



For Immediate Release

**ON AND OFF STAGE AT DTW**  
**JENNIFER MONSON/BIRD BRAIN, JEANINE DURNING,**  
**YOKO HIGASHINO & HIROAKI UMEDA OPEN**  
**DANCE THEATER WORKSHOP FALL SEASON**  
***MONSON (SEPT. 19–24); DURNING (SEPT. 28–OCT. 1);***  
***HIGASHINO & UMEDA (OCT. 6–8)***

Shakespeare’s observation that all the world’s a stage is taken literally by the quartet of dance companies that open Dance Theater Workshop’s fall season. First, there’s Jennifer Monson (September 19–24), who transforms her outdoor BIRD BRAIN project into an indoor installation, and then there’s Jeanine Durning (September 28–October 1) who theatricalizes a moving truck parked outside DTW to lure passersby inside. And then there are Japanese choreographers Yoko Higashino and Hiroaki Umeda (October 6–8), who turn the DTW stage into darkly surreal worlds of their own.

Inspired by her curiosity about nature’s flow of motion, Jennifer Monson followed the migration paths of ospreys, gray whales, ducks and geese throughout several continents, where she then staged a series of outdoor performances. She called the five-year project BIRD BRAIN. Now, with its conclusion in sight, Monson and her dancers turn indoors. At DTW, where she will present the world premiere of “Flight of Mind,” Monson will lead spectators on a migration of their own, taking them throughout the DTW building, which will be transformed by hundreds of strategically placed live, wetland reeds. After pausing for terrace and roof-top performances, the audience will travel to the theater, where a forest of plants are designed by Robert Braine and Leslie Reed to blur the line between indoors and outdoors. David Kean’s original sound installation, created from the hums, swishes and echoes of the building itself, will be performed live by the composer and Kenta Nagai.

**MORE**

**DANCE THEATER WORKSHOP  
ADD ONE**

Fascinated by a chance reading of Houdini's biography, Jeanine Durning delved further into the escape artist's life, discovering an individual trapped not only by ropes and chains, but also psychologically. These ideas of confinement inspired "out of the kennel into a home," a world premiere that manipulates space to suggest psychological, spiritual and physical escape. A divided stage and the mobile theatrical space created within a truck outside are the means. Dancers in the truck will perform for pedestrians and audience members en route to DTW. There will also be live video sent from the truck into the DTW café. Playwright Keith Reddin, who combines excerpts from Houdini's memoirs, letters from death row prisoners and his own writing, plays a vaudevillian M.C. who connects the piece's fractured scenes. London-based composer Jules Maxwell created the original score, which he mixes live onstage.

Two of Japan's brightest young stars, Yoko Higashino and Hiroaki Umeda, take advantage of the DTW theater in their own imaginative ways. In "ALARM! – zero hour edition," a U.S. premiere, choreographer Yoko Higashino appears in a blond wig, twisting and rippling her arms and legs to the relentless beat of Natiho Toyota's electronic score. The 2004 recipient of two major Asian dance awards—the Toyota Choreography Award's Next Generation Prize and grand prize at the Yokohama Solo/Duo Competition—Higashino creates a work of collage, suggesting the unpredictability of feelings and impulses in a society under the siege of change. Set design is by Kanami Nozu and visual elements by Yohei Saito and Kenichi Morita.

Hiroaki Umeda's solo work, "while going to a condition," begins with the choreographer moving slowly, almost imperceptibly, until a strip of light suddenly illuminates the stage. It disappears, abandoning him again to darkness. His improvisational movement gradually becomes more pronounced as the pulses of light, coinciding with buzzing sounds of static, steadily increase, creating a rhythmic base for his quick footwork and fluid motions. Umeda also designed the sound, images and lighting for the work, a U.S. premiere.

New this season is DTW's Studio Series: free performances by an emerging choreographer, curated by a DTW artist. The first, curated by Jeanine Durning, will feature work by Eric Bradley, September 30 & October 1, prior to Durning's shows.

**MORE**

***ABOUT THE ARTISTS***

**JENNIFER MONSON**, a California native and 1983 graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, has received a 1997 New York Dance and Performance Award (“Bessie”), as well as a 2004 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, among other honors. She has performed her work in New York venues such as P.S. 122, The Kitchen and Danspace Project at St. Mark’s Church, as well as throughout the U.S. and internationally. She has frequently collaborated with artists such as DD Dorviller, Yvonne Meir, David Zambrano and composer Zeena Parkins, with whom she has been working since 1985. Monson has performed with Cathy Weis, Karen Finley, Lisa Kraus, Fred Holland, John Zorn, Yoshiko Chuma, John Bernd, Pooh Kaye/Eccentric Motions and Jennifer Miller’s Circus AMOK, among others. Monson, who uses improvisation in her own work, curated two New York dance/music improvisation series and has participated in improvisational festivals throughout the country.

**BIRD BRAIN** is a multi-year dance project, created in 2000 by Monson, to investigate migratory patterns and habits of birds and other animals, as well as their relationships to humans, while linking ideas of science and conservation to dance and art. Her first BIRD BRAIN work was 2000’s “The Pigeon Project,” inspired by observing pigeons circling New York rooftops. This work, presented on Brooklyn roofs and at P.S. 122, led to subsequent BIRD BRAIN tours: “Gray Whales” (2001), “Ospreys” (2002), “Ducks and Geese” (2004) and “Northern Wheateaters” (2006). Monson has traveled over 7,000 miles with BIRD BRAIN, following migratory routes from the Arctic to West Africa and from Maine to Venezuela, to name a few. Each tour features free site-specific outdoor performances, workshops, discussions on issues of migration, navigation and conservation, as well as a website tracking the tour’s progress.

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**JEANINE DURNING**, a New York-based choreographer, studied at The Boston Conservatory and received a B.F.A. in dance from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. Since presenting her first solo dance at P.S. 122 in 1990, Durning’s works have been seen at Dance Theater Workshop, Danspace Project at St. Mark’s Church and Central Park SummerStage, as well as in venues throughout the United States and in England. Durning has also received commissions from several universities, dance artists and repertory companies, most recently FanClub Dance, in Exeter, England and Zenon Dance Company in Minneapolis, MN. A member of David Dorfman Dance from 1993 to 2002, Durning created over 10 original roles for the company. She has also performed with RoseAnne Spradlin, Lance Gries, Zvi Gotheiner, Wendy Perron, Dan Wagoner, Susan Rethorst and Richard Siegal, and was featured in the short dance film, “The Black Boots.” In 2003, Durning received a Barrymore Award nomination for her performance in the original musical, “The Green Violin.” Durning was choreographer-in-residence at The Yard, The University of Maryland and Dance Space Center, and is currently a member of Danspace Project’s Artist Advisory Board.

**MORE**

## DANCE THEATER WORKSHOP

### ADD THREE

**HIROAKI UMEDA**, born in 1977, studied photography at Nihon University in his native Japan before beginning to study classic ballet and hip-hop. He has been creating his own work since 2000. Umeda's 2002 solo "while going to a condition" has been presented world-wide in venues in France, Italy, Belgium, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Japan and Austria, among others. His other works include "Duo," "Quantize," "Looming" and "Ni." In 2003, he presented the well-received "Finore" at the Festival International de Nouvelle Danse (FIND) in Canada.

**S20** was founded by Umeda in 2000, and is based in Tokyo, Japan. While Umeda is currently focusing on solo work, he also collaborates through his company with artists such as musician Toshimaru Nakamura, video artist Takehito Koganezawa and video maker Octavio Iturbe from Wim Vandekeybus's company.

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**YOKO HIGASHINO**, who hails from Japan, began studying modern dance and ballet in 1982. In addition to her work with her company, Baby-Q, the multiple award-winning choreographer Higashino also collaborates with musicians to present solo work at galleries, nightclubs, music venues and outdoors.

**DANCE COMPANY BABY-Q** was founded in 2000 by Higashino as a multimedia performance group in which dancers, actors, musicians, visual artists, robot designers and other artists create work collaboratively. Musician Natiho Toyota, lighting designer Kiyokazu Kakizaki, set designer Kanami Nozu and visual artists Yohei Saito and Kenichi Morita have all worked with Baby-Q since its creation. Based in Tokyo, Japan, Baby-Q's works include "E-DEN – electronic garden," "Minimal-Q," "REMroom," "ALARM!" and "Zero hour."

The evening curtain at Dance Theater Workshop is at 7:30pm. Jennifer Monson/BIRD BRAIN's pre-show building migration begins at 6:30pm. Jeanine Durning's pre-show begins outside at 7pm. Eric Bradley's Studio Series performances begin at 6:30pm in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor studios. Tickets to Jeanine Durning and Yoko Higashino & Hiroaki Umeda are \$20, or \$12 with member, student and senior discounts. For Jennifer Monson/BIRD BRAIN, tickets cost \$25, or \$15 with discounts. All tickets, including 4 for 40% Club discounts, may be purchased at the box office, by calling 212-924-0077 or online at [www.dtw.org](http://www.dtw.org). Dance Theater Workshop is located at 219 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street, between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

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"Flight of Mind" is a co-commissioning project by the Myrna Loy Center/Helena Presents in partnership with Dance Theater Workshop, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art and the National Performance Network Creation Fund. The Creation Fund is sponsored by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). "Flight of Mind" is supported in part by funding from the American Music Center Live Music for Dance Program, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Bossak-Heilbron Charitable Foundation, and the Multi-Arts Production Fund, a program of Creative Capital, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

"out of the kennel into a home" was commissioned by the Bessie Schönberg/First Light commissioning program and the Creative Residency program of Dance Theater Workshop. This project was partly created while in residence at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's MOVE: 133 Beekman in space generously donated by General Growth Properties, Inc. and through the Artist in Residence program at Dance New Amsterdam (formerly Dance Space Center).

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