



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

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**Akron Hosts 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Heinz Poll Dance Festival**  
**Free Performances Include Visiting Companies, Premieres of New Ballets**  
**Sunday Symphonies Extend Weekend Arts Experience**

July 11 , 2012 (Akron, Ohio) - The City of Akron will continue its 37 year tradition of presenting free dance performances in the parks during the summer and honoring the legacy of the founding artistic director of the Ohio Ballet, Heinz Poll.

This marks the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the City has sponsored “The Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival” - - four weekends of ballet featuring four high caliber, professional dance companies. The 2012 festival welcomes the distinguished New York Dance ensemble, the Martha Graham Dance Company. The four-weekend event also features three of Ohio’s outstanding ballet companies, and the world premieres of new works.

Each Sunday during the festival, the City will continue free Akron Symphony Orchestra concerts on the ballet stage.

The dance programs will be presented July 27 - August 18, and begin at 8:45pm on Friday and Saturday evenings, with a children's program starting at 7:45pm each night presented by the University of Akron Dance Institute. The dates, the companies, and the locations:

July 27 & 28	Hardesty Park	Neos Dance Theatre
August 3 & 4	Goodyear Metropolitan Park	The Martha Graham Dance Company
August 10 & 11	Glendale Cemetery	Groundworks Dancetheater
August 17 & 18	Firestone Park	Cincinnati Ballet

**Neos Dance Theatre**  
**July 27 & 28, Hardesty Park**

Based at Mansfield's Renaissance Theatre, Neos considers itself a dual citizen of the Akron community. It will begin planting deeper roots with a Fall subscription series at The University of Akron. Artistic Director Bobby Wesner will lead his dance ensemble through a program that includes "Lickety-Split," choreographed by Alejandro Cerrudo to music of Devendra Banhart; "Story Ballets," which features the legend of Dracula, choreographed by Wesner; his Romeo and Juliet *Pas de Deux* to Prokofiev; and selections of *Creole Cinderella*, by Mary Elizabeth Fenn, who also dances the role of Cinderella

The opening program of the festival takes place during Akron's annual Arts Expo. Neos will stage the world premiere of Wesner's "Homage," to music of Brazilian Heitor Villa Lobos, described as Latin America's "most significant" composer.

**The Martha Graham Dance Company**  
**Goodyear Metropolitan Park, August 3-4, 2012**

The Martha Graham Dance Company has been a leader in the development of contemporary dance since its founding in 1926.

Martha Graham single-handedly defined contemporary dance as a uniquely American art form. Her groundbreaking style - focused on the human form- enlivened the body with raw, electric emotion. She influenced generations of choreographers, and created 181 dance compositions during her long and illustrious career.

The Akron performance, “Essential Graham: Classics,” will include masterpieces such as *Appalachian Spring* and *Lamentation*.

“Prelude and Revolt,” is a suite of dances that traces the emergence of Graham’s distinctive movement vocabulary from her days as a student (1916) of the Denishawn School. Arranged by Janet Eilber who is also the Narrator, the piece is a montage of three Denishawn-Style solos.

“Serenata Morisca, choreographed by Ted Shawn and reconstructed by Martha Graham to music of Mario Tarenghi, features a lighting design by the late Thomas Skelton, who co-founded the Ohio Ballet with Heinz Poll.

“Lamentation,” choreographed and costumed by Graham to the music of Zoltán Kodály premiered in 1930, and is performed almost entirely from a seated position, with the dancer encased in a tube of purple jersey. The diagonals and tensions formed by the dancer’s body struggling within the material create a moving sculpture, a portrait that presents the very essence of grief.

“Lamentation Variations” was conceived in 2007 to commemorate the anniversary of 9/11. The work is based on a film from the early 1930s of Martha Graham

dancing movements from her iconic solo. Choreographers were invited to create a movement study in reaction to the Graham film for the current company of Graham dancers.

“Suite from Appalachian Spring,” (1944) was first titled “Ballet for Martha,” by composer Aaron Copland, but Graham herself changed the name. The suite is a narrated presentation of highlights from *Appalachian Spring* that gives the audience an inside look at the remarkable collaboration between Graham and Copland, whose Pulitzer Prize winning score combines with Graham’s athletic choreography.

“Diversion of Angels,” (1948), by Graham to music of Norman Dello Joio was described by the creator as three aspects of love: one couple representing mature love in perfect balance; another, erotic love; and a third, adolescent love.

**Groundworks DanceTheater**  
**August 10 &11, Glendale Cemetery**

Artistic Director David Shimotakahara presents two world premieres at Glendale. He created “Brubeck” to pay tribute to the music of Dave Brubeck, and features several of the American jazz icon’s classic recordings.

A second premiere is “Current Frame,” by GroundWorks Artistic Associate Amy Miller, who explores the interplay between the formal structure of Baroque composer Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber’s *Passacaglia* violin solo and the emotional undercurrent in response to the music’s themes and cadences.

New to this year’s Festival is Ronen Koresh’s, “CoDa,” set to the haunting and exuberant music of French composer Rene Aubry. CoDa was commissioned in 2011 with

support from Toby Devan Lewis and the National Endowment for the Arts, The Cleveland Foundation and the Kulas Foundation.

“Sweet,” is Shimotakahara’s way of having fun with Bobby McFerrin’s signature vocal harmonies by the same name, created in 2007, for Ballet Met in Columbus.

**Cincinnati Ballet**  
**August 17 & 18 Firestone Park**

Since 1963, the Cincinnati Ballet has been the cornerstone professional ballet company of Southwest Ohio. Since 1997, Victoria Morgan has served as Artistic Director, and more recently, as CEO. Morgan spent nearly a decade as resident choreographer for San Francisco Opera, and was a principal dancer for San Francisco Ballet and Ballet West. Cincinnati Ballet presents a mix of classical ballets and a vibrant mix of repertory ballets at Firestone Park.

The “Don Quixote Wedding Pas de Deux,” by Devon Carney is an excerpt drawn from the full length production of *Don Quixote* first presented by the Bolshoi in 1869, and one of the most famous *pas de deux* in the classical repertoire, a glimpse into the pure classical ballet art form.

“Romeo and Juliet *Pas de Deux*,” was choreographed in 2002 by Victoria Morgan to music of Prokofiev. Romeo appears unexpectedly outside Juliet’s bedroom and invites her to dance. They proclaim their love for each other and experience the first kiss that binds them together forever.

“The Man in Black,” choreographed by James Kudelka, is a celebration of American working-class grit and of the man whose voice embodied it, Johnny Cash. Six Cash songs are staged as a suite of dances for an ensemble of three men and a woman, all

in cowboy boots. The choreography riffs country dances - line, square, swing, and step dancing.

“La Belle Danse,” with choreography by Jessica Lang and music by Corelli, Handel, Mozart, and des Prez was originally commissioned for Richmond Ballet in 2007. The work consists of five sections and explores complex patterns physically developed from the music.

### **Dance Stage to be Shared With Akron Symphony on Sundays**

The City of Akron, with support from local foundations, will extend the use of its weekend dance stage to Sunday nights again this summer for a series of four concerts by the Akron Symphony Orchestra. Performances under the direction of Christopher

Wilkins will be:

July 29	Hardesty Park
August 5	Goodyear Metropolitan Park
August 12	Glendale Cemetery
August 19	Firestone Park

The summer program of concert music will include music of John Phillip Souse, George Gershwin, Broadway show tunes, and movie themes of John Williams. All Sunday Symphonies began at 7:30 pm. Admission is free.

### **Festival History**

Initiated by Mayor Don Plusquellic, the Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival started in 2007 in response to the demise of Ohio Ballet, which gave its final performance August 6, 2006 at Goodyear Metropolitan Park. A committee of dance and education

professionals together with local foundations was convened by the Mayor, and examined options for continuing free outdoor summer performances, which date to 1975 and are unique to Akron among American cities.

### **Heinz Poll**

The German-born Heinz Poll came to Akron in 1967 and offered classes to promising students. In 1974, with lighting designer Thomas Skelton, he founded Akron's first professional company, which eventually became Ohio Ballet. Poll died in April, 2006. His works are included in the summer repertoire.

"Besides creating a professional dance company of national stature and taking it to New York City for five seasons, Heinz Poll created this special summer experience," says Startzman. "Everyone told him that he was crazy, but he was accustomed to accomplishing what others thought impossible."

### **Sponsors**

The City of Akron is providing support for the Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival and the Akron Symphony concerts. The Dance Festival receives support from the Ohio Arts Council, the John S. And James L. Knight Foundation, Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation, Akron Community Foundation, the GAR Foundation, and the Ohio Ballet Endowment of the Akron Community Foundation, Trustee. Significant support also comes from Friends of the Festival - individuals who have made contributions in Poll's memory and in support of continuing the summer tradition.

Akron Symphony performances have been supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and GAR Foundation.

**For More Information**

[www.akrondancefestival.org](http://www.akrondancefestival.org).

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