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Hiram, Ohio, June 12, 2006 – When Hiram College’s Center of Literature and Medicine hosts a national symposium on Global Health Care Justice, Verb Ballets will put new voice and form to the disparity in health care in United States and internationally.

With the premiere of *Luis* – a story of the intersection of the lives of a municipal dump scavenger and a wealthy physician in contemporary Brazil – the Cleveland dance group known for its interpretive originality, will attempt something even the story’s author questions is possible.

“I cannot imagine how *Luis* can be transformed into dance,” physician and author Richard Selzer said in an e-mail.

Selzer will find out on Saturday, June 24, at 7:30 p.m. in the Kennedy Center Ballroom on the Hiram campus. He is to introduce the performance, which is free and open to the public. Selzer is the author of numerous books and whose short fiction and articles have appeared in national magazines, including *Esquire* and *Harper’s*.

The symposium, from June 22 through 25, brings together researchers, scholars, medical practitioners, artists and graduate students to discuss economic, political, historical and cultural challenges to addressing health inequalities. Martin Kohn, co-director of the Center of for Literature and Medicine, proposed to Verb Ballets that it, with the assistance of Cleveland playwright Eric Coble, convert into dance Selzer’s story from a collection titled *Imagine A Woman*.

“In one of my first meetings with Martin and Eric we talked about the social issues we wanted people to think about,” said Mark Tomasic, Verb Ballets coordinator of outreach and education, who is choreographing *Luis*. “The hierarchy of the rich and poor, the difference between hope and despair, good intentions that end in a bad result – all of those opposites.”

It is the opposites that inform the collaboration that has emerged.

“I feel very comfortable telling the story,” playwright Coble said of the scenes he has created for Tomasic to use as a basis for his choreography. “But I am learning a new language. I’m learning to speak dance.”

To convey Selzer’s message – that “a blind love for science, for technology, produces a passionless barbarity” – Tomasic and Coble decided that the dancers would provide narration to better fuse the literal and abstract.

“I haven’t really done anything like this,” Tomasic said. “It is a unique combination...a hybrid of play, dance and story. It will be something different from what people have seen.”

Coble previously adapted an E.M. Forester story, *The Machine Stops*, for the Center for Literature and Medicine. Instead of creating a drama on this occasion, Coble has worked in a way he never has before, taking the former surgeon and professor of surgery at Yale Medical School’s words and making them dance.

Selzer’s story idea came from traveling on humanitarian missions with doctors, nurses and technicians to Brazil, Peru, Honduras and Haiti. In those countries he witnessed the suffering of the poor and “the contrasting privileged lives of the doctors.”

Among his patients was a young man with gangrenous hands. Selzer was forced to amputate both of them.

“It was not a great leap from his tragic situation to the plight of the character in *Luis*,” Selzer said. “The story was my effort to give him another life.”

During the Global Health Care Justice symposium, Verb Ballets will be attempting much the same thing – to give *Luis* yet another life.