

AXIS Dance Company

5337 College Ave. #630
Oakland, CA 94618
(510) 287-5792



www.axisdance.org Spring 1999

AXIS nominated for Isadora Duncan Dance Award



We are thrilled to announce that AXIS has been nominated for an Isadora Duncan Dance Award for Best Choreography in 1998.

The Bay Area dance award, "Izzie," is named after legendary choreographer and San Francisco native Isadora Duncan. AXIS's Izzie-nominated piece, Ta Kala, was co-directed by Stephanie McGlynn and Nicole Richter, with original music by Mimi Fox, and premiered at Theatre Artaud May 1998 in San

Francisco. Also nominated for Best Choreography are Keith Hennessey for Ice/Car/Cage and Robert Moses for State of Annihilation.

"The nomination is important and timely recognition of AXIS's growing visibility as an established dance company," says co-director Judy Smith, "and it reflects a new direction taken by the company since a change in artistic leadership in 1997."

"Since 1997, the Company has made a commitment to improve the quality of our work and our profile in the dance community. Over the past two years we have realized this goal by better supporting and promoting company choreographers. It is tremendously gratifying to receive the nomination for Ta Kala, a work choreographed by collaboration of Company members."

See you at the Izzies.

The Izzie Awards ceremony will be held Monday April 26 at 7 p.m. at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts at 700 Howard Street (cross-street Third). Tickets are \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door. Call the Yerba Buena box office at (415) 978-2787.

National Dance Week events:

Open rehearsals.

Come watch award-winning Bay Area choreographer Joanna Haigood create a new aerial dance piece for AXIS, slated to premiere in June '99 at the Dance Umbrella Aerial Dance Festival in Boston.

Sun. 4/25 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Wed. 4/28 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Sun. 5/2 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Open classes

Attend a class with AXIS Co-Directors and California Arts Council Artists-in-Residence Nicole Richter and Judith Smith.

AXIS holds weekly ongoing classes funded by the NEA and the CAC, open and free to dancers (beginning to experienced) with or without disabilities. Come sample a class or just observe!

Adult classes:

Tuesday 4/27 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Thursday 4/29 12:30-2 p.m.

Children's class (ages 8-12):

Wednesday 4/28 4-5 p.m.

Board Member Profile

Jan Garret joined the AXIS Board in March 1996. We talked with her about AXIS, her involvement, and how the Company serves its multiple constituencies.



You started at a busy time. The Dance Company was preparing its first evening-length piece, *Hidden Histories*, for its premiere at the Cowell Theater in San Francisco.

I'm not sure I had even seen AXIS perform before. It just seemed like a unique entity, a worthwhile cause. I had a strong sense of what this organization could give to the community, but I had zero board experience.

How was it?

Part of it was a nightmare, part of it was a dream. I have a busy job and home life. Anyone with a disability has extra stuff. This was an extra thing, but it was worthwhile. AXIS was in a serious state of transition then. It was rocky at first; I was picking up on some internal divisiveness. I didn't have a sense of what was really going on.

How did this affect your involvement?

It really influenced me when I was asked to be president of the Board. I really wanted to do things differently. I wanted better communication among the Board members, and between the Board and dancers. It was not always successful, but between 1996 and now, things have really changed. I think that difficult time actually helped us. AXIS is a small company. With Board members and dancers, it's only 25 people. You have to make sure people know what's going on. They have to feel valued.

How is AXIS doing, as an organization?

AXIS has always been in the black financially, and that's very gratifying. It's longevity is nothing less than amazing, when you look at the state of arts funding. I think it is a testament to the loyalty of the AXIS audiences, that they feel AXIS is doing important work, and they support that.

Where does AXIS fit in your life?

My legal experience has been helpful in my work on the board, and I believe it has helped me contribute. But volunteering with AXIS works a different side of my brain. My legal work is exacting and detail-oriented. I needed art in my life. It's important to me personally. What's good for me is getting away from the legal stuff once in a while.

What has AXIS given back to you?

Personally, the whole being of AXIS, and their overarching aesthetic, the image of people with disabilities and without who collaborate to make something beautiful. People with disabilities are strong, and can do something that most people in society would assume they can't. It breaks down stereotypes. It creates a new body image around disability. AXIS creates a new definition of what's beautiful.

Thanks for the feedback

Recently AXIS conducted a survey of our valued donors. We wanted to get to know a little more about you. Your responses will help to shape our future work and assist us in our outreach and audience development.

- Most of you are between the ages 35 to 55 years of age
- You are very loyal to AXIS. Many of you have been fans for over ten years
- You are generous, contributing to at least two other nonprofit programs
- Your support is equally divided between the categories of The Arts, Youth Programs and Disability
- Over one half are health and human services professionals
- Seventy five percent reside in the greater Bay Area
- All of you equally prioritized AXIS performances and the Dance Access Program

AXIS Calendar

National Dance Week

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Open classes

Adult classes:

Tuesday 4/27 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Thursday 4/29 12:30-2 p.m.

Children's class (ages 8-12):

Wednesday 4/28 4-5 p.m.

These events at Eighth Street Studio, 2525 Eighth Street in Berkeley.

4/29 - On-Line Chat Session

April 29, from 5 to 5:30 Pacific Time. *Dance Magazine* and *Voice of Dance* co-host an on-line chat with AXIS dancers Judy Smith and Nicole Richter. Tell all your emailing friends, family, neighbors, and AXIS fans to log on and participate!

5/16 - San Francisco performance

AXIS performs May 16th at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in the Forum. Performance at 5 p.m. Benefit reception at 6 p.m. Call the Yerba Buena box office at (415) 978-2787.

Sneak preview of *Descending Cords* by choreographer Joanna Haigood
Artistic Director of ZACCHO Dance Theatre
Plus other works from repertory.

5/28-5/31 - Los Angeles

Association of Theater and Accessibility National Conference in Los Angeles. AXIS teaches a class and hosts a panel.

5/30 - Los Angeles

Arts & Soul, Very Special Arts, Los Angeles. Company performance.

6/9-6/19 - Boston

Dance Umbrella Aerial Festival, Boston. World premiere of *Descending Cords* and AXIS Company residency.



Opening doors

AXIS Dance Company is opening doors for kids. The doors of Eighth Street Studio at 2525 Eighth Street in Berkeley will open to host dance classes for disabled and nondisabled children ages 7 - 12, every Wednesday beginning March 24 through May 12 from 4 - 5 p.m. Supported by a grant from the California Art Council (CAC), VISA Corporation, Clorox Foundation, ELA Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation, the classes are free and may be attended on a drop-in basis.

“There’s just not enough opportunity for disabled kids and nondisabled kids to cut loose and explore their physicality. What we do in the studio is make a space for the kids to explore together and create their own movement and aesthetic,” says AXIS co-director Nicole Richter. “I think the kids with disabilities are surprised at first when we tell them there is a dance company that includes people just like them. But after a couple hours, they realize they are dancers. And they have a lot of fun, too.”

A pioneer in the emerging field of integrated dance, Richter says teaching young dancers has energized her own work. A former student of the Laban Center for Dance in London, Richter began her integrated dance work in 1995, when she accepted an internship with Candoco, a professional integrated dance company in England and one of the first of its kind. “I was blown away by what I saw,” she recalls. The 1-week assignment became a 2-1/2-year mission and led to a master’s degree in a field that until recently few people had heard of. A principal dancer and co-director with Judith Smith of the Oakland-based AXIS Dance Company, Richter says her first priority is to give young people a space to explore. “We don’t make a ‘special case’ out of the disabled dancer. It’s about finding your own way to move creatively.”

(photo copyright Brenda Prager)

5/16 - Benefit Preview & Gala

**Sneak preview of *Descending Cords* by
award-winning choreographer
Joanna Haigood, Artistic Director of
ZACCHO Dance Theater.
Plus other works from repertory.**

May 16th in the Forum at
San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Performance at 5 p.m.
Call the Yerba Buena box office at (415) 978-2787.
\$7 - senior, student, disabled.
\$9 - general admission
\$25 - champagne and dessert benefit reception at 6 p.m.
Call AXIS to RSVP for the reception (510) 287-5792.

(photo copyright Marty Sohl)



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THE BLIND AND
HANDICAPPED**

See our web site:
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