



Cure s Passages offers a taste of Southern Italy:

Dave Tull, Gazette Theater Critic
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There's a convenient way to visit southern Italy and come back again with a host of memories. That's with a visit to the dance concert "passages," being offered by the Dance Cure company in Columbus this week.

Dance Cure has as artistic director Natalie Marrone, who is part-time on the faculty of Ohio Wesleyan University's Department of Theatre and Dance. Her work has been seen in Delaware but "Passages" is a brand new work. It produces a piece that is not only fine dance, but also has autobiographical elements.

Kay Albright, also of Ohio Wesleyan, is stage manager and lighting designer.

The program is based on Southern Italian folk dances and myth, all of which have been carefully researched by Marrone. It also explores a rich vein of family history reflected during the program with audio interviews with Marrone's grandmother.

Two themes dominate the concert. First is the experience of an Italian family torn from their home and crossing the ocean to America. Even more dominant is the myth of the Tarantate – women bitten by the tarantula as they worked in the fields. Once bitten, these women danced in white dresses in an ecstatic state until the bite was cured. This process of purification takes place at the shrine of St. Paul of Galatina. The ecstatic dance, Pizzica Tarantata is a traditional Italian folk dance. The tarantula legend is expertly woven throughout Marrone's program.

The entire program is rich in exceptional dance. It is colorful, exciting and sensual at times. Dance fans will recognize that the "Passages" dancers achieve some uncommon moves and do that with apparent ease.

Marrone and her dancers kick the program into high gear with the first dance, the lively folk dance La Tammurriata. She explains that this dance, which dates to pagan rituals, "done with castanets, is exuberant, seductive, flashy and colorful." And so it is. Further, we see in this dance some of the moves the dancers are capable of. Their timing is flawless, synchronized and incredibly athletic.

While doing research in Italy, Marrone encountered this dance performed by peasants in its natural setting, a tiny town festival in a mountain town above Pompeii.

The program features nine dancers, including Marrone, and it would be hard to find fault with any of them. Several performed remarkable dances, including the agile Jessica Tupa as a "spider" crawling along a webbed wall; a series of sinuous moves on a swinging trapeze, performed by Stacey Haynes – joined later by Marrone; and the Tarantate performed by the graceful Allison Fall. Marrone also takes a comic turn in *Divertissement: Pigeons in the Park*, with six other dancers appearing as pigeons jostling for the proffered pigeon food.

The cast includes (in addition to those named) Charlotte Evans, Mara Penrose, Amy Watts Charmella Wilks and Elisha T. Clark. The entire company demonstrates what can happen when each member is well rehearsed and in perfect synchrony.

Costumes, in every case, were simple but very effective. They contributed to the flow and sense of freedom on the dances.

"Passages" opens tonight and continues through Saturday. All performances are at 8 p.m. at the Davis Discovery Center, 549 Franklin Ave. in Columbus, behind the main Columbus Library. Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$10 for students and seniors. Tickets may be purchased at the door or in advance by calling 614-470-3015.