

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Cylla Von Tiedemann

Leah Stein Dance Company: Portraits

by Anna Drozdowski



Collaborating with Leah is like:

Sipping tea.

Putting your trust in the hands of a mad, brilliant, and amazing scientist.

It is a pretty funny experience! Leah's head is always up in the clouds, in a wonderful way, but she knows what she wants.

Walking through a garden, or a forest, or a field.

Never performed outside before, I thought she was crazy, (in a good way).

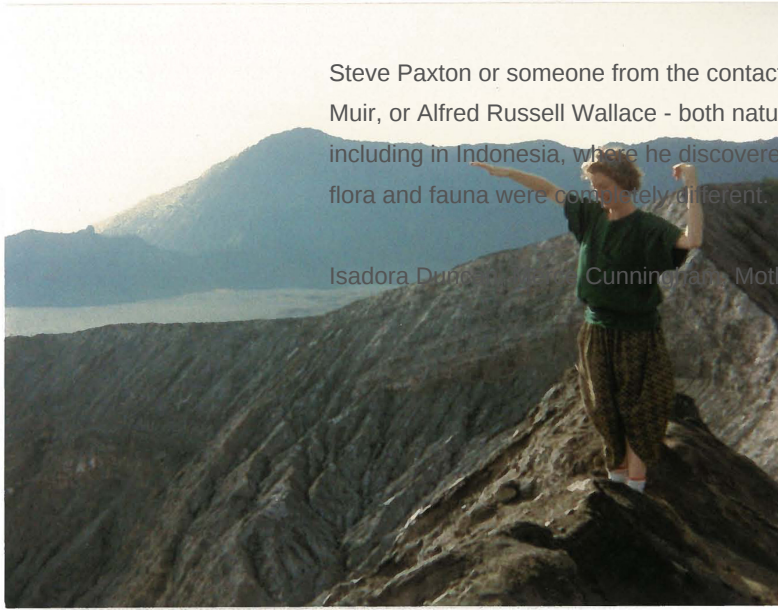
She thinks out loud: which took me years to get -- I always thought she was giving direction & it was (said with great affection) pretty disorienting.

Wow! Whether or not she can say it in words, she already sees the dance in her vision, & won't quit til it gets there!

Watching the seasons change over the years.

(Photo: Judith Stein)

Name Leah's "Dance Grandparents"



Steve Paxton or someone from the contact improv canon would be in there. Maybe someone like John Muir, or Alfred Russell Wallace - both naturalists. Wallace spent years in forests all over the world, including in Indonesia, where he discovered an imaginary geographical line, on either side of which the flora and fauna were completely different.

Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Cunningham, Mother Nature, and Terpsichore

Kazuo Ohno, Trisha Brown,
Simone Forti, Rudolph Laban

Grandparents: Isadora
Duncan, Martha Graham
Parents and Favorite Aunts &
Uncles: Trisha Brown, Merce
Cunningham, Steve Paxton,
Susan Hess
Cousins: Steve Kriekhaus,
Karen McMahon

The land, the waters, breath
& what remains

*(Photo: Collection of S. Ann
Alburger)*



Tell us something we don't know about her:

She doesn't like television, but is always enthusiastic about nature programs where animals are running around.

She can be quite stubborn.

Many know of her prima ballerina past -- she's also a skilled visual artist & spent time in France as an au pair.

Leah studied classical Javanese dance in Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

Leah is terrific working with kids. She fires up the imagination of little ones and knows just how to get them deeply engaged, and organized just enough.

She does funny things with her lips when she is thinking.

When she finds an interesting piece of nature (rock, stick, seed pod) she'll put it on the wall. She rarely puts nails in walls to hang them, she prefers to use nails that are already there.

(Photo: Collection of S. Ann Alburger)

In a word, Leah is...



Gentle

A Giver

Calm

A gentle adventurer who takes us and her dancing crew along on new episodes of "Discover Our City."

A dance-spirit

Uniquely unique!

Leah is grass under dancing feet. Leah is artist. Leah is easy. Leah is my friend. Leah is fertile ground.

Love

A world in motion

Driftwood, soft, of the ocean, becoming itself beautifully through organic process.

Unstoppable!

Her name translates to ethereal stone. I think that says it.

(Photo: Judith Stein)

Many thanks to contributors: S. Ann Alburger, Dave Champion, Ellen Gerdes, Alan Harler, Germaine Ingram, Roko Kawai, David Konyk, Lisa Kraus, Aryani Manring, Shavon Norris, Lee Shapley, Josie Smith, Darla Stanley, Jonathan Stein, Judith Stein, and Jane Stojak.

Contemporary photos & more reflections in the Feature Section here: [Leah Stein--Thoughts From the Field](#)

By Anna Drozdowski

March 3, 2012