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American Dance Festival

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American Dance Festival

The internationally renowned American Dance Festival's 77th season through Saturday, July 24, in Durham features collaborations with *Driving Miss Daisy* writer Alfred Uhry and new works marking choreographer Paul Taylor's 80th birthday and the 10th anniversary of Shen Wei Dance Arts. Performances take place at Reynolds Industries Theater at Duke University and at the downtown Durham Performing Arts Center. The season also includes children's matinees, community residencies and public lectures, all addressing the question *What is dance theater?*

"We want members of the public to have the experience of a live performance, of sitting in a theater with lots of other people enjoying something that is different every single time it's performed," says Jodee Nimerichter, co-director, American Dance Festival. "This extraordinary art form, and all of the theatrics that come with it, is hopefully going to rivet somebody and give them a feeling they've never felt before."

Nimerichter describes herself as a serious dance student in her younger days. "I've had a love affair with dance since I was very, very little," she says. "But although I loved to dance, there was an extraordinary spiritual experience beyond doing it, and that was being in the theater and seeing it."

The 2010 season opens Thursday, June 10, with performances by Durham's African American Dance Ensemble, founded at the American Dance Festival in 1984. Eiko & Koma will present a retrospective of their work covering more than 30 years, along with a lobby exhibition of their costumes and sets Monday, June 28, through Wednesday, June 30. Martha Clarke, 2010 Scripps/ADF Award recipient, will premiere a commissioned work inspired by the life of Ann Lee, founder of the Shakers movement, in collaboration with Pulitzer, Tony and Academy Award-winning writer Alfred Uhry Monday, July 5, through Wednesday, July 7.

Rosie Herrera's Miami-based company returns this year with *Various Stages of Drowning* Monday, July 12, through Wednesday, July 14, which will include a new section for American Dance Festival students, as well as a newly commissioned work entitled *Pity Party*. "For me and for my dancers, this has been a very difficult year — we've had a lot of personal loss and grieving" Herrera says. "*Pity Party* is an investigation of grieving using the context of parties and celebrations."

While in Durham, Herrera will teach four one-hour adult movement classes at El Centro Hispano, conducting an open rehearsal in Spanish, and may even include community members in some of her stage performances. "I never underestimate someone's potential to give me something really beautiful, whether they're classically trained modern dancers or have never seen it in their lives," she says. "By educating people, by making the work accessible, by literally being in physical contact with them, you build lifelong lovers of dance."

"We're really thrilled that she's going to be reaching out to the Latino community that is really blossoming and growing in Durham, introducing its members to modern dance and embracing a community of which she's a part." Nimerichter says.

Throughout the season, the American Dance Festival Web site features a daily online video blog, *May we have this CyberDance?*, presenting daily coverage of classes, rehearsals and performances, along with interviews with artists, students and community members. It also includes information on ticket discounts and Kids Night Out, which provides free admission to children accompanied by an adult or caregiver. For more information, visit [their website](#) or call (919) 668-2233.

Visit the daily ADF blog [here](#).

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