

Philadelphia Dance Projects
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Leah Stein Dance Company Celebrates a Decade of Dance Philadelphia Dance Projects Presents: March 8–11 at the Performance Garage

PHILADELPHIA — **Philadelphia Dance Projects** honors a landmark year for a movement pioneer with ***Leah Stein Dance Company's 10th Anniversary***, an expansive program that reflects on the company's past and contemplates the road ahead through duet and small group works. During each performance, to be held **March 8–11** at the **Performance Garage** (1515 Brandywine St., Philadelphia), Philadelphia choreographer Leah Stein will walk audiences through her ever-contemplative body of work, from introspective site-inspired dances to bold collaborations.

"This is an artist who is important to know," says Philadelphia Dance Projects executive director **Terry Fox**. "Leah has paved the way for site-specific work and has forged new territory in the way she creates structures in her dances. Philadelphia Dance Projects' mission is to give context to contemporary dance as an evolving form. This program shows the history of an artist with a particular style and virtuosity that we felt was important to examine and allows audiences to see the common threads throughout her works. It's about getting close to the mover — watching logic and inspiration happen and getting inside the heart of it."

Thematically, *Leah Stein Dance Company's 10th Anniversary*, an evening of six dances, focuses not only on Stein's individual path, but how she has shared it with her fellow dancers and collaborators over the past decade. The elegantly simple ***Kite***, a reprise of a 2002 duet with U.K. choreographer **Sean Feldman***, highlights the two artists' united movement aesthetic — resonant, flowing, graceful — while ***A Lily Lilies*** celebrates shared ideas about landscape and language between Stein and poet **Josey Foo**, with whom Stein also collaborated on a book of the same name. The program also includes a duet with longtime collaborator and acclaimed sound artist **Toshi Makihara**; a window into the in-progress interdisciplinary work ***Hull***, a reflection on what it means to be lost at sea; and an excerpt from the powerful ***Battle Hymns***, which was inspired by letters and songs of the Civil War and premiered to great acclaim during 2009's Hidden City Festival. The program will conclude with a group improvisation to include many of Stein's dancers and collaborators.

***Company member Jungwoong Kim will take the place of Sean Feldman for this performance series.**

These works, from serene and simple to brash and bombastic, also showcase Stein's cherished relationship with the world around her. The choreographer, whose mission is to connect people, culture and physical environment, is well known for forging the territory of site-specific dance in Philadelphia, yet her connection to nature runs deeper than the spaces her dances have inhabited. This program incorporates many elements of the natural world, from the muscular,

pulsing water of *Hull* to the weightlessness of *Kite*; Stein's dances explore how we interact with our environment, and how nature can enliven urban spaces.

Accompanied by Leah Stein Dance Company members **Ellen Gerdes**, **David Konyck**, **Shavon Norris**, **Jumatatu Poe**, **Michelle Tantoco** and **Jungwoong Kim**, as well as special guests including Sean Feldman performing artist **Germaine Ingram**, Stein invites audiences to join her in reflecting on a decade of dance. "I'm stepping back and taking note of the accomplishment, probably for the first time," Stein says. "I'm grateful for the process — how the work has developed and changed. I really do feel like celebrating this landmark and the richness of this group of dancers and collaborators."

About the Program

Leah Stein Dance Company's 10th Anniversary

Thursday, March 8, through Saturday, March 10, 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, March 11, 2 p.m.

Tickets: \$15 (DancePass), \$20 (Thursday or Sunday) or \$25 (Friday or Saturday); \$10 (children ages 12 and under)

Performance Garage

1515 Brandywine St., Philadelphia PA 19130

For more information, call Philadelphia Dance Projects at 215-546-2552 or email info@philadanceprojects.org.

Purchase tickets online at danceboxoffice.com.

Duet: Revisiting an early duet with percussionist/sound designer Toshi Makihara, this piece uses improvisation to celebrate two artists' longstanding collaboration and to attempt to answer the question: How should sound and dance relate to each other?

Kite: Leah Stein Dance Company member Jungwoong Kim accompanies Stein for this reprisal of a 2002 duet (which was originally created with Sean Feldman, Assistant Director of Scottish Dance Theatre and former Siobhan Davies Dance Company dancer) that explores the space — both literal and metaphorical — between two people. Music by Stuart Dempster.

Hull: In collaboration with visual artist/boat builder Carolyn Hesse, this selection from last June's Art in the Open Festival in Philadelphia was inspired by being on the river's edge. The in-progress piece uses dance and sculpture to investigate travel, water and what it feels like to be lost at sea. Hesse has constructed a 16-foot wooden vessel that will be incorporated into the dance, performed by company members Michelle Tantoco, David Konyck and Jungwoong Kim. Music by Dave Champion.

A Lily Lilies: This language-based quintet draws from an eight-year collaboration with poet Josey Foo that resulted in a cross-genre book of poetry, photography and notes for choreography, of the same title. Foo's poetry has inspired Stein to consider shorter and more pronounced choreographic cadences and rhythms. *A Lily Lilies* is the product of two artists sharing and blending their distinctive talents.

Battle Hymns: Based on letters and songs written by soldiers during the Civil War, *Battle Hymns* premiered in 2009 during Philadelphia's Hidden City Festival and featured a score by David Lang, co-commissioned with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. This excerpt, featuring six dancers and live singers, serves as an elegant statement on freedom and peace during times of war.

Finale: Company members and special guests, including choreographer Germaine Ingram, will join Stein for a grand finale to celebrate the past, present and future of Leah Stein Dance Company.

About Leah Stein

Leah Stein has been creating dance work and presenting it to the public for more than 20 years. She has performed and taught in Java, Indonesia, Canada, Poland, Romania, Japan and Scotland. Locally, her work has been commissioned by the Painted Bride Art Center, the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and the Hidden City Festival, among others. Stein has received recognition through grants awarded by the Leeway Foundation, Dance Advance and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Independence Foundation Fellowship. She has been artist-in-residence at Yellow Springs Art Institute, the American Dance Festival, The Winter Pillow and the Djerassi Resident Artist Program. Stein was awarded a Herald Angel Award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland for *In Situ*, created for the DanceBase building in Edinburgh. Stein has collaborated with dancer/choreographers Sean Feldman and Gus Solomons Jr.; sculptors Jeanne Jaffe and Ed Dormer; and composers/musicians Robert Maggio, Mark Weber, David Forlano and Dave Burrell. She has been collaborating with percussionist Toshi Makihara for more than 15 years.

About Leah Stein Dance Company

Leah Stein Dance Company (LSDC) creates dance works for the stage and for outdoor and architectural sites that engage the interaction among people, their culture and the physical environment. LSDC creates nontraditional dances with a focus on juxtapositions and interrelationships between movement, sound, object and place, involving musicians, artists and the local community. In 1998, after more than 10 years as an independent artist, Leah Stein formed LSDC and incorporated as a nonprofit in 2001. In 2004, LSDC launched "On Site Philadelphia" (OSP), dedicated to creating dance works in historic sites throughout the Philadelphia area. OSP's first production was *CornerStone*, created for the 2004 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival at the Christ Church Burial Ground Historic Site. Over the past 10 years, LSDC has produced 10 site-specific works in Philadelphia for OSP, eight site-specific works internationally in locations including Maryland, South Carolina, Japan, Poland, Romania and Scotland, and 18 stage works. The company also runs a high school residency. Recent collaborations have focused on work with singers, and in particular the Mendelssohn Club Chorus, developing ongoing partnerships with local sites including Shofuso Japanese House and Garden and the Science Leadership Academy.

About Philadelphia Dance Projects

Philadelphia Dance Projects (PDP) supports contemporary dance through projects that encourage artists and audiences to more fully participate and engage in the experience and pursuit of dance as an evolving form. PDP began as a three-year mentoring project (1993-95) under the aegis of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and was established as an independent organization in 1996. PDP achieves its mission by presenting stimulating performances, workshops, classes, a film series, and dialogs and forums for artists, aspiring artists, students and a broad-based audience. PDP launched the *Philadelphia Dance Projects Presents* series in 2009 and constantly surveys the contemporary dance world, keeping a close eye on current trends in content and style, while actively engaging in and appreciating the depth of work being created today which plumbs dance precursors' traditions. For more information about Philadelphia Dance Projects, visit www.philadanceprojects.org.

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