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**NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS AWARDS \$400,000 IN GRANTS
SUPPORTING RECONSTRUCTION AND RESTAGING OF SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN
DANCE WORKS**

(BOSTON – September 7, 2006) American Masterpieces: Dance (AMD), the dance component of a major initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) administered by New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), has awarded **\$400,000** in grants to support the reconstruction and restaging of historically significant American dance work that will tour nationally.

“We are proud to help acquaint Americans with the best of their artistic legacy in dance through American Masterpieces: Dance,” said Doug Sonntag, NEA Director of National Initiatives. “This ambitious initiative will celebrate the evolution of dance and choreography in the U.S. and bring performances of dance masterpieces to large and small communities throughout the country.”

Fourteen American dance companies received grants this year, ranging in amounts from \$20,000-\$40,000. Projects were selected from a highly competitive applicant pool, and projects include educational and interpretive components such as study guides, student performances, lectures, and exhibitions. Projects are also expected to tour, to ensure the works reach the broadest possible audience. In selecting projects, NEFA considered scale, geographic reach, and the representation of diverse ethnicities and artistic forms, as well as the historic significance of the works.

American Masterpieces: Dance was launched in December of 2005, and this is the first round of annual grants awarded. The program includes touring grants, which will support the presentation of the work created by the reconstruction grants. Touring grant recipients will be announced in July 2007.

“This first group of AMD grantees reflects a rich and varied representation of both the history and future of American dance,” said NEFA Executive Director Rebecca Blunk. “I look forward to seeing the restoration of these dances, especially since they will tour to communities across the country.”

A complete list of projects funded by AMD Reconstruction Grants is included below.

Funding for Colleges and Universities

AMD funding is also available to colleges and universities, through the American Masterpieces: Dance College Component (AMDCC). AMDCC is administered by Dance/USA and supports the restaging, performance, and documentation of classic American dances of the past century that are then brought to college students and audiences in communities across the nation. The first round of AMDCC grants will be announced later this fall. Information about AMDCC is available at http://www.danceusa.org/programs_publications/American_Masterpieces.htm

2006 AMD Reconstruction Grants

Artist: ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER, New York, NY

Project title: Talley Beatty’s *Road of the Phoebe Snow*

Beatty had a profound influence on Alvin Ailey, and this work, for 12 dancers, stands as one of his enduring masterpieces. Set to American jazz music by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, the work weaves a turbulent and gripping love story of young Americans from “the wrong side of the track” – literally, as the title refers to the name of a train on the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad.

Artist: COMPLEXIONS CONTEMPORARY BALLET, New York, NY

Project title: *Ulysses Dove’s Dancing on the Front Porch of Heaven, Odes to Love and Loss*

Complexions, led by Artistic Directors Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson, will reconstruct *Ulysses Dove’s Dancing on the Front Porch of Heaven, Odes to Love and Loss* (1993). This 20-minute work, which Dove said he created as a “poetic monument over people I loved,” involves six dancers and is set to *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten* by Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt. We believe that the beauty and emotional pulse revealed in this work will spread the appeal of Dove’s choreography to new dance audiences.

Artist: DAVID GORDON, PICK UP PERFORMANCE CO(S.) New York, NY

Project title: *Trying Times*

“*Trying Times* was made in 1982 after many viewings of Balanchine’s *Apollo*. The Pick Up Co. included three women/muses - Susan Eschelbach, Margaret Hoeffel and Valda Setterfield. Philip Sandstrom, resident designer, lit. Artist Power Boothe designed frames/cloths/boards called “visual devices.” DTW will produce the 25th anniversary of this work. Phil and Power will collaborate with me again. I watched the record tape and was impressed (yes, I was) with range of movement, design, dialogue and response to Stravinsky’s glorious music in the fragmented narrative journey culminating in a mock trial - I’m indicted for making dancers talk and abandoning post modern aesthetics. This piece was/is an example of piercing boundaries between disciplines and pursuing positive movement relationships between aesthetic forms.” - David Gordon

Artist: DAYTON CONTEMPORARY DANCE COMPANY, Dayton, Ohio

Project title: *Las Desenamoras*, choreography by Eleo Pomare

At the 40th anniversary of its creation, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company will engage choreographer Eleo Pomare to refurbish his 1967 master work, *Las Desenamoras*. Based on Federico Garcia Lorca’s “The House of Bernarda Alba,” with music by John Coltrane, this 17-minute piece with 10 dancers is a dramatic, tension-filled story of a tyrannical widow and her daughters, in a house where heartless pride and sterile convention destroy love and life.

Artist: HŌKŪLANI HOLT / PA`U O HI`IAKA, Maui, Hawai`i

Project title: *Kahekili*

Celebrating *Kahekili*, one of Hawaii’s most influential chiefs, this hula drama includes original choreography, chant, and music by native Hawaiian kumu hula (hula master) Hōkūlani Holt. It transports audiences into pre-contact Hawai`i through the earthbound movements and gestures of *kahiko*, ancient hula, accompanied by live traditional percussion instruments and chant, as well as ceremonies and cultural practices rarely performed on stage today. Through educational services and master classes, this project shares authentic Hawaiian culture through the dance protocols and cultural practices of *Kahekili*’s time.

Artist: JAZZ TAP ENSEMBLE, Los Angeles, CA

Project title: *American Tap Masterpieces: The Hollywood Journey-Dance, Music, Film*

Tap pioneer Lynn Dally celebrates American rhythm tap with a company of five musicians and seven dancers including legendary tap master Arthur Duncan. This evening length program of re-creations and new inventions brings to life famous tap dances from the heyday of the 30's and 40's film musicals (Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson, Fred Astaire, Eleanor Powell, Gene Kelly, Ann Miller, Coles & Atkins and the Nicholas Brothers), along with contemporary masterworks by legendary artists Gregory Hines and Jimmy Slyde, in a vivid, highly entertaining, ever changing action portrait.

Artist: JOSÉ LIMÓN DANCE FOUNDATION, New York, NY

Project title: *The Quartet Project*

This work will be a restaging of *The Traitor and Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* choreographed by company founders, José Limón and Doris Humphrey, respectively. *Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* was choreographed by Humphrey in 1946 and draws its inspiration from the famous poem of the same name by Federico Garcia Lorca. Choreographed in 1954 to Gunther Schuller's Symphony for Brasses and Percussion, *The Traitor* uses the Sholem Asch's novel, *The Nazarene*, as the impetus for re-telling of the Christ and Judas story.

Artist: MARTHA CLARKE, Sherman, CT

Project title: *The Garden of Earthly Delights*

Choreographer and director Martha Clarke will reconstruct her seminal work, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. This critically acclaimed piece, based on the painting by Hieronymus Bosch, is designed for the proscenium stage and incorporates aerial dance work. The cast of 13 will include ten dancers and three musicians who perform as part of the cast. The evening-length work consists of four sections: Eden, The Garden, The Seven Sins and Hell and captures the essence of Bosch's painting through movement and live music.

Artist: PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY, New York, NY

Project title: *Book of Beasts/Airs/Roses/Sunset/Av Ovo Usque Ad Mala (From Soup to Nuts)*

Paul Taylor will reconstruct a landmark work from his half-century as a dance innovator. The reconstruction will draw on the knowledge of current and former company members, as well as materials from the works' original creation. This work will be available for touring as part of evening-long programs that will include additional Taylor repertory.

Artist: RIRIE-WOODBURY DANCE COMPANY, Salt Lake City, UT

Project title: Alwin Nikolais' *Tent*

In a collaborative project with the Nikolais/Louis Foundation, the 1968 multimedia ballet *Tent* will be reconstructed and added to a substantial repertory of reconstructed works being kept alive for a new generation of audience members. Cited among Nikolais' most celebrated works, *Tent* includes 10 dancers who erect a canopy, which is continually manipulated to architecturally transform the stage for the dancers to move in, under, over, around, and through it. The 35-minute dance is illuminated by original slides and set to Nikolais' original electronic score.

Artist: THE MARTHA GRAHAM CENTER OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE, New York, NY

Project title: Martha Graham's *Ardent Song*

The Martha Graham Dance Company will reconstruct her 1954 ballet, *Ardent Song*. The work illustrates the phases of the moon from moonrise through dawn as personified by the goddesses Aphrodite, Hecate, and Aurora, as it invokes the imagery of Minoan, Greek, and Hindu cultures. Following the premiere of *Ardent Song*, critic John Martin said, "It may well be the richest and the most consistently beautiful of all of Graham's rituals."

Artist: THE PHILADELPHIA DANCE COMPANY, PHILADANCO!, Philadelphia, PA

Project title: Reconstruction of *Southern Landscapes* by Talley Beatty

This extraordinary work, one of Beatty's first, has stood the test of time. Mr. Beatty and Philadanco had a mutually beneficial relationship spanning decades. The company will remount the work using the artistry of their current dancers under the direction of veteran dancers who were involved in the initial piece. Philadanco will revitalize both the visual and musical vision created by Mr. Beatty in order to expose new generations to his genius.

Artist: TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY, New York, NY

Project title: *Trisha Brown: Early Works*

Trisha Brown Dance Company presents five works from her groundbreaking early repertory: *Accumulation* (1971), *Group Primary Accumulation* (1973), *Spanish Dance* (1973), *Spiral* (1974), and *Walking on the Wall* (1971). Challenging the conventions of early modern dance, these works draw on natural human movement and gesture, the choreographic maxims of the time they were created. The five works vary broadly in scale, some requiring only one dancer and others necessitating many dancers, extensive equipment, or alternative performance spaces.

Artist: URBAN BUSH WOMEN, Brooklyn, NY

Project title: *Chicken Soup* by Blondell Cummings

Created in 1981, *Chicken Soup* is a portrait of lifetime domesticity set to music by Brian Eno, Meredith Monk, and Colin Walcott; text by Grace Paley and Pat Stein; and a recipe from *The Settlement Cookbook*. This 12-minute solo will be restaged by Ms. Cummings working with Urban Bush Women to illuminate the political, social, and personal issues that surrounded the creation of the work. The highly theatrical Cummings was one of the first artists to integrate film into her choreographic explorations.

For further information about AMD, please visit www.nefa.org or call 617.951.0010 x 12.

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