



What connects a professional musician from Canada to a retired teacher in the UK? Despite a range of differences including age, gender and life experiences they share one important characteristic – a love of dance. In this we can be more specific. They express the joy they both find through dance by using their individual percussive step repertoires to explore the melodic and rhythmic components of the music they love. This music, whether handed down or newly composed, is made up of styles from popular music of the past; jigs, reels, clogs, hornpipes, polkas, waltzes. All these musical forms are associated with dances that also moved in and out of fashion. However, step dancing has persisted throughout the decades.

The Covid pandemic in some respects restricted the ability of those in the arts to function. However, the internet allowed folk with time on their hands to explore what fellow artists were doing, make connections, start conversations and potentially collaborate creatively. April contacted Simon after seeing the output video of a project which introduced young people to the idea of dance evolution. Step Your Way explored how popular dances from the past were not left behind and abandoned but were catalysts from which new forms grew. It emphasized that dancers of today needed to know about the evolution of dance to open up the exciting prospect of being a creative part of the future.

After going down the YouTube rabbit hole on everything she could find to watch Simon dancing, April was struck by the way he seemed to not only perform intricate steps and routines, but also improvised and ‘danced the tune,’ a component of step dancing she loves herself and feels has been lost to some degree in her native style. She tracked down Simon’s email address and a few hours later they were connected on Zoom and sharing their personal dance stories; the first step in a process towards a firm commitment for a collaborative dance project.

April writes: Born and raised in Pembroke, Ontario, where my family has lived for generations, I grew up in an area with a rich, distinctive musical and step dancing tradition shaped by the diverse roots of the immigrants drawn to the region’s lumber camps. I began Ottawa Valley step dancing at the age of three and fiddling at the age of six. I studied step dancing from Buster Brown, and later also his wife Pauline, for fifteen years and gained invaluable experience as a young performer when they invited me to dance with them at festivals, fairs, conventions and television appearances in the local area and in the USA. Buster was a student of Donnie Gilchrist, who is widely considered the pioneer and grandfather of our tradition. Over the years this style has continued to evolve and it has become part of my mission to help preserve some of the original elements of the genre for future generations, including that ability to ‘dance the tune’ and improvise rather than strictly follow a set routine. This has led to many exciting opportunities as it helps to set my dancing apart from many of my contemporaries.

Simon writes: I was born and have spent most of my life in Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK. My first encounter with step dance was during my Fresher's Week at Hatfield Polytechnic when I saw an English clog hornpipe performed during a folk evening. Friends later dared me, an inept dancer, to attend clog dance lessons advertised by the local folk club. After an initial struggle to coordinate my body and brain something clicked and I have been an enthusiastic step dancer ever since. During my time studying I attended clog dance classes taught by Graham Cole, at Cecil Sharp House, the London home of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Later I attended classes with acclaimed dancers such as Pat Tracey, Sam Sherry, Alex Woodcock and perhaps most influential of all, Alex Boydell. Alex Boydell's philosophy of 'take a step and then adapt and make it your own' really resonated with me. In the 1990s my wife Jo and I became aware of, and interested in step dancing from Canada: French Canadian, Cape Breton, Ontario and Ottawa Valley styles. We have been particularly influenced by teachers such as Pierre Chartrand, Jean MacNeil and Judy Waymouth. More recently we have been discovering the styles of stepping that were common up until the Second World War along the south coast of England. We have been most fortunate and feel privileged to have learned from dancers from the Gypsy community who have always valued and preserved their stepping heritage, notably Janet Keet Black and Valerie Shipley.

Although April and Simon's dance experiences are widely different, they share a huge respect for their dance teachers and those who have influenced the way they have developed as individual dancers. This understanding of the legacy of others has been termed 'dancestry' by dance scholar Janet Schroeder. It is not just an account of how a style develops or evolves but the personal stories of the dancers that were part of the process. This inevitably led to the question, 'If you had to name one dancer whose influence is still having impact on your dance journey, who would that be?'

April's answer was Donnie Gilchrist. She only met him once, around the age of three at a late-night party, when he let her dance on his round board. She can't remember that encounter, but dreams of it. Growing up in the rich Ottawa Valley dance tradition, stories of this legendary man surrounded her and it wasn't until she was grown and performing professionally that she took the time to dig back and watch his steps, the flair with which he performed them and consequently better understood her own dancing.

Simon's selection took a great deal of thought. During the pandemic lockdown he had found himself watching footage of and revising the steps learned directly from Alex Woodcock. Remembering Alex's emphasis on dancing rather than executing steps and his engaging performance style, Simon made Alex Woodcock his selection. Alex had retired to the south coast and for a while Simon was able to attend his weekly class. Alex focused on helping Simon dance integrating the whole body with a particular focus on arms, hands and fingers!

Decisions having been made, April and Simon began re-familiarizing themselves with these two outstanding dancers. The results of their explorations were intriguing and shaped the direction their collaboration, *Steps From The Heart*, would take.

### **Donnie Gilchrist - Family Background**

Donnie Gilchrist was born in 1925 in Campbell's Bay, Quebec, where his father worked in the lumber industry that dominated the area. It is said that Donnie danced as soon as he could walk. Quite possibly by the age of 4, he had lessons with an Irish shoemaker Dick Coghlan. Shortly after, Donnie's mother, Violet, took him to Ottawa by train to buy his first pair of dancing shoes which had single plated taps on the toes and heels. Donnie also watched the men from the lumber camps dance at the local hotel and picked up the basics of the Irish and French Canadian stepping styles. The lumber camps were a melting pot where men from many backgrounds shared their stepping style and influenced each other. In the early 1930s the family moved to Ottawa where Donnie took to dancing in the streets while selling newspapers on the corner of Gloucester and Bank Street and to itinerant fiddlers in the Byward Market. Donnie discovered that due to his innate dancing talent, he could supplement the family's income by dancing in the bar rooms and dancehalls at the weekend earning 6 or 7 dollars an evening when the daily wage was just 1 dollar.

When Donnie met his wife, he was regarded foremost as a talented tap dancer. Indeed, when in Montreal, the legendary Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson shared one of his time steps with Donnie. Although he taught step dance and tap dance as separate entities it was Donnie's creative talent for blending various influences into his own unique style and the resulting striking and charismatic performances which brought him recognition. Rather than leave the vernacular stepping of his childhood behind, Donnie took it forward as an essential element in the dancing skills he honed throughout his career. In addition to the many pupils Donnie inspired, he taught some of his own children not only to dance to a very high standard, but to appreciate his legacy and ensure that this legacy continues to influence the dancers of today and the future.

### **Alex Woodcock - Family Background**

Alex Woodcock was born in Alnwick in Northumberland, North East England, in 1922. Alnwick is the historic county town, dating back before the Norman Conquest, and the market town for the surrounding agricultural area. A number of villages in the area are built around coal mining pits and the associated industries. Alex's father, Andrew, was a miner at the nearby pit in Shilbottle as were three of Alex's brothers. It is said that Andrew was determined that Alex should not have to become a miner too. This seems to be borne out by the fact that Alex worked at a gentlemen's outfitters on leaving school aged 14. What he learned there stayed with him for life because he was certainly a 'shirt and tie man!' He was always smartly dressed and always ironed his shirts 'the correct way.'

In the Northumberland area, step dancing competitions were very popular and there were a number of renowned dancing teachers in the area who taught clog dancing and tap dancing. The competitions carried a cash prize and were held at social clubs, in theatres, at cinemas between the films and in public houses, as well as at town and village festivals. Clog dancers also entered more general talent competitions which were known as 'go as you please' contests. Andrew Woodcock arranged for his friend Cuthbert May, another miner, to give Alex dancing lessons when a child. Cuthbert's father, Eddie May, had been a

champion clog dancer and teacher. He had possibly been, in his younger days, a professional dancer on the Music Hall circuit. Young Alex had a weekly lesson and learned hornpipe, waltz and schottische steps in clogs together with tap routines. If Cuthbert charged for the lessons then it couldn't have been much as the family, with six children, was very short of money. As he progressed Cuthbert encouraged Alex to dance in shoes with ebonite soles rather than wooden clogs. In 1940 a journalist described Alex as, 'A tap dancer of exceptional merit, possessing a wide range of steps and tempo.' Alex also learned and subsequently taught ballroom dancing and popular dances of the day.

### **Donnie Gilchrist emerges as dancer of importance**

Barry Gilchrist writes that it was when his father met Frank Ryan, the owner of radio station CFRA that Donnie decided to dedicate himself to step dancing. His broad axe dance, which he performed with his protege Gilles Roy, introduced the Canadian public to the intricacies of the Ottawa Valley style when he performed it for Queen Elizabeth on July 1, 1967. Donnie came to epitomize the culture of the Ottawa Valley and was soon guesting on TV shows such as Don Messer's Jubilee, the Hee Haw series in the USA and Toronto's CNE. As early as 1959 Donnie was introducing Canadians to step dancing on coast-to-coast television. Performing and touring in Canada and then amazingly in 24 countries worldwide, as part of the Canada Entertains show, saw Donnie emerge as a Canadian cultural icon. Through his own, and his daughter Gina's teaching, there can be no Ottawa Valley dancer that has not been touched by Donnie's genius. His engagement with dancers and musicians from other Canadian traditions ensured that his influence has had a wider impact. Step dancer Ward Swartz describes Donnie as, 'a true dancing master, the step-father, as it were, of shantyman dancing in the Valley.' Phil Jenkins wrote, 'He took step-dancing by the collar and swam gracefully back to the shore.'

### **Alex Woodcock emerges as a dancer of importance**

As years went by Alex happily confined his performing to local amateur dramatics and his teaching skills were focused on ballroom dancing and tap, independently of the clog dance community. Then, in January 1990, out of the blue, Chris Metherell of the Instep Research Team, an organization that promotes step dance in the UK, was contacted by Alex. He asked if Chris could teach him some clog steps. Chris has no idea of how Alex heard about him or why he felt he needed some lessons, but Chris and Ian Craigs travelled down to Petworth, Sussex, where Alex was living in retirement after a career as a youth worker. Previously Alex had been a professional dance teacher, a role he took up again in retirement. They encountered a remarkable dancer with a wonderful repertoire and were delighted to film him. Soon after, Alex was introduced to the clog dancing and folk world of the UK as a performer and tutor. Alex became a very popular and sought-after teacher due to his skill and personality. Ian writes, 'His dancing had a much more animated and visual appeal which we liked... With Alex, there was no need for acrobatics or extremely complex steps in order to wow the onlookers.' Alex taught at many workshop weekends and at folk festivals. He was even invited to teach at the Pinewoods Festival in the USA by the dance researcher Tony Barrand who with his wife, particularly loved Alex's Schottische steps.

### **Exploring 'Dancestry'**

Around the time April and Simon were connecting, Simon read an article by Nic Gareiss, '[Light In My Loafers](#),' which introduced the concept of 'dancestry,' emanating from Nic's friend and dance scholar

Janet Schroeder. Janet generously spent time with April and Simon talking through their proposed collaboration. Rather than just learning steps from a teacher, the dancer is a channel: learning, internalizing and passing on to others. Janet writes, ‘...each dancer has their own influences that shape their style, vocabulary and experience of the form, which impacts the gestural, rhythmic and choreographic inheritance they embody and disseminate through dancing.’ She defines dancestry as, ‘...a facet of cultural memory...a generational legacy built upon a simultaneous commitment to innovation in the present and respect for the past.’ This became the motivation for *Steps From The Heart*; collaborating through sharing our dancing past with the focus on creating something new to pass on for the future. Janet’s word order puts innovation before respect, encouraging us to develop as dancers. Respect for the past should not be preserving it in stone but using knowledge to move on. Gustav Mahler wrote, ‘Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.’

It is through the dancer’s body that the past is respected and becomes part of the future. This cannot happen through film or notation alone. If the link between teacher and dancer or dancer and dancer is broken, something is lost that cannot be rekindled. Also, the stories we tell of our teachers and the stories they told us adds an emotional link to the physical connection of the steps. Through dance, ethnic, racial and class-based cultural knowledge can be handed on. Through the next generation, revision is a means to keep a legacy alive. To revise, the dancer must revisit, be aware of, and maintain a responsibility for ensuring the foundations of the style are not lost.

It has been seen above how Donnie and Alex were molded as dancers by their background and their life experiences. They danced within a social context which influenced them and which they, in turn, influenced; ‘As an embodied genealogy, dancestry acknowledges the interrelation between an individual dancer and their dancing community – the collective, syncretized, bricolage of memory that builds up in the body and manifests through aesthetics and steps and the ways individual dancers embody such histories.’ When Donnie and Alex taught their students or performed for an audience they brought with them the dancers they had seen in their youth in the lumber camps and mining communities of their homes. Gina Gilchrist warns that moving forward without bringing with you the heritage of the past is dangerous. Speaking about step dance she says, ‘a lot of it tends to be commercialized. When that happens, you lose the pure character of the dance, it becomes bleak. If the culture isn’t nourished and valued, it will go under.’ Donnie ‘saw it as a vital inheritance, not an anachronism to be dusted off and remarked upon.’ Ian Craigs also says, ‘Another important aspect for us was the North East heritage of Alex and his steps. It has always been our goal to keep Alex at the forefront of our performance and keep alive one of our treasured English, North East traditions.’ Talking about dancers such as Donnie and Alex Ian writes, ‘They have given us foundations to build on, encouragement to create and perform.’ Exploring these foundations, creating and performing is the essence of *Steps From The Heart*.

### **Connecting Donnie Gilchrist and Alex Woodcock**

Two dancers with different backgrounds on either side of the Atlantic. One a national figure known by the leaders of his country and the other a relatively obscure dance teacher until his late 60s. Yet there are important connections to be found that extend beyond step dancing.

Looking into the personal histories of Donnie and Alex immediately brought up the fact that they were contemporaries, both born in the early 1920s. Their childhoods took place in the aftermath of World War 1 and their teenage years through the Depression of the 30s. Neither family had very much income. By the end of World War 2 both men were associated with the military. Donnie tap danced with the



*Donnie on stage*

Canadian Army Shows in Europe and Alex was in the RAF working at often remote radar stations around the UK. Very different experiences but they both performed for their comrades in concert parties. At this time they were both regarded as tap dancers. Sarah Randall, Alex's daughter, probably describes the experience of both men when she writes about such performers, 'They would roll up at a corrugated iron hut or village hall, organize a pianist and put on dances and entertainment shows, a mix of music to dance to, comedy sketches and drama. I'm sure there were tap routines and clog dances as well.' It is interesting here to note the influence of tap dance on these men and that tap dance itself developed from a range of dance styles including step dance.

These experiences shaped their characters. Both were born to perform and clearly found personal satisfaction from dancing for an audience. However, this satisfaction was predicated on the audience getting enjoyment from the performance. The pleasure for Donnie and Alex was in giving and making people happy. Both families tell similar stories; Donnie and Alex would always be ready to dance, enlivening any occasion. Donnie could be relied

on to support charitable events while Alex loved being part of community shows. His daughter Sarah writes, 'and any chance at all he was in drag, playing the pantomime Dame in order to clog dance and tap dance on stage.' This is not dancing just for personal pleasure but for others in a big hearted and generous manner.

Film footage of these two wonderful dancers can tell you much about step vocabulary and style but there is more to be learned, particularly about audience engagement. Both dancers usually start with an introductory step that helps both dancer and musician to settle. Donnie and Alex use this to dance around the performance space engaging with and drawing in the audience. However, even before the music starts or a step is taken you get a feeling that the audience can sense that they are going to enjoy this experience. This ability to connect is not a superficial technique but emanates from the heart of who they are as people. In her obituary for Donnie, Rosaleen Dickson wrote, 'That was his talent. He made the dancing seem so easy that everyone rejoiced, tapped their feet, and took off into flights of fancy whenever Donnie

Gilchrist took to the stage.’ The Country Music Hall of Fame states, ‘He danced with his feet but he danced from his heart.’ Kay Nightingale who learned from and taught with Alex writes, ‘Alex was a true showman, and when he got up to dance, there would always be a twinkle in his eyes, and a big beaming smile on his face. When you watched him dance, you felt you were part of something special, something fun.’ Ian Craigs writes, ‘He had the charm and charisma to support an effortless yet mesmerizing performance. He could be confidently dancing away yet still give an individual in the audience a little wry smile, a simple friendly gesture or throw out a humorous comment without faltering.’ Charisma is a word that Gina Gilchrist uses too, to describe her father’s effect on an audience.

It would be impossible to calculate the number of dancers who learned from Donnie and Alex over the years. Gina says, ‘My father, who must have had over 1000 pupils through his hands, set high standards that you can see in his dancers.’ Ian Craigs, writing about Alex’s teaching style comments, ‘His ability to adapt steps to different situations we much admired. If the available music was a bit slower or a learner was coping well he’d just add an extra tap, roll or heel beat to fill out the step. Conversely he could easily simplify steps if the music was a bit quick or a learner appeared to be struggling.’ *Steps From The Heart* makes the point that their legacy lives on through these pupils. We are also fortunate that both dancers can be seen in videos easily accessible on the internet. Barry Gilchrist, Donnie’s son, and Simon have reflected together on the immense value to be gained by watching archival film of dancers. In this way their powerful influence can benefit today’s dancers who did not have the privilege of learning from them directly.



Here are two dancers who learned both the traditional steps of their home communities and also tap dance from the popular stage and the silver screen. They danced in response to the music they loved and the music that surrounded them. As solo performers they had no set routine but a step vocabulary from which they drew - or rather the music to which they were dancing drew out of them. They performed in a range of settings and honed their skills over a number of years. The steps they had learned blended with those they saw others execute and as creative dancers they developed steps and a style of their own. Ian Craigs found Alex’s flexibility to improvise and create new steps as he performed fascinating. However, this, ‘made collecting and duplicating steps difficult as it was unrealistic to set them in tablets of stone.’ Art Jamieson comments, ‘The greatest aspect of Donnie, he was very creative. He was always thinking up new steps.’ This ability to be creative is a vital element of these dancers’ legacies. This is summed up in Gina’s eloquent words, ‘It is something to train a dancer, it is quite another to have the ability to independently

make up steps. But without that the art becomes extinct. My father had it, and I've inherited it. Sometimes, I'll go to create a step, and I'll reach beyond. For a split second I'm helpless, and then out of thin air comes something. The most exhilarating thing is to do something beautiful I've never done before.'

### **Collaboration**

April and Simon are connected as they both identify as step dancers. However, by acknowledging their dance lineage while living, teaching and performing in differing social situations their differences become apparent. Consequently, therefore, to collaborate virtually on a project based on dancing together is a challenge. The agreed aim was to develop steps with what they had learned from Donnie and Alex that would enable them to dance the tune. They would not try to emulate these iconic dancers but as Janet Schroeder puts it, '...try on the aesthetic or stylistic markers of our mentors or legendary dancestors,' and work with the 'residues that stick with us over time,' so that, '...we develop our own particular style in the process.' Schroeder warns however that, '...without continual acknowledgement of the legacy as it is passed down, we risk losing sight of those who originated the steps and the aesthetics we share. When historical connections and traces of the lineage get too far displaced, there is a danger of shifting from invocation of dancestors to appropriation of their labor.' April and Simon hope that their respect for Donnie and Alex is evident and that throughout the project they are ever present and explicit in every step, gesture and look.

Dance is always evolving but the danger is that if dancers are not aware of the background to a style the essential elements may be watered down or even lost. A focus on routines can leave the dancer without the ability to respond to a tune and select, as they dance, steps from their vocabulary that match the tune. Honoring this ability in Donnie and Alex was important to April and Simon.

One wonders, if they had met, what Donnie and Alex would have made of each other. What a joy it would be to see the two of them dance together! April and Simon hope that by bringing their two dance legacies together, with a focus on Donnie and Alex, something new will emerge and that they will develop as dancers. Carl Jung wrote, 'The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemicals; if there is any reaction, both are transformed.'

### **A Funded Project**

Further discussion included finding a name for the project. Descriptions of both dancers led us to *Steps From The Heart*. With a clear picture of the project, April applied successfully to the Canada Council for the Arts for a bursary. April and Simon would like to thank the Canada Council for the Arts and acknowledge their support which made this project possible. Through interaction via the internet a sequence of steps would be developed. This routine would be videoed individually and edited into a performance video. This video would be presented with an explanation of the project at a Zoom event. This would be paired with a Zoom workshop where a selection of the steps would be taught. A written paper about the project, step notation and a tutorial videos would be prepared and made available via the

internet. We are proposing that the resources will be available on April's website with a link from the Instep Research Team.

### **Process**

Communication was carried out through Zoom meetings, video clips, voice memo notes, and by email. April and Simon had to find a shared vocabulary. Both dancers did similar actions with their feet but used different words for the same thing; scuff, catch out, strike and brush could be interchangeable. It would be important to standardize terminology especially for teaching and the notation.

With the focus on 'dancing the tune,' a melody was needed and it seemed obvious that April should write this. There was much discussion about writing tunes for dancing and what a dancer looked for in a tune and what made them want to jump up and start stepping. Initially they planned to work on waltz moving into reel. However, it soon became apparent that there would be more than enough to explore in waltz time alone. It was a perfect choice of rhythm! Dancing to a waltz was something Alex loved and excelled in. Gina Gilchrist says that her father was the only dancer who could do justice to a waltz as he would cover the stage with his intricate steps and timing. April soon had some tune suggestions ready and individually April and Simon explored their responses and tried out ideas. At this point it became clear that the Canadian Waltz Clog has a dotted rhythm while the English Clog Waltz flows evenly. After some discussion it was agreed that a Canadian Waltz Clog written by April would be recorded with Canadian pianist Kimberley Holmes and English melodeon player Will Allen.

Individually April and Simon started experimenting and formulating steps which they shared by videos and Zoom sessions. All the initial steps suggestions have been improved in some way by the other dancer's suggestions. In the fourth step April suggested removing a repetition of an Alex style move and replacing it with Donnie's 'twist.' They blended perfectly! This ability to blend styles was part of both Donnie and Alex's creative talents. Gina Gilchrist says of her father, 'When he danced the waltz there was a lot of tap dance technique involved and he would carry himself around the floor with his arms slightly extended.' Ian Craigs writes, 'We loved the way Alex took his clog steps and enhanced them with arm and body movements gleaned from the tap dance style he also embraced.'

It was soon realized that an English clog waltz step was twice the length of an Ottawa Valley waltz step, so to acknowledge both styles it was decided to develop short and long steps. The steps were then tried in different sequences to produce an agreed routine. This involved an amount of experimentation and step revision to make smooth transitions. The result was a 9-step routine of which 6 were short and 3 long. It is important to emphasize that the steps were created in response to the tune and to reflect features in that tune. In the third step the 'swanee' heel and toe movement is extended for longer than is normal in English clog to reflect the phrase of the music.

Having a belief that the dancer should work towards developing their own style albeit influenced by their teachers and contemporaries, it seems a contradiction to plan the performance video as a duet. However, working towards this ensured that April and Simon watched each other carefully, picking up nuances of

style and ways of moving; In a studio this would have happened automatically but in this virtual situation it needed to be worked on. An example is the shuffle which in Ottawa Valley step dance is straight while in English clog it can be rounded. It was felt important to include both so that each dancer was getting new experiences. The steps are suitable to be performed in all types of dance shoe; clogs, taps or flat soled. Having mastered the steps, the dancers then reviewed the dancing of Donnie, Alex and each other and looked for ways to bring these influences to the performance.

In November 2021, Dance Movement Psychotherapist, Sara Marshall Rose, asked April and Simon what they felt they had gained so far from the *Steps From The Heart* collaboration. These were their replies:

April: I have learned a tremendous amount over the course of our project so far. It has been wonderful to learn more about the subjects of our research, Donnie Gilchrist and Alex Woodcock - their history, careers, influences and lives. I have thoroughly enjoyed learning techniques and steps from the English step dance and clog dance traditions from Simon. We've talked about so many aspects of dance, from the types of tunes, to social aspects, to challenges within the dance community. Simon is so intelligent, passionate and involved. I learn something from every email, every Zoom call. It's also been lovely to connect with some of Donnie's family, students and friends, and to hear their stories and memories firsthand. I am really grateful for this opportunity and feel like I will be learning from this project for a long time to come! It has changed me as a dancer and as an appreciator of dance.

Simon: I have learned so much from the project already! I've read extensively about Ottawa Valley dancing and watched many films of Donnie Gilchrist and other notable dancers. I have been in contact with Alex Woodcock's family and connected with other dancers who have treasured his steps. We have discovered the concept of 'dancestry' and applied it to our project, with generous help from dance scholar Janet Schroeder. April and I have talked at length about the tunes we dance to and musicians that make us want to dance. We've talked about how we teach and the vocabulary we use. I have learned that neither Donnie nor Alex wanted steps 'set in stone', to be merely reproduced, but wanted dancers to use the material creatively while striving towards technical excellence. The project has led us to collaborate with musicians, film makers, sound engineers, film editors, a designer, a publicist and several academics. It has encouraged me out of my comfort zone and rewarded me with a huge amount of pleasure. But best of all, I have a wonderful new dancing friend in April, and a determination that one day we will dance the *Steps From The Heart* in the same room.

Important to both April and Simon are the processes they have gone through during this collaboration which have resulted in a deeper understanding of each other's stepping style, embodiment of that understanding and personal growth as a step dancer. April and Simon hope that the potential transformation that Carl Jung described has become a reality! Through *Steps From The Heart* the past is not only acknowledged but is drawn through April and Simon into a creative reality today, an energy that can be in turn absorbed by others and taken forward.

### **Credits and Thanks**

April and Simon had great pleasure working with those who have supported the project, especially Donnie and Alex's families. Many others have helped in various ways offering their time with research, phone conversations, Zoom calls and emails, proof reading, advice and spreading the word. Our logo was created by Nico Humby (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.) The performance audio track features Kimberley Holmes (of Carrolls Corner, Nova Scotia, Canada) on piano (recorded by Ross Billard in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada,) Will Allen (of Swanley, Kent, UK) on melodeon (recorded by John Cornwall in Thanet, UK) and was mixed and mastered by Andrew Creeggan and Ivan Rosenberg (in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.) The performance video and audio were created with the help of Casey Driessen (Asheville, North Carolina, USA,) Urte Laurinaityte (Portsmouth, UK,) and Nic Bradford (Southampton, UK.) Sue Passmore (Newcastle, Ontario, Canada) edited all video. Maria Wallace (Huddersfield, UK) provided invaluable marketing support. Sherry Johnson (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) and Toby Bennett (Derbyshire, UK) facilitated the Zoom presentation. Finally, April and Simon would like to thank their spouses, Cody and Jo for their patience and constant encouragement.

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The Instep Research Team website (instepRT.com)

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