

Imagine: You're an artist, and your medium is movement. So when you meet up with people you care about, how do you reconnect? Not by getting dinner or chitchatting, but by dancing together and seeing what happens.

That's how it was with **Sara Pearson** and **Patrik Widrig**, artistic directors of PearsonWidrig DanceTheater, when they reunited with a group of dance friends after a year apart. "Others might meet for coffee or a beer, but for us, we reconnect in the studio," explains Pearson. "Everyone had gone through a very rough year, and we started improvising together and choreographing, and a dance grew out of that."

That piece gradually became *Oashisu*, one of three that the company will perform this weekend at Dance Place. It's a stream of duets, trios, and solos, each of which has a unique identity. At heart, though, they're all about the friendship between the dancers.

That theme, said Pearson, is no fluke. The concept of forging and maintaining connections runs throughout all of the work that they do. A second piece, *Sayonara, Dear*, is about the romance Pearson's 86-year-old mother conducted during the last year of her life. Much of the evening's music is provided live by **Pauchi Sasaki**, a Japanese-Peruvian violinist and friend, whom the duo invited up from Peru. And just about all of the company's dancers are locals whom the choreographers gradually became friendly with.

Speaking of those dancers, they're quite lovely. While Pearson and Widrig—who are husband and wife as well as artistic partners and co-professors at the University of Maryland—say they're still adjusting to the area after having moved here from New York in 2009, they seem to have done a good job of eliciting some magic from their movers. Maybe that whole friendship thing really does make a difference.