

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY

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Experiments in the Studio: an MCDC new music series
Newton Armstrong, David Linton, Maria Chavez, Stephan Moore
Monday, June 23 at 8:30 PM, Merce Cunningham Studio

New York, NY—Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCDC) presents the sixth concert of *Experiments in the Studio* on Monday, June 23 at 8:30 PM in the Merce Cunningham Studio. The concert unites the diverse experimental composer/performers **Newton Armstrong, David Linton, Maria Chavez, and Stephan Moore**, featuring a solo performance by each, as well as a group improvisation to wrap up the evening. This occasion promises to be a meeting of innovative minds, as Chavez's avant-turrtablism meets Armstrong's knob-covered one-of-a-kind electronic instruments, Moore's idiosyncratic performance software, and Linton's Bicameral Research Sound and Projection System. All four will come together again on July 5 and 6 to perform for the fourth *Beacon Event*, part of MCDC's *Hudson Valley Project* residency at Dia:Beacon. For a separate press release regarding *Beacon Events* and additional *Hudson Valley Project* residency activities, please contact avianna@merce.org. This performance is the final concert of a highly successful first season of *Experiments in the Studio*. The second season will commence in autumn.

All concerts in the series are free and take place at the Merce Cunningham Studio at 55 Bethune Street, 11th floor. No reservations required, visit merce.org for directions and details. Recent concerts have been filled to capacity; to arrange a press seat in advance, please contact Avianna Perez at 212.255.8240 x14 or avianna@merce.org.

Newton Armstrong is an Australian composer and performer, currently living and working in the United States. His work has encompassed a wide range of activities, including collaborative projects with improvising musicians, dancers, choreographers, film, video, and installation artists, projects for children, and pieces designed for radio, art galleries, and the Internet. As a performer, he works mainly with self-built electronic instruments. Many of these instruments have shown a proclivity to spontaneous combustion. Armstrong has collaborated with a diverse group of musicians and artists, including Will Guthrie, Howard Stelzer, Timothy Feeney, Nate Wooley, Jennifer Mesch, Cor Fuhler, John Butcher, Tim O'Dwyer, Melissa Madden Gray, Chris Mann, Clayton Thomas, Chris Abrahams, and the Splinter Orchestra. He has been the recipient of grants and commissions from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Network for Art and

Technology, the Ian Potter Foundation, Arts Victoria, LIBRA, and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. His work has been featured at Darmstadt, Paris Autumn Festival, Festival of Exiles (Berlin), What is Music? (Melbourne/Sydney), The Now Now (Sydney), Melbourne Festival of Improvised Music, and Movement Research Festival (New York). He completed a PhD at Princeton University, where his research focused on phenomenological issues in digital performance practices. He currently teaches in the Music Department and Electroacoustic Music Program at Dartmouth College.

Maria Chavez is an avant-turntablist from Peru who focuses on electro acoustic sound of vinyl and needle. She has a collection of needles in conditions ranging from immaculate to ruined that she calls her "pencils of sound" and a collection of records that provide the palette. She has toured with Christina Carter (Charlambides, Scorses), performed with Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth in her New York City debut, and recorded with London-based laptop artist Kaffe Matthews, with whom she will collaborate on a live sound installation in London in the fall of 2008. Chavez has curated and performed in galleries and sound spaces around the world, including STEIM (Amsterdam), El Cervatino (Merida, Yucatan), the Kitchen (NYC), and Issue Project Room (Brooklyn), where she was an artist-in-residence for the fall of 2006. In November, she collaborated with fellow turntablists Otomo Yoshihide, dieb13, and ErikM as part of the Wien Modern festival of contemporary music in Vienna. She was recently awarded the Jerome Emerging Artist Grant from Roulette in SOHO, NYC ROULETTE's website. Chavez will also be included alongside Ikuo Mori, Mira Calix, and Marina Rosenfeld in a book entitled *Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound*, written by Tara Rodgers and due to be published by Duke University Press in 2008. Her sold-out 2005 solo CD *Those Eyes of Hers* "...shows indeed a great love for the way out experimental possibilities of turntablism" (*Vital Weekly*).

Originally a percussionist, **David Linton** has created sound for many collaborative dance, theater, & performance settings since his arrival in downtown NY at the end of the 1970's. By the late 80's – after a good deal of percussion work along side other musicians – he was equally known for his live wired solo electro-acoustic drumkit performances as well as his soundscore productions. His 1986 solo LP *Orchesography* (on Glen Branca's Neutral Label) was an influential collusion of "early" sampling tek with street beats and theatrical post modernism. By the early 90's he had retired from "live" performing in the "improvised" electro-acoustic vein to concentrate on the vocabulary of entirely electronic music and the resultant paradigm shift in performance priorities that this new "compressed" format suggested. Throughout the 90's Linton became a dedicated advocate for the expansion and appreciation of realtime performance in electronic media through the design and production of event/environments such as *SoundLab* (1996) and eventually *UnityGain* (1997-present). From 2001–2003 Linton's fascination with instantaneous collaborative audio visual communication among select units of realtime electronic musicians and visual artists assumed the form of a live television Manhattan cable/webcast project, UGTV (Unitygain Television) for which he was producer/director. 2005 marked David's return to live solo performance: "With his Bicameral Research Sound & Projection System David Linton aims to make

vibrational wave induced perceptual energy states manifest by deploying interconnected measures of electric sound & light in live action with hand manipulated objects in physical (live camera) space. He employs an integrated recursive audio & video feedback system of his own perversely simple design modulated by freehand intervention to deliver vigorous eye, ear, and sometimes body shaking realtime audio visual performances, from which a kind of retro-tech animistic ritual ‘medicine show’ emerges and where subject and object blur.” At present Linton remains open to select situations of collective improvisation because this seems to him the only viable method of cooperation applicable to our present circumstances (on the planet).

Brooklyn-based sound artist **Stephan Moore's** recent musical work centers around the collection and use of real-world sound, the creation and perception of sonic environments, and technological manifestations of improvisation and interactivity. He develops his own performance software and builds hemispherical point-source loudspeakers for use in his performances and sound installation work. His current ongoing collaborations include the Xenolinguistics performance project with video artist Diana Slattery, projects with choreographers Yanira Castro, Helene Lesterlin, Kimberly Young, and performance artist Kyle DeCamp, and performing in the duo Evidence with sound artist Scott Smallwood. He has been commissioned to create sound installations for a number of site-specific venues (such as Union College, The Chocolate Factory, Simon's Rock College of Bard, and Diapason Gallery). Moore co-curates the annual month-long Floating Points festival of performances and sound installations at the ISSUE Project Room in Brooklyn, pairing a sixteen-channel installation of his Hemisphere speakers with diverse artists. As a long-time computer programmer and user of Max/MSP/Jitter, Moore has developed custom software for a number of notable performers, composers, and artists, including Pauline Oliveros, E.V. Day, John King, Anne LeBaron, Caraballo-Farman, and the Beastie Boys. He has also worked as a sound designer in the art and commercial realms, serving as chief sound engineer for the NPR-syndicated radio program SoundPrint. Since 2004, he has been the Sound Engineer and Music Coordinator of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

Experiments in the Studio celebrates Merce Cunningham’s commitment to commissioning more new music by American composers than any other single choreographer, and the historic relationship between Merce Cunningham and John Cage, Founding Music Director of MCDC. The composer/performers in this series represent a vibrant history of avant-garde music and multiple generations of contemporary composers working and performing together, from the 1950s through today.

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