

FOREWORD

From the first time I saw her I knew she was special. She came in midways the tour of "Satchmo" amidst artistic unrest and brought a quiet elegant demeanor. Over time after we met, when she danced she inspired me to get to know her and it came at an unlikely time and place. Behind the curtains of the show...

She inspired me to write about her dance and this and late one night she knocked on my door... and opened a new page in my life. I was commissioned to write her life story in words and music and over time did both. The two songs; My Ballerina and The Forest Dance came into my consciousness easily....the words to her story came with pain, tears and the strengths of an amazing woman...who danced. This then became my passion and mission to capture the essence of Stela in words that could be understood all over the world. Listening to her tell her story became a nightly ritual after the evenings performance and she "spoke" with two voices: the normal speaking voice and her feet. It was and is an amazing story of life in her country and her journey.

Her story took on a life of its own. Inspiring its content and title: Broken Pointe of which she whispered one evening in this road.

She put the "D" in Diva and expressed her life as a ballerina every time she had the chance in a good way. I feel blessed to have witnessed a small part of her journey in word and music and given permission to capture it in this book.

That she chose me to tell her story at midnight gives the jazz tune; "Round Midnight" new meaning and linked Stela and I into an invisible song. That has no ending. A song that will be played hopefully for a long time its mysteries untold but appreciated for all that it was hoped to be. One of passion, and love and artistry of two unlikely people; A ballerina and a jazz musician. I am honored to be a part of Broken Pointe. Stela Cocarlea is a special, beautiful woman...and Dance is her life.

Washington Rucker