

# Overdrive Question and Answer Session with Genevieve Watson and Lewis Wilkins

Genevieve and Lewis are apprentices and have been dancing with Richard Alston Dance Company since August 2009. They took some time out from their busy rehearsal schedule to answer a few questions about rehearsing and performing in Overdrive (2003)

## 1. What were your first impressions of Overdrive before you started learning it?

*Genevieve:* I watched a video of Overdrive before learning the piece, and the energy of the dancers really appealed to me. I also noticed the changing group formations and dynamics between solos, duets, trios, and sextets.

*Lewis:* When we first watched Overdrive on video my immediate impression was that the movement looked very precise in terms of its rhythm and musicality. I also thought that the choreography appeared very complex in terms of the arrangement of dancers in space, and its relationship to the constantly 'driving' music.

## 2. What has been the most challenging part about learning Overdrive?

*Lewis:* The most challenging aspect for me has been staying in time with the music and with the other dancers, and even just managing to count the music correctly as we have to count it in 9s, 8s, and 2s, and on top of this the timing of the counts isn't always even.

## 3. Do you count the music, sing it or use a different method for keeping track of where you are?

*Lewis:* I use different methods for staying in time with the music, for example in the opening duet, I concentrate on counting the 9's from the beginning of the music and when we walk into the space, however as I start the opening phrase I stop counting and use the repetitive rhythm of the music to stay in time. In other parts of the piece I have to constantly count in order to stay together with the other dancers.

*Genevieve:* I tend to count the music for entrances, for example if I know I have four phrases of 9 before, I run on to start the trio. However, once I am on stage dancing I pick out the emphasised higher pitched notes to indicate the beginning of phrases and then I sing the rhythms. When the music changes to 2s, I count as it makes my movement more precise and helps me to stay in unison with the other dancers.

#### 4. Do you feel a particular way when performing Overdrive?

*Genevieve:* I enjoy dancing the trio as at times we are in close proximity to each other, making it quite exciting and sometimes challenging spatially. The sextet is difficult to dance as it is important to maintain the spacing of a diagonal line whilst passing through the men, which can be quite tight. It means you have to be really aware of the directions of movements as well as the steps themselves. When first learning the piece, the timing can feel rushed, and it can be hard to stay on top of the counts, but with rehearsal it becomes easier to find the rhythm.

*Lewis:* I feel all sorts of emotions while performing Overdrive. I find the music dictates this in a big way, most of the time I feel very driven by the music like its throwing me around the space. I find the challenge of this exciting and its very satisfying when you know the music so well that you feel like you are almost controlling the speed of the music. I also find the energy of the group sections really exciting as I think it creates a big impact on the audience.

#### 5. What was it like to first perform Overdrive on stage in front of an audience?

*Genevieve:* I found it exciting to first perform Overdrive, because it was still a work in progress and so the material was still fairly new to us. It was interesting to find that we communicated more with each other through eye contact on stage.

*Lewis:* Performing the piece is very satisfying, I always get nervous at the beginning as I open the piece and often feel under pressure to execute this duet as well as possible. To combat these nerves I have to stay relaxed so as not to rush and make sure I perform with clarity and stay in time with the music.