



## **Press Statement, July 6, 2010**

With eight days to go before imminent eviction from our Lower Manhattan home, Dance New Amsterdam (DNA) informs the public that we are fighting to keep our doors open, continuing our 26 year history of shaping the contemporary global dancer and being the launching pad for today's artistic voice.

As part of the citywide plan to revitalize post 9/11 Lower Manhattan, DNA was encouraged by the city to move into the city-owned Sun Building at 280 Broadway. Between 2004 and 2007 over \$4 million of taxpayer money was committed by multiple agencies to complete our renovation of 25,000 square feet of raw space into the existing state-of-the-art dance center. DNA includes six studios, a 130-seat theater, two art galleries and artist administrative space. Of the \$4 million, the city rescinded \$737,000 in 2009, leaving our lobby unfinished and needed equipment unpurchased.

In 2008, DNA's Board recruited current Executive Director Catherine Peila to restructure the organization due to deep financial troubles. Under Peila's direction DNA has responsibly reduced expenses from \$3.6 million to \$2.9 million, increased income by 41%, and cut our deficit by 60%. New and diversified programs and partnerships have been developed, making DNA one of the most vibrant cultural dance hubs in NYC. However, despite the successful efforts to stabilize the organization financially, DNA is unable to sustain the current commercial lease agreement with Fram Realty of \$68,945 monthly rent (rising 3% yearly) and includes a monthly \$33,050 city tax pass-through payment to Fram Realty.

We conducted a thorough examination of the original 2004 lease with city agencies, DNA's legal teams and supportive elected officials. There are questions regarding the legality of public policy issues connected to the lease that need to be addressed and corrected. We and our advocates have worked tirelessly over the past two years requesting re-negotiation of the original untenable lease agreements, including requesting DNA receive non-profit tax abatement under real estate property law 420a. After various appeals to landlord Fram Realty, building owner Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), there has been no consensus for resolution. As a result, Fram Realty is taking us to landlord tenant court on July 14, 2010, suing for possession of premises for rent arrears of over half a million dollars.

We are seeking a solution enabling us to maintain our mission to teach dancers to dance,

commission choreographers to create, and present dance performances to the public. We've requested lower rent to match current market rates and non-profit tax abatement. Unless there is immediate consensus between DNA, city agencies and Fram Realty, our legal teams will have to proceed accordingly.

DNA provides jobs for over 250 teachers, choreographers, technicians, visual artists and musicians as well as 18 full-time staff. Our dance education programs, performances and rehearsals are estimated to reach more than 8,000 students and in total 32,000 individuals each year, resulting in an economic benefit of at least \$750,000 to local businesses. The loss of our cultural institution will have great impact on Lower Manhattan's community, not to mention the loss of a home to thousands of global dancers and artists.

Institutions like DNA make New York—and more specifically, Lower Manhattan—unique. They take years to build, but only hours to destroy. We encourage dancers, cultural advocates and the community to stand together with our team of lawyers from Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP; Paul Weiss; and Seyfarth Shaw as well as elected officials State Senator Daniel Squadron, City Council Member Margaret Chin, Assembly Member Deborah Glick, Community Board 1 and others to keep DNA Alive.

Press Contact:  
Amber Henrie  
(917) 270-0550  
amber@inthelights.net

## **FAST FACTS**

- 26 year-old Dance New Amsterdam, originally Dance Space Center, was founded in 1984 by five choreographers committed to creating a diverse and open space for dance
- DNA's education and performance programs serve local, national and international artists
- DNA's 130 seat theater has showcased over 380 DNA performances and an additional 200 dance performance rentals
- DNA has a unique business model with earned revenue of \$1,925,000 and raises half a million dollars in contributions annually
- DNA is open 360 days a year, offers 120 classes weekly and has more than 8,000 enrolled students yearly
- DNA currently serves over 32,000 people on-site and continues to grow exponentially each year
- In addition to providing jobs to 250 people, DNA also funds project and commission work

that adds more than 400 ancillary artists and technical jobs yearly

- DNA's payroll is \$1,508,000 and contributes a government employee tax of \$281,658
- Emphasizing the development of the complete dancer from studio-to-stage and beyond, DNA offers over 20 specialized programs, providing access to today's most influential artists, disciplines, dance styles and administration/business training
- DNA's education program honors the complete dancer championing principles of injury prevention and conscious body awareness
- DNA offers a diverse range of professional styles from ballet, contemporary and modern mixes to Native American, Urban and new African dance, as well as unique international styles
- DNA has created a platform for some of the most revolutionary dance artists to showcase their work, including Sean Curran, David Dorfman, Alex Beller, Monica Bill Barnes, Wally Cardona, Nora Chipaumire, Robert Battle, Bill Shannon, Stephen Petronio, Kate Weare, Jonah Bokare, Jorge "Fabel" Pabon, Ronald K. Brown, Mark Morris and Urban Bush Women
- DNA opens its space to the local community for meetings and gatherings at a subsidized rate and often for free