



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CORNISH COLLEGE DANCE DEPARTMENT AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS NCCI GRANT
Cornish Students to Restage Martha Graham's *Diversion of Angels***

SEATTLE, WA –The Cornish College Dance Department has been awarded a generous grant from the National College Choreography Initiative to restage Martha Graham's *Diversion of Angels*, with performances scheduled for November 2005. This event will celebrate the 75th anniversary of Martha Graham's first performance at Cornish in 1930.

This historic project is made possible by an \$8,000 award from the National College Choreography Initiative (NCCI), a Leadership Initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, administered by Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional dance. Cornish College of the Arts was one of 35 award winners in 34 cities across the country.

Martha Graham was a brilliant and influential pioneer of modern dance. The Martha Graham Dance Company, founded in 1926, still tours internationally. In 1930, Martha Graham performed a solo concert and taught a summer workshop at Cornish, introducing Seattle to her modern dance technique. The Graham tradition has been kept alive at Cornish in Graham-based technique classes taught by faculty member Pat Hon, a protégé of Mary Hinkson (principal dancer with the Martha Graham Company from 1951-1973).

Diversion of Angels is one of Graham's signature masterworks, and will be staged during a four-week residency that includes master classes and community outreach activities. Cornish College's Dance Department is one of the first undergraduate performing groups in the country approved to restage this work by the Martha Graham Dance Resources. The importance of *Diversion of Angels* to Graham's artistic legacy as well as the technical challenges it presents for the dancers make this an ideal piece to perform. *Diversion of Angels* will be performed by Cornish Dance Theater (CDT), the Dance Department's performing ensemble, November 18-20, 2005.

The centerpiece of the community activities will be a *Day of Dance* for high school age Seattle dancers. In partnership with Seattle Theater Group's Education Outreach Program, the Cornish College Dance Department will present a lecture-demonstration and master classes for the culturally-diverse youth dance companies involved in STG's program *Dance This!* Through *Day of Dance*, youth dancers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including Cambodian, African, Hip-Hop and South Asian, will be introduced to the history of American modern dance.

"Learning a Graham masterwork will challenge students to develop new performance skills, provide a professional artistic context for their studio education, and create a personal connection to their artistic heritage," says Dance Department Chair Kitty Daniels. "In addition, training and rehearsing with a professional artist intimately acquainted with the challenges and rewards of a dance career will give students an appreciation for the realities of their chosen profession."

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From 1915 to the present, the Cornish Dance Department has influenced the direction of American dance, both regionally and nationally. The department's holistic approach and broad professional preparation have earned its reputation as a center of innovative dance education. In addition to Martha Graham, other early faculty include Mary Ann Wells (teacher of Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino), and Bonnie Bird (a Cornish graduate). Illustrious alumni include Merce Cunningham, who met and formed his life-long partnership with composer John Cage while a Cornish student, as well as Syvilla Fort, Remy Charlip and William Whitener. Contemporary Cornish alumni making their mark on the international dance field include performers Holley Farmer (Merce Cunningham Dance Company, recipient of a 2004 "Bessie" for sustained achievement) and Katrina Thompson (Trisha Brown Dance Company).

Images available upon request.

ABOUT CORNISH COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Cornish College of the Arts is the premier, accredited arts college in the Northwest, inspiring the highest standards of artistic and academic excellence. Founded in 1914 by Nellie Cornish, Cornish College is the only private, accredited college in the region offering baccalaureate degrees in visual and performing arts. Cornish College offers a Bachelor of Music and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in art, dance, design, theater and performance production. Cornish College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

Over the years, Cornish has hosted a parade of important artists in the roles of students, teachers or as visiting artists-in-residence, including John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Ping Chong, Kenny Werner, Obo Addy, Mark Morris, Meredith Monk, Rinde Eckert, Bebe Miller, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Robin Holcomb, Chet Huntley, Syvilla Fort, Ralph Towner, Thornton Wilder, Lou Harrison, Bill Frisell, Morris Graves, Jane Ira Bloom, Kraig Patterson, Musicians Accord, Bun Ching Lam, Brendan Fraser, Myra Melford, Sharon Isbin, Joanne Brackeen, Oliver Lake, California Ear Unit, Colorado Quartet, and Gary Peacock, among others.

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