

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Dance COLEctive presents *WRITTEN ON THE BODY*
Selected Works by Southern Danceworks
March 29 & 30 at the Harrison Theatre**

BIRMINGHAM – Chicago-based The Dance COLEctive (TDC) joins forces with Birmingham-based Southern Danceworks (SDW) in a collaborative concert on March 29 – 30 at Samford University’s Harrison Theatre. Through the joint venture with SDW’s Artistic Director Teri Weksler, TDC’s Artistic Director Margi Cole is able to bring her full company to perform for the first time in Birmingham as part of a southeastern tour that includes Talladega, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa. Southern Danceworks plays host to TDC’s five-day residency in Birmingham beginning on March 26 that includes master classes, workshops, collaborations with educational institutions, and performances. The visit culminates with the performance featuring Margi Cole’s seminal work *Written on the Body*, two other TDC pieces, and selected repertory by Southern Danceworks at Samford University’s Harrison Theatre on Saturday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 30 at 2:30 p.m.

Throughout the Birmingham residency, The Dance COLEctive will focus activities on *Written on the Body*, a work that uses the lives of the Brontë sisters as a point of departure in its exploration of gender roles and stereotypes. The hidden identities of authors Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë, as well as the hardships they endured throughout their lives in Victorian England, provide the framework. Cole interprets the Brontës’ masculine and feminine personas, using images of power, strength, vulnerability, and intimacy, exploring how each attribute can be related through movement.

“A pseudonym represents a way of disguising one’s identity to remain invisible,” Cole explains. “It is also a way to represent yourself as something other than what you are in order to be accepted. During the 19th century, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë’s pseudonyms—Ellis, Currer, and Acton Bell—allowed the three sisters to conceal their identities under masculine persona. The work is titled *Written on the Body* because our bodies are where our truest histories are written.”

TDC has developed a number of activities that will provide an opportunity for the company to work in community-based settings. Miss Cole made connections with local organizations to fashion a visit that will benefit her dancers as well as bring innovative dance experiences to participants and audiences. Besides Southern Danceworks, other partners include Samford University, Children's Dance Foundation, and the Alabama Ballet. Scheduled activities include workshops and master classes, the two joint performances at the Harrison Theatre, and post show discussions following each performance.

Margi Cole is a familiar face in the Alabama dance community. A graduate of the Alabama School of Fine Arts, she has been a guest artist with the Alabama Ballet, choreographing for the company, and teaching modern dance as part of their summer intensive. A consummate teacher, dancer, and choreographer, she uses her company to continuously challenge assumptions about dance - who dances; what they dance; where, how and when dance takes place; and why dance happens. "The Birmingham residency is important to my company and my work on a number of levels," says Miss Cole. "While individual company members have worked with area organizations in the past, this is the first time the full company will perform in this part of Alabama."

The Dance COLEctive presents *Written on the Body* Saturday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 30 at 2:30 p.m. at the Harrison Theatre, 800 Lakeshore Drive. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for seniors, and \$10 for students. Tickets are on sale now through the Samford University web site <http://www.samfordartstickets.com>. They can also be purchased at the door.

The Birmingham visit is part of a three-week tour of Alabama. Other tour locations include Talladega, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa. The tour is made possible by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts, Southern Arts Federation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information, please call Southern Danceworks at 205.602.3599 or the Harrison Theatre at 205.726.2853 or visit their web sites, www.southerndanceworks.com, www.samfordartstickets.com, or www.dancecollective.com.

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