

*Wilderness* is a site-adaptable dance installation presented and commissioned by Dance Theater Workshop (DTW) at two sites: a two-week run in Fall 2010 at the Brooklyn art center, The Invisible Dog, and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Desert Pavilion and Cherry Blossom Esplanade in Spring 2011. The Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media & Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) in Troy, NY will present the world premiere of the piece for their Filament 2010 festival, Oct 1- 3.

Castro has built a reputation for creating installations that specifically address the audience's relationship to performance. Michelle Vellucci of *Flavorwire*: "Castro specializes in work that feels more like a personal encounter than a performance, creating environments that don't allow audience members the option of viewing from a safe distance." *Wilderness* expands on these ideas by utilizing the audience's unconscious movement to generate the sound and dance scores.

The piece begins with the audience's entrance. They are directed to enter the performance space one by one. Irregularly spaced chairs isolate them throughout the environment, stationing them singly and asymmetrically throughout the space. Contact microphones attached to each chair collect noises resulting from the audience approaching, sitting and shifting. These sounds are translated into notes in standard musical notation by software programmed by composer and audio installation artist Stephan Moore. These notes are displayed in real-time to pianist Michael Dauphinais who sight-reads the score, spontaneously accompanying the dance with new music generated from the audience each evening. Simultaneously, the chair-sounds from the audience are electronically processed and transformed into an ambient sound-score that plays from speakers placed throughout the space. A relationship emerges, in both rhythm and pitch, between the overhead electronic score and the live pianist's performance.

The performance is composed of two sections. The first is a solo performed by an older dancer Peter Schmitz. He performs a series of physically daunting movement tasks in a small area demarcated by light within a field of black rubber mulch. The soloist's movement is constructed from several filmic moments including: Kurosawa's *Ikiru*, in which an old man sits alone on a swing on a snowy evening to pass away, Visconti's *Death in Venice*, in which Aschenbach dies on the beach watching the object of his desire, and Reygadas' *Japon*, in which a man instructs an elderly woman how to lay down so that they can have intercourse. The solo is an amalgam of these moments: a lone figure in a tundra landscape engaged in a Herculean effort to raise his body to a heightened awareness.

In the second section, the chairs are removed and the audience is free to engage the entire performance space. The experience of the piece changes from watching an isolated performer from a fixed distance in the first section to inhabiting the total space. The choreography for the second section is composed of four performers (Luke Miller, Pamela Vail, Darrin Wright, and Kimberly Young) whose entrances, exits, and phrasing are directly tied to audience behavior (when the audience stands or walks, their facial and hand gestures, etc.) and will, therefore, be different each night. The individual performances of the dancers are unique translations of the solo. While the solo is intimate, emotional and task-oriented, the movement of the group is larger and abstracted into technical movement. The second section is accompanied solely by the piano score captured from the audience in the first section but played in a "lyrical style" and unamplified so that the sound comes from a single

source and direction: the piano itself. The performance ends when the music is finished regardless of whether the dancers are still performing or if they finish in advance.

Roderick Murray will design the lights and environmental installation. The piece contemplates wilderness as a minimal and stark environment—a desert terrain, an empty field, the undisturbed surface of a lake: environments that bring activity into high relief. We are interested in bringing the audience and the performers into a shared attentiveness that is, because of the specificity of visual information and proximity to the action, acute.

*Wilderness* will have an alternate life as a video game. Castro has invited video game designer, Jason Rohrer, to create a game based on the rules/themes of *Wilderness*. Rohrer is known for creating elegantly simple games (downloadable on computers and smart phones) that engage players in an emotional encounter. For *Wilderness* Rohrer will be using a system he just built called *Sleep is Death (Geisterfabrer)*. It is a game generating system meant for two players, where one player is essentially creating the experience live for the other—putting on an interactive, improvisational, digital show. We would host game-playing sessions for people who have reservations to see the show. The idea is to provide an intimate setting to play the game (in their home) as their first introduction to the world of *Wilderness*. They would be playing with Jason remotely who would be orchestrating the “show” live based on their choices similar to how the dancers are responding live in performance to the cues from the audience.

Castro is also collaborating with photographer Kevin Kwan to create a photographic series of the work for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in which scenes inspired from the dance are staged as cinematic shots within the Garden. This series is being sponsored by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and will be displayed in their gallery prior to and concurrent with the performances.