

## **Program Notes – Prestidigitations**

Premiere: May 18, 1991, The David Howard Dance Center, New York, New York

Choreography by James Sewell

Music by Scott Joplin

Lighting by Susannah Hewson

Costume by Cathy Hazeltine

### **Original Cast:**

James Sewell

The first published, extended work by composer Scott Joplin (b. 1868, Texarkana; d. 1917, New York) was a 1902 ballet suite using the rhythmic devices of ragtime, the forerunner of modern dance music. *“Prestidigitations”* is a solo trilogy of classic magic tricks that incorporate traditional ballet: *“Jacket,”* a classical solo performed while escaping from a straightjacket; *“Rings,”* an adagio based on one of the oldest known magic tricks, the Chinese linking rings; and *“Cane,”* the quintessential “levitating” prop.