



For Immediate Release

**JAMES SEWELL BALLET PRESENTS THREE
PREMIERES AT THE JOYCE THEATER,
OCTOBER 16-21**

James Sewell's experimental balletic imagination and musical wit are well-known to Joyce Theater audiences. And while this release is being read, the Minneapolis-based company, James Sewell Ballet, is busy, readying three new dances to celebrate its return to The Joyce, October 16-21.

A season highlight is a world premiere, "Kinetic Head," for which Sewell is a triple threat: choreographer, solo performer and possible sound engineer. (P.S. Sewell comes from a family of musicians.) The eight-minute solo sets a fierce challenge to its dancer's coordination skills, with its polyrhythms at times so complicated that they can't be counted. Likening the ballet to the unballetic image of a jazz drummer, Sewell's body sometimes enacts four or five patterns simultaneously. The dance is part of a larger work scheduled for premiere in later October.

In "Schoenberg Serenade," a New York premiere, the asymmetrical lines and fractured movements of Sewell's choreography give visual life to the dissonant yet playful music of Arthur Schoenberg's "Serenade," Op. 24 for Chamber Ensemble and Brass. Set to the composer's 12-tone score from 1924, the 30-minute work for eight dancers was commissioned by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra in 2006.

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Music also drives Sewell in his “Opera Moves,” a choreographic interpretation of dramatic scenes from 11 operas by Bizet, Puccini, Mozart, Wagner, Weill and Saint-Saëns, among others. Five of the scenes are from Sewell’s original 1991 work; the other six are from the 2007 update, which will be seen in New York for the first time at The Joyce.

Born into a family of musicians, James Sewell began his dance training at the Children’s Theatre Company School in Minneapolis. He studied violin for nine years before beginning to train in ballet at the age of 15. After just two years, he moved to New York where he studied at the School of American Ballet (SAB) and with David Howard. He danced with ABT II, the apprentice company of American Ballet Theatre, before joining the Feld Ballet, where he was a principal dancer for six years. As a dancer, he also performed as a guest artist with ballet and modern dance companies such as New York City Ballet, Zvi Gotheiner and Dancers, Denishawn and Martine van Hamel’s New Amsterdam Ballet. George Balanchine created a role on him for the Dance in America television production of “L’enfant et les Sortilèges.”

Since beginning to create ballets in 1982 as an SAB student, Sewell has choreographed more than 60 works, 10 for which he also composed the music.

In 1990, he co-founded James Sewell Ballet with Sally Rousse in New York, before moving the company in 1993 to his native Minnesota, where it is currently based. The eight-member troupe performs regularly in Minneapolis/St. Paul, as well as throughout Minnesota and the U.S., Canada, Iceland and Bermuda.

More than a dozen companies in the United States and Taiwan have performed Sewell’s works. The New York Choreographic Institute selected him to work with New York City Ballet dancers and SAB students in 2001, and again in 2006. Other special projects and commissions have included “Musical Toys,” accompanied by pianist Andreas Haefliger, for the Minnesota Orchestra; “Passions” and “Schoenberg Serenade,” ballets commissioned for the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; “Amahl and the Night Visitors,” produced with the Saint Paul

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Chamber Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra; choreography for the Minnesota Opera's production of "Aida"; "Nutcracker: The Untold Story" for the Minnesota Orchestra's NotesAlive!™ video series; "Metamorphosis," commissioned by the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus; "Awedville," commissioned by the Wharton Center for Performing Arts in East Lansing, Michigan; and the Guthrie Theater's 2005 production of "She Loves Me" and 2007 production "1776." Recently, he has been integrating improvisation into his ballets. He has collaborated with Chris Aiken and Kirstie Simson, masters in the improvisation dance form, and in 2002, received the Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship to explore the intersections between improvisation and ballet. Other awards include a 2006 Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography and a 2007 McKnight Artist Fellowship for Choreography.

Following its season at The Joyce, James Sewell Ballet will perform in St. Paul, MN (October 26-28); Winona, MN (January 14-15); Fergus Falls, MN (February 22); Rochester, MN (March 7); St. Paul, MN (April 4-13); and St. Louis, MO (May, dates TBD).

The evening curtain for James Sewell Ballet at The Joyce Theater is at 7:30pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday, and at 8pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. There will also be 2pm matinees on both Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$40, or \$30 for members. Sunday evening tickets are \$25 each. All tickets are available at the box office, 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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