

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Mocean Dance announces appointment of Sara Coffin as Interim Artistic Director**

**August 4, 2011 - Halifax, NS** - Mocean Dance is delighted to announce that Vancouver-based dance artist Sara Coffin will be taking on the role of Interim Artistic Director for the 2011/2012 season. A Halifax native, Coffin will venture home from the west coast to relieve the company's Artistic Director, Carolle Crooks Fernando, for her upcoming maternity leave.

"Sara is bringing home a wealth of knowledge and experience; she's been creating and producing her own work, performing, teaching, and working with many great mentors," says Crooks Fernando. "She'll be an asset to Mocean and to the entire dance community this Season, and we're ecstatic to have her here."

One of Mocean's core goals is to contribute to the growth of Halifax as a centre for dance creation, performance, innovation and development. "Bringing a Halifax-native artist back to the community serves this purpose well," says Crooks Fernando. "Part of what we're aiming to do is provide opportunities for local artists to create and perform here."

Coffin grew up in Sackville, Nova Scotia, receiving her pre-professional training in the ITP Program at Halifax Dance where she danced with Mocean Dance founders Crooks Fernando, Alicia Orr MacDonald, Sara Harrigan, Lisa Phinney Langley and Sarah Rozee in the Young Company. Her early training began with Linda Jess at (CaDance) and the Sackville Sports Stadium. Coffin has spent the past eleven years creating, teaching and studying in Vancouver, where she completed her BFA in dance at Simon Fraser University School for the Contemporary Arts (2003), and holds important roles in the arts community such as sitting on the Dance Centre's Artistic Advisory Board and teaching and programming for the dance department at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts. Sara also holds a Kinesiology degree from Dalhousie University.

"Mocean has created a wonderful working model for growing the dance scene here in Halifax, so I am thrilled to take this opportunity to expand my own artistic base while giving back to my place of beginnings," explains Coffin. "It is with great pleasure and excitement that I work with the company as Interim Artistic Director to further build upon the company's driving force and offer a new perspective to the momentum already in motion. This is an exciting time for the Atlantic dance scene and the beginning of many more prosperous networks. I feel that the Atlantic region may very well be at the crest of another wave, with the expansion of many more collaborative approaches and fluid exchanges, so I am delighted to add to this growing tidal force and be a part of the growing arts and culture as a whole in Nova Scotia."

Coffin has always maintained strong connections to the East Coast dance community. She is a co-founder of SiNS (Sometimes in Nova Scotia) Dance, a collective that collaborates and has performed coast to coast with Halifax dance artists Jacinte Armstrong and Susanne Chui since 2005. An accomplished dance teacher, she has also been a faculty member of DANS Summer Dance since 2006. Knowing Sara's History, Crooks Fernando immediately felt she would be a perfect fit for the interim position.

One of Coffin's first tasks will be to oversee the creation and production of Mocean's new work with Canadian contemporary dance icon, Tedd Robinson. The company will travel to Robinson's own creation and performance facility, the B.A.R.N., in Litchfield Quebec, this September for the first of three working periods. "Working with Tedd is a nice through-line for the company's repertory development," says Coffin. "It will be fantastic to work closely with such a master creator. Tedd's work is rich with imagery and he really brings sensitivity to the awareness of time, space, and character. For me, dance is at its finest when the compression (and expansion) of time and space is really worked, while the fragility and vulnerability of the human form is questioned. There is no doubt Tedd's work will bring this viewpoint to the physical realm."

Mocean's new work by Robinson will take to the stage as part of Live Art Dance Productions new season, January 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 at the Sir James Dunn Theatre, 8pm.

**For more information, interview requests or high resolution photos, contact:**

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## **Sara Coffin – Bio**

Originally from Nova Scotia, **Sara Coffin** is a Vancouver based dance artist. Inspired by the lush resources found in the landscape, the dialogue and rooted impulses, Sara has been creating, teaching and inquiring within the west coast community for the past eleven years. She completed her BFA in dance at Simon Fraser University School for the Contemporary Arts, and her Kinesiology degree (BSc K) from Dalhousie University. Sara was the recipient of the Iris Garland Emerging Choreographer Award (2009), the Santa Aloi Award (2010) and the BC Emerging Dance Artist Award (2005).

Notable artist Sara has worked with include; Thomas Lehmen, Daelik of MACHiNENOiSY, Jennifer Clarke, Claire French, Mascal Dance, Susan Elliott, The Holy Body Tattoo, Lesandra Dodson, Deborah Dunn, Peter Chin, and the TILT sound + motion dance company. Sara is a co-founder for SiNS (sometimes in Nova Scotia) Dance, a collective that traverses Canada with Jacinte Armstrong and Susanne Chui. Since 2005, SiNS has created eight works together with performances across Canada.

Sara has sat on the Dance Centre's Artistic Advisory Board, and holds a teaching position at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts where she also acts as program assistant for the dance department. Finding her way home when possible, Sara has been a faculty member of DANS Summer Dance since 2006. Her interest as an instructor is rooted in the Bartenieff Fundamentals, working with the developmental movement patterns, principles from Contact Improvisation and Laban's BESS structure to hone expressive technique from the inside out.

As a choreographer Sara is interested in the vulnerability of the human body and our connection and function to technology as a society. Coffin's work has been presented throughout Nova Scotia, in Toronto, Victoria and Vancouver; including Dancing on The Edge, Dance in Vancouver, ROMPI!, Dances for a Small Stage and Toronto's 808 series. Supported by the Canada Council for the Arts and BC Arts Council for professional development, research and production, Sara has studied with master teachers, creators and festivals including; Impulstanz (Vienna), Movement Research's Melt (NYC), in Montreal and Seattle. Her recent full-length work '***taking your experience for mine***' was described by the press as 'hauntingly gorgeous, witty, and where the virtual goes visceral'.

Sara received her pre-professional training with Halifax Dance in the ITP program, as a member of the Young Company, through DANS Summer Dance, and via a treasured mentorship with the late Pat Richards. Her beginnings and love for dance stemmed from dancing in the fields of the Annapolis Valley, with Linda Jess (CaDance) and Susan Menzie-Bergeron at the Sackville Sports Stadium.