

DANCE LEGEND STEVE PAXTON TO TEACH WORKSHOP WITH LOW-INCOME YOUTH AT THE WOODEN FLOOR

SANTA ANA, Calif. (February 28, 2012) – **Steve Paxton**, one of the most important living figures in dance, will teach a two-week workshop entitled *Material for the Spine* with students of **The Wooden Floor**, a leading edge arts-based youth development nonprofit in Southern California dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty in low-income children. Paxton, the father of **Contact Improvisation**, a form of dance that explores the relationship between the body and momentum, gravity, and friction, has made an influence on choreography globally.

Students at The Wooden Floor eagerly await the arrival of Paxton and his workshop, which runs March 12-24. “With *Material for the Spine*, I am interested in alloying a technical approach to the processes of improvisation,” states Paxton. “It is a system for exploring interior and exterior muscles of the back. It aims to bring consciousness to the dark side of the body, that is the ‘other’ side, or the inside, those sides not much self-seen, and to submit sensations from them to the mind for consideration.”

His arrival at The Wooden Floor underscores the organization’s forward-thinking artistic vision to use dance as a means of positive transformation for the 375 low-income youth it serves annually. “Dance is at the center of everything we do,” affirms **Melanie Ríos Glaser**, Artistic Director for The Wooden Floor. “It is our goal to bring choreographers who are shaping the world of contemporary dance into an intense art-making process with the young dancers in our programs.” The under-served youth at The Wooden Floor work in collaboration with top of their field artists to produce work that breaks down stereotypes of who can create, perform, and contribute to the genre of contemporary dance - a process that promotes the development of skills necessary to become leaders in society, such as problem solving, collaboration, and creative thinking. As a result of this process, students at The Wooden Floor are three times more likely to graduate high school on time and enroll in college than their peers.

The Wooden Floor’s success has been a magnet for master classes and workshops with other artistic visionaries such as the **Merce Cunningham Dance Company**, **José Limón Dance Company**, **Elizabeth Streb’s STREB**, **Sally Silvers**, **Susan Rethorst**, and **Mark Haim**, as well as invitations to perform at such creative strongholds like **REDCAT at Walt Disney Concert Hall** in Los Angeles. Each summer, new work made in collaboration with leading contemporary dance choreographers is showcased by the organization’s young dancers at the Irvine Barclay Theatre. This year’s performance, **Tuned In**, runs May 31-June 2.

About Steve Paxton

Steve Paxton has researched the fiction of cultured dance and the 'truth' of improvisation for 40 years. He lives on a farm, and he has received grants from Change, Inc., the Foundation for Performance Arts, John D. Rockefeller Fund, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has been awarded two NY Bessie Awards, and is a contributing editor to Contact Quarterly Dance Journal. He was one of the founders of the Judson Dance Theater, Grand Union, Contact Improvisation, Touchdown Dance for the visually disabled (UK), and began his career studying modern dance techniques, ballet, Aikido, Tai Chi Chuan, and Vipassana meditation. He performed with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company from 1961-65. He lectures, performs, choreographs, and teaches primarily in the USA and Europe. In 2008, he and Lisa Nelson performed 'Night Stand' in Spain, and he published a DVD with ContreDanse in Brussels. In 2009 he re-choreographed 'Ave Nue' (1985) in Amsterdam, and toured Japan, including 'Night Stand' in Tokyo. With Contredanse of Brussels, he, Florence Corin, and Baptiste Andrien have developed the Phantom Exhibition, a multi-image room of meditations on *Material for the Spine* currently featured in the Super Bodies Triennale in Hasselt, Belgium.

About The Wooden Floor

The Wooden Floor is a 29-year-old nonprofit organization in Santa Ana that annually gives 375 low-income youth the tools to live fuller, healthier lives through a unique approach grounded in dance. Dance education and performance are the core transformational elements through which youth change the way they think about themselves and aspire beyond the grip of the poverty cycle. In the dance studio, rigorous training, creativity, and self-knowledge lead to confidence, leadership, teamwork, well-being, and joy. Academic programs, pre-collegiate mentoring, and college scholarships ensure that students succeed in school and are college-ready. **Since 2005, 100 percent of graduates from The Wooden Floor have enrolled in college, exceeding the national average for their socioeconomic peers by threefold.** Family Services at The Wooden Floor, including counseling, crisis intervention, and social service referrals, help families overcome hardships and navigate challenges. Community support enables these year-round programs to be offered free of charge. Bringing about generational change to break the cycle of poverty in our community is the long-term goal of The Wooden Floor. www.TheWoodenFloor.org

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To schedule interviews with Steve Paxton or The Wooden Floor’s Artistic Director Melanie Ríos Glaser,

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