

Sharon Leahy has spent a lifetime creating dance and theater, working with traditional forms to express/impress contemporary themes. As a choreographer she has been commissioned to create work by Jacob's Pillow, the National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts National Dance Project, and many others. She was an artist in residence at the University of Dayton and has taught master classes at colleges across the country.

As Artistic Director of Rhythm in Shoes, she led an ensemble of dancers and musicians, touring nationally and internationally, presenting original performance art that's been described by as, "both surprising and familiar."

Sharon's dance for camera work has been screened at numerous dance film festivals including Dance on Camera at Lincoln Center, The International ScreenDance Festival at the American Dance Festival and the San Francisco Dance Film Festival. She has won the Blue Ribbon in clogging contests at both the National Folk Festival at Wolftrap in Virginia, and the Appalachian String Band Festival in West Virginia.

"Union is the heart of my work—the rhythm of breath, the power of intention, practicing and teaching, seeking strength, flexibility, balance, the joy of connection, the authority of truth—this fuels each day of discovery and challenges me to reach for the heavens. I am thankful for the many teachers that have shared their knowledge and wisdom and the numerous students who have challenged me to keep pressing forward. I am grateful especially to the people I've known who laugh generously, for they remind me not to take life too seriously."

Sharon Leahy
Choreographer • Dancer • Director • Teacher • Yogi
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Major Works and Commissions

2016: *Ground Fine* - a screendance delving into the complicated relationship between food and mood. This work was a part of a collaboration between choreographers and chefs, commissioned by Runaway Dish, Basin Arts, and the Acadiana Center for the Arts in Lafayette, LA

2013: *Knuck 'n Futz* - a classic vaudeville duet created for the World Buskers Festival in Christchurch, New Zealand, featuring musician/composer Rick Good and Cirque DuSoleil artist Nate Cooper.

2013: *Carry it on...* - a screen dance that focuses on the sacred power and potential of place and our relationship to it. Moving through, with and around open fields, a pine grove and an old stage, the cast of dancers and musicians explores humankind's relationship to the environment and our universal need to gather. This work was commissioned by the Wheatland Music Organization in Remus MI, in celebration of their 40th anniversary.

2010: Created for Rhythm in Shoes collaboration with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra:

- *Bolero* – the Zen of Tap
- *Adieu Mes Amis* – a farewell work to the community of Dayton, inspired by the paintings of Jack Vettriano with original Cajun music.

2007: Created for Rhythm in Shoes collaboration with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra:

- *The Wild Party* – Dance Theater to Milhaud's, *Le Boeuf sur le toit*
- *Ragtime Dance* – Tapping to Scott Joplin
- *Harvest Home* – Old Time Dance Theater with Jay Ungar and Molly Mason

2007: *Banjo Dance: a Celebration of American Spirit* – an evening length program surveying and celebrating the evolution of Appalachian culture (itself a fusion of British Isles, African and Native American cultures) from the 1880s to the 21st century. Created for Rhythm in Shoes in collaboration with composer, Rick Good

2006: *RedScent* - concert tap work fusing North and South American rhythms.

2004: Created for Rhythm in Shoes collaboration with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra:

- *Brandenburg Concerto #3* - classical tap trio
- *Brubeck's Take Five & Blue Rondo ala Turk* – dance theater work examining family dynamics
- *Gershwin Suite* - ballroom/tap duets

2003 & 04: *Doctor Goodfellows Traveling Vaudeville Entertainment* - a recreation of vaudeville acts from the early 1900s, commissioned by the National Aviation Heritage Foundation for Dayton, Ohio's Centennial of Flight Celebration.

2002: Created for rhythm in Shoes collaboration with the Dayton Philharmonic orchestra:

- *William Tell Overture* – physical comedy dance theater
- *Morton Gould Tap Concerto* – recreation of 1952 score for tap dancer and orchestra

- 2002: *Rambleshoe* - created for Rhythm in Shoes' collaboration with the Red Clay Ramblers, based on concepts of family and home. With support from the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, this work toured nationwide 2003 - 05.
- 2001: *Hoagland* - a study of character and situation (a constant theme in my work). Inspired by the music of the composer Hoagy Carmichael, I translated his unusual melodies and rhythms into movement, interactions and visual exchange.
- 2000: *Walk With Me* - a 45-minute work in six movements, with original music by Rick Good. Commissioned by Dayton Contemporary Dance Company in memory of their founder, Jeryldine Blunden who, through her unbending support, had a major impact on my life and career.
- 2000: *Nova Town* - a dance/music/theater piece created in collaboration with writer/composer Rick Good. Blending a cast of fifteen dancers, actors and musicians, the work fuses elements of film noir, science fiction, beat poetry and astrophysics to portray a slice of life as it is mirrored in the heavens. Funded, in part, by the Dayton Foundation.
- 2000: *Harvest Home* - a dance theater piece with classically arranged music by Jay Ungar, commissioned by University of Akron and Wright State University Dance Departments.
- 1999: *Time Shifts* - a look at our understanding and use of time, created in collaboration with Keith Terry and Crosspulse, and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project. Premiered April 10, 1999, at Memorial Hall in Dayton, Ohio.

- 1997: *Do You Remember This?* - focusing on the passing of women's knowledge from one generation to the next, in collaboration with sound sculpture artist and musician Michael Bashaw, composer Rick Good and forty women of all ages from my community. The piece was funded through Cultureworks of Dayton.
- 1995: *Reach* - a modern, rhythmic work expressing multicultural themes of work, prayer and play, commissioned by Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, with music created by Rick Good.
- 1995: *Baltimore Girls* - a whimsical look at Catholic School girls.
- 1994: *Streets of the Capitol* - examines the issues of civil war, commissioned by Jacob's Pillow, MA, the Flynn Theater, VT and Cityfolk of Dayton, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, with music composed by Rick Good and Peter Sutherland.
- 1993: *Water from the Well* - incorporating gospel music and body rhythms, a collaboration with composer Rick Good and choreographer Keith Terry
- 1992: *I Live...* - created with the alternative rock band, the Horseflies, commissioned by Cityfolk of Dayton and funded through a New Work Grant from the Ohio Arts Council.
- 1991: *Rhythmic* - a contemporary, rhythmic work created through the study of the sacred geometric figure, the enneagram, and Baka Pygmy singing.

Employment History

2016 – 2018: Tap Dance Instructor Basin Arts, Lafayette, LA

2015 – 2018: Yoga Instructor Little Creek Yoga at Camelia House, Lafayette, LA

2012 – 2013: Director, Choreographer of *Carry it on...*, a 40th Anniversary Celebration of Wheatland Music Organization. This work included: a cast of over 80 artists, professional, student and community dancers and musicians, mentorship of a student choreographer, creation of new work for both live and film performances.

2008 – 2010: Yoga Instructor Practice Yoga, Dayton, OH

1987 – 2010: Artistic Director, choreographer and dancer with RHYTHM IN SHOES, a Dayton, Ohio-based touring company of musicians and dancers with a repertory of dance/theater works based in traditional and innovative step dance, tap, clogging and contemporary dance theater.

2003 – 2010: University of Dayton Artist in Residence, working to cultivate cross curriculum collaborations, design and implement dance and theater classes, choreograph ensembles, co-teach arts appreciation, host international performing artist on campus and facilitate annual Rhythm in Shoes concert with student participation.

1987 – 2001: Ohio Arts Council Arts in Education Artist in Residence designing and implementing one week to month long elementary and high school residencies in dance, music and theater.

1984 – 86: Artistic Director, choreographer and dancer with FOOTNOTES, a NYC-based company of contemporary American step dancers.

1980 – 1983: Soloist and ensemble member with the VANAVER CARAVAN, a NY based company performing world dance and modern dance theater, Denishawn reconstructions, step dance and tap.

1979 – 80: Ensemble member with the GREENGRASS CLOGGERS, a North Carolina-based company of traditional Appalachian clog dancers.

1978 – 79: Commedia actor with the PEOPLE'S THEATRE CO. of Bethlehem, PA.

Awards and Fellowships

- National Endowment for the Arts Choreography Fellowships – 1991, 1992 - 94, 1995 - 97
- Ohio Arts Council Choreography Fellowships – 1989, 1992, 1994, 1996
- 100 Top Irish Americans, 2003 - Irish American Magazine
- Cultureworks Opus Award for Artistic Excellence - 1996
- Ruth St. Denis Creative Choreography Award - 1983

Selected Film Festival Screenings

Dance for Camera - Lincoln Center, NYC - 2014

Movies by Movers - American Dance Festival, Durham, NC – 2014, 2018

San Fransisco Dance Film Festival - 2014, 2018

Portland Dance Film Festival - Portland, OR - 2018

Outlet Dance Project - Hamilton, NJ - 2018

Tipperary Dance Platform – Ireland - 2018

Experimental Dance & Music Film Festival - Toronto, Ontario - 2018

Selected Stage Performances

University of Limerick - Republic of Ireland
Earthquake International Dance Festival - Belfast, Northern Ireland
Filene Center - Wolftrap National Park for the Performing Arts
 "Face of America" Project
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival - Lee, MA
Chautauqua Institute - Chautauqua, NY
Washington Center for the Performing Arts - Olympia, WA
Arlene Schnitzer Performing Arts Center - Portland, OR
Irving Arts Center - Dallas, TX
1000 Oaks Performing Arts Center - Ventura, CA
University of Massachusetts - Amherst, MA
Carver Cultural Center - San Antonio, TX
Northrup Auditorium, University of Minnesota - Minneapolis, MN
Krannert Center for the Performing Arts - Urbana, IL
Flynn Theater - Burlington, VT
Walton Arts Center - Fayetteville, AR
Wexner Center for the Visual Arts - Columbus, OH
Victoria Theater - Dayton, OH
Suzuka Circuitland - Suzuka, Japan
Spoleto Festival, USA - Charleston, SC
International Children's Festival - Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Winter Olympic Games 1980 - Lake Placid, NY
National Folk Festival - Washington, DC and Dayton, OH

Selected Teaching Experience

- Rhythm in Shoes Studios - 1995 – 2010
- University of Dayton – Basic Dance, Choreography, Dance for the Elementary School Classroom, Art Experience - 2004 - 10
- Ohio Northern University, Ada, OH – Tap and choreography – 1994, 2000, 2003 - 04, 2006 - 07
- Muse Machine Teacher Training, Dayton, OH – 1993-1997, 2001 - 03
- Association for the Advancement of Arts Education (AAAE), Cincinnati, OH – Teacher Training - 2000 - 01
- Kodaly Music Educators Conference - Manitowac, WI - 1995

- Stivers Arts Magnet Middle School, Dayton, OH - 1992 – 95
- Jeraldyn's School of the Dance, Dayton, OH - 1992 - 94
- New York Council on the Arts – Arts-in-Education Residency Program - 1985 - 86, 1989
- St. Benedict's Prep, Newark, NJ - 1983 - 88
- McBurney YMCA, NYC - 1982 – 1988
- American Dance and Music Week, Pinewoods, MA - 1984
- Johnson State College Summer Dance, VT - 1981 - 82
- * Miles of Music Camp, NH - 2018
- * Augusta Heritage Center, WV - 1985, 2017
- Ashokan Fiddle and Dance Camp, NY - 1980 - 86, 1988 - 2018
- Wheatland Music Organization Dance Camp, Remus, MI – 1989, 1990, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014
- Swannanoa Gathering - Warren Wilson College, Black Mountain, NC: 2011
- Festival of American Fiddle Tunes – Port Townsend, WA - 2011

Choreography for Theater

- *Brother Wolf*: Human Race Theater Co. - Dayton, OH
- *Bat Boy, the Musical*: Human Race Theater Co. - Dayton, OH
- *Children of Eden*: Human Race Theater Co. - Dayton, OH
- *Quilters*: Human Race Theater Co. - Dayton, OH
- *Zombies from the Beyond*: Human Race Theater Co. - Dayton, OH
- *Dancing at Lughnasa*: University of Dayton Theater Department

Panelist/Lecturer

- Culture Within Our Borders - Midwest Arts Conference, Indianapolis, IN - 2005
- National Endowment for the Arts - Dance on Tour
- Ohio Arts Council - Performing Arts General Operating Support
- University of Dayton - Annie T. Thornton Women in Business Conference - 2006

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