

TANYA CUSAN-ESPINOSA

Performer/choreographer/dancer/teacher

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Dance and Theatre training

Bachelor of Performing Arts Degree, 1995 – 1996 at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds, completed with distinction.

Northern School of Contemporary Dance, 1985 – 1988, three year course in contemporary technique, Graham and Cunningham, classical ballet, choreography, allied arts, performance and related studies, dance in education, theory and practice and stage craft.

Various courses in, voice and speech for theatre, improvisation skills, physical theatre, character mask, puppetry and singing.

Academia Allegro, studies in popular dances such as salsa, merengue and other traditional South American dances, Colombia.

Academia Allegro, studies in classical ballet, Cali, Colombia

Academia de Ballet Ana Pavlova, studies in classical ballet, Colombia

Teaching skills

Ballet Technique, all levels up to professional standard

Contemporary Technique, all levels up to professional standard

Creative dance or drama workshops for children

Salsa and South American dances all levels up to professional standard

Creative salsa classes for children

Biographical Notes

- 2000 – continuing **Salsa Theatre Productions,**
Director/choreographer/performer
Offering a salsa programme that involves live performances combined with workshops and classes. The work has been made to suit a variety of venues such as theatres, schools, outdoor events, festivals and other community venues.
- 2006 **Wakefield Dance Project**
Lead Artist - choreographer, performer and teacher.
All Drum co-ordinating the project on behalf of Wakefield MDC. The project aimed to raise the profile of dance in Wakefield, through a series of performances and workshops.
- 1994 – continuing **Freelance performer/choreographer/director/teacher**
for many companies , venues and organisations such as the *West Yorkshire Playhouse, Stowe Opera, Yorkshire dance centre, Northern School of Contemporary dance, Dance City, Dance 4, Skippko Arts Team, Adam Smith Theatre, Vincent Dance Theatre, Northern Ballet Theatre, The Art Unit Cultural Services, Women’s Health Matters, NHS Patient and Public Involvement, The Maltings Theatre, Park Lane College, Space @ Bracken Edge, Space @Little London, All Drum All Dance, Salsa York, The Ridings housing Association, Bramley Elderly Action, Swindon Dance, Latin Xes, Hull City Arts, Skipton Puppet Festival, Rural Arts, Friends of Potternewton Park, Blaize University of Bradford, Eureka, The Coliseum, Champ Live, The Ju Ju Club, Trinity Arts Centre, Cabaret Heaven and many more.....*
- 1990 – continuing **Academia Allegro in Cali – Colombia**
Choreographer/director/ teacher and performer
A constant educational programme with the students of the school that involves choreographing and teaching a variety of techniques.
- 1995 – 2000 **Casa Latina**
Choreographer/performer and teacher
Casa Latina was the first Yorkshire’s Latin, music and dance club in at the Underground in Leeds, Luby Jovanovic one of its promoters openly acknowledges that if it wasn’t for Tanya the salsa scene would probably never have taken off in the city the way it has.
Tanya is considered one of the pioneers of salsa in the UK.
She has introduced a wide and diverse range of people to dance and the number of participants continues to increase.
Her salsa work is supported by The Arts Council England Yorkshire Space @ Bracken Edge and Space @ Little London.

- 1995 – 2000 **Tutti Frutti Productions**
 Performer/choreographer
 Tanya worked for the company for many years; she was actively involved in devising, choreographing and developing several characters with in each production.
 Tanya toured extensively with the company doing an average of 200 shows per year.
- 1994 -1995 **Burley Lodge Centre**
 Part time dance worker
- 1988 – 1994 **Northern Dance Company**
 Director/choreographer/performer/teacher
 She was one of the co-founders and co-directors of the company.
- 1982 – 1985 **Ballet Nacional de Colombia**
 Principal dancer

Awards

- 2000 **Year of the Artist Award, Yorkshire Arts**
 To continue with the exploration of how to fuse and combined traditional and popular South American Dances with Contemporary dance theatre and other dance forms.
- 2001 **Arts Council England Yorkshire**
 For the making of the show 'SALSA'
 A passionate and colourful performance piece that capture the richness of Latin culture.
 In the three sketches, she combined traditional and popular Colombian dances with contemporary dance theatre.
- 2002 **Arts Council England Yorkshire**
 For the touring of 'SALSA'
- 2003 **Arts Council England Yorkshire**

 The award was to develop a salsa programme over the next two years, and to continue with the creation of live performances.

 She created 'La Carmela' a tale of love that evoked a strong sense of the drama of Latin culture, and 'Valentino' a short piece exploring the possibilities of choreographing and dancing with a life size puppet.

 The music was especially composed by Sue Miller band leader of Charanga del Norte and the puppet made by Diana Bayliss from Black Cat Theatre.

2006

Arts Council England Yorkshire

'Latintastic'

The award was to continue with the creation of live performances; Tanya worked alongside a team of artists creating a fantastic piece of work 'Latintastic' a fabulous combination of dance, theatre, puppetry and song. Packed with laughter and wonder the show is a wonderful theatrical experience not to be missed!

The repertoire is suitable for many different venues, theatres, outdoor events, festivals and schools.

In 2007 Tanya received another award from The Arts Council England Yorkshire to tour 'Latintastic.

For further information on the show and touring dates please visit our website: www.tanyacusanepinosa.co.uk

TANYA'S PROFILE AND SALSA HISTORY

'Tanya is one of UK's outstanding exponents of salsa in the country'

Tanya was born in Colombia South America, trained in theatre and classical ballet at the Academia de Ballet Allegro in her native country, and later joined the Ballet Nacional de Colombia.

As contemporary dance was not performed or taught in Colombia, she decided to study in England and in 1985 she was offered a place at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds, where she studied for three years. The contemporary dance training enabled her to extend her skills and to develop a more creative approach to her work.

In 1988, Tanya and three of her colleagues form the Northern Dance Company. The company consisted of four professional dancers/choreographers from varied cultural backgrounds who operated as a collective. Each member contributed their own experience and creative ideas to develop a repertoire that explored new choreography in contemporary dance theatre.

Tanya's choreographic work proved to be a stalwart for the repertoire, and was described as fascinating, colourful and passionate, born from the land of salsa; she was already bringing a distinctly South American feel to her work.

Tanya then worked as a freelance dancer/ performer/teacher/choreographer all over the country and abroad with a variety of theatre directors and choreographers on individual projects.

Alongside this she taught and did demonstrations in popular Colombian dance styles like salsa and merengue at venues across the country, but particularly in Leeds and the Yorkshire region.

Tanya has introduced a wide and diverse range of people to dance, and the number of participants continues to increase.

Salsa is a form of dancing which has been hugely popular in London since the seventies but now the population of Leeds is just as keen as its Southern neighbours, in 1993, Leeds had its first premier Latin American night 'CASA LATINA' at the Underground and Lubi Jovanovich one of its promoters openly acknowledges that if it wasn't for Colombian Tanya Cusan Espinosa the salsa scene would probably never have taken off in the city the way it has. In 1995, Tanya returned to the Northern School of Contemporary Dance where she furthered her studies and during her degree thesis, she explored the possibilities of how traditional and popular Colombian dance forms could fuse and combine with contemporary dance theatre.

After finishing her studies Tanya joined Tutti frutti Theatre Productions where she performed in numerous shows as an actress/dancer and was actively involved in devising, choreographing and developing several characters with in each production, the company created some of the most unusual dance theatre, playful, imaginative and occasionally wicked.

In 2000 she was awarded the Research and Development grant as part of The Year of the Artist, where she continued with the exploration of how to fuse and combined traditional and popular South American Dances with Contemporary dance theatre and other dance forms, she was then able to work towards consolidating her various skills and contrasting cultural influences.

She wanted to develop her own language of dance with which to choreographed and subsequently create high passionate performance work that would reach a wide range of audiences, from dance aficionados to the uninitiated.

After a successful application to the Arts Council England Yorkshire in 2001 and 2002, Tanya was awarded another grant for the creation and the touring of 'Salsa'.

The show was a passionate and colourful performance piece that captured the richness of Latin culture, in the three sketches; she combined traditional and popular Colombian dances with contemporary dance theatre and other dance forms. This was built upon the theoretical research that she was undertaking.

In 2002 Tanya toured the show 'Salsa' to theatres, community centres, venues and many other places in the region and nationally. By touring 'Salsa' she was able to show the different representations and manifestations of the art form and its complexities, she also encourage her students to broaden and develop their own interpretations of the art form through their own improvisations pieces, which were performed as part of the show when possible.

Live performances help her to broaden peoples mind and to widen the perceptions of the culture outside of the class and workshop environment. The continued growth of salsa in the region is dependent on the awareness of its hybridity and the diversity of cultures from which it stems.

In 2003 with the support of Space @ Bracken Edge; Tanya once more secured funding from the Arts Council England Yorkshire.

The award was to develop a Salsa programme over the next two years and continue with the creation of exciting performance work. During this period she created two performances pieces 'La Carmela' a tale of love that evoked a strong sense of the drama of Latin culture, she continued with the exploration of combining and fusing popular South American dances with contemporary dance theatre and other dance forms.

In addition she created 'Valentino' a short piece exploring the possibilities of choreographing and dancing with a life size puppet.

'Valentino' was made by Diana Bayliss director of Black Cat Theatre.

The music was especially composed by Sue Miller, band leader of Charanga Del Norte.

In 2006 with the support of Space @ Bracken Edge; Tanya once more secured funding from the Arts Council England Yorkshire for the project, Salsa Theatre Productions with Tanya Cusan Espinosa.

She has created her new show 'Latintastic' a witty and magical insight into South American Culture. There are characters inspired by some of the female legends of the past such as Carmen Miranda, Jovita Feijoo and Amparo Arrebato, imagery from carnivals ferias and processions from her native town Cali- Colombia and with the return of her perfect dancing partner Valentino, she creates tableaux in which movement song and stillness meet.

A visual treat!

The repertoire will be versatile and suitable for many different venues, festivals and schools, and will be available for touring once the work is complete

In 2007 Tanya once more secured funding from the Arts Council England Yorkshire to tour 'Latintastic' the show is out and about so please visit our website for further information and dates: www.tanyacusanepinosa.co.uk

'LATINTASTIC' is a truly inspirational show, don't miss it!!

PRODUCTION	ROLE	COMPANY
Latintastic	Director, performer and choreographer	Salsa Theatre Productions
Mitos y Leyendas	Performer and choreographer for the character of 'La abuela'	Academia Allegro
Once Upon a Quarry Hill	Choreographer and movement director A community production	West Yorkshire Playhouse
Carmen de Bizet	Choreographer	Stowe Opera
La Carmela	Director, choreographer and performer Fusing traditional Colombian dances with contemporary dance theatre.	Salsa Theatre Productions
Valentino	Director, choreographer and performer A show using a life size puppet as the perfect salsa dance partner	Salsa Theatre Productions
Adaptation of La Carmela	Director and choreographer An adaptation of the original piece for the students of the school, salsa, theatre and song.	Academia Allegro
Fire in Ice	Dancer, singer A performance of music, lyric, dance and masquerade.	Geraldine Connor and The West Yorkshire Playhouse
Salsa	Director, choreographer and performer Three colourful shows combining popular dances with contemporary dance theatre.	Salsa Theatre Productions
Dewsbury de Janeiro	Choreographer A performance of percussion and dance	All Drum Alldance
The Hull Carnival Project	Choreographer	Creative Partnerships Hull
Barracudas	Choreographer	Cumbria's Barracuda's Co
Trafficking with Pictures	A short film about Latin American lives in Leeds	The Millennium award winners Latin American Society

Dance Salsa 1 with Tanya Cusan	Choreographer and teacher A salsa video for beginners	Ju Ju Media Productions
Candy and Flops	Devising and performing Actively involved in choreographing and developing Several characters with in each Production.	Tutti Frutti Productions A children's Theatre Co
The Beauty and the Beast	Devising and performing	Tutti Frutti Productions
Nosey	Devising and performing	Tutti Frutti Productions
Troll and in the Pink	Devising and performing	Tutti Frutti Productions
The Missing Satsuma	Devising and performing	Tutti Frutti Productions
The Keeper of Dreams	Devising and performing	Tutti Frutti Productions
Bike	Devising and performing	Tutti Frutti Productions
Basket Wallah	Devising and performing	Tutti Frutti Productions
Rhythms of The City	Performer, teacher and choreographer Outdoor Festival in Leeds	West Yorkshire Playhouse
Casa Latina	Performer, choreographer, teacher First Yorkshire's Latin, music and dance club in Leeds.	Casa Latina
Episodes	Choreographer For the students of the dance school.	Academia Allegro
Heads Together	Devising, performing	Heads Together A physical Theatre Co
Changing Faces	Devising , performing A celebration of 100 years of women in Leeds, performance project combining visual arts, dance, theatre and photography.	Leeds Metropolitan University and The Studio Theatre in Leeds.
The Life and times of Jovita Feijoo	Devising and performing A live art performance installation.	Northern Dance Company
Jimi Nama (adaptation)	Choreographer For the students of the school	Academia Allegro

Latidos (adaptation)	Choreographer For the students of the school	Academia Allegro
Mercado de Suenos	Choreographer For the students of the school	Academia Allegro
En Las Calles (adaptation)	Choreographer For the students of the school	Academia Allegro
Jimi Nama	Choreographer, performer	Northern Dance Company
Class of 89 film	Choreographer, performer	BBC
Eagle Rock film	Choreographer, performer Filming of commissioned piece on location Brimham rocks.	BBC
Rises Intones	Performer	Northern Dance Company
Raw Meat and Roses	Performer	Northern Dance Company
Deux Femmes	Performer	Northern Dance Company
Time and Tide	Performer	Northern Dance Company
Monitor in Motion	Performer	Northern Dance Company
Orienteering	Performer	Northern Dance Company
Dreamtime	Choreographer, performer	Northern Dance Company
Latidos	Choreographer, performer	Northern Dance Company
En Las Calles	Choreographer, performer	Northern Dance Company