

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance Premieres
Ensemble Dance Works 2013

Ensemble Dance Works 2013 showcases the works of local Houston choreographers, performed by the pre-professional dance company, the UH Dance Ensemble. The dynamics of Houston choreographers explode as they confront the changes of life and nature, tackle the issues of community, or just have pure fun. *Ensemble Dance Works 2013* will premiere at Lyndall Finley Wortham Theatre at the CWM Center for the Arts, Houston, Texas 77204 on Friday and Saturday, April 5-6, 2013 at 7:30pm, and on Sunday, April 7, 2013 at 1:30pm.

The performance displays a range of styles from contemporary dance choreographers and UH dance faculty Teresa Chapman, Leslie Scates, John Stronks, Sophia Torres, Becky Valls, the Head of the UH Dance Program, Karen Stokes and guest choreographer Sara Draper.

Many of the pieces use the creation of movement as their focal point. *Crawl Before You Walk* by Teresa Chapman was inspired by contrasting movement patterns and gestures of the very young and the very old. "The process was a collaborative one. The dancers contributed in the development of personal variations on movement phrases, giving them ownership and making them an integral part of the creative process," remarks Chapman. Becky Valls is restaging *Dangle* for the upcoming American College Dance Festival as well as *Ensemble Dance Works 2013*. "*Dangle* is a quirky dance to Klezmer music (Jewish tradition music) that uses facial expressions which isn't

usually used in modern dance choreography. Instead of basing the choreography on a theme, I worked with fun movement ideas. The dance is meant to be fun and not too serious,” says Valls. In Leslie Scates’ piece *HERD*, she explains that she is working with improvised movement from a foundation of sustained and repetitive movement phrases. The dancers perform a set phrase with improvised stillness and reorganization of self in space simultaneously. This work uses “serious rigor and concentration while in auto pilot,” shares Scates.

Other pieces use psychological, social, and anthropological themes to navigate the choreography. Jhon R Stronks’ *Dogs don't eat egg rolls*, with music by Gold Panda, is an ensemble work that examines the development and establishment of community. Sophia Torres uses the natural movement of the ocean as a symbol of human behavior. “Movement of the ocean floor is influenced by changes that occur thousands of miles away,” states Torres about her piece *Ground Swell*, “Storms, earthquakes or shifting of tectonic plates can create deep undulation of waves that swell up as they emerge from the ocean and push their way to the shores. In creating *Ground Swell*, I am searching for the connection between the natural occurrence that exists in the oceans and that of human nature. How often are we stirred, shifted and moved by events that occur far out of our eyesight? How does our inner landscape swell and change as a result?”

In *First Day of Spring, Second Day of Spring*, Sara Draper shares that she has been experimenting with mixing and fusing traditional ethnic dance styles with modern dance since the late nineteen-nineties. “In this case, I am drawing from Middle Eastern and North African dance, including Tunisian, Bedouin, Egyptian, Persian, and drawing in some Turkish as well. My goal is to create a distinct feeling of the beauty of Middle Eastern and North African cultures. At the same time, the dance is really about just being a human being and engaging in the joys and struggles of living as part of a larger community.”

Located on the University of Houston campus, *Ensemble Dance Works 2013* hits the stage Friday and Saturday, April 5-6, 2013 at 7:30pm; and Sunday, April 7, 2013 at 1:30pm, at the Lyndall Finley Wortham Theatre, 133 Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, Houston, Texas, 77004. Tickets are \$20 general and \$12 seniors. For tickets, contact the UH Box Office at 713/743-2929. For more information regarding the concert, contact Toni Valle at 713-409-2838 or visit theatredance.uh.edu. High resolution photos are available upon request.

FACT SHEET



Who: University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance

What: *Ensemble Dance Works 2013*

When:

Friday, April 5, 2013 @ 7:30pm

Saturday, April 6, 2013 @ 7:30pm

Sunday, April 7, 2013 @ 1:30pm

Where:

Lyndall Finley Wortham Theatre

133 Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts

Houston, Texas 77004

Tickets:

\$20 General/ \$12 Senior

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