

QUIZ YOURSELF: WHO ARE BALLET'S BEST AND WHY?

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Olivia, a longtime member of Dance Masters Of America, received her BA in theater and dance from Florida State University. She is a dancer, choreographer, teacher and writer based in Orlando, FL.

Myles And The Mouse

HOW THIS CHOREOGRAPHER EARNED HIS EARS.

What makes a successful choreographer? In the words of Myles Thoroughgood: "Vision, style, patience and understanding."

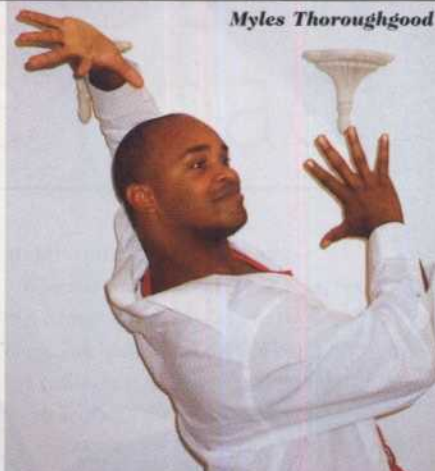
Thoroughgood has a full measure of these qualities and more. He stepped into the role of choreographer for the Disney Channel's "Mickey Mouse Club" having never before choreographed for the camera. In order to do that, he had to demonstrate not just the above, but show incredible flexibility and creativity as well. With an agent's prompting, Thoroughgood auditioned. Each candidate was given a two-week trial period to work with the kids and produce two numbers. "I got there, talked to the producer, picked up what they wanted, then began seeing and absorbing," recalls Thoroughgood. "The process is innate, creative. You interpret their vision."

He obviously hit the mark—after snatching the gig, he stayed with the Orlando "MMC" show for five years. "Myles' technical skill and clear direction maximized the abilities of our cast," says Jean Wiegman, the show's supervising producer. "He had the enormous task of choreographing for 24 teenagers daily." Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and *NSYNC's JC Chasez and Justin Timberlake were among the then-disciples.

"It was a great training ground for these kids," says Thoroughgood. "They were raw talent with little or no experience. JC was just a kid with a unique way of moving and

Myles' technical skill and clear direction maximized the abilities of our cast.

*—Jean Wiegman,
"MMC" supervising producer*



Myles Thoroughgood

showbiz kid Justin just loved to perform. Britney was the dynamic dancer and Christina was this small little person with a powerful voice that blew us all away.

"Shooting a TV show has its unique problems. There is so much to be done in such a short time and the kids had to go to school, too. It was a very busy time, but a good time. We were all learning from each other."

Thoroughgood and the cast knocked out three numbers and a music video each week, running four full takes (different angles) for each one. "I had maybe four hours of rehearsal time with each song," he says. "Everyone had to learn to work together very quickly."

A multi-dimensional talent, Thoroughgood is a total artist. He's an actor, a writer, a dancer, a director and a teacher who brings all those dynamics to choreography. He has created for pop stars and musical groups, including *NSYNC, for live shows, music videos and television. Destiny Shami, a young dancer who has worked closely with him says, "When you take his classes you know you're going to get some outstanding choreography. Whether he chooses music with a pumping beat or a soft lyrical song, you always end up satisfied.

"He teaches you how to move with controlled power, yet be soft and fluid at the same



COURTESY CHACHKIN MANAGEMENT

FYI

One of Thoroughgood's recent choreographic projects is Nickelodeon's "Taina" (see *DS* June 2001, page 31). He choreographed all of the first season's dance class scenes and collaborated with guest choreographers and directors.

time. Because he's an actor as well, he shows us how to bring out all kinds of expression in our dance. The first group number I had ever done with him was called "Spies." With Myles, I actually had this feeling of excitement and danger as if I were really a spy working undercover." Sheri Corino-Metcalf, Myles' assistant since he choreographed "Gullah Gullah Island" for Nickelodeon, shares some insight: "When Myles looks for dancers, he looks for people who fit the part, people with good attitudes, people with good work ethics." She says he's "an extremely creative person who is always working his craft. Myles is a great tool in our industry."

Working his craft is what he does best, whether choreographing a music video for *NSYNC, transforming horseback riders into waltzing antebellum Southern ladies and gentlemen at Dolly Parton's Dollywood or performing in his original work *Onemanshow* for Orlando's renowned Fringe Festival. A review by the *Orlando Sentinel* sums it up: "Myles Thoroughgood proves to be versatility personified." **For more:** Click Web Specials, then Extra! Extra! at dancespirit.com. **DS**