

VDC Interview Transcript
Schwartz Sisters
DBD Blunden-Diggs

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Dayton Contemporary Dance
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Key:
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JC: Jessica Cavender (VDC film team)
JD: Jane D'Angelo: (Ohio Dance Director)

CF: I'm Candace Feck, and I'm talking with Debbie Blunden-Diggs at Dayton Contemporary Dance Studios. Today is June 27, 2018.

Congratulations on your company's anniversary¹!

DBD: Thank you!

CF: It was wonderful talking with you the last time we visited about DCDC² and your mother, Jeraldyn Blunden.³ Today we're here, in part thanks to your comments last time around, to discuss the Schwartz sisters, Hermene and Josephine. I know that you studied with them...

DBD: Yes, I did!

CF: Of course, they're not here to speak for themselves, and while we have many kinds of documents and photos available about them, we're fascinated by these women and would love to get some kind of personal feel for each of them, if possible.

DBD: Okay.

CF: So, I wonder if you can tell me about your first meeting with them.

DBD: I don't know if I remember my first meeting as much as a patchwork quilt of how I was in and out of those studios for my first five or so years of training. I started Creative Movement at

¹ Founded in 1968, the Dayton Company Dance Company was marking its 50th anniversary at the time of this interview.

² Dayton Contemporary Dance Company is also known by its acronym, DCDC.

³ Debbie Blunden Diggs, current Artistic Director of DCDC, is the daughter of its founder, Jeraldyn Blunden, the subject of a separate VDC feature.

Jeraldyné's School of the Dance.⁴ Then, I guess she thought, "Well, if she's really going to be serious about this, let me send her somewhere else." So, I probably started there around seven and Miss Hermene ... actually, Miss Bess was *probably* my first teacher.

CF: Are you referring to Bess Saylor?

DBD: Bess Saylor Imber⁵, yes. But Miss Jo and Miss Hermene were both my teachers as I came of age and they were warm and strict at the same time. To walk into that space of the Dayton Ballet Studios, you knew you were someplace significant. You knew that you were there to not fool around. And this was even as a young child! Because my mother had her own school, I remember on visitors' days, my father was the person that came (she laughs) to Visitors' Day. I'm sure my mother was like, "Blunden, you have to go. She has to have a visitor," because even during the time that I was there... So, if I was six, seven ... this was, like, 1967. There weren't many African American people there at all as students. I remember myself being one and I remember Wendy Donnelley being one. Her father was a dentist in the area. But also, one of my classmates was Allison Janney.⁶ So, we were all there perched and primmed and ready to take what both Miss Jo and Miss Hermene had to offer us. They were on very different ends of the spectrum. Miss Hermene was more warm and fuzzy and Miss Jo was very disciplined, but it was a wonderful environment. I don't know if you're familiar with Dayton, but before they renovated the building, you had to go up two staircases of about thirty steps. So, every morning, every time you would go — when you're young, you only take once a week — you would trudge up those steps with your little bag and we would enter the space and they would try to give us not just the discipline of dance, but the discipline of operating in a world that's bigger than yourself.

CF: If I'm not mistaken, actually your mom studied there as well. Can you back up to that a bit?

DBD: I can back up to that because that's pretty historical and monumental in both of our stories. When my mother was probably about 15, my grandmother and some other women in the community approached Miss Jo and Miss Hermene about African American... There were some very interested [students]. They didn't know if they were talented or not, but these girls really were interested in dance but they wanted to find a place of quality for them to be able to study. Well, at that time, you know, you just kind of couldn't do that. Miss Hermene and Miss Jo said, "Well, we would like to be able to help you, but we cannot take them into our school at this time. The impact would probably just be a huge disturbance for everyone, and we don't want that. But if there's another place in which we can come to teach them, we will be more than glad to do that." So, they

⁴ Jeraldyné's School of the Dance, founded in 1963 by Jeraldyné Blunden, remains a cornerstone of training in the Dayton community. Though closely associated with it, the school operates as a for-profit entity and is not owned or operated by the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company.

⁵ "Miss Bess," as she is referenced by many, studied with the Schwarz sisters as a young ballet student and went on to become an associate director of the Dayton Ballet Company and School. Her influence is discussed in revered tones by many significant members of the Dayton Ballet Company and School, with whom she worked. An interview with Salyers is separately featured in the Schwarz sisters entry within the VDC collection.

⁶ Though born in Boston, Massachusetts, Janney, an award-winning and highly acclaimed actress, was raised and educated in the Ohio cities of Cincinnati and Dayton. She is the daughter of Macy Brooks Janney (née Putnam), a former actress, and Jarvis Spencer Janney, Jr., a real estate developer and jazz musician.

did. I really don't know the number of years, but I'm going to guess over a three or four year period that they taught, and the number of students grew, but so much so that it became harder and harder for Miss Jo and Miss Hermene to step away from their own classes at The Schwarz School of Dance.⁷ By that time, they had watched the growth of Jeraldynne as she studied here regularly and spent summers at Jacob's Pillow⁸ and Connecticut College for Women,⁹ so they felt that probably she could take over the leadership of the classes. And so she did. Jeraldynne's School of the Dance is really a by-product of what Miss Jo and Miss Hermene poured into her, and so we have always tried to create a place here where not *only* young African American students, boys and girls, could take class, but directly for that because there was a time where there was no place. There was no other place that they could go study and have quality dance. Through the years, up until the time of both of their deaths, they were very integral to some of the decisions that Jeraldynne made about the company.

CF: Can you give an example of that?

DBD: When Dayton Contemporary Dance Company first joined ... it's called Regional Dance America now, but it used to be the Northeast Regional Ballet Association [NRBA].¹⁰ It was much under the guidance and tutelage of Miss Jo, what kind of pieces we should do. Still, the understanding was that there were no African American companies in this association and what that might mean, what that would feel like, what we would come up against. I think that my mother talked to Miss Jo about programming a lot. When we started *really* having guest choreographers, I think it was a conversation. Stuart Sebastian¹¹ set a piece in our early years. Jon (Rodriguez)¹² was

⁷ The Schwarz School of Dance, founded by the Schwarz sisters in 1927, was the principal seedling that gave rise to the Dayton Ballet Company. The Experimental Group for Young Dancers, an elite performing troupe organized out of the school by the sisters during the post-WWII years, expanded and evolved into the Dayton Civic Ballet, a nationally known regional dance company, the second regional dance company to be established in the United States. The sisters continued to run the Schwarz School of Dance until 1984, when it became the Dayton Ballet Dance Center under the Dayton Ballet Association, merging with the Jon Rodriguez School of Ballet in 1988 and becoming known as the Dayton Ballet School.

⁸ Jacob's Pillow is the oldest performance space specifically designed for dance. Purchased by modern dance icon Ted Shawn in 1933 as an artistic retreat, the farm was often the site of small performances, but the summer Festival officially opened its doors to a wider public in 1942, and continues today. Like the Connecticut College reference, the reference here gestures to Jeraldynne Blunden's ongoing training and regular contact with many of the most important dance artists of her day.

⁹ The Connecticut College for Women, now Connecticut College, a co-ed institution, was the site of the second home of the American Dance Festival during the years 1948 - 1977, providing a critical training ground for modern dancers. It is referenced here as a kind of short-hand for Jeraldynne Blunden's summer training, during which she was exposed to the likes of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and other critical artists who shaped the rising modern dance community.

¹⁰ As a regional ballet company, Dayton Dance Company was part of a growing movement to decentralize and support dance in communities that were smaller than those located in the nation's large institutions, such as the New York City Ballet. Josephine Schwarz was a prominent voice for the necessity of forming regional associations that would allow the regional companies to collectively compete for funding, share resources and establish festival venues for performing and teaching. Dayton became a chartered member of the fledgling association in 1959.

¹¹ Stuart Sebastian (1950 - 1991), born and raised in Dayton, was a noted student of Josephine and Hermene Schwarz, who later assumed directorship of the company in 1980 at Josephine's invitation. He had danced professionally for the Dayton Ballet and the National Ballet of Washington before assuming the role, and had choreographed in New York, Germany and England. Sebastian led the Dayton Ballet for 10 years.

here. Bess (Salyers) was here. So, I think there was a bond, not a bond used for publicity, just a bond between two dance creators, the mentor to the mentee. Then, they became sort of colleagues in the field, in a really special way. I remember when I got married almost 29 years ago, Miss Jo's was one of the first gifts I received. So, it was a really *special* bond and it really *molded* my mother and the thoughts that she had about building this company, even though it was on the total opposite end of the spectrum of what, you know, the Dayton Ballet Company¹³ became.

CF: So, there was your mother's school — and sort of this satellite school of the Schwartz sisters—and was that at The Linden Center?¹⁴

DBD: I don't know if the very first classes were at The Linden Center, but yes, that became the space and the place in which the classes were held. I know there were some classes in the basement of the old Saint Margaret Church for a while, and every time we start to talk about this ... I don't want to give a false sense of the historical data, but Linden Center was one of the places in which those classes took place.

CF: I'm fascinated by these women. Something that interests me about them is that it seems they were just always thinking out of the box... Where did that come from? Do you have any sense of that?

DBD: I mean, no! I really don't. Even as a young person, I could sense that something was different, something about the way they embraced this art and the way their design to teach was different.

¹² Rodriguez (1930 - 2015) moved to Dayton from Detroit in 1965 to dance with Dayton Ballet, beginning a long association with the company as dancer, teacher, choreographer and director. He was named co-associate director of the company in 1972 (along with Bess Salyers), and in 1974 became founder and co-director of The Professional Touring Company. Among many other accomplishments, he served as artistic director and coordinator of the Wright State University Dance program for 20 years.

¹³ The Dayton Ballet Company was founded by the Schwarz sisters in 1937, arising from classes first offered in the Schwarz home during Depression-era Dayton (1927), eventually becoming the community-centered Schwarz School of Dance, the Experimental Group for Young Dancers and eventually the company and School of the Dayton Ballet. It is heralded as the second oldest regional ballet company in the nation, and the oldest ballet company in the state of Ohio.

¹⁴ The Linden Center, according to the group Heritage Ohio, was built in 1928 by the City of Dayton as a community recreational and cultural center for the local African-American community, although it served all citizens of Dayton. It was financed by a municipal tax levy, which was politically encouraged by Black leaders. It was built during the Great Depression, which caused it to be a facilitator of many federal programs designed for welfare, economic and community development purposes. It was a central meeting place that served to spawn the activists and community personalities who would become leaders in Dayton's civic, economic, spiritual, and cultural advancement. It was operational for over fifty years in its mission. It is one of the last vestiges of Dayton's original black business and economic corridor. The Center housed the classes offered by the Schwartz sisters for the African American dance students of the day, eventually becoming Jeraldyne's School of the Dance.

CF: Now, one of them, I think it was Miss Jo, had danced with Adolf Bolm¹⁵ in Chicago. Am I right about that?

DBD: I cannot tell you that...

CF: Okay. Because it seems that one was more involved with holding the fort down here and one was in Chicago for a while...

DBD: If I had to make an educated guess, I would say yes.

CF: Okay. Well, I can figure that out. You've already sort of characterized them as having kind of different personalities...

DBD: They did.

CF: ... and strengths, but I also ... I'm curious about them because they built this ballet company, really — but in fact, there is evidence that they were interested in modern dance ... in a way that was unusual for “ballet people” at the time, too.

DBD: I think so! I think that the influence of probably the time and where ballet fell in the field — and these are just my observations. I mean, even watching the company during the time where Jon Rodriguez and Bess Saylor were still performing, they weren't your typical “Go see *Swan Lake*.”¹⁶ They were doing repertory work before repertory became popular.

CF: I mean, they were just amazing.

DBD: Yes.

CF: Were they well-respected in the community?

DBD: Oh, yes. I think they were not only respected, they were *treasured* before that became a buzzword.

CF: In a sense, you could say, without their groundwork, your mom might not have had a place to study.

DBD: I'm sure of it.

¹⁵ Bolm (1884 – 1951) was a Russian-born American ballet dancer and choreographer, of German descent. His direct connection to the Schwarz sisters was as a tour manager for Anna Pavolva, whom the sisters memorably saw in Dayton during the 20s, and also as a teacher, whose summer classes they took three years in Chicago at the Bolm School of the Dance.

¹⁶ *Swan Lake*: choreographed in 1875-76 to the score by Tchaikovsky, this is perhaps the most iconic ballet representing the classical era. Originally created by Julius Reisinger, the staging most widely seen now is attributed to Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. In this reference, it is used, as is often the case, as a signifier for ballet itself, writ large.

CF: Gosh! So, the two organizations, joined at the hip...

DBD: Yes.

CF:... these two very *different* organizations.

DBD: Yes.

CF: I don't want to say DCDC hasn't had its ups and downs, but the Dayton Ballet Company went down for some time, and I'm not even sure of the details...

DBD: Well, I mean, I think and I *know* that succession in any established organization is a challenge. I think we were lucky here, because we were *ahead* of it. Jeraldynne never pointed to us and said: “*You're going to be the next Artistic Director. You're going to be next, and you're going to be next,*” but she put us in positions and roles so she could watch us work: she could watch our work ethic, she could watch all of those things. So, in our case, when she passed quite suddenly, we were ready. We didn't *know* we were ready, but we just continued to do the work the way that she had taught us to do the work. The Dayton Ballet transition — this is my opinion, again — it was really smooth when Jon Rodriguez and Bess Saylor were co-artistic directors, but they were internal. They grew up — they grew up in the machine. And even when Stuart (Sebastian) came back to take over the leadership, it was pretty smooth and the company was still really, really dynamic. And if we watch companies all over the United States, you can watch the pattern of what happens when they're on their, you know, third, fourth, and fifth artistic director. I tend to think that people get into trouble when you try to change the vision without really trying to change the vision. I mean, I think it's cool and I think it's valid if you're like, “I'm the new Artistic Director and now this is the direction that we're going in.” Dayton is a very fundamental and traditional community, and so I think they've had their bumps in the roads. I think Dermot (Burke)¹⁷ was able to stabilize it in a way that his predecessor, in my opinion, again, could not. So, I think they are facing their challenges like everybody else. We all have them in dance. You look at dance ... just the state of the art of dance in all of the arts falls at the bottom, and so if you are lucky enough to be in a community that just has dollars, dollars, dollars to support when the funding is going away, then you're really lucky. But I've not had anybody I know wave that flag, that “we're not worried about it — we can sustain ourselves no matter what.” So, I mean, I think a lot of elements go into people's various ups and downs. Our go-to is, “Well, the Ailey Company¹⁸ doesn't run into these problems.” Well, they *do* — on a different scale, but they do. So, I think all of the companies are really fighting just to keep the art form alive and to give people places, time, to express themselves in the art form.

CF: Right.

DBD: It's tough. It's tough. *Every day* is tough. I remember saying to my father, I'm like, “Dad...”

¹⁷ Dermot Burke was a star principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet in New York and had been artistic director of the American Repertory Ballet in New Jersey for ten years. He knew and had choreographed for Stuart Sebastian and the Dayton Ballet back in 1984. He assumed the dual role of executive and artistic director of the company in the Fall of 1993.

¹⁸ As the preeminent African American dance company in the U.S., Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, founded in 1958, is referenced here as a means of comparison between a small regional company and a highly acclaimed and seemingly unshakeable institution of formidable power.

— my mother was gone — “...we're 45 years old, and these are some of the same issues and problems” — and he said to me, “and they're *going* to be the same, so either you're going to *do* it or you're *not* going to do it.”

CF: Tough love!

DBD: So, I'm like, "Okay!"

CF: So, there's this very behind-the-scenes continuation of a kind of mentor/mentee relationship *plus*, I mean, they have become equals at some point, sharing ideas and, as you said, advice — maybe one for the other. But publicly — maybe “publicly” isn't the right word — but formally, perhaps, have the organizations stayed close or was there a point at which the Schwarz sisters passed, and things changed between the two companies?

DBD: I think, uh-huh. I think, time — time and capacity and different visions, and the way that we go after those visions has allowed us to respect each other in our significant spaces, but we're not connected in the same way. And that's not good or bad — it's just what it is. The *dancers* are connected because, I mean, this is a small community of dancers. Even when Rhythm and Shoes¹⁹ was still a part of the performing arts community, the dancers were really close— because they support each other on the level that they support each other. This is not New York or Chicago or LA. The dancers here are the dancers *here*. So, I think that *those* relationships remain really close and I think artistic and administrative leadership remains respectful, and we watch from afar and we're all in it together no matter what. Because it's the art form. So, if we're trying to say that what we do changes and impacts people's lives, it's the same. It's the same over here as it is over on Main Street. So, Karen (Russo Burke)²⁰ has her battles just like I have my battles over here, and just trying to make it an art form that sustains itself.

CF: Yes. I guess I've wondered, and I'm sure that this is something you've considered or maybe done, but is there a way of sharing any resources or any choreographers or to bring in somebody who could work with both companies? Does that kind of thing happen?

DBD: I mean, I think there is. I think there is an avenue of planning that neither company has had time far enough out to be able to sit down and think about it and do it. Yeah. I mean, I think there are incredible dancers in both companies and I think there are many choreographers out there that could come in here for a month or six weeks and create on the ballet and then come over here and create on DCDC. With everything else on our plates, we have just not actually had the time to even enter into a “What might it be like if ...” conversation.

CF: That makes sense to me. Which of the sisters died first?

¹⁹ Another important local Dayton company, Rhythm and Shoes is yet another separate feature within the VDC website.

²⁰ Russo Burke is the current Artistic Director of the Dayton Ballet, having risen to the position in 2011, previously serving for twelve years as a teacher at Dayton Ballet School and Director of Dayton Ballet II pre-professional company. Prior to that, Burke was a professional dancer with American Repertory Ballet for over 10 years.

DBD: Miss Hermene passed first.

CF: Do you recall... I don't know the circumstances. What was the effect on the company or on the other sister?

DBD: I'm sure the effect on Miss Jo was enormous. I think their integration with the company by the time she had passed away ... I mean, I'm sure the dancers knew who the founders were and they knew the historical data about them, but to really *know* them, I'm pretty sure they knew Miss Jo better than they knew Miss Hermene, so I think the community felt a larger sting just because, I mean, we were really pretty well-situated in the funding community. We had the Greens, we had Mrs. Kettering, we had all those people. So, I think the impact on that group of people, the group of people that shored up the Dayton Ballet Company from the beginning, felt the sting — and this is just my speculation — felt the sting in quite a different way than the company members that were current, the current company. My mother was pretty devastated. But, you know, they're not gone. None of them are gone: what they planted in this community is really special if we think about it, particularly in context of how dance grows and sprouts. Particularly in the beginning, it was coastal: it was either the East Coast or the West Coast. So, we have the Schwarz sisters who built this dynamic school that grew into a very top-notch, recognized regional dance company and has grown over the years. We're celebrating, I don't know, 100 years, 85? I mean, the company has been a part of the dance landscape here for a really, really long time, and to be able to do that in a Midwestern city and the company is still up and operational today is something pretty special.

CF: I think that that school, the Schwarz School of the Dance, was founded in '27. So, you're right, coming up on 100 years before we know it. So that's a good point. Then, I guess when the other sister died...

DBD: Well, when Miss Jo passed away, she was no longer living here. She was in Colorado with her niece, I believe.

CF: Do you know her niece?

DBD: No, I don't.

CF: My understanding is that her niece is up in years. We're talking to Gregory Robinson; we're talking to you. Who else would have known them or would really be able to shed light on them?

DBD: Have you talked to Bess (Salyers Imber)?

CF: No.

DBD: That's who you need to talk to. You need to talk to Bess Imber.

CF: Right. We've been wanting to do that.

DBD: Yes.

CF: I thought about calling the niece. When I read the obituaries of the two, she was mentioned, and I wondered...

DBD: Bess would be integral to the *dance* perspective. The niece would be integral to the *persona* perspective of both of them.

CF: Right.

DBD: Have you talked to the Saidels — Burt or Alice? You should talk to one of them, too.

CF: Are they Dayton philanthropists?

DBD: They're huge funders of the arts, period, but he is a writer of dance. The other person you should probably talk to is Macy Janney. She's Allison's mom, but she was pretty “in-there” with Miss Jo and Miss Hermene.

CF: Oh, that would be great. Because even the niece is, like I said, up in years, and I don't want to lose the opportunity. There are the archives...

DBD: Right. But still, a voice is... Yes. From this community, Bess, certainly, without a doubt. If you only had to choose one, Bess and then probably Macy.

CF: Thank you. Is there anything else that you'd like to say about the Schwarz sisters, about their school? Anything that I haven't asked?

DBD: I mean, I think I've never put it in this context, but to be able to give my own personal thank you for them not being afraid to step out there in a time where it was not popular to do so, because in their stepping out, that allowed another branch and avenue of a tree to grow big and strong. If they hadn't have had that...it's not even insight. *Compassion*. If they wouldn't have had that compassion — I'm sure they didn't know, you know, what they were getting into. This group of women puts this offer out there and they said “Yes” at a time when it was *not* popular to say “Yes” at all. So, I thank them because now I get to sit at the helm of an organization that probably would not have happened if they didn't say “Yes.”

CF: Incredible, really. I mean, they stepped out in that way: unpopular, unconventional for its time...

DBD: — As women!

CF: So, that is my other point. They were women who ran an organization, took these risks at a time when women weren't doing that and it's also interesting the way they kind of had a contemporary bent to their ballet interests. I've read that they brought a contemporary feel to ballet and balletic feel...

DBD: ... to the contemporary.

CF: Yes. Of course, you have very distinct profiles and very distinct movement styles, but there is a shared kind of bond in that, too, I think. I imagine that comes from the root.

DBD: I'm sure it does. I'm *sure* it does. I just think Dayton has some special fertility in the water

or air. I mean, everybody is always amazed that a city our size has as much rich arts and culture as we do, but not only in the traditional art forms. Think about the music groups that have come out of here. There's just something about *here* that is really, absolutely special.

CF: It might just be that art breeds art, and you get the Schwarz sisters and you get your mom and things start to sprout.

DBD: To sprout. Yeah.

JC: Just the *attitude*. Just saying, “World class is a state of *mind*, not a place.”

DBD: Right.

CF: Yes, that's true.

JC: One of the things that strikes me, and I think it's just because of my sort of generational location, is the concept that the Schwarz sisters were willing to step out, but they still had to separate from their regular class. Stepping out, and even going that far away, in my mind, I'm like, “Well, that's not, like, I would say it's not good enough! I mean, obviously, it's wonderful in the time because I don't have that experience, but I just have such a hard time imagining that you really had to go that far outside of accepted practice...”

DBD: Right. Sometimes, things have not gone as far forward as we would like them to or as we would think they would. I mean, if we're fifty years old ... I think they're eight-five years old. I mean, you think in the time — eh, that's another conversation. The world in which we're living today is not that far away from that, and *that* is sad to me. *That* part is sad and tragic. Yeah.

CF: This is just a point of information — when the Schwarz sisters had this alternate school for your mom and those folks, what was it called?

DBD: I don't know. I don't think it was a school. I think it was just classes. I think they found a space where there was a clear room and they just went, and they started to learn.

CF: So, did *that* then become Jeraldyn's School of the Dance? When it had a title, that's what it was?

DBD: Yes.

CF: Okay. And just stepping back, yet *again*, a generation, how about the chutzpah of your grandmother and her friends who went and approached the Schwartz sisters?

DBD: That's another big... you know, we think about how we are attached. You know, my grandmother had two daughters. My mother had a daughter and a son; one danced, one didn't. I danced, he didn't. He was an elite athlete. I have two daughters: one dances, one was an elite athlete. So, just the way we're connected. There's a lot of chutzpah in my family in *general*, and there's just this sort of stream of entrepreneurship. We think bigger than the standard “Do X, Y, Z, work for forty years, retire.” None of us are put together (she laughs) that way. So, as I trace it back, that was

a really bold move on their part. That was huge— and for them to be able to handle a conversation in a way that *resulted* in that result!

CF: Wouldn't you like to have been a fly on that wall?

DBD: Yes, I would have. I would *love* to have heard how they got to where they got!

CF: Me, too. Maybe there's something in the archives. There could be...

DBD: I think there's very little. I mean, there's always a question and there's always points of view, but none of those people are still living.

CF: Yeah. Did you know your grandmother?

DBD: Oh, yeah.

CF: Did she ever talk about that meeting?

DBD: No! I mean, I think when you are a part of the scene, you're a part of the scene, so you don't view it like other people. I mean, I didn't understand my *mother's* place of relevance in the dance world until she passed away — and that's honest.

CF: You said that when we talked to you last time. No idea.

DBD: No idea!

CF: It's like a fish in the fishbowl. You grow up and you're swimming in that water, and you don't know anything different.

DBD: Right. And that's your water and you don't know that that this is not normal or regular or... You just don't know.

CF: Well, thank you so much.

DBD: You're welcome.

CF: You're a primary source for these people, and it's very valuable to think about what they started here.

DBD: Yeah. It's mind-boggling to me when I really sit...As I was thinking about doing this interview, it's like "Okay. So..." I mean, I know it from my perspective, and again, I was in the fishbowl.

CF: Yeah. (To JC): Did you need anything else?

JC: No, just tacking onto your question earlier, because we've encountered it a couple of times, folks who were really going out of their way to make opportunities for black dancers, and sometimes folks

have been like “Let's really not discuss that that's what I was doing. I just wanted to give access to *people* to dance,” and we're from our hindsight view thinking, really, they were providing very specific opportunities for a very specific group of people. It's interesting that they do not want to say that that's what they are doing — and maybe that's just a really old habit...

DBD: And I don't know if they were able to speak — if they had their own *voice* in this — what they would say. I mean, I would think that they were just providing a service for some young kids that wanted to dance, but everybody on the *outside* of it saw it as a provision for crossing races, because if not, they *would* have been able to go to the school.

CF: Yes. Amazing. You're right. Yeah. In some ways, we're going backwards here.

DBD: We're going backwards very quickly.

CF: That's another conversation, but holy cow...

DBD: Yeah.

CF: Again, thank you, and safe travels today.

DBD: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

CF: Lots of excitement in the year ahead! We are excited about your anniversary year!

DBD: *Lots* of excitement. We are excited, too. So, tap into us whenever you get the chance.

CF: We will. Thank you.

DBD: Thank you, guys.