

THE FRANCESCA HARPER PROJECT



FRANCESCA HARPER

Francesca Harper blends original choreography, dance, music and film to create groundbreaking works that are category-defying. Harper was raised in New York City, where she studied at the School of American Ballet, the Joffrey Ballet School, The Ailey School, and under Madame Darvash and Barbara Walczak. After performing with the Dance Theater of Harlem, she danced as a Principal in William Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt from 1994-1999. Since returning to the States in 2000, Harper has performed in several Broadway productions including *Fosse*, *The Producers*, *The Frogs*, and *The Color Purple*. She played the role of Helene opposite Molly Ringwald in a national tour of *Sweet Charity* in 2007, and the role of Judith originated by Judith Jamison in a revival of *Sophisticated Ladies* in 2009.

Harper's choreographic career began while still in Germany, where she choreographed a full evening work for the Holland Dance Festival. She has since choreographed works for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Tanz Graz, and her own company The Francesca Harper Project, which has become the platform for her own artistic vision: classical dance forms deconstructed and fused with cutting-edge text, music, film and video. Her original hybrid work was first seen in 2000 at the Cherry Lane Theatre, as part of *50 minutes with Harriet and Phillis*, a collaboration with Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Margo Jefferson and composer Paul Miller a.k.a. DJ Spooky. She premiered her critically-acclaimed one-woman show *The Fragile Stone Theory* at the 2002 Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Francesca's latest commissioned work, *Documotion : ONE - Rave*, was performed at the 50th Anniversary of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center at World Famous Apollo Theater. This piece was personally selected for this program by the Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Judith Jamison.

The Francesca Harper Project debuted in August 2005 with the sold-out premiere performance of *MODO FUSION* at The Ailey Citigroup Theater, New York City, and went on to perform a week-long run of *MODO FUSION* during the 92nd St Y Harkness Dance Festival in March 2006. Company members have also been active performers in *MODO FUSION LOUNGE* (the music-based cabaret version of *MODO FUSION*), performing alongside Harper at venues such as Makor and Bowery Poetry Club in New York City. The Francesca Harper Project was recently featured at *Solstice: Dancing at the Crossroads* in Times Square, sponsored by Dancers Responding to AIDS, and at the Holland Dance Festival. The 2007-2008 season highlights include performances at Harlem Stage, Bloomberg Culture Series, Central Park Summerstage and Venice Biennale.

As a singer and lyricist Harper has released singles in Europe and Japan. In November 2003, her single "Would I?" was released on Powerhouse Records. In 2006, she released her debut solo album *Modo Fusion* with 10 original tracks of soul-inspired R&B and electronica.

www.thefrancescaharperproject.org

PROGRAMS



Modo Fusion: Art Prototype

"Modo Fusion: Art Prototype was an evening of futurism, Brilliant, global, otherworldly. Francesca Harper's vision is an aerial vision of what's ahead."

– Faith Popcorn, Brain Reserve

Conceived, choreographed and directed by Francesca Harper, *Modo Fusion: Art Prototype* is an hour-long, surreal blend of original dance, music, film and narration, exploring the world of beauty pageants; a world that provides opportunities to young aspirants; a world that exploits women. Dancers and musicians unveil short, comedic theatrical movements, or vignettes, that draw upon both Harper's own experience as an African American woman and performer, as well as an in-depth documentarian look at the history and evolution of beauty pageants over the years.



The Fragile Stone Theory

"This solo excursion by the former Frankfurt Ballet Dancer updates the exuberant excesses of Whitman's "Song of Myself," for our therapized, multi-media age...Harper moves from innocence to experience with such nuance and grace."

– The New Yorker

The Fragile Stone Theory, an evening-length solo show has been presented at the Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival and the Black Arts Festival in Atlanta. Excerpts have also been performed at the TAT Theatre in Frankfurt, Germany. *The Fragile Stone Theory*, through a symbiotic blend of choreographed dances, staged songs, narration, and video, confronts and expresses "the stone" in one's growth process when confronting childhood issues.



Photos © Bill Hebert

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PROGRAMS (cont)



Documotion : One - Rave

The World Premiere of this piece was presented at the 50th Anniversary Gala of Ailey at the Apollo! at the Apollo Theater in May 2009 upon the request of Judith Jamison, the Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

In the opaque world that is *Documotion*, the darkness only reveals fragments of one's pure self. Time cycles and habits repeat until a conscious choice is made to find the missing pieces. Some attempt to fit their fragments with those of another, while many analyze their own physicality, to work towards wholeness. As the ballet evolves, the superficial ego is shed and the purest version of one's self is illuminated.



Lovebluz.net

This piece was originally commissioned by Point Park University in 2008.

What do a disenchanted couple, an introvert, and a drug addicted Reality Star have in common? Meeting every week at a therapy session set in the year 2156. They confront their love issues through a series of duets, solos, and group dances. The musical score by Wynne Bennett sets the mood with oldies but goodies with music ranging from Gershwin to Chopin and songs sung by Dinah Washington, Nat King Cole, and Francesca Harper.



Photos © Lois Greenfield

For more programs and descriptions, please contact Company Manager Krissy Tate at krissy@francescaharper.com.

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PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

May 5, 2009

Ailey at the Apollo! Gala

Featuring *Documotion : ONE - Rave* by Francesca Harper

The Apollo Theater, New York, NY

April 5, 2009

Francesca Harper's Lounge Special

The Gatehouse @ Harlem Stage on Television

Channel 57 / Time Warner Channel

January 10, 2009 @ 1:10pm

Modo Fusion: Art Prototype

APAP at New York City Center, New York, NY

August 3rd, 2008 @ 3pm

The Francesca Harper Project

East River Park, New York, NY

July 11th, 2008

The Francesca Harper Project

Central Park Summerstage, Rumsey Playfield, New York, NY

June 19 & June 20, 2008

World Premiere: *The Fragile Stone Theory : Interactive Feast*

La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy

April 6, 12 & 14, 2008

MODO FUSION: Truth For Sale

E-Moves at The Gatehouse, Harlem Stage, New York, NY

February 26, 2008

Tribute to Chinua Achebe

Town Hall, New York, NY

November 9 & 10, 2007

MODO FUSION: Truth For Sale premiere

Holland Dance Festival, Amsterdam, Netherlands

June 24, 2007

Introfusion premiere

Solstice: Dancing at the Crossroads, Times Square, New York, NY

March 8-12, 2006

MODO FUSION

The Ailey Citigroup Theater

Presented by the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Festival, New York, NY

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PRESS QUOTES



"You want passion? It's here... Compelling and slashing moves? You got 'em."
- Village Voice

"...a charismatic singer and performer."
-The New York Times

"The statuesque clear-eyed dancer sings the body electric...moves from innocence to experience with such grace."
-The New Yorker

"...an impulse-driven action zone where loss of control and engulfing violence seemed imminent."
-Los Angeles Times

"Harper, who has the physique of a modern goddess, had the audience on the edge of its seats"
-The Oakland Tribune

Funded in 2005 by Francesca Harper, The Francesca Harper Project, Inc. is a non-for-profit 501 (c)(3) company dedicated to creating groundbreaking dance, music, and theater works. Francesca Harper's direction and choreographic work serves as the Company artistic foundation. But it is the innovation, commitment to humanity and diversity that is fundamental to FHP's mission.

The Company looks to such companies and artists as The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, The Forsythe Company, Pina Bausch, and Evidence as its inspiration. And in that vein, The Francesca Harper Project produces works ranging from pure dance to contemporary theater.

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THE FRANCESCA HARPER PROJECT

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