

THE DANCE Journal

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A Waltz in the Woods with Maddie Gardella and Philadelphia Dance Photo Project

IN [DANCE HEADLINES](#) / BY [JUAN IRIZARRY](#) / ON AUGUST 14, 2015 AT 6:30 PM /



by Juan Irizarry for The Dance Journal

Recently the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania installed a new stick-work sculpture created by Patrick Dougherty. The name of the sculpture is "A Waltz in the Woods". The management at the Arboretum thought it would be appropriate to have some photos featuring the combination of dance with the sculpture and contacted me about it since I have done many photo-shoots at the arboretum.

In the last thirty years, Patrick Dougherty has created some 260 sculptures in more than 15 countries. *A Waltz in the Woods* includes seven "towers", each roughly 30 feet high, through which visitors may roam. Open windows create an airy feel, and opposing doors allow for travel between the towers. The variations in shape and size create a unique sense of flow and a maze-like feel. The negative space within the circle of the towers pays homage to the Arboretum's *Summer Palace* which Dougherty created in 2009.

A Waltz in the Woods was created from willow saplings, which were brought in from Fredonia, New York, from a willow nursery. Dougherty likes that his work is relevant to just about anyone. He recognizes that each structure creates different associations for different people, and that it evokes something unique for each individual. In the end, for him, it is all about connections. "Sometimes we all just need to be reminded of our place in nature."



When the opportunity opened I found a willing and able partner for creating the images in Maddie Gardella. Maddie and I have previously created some gorgeous images at the Arboretum and she was happy to lend both her beauty and talent to the project.

Madeleine Gardella began her dance training at The Dance Academy, a local studio in Holland, PA, studying ballet, tap, jazz, and lyrical. When she was 10, Madeleine attended a summer intensive at The Rock School for Dance Education in Philadelphia and remained in their full-time, year-round professional ballet program for five years on full scholarship. During those years, she danced the parts of Abby (a.k.a. Clara) and the Sugar Plum Fairy in *Nutcracker 1776*, was a featured soloist in the annual Curtis Institute Gala, and danced as a featured artist in the 2013 Fringe Arts Festival. Madeleine won 1st Place Junior Classical Division in 2013 and 2nd Place Senior Classical Division in 2014 at the Youth America Grand Prix in Philadelphia. Madeleine was Clara in the Radio City

Christmas Spectacular in 2012 and 2011, touring with The Rockettes to Providence, RI and Boston, MA the first season and dancing at Radio City Music Hall the second season. Under the direction of Peter Stark, Madeleine spent two summers (2014, '13) at Next Generation Ballet -Patel Conservatory in Tampa, FL on scholarship, dancing

variations in Summer Fantasy including Third Odalisque Variation from Le Corsaire and Variation of Swanilda Act I from Coppelia. Madeleine is a model for A Wish Come True, a dance costume company located in Bristol, PA, and has had her photos featured as the 2012 holiday cover and the 2015 annual cover. Madeleine has been featured in Dance Spirit Magazine, she spent last year with Next Generation Ballet and looks forward to start as a member of Orlando Ballet II on this upcoming season.

As a dance photographer I felt honored to receive such opportunity and will work with the Morris Arboretum to continue to open new opportunities that can feature dancers and dance performances in nature and the beautiful settings found therein.

A Waltz in the Woods
New Stickwork Sculpture by Patrick Dougherty
Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania
100 E. Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118

