



DANCE TAKES CENTER STAGE AT PARK AVENUE ARMORY THIS DECEMBER

Final Performances of Merce Cunningham Dance Company
And World Premieres by STREB and Armory Artist-in-Residence Shen Wei Dance Arts

Tickets on Sale August 15

New York, NY - July 18, 2011 - To culminate its first full season of cultural programming, Park Avenue Armory will present three epic dance programs in November and December 2011, including the final performance of the legendary **Merce Cunningham Dance Company** on New Year's Eve. Marking the end of the Company's two-year Legacy Tour and nearly 60 years of creativity, the historic site-specific *Park Avenue Armory Events* will celebrate the artistic genius of Merce Cunningham and showcase the seminal influence that his company has had on visual and performing arts and the American avant garde.

The Armory will also present an evening-length performance by **Shen Wei Dance Arts**, including the world premiere of a new work influenced by Shen Wei's time as an Armory artist-in-residence that heralds the next direction of the ensemble. **STREB Extreme Action** will showcase new gravity-defying works performed throughout the Armory's expansive 55,000-square-foot, 70-foot-high Wade Thompson Drill Hall. Highlighting the distinctive choreographic styles of each company, the three programs will draw upon the Armory's scale and character, and immerse the audience in performances unhindered by the constraints of traditional spaces.

Tickets for all three dance programs are on sale beginning August 15, 2011. To purchase tickets and for more information please visit www.armoryonpark.org.

"Each of these three dance companies is known for mounting performances in non-traditional spaces, and each program at the Armory showcases new works that are informed by and that respond to the unique characteristics of our expansive drill hall. The end result provides visitors with immersive and engaging experiences with dance that dynamically connect the artists with the audience in dramatically different ways," stated **Rebecca Robertson**, President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. "We hope that visitors will dance with us at the Armory this December, as they experience site-specific performances by Shen Wei Dance Arts, STREB, and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, who we are especially honored to be presenting in a final historic engagement."

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SHEN WEI DANCE ARTS

November 29 - December 3, 2011, at 7:30pm

December 4, 2011 at 2pm

Tickets: \$35

Rite of Spring

Premiered: 2003 (American Dance Festival)

Choreography, Sets, and Costumes: Shen Wei

Music: Igor Stravinsky (Four-hand piano version recorded by Fazil Say)

Lighting: Jennifer Tipton

Folding

Premiered: 2000 (originally created for China's Guangdong Modern Dance Company)

Choreography, Set, Costume, and Make Up: Shen Wei

Music: John Tavener and Tibetan Buddhist Chants

Lighting: Jennifer Tipton

New World Premiere

Choreography: Shen Wei

Following his year-long creative exploration as a Park Avenue Armory artist-in-residence, Artistic Director Shen Wei and his company, Shen Wei Dance Arts, will perform a bold new work that heralds the next direction for the ensemble. Created during the Company's residence at the Armory, this site-specific world premiere will combine handcrafted scenic elements with an expansive digital projection in a performance that makes dynamic use of the boundless possibilities available in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall. The evening-length program will also include the restaging of two of Shen Wei's most celebrated works: *Rite of Spring* (2003), a study of deliberate versus reflexive movement set to Igor Stravinsky's intricate music; and *Folding* (2000), which combines highly stylized movement with the ethereal melodies of John Tavener and traditional Tibetan Buddhist chants. The evening will culminate with the newly commissioned work by Shen Wei, which will take over the entire drill hall.

STREB Extreme Action

December 14 - 16, 20, 22, 2011, at 7pm

December 17 & 21, 2011, at 2pm & 7pm

December 18, 2011, at 3pm

Tickets: \$35

Kiss the Airl

Action Architect and Choreographer: Elizabeth Streb

Composer: David Van Tiegham

Costume Design: Andrea Lauer

Lighting Design: Robert Wierzel

New York's own "action heroes," STREB Extreme Action stretch the limitations of the human body. Choreographer and MacArthur "genius" award recipient Elizabeth Streb will take over the Armory's expansive Wade Thompson Drill Hall with *Kiss the Airl*, a performance of new large-scale works that incorporate ziplines, ladders, trampolines, hoops, and bungee cords. Among the works will be *Ascension*,

which encompasses a 21-foot turning ladder on which nine dancers attempt to balance. *Human Fountain* features sixteen performers leaping from a three-storey scaffold to create the effect of a human Bellagio Fountain. Also included are *Falling Sideways*, which uses stuntmen's Air Ramps to hurl the dancers past the audience, and *Kiss The Air!* in which dancers in bungees fly over the audience—and a pool of water. Part aerial dance, part daredevil act, Elizabeth Streb's work defies the natural laws of motion and gravity to create a visual and auditory tour de force.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY

December 29 - 31, 2011, at 6:30pm & 9:00pm

Tickets: \$10

Park Avenue Armory Events

Choreography by Merce Cunningham

Arranged by Robert Swinston

Music composed and performed by the MCDC Music Committee

The Merce Cunningham Dance Company returns to New York City—its home since its founding in 1953—for six historic final performances at the Armory, culminating a two-year farewell Legacy Tour that brought the Company to more than 50 cities worldwide. For this last engagement, the Company will perform a series of *Events* created especially for the occasion across multiple stages in the Armory's dramatic drill hall. The Company has mounted these signature site-specific choreographic collages in unusual locations around the world throughout its nearly 60-year history, including two previous engagements in the Armory's drill hall, a 1983 performance and the 2009 public memorial for the legendary dancer and choreographer. The *Park Avenue Armory Events* mark the final opportunity for audiences to experience first-hand the work of Merce Cunningham as performed by the Company he personally trained and to celebrate Cunningham's lifetime of creative achievement with the Company before it disbands.

About Park Avenue Armory

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York by enabling artists to create, and the public to experience, unconventional work that could not otherwise be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of 19th-century European train stations—and array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory invites artists to draw upon its grand scale and distinctive character to both inspire and inform their work.

Since its first production in September 2007—Aaron Young's *Greeting Card*, a 9,216-square-foot "action" painting created by the burned-out tire marks of ten choreographed motorcycles presented with Art Production Fund—the Armory has organized a series of immersive performances, installations, and works of art that have drawn critical and popular attention, among them: Bernd Zimmermann's opera *Die Soldaten*, Ariane Mnouchkine's *Les Éphémères* and Declan Donnellan's *Boris Godunov*, as part of the 2008 and 2009 Lincoln Center Festivals; the 2008 Whitney Biennial with site-specific installations and performances by 37 artists; and an evening of Stravinsky's *Sacred Masterpieces* presented in association with Columbia University's Miller Theatre. In 2009, the Armory launched its annual visual art commission with Ernesto Neto's *anthropodino*, which transformed the drill hall into a multi-sensory labyrinth of fabric and spice. The Armory's second commission, *No Man's Land* by Christian Boltanski, filled the drill hall with thousands of pieces of discarded clothing and a soundtrack of reverberating heartbeats.

In December 2010, the Armory opened its first full season of artistic programming with the epic installation, *Leonardo's Last Supper: A Vision by Peter Greenaway*, followed by the Tune-In contemporary music festival and electronic composer and artist Ryoji Ikeda's immersive installation *the transfinite*. The season also includes five plays in repertory performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, site-specific performances by STREB and Shen Wei Dance Arts, and the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

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