



David R. White, the executive director, in Dance Theater Workshop's rebuilt theater in Manhattan.

Linking to Dance's Future

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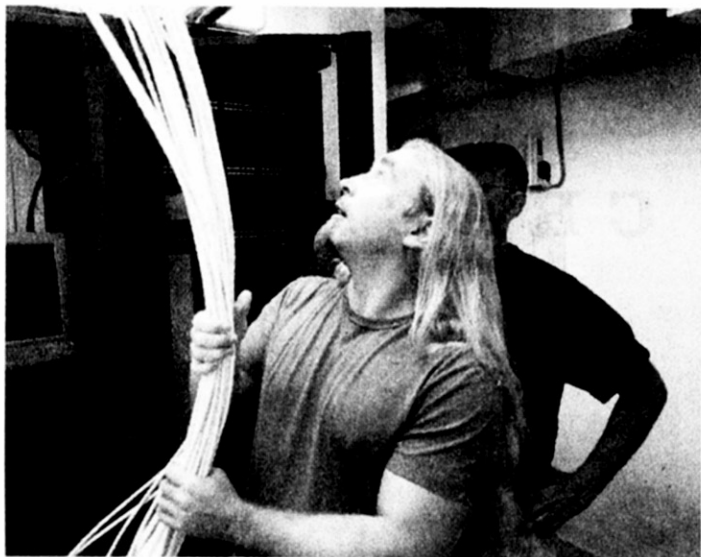
White said.

"With a nod to that reality — and its comparatively advanced technological capabilities and expectations — D.T.W. has created a fellowship program in which mentors will be matched with less experienced artists to work in the lab in one-year residencies starting in January. In one project, Nell Breyer, a student and media lab technician at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will work with the New York-based modern-dance choreographer Reggie Wilson on a collaboration with the Black Umfolosi company of Zimbabwe and the Noble Douglas Dance Company of Trinidad and Tobago.

Other mentors chosen by D.T.W. for this first year are Stephen Koplowitz, a choreographer who creates multimedia projects with teenagers; Mark Coniglio, the artistic co-director of the multimedia Troika Ranch group, and Tal Yarden, a video installation and live-performance artist. They will consult with the choreographers Gabri Christa, David Thomson and Maura Donohue and the video artist Brian Nishii about the use of technology in their work, which ranges from traditional pieces to developing new technology for a piece.

Video and audio equipment in the rehearsal studios will enable dancers to continue to collaborate with others across continents. Jay Ryan, D.T.W.'s technical director, cited a project by the Manhattan-based modern-dance choreographer and dancer Mollissa Fenley as an example of the kind of work that can be done. "She hooked up with a dancer in Tokyo," Mr. Ryan said. "They were doing simultaneous solos, watching each other on monitors so it became like a duet. That was streamed to Helsinki, where they added digital pictures and interesting textures in the background."

One of the most pressing needs of choreographers and dancers today is to create high-quality videos to market their work. Stage rehearsal time is always scarce, and few companies can afford to pay a designer to adjust lighting for full-production videotaping. D.T.W. is developing a plan to offer times in its theater when dancers can videotape pieces to distribute among producers. "There will be good video lighting, higher-end equipment and a good camera man,"



Photographs by Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

Jay Ryan, the technology director of Dance Theater Workshop.

A high-tech workshop allows dancers to collaborate across continents.

Mr. Ryan said, "with dressing rooms available before each allotted time."

D.T.W. has not, however, yielded completely to technology. Now 37, the workshop will still house a theater, offices, studios and a gallery. But the new D.T.W. is as different from its old self as that old self was from the impossibly narrow, primitive performance space at the first D.T.W. in the co-founder Jeff Duncan's loft a block north.

The new theater space, still called the Bessie in honor of the modern-dance master teacher Bessie Schönberg, has a larger stage, better wing space, twice as many seats and even a heated stage floor. The stage, almost twice the size of the previous one, will rise two floors from the basement, one of four floors D.T.W. will occupy in the 11-story building. There are more studios, and office space has been expanded. Rehearsals may be watched by passers-by through floor-to-ceiling windows, a

popular innovation today in dance buildings. There is a pretty roof garden and a restaurant called the Lucky Star Bar-Cafe. But the lineup of choreographers and companies for the 2002-3 season, which has an accommodatingly early 7 p.m. curtain time, is reassuringly varied and even funky.

The new complex, designed by Ed Rawlings, is the product of complicated real estate dealings in which D.T.W. sold air rights for luxury apartments on the eight upper floors in what has been named the Dance Building. The \$8.5 million complex was planned with flexibility in mind, particularly the wiring. "We can't make a lot of fundamental changes to the building later on," Mr. White said.

But already the new D.T.W. is proving itself. "With this 'plumbing,' at any point in almost any room you can plug in a video camera, plug in a monitor in any other room and watch and combine," Mr. Ryan said. Dancers with nothing better to do could even watch it all from the dressing room.

"We're a faucet into and out of a stream," Mr. White said, talking of the new global technology. "We want to have the best plumbing." He laughed, adding, "And no raw sewage." □