

Dancing Joy Program Notes

This project has been a huge labor of love, involving the talents and hard work of people all over the world. Those who danced, choreographed, invested, worked on set, translated or did any of a hundred other tasks—are the heroes. To our knowledge, no movie has ever been attempted to merge classical music, traditional cultural dance and global artistic collaboration, with sustainable filmmaking. We hope this is just the first of many such projects.

The idea began from a chance encounter, at the Dead Sea in Israel, in 2005. Our performing arts group met some Druze students on a school excursion and did a spontaneous performance for them. The students responded by turning on their music and showing their traditional dancing, the debka. As both groups were dancing, they beckoned in the watchers, until virtually every person in the parking lot was dancing together! Hundreds of people from all over the world were suddenly laughing and enjoying themselves—like *family*.

That was the moment I truly saw what “Peace” would look like.

For 12 years, this vision gradually took shape in my mind; a film that would let audiences journey to many distant lands, and experience the dance—the color—the scenery—to the music Beethoven wrote as his final gift to the world, his Symphony No. 9, with its powerful message of hope.

With advances in technology, what seemed impossible in 2005 became possible by 2018. We invited dancers through embassies, dance councils and many humanitarian organizations. We looked for three things: A love of their root culture, a love of humanity, and the desire to choreograph to the symphony.

The obstacles to mounting a film of this magnitude were enormous. At every turn, it seemed impossible. Yet, miracles happened, at so many key moments.

Just as Beethoven broke with tradition in creating a symphony with human voices and poetry as symphonic elements, this movie unfolds in the universal languages of music and dance. In reminder of his own loss of hearing, we featured American Sign Language Dance to help share the poetry sung by the chorus.

We filmed sustainably, protecting the natural environment and cultural locations with handheld or low-impact camerawork. We honored each culture’s traditions and wishes throughout the filming.

This is not just a movie, but a movement. We believe it is possible to create art and entertainment that advances humanity and the planet. We see a vast global audience for films that can be enjoyed by all ages and ethnicities, and can remind us of our potential.

We put together these notes to give you a glimpse of the many talented artists who helped design, choreography, perform or produce the film. Each person helped fashion the entire whole. For this, I am very grateful.

Many thanks,
Kate Tsubata

Fun Facts about *Dancing Joy*:

- ◆ Miles traveled by crew and cast for filming: 56,870
- ◆ Circumference of earth: 24,901 miles
- ◆ Number of dance cultures represented: 21
- ◆ Number of dancers: 184
- ◆ International Crew members: 4
- ◆ Local crew members: 102
- ◆ Cameras: 2 Red Ravens, one Phantom 4 drone, one GoPro
- ◆ International Baggage: 4 check in, 4 rolling, 4 backpacks
- ◆ Days of Shooting: 58 principal production, plus 2 special shoots
- ◆ US locations: 10 cities in 10 states
- ◆ International: 10 nations
- ◆ Post-production period: 18 months
- ◆ Principal Photography: 58 days
- ◆ Most shooting was exterior, with natural light
- ◆ Choreography was created by the dance groups and individuals to sections of the symphony chosen for similarity to their traditional music or tempos
- ◆ Invitation, audition, casting, music and choreography took place virtually
- ◆ Locations were sought using geo-satellite mapping and technology
- ◆ Wardrobe was chosen by performers, with attention to cultural and historical accuracy
- ◆ Due to language differences, the director often “danced” the directions, to show the performers where the cameras would be, or which section of the dance should be performed.
- ◆ Many locations are historic and cultural sites, so many hundreds of visitors helped by staying out of the scene during each take.
- ◆ *Dancing Joy* is one of less than one percent of films with women in the key roles of producer, director, editor and color graders.
- ◆ Performers were chosen not only to represent humanity in all its diversity.
- ◆ Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* is beloved around the world, and has been associated with human rights, reconciliation, and unity movements since its debut in May of 1824.

Featured Cultures, Performers, Locations



American Sign Language Dance ***Gallaudet Dance Company***

Choreographers:

Sue Gill-Doleac with Bridget Metzger
Lexine Brooks, Teresa Dominick, Chelsea
Hilaire, Benjamin Llamas, Bridget Metzger,
Briana Ogunmokun, Brooke Roberts, Rachel
Tozzi

(Location: Gallaudet University Campus,
Washington, D.C. USA)

Anishinaabe

(Ojibwa: Original People)

Close to the Earth Dancers

Choreographer:

Summer Sky Cohen

Summer Sky Cohen, James Cohen,
Rose Track, Tessa Diamond, Marla
Mahkimetas, Dakota Whitewater,
Constance Danforth, Dona Yahola

(Norbert Hill Center and Powwow
Grounds, Oneida Nation of
Wisconsin)



Appalachia

Appalachian Ensemble

Choreographer: Will Roboski

Laurie Goux, Carmensita Woodward, Nina
Stump, Tiffanie Toler, Dove Butler, Richard A.
Evans, Amy LaFollette, Will Roboski

(Location: Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, West
Virginia, USA)



Korea

Hyun Dance Troupe

Choreographer: Ji-Hye Lee
Eun Byeol Cho, Ah Ra Sung, Joo-Yeon Kim, Chuly Kim. Ji-Hye Lee
(Okranjae, Hwaseong, Republic of Korea)



Ballet

Hope Garden Ballet

Choreographer: Fran Ichijo

Charlotte Vogel, Maddie Durmowicz,
Charlotte Gularson, Elizabeth
Vinokurov, Abby Hanson, Anna Porch,
Christina Zhang, Aubrey Dorman,
Michael Stokes.
(Church of the Holy City, Washington,
D.C., USA)



Ballroom

Ballroom Blitz NI Choreographer: Deborah Worsley

Russell Johnson, Scott Kennedy, Patrick Anderson, Simon Maynard, Cheryl Hoy,
Deborah Worsley, Uel McCrea, Linda Rathzell, Marilyn Scourfield, Helen Doey, Kelly
Morris, Stephen Henderson, Stuart Bradford, Claire Mulvenna, Allister Parke,
Michelle Miles Cardwell.

(Belfast Castle, Belfast, Northern Ireland)

Botswana:

Mophato Dance Theatre

Artistic Director: Andrew Letso Kola
Project Director: Kealeboga Motsumi
Karabo Mpai, Tumisang Daiker
Mophosho, Lacey Lesego Molefi, Lone
Thabang Motsomi, Kealeboga Motsumi,
Edward Onkabetse Mphakelosa,
Lethogonolo Nyatschane, Isaac Hasan
Surtee, Lesedi Oitshepile, Alfred Tshephe,
Basetsana Joyce Santo, Kerabo Mpai,
Tumisang Mophosho, Tumelo
Motihagodi, Lone Thabang Motsomi,
Stephanie Keitumetse Keabetswe,
Andrew Letso Kola;
(Moritshane Estate, Gabarone, Botswana)



Bulgaria

Zharava Bulgarian Folk Dance Ensemble

Choreographer: Desi Jordanoff
Desi Jordanoff, Miroslava Papinova, Ina
Kovacheva, Tania Giozova, Kathryn
Mitchell, Zlatomira Simenova, Alla
Dvorkin, Nadia Karamcheva, Adriana
Parvanova, Todor Hinov, Krum Rangelov,
Borislav Dimitrov, Rick Speer

(Meridian Hill Park, Washington D.C.,
USA)

Caribbean

Spirit Wing Dance Ensemble

Choreographer: Laurie Goux
Laurie Goux, Nina Stump, Yoni Biye

(Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, WV,
USA)



Fiji

VOU Dance Company

Choreographer: Navi Fong
Ratu Rusiate Rokilibau, Akuila Tuivaga,
Sevuloni Lule, Edwin Saladoka, Ta'arei
Weeks, Rosie Weeks, Bernadette Suiqa,
Evangeline Kumar

(Nadi, Fiji)

Flamenco

Tablado Dance Company

Choreographer: Solange Gomes
Katie Brown, Lucia Fitisemanu, Ashton Snelgrove,
Solange Gomes

(Uinta Wasatch Cache National Forest, Utah)



Greece

Caryatids Ancient Greek Dance Company of Dora Stratou Dance Theater

Choreographer: Anahit Saribekyan
Anahit Saribekyan, Svetlana Volkova, Chrysoula
Kleisiari, Katerina Tsaga,
Vicky Kryiakopoulou, Sara Toscano,
Nataliya Dovhopol

(Academy of Athens, National Library of
Greece, Athens, Greece)

Hawai'i

Maluhia Ke Aloha (Peace of Love)

Choreographer: Mahina Rylee Cracknell
Celeste Mosqueda, Leilani Soon,
Mahina Rylee Cracknell

(Kualoa Regional Park, Kane'ohe Bay,
Oahu, Hawai'i)



Honduras Grupo Folklorico Raíces Hondureñas

Choreographers: Roger Alberto Flores Madrid, Blanca Mikesell Ariana Michelle
Flores Moreno, Paula Salome Moreno Ochoa, Rene A. Cruz Velasquez, Eva R. López
Estrada, Kenia Quintero, Dixy Caballero,
Claudia Caballero, Sofia Alejandra Torres
López, Javier Alfredo Pineda Paredes,
Nelsy Mariela Hernandez Martínez,
Eduardo Jose Funez Campos, Farith
Carrasco, Jose Noel Cedillo, Oscar Isaí
Osorto Aguilera, Sulema Pacheco Tehan,
Zoe Tehan Pacheco, Ciana Tehan
Pacheco, Gabriela Dayana Lemus, Roger
Alberto Flores Madrid, Blanca I. Mikesell



(The United States Navy Memorial, Washington, D.C., USA)



Indonesia

Pekalongan Menari

Choreographers: Cahya Ari Safira, Arif Rahman Haki, Undang Diki Destiawah, Anggi Widya Hutami, Arif Rahman Hakim, Cahya Ari Safira, Iftidah Dwi Anjasari, Ahmad Khanafi, Fadia Mitsalia, Genta Ari Syafa'at, Aulia Rizqi Apriliani, Afadia Menasa Tiara

Putri, Dewi Salsabila, Arofah (Surya Budhaya), Imam Choirul Huda (Imam Suma Budaya)

(Museum Batik of Pekalongan, Pekalongan, Indonesia)

Nepal

Namaste Dancers

Choreographer: Rochak Ramjee Thapa



Sunil Tamang, Jigme Samdup Tamang, Lakpa Dorje Syantan, Pradip Gole, Dil Bahadur Blon, Purna Bahadur Syangtan, Mukesh Rai, Srma Sunuwar, Om Rai, Namrata Tamang, Asmita Khadka, Renuka Tamang, Monika Gurung, Migma Sherpa, Ramila Shahi, Kritika Magar (Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Nepal)

Japan

Minbuza: The Japanese Folk Dance Institute of New York



Choreographers: Momo Suzuki, Kevin Suzuki, Maria Yabunaka, Rieko Takamiya, Ryo Shiba, Krystelle Diaz, Yoko Kato,

Sarah Bolander, Kevin Suzuki

(Mount Hope Pond, Wharton, NJ; Cao Residence, Rockaway, NJ, USA)

Ireland

Foy School of Traditional Irish Dance

Choreographer: Geraldine Foy, Brigid Bolz, Leah Brier, Lydia Foy, Kiera Fraim, Abbey McBride, Anya Moore, Emma Pergams, Colleen Richardson

(Menomonee Club, Chicago, Illinois, USA)





Rwanda
Jacques Nyungura
Choreographer and Soloist

(Meridian Hill Park, Washington D.C.,
USA)

Scotland
West Virginia Highland Dancers
Choreographer: Katy Dillon
Eliana McCutcheon, Charlotte Layman,
Daisy Stemple, Ally Simon, Mollie
LeMasters, Evelyn Anne Bennett

(Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV,
USA)



India
Suhasini Muthukrishnan
Choreographer and Soloist
(Bharatanatyam)

(Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, Lanham, MD,
USA)

Ludwig von Beethoven
Mehrddad Mizani, (Actor, Musical
Advisor)

(Studio, Maryland, USA)



Production Team:

Producer: Kate Tsubata

Executive Producer: Kazuo Tsubata

Director: Lan Tsubata Lee

Director of Photography: Henrik A. Meyer, DFF

Camera Operators: Yousuke Kiname, Henrik A. Meyer

Drone Pilots: Henrik A. Meyer, Yousuke Kiname

Unit Photography: SunJae Smith, Shane Yeager, Theo Lian

Associate Producer: Eric Benson

Production Coordinator: Sarah Karnowski Tsubata

Film Editor: Mie Smith, LightSmith Productions

Post-production effects: SunJae Smith, LightSmith Productions

Sound Editor: Kensei Tsubata

Music: Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Opus 125, "Choral"

Written by Ludwig van Beethoven

Performed by Dresden State Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Conducted by Herbert Blomstedt

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