

# THIS NEW ACTOR'S TALE GIVES ONE PAUSE

By BARBARA HOFFMAN – New York Post - Tuesday February 5, 2008

February 4, 2008 -- WHEN Susan Stroman says jump, Pi never asks "How high?" Maybe because Pi's a Boston terrier.

Nevertheless, as one of the stars of "Makin' Whoopee," Pi leaps tall dancers in a single bound; dashes across the stage in a bridal veil and has a spirited tug of war with a hat.

It sure beats being tied to a tree all day long, which is how Boston Terrier Rescue of New York found him. It was only a matter of time (and TLC) before animal trainer Bill Berloni came along and adopted the dog now performing grand jetés in Lincoln Center.



When she made the piece four years ago - inspired by a Buster Keaton film with a dog in it - Stroman reached out to Berloni, the guiding hand behind Bruiser the Chihuahua of "Legally Blonde" and many a Sandy of "Annie."

Because the ballet's an homage to the black-and-white films of yore, "she wanted a black-and-white dog, like a Dalmatian," Berloni recalls.

"I said, 'I don't have a Dalmatian, but this Boston terrier's very athletic.' I showed her what he could do, and she created around him."

Putting Pi through Stroman's paces involves some cleverly concealed hot dogs and a generous schmear of peanut butter across dancer Tom Gold's cheek.

But nothing, Berloni says, is as good as Gold:

"He's just a dog lover - who in his right mind would put his face next to a Boston terrier's?"

"I told him he can't ever retire. Pi understands that this man really loves him."  
It's true, the dancer says, happily.

"He's just so amazing, and a true professional. I don't even try to upstage him, because when he's out there, it's all about him. I just give it over to him."