

'Summerdances' presents world premieres at two iconic locations

by Beth Stafford



"Summerdances, Stephan Koplowitz: Water Sight, Milwaukee" is the world premiere of two large-scale performance works inspired by two of the city's iconic locations.

The works, created by internationally known, award-winning director/choreographer Stephan Koplowitz, take place June 13-15 at the Cudahy Gardens of the Milwaukee Art Museum and the historic North Point Park and Water Tower. Koplowitz drew inspiration from the architecture and ecology of water found at those two sites.

"Water Sight, Milwaukee" also draws on the talents of the Peck School of the Arts community through a cast of 30 student dancers, original music by Associate Artist Tim Russell and digital projections by Associate Professor of Dance Luc Vanier.

Koplowitz says that when he was first asked to create a site-specific work as part of the Peck School's Year of the Arts, he wasn't planning on doing a water-based project, although that is a topic of interest to him.

"However, when I got to Milwaukee, I was inspired. As I got to know the city, it became overwhelmingly obvious that water would be the perfect subject matter – the location on Lake Michigan, the makeup of the city and how Milwaukee is positioning itself economically, as well as the research at UWM with the School of Freshwater Sciences."

THE WATER CONNECTION

The sites at North Point Park and Water Tower and the Milwaukee Art Museum were chosen because of their connection to water. "They inspired me to make this work and are interesting icons, with one speaking to the past and the other to the future – each connected to water in its own way."

What will the audience see at "Water Sight, Milwaukee"? "These public sites will be animated in a way that they've never seen before," says Koplowitz. "Hopefully, the experience will create a different way of viewing these sites in the future and refresh their experience with a location that they take for granted."

Koplowitz auditioned dancers in the fall, then came back in March for five days to work with a core company. A California resident, he describes working with the residents in "quite cold weather"

on location in March. "I have to say the student dancers were very courageous and fantastic to work with."

UWM Professor of Dance and Department Chair Simone Ferro seconds his praise for the student dancers. "They came back early from spring break and spent eight hours daily on a Saturday and a Sunday outside in bone-chilling cold. Our students are unique in bringing complete trust to their work with faculty and guest choreographers – they make no judgments, are devoted to the experience and are avid for new challenges."

EXPECT THE UNPREDICTABLE

Ferro also cites Koplowitz for his skill in positioning dancers, audio and lighting, and anticipating the dynamics of an audience that can move freely. "Stephan can foresee what he wants the audience to 'get,' and as a choreographer, guide the viewer," she says. "The essence of this project, though, is the unpredictable – we really don't know what will happen!"

The audience also will become part of the performances as Koplowitz and company animate these two Milwaukee icons with movement, light and sound. Partner institutions include the Milwaukee Art Museum, City of Milwaukee, Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Milwaukee, Milwaukee County Parks and the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences.

Both Koplowitz and Ferro point to the behind-the-scenes coordination required, and the heavy lifting of the Peck School Marketing Office in dealing with the complicated logistics of an off-campus, on-site production.

In addition to the signature performances and world premieres, another important aspect of the Year of the Arts has been partnerships with metro Milwaukee's arts organizations. That continues as Bel Canto Chorus performs as part of "Water Sight, Milwaukee."

All performances are free and open to the public. Performances at the North Point Park and Water Tower are 9 p.m. on Thursday, June 13, Friday, June 14 and Saturday, June 15.

Performances at the Milwaukee Art Museum are 6 p.m. on Friday, June 14, and 3 p.m. on Saturday, June 15.

2013 SUMMER EVENINGS OF MUSIC

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In honor of the Year of the Arts celebrating the 50th anniversary of UWM's Peck School of the Arts, all Fine Arts Quartet Summer Evenings of Music concerts are free and open to the public. Space is limited and tickets are required. Tickets are available through the Peck School Box Office at 414-229-4308 or at arts.uwm.edu/tickets. Box office hours are noon-4 p.m. Monday-Friday.

All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Helen Bader Concert Hall at the Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts. Timothy Noonan, senior lecturer in music history and literature at the Peck School, will host pre-concert talks beginning at 6:30 p.m. before each concert. Programs are subject to change.

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

With guest cellist Denis Brott. Wolf, "Italian Serenade in G Major"; Debussy, String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10; Schubert, String Quintet in C major, D 956.

SUNDAY, JUNE 16:

Turina, "La Oración del Torero," Op. 34; Prokofiev, "Visions Fugitives," Op. 22; Haydn, Quartet Op. 71, No. 2; Tchaikovsky, "Children's Album," Op. 39; Shostakovich, "Two Pieces for String Quartet."

SUNDAY, JUNE 23:

With guest pianist Xiayin Wang. Chopin, Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor; Stravinsky, "Double Canon in Memoriam Raoul Dufy"; Ravel, String Quartet in F Major.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30:

With guest violist Gil Sharon and guest cellist Niklas Schmidt. Brahms, String Sextet No. 1 in B flat major, Op. 18; Brahms, String Sextet No. 2 in G major,



Fine Arts Quartet members (from left) Ralph Evans, violin; Efin Boico, violin; Robert Cohen, cello; and Nicoló Eugelmi, viola