

The Sun Journal's weekly entertainment magazine

Encore

Friday, April 14, 2000

Bates
dance
goes
to
Portland

PAGE 6

Elton
John
in
Boston:
the
review

PAGE 3

At
the
moves

PAGE 4

Chansonetta
Stanley
Emmons,
photographic
pioneer

PAGE 8

What's
happening
this
weekend

PAGE 11



3

dance, storytelling and song

*Portland Museum of Art will showcase
dance project featuring Lewiston and
Portland residents and sites.*

a community-based dance project titled "If Wishes Were Horses, Beggars Would Ride" – conceived by acclaimed choreographers Sara Pearson and Patrik Widrig – is under way with movement, song and story-sharing workshops scheduled at Portland locations.

Commissioned by the Bates (College) Dance Festival, this six-week artists' residency is an interactive, multi-media dance theater work involving community members of all ages: third-graders at Jack Elementary School, teens from East End Children's Workshop, a group of students from Portland Adult Education and elders from DanceSport Portland and USM LifelineGym. Also participating are members of the New Dance Studio and Ram Island Dance; Portland Arts and Technology High School; Maine College of Art students; and motivational speaker and martial artist John Jenkins. Musicians include percussionist Annegret Baier, oud player Al Gardiner and accordionist Tom Faux.

Last summer, phase 1 of the project took place in Lewiston, the community base for a similar six-week residency, where two workshop performances were given during the Bates Dance Festival. In addition, radio interviews were conducted and video footage was shot at the Bates Mill, Railroad Bridge Park, rural property overlooking the Androscoggin River, the former Empire Theater, and in private homes.

Final performances, scheduled for 7:30 p.m. May 10, 11, 13 and 14 at the Portland Museum of Art, will feature those interviews and video footage along with live music, dance, storytelling and poetry. The production will also incorporate choreography developed from participating community members' stories about change in their lives.

Pearson and Widrig selected the museum as the site for the final performances because of their immediate response to the beauty and mystery of the building's architecture.

Breaking with tradition, members of New York-based Pearson/Widrig and Company and local participants will not perform on a proscenium stage with the audience seated in the theater. Rather, they will perform in the museum's many singular spaces, with a culminating event in the Great Hall.

When the final work is presented next month in four performances taking place throughout the museum, members of the audience will turn each corner to a new space and be surprised by what they see and hear as well as what is requested of them.

For instance, as they enter the first room, they will encounter a group of people doing a simple, exquisitely subtle chair dance to a spiritual recorded in the 1930s. Later on, in one of the smaller rooms, there will be a video piece playing on a monitor showing the same dance, but this time it has been recorded in many different locations with many different people in different seasons and environments. Taking the experience of this dance one step further, the audience will be invited to perform this same dance when they are in the auditorium, exactly mirroring one of the professional dancers on stage.

In another space, the audience will encounter a duet between an older woman and a young teenager, each telling a story of something lost and something found in the past year. In the next room audience members will be invited to write a list of their own "lost and founds" on a mural.

Portland photographer Sean Harris has been commissioned to document the creative development of the second phase of the project. He will create portraits of project participants, which will be exhibited at the Portland Museum of Art's Community Gallery along with artwork created by Maine College of Art and Jack Element-

Dance CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

tary School students. For the past 11 years, Pearson and Widrig have been creating dance theater works for their company and touring throughout the United States, as well as gaining an

international reputation as a duet company performing in Mexico, Brazil, South Korea, New Zealand, India, Greece, England, Scotland, Italy and Switzerland. In recent years they have become well

known for site-specific works performed in rowboats in New York's Central Park, on the sand of Coney Island and at the Audubon Sanctuary in Falmouth, Maine.

"If Wishes Were Horses, Beggars Would Ride" is one of six pilots being created by dance presenters around the country in association

with the OnSite Performance Network, a national commissioning fund for site-specific work developed by New York-based Dancing in the Streets in 1992.

Attendance at the museum performances will be limited due to the intimate nature of the work and the gallery spaces it will occupy.

Advance reservations are recommended. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$8 for children under 12 and seniors over 60. They will go on sale Monday, April 24.

To purchase tickets, call PortTix at 842-0800. For more information, contact the Portland Museum of Art at 775-6148.