

Welcome to "Artistically Speaking with Marilou Donahue," a television arts program, and now a web site highlighting the arts in the Washington, D. C. area. This site is updated the first of every month. **Updated March 1, 2010.**

There will be chats with the leading professionals in the fields of music, art, theater, dance, and literature. You will see the latest news in the museums and art galleries. Arts managers and press agents will provide valued information.

Check out audition and television tips. Writers (not only in the arts field) will contribute their knowledge--along with a few surprises.

I hope you will find "Artistically Speaking" interesting, fun, and informative.

IF IT HAS TO DO WITH THE ARTS, YOU'LL FIND IT HERE!

Marilou Donahue



JANE FRANKLIN
Choreographer and Director
Jane Franklin Dance



Photo by Enoch Chan

When I spoke with Jane Franklin I asked her if she still danced. "Well really not anymore, I do the choreography." [Jane Franklin Dance](#) is based in Arlington, VA. She has won many awards, including one from the Washington City Paper which named Jane Franklin Dance the Best Dance Company (Best of DC) in 2008 by promoting participation in dance by people of all ages. I don't need to tell you how dedicated she is to her art; read on and find out. Enjoy.

MD: When you audition dancers, what qualities do you look for?



JF: We have an unusual audition process. Prospective dancers are invited to attend a rehearsal. This gives the dancer a way to see how we

work in rehearsal, and it tells me a lot about how the prospective company member might work within the group.

The auditioning dancer will be asked to step into rehearsal by learning some of the choreography, and by participating in creating something new. Much of our work is based on a response to an idea or problem. The dancer's role is to put their own creativity into solving some of the problems, be that with partnering with another dancer, or creating something for their own body based on another movement fragment.

MD: When you choreograph a dance, what is your process and inspiration?

JF: Each dance begins differently, but mostly there is a connection to some other component besides movement. Our pieces are filled with movement, but mostly the dancing serves to support the idea or original concept behind the piece, rather than the other way around. Working in this way ties into my love for the visual arts particularly, and into the pure and simple joy of making things.

Many of my recent works have incorporated media or video projection. We have done things that are interactive and the dancers actually affect the shape of the piece on stage.

I'll give a couple of examples. With "In the Blink of an Eye" a video backdrop was created for the piece. A component of the media is a human shadow that is in the video. When the dancers perform in front of the video, we get a nice interaction of the shadows the dancers are creating at the moment with the shadow that has been previously recorded.

We've also done things with Bryan Leister with interactive sound using a theremin-type device that Bryan created, as well as real time video that was dependent on the dancers' interaction.

Last year we did "Incidence," a chance piece that had no linear order. Using a life-size kinetic sculpture created by Howard Connelly, the dancers changed the visual appearance of the sculpture and in so doing, cued the movement segment identified with that particular configuration of the sculpture. We had numerous possibilities in the visual appearance because the poles could be used differently when vertical and when horizontal.

This gets around to your question about inspiration. I very much like the feeling of change, and since it is inescapable as a living being, I consider it part of the biological make up and very natural. The dances start with improvisations, and are "in the moment" that is not planned ahead of time. My job as a choreographer is to observe and catch the meaningful moments. The movement material is eventually edited down, and memorized by the dancers so it can be repeated, but it does always have an improvisation starting place.

Content comes from a variety of places. I feel a connection to land/space/environment and have done several pieces associated with that very broad topic from cultural and historical viewpoints.

We do a great deal of community work as well and that draws in individuals from different age groups, different personal experience. The tie to community brings in that wonderful aspect of



Jane Franklin Dance
Paul Gillis Photography

dance that is social, and is about the joys of moving with another person.

MD: If you could hang around any dancers' studios, living or dead, whom would it be and why?



Jane Franklin
Photo by Enoch Chan

JF: From very early in my career in dance I have been drawn to Merce Cunningham. His work with his collaborators, visual artists, and musicians, and the daring experiments, the risky challenges he always took on are so inspiring. There is a profound beauty in his work that I can't quite define but certainly feel. I think that is a very human quality as well, to find beauty; however that may be defined by each individual.

Just his commitment too is something to think about. Many years he had dire financial circumstances to deal with and not a lot of support from critics or dance community. A very brave soul, and one who has inspired many people, and really changed the landscape of dance and of what dance can be.

MD: Can you tell us your up-coming schedule for you dance company?

JF: I am happy to tell you our schedule for the remainder of the 2009-10 Season. Our 2010-11 Season has not yet been announced. I am also adding our schedule for performances not on the subscription season, for workshops for older adults, adult repertory, and adult dance technique.

Information can be found on the web site: janefranklin.com 703-933-1111

MD: Many many thanks, Jane. You have given us a good insight into the world of dancing. May I add that if you readers check my March [Career Tips](#), you'll see when you will be able to see Choreographer Jane Franklin in March, here in Washington D.C. I plan to be there. See you then, Jane.

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APPLAUSE APPLAUSE

If I thought January was busy, it paled in comparison to February. It seemed everybody was opening up something. Here is the best of what I saw.



[Turner to Cézanne: Masterpieces from the Davies Collection, National Museum Wales](#) is the name of the exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. It is a group of 19th and 20th century paintings and works on paper assembled largely between 1908 and 1923 by the Welsh sisters Gwendoline and Margaret Davies. The names are familiar: Turner,