

THE SPACES

A Grand New Studio, and 6 to Spare

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WHEN it comes to the competition for New York City real estate, dance has often lost. This year, it won. Five new dance spaces have opened in Manhattan in the last year or so, and two more are in the works. Either the dance world is less impoverished than has long been thought, or else it has had a very lucky year.

"The trend has long been for spaces to migrate to the outer boroughs," said Steve Gross, the executive director of the Field, an artist-services organization based in Manhattan. "It seems like the tide is turning."

At the top of the list of this year's arrivals is the **Baryshnikov Arts Center**, an interdisciplinary rehearsal and performance space that occupies three floors at 450 West 37th Street in the garment district. In addition, in October the **Cedar Lake Ensemble** inaugurated a theater and studio in two pricey brick garages at 537-547 West 26th Street, and in May the Field opened the FAR Space (for Field Artist Residencies) at 521 West 26th Street, both in Chelsea.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's new \$54 million home on West 55th Street in Clinton and Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, which presents some dance, both opened in late 2004.

In the soon-to-come category is **Dance New Amsterdam's** new \$5 million home in the old Sun Building at 280 Broadway in Lower Manhattan. The 25,000-square-foot space, with seven studios and a 135-seat theater, is to open in February. And Dixon Place, an experimental performance space that Ellie Covan founded in her living room in 1985, plans to inaugurate its \$4.5 million, 5,000-square-foot home at 161 Chrystie Street on the Lower East Side in April.

The flourishing of dance spaces is all the more surprising given the rising cost of real estate, and there is no single reason that so many of such projects, most of which have been in the works for years, have come to fruition in the last 15 months.

Dance New Amsterdam was helped along by \$2.5 million from the city. Mr. Gross, of the Field, thanks "serendipity" and the Starry Night Fund of the Tides Foundation,

which provided the money, for his 10-year lease. The Cedar Lake Ensemble owes everything to the very deep pockets of Nancy Walton Laurie, an heiress to the Wal-Mart fortune worth an estimated \$2.5 billion.

"It's great, but it's not nearly enough," said Harvey Lichtenstein, the chairman of the BAM Local Development Corporation, which is studying the needs of the city's dancers and choreographers. "New York is a great magnet for the arts, dancers among them," he added. "The problem is that New York has been losing artists because of the cost. If that trend can be reversed, it would be great."