

# Culture Count

## Our Deepest Sympathies

You can take the girl out of neuroscience, but you can't take neuroscience out of the girl.

This is at least true of 32-year-old choreographer Liz Santoro. A former neuroscience major at Harvard, she nearly became a surgeon. But her classical ballet training won out, and she spent her 20s performing with New York-based choreographers Ann Liv Young, Jack Ferver and Heather Kravas.

When we asked her to assemble figures related to her latest work, "We Do Our Best"—which will be presented this week at Dancespace on East 10th Street—Ms. Santoro generated the highest numbers in Culture Count history. What she was getting at, with the numbers and her work, is the sympathetic relationship between performer and audience: "sympathetic in its more scientific definition," she explained, "more 'sympathetic nervous system' and less 'I'm

sorry for your loss.'"

For Ms. Santoro, choreography and neurosurgery are related inquiries: "I'm still trying to understand the same things. The questions I'm asking are not that far off from the ones I was asking when I was studying neuroscience."

Recent theories, she said, suggest that we have mirror neurons that fire when we move and when we observe movement, which would explain why our hearts soar when we watch dancers leap—in our neurons, we may be leaping, too.

Ms. Santoro wants to explore that with her more understated movement vocabulary. "It's simple and quiet. But what we're trying to do is quite loud if you want to enter into it with us. That's my goal, to have that connection."

Any regrets about choosing choreography over surgery?

"Only my paycheck."

—Lizzie Simon

In 'We Do Our Best,' choreographer Liz Santoro attempts to evoke a scientific relationship between stage and audience. She counted up some of the biological statistics involved.

### PERFORMERS

STATS FOR THE THREE PERFORMERS:

2,400

Approximate breaths that will be taken by the performers during the show

18.72 BILLION

Approximate red blood cells the performers will produce during the show

135

Miles of nerves running through the bodies of the performers

618

Bones inside the bodies of the performers

### AUDIENCE (FULL HOUSE)



17,550

Miles of nerves running through the bodies of the audience

80,340

Bones inside the bodies of everyone in the audience

312,000

Approximate breaths taken by the audience during the show

2.43 TRILLION

Approximate red blood cells audience will produce during the show