CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, March 26, 2010, 8pm
Saturday, March 27, 2010, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Merce Cunningham Dance Company
The Legacy Tour

Dancers
Brandon Collwes, Dylan Crossman, Julie Cunningham, Emma Desjardins, Jennifer Goggans, John Hinrichs, Daniel Madoff, Rashaun Mitchell, Marcie Munnerlyn, Krista Nelson, Silas Riener, Jamie Scott, Robert Swinston, Melissa Toogood, Andrea Weber

Choreography
Merce Cunningham (1919–2009)
Founding Music Director
John Cage (1912–1992)
Music Director
Takehisa Kosugi
Director of Choreography
Robert Swinston
Executive Director
Trevor Carlson

PROGRAM
Nearly 90°
(2009)

Choreography
Merce Cunningham
Music
John Paul Jones, Takehisa Kosugi
Costumes
Anna Finke
Lighting
Christine Shallenberg
Musicians
John King, Takehisa Kosugi

Dancers
Brandon Collwes, Dylan Crossman, Julie Cunningham, Emma Desjardins, Jennifer Goggans, John Hinrichs, Daniel Madoff, Rashaun Mitchell, Marcie Munnerlyn, Silas Riener, Jamie Scott, Melissa Toogood, Andrea Weber

Nearly 90° is a restaged version of Merce Cunningham's final work, Nearly Ninety. First performed at Brooklyn Academy of Music on April 19, 2009, in celebration of Mr. Cunningham's 90th birthday, Nearly Ninety was co-commissioned by Brooklyn Academy of Music, barbicanbite10, Comunidad de Madrid-Teatros Canal and Festival Internacional Madrid en Danza, Théâtre de la Ville-Paris and Festival d'Automne à Paris.

These performances are funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and additional funding from the Ford Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation.

These performances are also made possible, in part, by the Centennial Campaign’s Creative Venture Fund through a gift from The Bernard Osher Foundation.

Cal Performances’ 2009–2010 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCDC) has had a profound impact on American art and the avant-garde since its founding in 1953. Guided by Merce Cunningham's radical approach to space, time and technology, the Company has forged a distinctive style, reflecting Mr. Cunningham's technique and illuminating the near limitless possibility for human movement. For more than 50 years, MCDC's collaborations with groundbreaking artists from all disciplines have redefined the way audiences experience the visual and performing arts.

MCDC was formed at Black Mountain College, and included dancers Carolyn Brown, Viola Farber, Paul Taylor and Remy Charlip, and musicians John Cage and David Tudor. In its early years, the Company famously toured in a Volkswagen bus driven by Mr. Cage with just enough room for six dancers, the two musicians and a stage manager, who was often Robert Rauschenberg. MCDC's first international tour in 1964—which included performances in Western and Eastern Europe, India, Thailand and Japan—marked a turning point for the Company and initiated a constant stream of national and international engagements. In the years since, MCDC has inspired artists and audiences with innovative performances, serving as an ambassador for contemporary American culture around the world.

In addition to its influence in the world of dance, MCDC has cultivated a body of new music, commissioning more work from contemporary composers than any other dance company. Its repertory includes works by musicians ranging from Mr. Cage and Christian Wolff to Gavin Bryars and Radiohead. Mr. Cage's association with the Company as Musical Advisor since its inception continued until his death in 1992, when he was succeeded by David Tudor. Since 1995, MCDC has been under the musical direction of Takehisa Kosugi.

MCDC has also collaborated with an array of visual artists and designers. Mr. Rauschenberg, whose famous “Combines” reflect the approach he used to create décor for a number of MCDC's early works, served as the Company's resident designer from 1954 through 1964. Jasper Johns followed as Artistic Advisor from 1967 until 1980, and Mark Lancaster from 1980 through 1984. The last Artistic Advisors to be appointed were William Anastasi and Dove Bradshaw in 1984. Other artists who have collaborated with MCDC include Tacita Dean, Rei Kawakubo, Roy Lichtenstein, Bruce Nauman, Ernesto Neto, Frank Stella, Benedetta Tagliabue and Andy Warhol.

MCDC has been featured extensively in film and video choreographed by Mr. Cunningham, first with Charles Atlas and later in collaboration with Elliot Caplan. With support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mr. Atlas continues to collaborate with MCDC, filming Views on Camera and Views on Video in 2004–2005 and, in fall 2008, filming the Company performing Mr. Cunningham's epic work Ocean (1994) in Minnesota’s Rainbow Quarry, 100 feet below the surface of the earth, accompanied by the 150-member St. Cloud Orchestra. Mr. Atlas's film of Splits Sides, which premiered on the 50th anniversary of MCDC at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in 2003, was released on DVD by ARTPIX.

The Company premiered Mr. Cunningham's final work, Nearly Ninety, at BAM on April 16, 2009, the actual date of his 90th birthday. In May 2009, it completed a two-year residency with Dia:Beacon, performing a series of “Events,” Mr. Cunningham's site-specific choreographic collages, in the galleries of Richard Serra, Dan Flavin and Sol LeWitt, among others. Other recent milestones include the 2007 premiere of XOVER, Mr. Cunningham's final collaboration with Mr. Rauschenberg. The Company has also maintained an active international touring schedule, with regular performances at such venues as Paris’s Théâtre de la Ville and the Barbican in London, and is currently embarked upon a final, celebratory two-year world tour.
Mr. Cunningham's lifelong passion for exploration and innovation made him a leader in applying new technologies to the arts. He began investigating dance on film in the 1970s, and choreographed using the computer program DanceForms during the latter part of his career. He explored motion capture technology to create décor for Biped (1999), and his interest in new media led to the creation of the pioneering web series Mondays with Merce.

An active choreographer and mentor to the arts world until his death at the age of 90, Mr. Cunningham earned some of the highest honors bestowed in the arts. Among his many awards are the National Medal of Arts (1990) and the MacArthur Fellowship (1983). He also received the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award in 2009, Japan’s Premiun Imperiale in 2005, the British Laurence Olivier Award in 1985, and was named Officier of the Legion d’Honneur in France in 2004. Mr. Cunningham’s life and artistic visions have been the subject of four books and three major exhibitions, and his works have been presented by groups including the Ballet of the Paris Opéra, New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theater, White Oak Dance Project and London’s Rambert Dance Company.

Mr. Cunningham passed away in his New York City home on July 26, 2009. Always forward-thinking, Mr. Cunningham developed the precedent-setting Legacy Plan prior to his death to guide his Company and ensure the preservation of his artistic legacy.

John Cage (Founding Music Director) was born in Los Angeles in 1912. He studied with Richard Buhlig, Henry Cowell, Adolph Weiss and Arnold Schoenberg. In 1952, at Black Mountain College, he presented a theatrical event considered by many to be the first “Happening.” He was associated with Merce Cunningham from the early 1940s, and was Music Director of Merce Cunningham Dance Company until his death in 1992. Mr. Cage and Mr. Cunningham were responsible for a number of radical innovations in musical and choreographic composition, such as the use of chance operations and the independence of dance and music. His last work for MCDC was Four3, the score for Beach Birds, presented at the James Joyce/John Cage Festival in Zürich in 1991. He was the author of many books, among them Silence (1961), A Year from Monday (1968), M (1973), Empty Words (1979) and X (1983), all published by Wesleyan University Press. L–VI (the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1988–1989) was published by Harvard University Press in 1990. Mr. Cage’s music is published by the Henmar Press of C. F. Peters Corporation and has been recorded on many labels. He died in New York City on August 12, 1992.

Robert Swinston (Director of Choreography) was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and attended Middlebury College and The Juilliard School, where he received a BFA in dance. He danced with the Martha Graham Apprentice Group, the José Limón Dance Company and with Kazuko Hirabayashi Dance Theatre. He joined MCDC in August 1980. In July 1992, he became Assistant to the Choreographer. Mr. Swinston directs the activities of the CDF Repertory Understudy Group and its work with the Cunningham Educational Outreach Program. Since 1998, he has assisted in various Cunningham archival reconstructions, including Suite for Five (1956–58), Summerspace (1958), How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run (1965), RainForest (1968), CRWDPSCR (1993) and Ocean (1994). He has assisted in the staging of Cunningham works on other companies, including Boston Ballet, White Oak Dance Project, Rambert Dance Company and New York City Ballet. In 2003, Mr. Swinston received a “Besse” Award for his performance in the revival of How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run.

Takehisa Kosugi (Music Director) was born in Tokyo in 1918. He studied musicology at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. In 1960, he co-founded the Group Ongaku, the first collective improvisation group in Tokyo. During this period his event pieces were introduced by Fluxus in Europe and the United States. From 1965 to 1967, he lived in New York, creating mixed-media performance works and performing with Nam June Paik and other Fluxus members. In 1967, he co-founded the Taj Mahal Travelers in Tokyo, a collective improvisational group. As a composer he participated in Expo ’70 in Osaka. He has been a composer/performer with MCDC since 1977 and was appointed Music Director of the Company in 1993. He received grants from the JDR 3rd Fund in 1966 and 1977, a DAAD fellowship grant to reside in Berlin in 1981, and the John Cage Award for Music from the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts in 1994. He has performed in many international festivals, including the Festival d’Automne à Paris, the Almeida International Festival of Contemporary Music in London, and the Sound and Nature in Krems, Austria. His sound installations have been presented in various exhibitions, including Für Augen und Ohren, Berlin; Ecorcer par les yeux, Paris; and Kunst als Grenzbrechung: John Cage und die Moderne, Munich.

Trevor Carlson (Executive Director) assumed the position of Executive Director of CDF in 2005 after serving as General Manager, Director of Communications, and Company Manager of MCDC. During his tenure at CDF, Mr. Carlson’s collaborative vision has fortified MCDC’s broad-reaching residency programs, increased event performances with innovative contemporary artists, and helped forge new ventures into technology such as the webcast series Mondays with Merce. Prior to joining CDF, Mr. Carlson worked as Company Manager at The Joyce Theater, Tour Manager for P.S. 122 Field Trips, Managing Director of the Stephen Petronio Company, and Fiscal Associate for Pentacle/Dance Works. He has given lectures at numerous institutions including The Juilliard School, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, and in various locations throughout Brazil, the United Kingdom and Norway, and he has served as a panelist for the Jerome Foundation. In 2001, Mr. Carlson performed in John Cage’s theater piece, James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet. A graduate of The Juilliard School with a BFA in dance, Mr. Carlson co-founded and has performed with the Stanley Love Performance Group.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DANCERS

Brandon Collwes received his early dance training at the Pittsburgh CLO, Pittsburgh Ballet Theater and the Creative and Performing Arts High School. He attended The Juilliard School and SUNY Purchase. Mr. Collwes studied as a scholarship student at the Martha Graham Center for Contemporary Dance and twice at American Dance Festival. He became a member of the CDF Repertory Understudy Group in October 2003 and joined MCDC in January 2006. Mr. Collwes has choreographed and performed his own work Intentional Happenstance, which will tour in the coming months.

Dylan Crossman grew up in the south of France, where he started training in contemporary dance at the Conservatory of Montpellier. Mr. Crossman has trained at Epsedance and Burklyn Ballet Theatre (Vermont) and graduated from the Laban Center in London. In New York, he has worked with Sean Curran, Peter Kyle, Pam Tanowitz and Christopher Williams. Mr. Crossman joined the Cunningham Repertory Understudy Group in June 2007. He joined MCDC in June 2009. He would like to thank everyone who helped and supported him along the way.

Julie Cunningham comes from Liverpool, England, and trained with Elizabeth Hilland at Rambert School. Cunningham has worked with Ballet der Stadt Theater Koblenz, Germany. In March 2003, Cunningham became a member of the CDF Repertory Understudy Group. She has worked and performed with Chantal Ysermans, Abi Sebaly and Anne Carson in New York. She joined MCDC in July 2004.

Emma Desjardins grew up and began her dance training in Providence, Rhode Island. She graduated in 2003 from Barnard College of Columbia University, where she trained and performed with its Dance Department. Ms. Desjardins began dancing at the Merce Cunningham Studio in 2002, became a member of the CDF Repertory Understudy Group in 2004, joined MCDC in January 2006, and is currently on faculty at the Merce Cunningham Studio.

Jennifer Goggans began dancing in her hometown of Owensboro, Kentucky, and continued her studies at the Nutmeg Ballet in Connecticut. She received her BFA in dance from SUNY Purchase in 2000, and joined MCDC that same year. Ms. Goggans has been a faculty member of the Merce Cunningham Studio since 2005 and has staged Mr. Cunningham’s Cross Currents for the Augusta Ballet. Ms. Goggans has also performed with the Louisville Ballet, MOMIX, Chantal Yzermans and Christopher Williams, and has created costumes for Daniel Squire’s Jace and RoseAnne Spradlin’s Survive Cycle.

John Hinrichs was raised in Rochester, Illinois. He graduated with a BS in mathematics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he also studied dance. He has danced for Randy James Dance Works and Kazuko Hirabayashi Dance Theatre. He joined the Repertory Understudy Group in September 2007 and MCDC in October 2009.

Daniel Madoff received his BFA in dance from Purchase College in June 2006. He has danced for Kazuko Hirabayashi Dance Theatre, Nelly van Bommel, Lauri Stallings and Pam Tanowitz. He became a member of the CDF Repertory Understudy Group in January 2005 and joined MCDC in August 2007.

Rashaun Mitchell was born in Stamford, Connecticut, and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. He started dancing at Concord Academy in Massachusetts and graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 2000. He received the Viola Farber-Slayton Memorial Grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts in 2000. Since then he has danced with Pam Tanowitz, Chantal Yzermans, Donna Uchizono, Risa Jaroslow, Sara Rudner and Richard Colton. He joined MCDC in January 2004 and is currently on faculty at the Cunningham Studio. In 2007, he was the recipient of a Princess Grace Award: Dance Fellowship. He presented his own choreography in collaboration with writer Anne Carson at the Skirball Center in December 2008, and recently performed with Pam Tanowitz.

Marcie Munnerlyn is from Portland, Oregon. She trained at Jefferson High School, Oregon Ballet Theater and the Cornish College of the Arts. She became a member of CDF Repertory Understudy Group in June 2002 and joined MCDC in January 2004.

Krista Nelson is from Champaign, Illinois. She received a BFA in dance with high honors from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2005. Ms. Nelson joined the CDF Repertory Understudy Group in May 2008, and joined MCDC in 2010. She has danced with Catherine Tharin since 2006. Ms. Nelson was on the dance faculty at the 92nd Street Y from 2008 to 2010. She also worked as production manager and co-curator of Fridays at Noon from 2007 to 2009.

Silas Rienier grew up in Washington DC. He graduated from Princeton University with a degree in comparative literature. There he began studying dance with Ze’eva Cohen and Rebecca Lazier, and performed works by James Waring, Vaslav Nijinsky and Leonide Massine, as restaged by Millicent Hodson. He has also worked with Takehiro Ueyama, Christopher Williams, Jonh Bokaer and Rebecca Lazier. While performing with MCDC, Mr. Rienier completed his MFA in dance at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. He joined MCDC in November 2007.

Jamie Scott began studying dance in her hometown of Great Falls, Virginia. She continued training in the pre-professional division of the Washington School of Ballet and moved to New York in 2001 to attend Barnard College. After graduating cum laude from Barnard in May 2005, she began her studies at the Merce Cunningham Studio. She joined the Cunningham Repertory Understudy Group in January 2007 and MCDC in July 2009. Ms. Scott is currently on faculty at the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio. She also dances with the Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company.

Melissa Toogood joined MCDC in June 2008. She began working with Mr. Cunningham as a member of the CDF Repertory Understudy Group in November 2005. A faculty member at the Merce Cunningham Studio since 2007, she has taught repertory workshops in her native city of Sydney, Australia. Ms. Toogood worked with Pam
Tanzwitz Dance and Miro Dance Theatre, was a founding member of the Michael Uthoff Dance Theatre, and performed with writer Anne Carson. Ms. Toogood earned a BFA in dance performance from New World School of the Arts in Miami, Florida, under Dean Daniel Lewis.

Andrea Weber graduated with a BFA from The Juilliard School, under the direction of Benjamin Harkarvy. Ms. Weber has danced and taught for Canadian based Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie, participating in the Manitoba Project in August 2007 and in the Gros Mourne Project in July 2006. In November 2006, Ms. Weber danced an excerpt from Jessica Lang’s Splendid Isolation II for Kanji Segawa’s Dance Project New York. She has assisted and staged Lila York’s works on ballet companies throughout the United States and in Denmark. Ms. Weber was a collaborator in Anne Carson’s Possessive Used as Drink (Me). In 2008, Ms. Weber performed in Stacks, a collaboration between Ms. Carson, Jonah Bokaer and Peter Cole. She has also worked with Charlotte Griffin, Sue Bernhard and Ellen Cornfeld. Ms. Weber joined MCDC in January 2004 and is currently a faculty member of the Merce Cunningham Studio.

COLLABORATORS

Anna Finke grew up on a strawberry farm in northern Minnesota and attended SUNY Purchase where she received a BFA in dance. She met Merce Cunningham during an internship at Jacob’s Pillow and began working with the company in 2004. Ms. Finke is now the company photographer and has been designing costumes for MCDC since 2007, creating five original works for the Event series at Dia:Beacon. She has toured with Mikhail Baryshnikov and freelances with various artists in the area. Ms. Finke was recently featured in an exhibit that celebrated women designers at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

John Paul Jones is one of the most accomplished and respected musicians in the world of rock today. As a prolific session musician in the 1960s, he played on or arranged innumerable recordings for artists such as Dusty Springfield, Tom Jones and the Rolling Stones, before becoming a founder member of the seminal band Led Zeppelin. Led Zeppelin’s iconic career was unparalleled, and it remains one of the most influential bands in the world. After Led Zeppelin, Mr. Jones continued to work as a performer, arranger and producer with a diverse range of artists, including Diamanda Galás, REM, Brian Eno, Peter Gabriel and La Fura dels Baus. His debut solo album, Zooma, was released in September 1999, followed by The Thunderthief in 2001. Always willing to challenge himself musically, Mr. Jones took part in John Cage’s Music Circus at the Barbican in London in 2004, before embarking on a tour with bluegrass heroes Nickel Creek. More recently, Mr. Jones produced the “old time” band Uncle Earl, performed with Robyn Hitchcock and produced the debut album for Sara Watkins.

The Legacy Plan

The first of its kind in the dance world, the Cunningham Dance Foundation’s precedent-setting Legacy Plan delineates the future of MCDC and ensures the preservation of Merce Cunningham’s artistic legacy. The multifaceted plan includes the celebratory two-year Legacy Tour, which offers audiences a final opportunity to see the company Mr. Cunningham personally trained before it disbands at the end of 2011. The plan also supports career transition for the dancers, musicians and staff who have invested their time and creative efforts into the realization of Mr. Cunningham’s vision, and provides for the creation of digital “Dance Capsules” that will bring Mr. Cunningham’s work to life for future generations. For more information about the Legacy Plan, go to http://www.merce.org/living-legacy-plan.html.
Mondays with Merce, a pioneering web-cast series, provides a never-before-seen look at MCDC, with footage of the Company in rehearsal and performance, exclusive interviews with Merce and artistic collaborators, and video from the Merce Cunningham Archives. Go behind the scenes and on the road with MCDC throughout the Legacy Tour (www.merce.org/mondayswithmerce.html). Trevor Carlson, executive producer; Nancy Dalva, producer/writer; Christopher Young, videographer and editor.

European administration for MCDC provided by Julie George, Paris, France, phone 33.1.4588.9020, 33.1.4588.0441, fax 33.1.4589.1393, email julie-george@wanadoo.fr.

North American, South American and Asian booking provided by David Lieberman Artists’ Representatives, phone 714.979.4700, fax 714.979.4740, mobile 213.792.0600, email david@dlartists.com.

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The Media Repertory of MCDC includes programs from the Merce Cunningham Archives, videotapes and films choreographed specifically for the camera, documentaries and educational materials, which are distributed by the Cunningham Dance Foundation, Inc., phone 212.255.8240 ext. 26, fax 212.633.2453.

Merce Cunningham Studio is a nonprofit educational institution accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance, giving instruction on the professional level. The Studio holds regular classes in technique, elementary to advanced, which are supplemented at periodic intervals by workshops in composition, repertory, and film/video dance. Scholarships, financial aid and work/study are available. Contact Mary Lisa Burns, phone 212.255.8240 ext. 32, fax 212.633.2453, email marylisa@merce.org.

Merce Cunningham Studio offers a rental program for emerging choreographers and performance open to any company or individual artist on a self-producing basis. The program features low rates, complete facilities, a flexible performance space and year-round booking. Contact Christopher Young, phone 212.255.8240 ext. 24, fax 212.633.2453, email christopher@merce.org.

Physical therapy for MCDC provided by Susan Blankensop, Christine Bratton. Orthopedist to MCDC is David S. Weiss, M.D., NYU-HJD Department of Orthopedic Surgery.

Consulting services provided by David Bury & Associates for development and strategic planning, and Resnicow Schroeder Associates for public relations and strategic communications.