

LUMINA NEWS

Dancers stage avant garde festival on beach

by Marimar McNaughton
Thursday, August 16, 2007

Contemporary dance theatre and performance art installation surface on the streets and the sands next week when the Sarus Dance Festival premieres in Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach, Aug. 23-27.

Nine dance companies, some with European and Middle Eastern ties, will travel across the state of North Carolina and beyond to perform 16 original works choreographed for site-specific locations in downtown Wilmington and on the beach at Wrightsville. With evocative titles such as "Sarus bird flies along the beach," "the weight of a grain of sand," "sandans," and "short cut to the beach," the experimental, environmental approach to the festival integrates the dancers into the landscape and lifts the veil between performers and audience, which at times is invited into an interactive role.

Karola Luttringhaus, artistic director of the alban elved dance company, is the festival's director and a new resident of Wilmington. Her company, founded in Berlin, Germany, is recognized for the visceral physicality of its interdisciplinary choreography, which blends music, art, aerial movement and dance.

Alban elved/ Karola Luttringhaus performs at Johnnie Mercer's Pier at 6 p.m. on Aug. 24 in collaboration with human kinetics movement arts from New York, which combines dance with the visual arts to create site-specific movement installations.

The festival continues on Saturday, Aug. 25 with a sunrise watch at 6:20 a.m. at Beach Access No. 4 and performances through 9:30 a.m. by alban elved; human kinetics movement arts; Naomi Greenberg, a native of Israel and a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts; and Dawn Webster/Catie Arndt, based in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Encore performances are scheduled for later the same afternoon from 4-6:15 p.m., also at Beach Access No. 4.

Turning the Wheel, a resident Wilmington, intergenerational, dance theatre improvisation company, will perform at Johnnie Mercer's Pier at 6:45 p.m. on Saturday evening, followed with performances by Naomi Greenberg and Caroline Calouche & Co., a non-traditional troupe with North Carolina roots.

The festival is supported through generous gifts from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, the UNCW Office of Cultural Arts, the Cameron Art Museum, the Wilmington School of Ballet, the Dance Cooperative and local businesses. Throughout the weekend, master classes and public receptions will be held at various locations. Most are free. Profiles of participating dance companies and a complete schedule of activities can be found at www.sarusfestival.com.