

José Limón Dance Foundation, Inc.

THE MISSA BREVIS PROJECT

José Limón – Missa Brevis

Premiere April 11, 1958

Music by Zoltán Kodály – “Missa Brevis in Tempore Belli”*

*written for mixed chorus and organ.

Zoltán Kodály, the Hungarian composer, wrote “Missa Brevis in Tempore Belli” at the end of World War II. It was completed under great hardship during the siege of Budapest. It is a Mass in time of war. Though Kodály’s home was devastated, his manuscripts were later recovered intact and the music’s first performance was given in the cellar of a bombed-out church in Budapest. José Limón’s stirring choreography depicts an indomitable humanity rising up after near-destruction. It is a memento to cities destroyed during World War II and to those unconquerable qualities in human beings that compel the spirit to rise in hope and to survive.

The major revival of José Limón’s master work, *Missa Brevis*, requires a cast of 22 dancers and the Limón Dance Company presently has 13 dancers. For our upcoming 65th Anniversary Celebration in 2011 this piece will be performed as a partnership between the Limón Dance Company and the communities where they tour. Company members and/or master Limón teachers would go ahead of the tour to teach a *Missa Brevis* Workshop for a minimum of three weeks (40-60 hours) to a select number of professional/advanced dancers in the community or schools. This workshop would provide an in-depth learning experience of the piece, its message, and Limón’s technique and movement philosophy. The dancers from this workshop would then augment the Company for their performances after an additional week of rehearsals with the Limón Company.

During the preliminary workshop and/or Company residency, public outreach activities will be planned which involve people in and outside of the dance community. These activities could include lectures on *Missa Brevis* or the life of José Limón, lecture-demonstrations, film screenings, master classes and day long workshop, with the aim to reach as many people as possible.

This unique and powerful work set to music by Kodály for full choir and organ and Limón would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with local choirs to perform the music live, providing its own conductor if needed. *Missa Brevis* also lends itself to be performed in churches, cathedrals, and other alternate spaces. Performances of *Missa Brevis* would be a true collaboration between the Limón Dance Company and the local community exposing Limón’s work and modern dance to a new and broader audience.

“It has been a long time since the modern dance has produced a work so profoundly stirring, and so exalting as José Limón’s *Missa Brevis*.”

DANCE MAGAZINE, June 1958, Lillian Moore

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Where *Missa Brevis* Projects have been performed:

March, 2006

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY
In collaboration with CALArts, Los Angeles and local professional dancers.

June, 2006

SKIDMORE COLLEGE, Saratoga Springs, NY
Commemorating 22 years of long-term residencies sponsored by NYSCA

October, 2006

EMORY UNIVERSITY, Atlanta, GA
Emory Arts – Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts

September, 2006

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, College Park, MD
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center – with Live Music

February, 2007

NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, Winston Salem, NC

May, 2007

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS
Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts – Jackson Hall

October, 2007

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY, Nashville, TN
Great Performances at Vanderbilt

March, 2009

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, Minneapolis MN
Northrup Auditorium – with live music