

For Immediate Release: Theater / Dance
Media Contact: Leigh Riley, The Riley Project
510-343-4412 or leigh@rileyproject.org

The Riley Project & Aura Fischbeck Dance
present new and beloved works in a shared home season
at CounterPULSE, Friday – Sunday January 21 – 23, 2011
rileyproject.org - aurafischbeck.com

November 22, 2008, San Francisco, CA - The Riley Project and Aura Fischbeck Dance present new and beloved contemporary dance works in their 2nd home season co-production. With potent and distinct physicality, these works investigate the human condition through the lens of social politics, misbehavior, and love in all its many forms, developed by a collaborative cast of some of San Francisco's finest dance artists. The show includes choreography by Leigh Riley and Aura Fischbeck, and performances by Caroline Alexander, Jennifer Bennett, Andi Clegg, Leah Curran, Aura Fischbeck, Gretchen Garnett, Julie Potter, Travis Rowland, Stacey Swann, Katharine Vigmostad and Andrew Ward.

THE PERFORMANCE

The Riley Project will be presenting a suite of four duets titled *All You Need*, each stemming from one of the four Greek words for love. As a whole, these dances present scenes from life; from childhood and family, school and work rivalries and friendships, the fiery passions which burn bright and fast and hard, and the true romance in finding a partner and mate, all based on real relationships from Ms. Riley's life.

I. Starting with "philia", we take a slightly different look at friendship, and depict here the ones that challenge us and spur us on to be better people. Borrowing its name from an old silent film starring Buster Keaton, *Our Hospitality*, is a comedic tussle of friendly rivals. Complete with pratfalls, comedic timing, and ludicrous challenges, two distinct characters vie for the stage, do the same moves with unique élan, but eventually stop competing and dance alongside one another. *Our Hospitality* was developed in residence at The Garage and premiered in July of 2009.

II. "Éros" is passionate love, with sensual desire and longing. Its correlating piece, *Charade* will be a short fiery passionate dance, reflecting those romances that quickly grow intense and overwhelming, but then just as abruptly fizzle out.

III. In Greek, "storge" is a natural affection, used almost exclusively as a descriptor of relationships within the family. Set on two women, *Sandbox* will depict scenes from childhood and adolescence, going through the process of growing up and defining oneself.

IV. "Agápe" means romantic love in modern day Greek, and is primarily used to denote feelings for a spouse. Audience favorite *Second Chances*, was developed through support of the Pilot program at ODC and premiered in November of 2009. Dance-legend Barbara Dilley of Judson Church & Grand Union movements called it "beautiful, a classic pas de deux in a contemporary context". Choreographic mentor Lizz Roman praised Ms. Riley's talents at having "crafted a wonderful dance" and affirmed that she has "a natural ability, and hope [she] continues to make dances."

Our human existence is defined by the relationships we build and nurture in our lives, and these dances remind us to prize each one. These duets will include performances by Caroline Alexander, Jennifer Bennett, Andi Clegg, Leah Curran, and Andrew Ward.

Ms. Riley's final premier piece takes a look at the fine balance between individual and group dynamics: when group assimilation is natural and beneficial, and when it swallows or distorts the individual. *DuBeUs* will examine some of these dynamics, and ask when is conformity crucial and when is it detrimental, when does it happen naturally and when is it forced upon the individual. Even countercultures conform to social strata; unique individuals come together to create communities and the "underground" or "alternative" slowly become the norm. In some situations, religious people are shunned or persecuted because of their beliefs and end up hiding a part of who they are in order to live a peaceful life. Under the law known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", it has been necessary to hide a part of one's life merely to keep one's job. Counterbalancing groups and unison with individuals and solos, *DuBeUs* explores how people naturally follow and organize, when rules keep people from fully expressing themselves, and what happens when people bend or break those rules, or are simply not willing to follow.

Caroline Alexander, Jennifer Bennett, Leah Curran, Stacey Swann, and Katharine Vigmostad will be collaborating and performing in this new piece.

Driven by curiosity and a willingness to experiment, **Aura Fischbeck Dance** begins with the body as an expression of history and biology, which when shaped and articulated arrives at a vocabulary unique to each dance.

The company is very excited to present the world premier of our newest work, entitled *Bodies that Won't Behave*. The subject is the body - do we wish to control it or do we wish to set it free? Proposing that the body has a "mind" of its own, *Bodies that Won't Behave* examines the ways in which our bodies betray our attempts at good behavior, and the dialogue between freedom and control that exists as a fundamentally human experience of the body. This 45 minute piece is divided into two distinct sections.

Part 1, aptly named *Bodies that Won't Behave, (part 1, body1)* is a solo choreographed and performed by Aura Fischbeck. Simply structured, this dance combines intriguing video elements of misbehavior in the park, and a live exhibition of good behavior gone wrong, simply expressed as the inability to sit still in a chair, with video shot by Christopher Wise and set to contemporary music by Cat Power and Radiohead.

Part 2, *Bodies that Won't Behave (bodies 2, 3 and 4)* expands the misbehavior into an ensemble experience. Through idiosyncratic gestures, uncontrollable outbursts, and engagingly awkward encounters the dancers conjure an array of physical states, revealing each individual body's capacity to be at once virtuosic and inferior, exalted and limited. How does each individual body perpetually fall out of line, and how do our failed attempts to repress our "out-of-line-ness" play out in unique behaviors, both public and private, consciously or unconsciously? A hair out of place, an inappropriate gesture, an awkward pause . . . Is it the task of the dancer in contemporary culture to remind and instigate the misbehavior of the body?

Combining live performance and video *Bodies that Won't Behave (bodies 2, 3 and 4)*, is a celebration of humanity and a testimony to reality, and will be performed by Aura Fischbeck, Gretchen Garnett, Julie Potter, and Travis Rowland, with video shot by Christopher Wise, and a sound score ranging from the Talking Heads to Bach.

Rita Felciano of the The San Francisco Bay Guardian and DanceViewTimes described Fischbeck's dancing as "fierce" and "expressively pliant" and called the companies performance in the 2008 Women on the Way festival as "lusciously danced, with a wonderful sense of spontaneity . . ."

COMPANY HISTORIES

THE RILEY PROJECT

Mission

The Riley Project is an exploration in forging new movement concepts and embedding them in everyday settings and images relatable to all audiences. The company's projects seek to engage audiences, always with the promise of an intimate experience.

History/Bio

Leigh Riley has been active in the Oakland arts scene for the last decade and officially made her choreographic debut in 2004 at the Chevil Até Theater in Oakland in an evening of art, music and performance which brought multiple communities together. After several choreographic projects including ODC's Pilot program and a dance/theater collaboration with playwright Sequoia Nagamatsu, she founded The Riley Project in 2007. Since then, she has held two residencies at The Garage, and has presented work around the San Francisco Bay Area at ODC Theater, CounterPULSE, The Garage, Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Moving Arts Dance, Shotwell Studios, Subterranean Arthouse, in Union Square with the San Francisco International Arts Festival and most recently at Denver's Packing House Center for the Arts. Leigh Riley received her foundations in dance at Omaha Academy of Ballet and at University of California, Berkeley. In the Bay Area, she has performed in the work of Alma Esperanza Cunningham, Corinne Blum, Patricia Banchik, Sarah Moss and Aura Fischbeck. Ms. Riley is currently investigating various improvisation techniques based on the methods guided by Meg Stuart, Christian Burns, Paige Sorvillo, and Amy Raymond. She has been on the teaching staff at Shawl-Anderson Dance Center and the Omaha Academy of Ballet, and has been a guest teacher at PHCA in Denver. The Riley Project is a fiscally sponsored project of Dancers' Group. For more information, please visit rileyproject.org

AURA FISCHBECK DANCE

Mission

Aura Fischbeck Dance exists to create distilled, intentional dances which investigate and communicate the specificity of the bodies intelligence and reflect the complexity of the contemporary human experience.

History/Bio

Since 2001 Aura Fischbeck's choreography has been presented nationally in series,

festivals and shared programs. In 2008 she established her company, Aura Fischbeck Dance. Her work has been performed in San Francisco at CounterPULSE, ODC, Project Artaud, the Shotwell Studios, the Garage, the Jon Sims Center, the Subterranean Arthouse (Berkeley) and Venue 9, in Philadelphia at the CEC's Meetinghouse Theater, and the historic Christ Church Community House, and in Colorado at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art and Denver's Packing House Center for the Arts. The company has held residencies in S.F. at the Garage, the Shotwell Studios, and the Jon Sims Center for the Arts and in Philadelphia with the Group Motion Dance Company, and has received grants from the Zellerbach Family Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Aura has been a guest teacher at the Naropa University (Boulder, CO) and the Packing House Center for the Arts. A Philadelphia native, Aura received her earliest dance training from her mother Brigitta Herrmann, a student of Mary Wigman and co-founder of Group Motion Dance Company, and her father Manfred Fischbeck, co-founder and current artistic director of Group Motion Dance Company. She has also had the pleasure of performing in the work of many outstanding artists, including Chris Black/Potrzenie Dance Project, Kathleen Hermesdorf, Christy Funsch, The Riley Project and others. She received her B.A. in dance and poetry from the Naropa University in 2001, studying under Barbara Dilley, Cara Reeser, Wendell Beavers, and others, and is a certified teacher of the Pilates method since 2003, through the esteemed Pilates Center of Boulder, CO. Aura Fischbeck Dance is fiscally sponsored by Dancers' Group.

CALENDAR LISTING

WHO: The Riley Project and Aura Fischbeck Dance in a Home Season Co-Production

WHAT: An evening of new and beloved dance tapping into social politics, a body's inherent truth and expression, and love in all its many forms developed by a collaborative cast of some of San Francisco's finest dance artists.

WHEN: Friday and Saturday, January 21 – 22, 2011 at 8pm and Sunday January 23 at 2pm

WHERE: CounterPULSE, 1310 Mission Street @ 9th in San Francisco

TICKETS: \$10-20 in advance, \$12-20 at the door (no one turned away for lack of funds)

INFO/RESERVATIONS: brownpapertickets.com

WEB: counterpulse.org, aurafischbeck.com, or rileyproject.org