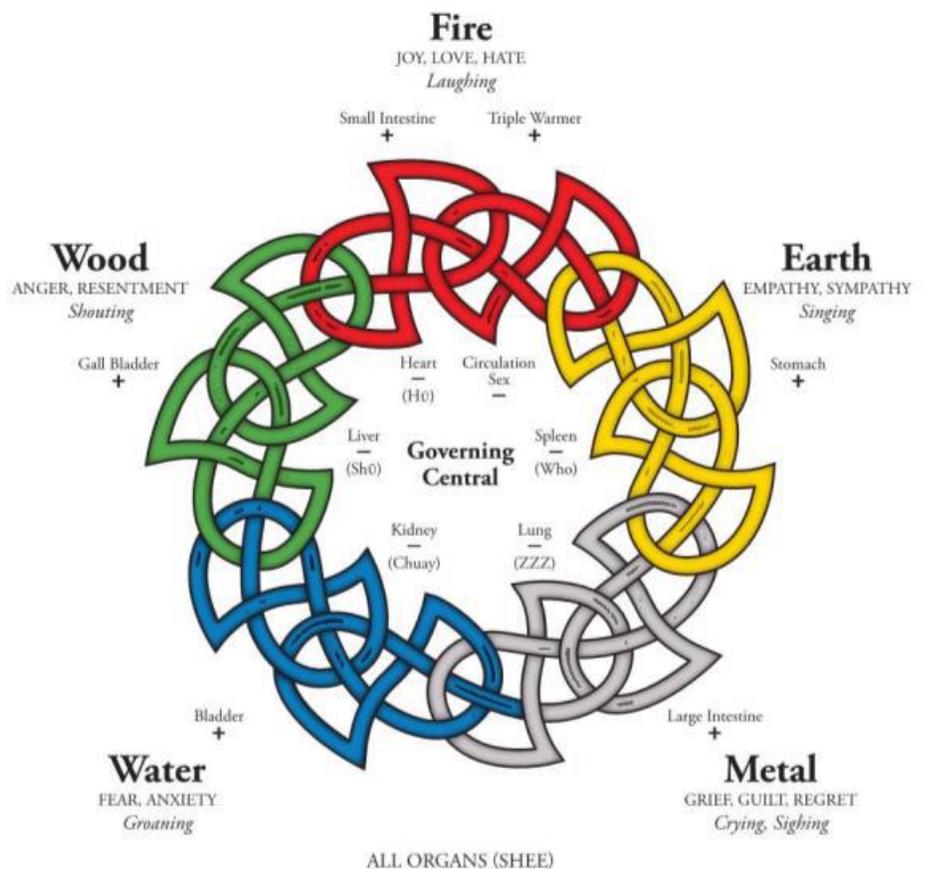


“Dance, It’s a Natural Thing!”

2019 presents a culmination of discovery for Dance Debut dancers and Michelle Greenwell. In the early 2000’s Michelle lost the ability to walk and to dance due to the stresses of running a large competitive studio. This journey through pain and healing has been a long and inspiring voyage of discovery for both Michelle and the dancers who have studied with her. Lynn Simonsen, a beautiful dancer and educator from New York, introduced Michelle to Touch for Health and how to use its tools for dancers, and Greg Webb, a TFH Instructor and healer, supported Michelle with private sessions and instruction to learn the powerful techniques for energy building. Over the last 15 years Michelle has dedicated her dance discoveries to safe ways of learning and growing with dance, and to honor the function of the body and its innate capability to take care of itself when it is supported with proper technique and energy opportunities. This journey has taken Michelle away from traditional techniques that do not support alignment or strength, and towards learning in a relaxed way with support through the foot, knee, hip, back and shoulders. Her development of the Feet First System was the culmination of her first stages of growth with supporting the feet and their reflexes, gaits, bones, muscles, tendons, fascia, ligaments, emotions and more. The manual for this program is in production and will be released soon.

What does this have to do with the dance show this year?! The power of Chinese Medicine. The opening of the show is a dance explanation of how the 5 Elements work and how the meridians or Primo Vascular System electrically support the corresponding muscles in the body. The show will begin with the “Music of the Plants,” music made by plants that the dancers and Tai Chi students have been interacting with all season. Bringing nature into the theme was instrumental to raise awareness of how we fit into nature and how all that we bring through dance is a natural thing. The Dance Club, Jazz and Tap students will enter from the back of the theatre with scarves hand painted by Michelle and her mom, Yvonne. They will enter in the order of the Shen cycle which is of nurturance through the 5

Five Element Flow



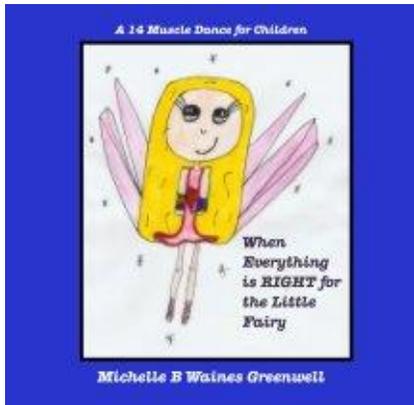


Element Wheel: Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood. Once they have arrived at the stage they will dance through the Ko Cycle which is of creation or destruction for breaking down barriers or creating relationships. This order will see the colors change from Fire to Metal, Metal to Wood, Wood to Earth, Earth to Water and Water up to Fire. Buffy Sainte Marie will inspire this display with “Carry it On”.

The dancers will then move into lines of color and exit the stage. On their return they will share some of the learnings for warmups this year. They will begin with a Meridian Sweep that supports the electrical system in the body and provides energy to all the muscles in an energizing order by the Time of Day Wheel, as seen

by the clock that was created this year as well. This will be followed by the Feet First System Foot Rub.

Next, the dancers will engage the switches in the body which coordinate right and left, up and down, back and front as well as using a mirror. We will move into the Muscle Dance that was inspired by the Touch for Health Balancathon in September, as well as the publication of a children’s version of the muscle dance for preschoolers with pictures from some of our Dance Debut dancers:



The dancers have been working on learning about the 14 Muscles that link to each of the

Dance Debut
Michelle Greenwell www.dancedebut.com

BASIC FOOT RUB

- 1 Rub down between the bones of the foot. Rub the muscles along both sides of the foot.
- 2 Shake up the ball of the foot by twisting the bones back and forth.
- 3 Pull out each toe and circle it around several times ("This little Piggy").
- 4 Squeeze the foot all over and around the ankle.
- 5 Lengthen to Strengthen:
Place fingertips together in the middle of the top of the foot and pull the fingers the length of the muscle fibers out to toe and ankle in opposite directions.
Repeat on the bottom of the foot. Can also be done over the ankles.

Illustrations by Tyson Chen
www.tysonchen.com

Meridian cycles in the body and will be calling the name of the muscle that is responsible for the movement they are doing. Influenced by the whole-body movement philosophy from Tai Chi, this performance will demonstrate how the dancers link the power of the feet into each movement and harmonize all the tissue in the body for a synergy of movement. When we began this exercise many of the dancers could not push through their feet, bend their knees, or coordinate the whole-body action. Now they are seeing the benefits in their coordination with other dance steps. Many dancers in traditional training learn a few muscle names, but they never really learn about the body and how it makes a movement. This part of the process, this year, has had dancers realize there is more to the body than just a few limbs and a core. They have also realized how science is involved in dance, as well as physics and math. There have been many interesting conversations around this knowledge.

Lastly, the dancers will do Cook's Hookups to link the Figure 8 Pattern or Radiant Circuits that bring all the energy flow through the body. By dancing this together we create a flow between us as performers and this will be something never done before in the start of a show. Usually the warm ups are left to the dancers to do on their own, and they often don't do it, but chat and prepare hair and makeup. This will have everyone working together as one unit. The preschool dancers will follow the older dancers with their rendition of the Muscle Dance to warm up to Charlotte Diamond's "Ti-U, Turn it Up". They will be calling out the characters or action that they are doing which comes from the children's book. They have also done the Feet First System Foot Rub each day before putting on their shoes.

This is the start of our show this year. What an interesting and in-depth process we have explored this year. It has not been easy to remember the names of the muscles, nor have the dancers always wanted to go through the order. But, one morning in Port Hawkesbury we were rushed for time, so we only did half of the process. The piece they were working on begins with their backs to each other and they cannot see each other. They were not coordinated at all with the music nor with each other. We went back and completed the warm up routine and they danced in perfect unison. This was a lesson for all of us to realize that there is an important sequence for the body, and it is easy to dance when we honor this process.

Stay tuned to learn more about our journey in dance this year!

Michelle Greenwell

Celebrating 31 years with Dance Debut, 37 years of teaching dance, 23 years as a Tai Chi enthusiast, and 15 years with Touch for Health and instructing. What an awesome journey...thanks for sharing this celebrating of dance with us.