

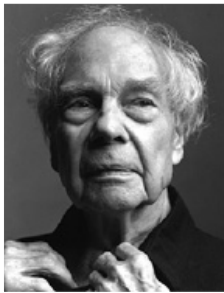
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WEXNER CENTER PRESENTS FIRST PERFORMANCE OF MERCÉ CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY'S *LEGACY TOUR*

EVENT INCLUDES PRE-SHOW TALK, POST-SHOW Q&A, FILM, WEB REFLECTIONS, MORE

"He has taught us something new and powerful about how to dance and how to live." —Mikhail Baryshnikov, on the late Merce Cunningham

Columbus, OH—Choreographer Merce Cunningham, who died in July at age 90, was universally acknowledged as one of the true artistic pioneers of our time. In keeping with his express wishes just prior to his passing, the



Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCDC) will embark upon *The Legacy Tour*, a final two-year international tour that will commence on **Friday, February 12 at 8 pm** at the Wexner Center's Mershon Auditorium. This concert will both

commemorate and celebrate Cunningham as an unrivaled force during the last 60 years in dance and vanguard multidisciplinary practice, whose work was acknowledged here in 1993 when he received the **Wexner Prize** (jointly awarded to his frequent collaborator, composer John Cage, who passed away prior to the Prize event).

The Legacy Tour will be audiences' last opportunity to see Cunningham works performed by the superb dancers he personally trained. At the conclusion of the world tour, the company will disband permanently, closing an important chapter in this country's creative legacy. Showcasing two pieces spanning Cunningham's rich career, the evening draws from the master's early work and later choreography. The program features *Crises* from 1960, a piece set to music composed for player pianos by American maverick composer Conlon Nancarrow with costumes by Robert Rauschenberg, and *Split Sides*, a recent work with an electronic score



Above, MCDC in *Split Sides* (photo by Tony Dougherty); at left, Merce Cunningham (photo by Mark Seliger)

SHOW INFORMATION: The Wexner Center presents **Merce Cunningham Dance Company: *The Legacy Tour*** **Friday, February 12 at 8 pm** in the Wexner Center's Mershon Auditorium, 1871 N. High St. on The Ohio State University campus. Works include *Crises* and *Split Sides*. Run time: 90 minutes with intermission. **Ticket prices** are \$28–\$36 for the general public, \$24–\$32 for members, and \$20 students (upper balcony only), available at the Wexner Center Ticket Office (614 292-3535), or through ticketmaster.com/800-745-3000. [\\$5 High 5 tickets](#) also available for middle- or high-school students. A **group rate** is available for groups of 10 or more; [contact the ticket office](#) at 614 292-3535 for more information. "Merce is for Lovers" package deal at The Blackwell (\$225 for deluxe accommodations, two tickets to the show, and more); details [here](#). **Pre-show talk at 7 pm; post-show Q&A** offered as well. Visit www.wexarts.org for additional information.

composed by leading art rock bands Radiohead and Sigur Rós.

Notes Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin, "The Wexner Center is enormously proud to launch *The Legacy Tour* celebrating Cunningham's extraordinary, lifelong contribution to the evolution of contemporary dance and creative expression. As an institution that itself commissions, supports, and presents multidisciplinary work—and having awarded the 1993 Wexner Prize to Merce Cunningham and John Cage—the Wex is a fitting venue at which to inaugurate this two-year tribute tour."



Above: MCDC in *Crises* (photo by Briana Blasko). Below: MCDC in *Split Sides* (photo by Tony Dougherty)



Two distinguished faculty members of Ohio State's Department of Dance, **Karen Eliot** and **David Covey**, will offer

personal remembrances of their own experiences working with the MCDC in a **pre-concert talk at 7 pm** (free to all ticketholders).

Eliot is a former dancer with Cunningham's company, whose book, *Dancing Lives: Five Female Dancers from the Ballet*

d'Action to Merce Cunningham (2007), investigates Cunningham's historical contribution. In 1998 Covey received a BESSIE award for his lighting design for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and now serves as production coordinator for Ohio State's Department of Dance. **Their reflections of Cunningham's artistic legacy** are also posted online at www.wexarts.org (Covey's [here](#) and Eliot's [here](#)).

A **post-performance Q&A session** with Robert Swinston, director of choreography, and David Vaughan, company archivist, will conclude the evening and provide further insight into the work of this American master.

A **master class in Cunningham technique**, taught by a Cunningham company member, will take place at Ohio State's Department of Dance for Ohio State dance students and invited local dancers.

Merce Cunningham Dance Company web site: www.merce.org. Wexner Center Director

Sherri Geldin's thoughts on Cunningham's legacy:

<http://wexarts.org/wexblog/?s=merce+cunningham>



Leslie H. Wexner and Merce Cunningham at the 1993 Wexner Prize ceremony at the Wexner Center for the Arts (photo by Kevin Fitzsimons)

Tacita Dean's *Craneway Event*

Friday, February 12

12:30 and 3:30 pm

Wexner Center Film/Video Theater

Free admission

In conjunction with the MCDC performance, the Wexner Center presents artist Tacita Dean's ***Craneway Event*** film project. Dean spent three days in the fall of 2008 filming Cunningham and his dancers developing an "Event" (the company's term for a performance composed of movement phrases from past works) in a former Ford assembly plant on the waterfront in the Bay Area. The resulting 16mm feature marks Cunningham's final appearance on film and was constructed by Dean from 17 hours of footage. The 2009 film is 108 minutes long.

EVENT AND SEASON SUPPORT

Merce Cunningham Dance Company is presented with major support from the **Ohio Arts Council** and the **National Endowment for the Arts**. Major support for the Wexner Center's 2009–10 performing arts season is generously provided by the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**. Accommodations provided by **The Blackwell Inn**. Promotional support is provided by **90.5 FM WCBE**. Performing arts programs and events also receive support from the Corporate **Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation** and **Wexner Center members**, as well as from the **Greater Columbus Arts Council**, **The Columbus Foundation**, **Nationwide Foundation**, and the **Ohio Arts Council**.