2-15-1997

River North Dance Company

Center for Performing Arts

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River North Dance Company

The Center for Performing Arts

At Governors State University
River North Dance Company
Dancers

Sara Ayers
Alberto J. Arias
Jeffrey Hancock
Mari Jo Irbe
Cheryl Mann
Stephanie Martinez
Harrison McEldowney

Heather Sirois
Tiffiny Stanfield
Mark Swanhart*
Lara Tinari
Kelly Tonge
Robyn Williams
Gretchen Zweifel*

*performing apprentice

Artistic Direction

Sherry Zunker Dow
Artistic Director
Claire Bataille
Ballet Mistress

Frank Chaves
Artistic Director
Sara Ayers
Rehearsal Director

Administration/Development

Joan Gress Stevens, J.D.
General Manager

Michael Godnick
Development Consultant

Kimberly Jones
Administrative Assistant

Joni May
Marketing Manager

Beverlee Bailey
Administrative Intern

April Castro
Special Projects

Production

Tom Fleming
Stage Manager

Joe Cerqua
Sound Designer

Todd Clark
Production Consultant

by arrangement with Siegel Artist Management
ACT I

ZIB WOHS 1996
Choreography: Sherry Zunker Dow
Costume Design: Jordon Ross
Lighting Design: Tom Fleming

The Cast

Inspiration - Sara Ayers
The Bobs - Tiffiny Stanfield
- Kelly Tonge
Starlene - Stephanie Martinez
Stepp - Harrison McEldowney
Jasper - Mark Swanhart
Sadmatter - Jeffrey Hancock
Chorine - Cheryl Mann
Glee - Lara Tinari
Gypsy - Mari Jo Irbe

I. The Beginning
Music: Allen/Bayer Sager
(Arranged by: John Mennella/ Sung by: Louise Cloutier)
Performed by: Inspiration

II. On the Road
Music: Green/Brown/Homer (Arranged by: Esquivel)
Performed by: The Cast

III. Late Nite Gigs
Music: J. Cox (Sung by: Nina Simone)
Performed by: Sadmatter & The Bobs

IV. The Big Break
Directors Voice: Jim Corti
Additional Voice: Louise Cloutier
Music: Rodgers & Hart (Sung by: Natalie Cole)
Performed by: Gypsy, Jasper, Sadmatter, Stepp, Starlene and Chorine
Featuring: Glee

V. The Finale
Music: Ortolani/Newell/Oliviero
Performed by: The Company

Costumes underwritten in part by a grant from the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation

Passion
Choreography: Frank Chaves
Music: Graeme Revell, Jeff Selbar, Warren Hill
Lighting Design: Todd Clark
Costume Design: Jordon Ross
Performed by: Tiffiny Stanfield, Jeffrey Hancock and Harrison McEldowney

Costume for Passion underwritten by Mr. and Mrs. Francisco Chaves

Lean On Me
Choreography: Randy Duncan
Music: Bill Withers
Lighting Design: Todd Clark
Costume Design: Barbara Neiderer
Performed by: The Company

*Randy Duncan originally choreographed Lean On Me for “Dance for Life.” Its goal is to raise awareness and funds to fight AIDS, to honor our losses and to celebrate life. Randy has given Lean On Me as a gift to RNDC to keep the spirit of this cause alive.

Fixe
Choreography: Frank Chaves
Music: Cirque Du Soleil Soundtrack, Nouvelle Experience
Costume Design: Barry Doss
Lighting Design: Todd Clark
Performed by: Alberto Arias and Lara Tinari

Reality of a Dreamer
Choreography: Sherry Zunker Dow
Music: Composed and performed by Douglas Johnson, Eurythmics
Costume Design: Sherry Zunker Dow
Lighting Design: Todd Clark
Performed by: The Company

Intermission
ACT II

Grusin Suite 1996
Choreography: Frank Chaves
Music: Dave Grusin (from the soundtrack of The Firm)"
Costume Design: Barb Neiderer
Lighting Design: Tom Fleming

Section I. Alberto Arias, Sara Ayers, Jeffrey Hancock, Harrison McEldowney, Cheryl Mann, Stephanie Martinez and Tiffany Stanfield, Mark Swanhart

Section II. Alberto Arias, Jeffrey Hancock & Harrison McEldowney

Section III. Mark Swanhart and Kelly Tonge

Section IV. Alberto Arias, Sara Ayers, Jeffrey Hancock, Mari Jo Irbe, Cheryl Mann, Harrison McEldowney, Stephanie Martinez, Tiffany Stanfield, Kelly Tonge, Robyn Williams

Change Partners 1996
Choreography: Harrison McEldowney
Lighting Design: Tom Fleming
Costume Design: Nan Zabriskie
Music: Arthur Schwartz & Howard Dietz / Irving Berlin
Music Performed by: Barbara Cook
Performed by: Alberto Arias, Mari Jo Irbe, Cheryl Mann, Harrison McEldowney, Mark Swanhart & Kelly Tonge featuring Robyn Williams

WIRED 1988
Choreography: Sam Watson and Kenny Comstock
Music: An original music collage by Sam Watson & Kenny Comstock

Lighting Design: Todd Clark
Costume Design: Sara Ayers
Performed by: Jeff Hancock and Lara Tinari

Charanga 1995
Choreography: Frank Chaves
Music: Yellow
Lighting Design: Todd Clark
Costume Design: Jordan Ross

Section I: Sara Ayers, Jeffrey Hancock, Cheryl Mann, Harrison McEldowney, Tiffany Stanfield, Mark Swanhart

Section II: The Company

Artistic Directors:
Sherry Zunker Dow (Manitowoc, WI) has been the Artistic Director of River North Dance Company since 1990. In the past six years, she has choreographed seven pieces for the Company and has commissioned the work of 11 other talented Chicago choreographers to set twenty-eight pieces on the Company. The result is a highly acclaimed repertoire that is innovative, diverse and thoroughly entertaining. She has been proclaimed "a sophisticated choreographer" with a "passion for dance" and a "clear artistic vision," by several Chicago dance critics. Sherry has had extensive performing experience as well. She danced with Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble, was a principal dancer with Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, was a soloist in the national touring company of Bob Fosse's Dancin', and was in the Goodman Theatre production of Pal Joey, under noted choreographer Ann Reinking. She has danced professionally in several films, commercials, television specials and videos. In addition, Sherry has served on the faculty of Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Center, The Lou Conte Dance Studio, The Ruth Page Foundation and she currently teaches master classes throughout the US.

Frank Chaves (Miami, FL) was named Co-Artistic Director of River North last year after having served as the Company's Associate Artistic Director since 1993. Frank is known to audiences throughout the world for his work as a six year company member with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and also as an independent choreographer. Frank studied dance at the University of South Florida, the Miami Conservatory and in New York City with many teachers, including Lynn Simonin and David Howard. He has television and musical theatre experience and has performed with numerous companies including Waves, Ballet Concerto of Miami, Ballet Hispanico of New York, Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Frank also serves on the faculty of several noted Chicago dance studios and travels throughout the United States and Europe teaching master classes.

General Manager:
Joan Gress Stevens (Olympia Fields, IL) received her Bachelor's degree from Purdue University and her Juris Doctor from the University of Illinois School of Law. Joan practiced as a litigation attorney for six years with the Chicago law firm of Pedersen & Houpt. It was during this time that she was asked by the founding directors of River North to incorporate the company and act as its part-time general manager, primarily writing grants. A few years later, Joan decided to dedicate herself to River North as its full-time general manager. In addition to being a "jack of all trades" for the company, Joan is currently a member of the Lawyers for the Creative Arts Committee of the Chicago Bar Association, The Chicago Dance Coalition Advisory Board and recently served on the 1996 Ruth Page Awards Benefit Committee. Having danced in a variety of performing groups throughout high school and college, Joan is a 15-year veteran judge and past judging coordinator for the Illinois Drill Team Association (IDTA) judging high school dance, pom pom and flag team performances throughout Illinois.

Choreographers Premiering New Works:
Sherry Zunker Dow has choreographed seven pieces for River North and has commissioned the work of 11 other talented Chicago choreographers. Her work for River North includes Round (1990), The Man that Got Away (1990), So in Love (1991), Too Darn Hot (1991), Reality of a Dreamer (1992), Glimpse (1994) and ZIB WOHS (1996). Sherry's Reality of a Dreamer, has become River North's "signature piece" and was the finale of the Company's television performance documentary of the same name. The documentary has won numerous awards including a Chicago/Midwest Emmy for Outstanding Entertainment Special, another Emmy for Todd Clark's exquisite lighting design and the Chicago International Film Festival Silver Plaque. Most recently, Sherry set her Man That Got Away on the Jeffrey Ballet of Chicago as part of Legends, a new work honoring five women entertainers by five women choreographers. Sherry has also choreographed numerous musical productions, commercials, music videos, live industrial shows as well as writing and choreographing several productions for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines. It is from her musical theatre experience that her new work, ZIB WOHS, was inspired.
Frank Chaves has been a prolific choreographer for River North having created seven new works for the company - In the Still of the Night (1991), Thief (1993), Passion (1993), Grandma’s Hands (1994), Ficce (1994), Charanga (1995) and Grusan Suite (1996). Frank has also choreographed pieces for Spectrum Dance Theatre (Seattle), Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, Point Park college for the Performing Arts (Pittsburgh), Barat Repertory Dance Company (Lake Forest, IL), Kaleidoscope Dancers (Ohio Northern University), and Lisa Nojonen Dance Company (Finland). He has also staged ballets for choreographer Daniel Ezralow on Atlanta Ballet, Ballet Florida (West Palm Beach, FL) and Ballet Lirico di Verona (Verona, Italy). His theatrical commissions include work for Steppenwolf Theatre and The Cleveland Playhouse.

Harrison McEldowney has performed with River North Dance Company for four years and choreographed his third piece for the Company this year. This past year, he was in Europe where he choreographed an original production of "Beauty and the Beast" and was Associate Choreographer for the Hot Mikado on London’s West End. He has choreographed numerous trade shows and musicals in Chicago. He also choreographed for Carnegie Hall’s 125 Years of Musical Theatre and assisted David Bell and Gregg Burge on the 1992 Barcelona Olympics’ Closing Ceremonies. Harrison also choreographed a tour of “Chess” starring Jodi Benson, the Australian tour of “More Dirty Dancing” featuring Bill Medley andContours, the 35th Anniversary Tour of American Bandstand and, most recently, the regional premiere of the Cole Porter musical “The New Yorkers.” He is proud to have received Gay Chicago Magazine’s After Dark Award for solo performance and choreography.

Company Members:

Sara Ayers, a founding member of River North Dance Company, in her seventh season as a performer and rehearsal assistant. She is honored to have recently received a 1996 Ruth Page Award for “A Season of Outstanding Dancing” with River North. Sara began her training in Manitowoc, WI and continued in Champaign, IL at the National Academy of the Arts. She took part in the Emmy Award winning TV special “Love in Four Acts” choreography Project, the PBS Great Performances Special “Love in Four Acts” choreographed by Claire Bataille and a European tour with choreographer Danny Herman. Stephanie was also nominated in 1994 for a Ruth Page Award. For the last two years Stephanie has been a featured performer in Randy Duncan’s finals for Dance for Life.

Harrison McEldowney has had the privilege of dancing around the world in Spain, Japan, Australia, Canada and the UK. He has danced on the stage of Carnegie Hall and at the Barcelona Olympics Closing Ceremonies. Harrison comes from a musical theatre background that has taken him from Off-Broadway to regional theatre and touring. Harrison also spent six months on the road with Heart Strings, a fund raiser to benefit people living with HIV and AIDS. Harrison has had the privilege of dancing with Chita Rivera, Sammy Davis Jr., Van Johnson, Gregg Burge, Salt-N-Pepa and the lovely, but sadly, recently departed Dorothy Lamour.

Heather Sirois is currently an apprentice with River North and is also performing in the choreographers’ showcase of Dance Chicago ‘96 performing with Wilfredo Rivera. She recently completed a seven month contract with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines as a dancer and dance captain under the direction of Mark and Sherry Dow. Heather began her dance training with Paula Aubry in Kankakee, IL. After high school, Heather went on to study at Barat College and Oklahoma City University before returning to Chicago to choreography Project in Chicago. Heather held the title of Miss CNADM '94-'95 and has worked with choreographers Ginger Farley, Greg Begley, Jeff Hancock, Ricardo Moyano and Tom Rahalate.

Tiffiny Stanfield, a Scorpio, began her dance training in Amarillo, Texas with Neil and Camille Hess. She spent several summers studying on scholarship with Houston Ballet and Southwest Ballet Center with Bill Martin-Viscount. After graduating high school from Harid Conservatory in Boca Raton, Florida, she moved to Chicago where she joined River North. Tiffiny travels internationally performing in industrial and trade shows. In her spare time she likes to Jitterbug and has become the number one partner of “A League of Their Own” Tony Savino (watch out Madonna). Tiffiny also took part in the Emmy Award winning TV special “Reality of a Dreamer.” Most recently, Tiffiny participated in Design Industry Foundation Fighting AIDS Project Collection Rouge, which toured seven cities featuring dresses by forty of the world’s top designers. Tiffiny is now a homeowner and has no plans of leaving Chicago.

Mark Swanhart, originally from Vinco, Pennsylvania has joined River North as an apprentice for the ‘96 season. He received his training from Point Park College in Pittsburgh where he studied all forms of dance. Mark has worked professionally with “The Dance Alloy of Pittsburgh” and Elizabeth Strebb of “Ringside.” Mark is currently with the James Kelley Choreography Project.}

Cheryl Mann, originally from Orlando, Florida, joined River North after graduating from Point Park College with a B.A. in dance. She has performed with Civic Light Opera in Pittsburgh, Southern Ballet Theatre Project in Orlando, as well as Walt Disney World, FL. She has worked with the James Kelly Choreography Project, Disney’s Poohcartons Summer Extravaganza at the Chicago Theatre, and toured nationally with DIFFA (Designer Industry Foundation Fighting AIDS). Most recently, Cheryl has danced in Nick Johnson’s Segway and Cerqua-Rivera Dance Company.

Stephanie Martinez, is a native of El Paso, TX and is an original Company member. Stephanie received a full scholarship and apprenticeship with Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago and a full scholarship with the Lou Conte Dance Studio, where she serves as a faculty member. Aside from her ongoing work with River North, Stephanie’s freelance performances include The James Kelly Choreography Project, the PBS Great Performances Special “Love in Four Acts” choreographed by Claire Bataille and a European tour with choreographer Danny Herman. Stephanie was also nominated in 1994 for a Ruth Page Award. For the last two years Stephanie has been a featured performer in Randy Duncan’s finals for Dance for Life.

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Harrison McEldowney has had the privilege of dancing around the world in Spain, Japan, Australia, Canada and the UK. He has danced on the stage of Carnegie Hall and at the Barcelona Olympics Closing Ceremonies. Harrison comes from a musical theatre background that has taken him from Off-Broadway to regional theatre and touring. Harrison also spent six months on the road with Heart Strings, a fund raiser to benefit people living with HIV and AIDS. Harrison has had the privilege of dancing with Chita Rivera, Sammy Davis Jr., Van Johnson, Gregg Burge, Salt-N-Pepa and the lovely, but sadly, recently departed Dorothy Lamour.

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began her dance training with Sheila Stracka and continued her studies with Lisa and Frank Boehm in Elgin where she performed various soloist roles. She received a full scholarship at the Lou Conte Studio out of high school and was the recipient of the Elgin Area Performing Arts Dance Scholarship. Kelly has been teaching dance for ten years at Gould Academy in Elgin and enjoys substitute teaching in the Chicagoland area. Kelly has performed internationally in various industrials and was very happy to be a part of the Collection Rouge seven city tour for DIFFA this past year. Kelly would like to thank her fiancee Brian for his continuous love and encouragement.

Robyn M. Williams is from Lombard, IL and began dancing at an early age under the direction of Yvonne Brown Collodi with whom she toured Germany, Switzerland and Austria. She continued her dance studies on full scholarship at the Lou Conte Dance Studio and directly after high school graduation in 1995 received an apprenticeship with River North. Robyn has performed in industrial and commercial shows throughout the Chicago area and recently received the first Mark Strand Memorial Dance Scholarship. She is now happy to be touring as a company member with River North.

Gretchen Zweifel began her dance training in Wisconsin with Jean Wolfmeyer. In 1993, she graduated from the Virginia School of the Arts, under the direction of Petrus Bosman, with both dance and academic honors. Gretchen recently finished her second season as a company member of Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago which included international tours to Japan and Switzerland. Gretchen had the opportunity to perform in Disney’s Pocahontas Summer Spectacular which brought her to Rome. She has taught at the Gus Giordano Dance Center and for the Virginia School of the Arts. Gretchen is excited to continue her dance career with River North Dance Company.

The Center for Performing Arts

Welcomes

The Enhancement Organization of Olympia Fields