

VCU Dance news

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

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VCU Dance NEXUS 2007-2008 presents

MIGUEL GUTIERREZ & THE POWERFUL PEOPLE

"At a time when so much art lacks a heartbeat, Mr. Gutierrez's chest pounds."
—The New York Times

Richmond, VA – VCU Department of Dance and Choreography presents **Miguel Gutierrez & The Powerful People** in *Retrospective Exhibitionist/Difficult Bodies*, Friday & Saturday, **January 25 & 26, 2008 at 8:00 pm at the Grace Street Theater**, 934 West Grace Street, in Richmond. **Tickets are \$20 general / \$10 to VCU students with a valid ID.** Rambucks accepted. **Tickets may be reserved beginning January 14, 2008 by calling 804-828-2020.**

Retrospective Exhibitionist/Difficult Bodies is an evening of two works presented as a diptych, back to back. This evening looks at the two sides that are in every performance: what the performer presents and what the performer feels. In *Retrospective Exhibitionist*, a landmark solo for Gutierrez, he shuttles through his own real and imagines performance history, excavating to find the vulnerability of what it is to be watched by others. Using a TV/VCR, boom box, mic and amp, video camera, and other simple props, Gutierrez looks at the merciless unraveling of time and its impact on live performance and the life on the stage. In *Difficult Bodies*, Gutierrez continues his confrontation between performer and viewer, with the three women of MGPP as his foil in a celebration of individuality and the tension of togetherness. Their insistent actions fill the space with the rhythms of attraction and repulsion, as they continually approach and resist the audience. Gutierrez supplies the original music for the work manipulating his own voice live onstage.

Gutierrez is the recipient of a **2006 New York Dance & Performance Award** (a.k.a. a Bessie) for Choreography for *Retrospective Exhibitionist/Difficult Bodies*, which premiered at Dance Theater Workshop in 2005. The Bessie award cited Gutierrez "for a self-reflexive lecture demonstration exposing artist and

artistic creation; for a personal and communal look to what has come before, and a presentation of what is now; for a naked, even pregnant display of 'who I am' and 'what I do'."

Miguel Gutierrez is the second of four nationally-recognized artists culled from *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" to visit VCU Dance and Richmond for a series of one-week teaching and performance residencies during 2007-2008. In addition to his company performance, Mr. Gutierrez will also teach VCU Dance majors and conduct a master class for the Richmond dance community.

VCU Dance NEXUS: GUEST ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Miguel Gutierrez (New York): January 21-26, 2008

I am a dance and music artist based in Brooklyn. I create group work with the Powerful People and I also make solos. Since 2001 I have made enter the seen, I succumb, Sabotage (in collaboration with Jaime Fennelly), dAMNATION rOAD, Retrospective Exhibitionist and Difficult Bodies (2006 Bessie winner) and most recently, myendlesslove and Everyone. I just completed a commission by Melbourne, Australia-based Phillip Adams to make a short section that sits inside of a larger work that he is making for his company BalletLab entitled Brindabella. I think my section is called I HATE OUTSIDE. I have been lucky to collaborate with a wide range of contemporary dance, music and visual artists. My work has been presented in: NYC at various venues, including Dance Theater Workshop, The Kitchen, MIX: The NY Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival, across the country at Diverseworks in Houston, TX and the Flynn Center in Burlington, VT, and internationally in festivals such as ImPuls Tanz in Vienna, Springdance Festival in Utrecht and Touch:2005 in Archangel, Russia.

My work tends to be quite emotional and concerns itself with the phenomenon of existence. I am interested in asking who are we and why are we here, both in in life and in the theater. I am fascinated by the body's ability to move between the mundane and the transcendent. I am interested in how the presence of the audience creates a space of attention and extraordinary perception.

I work in close collaboration with the participating artists of each project to create pieces that speak to the interests of the time, both the time spent in the studio and also time in the sense of a larger context - what is happening in the world. I like finding ways to translate the experiential nature of performing into a sensory, emotional and visceral experience for the audience. I like to assume that you are intelligent and willing and ready for anything.

Miguel Gutierrez and the Powerful People is the fifth event of the **VCU Dance NEXUS 2007-2008 Season**, which, with a stunning array of performances, film screenings, guest artist residencies and master classes, promises all the energy and explosive creativity of a national festival. The VCU Dance NEXUS 2007-2008 Season is made possible in part by funding graciously provided by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter

Foundation; the Virginia Commission for the Arts; the Sydney and Frances Lewis Foundation, the Elmwood Fund, and VCUarts.

The presenting program of VCU Dance is committed to building and engaging dance audiences in the University and Richmond community while providing opportunities for artists to present and create work. Recognized by professional dancers and choreographers as “a place where things are happening,” Virginia Commonwealth University’s Department of Dance and Choreography offers a vibrant and stimulating atmosphere where students prepare for careers in dance.

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