



Dominic Walsh Dance Theater's E_Merging II Published by Houston Theater District, April 2008

HOUSTON—Contemporary ballet company Dominic Walsh Dance Theater will end its 2007-2008 season run at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Zilkha Hall with E_Merging II on April 10 and 11, 2008 at 7:30 PM. With this program, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater will build on its long tradition of collaboration by working with local artists to produce unique works that integrate the disciplines of visual art and dance.

Dominic Walsh Dance Theater's first E_Merging in 2006 featured new works by up-and-coming choreographers created in collaboration with visual artists. For E_Merging II, the company will offer a new take on the concept with works by two mid-career choreographers who are shaping contemporary ballet, Gustavo Ramirez Sansano of Spain and our own Dominic Walsh.

Ramirez has danced with many companies including the prestigious Nederlands Dance Theater II and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and his works are in the repertoires of companies around the world including Luna Negra Dance Theater, Hamburg Ballet, BalletMet, Ballet Carmen Roche, Passerelles in Belgium, ABCDance Company in Austria, IT Dansa in Barcelona, and Dominic Walsh Dance Theater. (The company performed the U. S. premiere of Ramirez's 2 & 1 for Mr. B in 2004 at the IX International Ballet Festival of Miami, and then again in Houston in 2005.) Ramirez has won numerous choreographic awards and was recently chosen by the magazine *Por la Danza* for its 15th anniversary as one of fifteen choreographers to consider. He is now artistic director of the newly formed TITOYAYA Dance Project in Valencia and in his role as artistic director of Torre Vieja Danza, invited Dominic Walsh Dance Theater to perform at the dance week near Alicante, Spain last July.

For E_Merging II, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater will present the U. S. premiere of Ramirez's *Dicese*. For this work, Ramirez won awards for "Best Show" and "Best Choreography" at The Generalitat Valenciana in 2005. "It is a great learning experience for our dancers to perform Gustavo's work - it is an athletic and innovative movement vocabulary that stretches us into a slightly different style from most of our repertoire. I am excited to introduce *Dicese* to Houston audiences," says Artistic Director Dominic Walsh. For the Houston presentation, Ramirez chose to collaborate with Houston artist Navid Ghedami to re-imagine the visual aspects of the work including the physical set and props. Ghedami's Mind Puddles Gallery is next door to Dominic Walsh Dance Theater's studio and administrative offices. He has long been a fan of the company but this will be the first time he has contributed artistically to a project.

Walsh will present a world premiere work for E_Merging II created especially for the DWDT company members set to music composed and performed live by Houston's own Two Star Symphony. Two Star Symphony is a string ensemble founded in 2002 by Jo Bird (viola/toy piano), Debra Brown (violin), and Margaret Lejeune (cello/harp). Walsh first worked with the group in 2004 when they composed and performed the score for his *Alchemy*, a work he created for New York's American Ballet Theatre Studio

Company. Walsh's new piece focuses on the evolution of ballet philosophies that have inspired his choreography and will be set against an installation created by Houston painter Nicola Parente. Born in Italy, Parente draws from a rich Italian heritage and a deep well of cross-cultural experiences to bring his art to life. Inspired by the experiences of his friend and fellow artist Tami Merrick who participated in the first E_Merging, Parente responded to the company's open call for this year's project. "Upon reviewing his work, I knew immediately that I wanted to collaborate with Nicola on this new creation. His abstract paintings speak of urban life, time, and distance. I am excited about the ideas that have developed so far, and I look forward to the rest of the journey," says Walsh.

Although Dominic Walsh Dance Theater is, at its heart, a dance company, it is somewhat unusual in its focus on collaboration. In just five years, the company has produced works in conjunction with more than a dozen Houston-area arts organizations and artists. "This collaborative tradition has allowed us to offer desirable opportunities, not just for dancers, but for singers, musicians, visual artists, and technical personnel as well. We are excited to continue this tradition with E_Merging II," states Executive Director Leigh McBurnett.

Tickets for E_Merging II are available for \$17, \$30, and \$42 through www.dwdt.org or by calling 713-315-2525. A VIP Opening Night package, including priority seating and an exclusive post-show cocktail reception with the performers at Artista is available for \$75.

The goals of Dominic Walsh Dance Theater are: to present innovative, thought-provoking contemporary ballet in Houston and abroad; to expand the contemporary repertoire by supporting the creation of new works by choreographers from around the world; and to advance international dialogue by bringing the work of today's iconic choreographers to Houston. Dominic Walsh, a world-renowned principal dancer and choreographer, created the company in 2002 to build upon and expand the vocabulary of the masters of contemporary dance. By bringing together the world's greatest choreographers and the finest dancers, musicians and designers, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater inspires, challenges, and entertains audiences and artists alike with stimulating and visually stunning performances.