

KAROLE ARMITAGE'S VIBRANT DANCE COMPANY MAKES COLUMBUS DEBUT AT WEXNER CENTER

"A winner...what sticks in the memory is the personality of the dance and the dancers." —*New York Times*

Columbus, OH—**Armitage Gone! Dance**, renowned choreographer **Karole Armitage's** company, makes its Columbus debut performing its dynamically charged works for **one-night only** in the **Thurber Theater at the Drake Center on Thursday, March 29 at 8pm.**

Strongly grounded in ballet and Balanchine, Karole Armitage was a standout with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company before launching her own career as the incendiary "punk ballerina" of the 1980s' Downtown scene with landmark works like *Drastic Classicism*, her collaboration with massed guitar composer Rhys Chatham. She then spent many years working in Europe with major companies. Now she's reestablished herself in New York to concentrate on developing her own very impressive company and a new body of work that displays her stylish and kinetic dynamism.



Armitage Gone! Dance
Photo: Richard Termine

The evening of three works includes *Time is the Echo of an Axe Within a Wood*, described by the *New York Times* as "one of the most beautiful dances to be seen in New York in a very long time." This work full of sensual, flowing lines and fierce partnering was commissioned by the Joyce Theater and part of Armitage's triumphant return to New York in 2004. *Ligeti Essays*, which premiered in February in New York, was inspired by the music of the late contemporary composer György Ligeti. Armitage says: "I was attracted to Ligeti not only for his mixture of classicism and innovation, but also for the deep humanity found in these haiku like compositions." The delicate yet fierce *In This Dream That Dogs Me* (2005), inspired by Chinese calligraphy, expands the range of the dancers' limbs through complex body designs and broad bold strokes of calligraphy that disappear in the air. The work ran an unprecedented three weeks in its debut at The Duke on 42nd Street.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

While at the Wexner Center, Armitage will offer a technique masterclass for students in the Department of Dance that explores her approach to the expansion of ballet vocabulary towards contemporary formal invention. At this session students will have an opportunity to hear about Armitage's background as a dancer with Merce Cunningham as well as her independent career as a choreographer in Europe and New York.

ABOUT ARMITAGE GONE! DANCE

Armitage Gone! Dance was launched in 2005 when Karole Armitage returned to the U.S. after 15 years of working abroad. She formed her first company, Armitage Gone! in New York City in 1979

to critical acclaim which led to the founding of The Armitage Ballet in 1985. The company toured extensively to festivals and venues worldwide performing works in collaboration with visual artists David Salle and Jeff Koons. Throughout the 1990s Ms. Armitage chose to maintain her company on a project basis while accepting commissions from European ballet and opera companies. In November 2005, Armitage Gone! Dance was launched in an unprecedented three-week season with a world premiere at The Duke on 42nd Street in New York and followed by a commissioned work, *Visual Brainstorming*, for the Guggenheim Museum's Works and Process series. As a choreographer entering her third decade of creativity, Armitage enjoys working full-time in New York again, creating new work that expands our thinking about the dilemmas and beauties of modern life.

ABOUT KAROLE ARMITAGE

Over the last twenty-five years, Karole Armitage has had the opportunity to work with a wide range of artists, from the pop star Madonna to filmmakers Merchant and Ivory and fashion designer Christian Lacroix. Armitage began her studies at the School of American Ballet and later graduated from North Carolina School of the Arts. She was a member of Balanchine's Geneva Ballet (1973-75) and The Merce Cunningham Dance Company (1976-81). She choreographed her first work, *Ne*, in 1978 followed by the landmark *Drastic-Classicism* (1981) and since then has created works for the American Ballet Theatre and the Paris Opera Ballet, among other renowned companies. For an extended period of time, Armitage worked in Europe and was appointed Director of the Ballet of Florence, Italy from 1995–1998 where she collaborated with fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier and artist Jeff Koons. She also directed operas from the baroque and contemporary repertoire for many of the prestigious opera houses of Europe including San Carlo in Naples, Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, and Het Muziek Theater in Amsterdam.

EVENT SUPPORT

Armitage Gone! Dance is presented by the Wexner Center for the Arts in association with BalletMet.

Major support for the Wexner Center's 2006–07 performing arts season is generously provided by Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Columbus Foundation, and Huntington Bank.

Significant contributions are also made by Altria Group, Inc., Morgan Stanley, and Nationwide Foundation.

Armitage Gone! Dance is funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional funding is provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and The Ford Foundation.

Additional season funding is provided by the Ohio Arts Council, the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation, and Wexner Center members.

Accommodations are provided by The Blackwell Inn.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION: Catch the Columbus debut of **Armitage Gone! Dance**, performing dynamic new and recent works.

DATE: 8 pm, Thursday, March 29, 2007

LOCATION: Thurber Theatre at Drake Center, 1849 Cannon Drive on OSU Campus

TICKETS: \$17 members, \$18 general public and \$15 for student; \$5 tickets for teens (ages 13-18) are available through High 5 Tickets to the Arts.

TICKET OUTLETS: Wexner Center Ticket Office (614 292-3535) and Ticketmaster (614 431-3600) or Ticketmaster.com.

PUBLIC INFORMATION: wexarts.org or 614 292-3535

Media contact for more information: Erik Pepple, epepple@wexarts.org, or 614 688-3261