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### **DANCERS BECOME THE MUSIC AS CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE GOES TEKJNI**

*Dance company utilizes technology from Princeton University to unite art and science*

Washington, DC— **CityDance Ensemble** continues to blaze new paths in uncharted territory with an experimental project entitled **Tekhni** that brings together dance, music, and technology to challenge current views of movement and sound. The crux of the concept is to create music through movement, to use the dancers themselves to bring about the sounds that frame the piece. The challenge is how to realize that goal.

CityDance is pleased to partner with **Scott Smallwood**, a graduate student in music composition and technology at **Princeton University**, and well as **Frances “Sis” McKay**, Director of Composition at **The Levine School of Music** in Washington, DC, to create a work that will premiere **September 7 & 8, 2007** at the **Lansburgh Theatre** for a celebration of dance, music and computer wizardry.

The project began as an exploration of technology with the support of a New Media grant from the **DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities**. The technological know-how of Mr. Smallwood offered the computer engineering it would take to make the project happen, and the composition creativity of Ms. McKay lent a voice to the project.

State-of-the-art sensor technology is used to generate signals which, when fed either wirelessly or visually into a capture system, instruct a computer to generate a sound. In this way, a dancer can make the music to which he/she would dance. The technology utilizes proximity sensors (sensors that respond to each other), placed on two CityDance company members, **Kyra Jean Green** and **Bruno Augusto**. Some of the sensors correspond to each dancer’s body and others correspond to their partner’s body. Wireless transmitters and

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motion capture cameras in turn pick them up. The motion capture cameras also pick up movement made by the dancers in each of 16 quadrants outlined on the floor. Each quadrant corresponds to a specific sound generated by a computer. The captured data is then fed into an Apple 17-inch MacBook Pro loaded with custom software that translates the signals into commands to trigger sounds.

For this project, sounds have been gathered and arranged by Ms. McKay, who recorded an array of natural sounds from **Rock Creek Park** including the harmonic tones from the creek itself as well as that of foxes coyotes, wind, and more. Once programmed into the computer system, these tones become the notes used by the dancers to frame their movement/music creation. The dance itself explores the idea of distance between two people and uses themes of love and isolation as its catalyst. Costumes, designed by **Marija Djordevic** from Montreal, Canada, add interest by hiding some sensors and revealing others. The result is a fusion of art and technology as never experienced before.

“Dancers are, at least by my definition, musical creatures,” explains CityDance Artistic Director **Paul Gordon Emerson**. “I know when I started dancing I found it a way to ‘play an instrument.’ That instrument was me—moving was a way of being musical, not simply physical.” He wanted to bring that motivation of “being the music” to his dancers in order to further inspire their artistry. “This is in the service of doing good work,” he says, “not just using technology for the sake of it.”

The creative process of bringing this collaboration to life is currently underway at the **CityDance Center at Strathmore** in North Bethesda, MD. Media are invited to view the work in progress and to interview the creative team of choreographers, dancers, and computer experts. To schedule a visit or interview, please contact Dina Ghandour, Marketing Assistant, at [dina@citydance.net](mailto:dina@citydance.net) or 202.347.3909.

Tickets for the September 7 & 8 premiere of *Tekhni* are available through the **Harman Center for the Arts Ticket Office** (610 F Street NW, Washington, DC) at [www.harmancenter.org](http://www.harmancenter.org) or 202.547.1122.

#### **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 underserved youth in the DC area; **CityDance Education Centers**, two 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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