

One River Mississippi

Report from the Artistic Director

Issue No. 6: April 26, 2006

onerivermississippi.org

Just 59 days left until Performance Day

June 24 2006



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Note from the Director

Less than two months to go! We have turned the corner into the last phase of our project, which has been four years in the making. We are getting our proverbial ducks in order. You'll read more about the dance therapists and the project managers that we have lined up in this issue.

I'll just note here that several magazines and some television stations have signed on to do stories about the project in the various cities.

And radio? We all know the pleasure of tapping that final piece of a picture puzzle into place. I felt that contentment as the seventh radio station agreed to come on board. Now that all of our broadcasters have committed to play the same music at the exact same time, I feel assured that my dream of synchronization can now come true. The level of excitement is rising in our choreographers' conference calls, as we bring together this amazing performance.

Dance therapists guide us to community

We now have our quota of Dance Therapists who have graciously agreed to lead the dance-goers at each site. The seven had their first conference call just a few days ago. We had so much fun calling out the names of our sites in order down the river: "Itasca!" -- "Minneapolis!" -- "Quad Cities!" -- "St. Louis!" -- "Memphis!" -- "New Orleans!" -- and last but not least, "If you'll tell me how to pronounce my Parish I will shout it out too!"

These Dance Therapists will utilize the tool of synchrony to melt the distances among all of us in the

[Itasca](#)

[Twin Cities](#)

[Quad Cities](#)

[St. Louis](#)

[E. St. Louis](#)

[Memphis](#)

[New Orleans](#)

[Plaquemines](#)

[Parish](#)



seven simultaneous performance sites along the entire course of the Mississippi River. How, you may ask, will these Therapists create a sense of cohesion amongst all of the seven audiences? These professionals are skilled in working with non-dancers and trained to work with large numbers. They will be focusing on leading the audience members to feel their connection to each other as a community beside the River. The next step is to become a part of seven communities.

They will invite every human attending to join a beautiful and symbolic movement for the last few minutes, so that everyone—performers and audiences alike—are connecting through synchrony all up and down the river. All the while, they hold the intention of healing the river across the seven communities.

Who will serve as a Dance Therapists? For Plaquemines Parish, Sharon Chaiklin is flying in from Maryland and will stay at Foster's Bed and Breakfast. Susan Kierr Dyer from Louisiana (our only resident Dance Therapist) will pick up Sharon at the New Orleans airport and drive Sharon down to the site. Then Susan will drive back to New Orleans to be at her own site first thing Saturday morning when all the Dance Therapists will work on their telephone conference line connection for their audiences.



Dance Therapists will use their skills to build a sense of group cohesion in each audience. Shown is the Blue Highway from Solstice River 2005.

Sarah Campbell Arnett is coming from North Carolina to be back in Memphis near where she grew up. Likewise, Paul Sevett will return to his native St. Louis with his fabulous wife Emily, also a Dance Therapist, to guide the Eads Bridge community.

Pam Margules will drive down from Chicago with her husband to serve the Quad Cities community. Annie Kirschenmann will come in from North Dakota to unite the audience in Minneapolis, and for Itasca, Tracy Moroney will fly in from California and thus complete the coast-to-coast involvement of the American Dance Therapy Association.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank these individuals for taking time out of their busy schedules to volunteer their time and their incredible set of skills to help us join the hearts of all who come to this event.

Proclamations from the governors

Quick, answer this: How many states touch the Mississippi? No, you may not look at a map. If you answered ten, give yourself a gold star. We have asked the governor of each of these 10 states to proclaim June 24, 2006 as "One River Mississippi Day." We are also keen on getting these 10 governors to get together to create a 10-state charter to promise to take good care of the river, but we'll do that later.



Wisconsin Proclamation

articles about the event to come out yet, written by Lisa Lockheart for the May/June issue of QC, the Quad Cities Magazine.

Loryl Breitenbach in St. Louis has been instrumental in procuring and sending press photos, and handling much of the communication with Buzz Inc, our fabulous public relations firm that is handling the seven (count 'em!) 'media events' our performance will provide.

Amy Salerno Hale has been compiling the mailing lists of those in her community who will receive the National Postcard when it is sent in early June. She has visited the parking garage to measure the height of the walls so that her choreographer Kimberly will be able to "costume" that edifice for the performance.



St. Louis press photo

The formidable team in New Orleans, Janet Spencer and Lyn Caliva, has come up with the idea of borrowing the parade stands from Mardi Gras to hold their audience. They also had the tough job of articulating directions for the National Postcard. Should it say, "At the site of where the Orange Street Wharf used to be but is no longer?" Or perhaps "Near the temporary housing (a docked cruise ship) where the Tulane University Faculty is now living but will be gone by the performance?" Or perhaps "the future site of Riversphere" that most people don't yet know about?

Our newest addition to the team is the Plaquemines Parish Project Manager Donna Duhe. She exudes passion for the notion that the nation will learn that her Parish is the Gateway to the Mississippi River. Not only did she discover a crackerjack radio station, she was able to persuade Charmaine Neville (Aaron's sister) to come sing live at her site the evening of the performance.

Now you know the folks operating behind the scenes so this event will come off. I tip my hat to all of them!

Possible web-cast

Some of you have asked whether you could hear the performance, even though you may live in Maine, or Timbuktu. We believe that at least some of the radio stations may have such capability via the web, and we will let you know in a future newsletter.

At this time, as our two-month count down begins, we find ourselves in very good shape. We have only the smallest amount of fund-raising to complete, thanks to our board members Julie Andrus, Ames Sheldon, and Louise Miner. We have all of our Personae Dramatis on board. We have our music, which was written especially for this dance, and we are sailing toward the finish line with the wind at our back. Stay tuned!

About One River Mississippi

The One River Mississippi newsletter provides updates about our project, which encompasses seven simultaneous performances in seven venues along the river.

This public art event, which is free and open to the public, has gained a timeliness and a new sense of commitment given the recent devastation downriver. The performances will create a sense of the interconnectedness that goes beyond one's immediate local environment to encompass an entire ecosystem.

The peoples of this ecosystem who come to the performance, and who act in it, will have the opportunity to work together to honor the "One River" that spans our nation, through the tools of art, ecology, and community awareness.

For complete information on the entire project, visit our website: <http://onerivermississippi.org>

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This project is presented as a collaboration between Global Site Performance and Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education, which is committed to environmental and community building efforts.