

CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE CROSSOVERS

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THE PHYSICS OF ENTANGLEMENT

by Paul Gordon Emerson, Artistic Director

I was born not knowing and have had only a little time to change that here and there.

- Richard Feynman, Nobel Laureate in physics, in a letter to Armando Garcia

Quantum entanglement: (physics) *A quantum mechanical phenomenon in which the quantum states of two or more objects have at all times to be described with reference to each other, each instantaneously tracking changes to the other, however large the spatial separation of the objects.* (CalTech textbook)

There is a passage in *The Forever War* by Dexter Fitkins in which he is trying to make sense of the violence of Iraq that the American invasion set loose. The endless tribal intertwining, the codes of honor, the deceit and deception, and the swirl of it all in the rotor wash of an Apache helicopter kicking up the desert on the outskirts of Fallujah in 2006. It was all interconnected. It was physics. It was probably the most pure definition of what it means to be entangled I have ever read. Each action, each person, each tribe was "instantaneously tracking the changes to the other, however large the spatial separation of the objects."

Nicholas Taleb, in his *The Black Swan*, argues that humans are not hardwired to understand this. We parse information into discrete, logical morsels that enable us to manage a complex world through superimposed simplicity. We *dis*-entangle to survive, and therein lies the seed of our inability to manage the planet, to find tolerance across racial, gender, political, religious, and tribal boundaries. We parse.

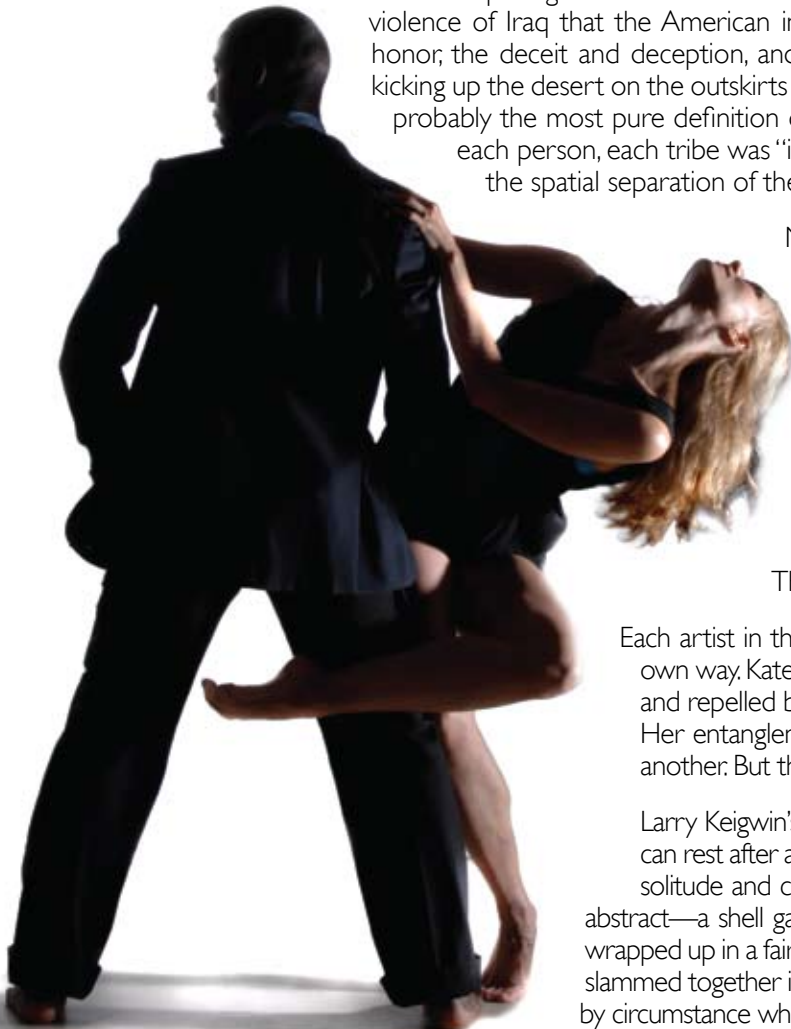
Coming to terms with that contradiction is the nutrient that feeds choreography. Every action has a reaction, each informing the other, however large the spatial separation of the objects. That's the physics of dance.

Each artist in this concert comes at this question, this contradiction, in his or her own way. Kate Weare's *Scorched* is quantum mechanics, with people attracted to and repelled by each other in a magical mélange of patterns and improbabilities. Her entanglements don't last; the particles, the people, keep bouncing off one another. But the truth of her balance and imbalance invades the heart.

Larry Keigwin's entanglements are about finding a steady state, a place where we can rest after all the chaos of searching for a fit in terms of gender and partnership, solitude and companionship. My take, for the title piece of the show, is the most abstract—a shell game about entanglements in the horrible isolation of Guantanamo wrapped up in a fairy tale white world. These are co-dependent partners, twin electrons slammed together in a confined space, damaging each other by the act of being bound by circumstance when they are repelled by purpose, by charge.

All the dances in *Entangled* are about how we track the changes to each other. But unlike physics, they are a search—not for rules, but for knowing. These are chaotic, uncertain, and unsettling times. But they are not isolated times. Our entanglements are what make a local crisis global, but they are also what make global concerns endurable. We parse what is overwhelming into what we can understand. The stories of *Entangled* are stories about balance and humanity, sometimes achieved, sometimes not. That quest is the why of doing concerts, of asking questions. As Feynman, a man who transformed our understanding of the universe, who saw how the smallest element can transform our perceptions of the possible, but when participating in the development of the atom bomb wrote, "we have only a little time to change that here and there."

The rest is physics.



ONE-ON-ONE WITH LARRY KEIGWIN

Larry Keigwin, New York-based choreographer and Artistic Director of Keigwin + Company, and Nicole Wolcott, Associate Artistic Director of Keigwin + Company, spent two weeks in the studio with CityDance Ensemble to set Keigwin's witty and amorous *Mattress Suite*. This is the first time Keigwin has licensed the work to a company other than his own.

In an interview with CityDance, Keigwin shares some of his thoughts and experiences to help us gain insight on the premise, motivation, and meaning of *Mattress Suite*.

CityDance (CD): What inspired the creation of *Mattress Suite*?

Larry Keigwin (LK): *Mattress Suite* was inspired by many different things, but primarily it began with the desire to make a dance with Nicole Wolcott. I had always wanted to make a dance on a mattress (after having seen someone else do it) and I knew that the timing was right when I met Nicole. I was also inspired by the music, some paintings, and real life stories.

CD: Describe the process of creating choreography that incorporated a mattress. Any particular challenges or surprises?

LK: We created *Mattress Suite* in my living room, but that was actually the easy part. The challenging part was transporting the mattress all over town for performances. Up and down four flights of stairs. On top of cars. In the rain. There are also many surprises when you perform on different mattresses—such as feathers and dust.

CD: What do you hope the audience will take away from your work?

LK: I hope the audience can relate to the characters and the story. I would be happy if the audience identified emotionally with the work, the ups and downs of being in a relationship.

CD: What is your view on the role of humor in concert dance?

LK: I think concert dance is like contemporary art. I think any work of art is an extension of the artist's personality and a reflection of life. If an artist is interested in reflecting with a sense of humor, I think that's wonderful, but certainly not necessary. To me, a little humor can help people enter the work and keep them engaged. Engaging work is important.



Company members Kathryn Pilkington and Maleek Mahkail Washington rehearsing *Mattress Suite*

OBSERVING THE TIES THAT BIND

Ties that bind. It's a simple and familiar phrase, yet one that can carry a weight of meaning and connotation. In this concert, Christopher K. Morgan explores this idea with his piece *Ties that Bind*. Using physical and physiological metaphors to tackle the concept of restriction, Morgan's choreography morphs through a series of visual images that parallel the constraints that can be placed on a person's individuality, self-expression, or sense of autonomy.



Company member Alice Belle Wylie in *Ties that Bind*

Originally commissioned by the Lithuanian Dance Company AURA, *Ties that Bind* was first cast on a group of dancers who had all lived through their country's reign of Communism.

"At the time that I was commissioned for this project, it was a piece that I already had on my mind," reflects Morgan. "I was looking to create a dance that metaphorically expressed the frustration I was feeling from restriction in my own life. So when I got this commission from Lithuania, the idea became a lot more interesting because of the political scenario of the dancers' lives."

Within a Communist regime, these artists had all experienced a time when creative expression and artistic freedom were a narrow path that deviated from mainstream, conventional propaganda.

"One aspect of the dance that definitely came from working and talking with this specific group of dancers was the idea of the unseen observer," notes Morgan. "They talked a lot about their experience under Communist rule feeling like they had eyes on them at all times even though they couldn't necessarily see those eyes. This idea is represented a lot in the first section of the dance, and though it was not something that had been in my original plan for the dance, it developed naturally out of working with these dancers."

After its March 2002 premiere at the University Theater in Kaunas, Lithuania, *Ties that Bind* was featured in the New Baltic Dance Festival in Vilnius, Lithuania. A solo excerpt was chosen as a finalist in the 2002 Dance Under the Stars Choreography Competition in Palm Desert, California, and has been performed in New York, San Francisco, and Munich.

Ties that Bind debuted in the United States at CityDance's 2008-2009 season-opening concert at The Kennedy Center. Tonight, we invite you—as a welcome and seen observer—to experience *Ties that Bind*.

A WORLD PREMIERE BY KATE WEARE

As a repertory company, CityDance is not devoted to a single artistic voice but instead commissions dances from a wide variety of choreographers. These commissions are usually for pieces already in existence—that is, they have been created on another company and are then re-staged on CityDance. This weekend, however, we are privileged to experience the world premiere of Kate Weare's *Scorched*, a piece she choreographed and created specifically for CityDance Ensemble.

A New York-based choreographer who also directs her own company, Weare is steadily blazing a trail of exciting new choreography and critical acclaim. Deborah Jowitt of *The Village Voice* recently wrote, "Note to self: Try not to miss any performances by Kate Weare's group... This is what I've been craving." Such high praise is rare, but Weare's works prove that she is more than worthy.

During her time as CityDance's 2008-2009 Artist-In-Residence, Weare first re-staged her fiery duet *Drop Down*, which CityDance performed at its season opening concert in October. She then spent two weeks with CityDance in November and December creating and rehearsing *Scorched*, a dance in three sections about the human instincts that drive us toward love.

"I make dances that examine our need for safety, our longing to connect, our desire to be seen, and our irrepressible intelligence about who we are as individuals," comments Weare.

This approach to choreography resonates not only with press and audiences, but with the dancers she works with as well. CityDance company member Kathryn Pilkington worked with Weare on *Drop Down* and *Scorched* and was able to experience

the rehearsal of both a re-staged piece and a new piece by the same choreographer.

"When Kate first got here to construct her new piece *Scorched*, it was obvious that she had some definite ideas of the outline of the piece," says Pilkington. "However, it has been interesting to watch how she choreographed a work that is specifically for the CityDance dancers. She started with her own ideas and let us grow in the movement and find our own way of making it work."

With both *Scorched* and *Drop Down*, the dancers were encouraged to infuse their own individuality into the choreography and to focus on their connection with the other dancers.

"Kate is more interested in your connection with

who you are dancing with, because as dance is a live art form, things will change from performance to performance," notes Pilkington. "If you are connected to your partner, both by reading their signals and energy well, and by giving clear feedback to them, it will make for a more interesting experience for the audience as well as a more satisfying performance for yourself."



Company members Alice Belle Wylie and Maleek Mahkail Washington rehearsing *Scorched*

MEET THE ARTISTS OF CITYDANCE



ALICE BELLE WYLIE

Originally from: Olney, Maryland

CityDance company member since: Fall 2003

Noteworthy: Bachelor of Science in Ballet and French from Indiana University; danced with Ballet Austin, Kim Robards Dance, and DanceSmith; guest artist with Bosma Dance and Deviated Theatre

Oddest performance experience: Though there have been a few, performing at the Nebraska State Fair with CityDance's D.A.R.E. outreach program was probably one of the most offbeat dance experiences I have encountered. We put on three shows a day for four days in a row. Our dancing space was 12x12, alongside a corn dog vendor in the midst of various farm animals, sellers, buyers, and onlookers. We drew quite a crowd, especially with our spontaneous chants of, "Drug, Abuse, Resistance, Education!"

What your fellow company members don't know about you: I play a mean game of darts.

Something you might be if you weren't a dancer: A writer.

Favorite CityDance moment: Performing *Falling into the Sea* in an ancient castle ruin along the beautiful shores of Croatia.

Recurrent dance fantasy: I've always had this dream to travel the world with an assortment of other artists—dancers, musicians, actors, and singers—performing, teaching, creating, learning, and setting up workshops in third world countries.

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Sidney Harman Hall

Harman Center for the Arts

Tickets: HarmanCenter.org

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Watch a performance. Take a class. Or help a child do both. We invite you to discover the power, passion, and purpose of dance.

WHAT IS CITYDANCE?

PROFESSIONAL DANCE COMPANY—CityDance Ensemble attracts world-renowned dancers, choreographers, artists, and educators to create and bring innovative modern dance to Washington, DC. In residence at the Music Center at Strathmore, and one of only a few full-time professional dance companies in the DC metropolitan area, we perform at The Kennedy Center, Harman Center for the Arts, Music Center at Strathmore, across the nation, and around the world.

DANCE OUTREACH PROGRAMS—We ensure that children from DC's most underserved neighborhoods have access to free dance classes and performances. We perform in front of 15,000 students each year and our instructors teach in more than 20 schools and community centers. CityDance is committed to building a new generation of dancers and empowering youth through dance.

DANCE SCHOOL & PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM—We provide high-quality dance training to children and adults. A faculty of highly trained master instructors teach classes in such genres as contemporary, ballet, jazz, hip hop, and African. Our audition-only, pre-professional program, CityDance Select, is unique to the region and prepares talented students ages 13-18 for careers in contemporary dance—whether it be on the concert stage, in commercial work, or as entry to a college dance program. The first Studio Scholarship Fund was launched in June 2008.

SUPPORT CITYDANCE

Only 55% of the work we do is covered by ticket sales and student tuition. Help us:

- Continue to bring some of the world's best dancers, choreographers, and performances to the nation's capital
- Offer free dance classes, workshops, camps, and performances to youth from underserved neighborhoods
- Provide scholarships to students who want professional dance training

BECOME A FRIEND OF CITYDANCE and enjoy these exciting benefits* at the following levels:

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In the Spotlight (\$500)—Complimentary tickets to VIP concert reception, complimentary CityDance Calendar

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*For a complete list of benefits or to become a Friend of CityDance, visit us online at www.citydance.net and click the "Contribute" button. Checks payable to CityDance Ensemble may also be sent to 1111 16th Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

If you have any questions or would like more information about how to support CityDance, please contact Marla Moffet, Director of Individual Giving & Major Gifts, at marla@citydance.net or 202.347.3909.

CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE, INC.

Artistic Director
Paul Gordon Emerson
Executive Director
Alexandra Nowakowski

CityDance Center at Strathmore
5301 Tuckerman Lane
North Bethesda, MD 20852
301.581.5204

Administrative Offices
1111 16th Street NW • Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
202.347.3909

CrossOvers Contributing Writers
Dina Ghandour, Paul Gordon Emerson,
Carolyn Kamrath, Betsy Lundgren,
Marla Moffet