



Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble celebrates 15 innovative years in Hartford with a groundbreaking première

**Opening Night:
Thursday,
Oct 14**

**Gallery Opening at 6.00 PM
Performance at 8.00 PM**

PERFORMANCES:

Friday & Saturday, Oct 15 & 16 at 8.00 PM

Call (860) 527-9800 for information

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BEST KEPT SECRETS

By Jill Henderson

“Secrets” is the newest collaborative project from one of Hartford’s best kept.



Judy Dworin is an unusual phenomenon in the world of dance. She is fiercely committed to her craft and to the belief that her particular form of dance theater, and her Ensemble, should make a difference—addressing important issues in all of our lives through performance. Her themes are social and political with a spirit of collaboration that exists not

only in the content of her work, but also in the way in which she has worked with her company over the last fifteen years. She investigates a pared-down, expressive movement vocabulary that is carefully integrated with visual elements, sound and often text. The work is not easy to pigeon hole—no matter how hard funders, publicists and critics try. It crosses not only cultural boundaries but also the boundaries between arts disciplines. Dancers, actors and musicians are used in untraditional ways, allowing dancers to speak, musicians to move, and visual artists to bring more to the project than their usual supportive role in the theater.

Past collaborations include *¿dónde estás?* (where are you?) a piece that movingly portrays the Mothers of the Detained and Disappeared in Chile and Argentina in the 70’s and 80’s; *The*



Glorious Knot, a piece speaking to the plight of Tibet and the need for peace and compassion in our world, and Starting Over addressing the post 9/11 world of violence and terrorism.

Dworin's craft goes directly to the heart of the matter; in fact, it is the heart of these issues that she feels performance can reach, allowing audience members to feel the issues and process them both emotionally and intellectually. Judy Dworin believes that people change when their direct experience has been touched and altered. This is what drives her to give voice to voices that have not been heard and to stories that have not been told.

She seeks her inspiration from direct interaction with those who have been affected by the issues and circumstances she researches. For *¿dónde estás?*, Judy Dworin traveled to Chile and Argentina to interview the Mothers and brought back with her their recorded voices and their defiant spirit which further fired her vision for the new dance theater piece. She created *¿dónde estás?* in collaboration with her Ensemble, members of the local Chilean and Argentine community, and internationally renowned Chilean poet, Marjorie Agosin.

As the 15th Anniversary year nears its conclusion, the Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble will be premiering *Secrets* at Charter Oak Cultural Center. With a cast of 10 performers, it is a dance/theater/video production that delves into the secrets of our twentieth century past and how they unfold and resonate with the secrets that lie hidden today. Part I of *Secrets*, *Hometown Hits*,

explores personal stories of gender and identity that are placed in the larger maze of secrets surrounding us culturally and globally in our present moment. Part 2 of *Secrets*, *Hot Licks: The Story of the Radium Girls*, explores the historical, focussing on the story of the Radium Girls of turn of the 20th Century America and how their story resonates with our present radioactive reality. Dworin is researching the untold stories of these women and is seeking out the surviving family members to interview.

Hometown Hits features NYC performance artist, Michael Burke, and traditional Kathak dancer, Rachna Agrawal who focus on the societal cost of revealing personal secrets. In Michael's story he returns home to his rural Idaho town after ten years, to perform a piece exploring his identity as a gay man. Rachna's story concerns her having to leave home in her small and conservative hometown of Bihar, India after her neighbors discover that she is studying Kathak, a traditional dance form that became associated with prostitution under British rule. Michael's return and Rachna's departure from home highlight the fertile ground in which societal biases take root and exposes the cultural cost of revealing and owning one's own identity.

zHotlicks: The Story of the Radium Girls opens with Marie Curie, the scientist, (played by NYC actress, Alicia Fitzgerald) who, with her husband Pierre, discovered radium—a discovery that changed the course of contemporary life. It is an older Marie Curie that we meet; her health is failing; but she is tenacious both in her desire to continue to work and in her refusal to see some of its deadly consequences.

Juxtaposed with Marie Curie's story is the story of the Radium Girls. It is 1910—1930's America and radium has been deemed a miracle cure for all ills. The Radium Girls, clock factory workers from Waterbury, CT, Orange, NJ and Ottawa, Ill., appear making dials that glow in the dark, radium dials, the new one—dollar watches. The radium is applied with tiny brushes that these 19 and 20 year old girls just becoming women are instructed to point with their lips as a technique for faster production. Each dial has a kiss of those lips—those lips that now

begin to glow in the dark with a cancerous aura. From their factory stools they perform dances of work and innocence with gestures and hot licks that will ultimately result in their deaths.

Who could have known? The clock factory Papa, (played by actor, Sean Maloney), shoulders no blame, no responsibility as the Radium Girls become quiet before death accepting minuscule settlements for their poor families. Five women in New Jersey speak out and go to court. They are represented by Katherine Schaub (played by Kathy Borteck Gersten) who becomes a voice of truth and hope amidst the lies and deception surrounding the radium girls plight.

And so once again, Judy Dworin is digging deep to create work rooted in the stuff of our lives. From Idaho to Bihar, from the Mothers Movements in Chile and Argentina to the Radium Girls in Waterbury, New Jersey, and Illinois, the work of the Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble brings you an immediate experience of these courageous figures—transformed into compelling dance theater.

Secrets will premiere At Charter Oak Cultural Center, 21 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford with a companion exhibition In the gallery, *The Secrets in our Lives: Artists Revealed*, featuring works by NY artist, Linda Moses; NY photographer, Richard Moses; CT artist, Jill Henderson Pasanen; and a series of works, *The Radium Girls*, by CT artist, Maureen MacElhone. **FX**

photos by Ron Compton, Deborah Goffe & Lisa Pleskow Kassow

