

Limón

Limón Dance At a Glance

September 2, 2009



The Limón Dance Company performs "There is a Time."
Click on photo to see video.

In this month's issue, we talk to Limón Dance Company Associate Artistic Director Roxane D'Orléans Juste about her process of reconstructing José Limón's "There is a Time," learn more about Roxane in our "Featured Dancer" article, and get "Behind the Curtain" thoughts about this project.

LIMÓN DANCE COMPANY ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ROXANE D'ORLÉANS JUSTE DIRECTS A NEW PRODUCTION OF "THERE IS A TIME."

"There is a Time" by José Limón, had its world premiere in 1956. The entire work is, both choreographically and musically, a theme with variations based on Chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes: "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal,... a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,... a time to embrace and a time to refrain,... a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace." The score for the piece was commissioned from Norman Dello Joio, and earned the composer the Pulitzer Prize in 1957.

Roxane began rehearsing with the Company during their residency at SUNY College at Brockport this summer. Here, below, she talks about the process of reviving this masterwork:

The cycles of life, never ending; the desire to strip ourselves of the meaningless and reveal the essence of man's true nature, its mystery, uncertainty, innocence and culpability. "Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever." (international translation from Ecclesiastes 1:4).

The process of re-creating a masterpiece such as *There is a Time* carries great treasures to be discovered. In the beginning, I wondered if I would be able to transmit the immediacy and purity of this dance. What is truth in the movement? Where do I begin?

My process began with researching early films, photographs, articles, choreographer's notes, composer's notes, and notes from designers, and gathering wonderful commentaries from films of original cast members speaking and coaching dancers. The role of a director is, to the best of his or her ability, to give new life to this rich collection of thoughts and opinions and to help others develop their own perspective on the same subjects.

I looked back and wondered how biblical themes are adapted and translated today, while remaining true to its messages, but also adapting to the world we live in. I have chosen to explore these statements of life's cycles in a different light. I want to leave behind the connotations of a time past and acknowledge instead the constancy and force of nature's cycle through time.

As my thoughts turned to the movement of the dance, I realized that teaching the dance alone is not enough, it's about discovering how fourteen human beings now speak of healing, of death, of unity, separation, resilience, courage. These universal concerns, deeply human emotions and experiences, are not always given their true time value; no time to rest, no time to reflect. How do I convey this in the rehearsal room?

Researching José's thoughts and notes about the making of the dance took away some of the doubts on my mind. There it was in bold letters: "the community... forming a very close circle which pulsates symbolizing an ovum or a womb in travail- in the pangs of partition-of birth, slowly it separates into a large circle...leaving in the center the newly born who is himself curled into an embryonic shape, and who slowly unfolds, limb by limb... to eventual full stature. He takes his place in this large circle, which is to symbolize time- the great continuity- eternal, unbroken, as is a circle and which is to revolve slowly and without hurry and without end." (from preliminary concept notes by José Limón 1956, from the José Limón Manuscript Collection at the New York Public Library, Transcribed by Norton Owen March, 1994).

We began the first rehearsal by joining hands and starting to sway, interconnected, responding to one another's breath, one another's weight. It was beautiful and powerful in its simplicity. Each day of rehearsal grew in intensity and complexity, as we recreated three sections at one time. The process was a feat in translating sensorial memory as well as conjuring up from the deepest part of myself hours of research and reflections.

We explored intention, intonation, how energy in movement affects one another and how time never ceases to move forward. There is no time to pause, as time has already moved on. Just being, doing, living in the moment is imperative. But when our breath is sustained through the voice of the string of a violin, effortlessly, we give in, in awe. We listen for the possibility of the unknown, and we stand still in constant flow of energy.

There is a Time is a perfectly crafted dance, nothing is left to be desired, and I had to remove my self, the dancer/performer and give birth to my voice as an interpreter. As an interpreter, not a translator of movement and ideas, the concern was to remain integral to the dance, the choreography, the structure of the dance, and the movement language used to translate each idea. The objective was to discover how simple movement themes evolved into multitudes of variations. I did not want to leave one stone unturned.

In addition to recreating the movement, we are recreating the costumes and lighting for the piece. As sources of inspiration for these visual elements, I was attracted to The Naturalist movement in painting as well as the Impressionist movement of the mid 19th century. These groups of artists were concerned with immersing themselves in nature itself in order to render a strong sense of time and place. An "impression" is a moment, a point of view. I found this to be true in *There is a Time*. With themes and variations as a platform, this dance could take place in a day, in a year, through the seasons.

I was inspired by Monet's *San Giorgio Maggiore by Twilight*, Pissarro's *Autumn Morning, 1892* Monet's *Lane in the Poppy Fields Ile Saint Martin*, Van Gogh's *Le Semeur*, and many other Italian and Spanish Impressionists. These paintings suggest the beauty of the lightest specks of color, looking into shimmering brilliance and wavering luminosity. The moods reflect the passing of clouds, strange depth of imminent darkening skies, deathly quiet of white and grey winter's winds, and striking lightning bolts of pure liquid steel. This is nature at its best, and a painter's canvas which inspires and supports the dance.

This is a once in a lifetime gift, to be able to look so closely at someone's deeply personal viewpoint on life in its most unmannered expression, and share it with others. How often do we have the opportunity to harness our energy as one, listen to one another, and tell our stories? *There is a Time* is magnificent, deeply moving, pure. It reminds us that dance through times remains the most affirmative form of communication. This is the time to invite others to take a deep breath, to hear and be moved by the subtlety of Norman Dello Joio's rhapsodic and stirring score. We are invited to transcend time and travel through the journey of our human heart, in its deepest expression, through darkness and through light, through truths and through doubt. It is an irreplaceable moment in "time."

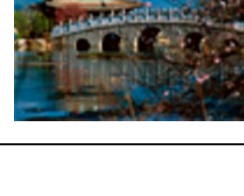
UPCOMING EVENTS:

September 1: [Professional Studies Program begins](#)

Nov. 28-Dec. 7: Join the Limón Dance Company on tour to Beijing, China

The Limón Dance Company has been invited to perform at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China and you are invited to go on tour with us! This will be the Company's inaugural trip to China, and will include four performances of two different programs featuring live music performed by the Chinese Musical Conservatory. This unique travel package includes accommodations in a five-star hotel, sightseeing trips and "behind the scenes" events with the Company.

[Click here for more information.](#)



BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Breaking News



Dancers Ryoko Kudo, Kristen Foote, and Belinda McGuire were featured in a fashion shoot for the September issue of Dance Magazine. Click the photo above to see the whole 4-page spread.

Thoughts on "There is a Time"

Dante Pulio, Dancer: It's a really cool experience to re-visit *There is a Time*, as it was the first piece I learned with the Company in 2000. Now to re-learn it is comfortable, but still exciting because I get to explore the movement from a completely new place. It seems I can go deeper, and now the steps feel like a vehicle to get to the meaning of what the sections of the dance or even what the entire piece is about. I'm really psyched to start performing it and see where it all goes. Plus I'm learning the sections I used to just sit and watch, which is totally fierce, because now I get to do all those beautiful solos and duets I fell in love with ("A time to be born, and a time to die;" and "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak").

Katherine McDowell Patterson, Costume Designer: While watching an archived video of the choreography from 1998, I recognized several of the dancers in the piece from our earlier days.

At that moment, I realized that the newly designed *Time* costumes, like those dancers, would become part of Limón's archived history. I take this project very seriously and aspire to produce costumes that live up to the reputation of the choreographer and his dance.



Katherine shows Carla Maxwell sketches and inspiration for the new



SPECIAL DISCOUNT TICKET OFFER!

See the new Broadway dance sensation, "Burn the Floor" and help support The Limón Dance Company. For every ticket purchased, \$20 will be donated to the Company. Click [here](#) to view this special offer.



THIS MONTH'S FEATURED DANCER:

Roxane D'Orléans Juste

Favorite Hobbies: creating, writing, photography, laughing with my husband and nephew, playing the piano, listening to music, taking care of my family and staying in touch with close friends.

My favorite place: the sea.

Favorite subjects to read: Women's literature, Anthropology, Holistic medicine, Psychology, 14th Century French poets, Russian literature.

If I weren't a dancer, I would be: a doctor in osteopathy specializing in pediatric care creating healing energetic dances to help relieve pain and suffering.

Roxane D'Orléans Juste is a native of Montréal, Canada. She obtained her first college degree in Science and Psychology in Sherbrooke, Quebec and then graduated from the National Ballet School's Teacher Training Program in Toronto. She was honored with the Canadian dance award "le Prix Jacqueline Lemieux," and subsequently moved to New York to begin her professional performing career as a member of the Eleo Pomare Dance Company in 1981.

Ms. D'Orléans Juste was invited to join the Limón Dance Company in 1983 where she was featured in many leading roles of Humphrey, Limón and renowned contemporary choreographers. Roxane joined the Annabelle Gamson Dance Solos company from 1988 to 2000 and was sponsored by the Canada Council for the Arts to research and create new work. She created her own vehicle *En Solo* in 1992, a platform for her choreographic exploration and specially commissioned works and revivals by choreographers such as Daniel Nagrin, Susanne Linke, Annabelle Gamson and Donald McKayle. *En Solo* concerts have been presented in Canada, the United States, Germany and in South America.

Roxane is now the Associate Artistic Director of the Limón Dance Company and has received a 2006 Bessie Award in the "performer" category for "her majestic stage presence, infectious lightness and joyousness, and emotional depth in works by José Limón, Donald McKayle, Susanne Linke and others."

Roxane's performances during the Limón Dance Company's 60th Anniversary season at the Joyce Theater were mentioned by Robert Johnson of the Star-Ledger on his list of "Best of 2006 Dance" stating "the magnetic dancer Roxane D'Orléans Juste has attained a peak of artistry in which finely tuned physical responses combine with intimate, dramatic awareness. She was unforgettable in *Dances for Isadora* and *Day on Earth*." Also an active teacher, she tours internationally and continues to stage dances from the Limón repertory with Universities across the United States and Europe as well as for the New York International Ballet Competition. This past May, she was sponsored by the Canada Council for the Arts to travel to Venezuela to choreograph a new work, "Children of Dictatorship" for the company Coreoarte.

Roxane is also one of the pre-eminent reconstructors of José Limón's works. For the Limón Dance Company's 2010 season, she will reconstruct Limón's *There is a Time*. Originally titled *Variations on a Theme*, this 1956 masterpiece alludes to a chapter of Ecclesiastes and its evocation of the human experience. In addition, Roxane will be reconstructing *The Moor's Pavane* on the Opera Ballet of Toulouse in January 2010.

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