers an intriguing view of African-American attitudes toward education at the turn of the 20th century.

Company: Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City, MO

Choreographer/project title: Twyla Tharp's Brahms Paganini

Brahms Paganini is a two-part dance choreographed by Tharp in 1980, set to a series of intricate piano variations by Brahms. The work begins with a virtuosic male solo, followed by a female soloist accompanied by two couples. "The (male) solo... is one of the most amazing feats I have seen all year. The smoothness, the musical phrasing (never duplicating the piano variations but always providing an apt parallel) and the casual perfection of this long, heterogeneous dance are the hallmarks of Tharp's choreography." London Times, 1981.

Company: Limón Dance Company, New York, NY

Choreographer/project title: Anna Sokolow's Rooms

The Limón Dance Company will revive Rooms (1955), Anna Sokolow's seminal masterwork about urban alienation. The reconstruction of this groundbreaking work, including a new recording of Kenyon Hopkin's jazz score, epitomizes the spirit of the Company's upcoming 100th Anniversary. The Limón Foundation is committed to showcasing the breadth and scope of the Limón legacy. This legacy encompasses not only the founders' creative output but the work of their contemporaries, who alongside Limón and Humphrey developed a rich and enduring dance vocabulary that helped shape American modern dance as we know it today.

Company: Luna Negra Dance Theater, Chicago, IL

Project title/choreographer: There Is A Time by José Limón

There Is A Time takes its inspiration from Chapter 2 of Ecclesiastes. Its Pulitzer Prize-winning score was written as a theme and variations, and the dance follows that structure. During this ritualistic enactment of a dozen episodes in the life of a community, the contrast between the episodes is consistently stressed. Underlying is a conviction that in spite of killing and healing, mourning and laughing, breaking down and building up, there is continuity to life that cannot be destroyed.

Company: Martha Graham Dance Company, New York City, NY

Choreographer/project title: Martha Graham's Clytemnestra

The Martha Graham Dance Company celebrates the 50th anniversary of the full-length masterpiece Clytemnestra with a tour of Graham's original 1958 production. In what many believe to be Graham's greatest ballet, the dramatic story of the House of Atreus is seen through the eyes of Agamemnon's queen. Residency activities exploring topics such as women in society, attitudes toward power, and forgiveness and reconciliation are available. The Company performs with local orchestras by special arrangement.

Company: Merce Cunningham Dance Company, New York, NY

Choreographer/project title: Merce Cunningham's Second Hand

Merce Cunningham Dance Company will reconstruct Second Hand, a seminal work dating from 1944 to 1970. Featuring music by John Cage and costumes by Jasper Johns, this work for ten dancers represents a significant period in Cunningham's choreographic history. Second Hand is a work in three movements: first a solo (Cunningham's Idyllic Song from 1944), second a duet, and third a dance for all ten dancers. Second Hand stands as the last

work in which Cunningham's choreographic sequencing was influenced by external elements; in this case, the phraseology of Cage's score.

Company: Pilobolus, Washington Depot, CT

Project title: Ocellus

Ocellus (1972) was the second work choreographed by the original four members of Pilobolus: Robby Barnett, Lee Harris, Moses Pendleton, and Jonathan Wolken. Its communal creation and non-traditional vocabulary were viewed at the time as a genuinely new approach to physical expression. Now, with more than 35 years of modern dance history behind us, Ocellus remains a defining moment in Pilobolus' emergence as a unique American arts organism.

Company: Tapestry Dance Company, Austin, TX

Project title: The Souls of Our Feet: A Celebration of American Tap Dance II (2008-2009)

Tapestry Dance Company, under the direction of Acia Gray, presents a rhythmic journey through the past, the present and the future of tap dance! This infectious evening of rhythm features traditional choreographic classics from tap's heyday, signature works by contemporary masters and the incredible skills and magic of living legends Arthur Duncan and Dianne Walker. This one-of-a-kind concert brings a swingin' jazz trio and 22 feet keeping time to the pulse of this wonderful and indigenous American art form; a celebration of rhythm at its best!

Artist: Twyla Tharp, New York, NY

Project title: The Bix Pieces

Twyla Tharp, with the assistance of The Joyce Theater Foundation, will reconstruct The Bix Pieces. Originally premiered in 1971, this work for five dancers and one actor has not been seen since Tharp's Broadway season in 1981. It was inspired by the music of American jazz composer and trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke, one of the great jazz musicians of the 1920's. With references to popular culture, including tap, ballroom and even baton twirling, The Bix Pieces is classic Tharp.

Funding for Colleges and Universities

AMD funding is also available to colleges and universities, through the American Masterpieces: Dance College Component (AMDCC). AMDCC is administered by Dance/USA and supports the restaging, performance, and documentation of classic American dances of the past century that are then brought to college students and audiences in communities across the nation. The second round of AMDCC grants will be announced later this fall. Information about AMDCC is available at www.danceusa.org/programs_publications/American_Masterpieces.htm

For further information about AMD, please visit www.nefa.org/grantprog/americanmasterpieces.html or call (617) 951-0010 x 516.

American Masterpieces: Dance (AMD)

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New England Foundation for the Arts

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