

In *The Round Pegs Square Whole Project* choreographer Dawn Lane works with professional and community dancers

By Judith Monachina

Sometimes a lost battle can lead to an unexpected good. Such is the case with choreographer Dawn Lane's newest work, *The Round Pegs Square Whole Project*. In this work, which will premiere in the Lenox Duffin Auditorium on Sept. 24 and 25, Lane will bring together various aspects of her professional development and her personal experience.

One part of the piece is an outgrowth of the experience of living in a beautiful semi-rural setting with woods behind, learning the land is about to have a large housing development on it, fighting the development, and losing the battle.

With 400,000 acres of land developed every year in this country, she says her concern is with the fine line between growth and overdevelopment.

But over-development isn't all the work is about, she says. Anyone who saw a much earlier and incubating version of this piece at the Berkshire Women's Performing Arts Festival in Great Barrington a few years ago, will understand that in fact one could probably watch the entire piece and smile and think and enjoy the "costumes" and set and not think of over-development — though the *Little Boxes* song by Malvina Reynolds and the box costume were excellent and fun clues.

In the new piece using people and boxes, both of which become more plentiful as the evening progresses, she "abstractly addresses the notion of land development." The group will actually do some of the constructing of the scene on the stage.

Boxes are partly representational — serving as shelter — partly costume, part restriction, and later, liberation when the dancers are no longer restricted by them.

Another dimension of her professional development that makes it into this piece is her extensive work with members of the community through Community Access to the Art. Lane has been working with the Community Access to the Arts for five years and says the experience has done much to inform her work. "Community Access helped me to learn about working backwards," she says. Working with non-professional dancers, people with varying abilities, has taught her to "subtract things" from the work.

Conservation has made it into her choreographic process as well as the content. In working on it — with six professional dancers and four non-professional Community Access dancers from Riverbrook Residence in Stockbridge — Lane says she also learned that she wants her "artistic process to be resourceful, not wasteful."

For example, one chunk of the choreography will be used while the dancers are in their boxes and then again when they aren't. This piece is minimalist in the beginning, she says, but "goes out of control."

At the very beginning a man will be seen on stage surveying it. This week Lane is accompanying Accord Engineering surveyors to see how they do their work. If there is a particularly interested surveyor he may be part of the opening scene, but there is a male dancer who is also interested in the part.

Performers include Donna Rainone Ballon, Michelle Duffin, Susan Booth, Jane Goodrich, Ashley Hartka, Joann King, Dawn Lane, Bettina Montano, Carol Ray, and Teresa Thomas. Technical design is by Maia Robbins-Zust and Berkshire Production Resources.

Of course there will be a little humor. "I can't avoid that."



Dawn Lane

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