



Fall 11-20-2001

Dancing Like Nobody's Watching: Former New York City Ballet Principal Dancer to Visit IWU

Kate Weber
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Weber, Kate, "Dancing Like Nobody's Watching: Former New York City Ballet Principal Dancer to Visit IWU" (2001). *News and Events*. 1256.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/1256>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

November 20, 2001

Contact: Kate Weber, 309/556-3181

Please note: Addition to the news release: Jacques d' Amboise's visit to Illinois Wesleyan University is part of the E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick Visiting Artists Series. The series, established 23 years ago through a gift from Charles S. Kirkpatrick of Bloomington, is named for his sister-in law, E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick.

The Kirkpatrick series has brought to IWU many of the nation's most distinguished figures from the stage, films, and opera, including Edward Villella, a veteran star of the New York City Ballet; director-producer-playwright Joshua Logan; actor-producer John Houseman; actress-singer Kitty Carlisle Hart; and actress Viveca Lindfors.

Dancing Like Nobody's Watching: Former New York City Ballet Principal Dancer to Visit IWU

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. --Jacques d'Amboise will bring his fancy feet to Illinois Wesleyan University as a visiting artist Nov. 27-28. d'Amboise will spend the two days at Illinois Wesleyan in rehearsal with IWU students in preparation for public performances at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Nov. 28 in McPherson Theatre, 304 E. Graham St., Bloomington. Question and answer sessions with the visiting artist will follow both performances.

Former New York City Ballet principal dancer for 30 years, honored educator and founder of the National Dance Institute, d'Amboise has been recognized as one of the finest classical dancers of our time. His model program leads in the field of education, exposing thousands of school children each year to the magic and discipline of dance. He founded the not for profit National Dance Institute (NDI) in 1976 while still a principal dancer with the New York Ballet in the belief that the arts have a unique power to engage and motivate individuals towards excellence.

About the National Dance Institute

Through NDI's distinctive dance programs, children develop discipline, a standard of excellence and a belief in themselves that carries over into all other aspects of their lives. The program extends to 19 public schools in New York City and approximately 2,000 children. The many programs offered by the institution include: integrated learning, annual curriculum guides for classroom teachers to foster an integration of the arts with traditional classroom subjects; national and international residencies; SWAT, advanced dance instruction for approximately 100 dancers each Saturday; Celebration Team, performances by advanced dancers in Central Park, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and the White House; a summer institute; and teacher training where classroom teachers study the distinctive teaching methods pioneered by d'Amboise in special programs at SUNY-New Paltz and the University of Southern Mississippi. Special programs include The New York Lighthouse, St. Francis de Sales School for the Deaf, PS 199 dancers in wheelchairs, and the Henry Ittleson Center for the Emotionally Challenged.

"I started NDI with the idea that all children would benefit and be transformed by interaction with the arts on a high level," d'Amboise said. "That intuition has proven right, better than I ever

dreamed of. One thing I didn't expect was the quality of teachers I would be able to find for the NDI program, and how each teacher's personality and inventiveness would become the real strength of NDI."

In an article on graduates of the NDI program in the Spring 2001 NDI newsletter, Andrew McKay, NDI's new program associate said, "It's no surprise that I'm here because NDI has meant so much to me. When I think back on my time as a dancer, it's all condensed into this soup of feelings and images—sweat, screaming, laughter, and joy."

"NDI has allowed me to see things and go places that, growing up on 125th Street, I never would have had the opportunity to see," said Jermaine Jones, a class of 1992 NDI graduate. "It has allowed me to be a part of big things and to take on all kinds of roles."

Honors and Awards

For his work d'Amboise has been bestowed with such honors as an honorary doctorate of fine arts from the University of the South (2001); the Heinz Award (2001); an honorary doctorate of fine arts from the Juilliard School (2000); the National Medal of Arts, America's highest national honor for cultural contribution (1998); and the Kennedy Center Honors (1995), among others. As a teacher, he has received many additional honors and has served as a professor of dance and dean for two years at SUNY, Purchase.

Additionally, the 1984 film "He Makes Me Feel Like Dancin'" produced by Judy Kinberg and documenting d'Amboise's work with the National Dance Institute received an Academy Award, six Emmy Awards, The Peabody Award, the Golden Cine Award and the Education Association Award for the Advancement of Learning Through Broadcasting.