



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2009

Please note updated Program information

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**COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO FACULTY ARTISTS COLLABORATE WITH
MERCÉ CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY FOR DANCE CENTER PERFORMANCES**

CHICAGO—Chicago-based composer/sound designer Richard Woodbury and visual artist Anna Kunz, both members of the Columbia College Chicago faculty, contribute their artistic talents when the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCDC), one of the world’s preeminent modern dance companies, makes its first appearance in the intimate 272-seat theater at The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago. The Company will perform two distinct, site-specific *Events* October 1–3, 2009 at the Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago: *Chicago Event 1* on Thursday, October 1 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, October 3 at 3 p.m.; and *Chicago Event 2* on Friday and Saturday, October 2 and 3 at 8 p.m.

In contrast to specific repertory dances, Cunningham *Events* consist of excerpts of repertory works arranged for this engagement. Presented without intermission, Cunningham described *Events* as choreographic collages consisting of excerpts from the MCDC repertory and new sequences arranged especially for each site-specific performance, with the possibility of several separate activities happening at the same time—to allow not so much for a program of dances as the experience of dance. In an *Event*, the audience sees “fragments [that] are so intermingled as to constitute a new entity that is satisfying on its own terms,” as Jack Anderson wrote in *The New York Times*. Unlike previous works by MCDC presented by The Dance Center, these *Events* will allow audiences to experience Cunningham’s choreography in the intimate setting of The Dance Center’s theater.

Woodbury, who has served as The Dance Center’s music director since 1980 and is an associate professor at Columbia College Chicago, contributes music along with MCDC Music Director Takehisa Kosugi for both *Chicago Event 1* and *Chicago Event 2*. Kunz, who teaches painting at Columbia College Chicago, provides décor design for the first two performances; Robert Rauschenberg’s painting *Immerse*, created in 1994 specifically for Merce Cunningham Dance Company *Events*, serves as décor for the remaining performances. The different combinations of choreography, music and design décor offer Chicago audiences the opportunity to have four different experiences during the company’s visit:

| Event | Day, Date, Time | Music | Décor |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Chicago Event 1</i> | Thurs., 10/1, 8 p.m. | Woodbury/Kosugi | Kunz |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Chicago Event 2</i> | Fri., 10/2, 8 p.m. | Woodbury/Kosugi | Kunz |
| <i>Chicago Event 1</i> | Sat., 10/3, 3 p.m. | Woodbury/Kosugi | Rauschenberg |
| <i>Chicago Event 2</i> | Sat., 10/3, 8 p.m. | Woodbury/Kosugi | Rauschenberg |

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

As part of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company’s residency, Dance Center Chair Bonnie Brooks will give pre-performance talks, free to ticket holders, October 1 and 2 at 7 p.m. and October 3 at 2 and 7 p.m. Robert Swinston, assistant to the choreographer, will lead a DanceMasters class Wednesday, September 30 at 6 p.m. at the Lou Conte Dance Studio of the Hubbard Street Dance Center, 1147 W. Jackson Blvd. DanceMasters is a series of community master classes presented by The Dance Center’s division of Community Outreach and Education (COE), in partnership with the Lou Conte Dance Studio of the Hubbard Street Dance Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Classes are for dancers at the intermediate level or higher.

COLLABORATORS

Takehisa Kosugi has been Music Director of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company since 1995. His multimedia music has been presented at international festivals during the past two decades and sound installations have been exhibited in Europe, the United States and Japan. During the 1960s in Japan he cofounded the Group Ongaku, the first Japanese group for free improvisation and events, and the Taj Mahal Travellers, an electro-acoustic/multimedia band for free music in various environments. His music has been recorded on the Lovely Music Label.

Anna Kunz recently worked collaboratively with Dance Center instructor, choreographer and former Merce Cunningham Dance Company member Paige Cunningham. Kunz’s work was represented at The Thomas McCormick Gallery in Chicago for nine years. Her paintings, works on paper and site-specific installations have been included in numerous national and international collections, and she has had exhibitions in Los Angeles, Houston, Brooklyn, San Antonio, the UK and Poland.

Robert Rauschenberg was resident designer (décor, costumes, lighting) for the company from 1954 to 1964. His first work for the company was the décor for *Minutiae* (1954), a freestanding object that became known as the first of the artist’s “Combines.” It was shown in the exhibition of those works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from December 2005 to April 2006 as well as at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm. For *XOVER* (2007)—Merce’s final collaboration with Rauschenberg, with music by John Cage—Rauschenberg created both the costumes and backdrop from his work *Plank* (2003).

With extensive credits in theatre, dance and media arts, **Richard Woodbury** has composed more than 20 commissioned scores for dance companies including, most recently, The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company and Chicago's The Seldoms. His work also includes Tony Award-winning Broadway productions and works for Chicago's Goodman Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company, San Francisco's A.C.T., Canada's Stratford Festival, Los Angeles' Geffen and Ahmanson Theatres and the National Theatre in Paris.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY

Merce Cunningham Dance Company came into being in 1953, when Cunningham took a group of dancers who had been working with him—including Carolyn Brown, Viola Farber, Remy Charlip and Paul Taylor—to Black Mountain College in North Carolina, joined by music director John Cage and musician David Tudor. Cunningham subsequently choreographed more than 160 works for the company. A world tour in 1964 was a turning point in the company's history, as critics and audiences recognized the importance of their work. Since then the company's annual schedule has included domestic and international tours and seasons in New York City. Cunningham extended the frontiers of choreography for more than half a century, most recently with his use of the computer program Life Forms, now called DanceForms.

In his many works for the company, Cunningham, who died July 26 of this year, has been noted for his collaborations with important contemporary visual artists and musicians, especially with John Cage, his life partner from the 1940s until Cage's death in 1992. In the course of their work together, they proposed a number of radical innovations, the most famous and controversial being the relationship of dance and music, both of which are time arts. They concluded that the two should exist independently, occurring in the same time and space but without supporting or being connected to one another in the usual way.

Before founding his company, Cunningham was a soloist in the company of the legendary Martha Graham. He began choreographing independently in the 1940s, including works for New York City Ballet and Paris Opera Ballet, and his work is in the repertoires of numerous ballet and modern dance companies around the world. He collaborated on two books about his work and was the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships for choreography, a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and numerous awards and honors, including the National Medal of Arts in 1990. He received the Arts and Business Council Kitty Carlisle Hart Award in 2002 and the Edward MacDowell Medal in Interdisciplinary Art in 2003. Also in 2003, he was made Officer of the French Legion of Honor.

THE DANCE CENTER

The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, named “Chicago’s Best Dance Theatre” by *Chicago* magazine and “Best Dance Venue” by the *Chicago Reader*, is the city’s leading presenter of contemporary dance, showcasing artists of regional, national and international significance. Programs of The Dance Center are supported in part by Alphawood Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince, The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, New England Foundation for the Arts, The Boeing Company Charitable Trust, Arts Midwest, Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, and The Irving Harris Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council. Special thanks to Friends of The Dance Center. All programming is subject to change.

FUNDING

The Dance Center’s presentation of Merce Cunningham Dance Company is funded, in part, by the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation and the Illinois Arts Council.

The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago presents Merce Cunningham Dance Company in four performances: *Chicago Event 1* is Thursday, October 1 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, October 3 at 3 p.m.; *Chicago Event 2* is Friday and Saturday, October 2 and 3 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$38. All performances take place at The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave. The Dance Center does not allow late seating at its performances. The theatre is accessible to people with disabilities. The DanceMasters class on Wednesday, September 30 at 6:30 p.m. at the Lou Conte Dance Studio of the Hubbard Street Dance Center, 1147 W. Jackson Blvd., is \$15; space is limited. For tickets or more information, **call 312-369-8330 or visit colum.edu/dancecenter**.

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