

LIMÓN

JOSÉ LIMÓN DANCE FOUNDATION NEWS

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All interviews conducted by John Claassen, Editor

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Nov. 27-Dec. 7: JOIN THE LIMÓN DANCE COMPANY ON TOUR TO BEIJING, CHINA!

The Limón Dance Company has been invited to perform at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China and you are invited to go on tour with us! This will be the Company's inaugural trip to China, and will include four performances of two different programs featuring live music performed by the Chinese Musical Conservatory. This unique 10-day travel package accommodations in a four-star hotel, sightseeing trips and "behind the scenes" events with the Company.

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A Conversation with student Stanislav Stanek about the Summer Residency at SUNY College at Brockport



Photo: Company member Raphael Boumaila teaching at Brockport

LIMÓN DANCE COMPANY
Residency at SUNY College at Brockport, NY
July 19 - August 7, 2009
Stanislav Stanek, Residency Participant

JC: Having already spent 3 months in the Limón Professional Studies Program two years back, were there any surprises in this years summer three week workshop for you?

SS: Not really, I knew what to expect of the workshop and was very satisfied with the classes and in particular learning repertory and being able to apply the technique learned in class to the execution of the actual material.

JC: What was the most satisfying aspect of the workshop for you?

SS: The teachers are so patient and supportive creating a special family atmosphere unique to the Limón dancers and training. The workshop underscores the importance of movement and how to move expressively, such intensified work allows you to feel and connect with what you're dancing.

JC: What repertory did you have the opportunity to explore?

SS: I worked on sections from Limón's last work *Carlota* and his *Missa Brevis*, but it was the opportunity to work on a solo from Limón's *Psalm* that was the most powerful experience for me. I felt particularly connected emotionally with this work.

JC: You return to Slovenia today, will you be coming back for another workshop in the future?

SS: I would certainly come back if I could afford it, there aren't many opportunities to dance in Slovenia. I do work with a post-modern company in Bratislava called Elle Danse more as a sideline. I am currently studying to be in the Computer Graphics field. But I would love to dance more and find the Limón technique a natural way of moving that is kind to the body and allows one to dance longer and more fully.

The Limón Dance Company's summer residency at SUNY College at Brockport is supported by The New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well in-kind support from SUNY College at Brockport.

An Interview with Janet Pilla

JC: As one of Jose Limón's original company members, Pauline Koner was also an independent dancer and choreographer of note as well as a pioneer of dance on television. What can you tell us about Pauline's choreography?

JP: Pauline's choreography is very musical. It is set to the final section of Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied Von Der Erde* (The Song of the Earth) and, like the music, it is both rich and lush at times and stark and deeply moving at others. Also, because this dance was choreographed as a tribute to Doris Humphrey many elements are reminiscent of Humphrey's choreography, for example, the use of



Photo by Matt Wysocki: Pauline Koner, José Limón, and Lucas Hoving in Limón's "Symphony for Strings" which Janet Pilla performed in 1995.

clear and specific gestures.

JC: What is "The Farewell" about and what would you say are its strongest influences?

JP: Pauline choreographed "The Farewell" after the death of Doris Humphrey who had a great influence on Pauline and Pauline was deeply affected by her death. "The Farewell" is a solo in four sections; Farewell to the Earth, Farewell to Youth, Farewell to Love and the Final Farewell. The soloist is a mature woman coming to terms with her own mortality and the beauty, joy and frailty of life. The other strong influence I mentioned previously is the music. One day after Doris Humphrey's death when Pauline was listening to *Das Lied Von Der Erde*, a piece she knew quite well, she suddenly knew it was the perfect accompaniment for the solo she felt compelled to create.

JC: Who is setting this solo on you?

JP: Evelyn Shepard is setting the solo on me. Evelyn was Pauline's student and then assistant for many years. Evelyn, who has performed this solo, learned it from Pauline.

JC: Will we have an opportunity to see you perform "The Farewell" any time soon? It is one of those works every dance lover should have an opportunity of seeing in live performance at least once.

JP: I do not yet have specific dates and venues but I am working on performances in 2010.

The 2nd Annual Limón Teachers' Workshop with Lisa Herlinger-Thompson



Photo: Teacher Workshop Participants

LIMÓN TEACHERS' WORKSHOP New York, NY

July 20 - 31, 2009

Lisa Herlinger-Thompson, Dancer/Teacher

JC: Having participated in the first Limón Teachers Workshop in 2008, what made this one different?

LH: Last year there were more participants, so we had two morning technique classes. We had a partner in the alternate class whom we observed and then shared ideas with each other. This year there was one technique class and we observed a few classes at Peridance during the week. Even with a slightly shorter day, we were able to work more with the principles and apply them in our individual teaching session. (There wasn't enough time for each person to teach last year.) We also had sessions devoted to repertory, rhythm and music, developing movement phrases, and planning classes.

JC: How many people took part and who were the people participating?

LH: This year there were 18 participants from the United States, Canada, Europe, and Mexico. They teach a range of students from pre-school through college in both general education settings and performing arts schools. Many also teach professional studio classes. Some teachers have had years of exposure to Limón technique, while others had minimal or no experience. It was an opportunity for everyone to immerse themselves in the principles of Limón. Our instructors were Ann Vachon, Gary Masters, and Alan Danielson, with a special anatomy session by Susan Hefner. They gave a well-rounded perspective of Limón technique, repertory, and principles.

JC: What will you take away from a workshop like this?

LH: I am beginning to see more clearly how to embed the principles into my teaching of both children

and adults. I want to be the kind of teacher that trains dancers to have infinite movement possibilities. Through the use of time, space, and energy, dancers can explore these multiple options. I am realizing that the language we use to describe movement can be a powerful tool in teaching and the vocabulary modeled in the workshop proved this to me. I was also reminded that the kind of dance that excites me the most focuses on the use of varying degrees of energy and is movement (not position) oriented. The discussions sessions, as well as the feedback from teaching sessions, were invaluable.

JC: If there is a workshop next year would you consider participating again?

LH: Yes, learning and implementing the principles of Limón is a process I gladly continue to revisit. Although I am a teacher, I never want to stop learning. A workshop like this allows me to work on my own technique and experiment with movement in my own body. The more I discover, the better teacher I can become. The experience of being a student also allows me to put myself in my students' position and rediscover what it feels like to learn something new. I would definitely consider participating in the workshop again.

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