



City of Cambridge

26.

IN CITY COUNCIL

October 26, 1998

COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
MAYOR DUEHAY
VICE MAYOR GALLUCCIO
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

WHEREAS: Joan Green and Victoria Solomon of Back Porch Dance Company are creating an exciting multi-part project celebrating the women of Cambridge and work they do; and

WHEREAS: The core of the project will be the creation of a dance/theater piece, based on the text of interviews of a dozen Cambridge women chosen to reflect diversity of age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual preference and occupation; and

WHEREAS: The creators plan this project as an exploration and celebration of Cambridge women in this complex community, home of world-class universities, many immigrant populations, a long-established African-Caribbean community, the remnants of long-term Irish and Italian communities, housing projects and poor neighborhoods side-by-side but not always in harmony with some of the most impressive intellectual resources anywhere; and

WHEREAS: The dance/theater piece will have a community component; women from a Cambridge workplace will participate in a dance created for them; and

WHEREAS: The project includes collaboration with Cambridge photographer Vaughn Sills; and

WHEREAS: Ms. Green and Ms. Solomon are contacting Cambridge organizations to join a list of sponsors that already includes the Cambridge Women's Commission and the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, among other key community organizations; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record expressing its enthusiastic support for Back Porch's groundbreaking multi-part celebration of the women of Cambridge and their work and urging all Cantabrigians to consider support and sponsorship of this exciting millennial effort; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Joan Green and Victoria Solomon of Back Porch Dance Company on behalf of the entire City Council.

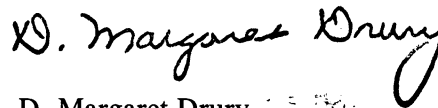
In City Council October 26, 1998.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the printed name.

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

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(26)

Whereas: Joan Green and Victoria Solomon of Back Porch Dance Company have are creating an exciting multipart project celebrating the women of Cambridge and the work they do; and

Whereas: The one of the projects will be the creation of a dance/theatre piece, based on the text of interviews of a dozen Cambridge women chosen to reflect diversity in age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual preference and occupation; and

Whereas: The creators plan this project as an explanation and celebration of Cambridge ^{women} ~~and~~ ^{in this} complex ~~community~~ community, home of world-class universities, many immigrant populations, a long-established African-Caribbean community, the remnants of long-term Irish and Italian communities, housing projects and poor neighbourhoods side-by-side but not always in harmony with some of the most impressive intellectual resources anywhere; and

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Whereas: Ms Green and Mrs. Solomon are contacting Cambridge organizations to join a list of sponsors that already includes the Cambridge Women's Commission and the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Centre, among other ~~sponsors~~ and other key community organizations; now therefore be it

Resolved: That the CC go on record expressing its support and enthusiastic support for ~~the~~ Backporch's groundbreaking ~~project~~ a multipart celebration of the women of Cambridge and their work and urging all Cambridgeans to consider support and sponsorship of this equity millennial effort; & be it further

Resolved: SEC to Jon Green and Victoria Solomon of Backporch Dance Company,

6/1/98

Draft Version

1998 OCT 19 P 12:48

PROJECT SUMMARY: Celebrating Cambridge Women and Work

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Looking toward the millennium, Cambridge choreographers **Joan Green** and **Victoria Solomon** of **Back Porch Dance Company** are planning a multipart project celebrating the women of Cambridge and the work they do. The target date of this project is March 2000.

The core of the project will be the creation of a dance/theater piece, based on the text of interviews of a dozen Cambridge women. We intend to choose these women to include diversity in age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, and sexual preference as well as diversity in occupation. Members of the company will interview these women about the work that they did or do, a range of jobs including the unglamorous kind of work that makes the world turn. There are hundreds of thousands of stories to be told among the women of Cambridge; we cannot tell them all but we expect that among the 12 women we interview we'll touch on some of these issues: the glass ceiling, the lower pay of women workers, the need to be superwomen, shadow work (the unpaid labor that keeps many endeavors afloat), the difficulty women academics often find in getting tenure. We expect also to encounter stories that tell of many positive connections between a worker and her work.

Why look at women and their work in Cambridge and why now? To the world at large, Cambridge is synonymous with two major universities. To those of us who live and work here, it is much more: a complex community that includes many immigrant populations, a long-established African-Caribbean community, the remnants of long-term Irish and Italian communities, housing projects and ghettos side-by-side but not always in harmony with some of the most impressive intellectual resources anywhere. Until quite recently, a custodian lives next door to a college professor, who lives next door to a bus driver. Incredible diversity has been Cambridge's hallmark; now that is threatened by the recent demise of rent control, by unbridled development and by the expansion of the universities. As we enter the next millenium, we need to reflect on the value that this diversity has bestowed; Back Porch Dance Company has chosen to do this by celebrating Cambridge women and the work that they do.

From the interviews we will distill the poetry that emerges into a score to accompany the piece. We will collaborate with a historian to choose our narrators and to put what they tell us into the context of women's and labor history in Massachusetts. The dance itself will grow out of the interviews. The process of making the dance involves bringing the company together with the historian to share accounts of the interviews, to share the physical gestures we learned from the narrators as they showed us how they move on the job, to discuss the ideas and anecdotes and to develop movement phrases. From there, the choreographers go into the studio and piece together the whole. We will also collaborate with a composer/sound score creator, who will help us to create a musical score from music which was important to the interview subjects at different times in their work lives.

The dance/theater piece that we create will have a community component. We will bring together a group of women from a Cambridge workplace. We will create a part of the dance to include them and teach them the material in a series of three workshops. They will perform it with us in our Cambridge performances. Later, as we tour the work, we will recruit a group in each place we perform, teaching the group the dance and including them in the performance. This will build an intimate connection in each community where we travel.

Collaborating with Cambridge photographer Vaughn Sills, we will create a photo exhibit to accompany the performances. The purpose of the exhibit will be to celebrate the narrators, who stand in for all women who work. These portraits of our narrators, at home and at work, will add another dimension to the audience's appreciation of these women and the work they do. We have chosen to work with Vaughn Sills because she is an eloquent portrait photographer with a special sensitivity toward and appreciation of women and workers. At our Cambridge performances, the exhibition will hang concurrently with the dance performances. It will then move to the

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Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center and to Cambridge City Hall, and will accompany the company's touring performances.

On opening night, we will invite the narrators, the historian and the composer/sound score creator to be our honored guests. We will ask them to sit on the stage at the close of the performance and respond to questions from the audience, who may want to query them about their work or the making of the performance piece or their reactions to it. We will follow this Q and A with a reception open to all attending. This will give the audience a further chance to view the photographs and to talk with the narrators and the company members.

We have begun to make contact with Cambridge organizations, and in the coming months we will contact many more, asking them to join a list of sponsors. The Cambridge Women's Commission and the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center are already collaborating with us on this project. We will form a Project Advisory Board with representatives of sponsoring organizations. We will call upon these organizations to help us locate narrators and to help publicize the performances. We will ask those organizations that can afford it to make a monetary contribution which will go toward designing and printing a beautiful poster.

After the premiere performances, we will perform the work for students at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. We will also give a performance targeted at girls between the ages of 8 and 14. We will invite girls' groups to attend, far in advance of the performance, so that they will be able to use the material of the performance and the issues it raises to talk about women and work.

While we are planning and developing the project, we will identify two communities in Massachusetts which lack Cambridge's resources but share in having a similar immigrant population. For instance, there is a large Portuguese population in Cambridge and also in New Bedford. We will plan to tour the piece to these two communities, finding a local presenter and making connections through ethnic organizations to find a workplace group to perform with us.

Back Porch Dance Company finds this project full of thrilling possibilities. It has the potential for connecting us to many groups within our community, for offering a group of non-dancers the chance to perform on stage, for providing the audiences in each community an opportunity to consider the women they know and are and the work they do. This project weaves together many threads of our previous work: collaborating with other artists, with a humanist and a composer; involving our company in oral history gathering; transforming the experiences and feelings of a diverse group of women into a powerful piece of dance theater, creating a unique theater experience that includes the audience and offers them opportunities to participate; and offering our hometown, Cambridge, a very special community building event.



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October 26, 1998

COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

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- RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record expressing its enthusiastic support for Back Porch's groundbreaking multi-part celebration of the women of Cambridge and their work and urging all Cantabrigians to consider support and sponsorship of this exciting millennial effort; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Joan Green and Victoria Solomon of Back Porch Dance Company on behalf of the entire City Council.

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Consent Order #26

Councillor Triantafillou re: support and sponsor Back Porch Dance Company on their multi-part project celebrating the women of Cambridge and the work they do.

In City Council October 26, 1998

ORDER ADOPTED