



Word Dance Theater is a 501(c)3 performing arts company founded in Washington, D.C. in 2001. Our mission is to create progressive, multi-disciplinary theater productions. Originating from the world of Modern Dance, Word Dance Theater integrates the philosophy and dances of Isadora Duncan, founder of Modern Dance, along with original story and live music to create theater experiences that are a multi-sensory celebration of the richness of the human spirit.

About *Once Wild: Isadora in Russia*

Completing Word Dance Theater's groundbreaking multi-disciplinary trilogy of the life of Isadora Duncan, ***Once Wild: Isadora in Russia*** pushes the boundaries of Duncan's concept of dance in relationship to theater once again. Told in the progressive theatrical model featuring the balanced dominance of equally integrated story, music and dance, we share the story of Isadora Duncan's tumultuous last years through the eyes of Irma Duncan, Isadora's adopted daughter.

Driven by our desire to share this beautiful and tragic story in the multi-disciplinary model that Duncan envisioned 100 years ago, Word Dance Theater's Artistic Director and Choreographer **Cynthia Word** has joined forces with Georgetown University's Davis Performing Arts Center, award-winning stage director **Derek Goldman** (*Our Class*), Helen Hayes Award-winning playwright **Norman Allen** (*Nijinsky's Last Dance*), renowned composer **Dominik Maican**, and cutting-edge projection artist **Jared Mezzocchi**, to step across creative boundaries and offer a bold, new vision of not only the seminal artist Isadora Duncan, but also our vision of theater in the 21st century. ***Once Wild: Isadora in Russia*** promises to be a production you will not want to miss.

Our Philosophy

Word Dance Theater believes that strength, beauty, and freedom of dance, woven with inspirational stories, and moving music create transformative theatrical experiences. Because dance uses the human body as the instrument of expression, and because all humankind shares this common vocabulary of physicality, we believe that the blending of dance, story, and music provides an environment in which the audience can go beyond a passive "watching" experience to that of being actively engaged in body, mind, and spirit. Through our art, we hope to contribute toward creating the highest consciousness in the freest body and a more compassionate and humane society.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Leading Washington Artists Reach Across Disciplines for World Premiere Dance-Theatre Collaboration

Washington, D.C. – Innovative performing arts company Word Dance Theater joins forces with Georgetown University's Davis Performing Arts Center and award-winning stage director **Derek Goldman** (*Our Class*) to produce the multi-disciplinary theatrical collaboration **Once Wild: Isadora in Russia**. Written by Helen Hayes Award-winning playwright **Norman Allen** (*Nijinsky's Last Dance*), with original music by renowned composer **Dominik Maican**, and choreography by **Cynthia Word** (*Preludes: Duncan, Sand and Chopin*), *Once Wild* steps across creative boundaries to offer a bold, new vision of seminal artist Isadora Duncan, her work, and her years in Bolshevik Russia.

In keeping with the company's cross-disciplinary spirit, the central role of Irma Duncan, Isadora's adopted daughter, will be shared by actress **Kimberly Schraf** and dancer **Ingrid Zimmer**. **Philip Fletcher**, known for his work with Syntetic Theater, portrays volatile Russian poet Sergei Esenin, and Cynthia Word dances the lead role of Isadora.

Playwright Allen explained, "Isadora Duncan changed forever the way we think about dance, and thus the way we think about theatre. She broke the rules. It's exciting to be immersed in a creative process that attempts to do the same. Pairing an actress of Kim Schraf's caliber with a dancer like Ingrid Zimmer to create a single, complex character provides new opportunities, and distinct new challenges. To layer text, however sparse, onto a classic work of Duncan's own creation requires a bit of chutzpah, but the result will give audiences an entirely new perspective on her choreography, and the revolution that she caused."

For the past decade, Cynthia Word, Artistic Director of Word Dance Theater, has proven the artistic power of cross-discipline work through a series of innovative performances created by teams of artists working in different genres. According to Word, "Cross-discipline work breaks through the isolation of individual art-forms. It challenges even the most collaborative of artists to work with unfamiliar tools, and to communicate with new artistic vocabularies. Because of the challenges inherent in the process, cross-discipline work is also extraordinarily rich in possibility. It reflects a broader shift of consciousness toward global thinking, conflict resolution, and problem solving that we feel throughout the culture. Perhaps most important, the work models our own belief in the capacity of the human spirit to be continuously reborn through acts of creation."

Director Goldman says of the project, "It's an honor and a remarkable opportunity to come together with leading artists from a range of disciplines (leading choreographers, dancers, multimedia designers, composer/musicians, and actors, along with an extraordinary playwright), to examine the legacy of one of the 20th century's most complex artistic figures. The piece we are creating speaks to the connection between individual artistic vision and global politics. By introducing us to Irma Duncan, one of Isadora's disciples and adopted daughters, the piece engages questions about teaching, memory, and revolution, about how personal and artistic legacies are passed on from generation to generation, particularly in the ephemeral art form of

performance. All of us working on this unique cross-disciplinary collaboration are energized to be using different artistic muscles, pursuing new ways of working, and combining expressive forms in surprising new ways."

Joining the eclectic creative team are projection artist **Jared Mezzocchi** (*Trip to the Moon*), lighting designer **Robbie Hayes** (Rorschach Theatre), award winning costume designer **Judy Hansen**, and sound designer **Jimmy Garver** (*Our Class*). **Carlos Cesar Rodriguez** (*El Amor Brujo*) serves as both music director and pianist.

Once Wild: Isadora in Russia

Co-Produced by Word Dance Theater and Georgetown University's Davis Performing Arts Center
Performance Times: Friday and Saturday, May 3 and 4 at 8 p.m., Sunday, May 5 at 2 p.m.

Location: DAVIS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, GONDA THEATRE
37th & O Streets NW Washington DC 20057

Tickets: \$25 General/\$18 Faculty, Staff, Alumni, Senior/\$10 Student

For tickets, go to <http://performingarts.georgetown.edu/> or call **(202) 687-ARTS (2787)**

**Post-performance reception on May 3 and discussion with artists on May 4*

Synopsis

At the invitation of the Bolshevik government, Isadora Duncan and her adopted daughter Irma arrive in Russia determined to ignite its children's minds and bodies through a new school of dance. Immersed in the revolutionary spirit, Duncan created some of her most groundbreaking work, and faced some of her greatest personal challenges. Seen through Irma's eyes, *Once Wild* explores Isadora's Russian years, her romance with poet Sergei Esenin, and her lasting legacy.

Directed by Derek Goldman.

Written by Norman Allen.

Original music by Dominik Maican.

Original choreography by Cynthia Word.

For more information about *Once Wild: Isadora in Russia*, go to

<http://worddance.org/repertory/once-wild/>

About Word Dance Theater: Word Dance Theater is a 501(c)3 performing arts company dedicated to advancing the performing arts through the creation of innovative, multi-disciplinary theater productions. Originating from the world of modern dance, Word Dance Theater integrates the holistic philosophy of Isadora Duncan, founder of modern dance, to pioneer the equal blending of theater, music, and dance and to create a rich foundation from which new theater experiences can emerge. Please visit us at www.worddance.org.

About the Davis Performing Arts Center: Opened in November 2005 in the center of Georgetown University's campus as the only building in Georgetown history designed specifically for arts education, the Davis Performing Arts Center is the academic home to the Department of Performing Arts and features two theatre spaces: the proscenium Gonda Theatre and the black box Devine Studio Theatre. The Davis Performing Arts Center season unfolds in intimate dialogue with the Department's curricular offerings. In addition to mainstage theater productions, the Department sponsors numerous music and dance performances, workshops, readings, master classes, symposia, and guest lectures, placing students from the entire Georgetown community in regular contact with leading professionals from the US and beyond.
performingarts.georgetown.edu

Once *Wild*: Isadora in Russia

THE COLLABORATORS



Cynthia Word, Director of Choreography
Artistic Director of Word Dance Theater

Cynthia Word is the Founder and Artistic Director of Word Dance Theater a non-profit performing arts organization founded in 2000. Born and raised in Abilene, Texas, Ms. Word has a Bachelor of Science for the University of Texas/Austin, but began her Modern Dance training at the University of Illinois with choreographers Beverly Blossom, Chester Wolenski, Mary Anthony, and Sarah Rudner. She later received her Master in Fine Arts from The George Washington University, where she served on the teaching faculty. Based in Washington, DC, Ms. Word and Word Dance Theater create Isadora Duncan-based dance/theater productions, blending compelling story, live music, and the dances of Isadora Duncan to create theatrical productions that are powerfully engaging to audiences. Her most recent creation, co-produced with the Department of Performing Arts at Georgetown University, is entitled *Once Wild: Isadora in Russia* and will premiere May 3 thru 5, 2013 at the Davis Performing Arts Center, Washington DC.

In addition to her dance/theater productions, Word has performed as a soloist in Austria, England, Scotland and Iran. In 2009 she toured Greece as a featured artist with the Isadora Duncan International Institute. The IDII awarded Cynthia the prestigious Maria-Teresa Duncan Award for Excellence in November 2010 for the mix media theater/dance production *Preludes: Duncan, Sand & Chopin* which presented for the first time since 1949 Isadora Duncan's choreography to Chopin's "The Twenty Four Preludes".



Derek Goldman, Theatrical Director
Artistic Director of the Davis Performing Arts Center

DEREK GOLDMAN (Davis Performing Arts Center Artistic Director) is Professor of Theater and Performance Studies at Georgetown University and an award-winning director and playwright/adaptor, developer of new work and published scholar, whose work has been seen around the country and internationally, Off-Broadway, and at major regional theaters including Steppenwolf in Chicago, Lincoln Center, Arena Stage, Folger Theater, Round House, Syracuse Stage, Theater J, Everyman Theater, Synetic Theater, Forum Theater, the Kennedy Center, and many others. He is the author of more than 25 professionally produced plays and adaptations, and has directed more than 75 productions. His recent production of *The Brothers Size* at Everyman Theater was named Baltimore Magazine's "Best Production of the Year." Recent/upcoming projects include *Our Class* at Theater J and the World Premiere of *Young Robin Hood* at Round House, *Clementine in the Lower Nine* at Forum, and *Once Wild* with Word Dance Theater, premiering at Georgetown in May. Founding Artistic Director StreetSigns Center for Literature and Performance

(Chicago and Chapel Hill, NC); Executive Board member/ US Delegate of the UNESCO Chair / ITI (International Theatre Institute); Delegate ITI World Congress, China; Ph.D. in Performance Studies, Northwestern University. At Georgetown he is honored to teach extraordinary students in Directing, Adaptation, Political Theater, Global Performance, Acting Shakespeare, and more. This past summer he and Ambassador Cynthia Schneider co-hosted a major international convening at Georgetown on Global Performance, Civic Imagination, and Cultural Diplomacy, part of a new initiative called the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics.



Carlos César Rodríguez, Musical Director

Carlos César Rodríguez is a musician of brilliance and versatility recognized as a virtuoso pianist who not only generates excitement in the Hispanic and Spanish repertoire, but also displays an extraordinary flair for Mozart, the romantics and the avant-garde scores. He has recorded for Omicron and Briosio labels and has won the highest critical acclaims for his CD of Spanish music, *España en el Corazón*, distributed by Briosio Recordings. He is an expert on early instruments and is privileged to have access to the Smithsonian Institution's rare collection. Mr. Rodríguez was chosen by the Smithsonian to perform during its 300th year celebration of the piano. He was also invited to participate in the 150th anniversary celebration of the Smithsonian Institution. Mr. Rodríguez has won acclaim as music director of Mozart operas and Zarzuelas (Spanish operas), and as a composer, arranger, and improviser of ballets, Spanish dance scores, and Latin-Jazz/Pop compositions. Currently, Mr. Rodríguez is a member of the piano faculty at the Levine School of Music in Washington, DC, and guest artist and coach for the Domingo/Cafritz Young Artist Program with the Washington National Opera.



Norman Allen, Playwright

Norman Allen's work has been commissioned and produced by the Kennedy Center (*The Light of Excalibur*), the Shakespeare Theatre Company (*On the Eve of Friday Morning*), and the Karlin Music Theatre in Prague, where his contemporary *Carmen* (score by Wildhorn & Murphy) ran for four years, and recently premiered as a 3D film. While playwright-in-residence at Signature Theatre, Allen premiered *Melville Slept Here*, *Nijinsky's Last Dance* (Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Play), and *In the Garden* (Charles MacArthur Award, Outstanding New Play), with subsequent productions across the United States and Europe. Current and upcoming projects include an adaptation of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, funded by a grant from the DC Commission on the Arts, and productions of *Carmen* in Japan and Korea. He was recently named a member of the Playwrights Arena development program at Arena Stage. In addition to his work for the theatre, Allen has provided essays and commentary for WAMU-FM (NPR), and for leading national publications, including *Smithsonian* and the *Washington Post*. Photo by Teresa Castracane.



Dominik Maican, Composer

Tudor Dominik Maican was born December 16, 1988 in Koln, Germany. At the age of 11 he was received at the Juilliard School of Music, Pre-College Division. There he studied composition with Dr. Andrew Thomas, Ira Taxin, and privately with Milton Babbitt, and piano with Olegna Fuschi. Mr. Maican received top honors at Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory's Competition for Young composers, Italy's Cultural Association's 7th Annual International Competition for solo instrument (piano), Vancouver, and Canada International Competition

for Choral Music to name only a few. He received the 2007 Presidential Scholar and has been received at the White House by President George W. Bush, he has been featured in the Washington Post newspaper and many other publications, NPR radio programs "From the Top", and "All Things Considered". The same year, NBC named Maican the Amazing Child of the Year. Maican was Composer in Residence at Dumbarton Concerts Society 2006-2011 and commissioned him for a major work every year. Most recently, he was commissioned by Musica Nova Ensemble of Contemporary Music from Paris, France to write a septet, which opened the 2011 International Music Festival in Bucharest, Romania. Also, he has been commissioned to write a trio for "From the Top", the very well-known music show on NPR.



Ingrid Zimmer, Associate Director of Word Dance Theater

Ingrid Zimmer received a B.A. in Dance/Theatre from Pomona College where she was trained in the Limon Technique. Upon graduating, she moved to Europe where she toured, performed and studied dance at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen, Germany under the artistic direction of Pina Bausch. Ms. Zimmer has been dancing professionally, teaching and choreographing in the Washington, DC,

area for the last 14 years. She has danced with local companies Bowen McCauley Dance, and Rincones and Company. Ms. Zimmer has performed in national and international venues including the Kennedy Center, Jacobs Pillow, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, France, and the Gran Festival Internacional de Danza Contemporanea in Monterey, Mexico. Ms. Zimmer is currently in the Certificate Program at the Isadora Duncan International Institute where she is learning Duncan's original choreography and pedagogical techniques.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT WORD DANCE THEATER

"some of the most clear, unadulterated, powerful dance I have ever seen."
– Meagan Bruskewicz, (Non-review) *The Hidden Language of the Soul*, 7/2012.

"Because of the unique and historically careful juxtaposition of these works, we not only experience these iconic artists with fresh ears and eyes, but the piece itself takes flight, rising to a level of expression that transcends time and space."
–William Schlitt, *Theatre Coordinator, Piccolo Spoleto 2011*, 9/2011

"the actress Maia DeSanti is powerful in her portrayal of the passionate and prolific [George] Sand... Carlos Cesar Rodriguez plays the preludes[sic] with great skill and sensitivity as three dancers (Cynthia Word, Ingrid Zimmer, and Jeanne Bresciani) perform Duncan's solo dances in a dreamlike way that gives another dimension to the story and illuminates the characters with joy, pain, loss, and soul stirring artistry... The music is a perfect stage for Duncan's dances that become a silent song of sheer expression. Kudos to the creators of this original and heartwrenching theatrical experience."
– Eliza Ingle, *Charleston Today*, 6/2011

"[Mary Hall's] compelling narrative succeeded in creating a dramatic context for the presentation of Isadora Duncan's sequence of dance pieces to Chopin's Preludes, together with the on-stage rendering of a musical collage of the 24 preludes, all woven together within the story of the tumultuous relationship of Chopin and George Sand during the composition of the Preludes. Quite a feat indeed! Themes focusing on the quest for creative expression and the seeking of the ideal - in art or love - made the evening's robust material rich and accessible for all. Magnifique! We look forward to further productions."
– Leslie Hyde, *Producer of the Amalfi Coast Music & Arts Festival*, 11/2010

"'Preludes' was at its very finest when it did seem like a seance – intense yet tenuous because its link to another world depended... on the concentration of performers possessed by the idea of being Duncan, Sand and Chopin ... The performers were professionals and once contact had been established did not loose touch."
– George Jackson, *Danceviewtimes, Lansburgh Theatre*, 11/2010

"'Preludes: Duncan, Sand & Chopin' is likely the Dance season's most historically significant event"
– Sarah Kaufman, *The Washington Post, Lansburgh Theatre*, 9/2010

"The dances, -- skips, hops and runs -- were at their best in the hands of Cynthia Word, artistic director. She delivered the steps with the natural, unstudied grace Duncan was known for. She shined in "Ave Maria," a solo set to the Schubert score.... For most of the dance, her feet remained planted and the only movements were slow tilts of the head and deliberate, unhurried lifts and drops of the arms. To take such spare, minimal movement and imbue it with emotional intensity is a major triumph"
– Sarah Halzack, *The Washington Post, Dance Place*, 6/2010

"The climax of the play arrives when Duncan shares the story of discovering that her two small children have died. Here Playdell and the dancers are at their best. Describing the pain of such loss... Tears spilled down faces in the audience as Jeanne Bresciani took the stage to dance *Mother Etude* followed by the even more powerful dance, *Ave Maria*... And if for those moments alone, the show is worth seeing — where, like the company's name, word and dance become theater."

-Kinsey Gidick, *Charleston City Paper, Piccolo Spoleto, 5/2010*

"equally as innovative" as modern dance's "firebrand, Isadora Duncan"
-Stephanie Kaye, *NPR Arts Beat, 3/2010*

"thanks for creating such a magical afternoon for my Youth Dance Ensemble girls last Friday... It was simply wonderful." *Helen Hayes, Joy of Motion, 2/2010*

"*Revolutionary! Isadora Duncan* is a wonder to behold. From the excellent narrator who tells of her captivating spell on the world, to the three nymph-like dancers who exemplify her style of simple naturalism in movement *Revolutionary!* Is as close to seeing Ms. Duncan on stage as you're going to get...Seeing work of this caliber...is the ultimate Fringe experience. Go, dance, fly."
-Debbie Jackson, *DC Theater Scene, 7/2009*

"A production filled with bohemian ardor; militant ecstasy; fervent; lissome and informative; earnestly rendered, embodying Duncan's iconoclasm."
-Celia Wren, *The Washington Post, 7/2008*

"Elegant; masterful gestures; thoughtfully measured delivery; vibrant; the accomplishment of ever-elusive ideals in movement, gesture and the human form"
-*The Washington City Paper, 7/2008*

"the dancers show us that Duncan dancing is an endpoint in itself; staunch "Revolutionary Etude" with its muscular attack; churning, roiling turmoil unleashed in "Flames of the Heart"; steadfast timelessness in "Ave Maria" poignant and profound."
- Lisa Traiger, *DanceViewTimes 7/2008*

"The Dances of Isadora Duncan" provided a rare treat for Washington audiences: the chance to see live the work of one of the founders of modern dance. The works, mostly solos, were brilliantly performed by three experienced and knowledgeable Duncan-style dancers -- Cynthia Word, Valerie Durham and Ingrid Zimmer."
- Barbara Allen, *Washington Post, May 2008*

"Ruth St. Denis's "The Incense" wafted into space as the image of a woman in motion amidst ascending spirals of smoke. Serenity, "spirituality" if you will, in this dance isn't at odds with sensuality. The woman's arms and hands caress a dense, luminous atmosphere. Her torso's length segments itself and does so with self knowledge. Cynthia Word used her physical attributes and artistry—she has height, sculpted bones, technical flexibility and insight into character, to become three beings simultaneously: everywoman, enactor of a ritual and the refined Miss Ruth (as St. Denis is familiarly known). What a powerfully subtle performance!"
- George Jackson, *Danceviewtimes Magazine, September 2006*

"Cynthia Word's, *Suite Sappho*, featuring Duncan-inspired dance as well as the Greek poet's word, effectively created an otherworldly ambiance...In Isadora Duncan's *Dances to Chopin*, Word exhibited clear character and impeccable musicality."
- Sarah Halzek, *The Washington Post 11/13/06*

States of Mind is a vibrant, spirited tribute to passion, ambition, hopes, and exuberance. It explores in words, movements, and images the vitality of being full of life and the pursuit of dreams."
- Robin Schneider, *Presenter, Gildenhorn-Speisman Center for the Arts, 2004*

FURTHER INFORMATION: For additional information , please contact Cynthia Word at 301.785.9970 or cynthia@WordDance.org.

WORD DANCE THEATER PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES

2013

Sophia Institute

Presented by Piccolo Spoleto 2013

Charleston, SC

An Evening with Isadora Duncan and Frederic Chopin: The 24 Preludes

May 28th **(SOLD OUT)**

Georgetown University/Gonda Theater

Washington, DC

Once Wild: Isadora in Russia

May 3-5

2012

The 92nd Street Y/Harkness Dance Center

New York, New York

On Isadora Duncan: The Living Legacy

December 9

Sidney Harman Hall, Velocity DC Dance Festival

Washington, DC

Preludes: Duncan and Chopin

October 18

Dance Place

Washington, DC

Part and Parcel, DanceEthos and Word Dance Theater

June 23-24

2011

International Visions Gallery

Washington, DC

Preludes: Duncan, Sand & Chopin

In conjunction with Claire McArdle Sculpture

October 15

St. Albans Church/ Arts at Mid Day Series

Washington, DC

Preludes: Duncan, Sand & Chopin

September 14

Charleston Ballet Theater

Presented by **Piccolo Spoleto 2011**

Charleston, SC

Preludes: Duncan, Sand & Chopin

June 7-10

The Atlas Performing Arts Center – Lang Theatre

In conjunction with **Intersections: A New America Arts Festival**

Washington, DC

Preludes: Duncan, Sand & Chopin

March 5, 6

2010

The Shakespeare Theatre's Harman Center for the Arts

Washington, DC

Preludes: Duncan, Sand & Chopin

November 4 (**SOLD OUT**)

The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, University of Maryland

Presented by the *Take Five Series*

College Park, MD

March 31 (**SOLD OUT**)

2009

The Mountain Theater

In conjunction with the Capital Fringe Festival (five performances)

Washington, DC

Revolutionary! Isadora Duncan

July 9, 10, 12, 15, and 25

Lance Hall

Presented by **Piccolo Spoleto 2009** (four performances)

Charleston, SC

Revolutionary! Isadora Duncan

June 1, 2 (2PM **SOLD OUT** and 8PM **SOLD OUT**), June 3 (2 PM **SOLD OUT** and 6PM), and June 4

Dance Place

Presented by Dance Place (Two performances)

Washington, D.C.

Revolutionary! Isadora Duncan

June 26-27

Isadora Duncan in Greece

Tour of Greece

In conjunction with the Isadora Duncan International Institute

May 15 thru 30

2008

Forum of the Shakespeare Theatre's Harman Center for the Arts

In conjunction with the Capital Fringe Festival (Six performances)

Washington DC

Revolutionary! Isadora Duncan

July 10, 12, 13, 20 (**SOLD OUT**), 24 (**SOLD OUT**), and 26 (**SOLD OUT**)

*****The best-selling event of the Festival***