



FOOT WORK

May 2015

By Kristen Schott

The Wooden Floor has tapped top choreographer John Heginbotham for its 32nd Annual Concert May 28-30 at the Barclay (benefit seating \$50, thewoodenfloor.org). The talent—whose namesake company was just chosen for the Department of State's *DanceMotion USA* program—is co-creating a piece with the arts-based nonprofit's students. Here's a step or two...

Have you always loved dance? My parents introduced me to classic Hollywood musicals, and the dancing was where the magic happened. I fell in love with *Singin' in Rain*. They also took me to see every live theatrical event in Anchorage.

What a testament to the power of the arts! Perhaps that's why The Wooden Floor is important to you. This place recognizes two things: The creation of art encourages possibility, and kindness is effective. Art comments on culture, and at The Wooden Floor, that art tends to lift the spirit.

Now, your new piece is inspired by the desert. How do you translate that into movement? I [listened to the] music—a solo guitar piece by Heitor Villa-Lobos. His *Prelude No. 1 in E Minor* set a scene—a heat wave. It made me move in a particular way, and when I translated that to the dancers, a mood emerged. I told them to 'do it like you're in the desert.' From then on, desert themes presented themselves.

Does your concept tie in to the nonprofit's mission? It has more to do with the creation of the dance rather than the content. The Wooden Floor empowers income-challenged youth through dance. I'm asking our dancers

to...own their movement by filling it with their imaginations and abilities, and then to share that with an audience. This is uplifting but also difficult.

What impresses you most about your students? Their generosity and humor. The act of dancing can be vulnerable. They're brave and they do it. They also share their food—these kids offer me their snacks.

Any words of wisdom? Learn to dance by dancing.

Is there any genre of dance you don't like? I love this question. Each time I think I've come up with an answer, there's an exception—always that one time I liked something from that genre.

If you weren't a choreographer, you'd be...a quality control inspector for high-end hotel chains.

And where must you go while in OC? Don the Beachcomber.