

Trisha Brown Dance Company



The Trisha Brown Dance Company has presented the work of its legendary artistic director for more than 35 years. Founded in 1970, when Trisha Brown branched out from the experimental Judson Dance Theater to work with her own group of dancers, TBDC offered its first performances at alternative sites in Manhattan's SoHo district. Today, the Company is regularly seen in the landmark opera houses of New York, Paris, London, and many other theaters around the world. The repertoire has grown from solos and small group pieces to include evening-length works and important collaborations between Ms. Brown and major visual artists.

Trisha Brown

TRISHA BROWN, the most widely acclaimed choreographer to emerge from the postmodern era, first came to public notice when she began showing her work with the Judson Dance Theater in the 1960s. Along with like-minded artists including Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer, she pushed the limits of what could be considered appropriate movement for choreography, and in so doing changed modern dance forever. This "hot-bed of dance revolution," as one critic of the time called the Judson group, was imbued with a maverick spirit and blessed with total disrespect for assumption, qualities that Brown still exhibits even as she brings her work to the great opera houses of the world today.

Founding her own company in 1970, Brown explored the terrain of her adoptive SoHo, creating her early dances for alternative spaces including roof tops and walls, and flirting with gravity -- alternately using it and defying it. Her *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* foreshadowed not only her own innovative use of flying in her 1998 production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, but also much of the work of choreographers and theatrical directors who still seek unusual and startling contexts for the human body. She soon began exploring her complex movement ideas over the course of several dances, working in cycles. In 1983 she added the Robert Rauschenberg/Laurie

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Anderson collaboration, *Set and Reset*, to her first fully developed cycle of work, *Unstable Molecular Structures*, establishing the fluid yet unpredictably geometric style that remains a hallmark of her work. The relentlessly athletic *Valiant Series* followed, perhaps epitomized by the powerful *Newark* in which she pushed her dancers to their physical limits and explored gender-specific movement for the first time. Next came the elegant and mysterious *Back to Zero* cycle, in which Brown pulled back from external virtuosity to investigate unconscious movement as seen in the classic *For M.G.: The Movie*.

Inspired by her experience choreographing a production of the opera, *Carmen*, with director Lina Wertmüller, Brown turned her attention to classical music with the goal of directing her own opera production. Her *M.O.*, choreographed to J.S. Bach's monumental *Musical Offering*, was hailed as a "masterpiece" by Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times*, who stated that Brown's piece made "a great deal of other choreography to Bach's music look like child's play." In 1998 her production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* premiered in Brussels and later played to sold-out houses in London, Paris, Aix-en-Provence, and New York. In *L'Orfeo*, Brown achieved the total integration of music, text, and movement, creating what a reviewer from London's *Daily Telegraph* called "as close to the perfect dance opera as I have ever seen."

Brown joined with two new collaborators, visual artist Terry Winters and composer Dave Douglas, to create a trilogy danced to the sounds and structures of today's new jazz music. Working with celebrated lighting designer Jennifer Tipton, the team has produced an evening-long choreography full of sensuousness and marked by an unmistakable modernity. Completed in 2000, *El Trilogy* clearly heralds a new direction for a new century.

In 2001, Brown returned to the opera stage to create a new production of Salvatore Sciarrino's *Luci Mie Traditrici*. Based on the story of Count Carlo Gesualdo, early 17th century composer, the opera is an account of love, betrayal, and murder. Bernard Holland of *The New York Times* called the Lincoln Center American premiere a work of "visceral power," and "very effective theater." Brown's staged production of Franz Schubert's *Winterreise* for British baritone Simon Keenlyside and three dancers premiered in December 2002 as part of Lincoln Center's *New Vision* series. David Shengold of *Time Out New York* wrote that the work was "exceptional, even by Brown's own standards." The mysterious *Geometry of Quiet*, also received its American premiere in December 2002, prompting Deborah Jowitt to comment in the *Village Voice* that the "calm austerity...pervades her stunning new dance." The aerial choreography in *PRESENT TENSE*, which premiered in 2003, features raucous, cantilevering, aerial partnering in which dancers seem to ride and tumble -- suspended in space. The earthbound phrase work is distinctly Trisha Brown, but unexpected in its logic, employing motifs that hint at a poetic emotional narrative.

Ms. Brown's most recent works continue her long history of innovation. The December 2004 premiere of *O zlozony O composite*, a piece created for three étoiles of the Paris Opera Ballet, marked Brown's first foray into the ballet lexicon and is the only dance she has created for a company other than her own. This widely heralded choreography is a quiet mixture of the classical and the modern, bringing together the work of poet Czeslaw Milosz, composer Laurie Anderson, and painter Vija Celmins. how long does the subject linger on the edge of the volume... employs the latest generation of motion capture technology in its visual elements and design. The critically acclaimed April 2005 premiere prompted one writer to comment, "However subliminally perceived, the



deep connections between the movement, sound, and terrain create the image of a united world, unimaginably gorgeous.”

In 2006, Ms. Brown directed *Da Gelo a Gelo*, a new chamber opera by Salvatore Sciarrino based on the love poetry of ninth century Japanese courtesan, Izumi Shikibu. The opera premiered to accolades in May at the Schwetzingen Festival in Germany. Her historical research for the opera provided the contextual basis for her newest dance piece, *I love my robots.*, with set design that includes two robotic apparitions and allow for the dancers to interact with the stage space and with each other, exploring the interplay between the living and the inert. Kenjiro Okazaki designed the robots; Laurie Anderson, who first worked with Ms. Brown on *Set and Reset*, created an original score; Jennifer Tipton lit the work; and emerging costume designer, Elizabeth Cannon, made her TBDC debut, clothing the dancers in sheer, sculptural pieces evocative of light and movement. Also recognized as a visual artist, Ms. Brown's work has been in group and solo exhibitions and, most recently, she has been invited to participate in Documenta 12 this summer in Kassel, Germany.

Trisha Brown is the first woman choreographer to receive the coveted MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and has been awarded many other honors including Brandeis University's Creative Arts Medal in Dance, two John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships, and the National Medal of Arts in 2003. She was named Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the government of France in 1988; was elevated to Officier in 2000; and then to the level of Commandeur in 2004. In 2005 she received Benois de la Danse Prize for Lifetime Achievement, a significant honor generally reserved for ballet artists. This past December in Monte Carlo, Brown received a Nijinsky Award for achievement. Ms. Brown's *Set & Reset* is currently included in the baccalaureate curriculum for French students pursuing dance studies. She was a 1994 recipient of the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award, has been named a Veuve Clicquot Grand Dame, and, at the invitation of President Bill Clinton, served on the National Council on the Arts from 1994 to 1997. In 1999, Brown received the New York State Governor's Arts Award. She has received numerous honorary doctorates and is an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

TBDC

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