



**ARMITAGE GONE! DANCE RETURNS TO THE JOYCE THEATER,
MARCH 2–7 WITH WORLD PREMIERE OF
“Time is the echo of an axe within a wood”
COLLABORATORS INCLUDE DAVID SALLE, PETER
SPELIOPOULOS AND CLIFTON TAYLOR**

She first magnetized the eyes of critics and audiences as one of the quintessential interpreters of Merce Cunningham’s dances and muse for many of his masterpieces in the mid-seventies and early eighties; then when she began choreographing—while still a Cunningham dancer—the press christened her “The Punk Ballerina.” Her subsequent collaborations with some of the most important visual and musical artists of her generation added yet another dimension to her reputation as a singular and spiky talent who has combined the physical rigor of ballet with the spatial imagination of modern dance. And now, she is incorporating dance forms from other cultures into her mix.

Armitage’s company, Armitage Gone! Dance, will present the world premiere of her “Time is the echo of an axe within a wood” at The Joyce Theater, March 2–7. David Salle is the dance’s designer, Peter Speliopoulos is designing the costumes, and Clifton Taylor, the lighting. The occasion marks the Company’s first New York shows since 2001.

The dance’s title is a line from Philip Larkin’s poem, “This is the first thing.” The poem reads: “This is the first thing/I have understood:/Time is the echo of an axe/Within a wood.” The music—Gavin Bryars, Béla Bartók and Annie Gosfield—shares the haunting poetry of Asian sounds, powered by a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Drawing upon, combining and recombining the vocabularies

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of kung fu, capoeira, yoga, Bharatanatyam, voguing and ballet, the dance explores the tension between harmony and cacophony, stability and instability, balance and imbalance. The performers—appropriately representing a wide range of cultural and dance backgrounds—are Leonides D. Arpon, Leone Barilli, Brian Chung, Megumi Eda, Theresa Ruth Howard, William Issac, Valerie Madonia, Cheryl Sladkin, as well as guest performers Bendeleon, (a self-taught dancer who is a chef by day), Sharmila Desai, (a descendent of legendary Indian dancers) and New York “urban” and voguing champions Aviance Milan and Mecca.

In addition to directing her own company, Karole Armitage is currently Associate Choreographer with the Ballet de Lorraine, which is based in Nancy, France. She was recently named Director of the second International Festival of Contemporary Dance at the Venice Biennale.

She began her professional career in 1973, as a member of Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, Switzerland, and joined the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1976. She formed her company Armitage Gone! Dance in 1979, while still a member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. She left the Cunningham Company in 1991 to work regularly with her own group of dancers, first called Armitage Gone! Dance (1979–1984) and then, The Armitage Ballet (1985–1990), which performed across the United States and Europe.

In 1990, Armitage chose to maintain her company on a project basis in order to pursue commissions from major European ballet and opera companies. As a guest choreographer she created ballets for the Paris Opera Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, White Oak Dance Project, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, Oregon Ballet Theater, Lyon Opera Ballet, The Tasmanian Dance Company, Greek Lyric Opera, among others. Armitage’s work has also appeared in music videos for artists such as Madonna (“Vogue”) and Michael Jackson (“In the Closet”) as well as in the feature films *Chain of Desire*, *Without You I’m Nothing*, *Search and Destroy*, *Up at the Villa* and *The Golden Bowl*.

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She was appointed Director of MaggioDanza in Florence, Italy, where from 1996 to 1999 she supervised 45 dancers in a repertoire of 19th and 20th century ballets. Her work in Florence alternated between large-scale works designed for general audiences such as Georg Frideric Handel's baroque oratorio "Apollo e Dafne" (1997) with sets and costumes by film director James Ivory and smaller scale works devoted to pure dance.

With New York now as a base, Armitage continues to work as an independent choreographer, alternating projects for Ballet de Lorraine, guest commissions and work for her own company. In 2003, she created a new work for London's Rambert Dance Company and choreographed and directed Christoph Willibald Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice" for the San Carlo Opera in Naples. Her company had a week-long season at Het Muziek Theater, Amsterdam, this past January.

Over the years, her collaborators have included Thomas Adès, Andrea Branzi, Jean-Paul Gaultier, James Ivory, Jeff Koons, Christian Lacroix, Stefano Paba, David Salle, David Shea, Peter Speliopoulos and Philip Taaffe. Her work has been the subject of two documentaries made for television: "The South Bank Show" (1985) directed by David Hinton and "Wild Ballerina" (1998) directed by Mark Kidel.

Her awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship in choreography in 1986 and the French Government's Chevalier dans L'ordre des Arts et Lettres in 1992.

The evening curtain for Armitage Gone! Dance's Joyce Theater season, Tuesday through Saturday, is at 8pm; the Sunday evening curtain is at 7:30pm. There will also be 2pm matinees on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$36, and are available at The Joyce Theater box office or by calling JoyceCharge at 212-242-0800 or online at www.joyce.org. The Joyce Theater is located at 175 Eighth Avenue at 19th Street.

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