



DANCERESOURCECENTER

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DANCEZINE



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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Sweltering heat pours off the sidewalk in El Sereno as I squint at addresses, making my way towards Fusion Performing Dance Academy's gated front door. The roar of an industrial fan greets me, and over it, Albertossy Espinoza does too. "You're here!" he says, setting out a tray of frosted cupcakes. The Academy just had a bake sale to raise money, and we sample the remainder as we set up for another community event: the DRC's first DanceLounge.

The need for a regular DRC gathering had been mulled over by the board for a while—hopefully not just for Networking (that kind with a capital "N"), but also to have a good time. Meet new folks. Dance. We devised a plan of cocktails combined with a mini dance class, free for members. Board President, Albertossy Espinoza, agreed to teach the first class—Flamenco Fusion—and host the kickoff in his own newly-opened space, Fusion Performing Dance Academy.

Spraying down the tall glass mirrors—one of the biggest expenses of opening shop, Albertossy tells me—as the sun streams in low through the curtains, I see that every neighbor who walks by waves to us. Inside, rows of posters coat the walls, displaying classical modern dancers leaping and posing, reminiscent of our host's own time at Julliard and Hubbard Street.

A small print entitled "The Positive Effects of Dance on Children," illuminates the main reason Fusion opened: after a community center closure, where his free classes could be 100 dancers thick, Albertossy identified the need to keep low-cost dance available, especially for youth. As a service to both the neighborhood and the LA dance community, he opened his own space to offer community and professional classes, as well as rehearsal space, at affordable rates. He tells me his biggest goal right now is to have the kids' classes be free again.

The heat just this side of stifling, everything begins to cool down as the shadows thicken. Members of the board begin arriving, carrying ice, wine, and platters of baby carrots. We start catching up, greeting new folks as they come in and making introductions. In addition to DRC folks, students and a board member of Fusion are there, as well. Music plays, and a couple of participants take a few excited—if tentative—dance steps. This group is like a bunch of eager horses, pawing the ground while still cradling their plates of hors d'oeuvres—or maybe that's just me!

I turn to our Prez and ask for an official quote: "There's this feeling of excitement—we're dancers, and we're going to have a dance party!" So true. It feels great to have an event where both "dance" and "party" are an apt title—and beyond that, it's a gathering of community. We're relishing the chance to swap stories with fellow dancers, about work, teachers, styles, ideas you didn't know you had in common.

Being at Fusion also provided insight into Albertossy's professional life outside of the DRC. A mother who dances there and sends her daughter, too, shed light on how important the classes are: she spoke about her teen learning to work hard and take care of herself and her body.

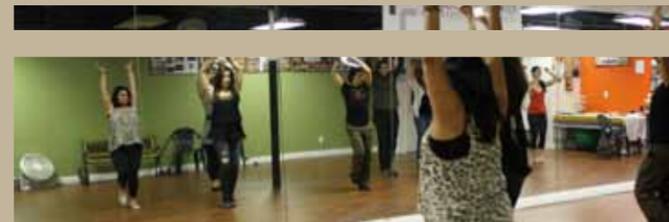
Together, she told me, they had made the decision to give up going to McDonald's so that they can afford to go to dance class. Her daughter has a new idea: that she can be anything. Seeing the space and those it serves gave us a picture of someone who cares deeply about community and making a difference.

After a few hours of talking, excitement and camaraderie build, and we're all feeling warm and fuzzy. And then: we bust out the dance class! What more does a roomful of happy dancers want than the chance to do fabulous steps to fabulous music? Pulling on his flamenco boots, Albertossy revs up a Gipsy Kings track. Our forearms feel the heat as we circle our wrists and hands to compas. This is Flamenco Fusion—it's accessible, simple enough for everyone to catch on, but still giving us a taste of the form and bringing out the performer in each of us. In unison, we get to joyously bust a move, taking part in what brings us together in the first place.

-Christina Leyva



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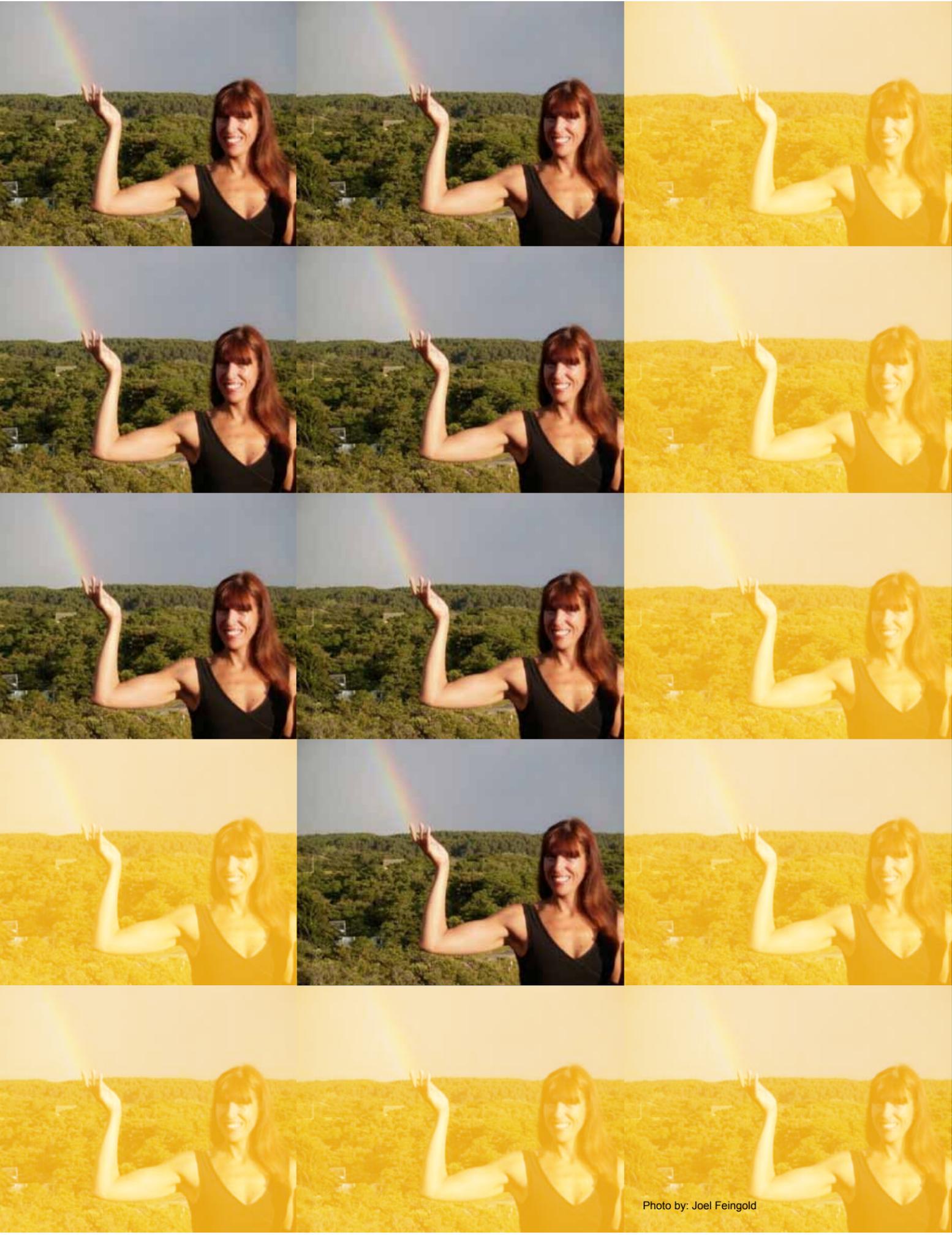


Photo by: Joel Feingold



An interview with Judith FLEX Helle founder and Artistic Director of Luminario Ballet.

By Grete Gryzwana

Luminario Ballet of Los Angeles performs contemporary and classical ballet en pointe, modern dance and aerial ballet a la Cirque du Soleil. Representing the vibrant, diverse population of SoCal, Luminario Ballet performs full-length repertory as well as guest spots and commissioned choreography. The 501(c)3 company was founded in December 2008 with a grant from the Charles Evans Foundation, NY.

Luminario Ballet's founder and artistic director Judith FLEX Helle is an energetic, effervescent, and articulate individual. She received a BFA in filmmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute prior to pursuing a successful dance career in Europe. FLEX has been Judith's stage name since 1981. FLEX was also the name of her Berlin based modern dance company. Upon her arrival in Los Angeles, the shortage of dance jobs led her to work as an aerialist for ten years. A self proclaimed intellectual and student of the world, Judith is in constant relationship and conversation with artists all over the world. In our interview she speaks passionately about Luminario Ballet, dance and the Los Angeles dance community.

GG: What was your inspiration for starting Luminario Ballet?

JFH: I really just wanted to create a company that I, as an audience member, would want to buy a ticket to go see. I moved to LA in 1988 after growing up on the East Coast and living and performing in Europe for my dance career. When I arrived here, I got into the MTV/film/TV jobs, as we had no paying ballet, modern, or jazz companies to join. After watching the Joffrey's attempts to plant here fail, I began thinking about what might work here, for the LA audience. I came up with the idea of a contemporary ballet repertory company with varied choreographers of national and international prominence, so that we could become part of the global dance conversation, and also to include the new dance audience being built by the phenomenal success of shows like "So You Think You Can Dance" and "Dancing With the Stars". And, important to me was to begin the synergy between ballet and aerial dance.

GG: How would you define Luminario's artistic style?

JFH: Luminario Ballet is a highly technical, sexy, and artistically expressive contemporary ballet company. I believe we are the only company in the US to perform ballet en pointe, modern dance classics, and aerial at the Cirque du Soleil level in the same program. Our choreographers are very different, but what unites every program is each piece takes off in technical daring and demanding emotional exploration to reach our audience.

GG: What works were on your most recent program?

JFH: Season three included Josie Walsh's emotional *Luminate*; two works by Jamal Story, *If the Walls Could Scream*, and *Essays on Recovery*; *Over/Under*; Bella Lewitzky's charged and historic *TURF*; two beautiful aerial solos, *Striped Socks on rope* by Brett Womack and *Where the Light Gets In* on aerial hoop by Sita Acevedo. I rounded out the program with three of my own pieces; neoclassical ballet excerpts from Schubert's *Winterreise*; the psychedelic aerial dance piece *Lift Ticket*; and the ever popular aerial dance excerpt from *LedZAerial, Kashmir*.

GG: What drew you to those choreographers and or particular works for the program?

JFH: I am a huge fan of the intricate and the emotional. Draw me in! Take me somewhere! Technique is always the springboard for my appetite, but delivering a gorgeous performance instantly understandable by the audience whoever they are is what I'm looking for.

Our choreographers represent the great talent from California right now. In the future, I hope we can add international and national choreographers such as Nacho Duato, Jiri Kiljian, Dwight Rhoden, and Yuri Possokhov, as well.

GG: I understand that you have a new rehearsal space. Can you tell me a little about it?

JFH: Our new space, 3000 sq ft with 45 ft of mirrors, a stage, lighting, and aerial rigging from a 22 ft ceiling has been lovingly renovated and hugely upgraded to be suitable for us by a friend and donor, David Sukonick, with the support and cooperation of the building's lessee/owner, Steve Yablok, of Faisdodo. Located on Adams and La Brea, this space has mainly been used in the past for film shoots, but with these new improvements it is now a concert space as well as a rehearsal space. Theater companies, opera companies, and of course dance companies can now rent it for their productions. Luminario Ballet gets priority when we are in our season rehearsals and for our events.

GG: Does the company meet regularly for class and rehearsal? If so, is the class open to other professionals?

JFH: So far, the company has managed to have a 20+ week season for 3 seasons over 3 years. Up until our Faisdodo space opened in February, we rented space at Mimoda, Brockus, Cirque School LA, and Hollywood Dance Center. When we are in rehearsal, we always have company class before rehearsal. Rarely we will audition dancers in company class, and sometimes friends of the dancers are allowed to come, but company class is mainly closed.

GG: Is there any particular reason that company class is closed?

JFH: Luminario Ballet integrates dancers with aerialists, who each have different skill sets and strengths. Company class is closed so that everybody can leave their egos at the door and focus on working hard, while integrating their skills and artistry into a cohesive company.

GG: How does this effort to integrate affect the atmosphere of class and rehearsals?

JFH: It is actually a balanced and happy atmosphere. Aerialists are calm people. They know what they can and can't do. Unlike dancers, the floor, their shoes, or whether they had an appropriate warm-up does not affect them. In company class, just like the dancers, they work very hard. The dancers working side by



Photo by: Scott Belding
"Lift Ticket", choreographed by Judith FLEX Helle, 2011
dancers: Evan Swenson/Sadie Black, Brett Womack/Sita Acevedo, Michael Waldrop/Ashley Hoffman

X1 1/2 X 1, 34 2) 2 is a Los Angeles based choreographer, dance and Pilates instructor. Grete holds an MA in Theology and the Arts from Fuller Seminary, and is the founder and principal choreographer for Epiphany Dance Company. She has trained and taught throughout the United States and Europe. Currently, Grete teaches at The Wooden Floor.



side with them in turn work even harder, inspired by the aerialist's skills and confidence. Both groups just want to be sublime and have their inner souls shine, not for each other but for their audience.

GG: Are you currently accepting resumes from dancers and choreographers?

JFH: If we have openings for dancers next season we'll hold another audition. I will keep any dancer resumes sent to me on file and notify them when we hold an audition. Choreographers can send their DVDs or links to their work on youtube.

GG: What are your goals for Luminario Ballet?

JFH: We want to become a well-loved home team. Many people in Los Angeles don't think too much about what they spend on Laker tickets, or at the concession stands. I'd like to get dance on the same level. I believe that a wonderfully artistic dance performance can be appealing to a general audience. We want to present programs that are representative of Los Angeles that anyone of any age can appreciate.

GG: Are there any particular milestones that you are reaching for?

JFH: The milestone I would like us to reach is where we have enough budget stability where I can plan multiple years ahead, and include touring with a regular season here. We are currently looking at some exciting out of town possibilities, and one out of the country gig in 2012!

GG: What else do you want the dance community to know about Luminario Ballet?

JFH: Dance in LA is hotly competitive. There are lots of hurt feelings in place, as there is a lack of solid companies. We really want to make friends. There are many companies that are really different and we can all flourish together. There is time to go to many performances. We hope to make friends, coexist, and see the dance scene in Los Angeles flourish.

For more information, photos and video visit www.luminarioballet.org



SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING!

INTERESTED IN LEARNING
MORE ABOUT WHAT THE DRC OFFERS?

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2-4PM

AT THE DIAVOLO SPACE



GETTING
THE MOST
OF

THE
DRC



www.drc-la.org

FISCAL RECEIVERSHIP

The DRC also helps support your company or personal dance projects in financial ways. The DRC can represent any member as a fiscal receiver, financially sponsoring them with our non-profit status. With the DRC working as your fiscal receiver, you can apply for grants and/or receive tax deductible donations from people that wish to help financially support your company! To apply for fiscal receivership, email your request to finance@drc-la.org and provide the following information:

1. Your name
2. Your company's name
3. Your contact address
4. Your contact phone number
5. Your contact email

Two contracts will be prepared, signed by the DRC and mailed to you. Sign both contracts and mail one back to The DRC. Donors make checks payable to the "DRC" with your company's name in the memo line. Our bookkeeper processes checks once a week. Receivers are provided a statement of their account balance once a month, by email. The DRC takes 5% of all raised funds/grants for the use of our non-profit status and name.

THE DANCE NEWS

The Dance News is a weekly eNewsletter that keeps you updated about events and opportunities happening in the dance community. Members may post their news by contacting dancenews@drc-la.org. There is no additional cost to post on Dance News and events include shows, classes, workshops/seminars, fundraising events, services, and jobs. Events are included three weeks prior to their active date and can be submitted in e-mail format WITHOUT attachments or pictures in 100 words or less. Weekly deadline for submissions is Sunday night.

E-BLASTS

In addition to The Dance News, DRC's E-Blasts also assist in promoting your dance activities. For a small fee, you can have your own event advertised through our growing e-mail list, reaching all of our members! E-Blasts can include pictures and help other members get a concentrated idea about your event in the weeks approaching. This is ideal for added internet visibility to help in promotion. To submit an E-Blast, contact, eblast@drc-la.org. E-Blasts are \$35.00 (\$75 for non-members). Please submit in email form one week prior to the scheduled event.

THE DRC WEBSITE

The DRC site is a wonderful opportunity to post any and all information that is Dance! Post your upcoming show on our performance calendar, available for viewing by both members and non-members. (To add a show, access the calendar from the Dance Resource menu, then click the link in the upper right corner to post your event) Post and promote your class and/or workshop. (This is available in the pink box upon logging in) Post and promote a new event that can be automatically added to the Dance News! (This is available in the pink box upon logging in) Update your profile with a bio, picture, and your contact information to help build our member database so that other members can contact you about your company or classes. This and so much more at www.drc-la.org.

MAILING LABELS

In addition to our internet advertising options, we also offer the chance to reach hundreds of dance enthusiasts with our mailing list. You may purchase the list to help promote your event or simply network. We can work with the mailing house of your choice for prompt delivery. To purchase the email list, contact mailinglabels@drc-la.org. One time use of \$40.00 (\$80.00 non-members). Please include mailing house email address and your contact number.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

One very exciting feature is the member discount. Any DRC hosted event and most dance companies offer a DRC discount on tickets to their shows and events! Some studios offer a member discount for classes and rental studio space. Discounts vary based on company and event. If you don't have your member card, please contact membership@drc-la.org.