

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Tiny Steps

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, August 12th, 2015

Like birds are hardwired to fly, we humans are born with an instinct to dance. Put on a piece of music and even a pre-ambulatory infant will bop and move to it sitting down or while barely holding themselves up. In countries with indigenous cultures like Asia and Africa, children as young as two-years-old begin tapping into their movement gene while learning sacred temple or tribal dances.



A young boy dances with abandon in Tiny Steps

Over the years, when I have taught dance to very young children – many between the ages of two and five years old – it's been incredibly rewarding. To see a young person move without a pre-established idea of what they look like or "should" look like from the outside... To see them find their own raw, emotional, and imaginative germ of dance from the inside out and without inhibition, is beyond inspiring. If only we could stay that way all our lives! Instead, so many adults grow up and lose all organic connections with their bodies and their inner dancing selves.



Gaelle Henry instructs as young dancers listen and watch

So when I saw this new dance short by Dominique Palombo – who many of you readers know as one of my favorite dance film makers – I knew I had to write about it. **Tiny Steps** features Dominique's lovely partner, Gaelle Henry, teaching students of the Centre Valeyre in Paris, France. When I met her, Gaelle and I had several conversations about teaching movement to children, and in her way with these young students, I definitely see a kindred spirit.



A young girl explores movement in Tiny Steps

As a film, **Tiny Steps** has many of the earmarks of Palombo's other dance shorts: stationary camera, people starting in and dancing out of frame, a layering of bodies, and a great sense of depth of field. Shot entirely in black and white as if to suggest old home movies and soon-to-be-bygone moments, **Tiny Steps** is nostalgic for sure. But with the song "Stubborn Love" by the Lumineers' and all the beaming faces of the children dancing their hearts out with absolute abandon, it's hard not to fall for. Beyond all this, **Tiny Steps** acts as a visual testimonial to the power of dance – to how instrumental and engaging it can be.

Dance is a life force that lives in all of us... When tapped into at a very young age, how can it *not*

contribute to creating whole, healthy, and vibrant human beings?

Enjoy.

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