

Dance Theatre of Ireland (IRL) & Soul Steps (USA) Every Little Step...*the Rhythm of Hope*

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“...a really powerful performance...definitely go...” NYC Irish Arts Review

“...ebullient performances and choreography...” Dance NYC



TOURING 2012 / 2013 / 2014



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Dance Theatre of Ireland Every Little Step...*the Rhythm of Hope*

Press Quotes – New York, premiere Joyce SoHo, Nov 17-20th, 2011

"a really powerful performance...definitely go, a very powerful combination of two traditions that blended well together "

Irish Arts Review NYC, Gwen Orel

"...ebullient performances and choreography which both showcased and integrated the companies' talents"

Dance NYC, Eveline Chang

"...seamless in their fusion of African-American Step, Irish Dance, Modern dance and story telling. It was a fantastic show and an inspiring way to spend a day...."

Elena Vazintaris NYC Dance Blog

"...the words draw a parallel between two cultures, colonized and enslaved, that communicated in rhythms when their spoken languages were suppressed."

"...the two sides bring to this new marriage of traditions what they brought to the old. Stepping plays the low bass of stamping feet against the higher pitches of hands slapping chests, bellies, thighs and hands, sometimes hands that meet underneath a raised leg. It excels in cross-rhythms, syncopation. Irish dance articulates the different parts of the foot and plays them against one another. It shines in *floor-skimming* speed.

"...percussive embroidery...smooth segues and teamwork...when the mixed company is stepping together or contributing to the rhythm in pairs, the aural image of unity is persuasive and rousing."

"...the advanced Irish technique of Andrew Vickers strikes sparks during his call and response."

The New York Times - Brian Seibert



Artistic Directors Robert Connor & Loretta Yurick.
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Board of Directors: Robert Burke, Patrick Delaney, Caroline FitzGerald, Gail Gilliland, Dr. Joe Mulholland, Kay Scora

Every Little Step...*the Rhythm of Hope*

National Tour November 2012

An exhilarating, cross-cultural fusion of Contemporary, Irish and African-American dance and rhythm

Dance Theatre of Ireland (IRL) and *Soul Steps* (USA) present **Every Little Step...*the Rhythm of Hope***, an original creation drawing on their unique dance vocabularies, personal stories, and above all, on rhythm.

Every Little Step is a powerful performance about Hope. From their critically acclaimed premiere in New York, this is a riveting, foot-stomping, body-clapping energizing experience for all ages. With sheer human energy, embodied by the precision of the choreography, this is a clever, joyous and compelling work.

Through Body Percussion (African-American stepping), Irish and Modern dance, spoken word, and call and response with the audience, there is a physical musicality and engagement that drives the performance, offering a connecting and uplifting experience. "...*persuasive and rousing...*" *The New York Times*.

At a time when individuals and communities are often experiencing great hardships, **Every Little Step** offers a refreshing perspective on perseverance and connects us with the roots of cultural expression. With primal rhythms and collective stories, drawn from life's settings, the performance gives us a way (and a time) to *feel* our connection with each other and, in so doing, the power in ourselves.

The Performance is touring to all major Theatres in Ireland, many community settings and schools and can also be performed for Festivals (indoors and outdoors). Participatory Body Percussion workshops taking place throughout the tour explore and share the unique expression of rhythm, stepping, heritage and stories of hope.

Every Little Step...*the Rhythm of Hope* was critically acclaimed following its premiere in New York as part of *Imagine Ireland*, Culture Ireland's celebration of Irish Arts in America 2011 and was created in both Ireland and New York. It is supported by the Arts Council Touring and Dissemination Award, Culture Ireland, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Arts and the United States Embassy, Ireland.

Choreography: Robert Connor & Loretta Yurick, Dance Theatre of Ireland (IRL) & Maxine Lyle, Soul Steps (USA) with 7 Dancers: Robert Connor, Bridget Madden, Kyle V. Martin, Teresa McHugh, Marc Stevenson, Andrew Vickers

National Tour 2012 - Ireland

Nov 2 Draíocht, **Blanchardstown, 8pm**

Nov 6th – 9th Pavilion Theatre, **Dun Laoghaire, Nightly 8pm plus School Matinees Nov 8th & 9th @noon**

Nov 13 Hawk's Well, **Sligo, 8pm**

Nov 15 University of **Limerick, 8pm**

Nov 17 Síamsa Tire, **Tralee, 8pm**

Nov 18 The Firkin Crane Theatre, **Cork, 8pm**

Nov 22 Mermaid Arts Centre, **Bray, 8pm**

Nov 23 Axis, **Ballymun, 8pm**

Nov 26 Town Hall Theatre, **Galway, 8pm**

Here are some links to the work:

<http://www.dancetheatreireland.com/pages/Creations/everystep.htm> **Information on the production,1-page.**

<http://vimeo.com/40729739> **Live Excerpts** from Joyce SoHo performance November, New York, 1.5 min.

<http://vimeo.com/23563185> **"First Steps"** rehearsals between DTI & Soul Steps

<http://vimeo.com/25457006> **"Second Steps"**, rehearsals excerpts 2

<http://bit.ly/nMFFxk> **"Third Steps" The Company** – rehearsal extracts 3, **Sept 29, 2011**

<http://youtu.be/4f-CnyZdGdw> Photos from **Every Little Step, slide show**

Every Little Step...*the Rhythm of Hope*

Company Biographies

Dance Theatre of Ireland

Dynamic and multi-faceted, Dance Theatre of Ireland has extensive International performance experience, including performances in France, Netherlands, Italy, the U.K. Germany, the USA, Sweden, Bulgaria, South Korea and Spain. The Company has produced work by its Artistic Directors Robert Connor & Loretta Yurick, as well as commissioning work from International choreographers including Charles Linehan (UK) , Rui Horta (Portugal), Joanne Leighton & Martine Pisani, Dominique Bagouet and Charles Cre Ange (FR) Their international co-productions *Parallel Horizons / Under the Roof*, with *Now Dance Company* KOREA premiered in the *Seoul Performing Arts Festival*, with 8 dancers and 4 musicians, and toured in both countries. Their 2007 *Block Party*, a playful performance for public spaces for five dancers, 3 drummers and 32 gigantic blocks, has been an international hit touring Korea, Europe & the USA internationally each year since 2007. Whether for the theatre or open spaces, their work embraces the search for vocabularies that enlighten the process of being human.

Dance Theatre of Ireland's Artistic Directors are founders and directors of an award-winning Dance Performance Outreach programme, **DANCE POP**, which reaches out to very diverse populations and in particular to the young, and multicultural groups.

Artistic Directors Robert Connor & Loretta Yurick, Dance Theatre Ireland, Co-Choreographers, *Every Little Step...the Rhythm of Hope*



Robert Connor (who performs in this work) & Loretta Yurick are founders, principal choreographers and Artistic Directors of **Dance Theatre of Ireland** and have created over 30 original dance theatre works, most utilising original music and design with some of Ireland's finest artists, including artists Robert Ballagh, Nigel Rolfe, and musician Pól Brennan (Clannad), among others. Their work has been described as a constant reflection on our human states of frailty and strength. They have also collaborated and produced the work of many seminal international choreographers in Ireland.

Their work (*Exodus, Watermark, As a Matter of Fact, Evidence, Soul Survivor, PRISM, Parallel Horizons*) has incorporated Digital Technologies and video, including motion capture & 3-D Digital animation and has been presented at many international Festivals: *Tanzwochen Dresden, CNetART (Dresden), Monaco Dance Forum, Essexdance MESH Festival, Dublin Theatre Festival, Darklight Festival and Seoul Performing Arts Festival, Greenwich Dance Festival London, Fira Tarrega Spain, among others*. Other theatre and outdoor street work has toured to major venues and Festivals in **Korea, Italy, France, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Wales, England and Spain**, and to every major theatre in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Robert & Loretta are founding Members and former Officers of the Association of Professional Choreographers & Dancers in Ireland (now *Dance Ireland*). In 2001, Irish **President Mary McAleese** officially opened their **Centre for Dance** in Dun Laoghaire, where, under their direction, more than 2000 people now dance yearly, commenting: "You are powerful Ambassadors for the exhilarating language of dance..."

They are also founders of the **Dublin Youth Dance Company (DYDC)** and progenitors of Ireland's largest outreach programme in Dance, **DANCE POP** (Dance Performance Outreach Programme).

Soul Steps LLC (New York, USA)

Soul Steps was founded in 2005 by step artist **Maxine Lyle**. Their mission is to expand the presence of stepping in the arts while creating avenues for cultural exchange and awareness among diverse

communities. They specialize in the live performance, artistic instruction, and educational outreach of African-based step dance. **Soul Steps** reaches far beyond conventional boundaries and concentrates on the body as a percussive, story-telling instrument. Performances include the personal and cultural stories of the artists and the generations of ancestors they represent. NYC based Soul Steps has toured extensively in the USA and internationally.



Maxine Lyle, Artistic Director Soul Steps, Co-choreographer Every Little Step, began stepping at the age of seven in her hometown of Newark, NJ. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Williams College and Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatrical Management and Producing from Columbia University. She now performs, choreographs and offers step instruction to youth and adults throughout the Northeast. She has extensively researched the local and international history of stepping. In 1996 she co-founded *Sankofa*, the Williams College step team, which celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2006 and is now under the official auspices of the *Williams College Dance Program*. She has been a creative advisor to college and youth step teams and taught at arts institutions, including the Youth Alive Step Team (Pittsfield, MA), the Manhattan College Step Team, the Westfield State University Step Team, the Vermont Arts Exchange, Berkshire Pulse, Eden Hill, and Simon's Rock. Her choreography has been featured at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA).

The Dancers / Performers (7) including DTI Artistic Director **Robert Connor**



Tess McHugh grew up in Williamstown, Massachusetts and graduated from Williams College where she studied Theatre and French (2011). Her grandparents both came to New York City from Ireland in the 1930's and she could not be more thrilled to return home to perform. She has been dancing and performing her whole life and began stepping at the age of 12 at Williams College, in the *Sankofa* Stepping group founded by **Maxine Lyle, Director Souls Steps** at Williams College. She performed and danced with **Soul Steps** in their production **Step Show**.



Aurelia Michael is from Bronx, New York and began her dance training at the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She is a graduate of the *Broadway Dance Center* Internship program. She studied dance at the University of Maryland, College Park, and founded the UMD dance company *Dynamic*. She was Captain of her Stepping Group while at UMD and continues to work with them. Aurelia was a member of *Culture Shock* Dance Troupe DC for four years, performing nationwide and internationally, and has performed with Cirque Du Soleil, Xbox 360, Mattel, Michael Jackson Album Release Party, *Legally Blonde: The Musical* and many others.



Kyle V. Martin is from Connecticut and is a recent graduate of Williams College in Art and Art History. He is the recipient of a year's Fellowship to study dance, and has trained in New York at the *Broadway Dance Centre* (among other studios) studying ballet, hip hop, jazz and choreography. He has recently returned from a two-month choreography project in Costa Rica. Kyle was a stepper with *Sankofa* (the Williams College Stepping group founded by **Maxine Lyle of Soul Steps**). He performed with **Soul Steps** recently on **Step Show**.

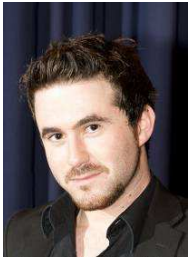


Bridget Madden is an Irish and Contemporary, dancer and choreographer based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. She graduated with a first class honours dance degree from the University of Ulster in 2009 and then went on to tour worldwide with *Rhythm of the Dance* and *Celtic Dream*. As well as being involved as a company member, performer and outreach facilitator for *Echo Echo Dance Theatre* (in Derry) since graduating, she has worked extensively and created and premiered work in New York, with *Solas an Lae* and more recently *The D'amby Project*.



Marc Stevenson studied classical and contemporary dance with the *Cie Grenade* of Josette Baiz (Aix en Provence), from the age of 10. At the same time he completed a Literary

Baccalaureate (A level) with cinema and dance emphasis from 2000-2003. For 5 years he was a professional contemporary dancer with *Cie Grenade* Company touring internationally and involved in the creation of many original works. He is a musician (guitar) and singer and has sung and played with many professional and semi-professional companies, and is also versed in African percussion. Since 2010 he has been living in London. He has also been active in developing and promoting heritage and cultural tourism in the French West Indies.



Andrew Vickers is from Galway, and is a trained Irish dancer who has been performing for over 10 years. He has been a featured dancer with Celtic Entertainments performing with Frankie Gavin and De Dannan in the show *Women of Ireland*. For 9 years he worked as a principle dancer with Star Entertainment's *Magic of the Dance* and Ceol Chiarrai Productions on *To Dance on the Moon*, *The Spirit of Ireland*, and *Dance of Desire*. He holds an MA in Traditional Dance Performance from the University of Limerick and also has worked in American Tap, Hungarian Body percussion and Latin and contemporary dance.

About African-American Stepping

"Stepping is tap dance without tap shoes, James Brown without the music of the JB's, Cab Calloway sans piano, a marching band without John Philip Sousa. It is jazz, funk, rhythm and blues, and rap without instruments. Stepping is lean and mean. The music comes from the synchronized interplay of hands and feet, from chants and hollers. It is a way to make music using the body as instrument." (*Washington Post*)

Stepping is a unique dance tradition created by African American college students. In stepping, the body is used as an instrument to create intricate rhythms and sounds through a combination of footsteps, claps and spoken word. Stepping comes from a long and rich tradition in African-based communities that use movement, words and sounds to communicate.





There is constant audience interaction throughout the *live* performance but also, we will be giving workshops in the community in Dance & *Step Dance* and the unique use of body percussion with Irish rhythms. We will be working with local **schools, colleges, dance clubs, youth groups, slam poetry/rap groups, Irish traditional step dance groups, youth dance & theatre companies, immigrant resource organizations, gospel choirs, plus open public workshops.** They are a very important part of the reach of **Every Little Step... the Rhythm of Hope.**

