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Touch



Photo © Paul Kolnik

Music Richard Peaslee

Choreography David Parsons

Premiere February 15, 1996

Original Cast Stacey Calvert, Michele Gifford, Monique Meunier, Teresa Reyes, Albert Evans, Tom Gold, Edwaard Liang, Damian Woetzel

Average Length 23 min.

David Parsons says that *Touch* is a dance that explores the changes that have occurred in people's relationships over the last two generations. A fast-paced, virtuosic piece for four women and four men, *Touch* contains single-sex and male/female duets, trios, and quartets, as well as solos and group dances. It is a ballet filled with innovative and intricate shapes and movements for the arms and feet, and turns and jumps executed at dizzying speeds. Says Mr. Parsons: "In classical technique there are stops: you step, prepare, turn. But I give dancers what I call squiggles – there are no stops in a squiggle. It's almost like someone taking a paintbrush and never letting it leave the paper." The women in *Touch* wear jazz slippers, not pointe shoes. David Parsons, born in Illinois and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, first studied dance with Cliff Kirwin and Paul Chambers. From 1978 to 1987, Mr. Parsons was a leading dancer with the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Paul Taylor created many roles for him, among them *Last Look*, *Roses*, and *Arden Court*. Companies with which he has made guest appearances include New York City Ballet (*Barber Violin Concerto*), the Berlin Opera, and the White Oak Dance Project. Mr. Parsons has created 24 works on The Parsons Dance Company since 1985. He has also choreographed works for the Paul Taylor Dance Company, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet Metropolitan, the National Ballet of Canada and Ballet Chicago, among others. Paris Opera Ballet, Feld Ballets/NY, the Netherlands Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance Company and Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal have also

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— Peter Martins

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performed his works. This is the first piece he has choreographed for New York City Ballet. Caught, Mr. Parsons' signature piece, was televised nationally on "Alive from Off Center." In 1988 and 1989, he received Choreography Fellowship Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Richard Peaslee (b. New York City 1930) is a veteran composer for dance and theater. His work includes scores for The Royal Shakespeare Company (Marat/Sade and A Midsummer Night's Dream) as well as a number of collaborations with choreographer/dancer Martha Clarke. In 1993 he collaborated with David Parsons on the choreographer's dramatic piece, Ring Around the Rosie, a dance inspired by the 14th-century plague. Mr. Peaslee, who has degrees from Yale and Juilliard, also studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. Touch is his first piece to be performed by New York City Ballet.

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