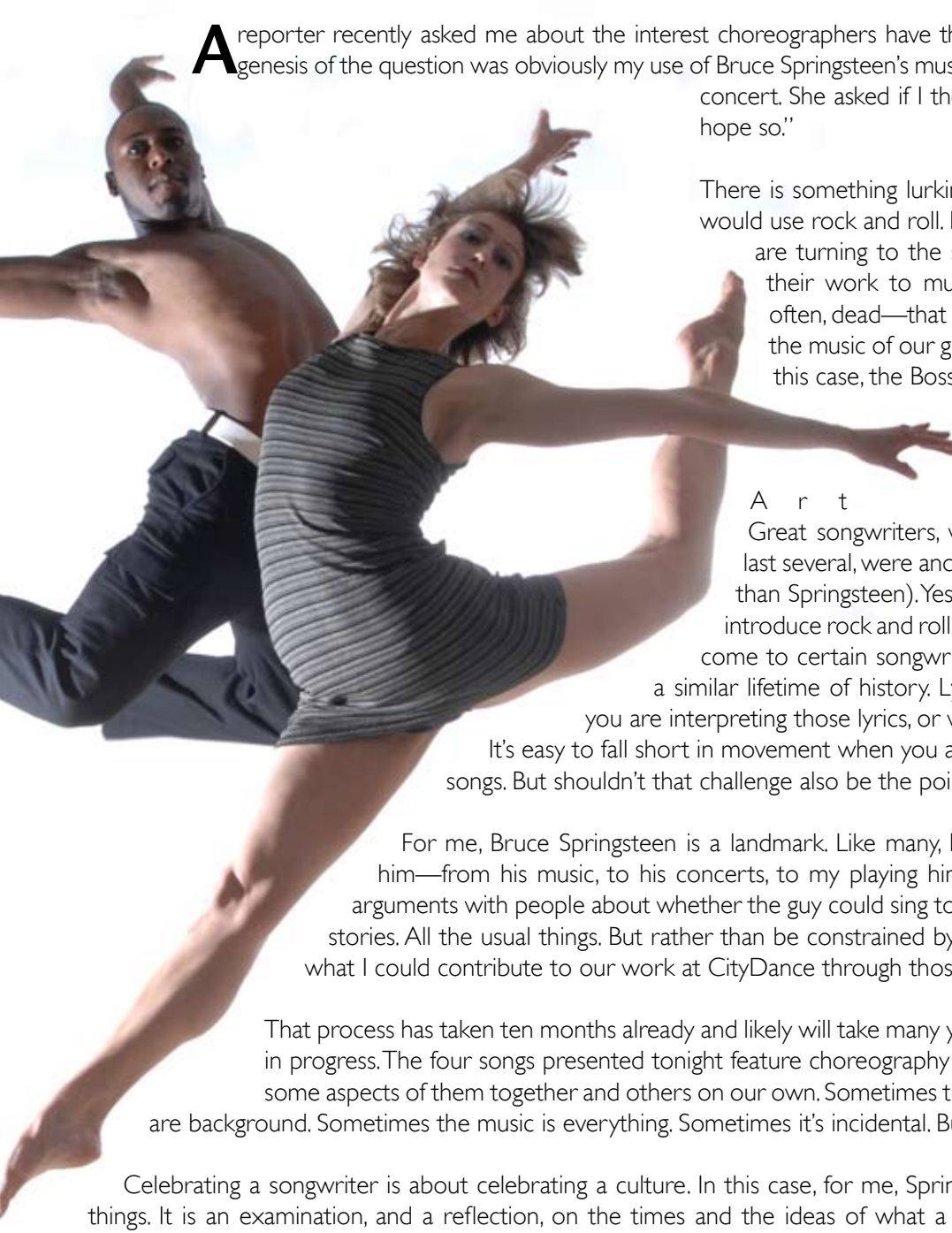


CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE CROSSOVERS

A PUBLICATION OF CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE, INC.
JUNE 2008 • THE SONGWRITERS • MUSIC CENTER AT STRATHMORE

INSPIRED BY THE BOSS

by Paul Gordon Emerson, Artistic Director



A reporter recently asked me about the interest choreographers have these days in the use of popular music. The genesis of the question was obviously my use of Bruce Springsteen's music for *Born to Run*, which is a part of tonight's concert. She asked if I thought that this was a trend. My reply was "I hope so."

There is something lurking in questions about why choreographers would use rock and roll. It's an implied criticism that choreographers are turning to the storytellers of the day instead of confining their work to music by classical composers living or, more often, dead—that there is something less "artistic" about using the music of our generations, whether Prince, Radiohead or, in this case, the Boss. I think it is a criticism misplaced.

The moment that you limit your field of vision, you limit your field of possibilities. Art should, and must, be about the possible. Great songwriters, whether they be from this century or the last several, were and are raconteurs of their times (few more so than Springsteen). Yes, there are challenges you accept when you introduce rock and roll into your choreographic thinking. Audiences come to certain songwriters with a lifetime of expectation born of a similar lifetime of history. Lyrics by default raise questions of whether you are interpreting those lyrics, or whether you should ignore them altogether.

It's easy to fall short in movement when you are working from someone adored for their songs. But shouldn't that challenge also be the point?

For me, Bruce Springsteen is a landmark. Like many, I have my own lifetime of experience with him—from his music, to his concerts, to my playing him endlessly during my radio shows, to the arguments with people about whether the guy could sing to save his life. I have girlfriend stories and bar stories. All the usual things. But rather than be constrained by those stories, it has been liberating to see what I could contribute to our work at CityDance through those inspirations.

That process has taken ten months already and likely will take many years more. *Born to Run* is very much a work in progress. The four songs presented tonight feature choreography by Bruno Augusto and by me. We took on some aspects of them together and others on our own. Sometimes the lyrics defined the work. Other times they are background. Sometimes the music is everything. Sometimes it's incidental. But, again, that's the point.

Celebrating a songwriter is about celebrating a culture. In this case, for me, Springsteen is a window into so many different things. It is an examination, and a reflection, on the times and the ideas of what a relationship is. His songs are always about relationships, as are his stories. Those could be with your wife, with your dad, with your girlfriend or your best friend, or often with your country. What more could you ask for as a choreographer than a canvas as rich, and deep, as that.

ONE-ON-ONE With Lynn Frielinghaus

Lynn Frielinghaus spent two weeks in the studio with CityDance Ensemble to reconstruct Sophie Maslow's *Folksay*. She was a member and soloist of the Sophie Maslow Dance Company and traveled with Ms. Maslow before her death in 2006 to restage many of her dances.

Q: DESCRIBE SOPHIE MASLOW IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

A: Sophie Maslow was a person of great integrity and thoughtfulness. Everything she said, did and created were true to what she believed and felt. I never saw her compromise herself in any way. I so respected her for that. She wasn't the most demonstrative person, and getting a compliment from her was tough. The best I ever received in 30 years of working with her was, "Well, that was pretty good, Lynn." She was a remarkable person in every way and I truly loved her. In fact, I named my first daughter after her.

Q: ARE THERE GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE INTERPRETATION AND PERFORMANCE OF *FOLKSAY*?

A: When we rehearsed *Folksay* in the 80's, we rehearsed for months with a company familiar with Sophie's style. The dance really "got into our bones." With CityDance, we worked one month with dancers who were trained in a whole different way of moving. Today we have the use of a dance notation score, which has proved invaluable. Thanks to Sophie and her forward thinking, she had *Folksay* notated in the 90's. Between the score, the videotape, and my "muscle memory" and recall of Sophie's style, the reconstruction went fairly fast.

Q: HOW HAS THE WORK CHANGED OVER TIME?

A: I think when *Folksay* was first created in the 40's, the U.S. was very optimistic and proud of itself. The dance really embodies those feelings. I remember when performing *Folksay* in the 80's, I felt a hopefulness and pride in a way of life that was truly American and was mine. I hope the CityDance dancers are experiencing some of that. *Folksay* is also a history lesson for these young dancers, some of whom are unfamiliar with Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly and traditional folk songs—songs we all learned in school in the 50's.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE PROCESS?

A: My favorite part has been working with "Team *Folksay*" as we call it. So many people have contributed to the process. All the hardworking people at CityDance, Ana-Marie Forsythe—another coach who worked on some of the solos she performed, Greg Halloran—the dance notator who set the piece with such care and made my job so much easier, and Abby Blatt—Sophie Maslow's daughter, who has given such insight into the piece. And I can't forget the dancers who have given their all and really put their personalities into the dance. The most difficult part has been realizing it is my time to pass it along to others and not be out there performing—the aspect of dance I love the most. But it's OK because I am passing it on to a wonderful group of people.

Folksay was made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts American Masterpieces: Dance initiative, administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts.

IT WAS 1938 AND...

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was in the White House, the nation was four years away from entry into the Second World War and Jim Crow was the way of things, in spirit as well as in law, throughout most of a nation still mired in the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl which was battering the Midwest. Huge parts of the population were on the move, escaping economic and social strife, looking to new cities and new regions for new opportunities. The social conscience of the nation lay in the hands of its artists, and they had something to say. Take, for example, Jane Dudley, choreographer of *Harmonica Breakdown*, which CityDance Ensemble stages tonight through funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Jane was part of a time and a movement that believed in using art to speak to deep social issues," notes Sheron Wray, the dancer, choreographer, director and artist responsible for preserving *Harmonica Breakdown* and a significant part of Dudley's legacy. *Harmonica Breakdown* is a short work—only 3.5 minutes—but it is incredibly dense. There's not a wasted step or moment. It speaks of the journey into which people were being thrown and to the struggles of simply getting on."

"One of the most interesting aspects of *Harmonica Breakdown* is its use of music. Today blues music is common in dance, but in 1938 it was revolutionary. Jane saw Sonny Terry, the blues harmonica player who composed and performed *Harmonica Breakdown* at Carnegie Hall. That by itself was revolutionary—a black man playing the blues on the stage of the premiere concert hall in New York. For Jane it was electrifying, and it led her to break another boundary—using blues in her work. These are things we take for granted today, but imagine all this in their time."

Wray attributes the enduring power of a work made 70 years ago to the universality of human struggle. "Whether it's about losing your home or losing your PlayStation, everyone can relate to the blues and to the movement it conjures in all of us, whether conscious or unconscious. A work like *Harmonica Breakdown* taps into this and transports us."



CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE 2008-2009 SEASON

Join CityDance for our 2008-2009 season, featuring the company's return to the Kennedy Center, our second season as an artistic partner in the Harman Center for the Arts, and fourth season as the resident dance company of the Music Center at Strathmore

THE KENNEDY CENTER
2700 F STREET NW • WASHINGTON, DC

Next

October 18, 2008

CityDance takes a look at what's next in dance with a collection of works by today's up-and-coming choreographers.

Tickets: Kennedy-Center.org • 202.467.4600
On sale August 1

HARMAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS
450 7TH STREET NW • WASHINGTON, DC

Entangled

January 16 & 17, 2009

A concert that unveils the pulse, rhythm, and patterns that drive human interactions and exchanges.

Tickets: HarmanCenter.org • 202.547.1122
On sale now

Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Books

April 18 & 19, 2009

An original dance and music adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books* for the whole family.

Tickets: HarmanCenter.org • 202.547.1122
On sale now

This performance is funded in part by Washington Performing Arts Society by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

MUSIC CENTER AT STRATHMORE
5301 TUCKERMAN LN • N. BETHESDA, MD

Carbon

March 14 & 15, 2009

CityDance continues to explore the intersection between the environment and humanity with a concert about global warming.

Tickets: Strathmore.org • 301.581.5100
On sale August 7

Scandal

June 4, 2009

Scandal features the explosive *Last Look* by Paul Taylor and other works that will leave you stirring in your seats.

Tickets: Strathmore.org
301.581.5100
On sale August 7



MEET THE ARTISTS OF CITYDANCE ENSEMBLE



BRUNO AUGUSTO

Originally from: Luanda, Angola

CityDance company member since: January of 2004

Noteworthy: 1995 – Escuela Nacional de Artes, Havana, Cuba (dancer and teacher of Cuban Modern Dance Technique, diploma). 2004 – Towson University, Towson, MD (B.F.A. in Dance Performance).

Oddest performance experience: I did this one *Nutcracker* at a farmers fair... The stage was packed with music instruments, amps, and microphones. It was really tight. But the worst part was the fake grass on the floor. After all, I guess it helped landing some of the bigger jumps.

Something you might be if you weren't a dancer: A chef. I love cooking.

Favorite CityDance moment: I met a very special person here. We danced together many times. Now she's my best friend, my Ellen, my wife.

Recurrent dance fantasy: To travel the world as a choreographer is a great dance fantasy that I have.

**Congratulations to Bruno Augusto for his acceptance into NYU's Tisch School for the Arts where he will pursue an M.F.A. in Choreography. He will be greatly missed.*

CITYDANCE. LET US MOVE YOU.

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—We create and bring innovative modern dance to Washington, DC. As one of only two full-time professional dance companies in Washington, CityDance Ensemble attracts world-renowned dancers, choreographers, artists, and educators. Rehearsing at CityDance Center at Strathmore, our company regularly performs at Strathmore, across the DC region and around the world.

FREE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS—We work hard to ensure that children from DC's most underserved neighborhoods have access to free dance classes and performances. Our professional company performs in front of thousands of 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.

PROFESSIONAL DANCE SCHOOL & STUDIO SCHOLARSHIPS—We provide high-quality dance training to children and adults. With a diverse curriculum, our 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 12-19 for careers in contemporary dance, whether it be on the concert stage, in commercial work, or as entry to a college dance program. We are pleased to announce the launching of our first Studio Scholarship Fund.

SUPPORT CITYDANCE

Only 70% 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 dance classes, workshops, camps, and performances to youth from underserved neighborhoods
- Provide scholarships to students who want professional dance training

CityDance announces the annual George Alexander Adamson Scholarship, created in his memory by Susan Burt in the hope of inspiring others to establish additional named scholarships or contribute to the Studio Scholarship Fund. This scholarship will be awarded annually to a deserving student at CityDance Center at Strathmore.

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

On Stage (\$250)—Invitations to CityDance Ensemble open rehearsals; Members-only discounts
In the Spotlight (\$500)—Complimentary tickets to VIP reception; Name listed in Strathmore's *Applause Magazine*
Standing Ovation (\$1,000)—Invitations to private special events; Complimentary book of CityDance photography by Artistic Director Paul Gordon Emerson
Encore Performance (\$2,500)—Backstage tours with the Artistic Director; Private studio performance for you and your friends to get an up-front, inside look into the creative process

*For a complete list of benefits, to contribute to the Studio Scholarship Fund, or to become a Friend of CityDance, visit us online at www.citydance.net and click the "Contribute" button, or send a check payable to CityDance Ensemble, 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.

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