

Trisha Brown Dance Company

A year-long series of performances at Dia:Beacon

Dia:Beacon

Riggio Galleries

3 Beekman Street Beacon New York 12508

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artistic director and choreographer

Trisha Brown

dancers

Dai Jian

Elena Demyanenko

Hyun-Jin Jung

Leah Morrison

Tamara Riewe

Todd Lawrence Stone

Nicholas Strafaccia

Laurel Tentindo

Samuel von Wentz

choreographic assistant

Carolyn Lucas

rehearsal director

Irène Hultman

special projects

Diane Madden

production manager

John Torres

sound designer

Patrick Heilman

Dia Art Foundation presents

Trisha Brown Dance Company

Program 1

Saturday, November 14, and
Sunday, November 15, 2009

Program 2

Saturday, February 13, and
Sunday, February 14, 2010

Program 3

Saturday, May 1, 2010

This program is supported in part by Dia's Board of Trustees, President's Council,
Art Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency.

Bookshop Display

November, February, May

The Dia:Beacon bookstore features material from Trisha Brown's collection.

Screenings

Weekends in November, February, and May

The Dia:Beacon screening room features film and video of Trisha Brown Dance Company.

Conversation

Saturday, February 13, 2010, 3 pm

Trisha Brown, Klaus Kertess, and Philippe Vergne

Dia:Beacon galleries

Forever Young: Some Thoughts on My Early Work Today

Trisha Brown, with Susari Rosenberg

As a high-school student in Aberdeen, Washington, I was given a questionnaire meant to assign a suitable career to me. I was told a future as a music librarian was in my cards. *Quoi?* No doubt this was a deck dealt to many other women in 1950s America, however the test's predictive efficacy, or possible significance, didn't compute for me at the time. In light of my four-plus decades as a choreographer who has described herself as "a bricklayer with a sense of humor," there is an uncanny logic to that early measurement of my professional aptitude: my formal training at Mills College and the summer classes I took at the American Dance Festival with Louis Horst, the preeminent teacher of modern dance composition, would set me up to love structure, forever.

Before even setting foot on Anna Halprin's outdoor dance deck (in the summer of 1960), nature was my equipment and ordinary and athletic movement my language. Growing up in Aberdeen, I lived in trees, climbing high and then walking down uneven terrain, feeling my weight's subtly regulated but irregular shifting—all the while wishing to be airborne, to fly. At Halprin's workshop, I found task to be a sympathetic, usefu' way to generate movement, and I was intrigued by the possibility of admitting talking into dance performance; however, I still considered improvisation a taboo to be broken on my own terms. In California and then in New York in 1960 and 1962, I was twice seen transforming task into flight. This story is one of the true myths of my origins as a choreographer.

In 1967, I drove footholds into the wall of my SoHo loft, in order to reach the ceiling but also to move on a vertical plane. In 1970, I choreographed a walk down the façade of the building where I lived, 80 Wooster Street, and on the same program, "Dances In and Around 80 Wooster Street," I suspended myself and another dancer above the ground in clothing rigged on a gridded frame, *Floor of the Forest* (1970). In these works, as in *Leaning Duets I* (1970), I enlisted gravity as a collaborator, a machine for making dances. Back then, for a brief period, it was but a short trek from downtown Manhattan to the Whitney Museum, where, in 1971, together with seven other dancers, I walked across the white walls of a gallery emptied of all other art. Footprints, left fleetingly, were painted over.

For fifteen years, I taught at my loft on 80 Wooster Street, preparing for one half hour by writing down fifteen things to do in my class. The ideas came fast and I dodged no bullets. My choreographic process was increasingly defined by a rigorous economy, although one encumbered by the required "equipment," sculptural constructions and actual architecture used to imbue my work with an internal logic, natural and inevitable.

I shed the equipment to deliberately explore the body's structure, in particular, the capabilities of the joints and spine, where movement occurs through three tasks: bend, straighten, and rotate. To make my original movement language, I set off in pursuit of "pure movement"—that is, movement without connotation, neither functional nor pantomimic.

Accumulation (1971), a solo, started with one movement, the rotation of the fist with thumb extended; this was repeated, and to it another movement was added; these two were repeated, and then a third was added, and so on. Built from self-contained movement units, each *Accumulation* dance is also a single stationary object in three-dimensional space. From the movement material of *Accumulation* came *Primary Accumulation* (1972), in which a supine figure systematically accumulates thirty moves in eighteen minutes, rotating forty-five degrees each on the last two moves until a 360-degree turn is completed.

Primary Accumulation became *Group Primary Accumulation* when performed on May 16, 1973, in the plaza of the McGraw-Hill Building on the occasion of New York's Spring Dance Festival. The midtown audience, on lunch break, caught on to my choreography's logic; to their surprise, I arranged for two male dancers to enter the plaza and lift the four women to new locations on the concrete site, while the dancers continued the choreography, unarrested. When presented at the Walker Art Center on November 9, 1974, another plane for movement was added; the dance was performed on floating rafts in the Loring Park lagoon in the rain. This environment introduced another dimension to the work; the relationship of the dancers to one another and their orientation in space was determined by the water's current, which was dictated by the wind.

The visual art world focused its attention on my work in the 1970s, which led to my performing internationally in such sites as galleries and museums (including Galleria L'Attico in Rome, Sonnabend Gallery in New York, and the Musée



Galliera in Paris), on programs featuring contemporary art: musical, sculptural, and conceptual. But, a still-well-kept secret of the time is that, in Europe, works made to be seen in lofts and other white cubes were presented on the proscenium stage.

Spanish Dance (1973) accompanied my first foray into the theater, the conventional frame for dance in our time. A mainstay of my company today, *Spanish Dance* was then an anomaly; it was inspired by the stage's proscenium arch, the boundary containing its deadpan presentation of group locomotion, and was performed with arms raised in proud flamenco style and with hips swaying rhythmically to Gordon Lightfoot's 1965 "Early Morning Rain," a rare instance when music accompanied my work. *Spanish Dance* could go on forever and for me is strongly connected to my company's ongoing, peripatetic movement from city to city on tour. Today it is presented on its own and in a variety of contexts. Between 1973 and 1976, it was part of a group of works, which also included *Sticks* (1973) and *Figure Eight* (1974), that were performed singly or together as *Structured Pieces*, dances that each emanate from a single rule and its permutations, producing group choreography discovered during the course of performance.

After the premiere of my *Accumulation* dances at the Wadsworth Atheneum, on December 1, 1972, I was looking for a new dance. Pure movement was one contender. The second was a free-wheeling, semicrazed, now-you-see-it, now-you-don't, improvisational approach—the one I embraced wholeheartedly in 1979. However, the two came together in *Locus* (1975), which envisions the space around the body as a cube defining the choreography's architecture. The cube is marked with imaginary points, each identified with one letter and a digit corresponding to the alphabet's twenty-six letters plus number twenty-seven, the cube's and the body's center. In part, I was rethinking Rudolf Laban's notational effort to map the body's harmonious movement through space—his kinesphere—as an indeterminate choreographic format and form.

With *Locus*, I wrote the script of my choreography through my biography, spelled out in letters equated to numbers for the body to perform. My assignment as a dancer was to touch each of the cube's twenty-seven points in space to spell out that sentence randomly, without knowing what was coming next or where

it was coming from—yet remaining in control. Derived from structured improvisation, *Locus's* movement is set. The dance is complex enough even with the explanation I supplied by showing people the *Locus* score, a drawing. I wanted my audience to be conversant with my methods. I was now identified with Minimalism in the public's mind and eye.

In 1979, I adopted the proscenium stage as the home for new works, and today I live in the realm of choreography and opera, a post-studio world. However my art allows me to regularly inhabit parallel universes of my own making—not one in which I look back but instead where I see my work live. When I made the work on this program, I was fascinated by qualities of gesture that exist on the edge of memory, that are made permanent through repetition. The time of repetition in performance was on my mind—but so was the desire to imbue my choreography with structure as the lasting architecture for my ideas. These works made me the artist I am, and I made them to be forever young, to continue to be repeated.

P.S. I clamor to join my fellow artists at Dia:Beacon.

Biographies

Trisha Brown was born and raised in Aberdeen, Washington. She graduated from Mills College in 1958, studied with Anna Halprin, and taught at Reed College in Portland before moving to New York City in 1961. Instantly immersed in what was to become the postmodern phenomena of Judson Dance Theater, her movement investigations found the extraordinary in the everyday and challenged existing perceptions of what constituted performance. In 1970, Ms. Brown formed her company and made the groundbreaking work, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building*, one of many site-specific works created in, around, and hovering over the streets and buildings of her SoHo neighborhood. Her first of many collaborations with Robert Rauschenberg, *Glacial Decoy*, premiered in 1979, followed by *Set and Reset* in 1983 with original music by Laurie Anderson. Other collaborators have included visual artists Nancy Graves, Donald Judd, and Terry Winters, as well as composers and musicians Peter Zummo and Dave Douglas. Brown has created nearly one hundred dance works since 1961, including several operas and is currently at work on a new operatic evening featuring the music of Jean-Philippe Rameau. Increasingly recognized as a visual artist, her drawings have been exhibited in group and solo exhibitions, including Documenta 12 in Kassel, Germany, Sikkema Jenkins Gallery (2009), and most recently as part of the *Year of Trisha*—a celebration of her entire body of work at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

Brown was the first woman choreographer to receive the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Other honors include the Brandeis University's Creative Arts Medal in Dance, two John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships, a New York State Governor's Arts Award, and the National Medal of Art. In 1994 she received the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award and she has been named a Veuve Cliquot Grand Dame. Ms. Brown was named a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the government of France in 1988, elevated to Officier in 2000 and to Commandeur in 2004. She served on the National Council on the Arts from 1994 to 1997. She has received numerous honorary doctorates and is an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Dai Jian was born in Hunan Province, China, and graduated from Beijing Dance Academy and Guangdong ATV Professional Academy for Performing Arts founded by Madam Yang Meiqi. In 1998 he was awarded Second Prize at the Fourth National Dance Competition. He danced and choreographed for Jin Xing Dance Theater and Guangzhou Song & Dance Ensemble in China before becoming a member of the Shen Wei Dance Arts in 2005. Dai Jian joined the company in 2008.

Elena Demyanenko is a Russian-born graduate of the Academy of Theatrical Arts (Moscow) and has been dancing, choreographing, and teaching in New York City since 2001. Elena was a member of Stephen Petronio Company from 2003 to 2008 and has performed with Pavel Zustiak, Lindsey Dietz Marchant, and Jimena Paz, and in Martha Clarke's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. She was the recipient of EMPAC Dance Movies Commission in 2007. She joined the company in June of 2009.

Irène Hultman, a native of Sweden, danced with Trisha Brown Dance Company from 1983 to 1988 and formed Irène Hultman Dance in 1988. She has choreographed several operas and received commissions including Gothenburg Opera Ballet and Royal Opera House of Sweden. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts Award, serves on Danspace Project's Artist Advisory Board, and has been a member of the Bessie Committee.

Hyun-Jin Jung is from Pusan, South Korea, where he earned a degree in choreography from the Korean National University of Arts, School of Dance. He performed throughout Europe before moving to New York in 2003. He joined Trisha Brown Dance Company in October 2004.

Carolyn Lucas has been a member of the Trisha Brown Dance Company since 1984. In 1993 she was appointed Choreographic Assistant, and since then has been involved with the creation of Brown's works in dance and opera. She attended the North Carolina School of the Arts and received a BFA from SUNY Purchase in 1984.

Diane Madden joined the Company in 1980. Rehearsal Director from 1984–2000, Diane enjoys keeping a rich range of choreography alive with a group of very talented dancers. Her major influences are Trisha and her collaborators in improvisation, most notably the members of Channel Z. Diane has received two Princess Grace Awards and a Bessie.

Leah Morrison joined the company in 2005. She is from St. Louis, where she began dancing with Lee Nolting at the Center of Contemporary Arts. She graduated from SUNY Purchase. In 2008, Morrison was selected as a Princess Grace Honorarium Recipient and received a New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award for her performance of Brown's *If You Couldn't See Me*.

Tamara Riewe began her dance training in Seattle at the University of Washington. She transferred to Salt Lake City and in 2001 earned a BFA in Modern Dance from the University of Utah. She has worked with Daniel Charon, with Keith Johnson (LA), as a member of Bill Young/Colleen Thomas and Dancers, and with Doug Varone at the Metropolitan Opera. She joined the Company in 2006.

Todd Lawrence Stone has danced with Irène Hultman Dance Company and Wil Swanson. He has also worked with Pearl Lang Dance Company, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, and Neta Pulvermacher and Dancers. Stone graduated from SUNY Purchase in 1995 with a BFA in dance. He currently studies with June Ekman. Todd joined Trisha Brown Dance Company in 1998.

Nicholas Strafaccia grew up outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and began his training and professional career with the Minnesota Dance Theatre under the direction of Lise Houlton. Strafaccia holds a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and has performed with such choreographers as Gerald Casel and Cherylyn Lavagnino. He joined the Trisha Brown Dance Company in June 2009.

Laurel Tentindo grew up and began dancing in Vermont. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College and has danced with Sara Rudner, Vicky Shick, and the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. She studies the Alexander Technique with June Ekman and is a Skinner Releasing teacher. Tentindo joined the Trisha Brown Dance Company in 2008.

Samuel von Wentz, a native of North Dakota, has worked and studied with Gerald Casel, whom he met while he was continuing his academic adventure at NYU Tisch. He joined the Company in June of 2009 and enjoys jigsaw puzzles and origami.