



CLASSIC ART STAMPS
THE STAMPERS' SAMPLER
SOMERSET STUDIO
BELLE ARMOIRE

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**BALLERINA BEATS THE ODDS & GRACES COVER
OF PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE**

Laguna Hills, CA – October 8, 2008 – Each issue of Stampington & Company's photo-journaling magazine *Life Images* highlights moving photographs and words from around the world, including stories of people facing personal challenges and finding inner strength. The cover of the Autumn 2008 issue of *Life Images* features one such image – a ballerina diagnosed with a painful disease who has overcome the odds.

After seeing a reader challenge calling for submissions reflecting the quote "we don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing," Jeanee James immediately thought of her friend Robyn DeKeyser. At the age of three weeks old, Robyn was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis and was only given a few years to live. Despite the odds, her fighting spirit has kept her alive, although she only has 32% lung capacity, has a g-tube, faces regular infections, and takes an average of 22 pills per day. She strives to live her life to the fullest and follows her passions, one of which is dance.

Because her illness prevented her from playing outside as a child, Robyn's mother enrolled her in dance classes at a young age to enable her to socialize with other children. It was clear early on that she had a special gift for ballet, and she went on to dance with the Southern Ballet Theatre (now the Orlando Ballet), the Paris Opera Ballet, the National Ballet of Cuba, the San Francisco Ballet, and the Joffrey Ballet, led by her mentor Robert Joffrey. Though she had to take an eight-year hiatus during her twenties in which she was on and off the lung transplant list, she was able to rebuild her endurance and currently spends about 30 hours per week in the studio, taking classes, teaching, and rehearsing.

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“To watch her dance is like watching poetry in motion,” says Robyn’s friend Jeanee, who is the photographer behind the cover image. “With dance and music, she is able to transport herself out of her pain and fear and for a few short minutes live in another world being Aurora, Clara or Coppelia. She knows how priceless life is and never takes it for granted ... These pictures of her show her fierce passion, frailty and strength.”

“I have always felt I needed to make up for a ‘lost career’ and lost time on stage,” shares Robyn. “I feel robbed of a passion which I knew I could have excelled in – robbed by a thief called ‘Cystic Fibrosis.’ So with these thoughts, it has been my challenge to overcome the ‘defeat’ CF put on me and continue to dance to prove it has not beaten me and I can still perform. I dance with the greatest amount of determination and passion I can possibly find – regardless of the constraints put upon me by CF.”

Life Images is released quarterly and is available directly through Stampington & Company or on newsstands in the “Photography” or “Craft & Hobby” sections. Current or back issues can be purchased online at www.stampington.com or over the phone at 1-877-782-6737. To see more photographs of Robyn DeKeyser taken by Jeanee James, visit www.jeaneej.com. For more information about this release, including print-ready images, visit www.stampington.com/press.

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