

## EDUCATION NOTES

Education is one of those words with wide definitions that usually include "the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution" and sometimes "an informative experience". It is in the arts, however, that a very special education happens-, whether at age 5 or 15 or 55, education does its work through multiple parts of our beings and not just our brains. It has to do with "culture." For our programming in schools, we meet student needs **by providing standards based educational programs,**

dancers who are both trained educators and working professional artists, and an arts experience that is engaging and inspiring. We understand that the arts offer students an anchor for personal expression, a source of motivation, and a model to deal with life. We meet students' needs with multicultural and multi-disciplinary workshops and assemblies that create a forum for students to develop creative ideas on how to approach work and solve problems in all subject areas. Our basic **Professional Training Development** workshops can empower teachers to feel confident in handling dance and movement. On a much broader level, through our concert pieces we try to enlarge the context of each person of their personal immediate world, both "real" and from imagination. In this Education section, we will focus on some of the work we do with the students during their curriculum time, in some of our after school programs, as well as our work with some of the students who become part of our bigger productions as the characters of the Hoppers and Horners in "The Patchwork Girl of Oz." We will also include a few "evaluation" comments from our teachers' program.

Los Angeles Choreographers & Dancers is a 2006-2007 member of the Los Angeles Unified School District's **Arts Community Partnership Network (ACPN)**. This designation through the Arts Education Branch of LAUSD affirms that LA C&D is a "qualified" provider who meets the criteria of the master services agreement. We have 10 vetted programs on LA County's **www.LAArtsEd.org** and we are a member of the touring roster for the **Children's Creative Project** in Santa Barbara.



Schools we have worked with since our last big newsletter include: Alexandria, Arlington Hgts, Arco Iris PC, Ascot, Bakewell PC, Blythe, Bonita, Broad Av, Broadous, Canyon Charter, Castelar, Children's Community School, Chase, Cienega, Coldwater Canyon, Corona, Dayton Hgts, Elizabeth LC, Erwin, 59th, Fries Av, Gardena, Gates, Germaine, Grant, Griffin, Haddon Av, Hamasaki, Kittridge, Laurel, Leland, Leo Politi, Liberty, Linwood Howe, Lockhurst, Los Feliz, Loyola Village, Madison Middle School, Manchester, Manhattan Pl, Marvin, Maywood New, Melrose Av, Micheltorina, Miller, Mt. Washington, 99th St., Norwood, 107th, 109th Park Av, Pomelo, Ranchito, Rosemont, San Antonio, San Fernando, 75th, 6th Av, 66th, South Park, South Shores, Stoner, Sunland, Toluca Lake, Topanga, 232nd Pl, Union Ave, Valerio New PC, Van Nuys, Vernon City, Vine, Welby Way, W. Hollywood, Wonderland, and Woodlawn Ave.



Top photo- LA C&D dancer Teya Wolington rehearses with the "Joking Horners" for their school performance. Other company dancers include Erik Abbott-Main, Lindsay Dale, Kiyoko Ando, and Anaja Holloway. Students pictured from Park Ave, Cienega, Miller, and W. Hollywood ES's. (photos Louise Reichlin)

## EDUCATION ON TOUR OR WITH CONCERT PERFORMANCES

When we did a residency at ARTCORE in Wyoming last season, we worked with students who learned the Hoppers and Horners from our dance/multimedia work **"The Patchwork Girl of Oz"**. The presenter there wrote, "You touched the lives of 2,480 people from the Casper area with your excellence." At the Madrid last season, our young guests were from Welby Way ES in the Valley; for the performance at the Ivy Substation we provided after school programs at Linwood Howe in Culver City. In addition, we donated our services to Manchester ES-, a Title I school in Central LA, a school whose students we had been particularly impressed with during a curriculum ACPN residency with many at-risk students. These 3rd graders showed great enthusiasm and potential when we initially worked with them. Thanks to a dedicated teacher who secured bus transportation along with some older student volunteers who provided additional supervision, they were also able to perform with us at the Ivy Substation. It was equally gratifying to see the positive effects of this experience on these volunteers, who were also at-risk students.

These performances are different than the other educational activities because the productions have an additional element – **theatricality** from high production values and more demand for perfection from a "paying" audience. It brings a different side to the process – the precision and ability to repeat something with clarity is certainly not the only thing in life, but striving for excellence is another side that the quest for seeking perfection in a dance can teach. Sometimes we just use volunteers from the audience to be in our bigger concert pieces, and this doesn't fall so much into education as under memorable enriching experiences. We did this at the Levitt Pavilion where 1,100 saw "The Patchwork Girl of Oz" in their beautiful outdoors bowl and at the Brand Art Gallery concert just last month.



Photos: Above: Our dancers in a school assembly performance.

Upper right: Administrator Amy Cureton who will tape the students' performance so they will be able to see themselves in our follow-up workshop. (photos: Louise Reichlin)

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

Our interactive training sessions for teachers offer substantial practical **techniques in developing creative intelligence** within their students including physical dance study, cultural, aesthetic, and historic appreciation, and subsequent integration into the rest of the curriculum using a model that depends on participatory education. The topics range from "Creating a Dance" with practical examples to others that are more concerned with the integration of dance into other curriculum areas. "Creating a Dance" allows teachers to put together a full dance in that same session, while the latter can include Open Court. They incorporate techniques on how to use the elements of dance – space, time, and energy, within their own dance phrases. Other PD sessions also teach some of our choreography that teachers take away and use with their students. Some of their evaluation comments tell the story:

- "Enjoyable – I am able to see how this can be done in my room."
- "Can be used across other content areas such as math. Lesson was practical for student use."
- "Great discipline and use of discipline"
- "Fun, kinesthetic, hands on, kept us active and engaged"
- "I enjoyed it – can you come here every week?"

(all from Cienega Elementary School)

- "Great- it reminds teachers of the importance of adding kinesthetic activities during the day. It also motivates students to move."
- "Awesome!" "Eye-opener."

(all from Broadous Elementary School)

- "I got many ideas of movement that I can use during my class. I can do movement during reading or math so my students can learn easier."

(Park Ave. Elementary School)

- "Engaging and provided confidence to try choreography with my students."



- "Very useful and full of important ideas."

(all from San Fernando Elementary School)

On our residencies including Assemblies, Teaching Workshops for students, and Professional Development:

- "Students were enthusiastic and engaged in the performance. Students also learned about other cultures. Overall: great work!"

- "Fantastic! Please come back."

(Cienega Elementary School)

- "The group of choreographers and dancers who came to our school did an excellent job working with our students. We look forward to having them again next year."

(Park Ave. ES)

- "I was very pleased with the LA Choreographers & Dancers program. It really taught the students to be open and more outgoing. The students really appreciated the program. Louise Reichlin & Dancers were great!"

(Fries Ave ES)

- "All the teachers and students really enjoyed the dance because it included them into the program."

(Griffin Ave ES)

- "I can't wait for Louise and LA Choreographers to come back and work with our students! What a treat! Class A Act!"

(Grant Elementary School)

- "My students loved it. They left the auditorium dancing."

(109th ST Elementary School)



## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Since our last newsletter we have completed four more after school programs through grants from Youth Arts & Education, Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Dept (CAD). Another five were done through the Hollywood Arts Council, and this year through a grant from Target we were able to create a series at West Hollywood Elementary School. The Milken Family Foundation also funds our educational activities. The longer series at West Hollywood, Rosemont, and Los Feliz ES involved the students creating their own costumes. West Hollywood was more similar to our curriculum programs where students have five sessions that include learning already set dances, creating costumes, and then performing with our professional

company for their peers at school. Although all are California Standards based, the CAD funded ones were much more experiential for each student and included writing and creating visual artwork to integrate their dance into other aspects of their lives. Rather than working on a final program, their culminations were called "Show & Share" which included a demonstration class for their families and peers, and a part where they created their own pieces. These two types of arts education are really different – yet both valid. Often the students are asked to fill out questionnaires on the first day, and then write a reaction piece after each class. The following are from 7 and 8 year olds at Los Feliz ES:

"When I started class it felt happy!"

"we make shapes when we had to take off our shoes."

"I felt excited. I Love Dancing!"

"I felt shy, excited and scared because it was my first day in class."

"i Love you guys so much. Thanks for showing us so much. i am very jolly. i was very shy when it was the first day of dance. i hope you guys keep on teaching others."

"When i first came to dance class i was scared because i thought i was not going to make it. On the first day i was nervous. One the second day i was happy but i was afraid when Miss Louise told us that we were going to have a competition to see who was going to make the class because we had too many people. On the third day i was happy because i knew i was in the dance class already."

"It was fun! I was happy! I like it a lot too! I like you a lot!"

"I was shy when I had come. I like the part when I pretend I was a cat."

"I was so excited when I came in first I liked the things we did and my favorite was the across the floor. I like all the teachers in dance class."



"I learned a lot of things it was fun and cool."



Above: Company director Louise Reichlin and student translators - plus some dancing- for a Show & Share for families at Los Feliz ES.

Left: 4th/5th grade students at Rosemont ES design invitations for Rosemont ES Show & Share.

Right: Some student designed tee shirts from Los Feliz Elementary. (photos by Alfred Desio / Louise Reichlin)