



## *News Release*

For Immediate Release

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# **Portland Dances on the World Scene**

## *Water Issues Clearly Front and Center*

**Portland, OR** — At 5 p.m. on Saturday, June 25, the Cathedral Park riverfront under the St. Johns Bridge will be the site for Portland’s Global Water Dance. As 5 o’clock moves through time zones from Australia to Hawaii, 55 communities will dance together over a 24-hour period to draw attention to the global need to safeguard clean water supplies and protect waterways for the benefit of all.

Portland’s Global Water Dance is being produced by three choreographers — Kirsten Peterson, Tamara Gilbert, and Beverly Burke — and is supported by the Portland Office of Healthy Working Rivers. The hour-long community dance is free and open to the public. A group of dancers will perform a water story, with pre-recorded music as the common thread linking it to all other Global Water Dances. Group improvisation will be used so that all people, including those with no prior dance experience, can join in a group water dance. The opening ceremony will give voice to local water issues and celebrate the ways that water has contributed to Portland’s vitality. The dance closes with simple unison movements that everyone throughout the world will do as an artistic expression of human connections to water.

“Portland’s Global Water Dance is a way to celebrate and reconnect — physically, mentally, and spiritually — with our streams and rivers,” says Ann Beier, Director of the City of Portland Office of Healthy Working Rivers. “This event reminds us of the importance of clean water to all of life,” she adds.

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Anyone interested in joining Portland's Global Water Dance should meet at Cathedral Park, under St. Johns Bridge by the intersection of N. Baltimore and N. Bradford Streets by 4:45 p.m. For further information, contact Bev Burke at (503) 636-4203.

Portland's Global Water Dance is the final event in celebration of Creative Dance Week, June 19 – 25, as proclaimed by Mayor Sam Adams. Portland hosts the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Creative Dance Congress of the International Association for Creative Dance from June 19 to 24. Another free, open community creative dance will be held on Thursday, June 23 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Peninsula Park Rose Garden, 699 N Ainsworth St, Portland. For further information about the Peninsula Park dance, contact Yael Schweitzer at (971) 404-8249.

**Background:** Global Water Dances evolved from the marriage of art and activism. In 2008, Marylee Hardenbergh, artistic director for Global Water Dances, visited England to attend the Dance and the Environment Conference. A colleague shared the film of Hardenbergh's site specific dance that she choreographed for seven Mississippi River locations to perform simultaneously. According to Hardenbergh, as people connected through the color and rhythms of the dance, they drew attention to the river and its water quality issues. After seeing *One River Mississippi*, others at the conference became inspired to use community dance as a vehicle to build awareness of environmental issues. The planning team arising from the conference chose water as the theme for a worldwide dance.

Says Hardenbergh, "There's a strong desire in people's hearts to use dance in a way that has global connection, deep meaning, and intention. There's hunger in the performing world to sink our teeth into something. That's why dancers participating in the Global Water Dances project are so excited. It's a way of connecting to people on six continents about water, the element that supports all life on earth."

For more information about Global Water Dances, visit [www.globalwaterdances.org](http://www.globalwaterdances.org).

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