

POWERDANCE : A STORY OF A METRO MANILA DANCE COMPANY

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by

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ABSTRACT

Many dance companies have been formed in the Philippines since the American period. Some are now defunct; others have successfully maintained their status. In the last ten years, Powerdance has been successfully participating in the dance world, both local and international. But there has been no formal study of this group.

The thesis is a descriptive study of Powerdance, with the following objectives: to give an overview of dance during the American period and the Metro Manila-based dance companies that emerged; to describe the history of modern jazz in the Philippines; to analyze how Powerdance operates by looking at the managerial and artistic aspects.

Data for the study were obtained from library research and interviews, and from Powerdance souvenir programs to establish the history of the company, and videotaped performances to describe the choreography of the group.

The thesis as baseline research can be an important addition to the history of dance. It could also be used by other dance companies that may want to adapt the management and artistic style of Powerdance.

The American occupation brought different forms of dance such as ballet, modern dance and jazz, and foreign dancers that helped in the development of dance in the Philippines. The first modern dance

company was formed in the 1930s. Jazz dance was first performed in bodabil shows during the American period but it was not until the 1960s that a jazz dance group was formed. Jazz dance has the same basic techniques as ballet but, unlike ballet, its movements are snappy and syncopated and stresses body isolations. One of these jazz dance companies is Powerdance, founded by Douglas Nierras in 1988. Aside from performing in concerts and product-launching shows, the dance company runs Powerdance Studio that offers classes in ballet, jazz, hiphop, ballroom, and aerobics. The company generates sufficient income from the clientele of the Studio and its shows. All managerial and artistic decisions are made by Douglas Nierras. Although the training technique is jazz, its performance medium is show dance using all forms like folk, ethnic, hiphop, ballet and jazz. Its choreography is innovative and stretches the limits of the human body. In its existence of ten years, Powerdance continues to perform actively.

A major problem observed in this dance company was the lack of proper documentation of its performances and a written mission-vision statement. It should keep an active file of photographs and videotapes of its performances, souvenir programs, press releases and reviews. It should formulate a mission-vision statement to serve as a guide for succeeding dancers in the company.

APPROVAL SHEET

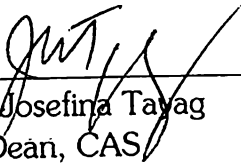
This thesis, entitled POWERDANCE: A STORY OF A METRO MANILA DANCE COMPANY was prepared and submitted by Lizbeth R. Montesa, and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of BA Philippine Arts.



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and especially to
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and to
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LQM

PREFACE

Dance has always been a part of me. But it is a part of me that I have not nurtured to its full potential. Even without formal training, I have joined school-based dance organizations both in high school and college. But it was not enough to fulfill this need to become a well-trained dancer.

Then it happened. One night, a friend of mine invited me to watch a concert with her. It was a dance concert entitled, "Powerdance: Taking it Off." At first I was having second thoughts about spending my money on a dance group I have not even heard of. But I did watch and I thanked my friend for the nagging. It was a concert worth paying P100 for.

When I saw Powerdance perform at the CCP Main Theater that night of November 4, 1995, I told myself that this is the dance company I want to learn from and train in. I sat there on my seat amazed and speechless until the concert was over. I had never seen movements that defy the human body's potential except from this group.

And so I did. I trained with Powerdance and even had the opportunity to perform with the group on a couple of their product launching shows. Because of the time I spent training with Powerdance, I have learned the joy and hard work a professional dancer goes through.

I even experienced the terror of Douglas Nierras while rehearsing for one of the shows. I have experienced being shouted at and being put on "the spot." But these are experiences that I do not regret having. It gave me the chance to become part of dance group that is very much respected in the industry. But most of all it helped me reach my potentials as a dancer. I am currently not involved with the group but I am planning to go back.

With my experience of Powerdance I thought that doing my thesis would be welcomed with open arms. However, it turned out the opposite. I never realized that gathering data regarding the group would be difficult. But still I pursued this topic for my thesis.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Since the emergence of dance companies during the American period up to the present, many professional dance companies have come and stayed or have gone. Some of those still active today are the Bayanihan Dance Company, Ballet Philippines, Philippine Ballet Theater and the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group. Dance companies such as Dance Theater Philippines, Julie Borromeo Dance Company, Dance Concert Company and Hariraya Ballet Company, to name a few, have disappeared from the scene.

At present, there are quite a few dance companies that still exist. Among these is the contemporary dance group called Powerdance. The dance company has survived for ten years and has actively participated in the dance community, both local and international, by having a repertoire of modern jazz influences. For many years, jazz dancing earned the reputation of being an entertainment medium that is performed only on television or in night clubs. However, Powerdance proved this notion otherwise. Powerdance is chosen for the study because of its ability to maintain its existence using a form of dance not readily embraced by many. And though the company is respected in the field of dance, there

is lack of information about the company itself and how it maintains its existence.

Statement of the Problem

The thesis is a descriptive study of Powerdance, focusing on both its management and artistic aspects.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to analyze how Powerdance functions as a dance company. In the process, the study will focus on the following objectives:

1. To give an overview of dance during the American period, the emergence of Metro Manila-based dance companies, and the history of modern jazz in the Philippines
2. To analyze the management aspect of Powerdance
3. To explain the artistic aspect of Powerdance

Scope and Limitations

The overview of dance companies in the Philippines starts in the 1930s which marked the beginning of professional dance companies, dance groups that are paid for their artistic talents. Only dance

companies, that are still active members of the dance community are included. Since Powerdance is a modern jazz group, a historical background on this form of dance will be included.

The study also discusses all aspects of the company, including its history, profile of member, activities, organizational structure, financial capabilities, performances, working relationship of the dancers, and the discipline instilled by Douglas Nierras and his choreography .

The limitations of the study lay heavily in the lack of academicians interested in the field of dance. There is lack of written resources about dance and Powerdance itself. However, interviews and periodical articles by dance historians such as Basilio Esteban Villaruz and Reynaldo Alejandro are used. Julie Borromeo was not available for an interview as the research was conducted.

Methodology

Data were gathered from library research. However, it was not an easy process to interview the members of Powerdance because they were either too busy or probably not interested. Photographs were taken of the various stages in a dance class and of the different classes offered by Powerdance the Studio.

The primary sources consist of interviews from noted figures who contributed to the development of dance in the Philippines such as Basilio Esteban Villaruz. Information about Powerdance comes from interviews from Douglas Nierras, the founder of the company, and the members. Also, a videotape of the company's concerts is used to help describe the choreography of the company.

Secondary sources are books on dance such as Jazz Dance: The Story of Vernacular Dance by Marshall and Jean Stearns to describe the history of jazz and Philippine Dance: Mainstream & Crosscurrents by Reynaldo G. Alejandro to establish the history of dance in the Philippines. Since there are no books written about Powerdance, newspaper clippings about the company are used as background information of the group. Four souvenir programs of the company's performances are also used as reference. Performers and Performances: The Social Organization of Artistic Work by Jack B. Kamerman and Rosanne Martorella is used as basis for identifying Powerdance's style of management.

Approach of the Study

For this study, a descriptive/narrative approach is used, in order to obtain basic data about Powerdance.

Significance of the Study

The thesis as baseline research can be an addition to the history of dance in the Philippines. In turn, school based and non-school based dance companies may find it useful to adapt Powerdance's management or artistic aspects.

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF DANCE DURING THE AMERICAN PERIOD

An overview of dance during the American period is included because it traces the origin of the form of dance Powerdance uses, which is jazz. It also gives a brief description of ballet, modern dance and modern jazz to distinguish these forms of dances from each other.

When the Americans colonized the Philippines, they brought a new form of culture in dancing. American social dancing like the *fox trot*, *boogie*, and *swing* became the trend. Bodabil (vaudeville) dancing or variety shows consisting mainly of popular dances, jugglers, mime, ballad singing and acrobatics also invaded the Philippines.¹ During the Japanese occupation it became known as the stage show because it included the "drama" as its main feature in the end.² Bodabil was renamed stage show. Ballet, modern dance and jazz dance also came with American culture.

Ballet was first performed in the Philippines by a visiting group called the Australian Lilliputians in 1901. Then in 1902 two groups, the "Infantile" company from Japan, and the dancers from the Baroufski

¹Basilio Esteban Villaruz, "Bodabil Dancing," *Philippine Dance*, vol. 5 of *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts*, ed., Nicanor Tiongson (Manila: CCP, 1994), 72.

² *Ibid.*, 47.

Imperial Russian Circus also performed.³ In 1915, Paul Nijinsky of the Imperial Russian Ballet performed for the Belgian Red Cross and at the Manila Hotel Roof Garden in 1916. Anna Pavlova, the world-renowned ballerina, came with her company and shared their talent at the Manila Grand Opera House in 1922.⁴

Ballet is a form of theatrical dance that consists of stylized movements and positions. The basis of ballet technique is a turned-out position of the legs and feet with corresponding arm positions.⁵ There are five specific numbered positions of the feet. Almost all ballet steps are derived from these five basic positions. Figure 1 illustrates the five basic

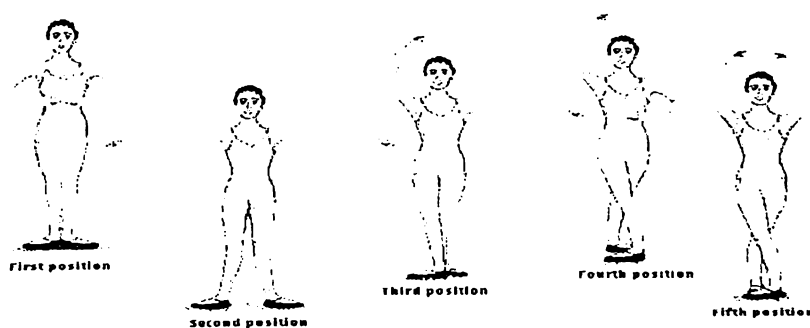


Figure 1

Five basic positions of the feet in ballet with corresponding hand and arm positions

(Source: "Ballet," Encarta Concise Encyclopedia, www.encarta.msn.com, 1998.)

³ Villaruz, "Ballet," Philippine Dance, vol. 5 of CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts ed., Nicanor Tiongson (Manila: CCP, 1994), 68.

⁴ Reynaldo Alejandro, Philippine Dance: Mainstream and Crosscurrents (Quezon City: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1978), 53.

⁵ "Ballet," Encarta Concise Encyclopedia, USA: Microsoft, 1998.

positions of the feet. The first position has the two heels facing each with the feet pointed outward and the arms are slightly curved, meeting at the center of the body. In second position the legs are slightly apart with the feet pointed outward and arms outstretched horizontally. In third position the right heel touches the left big toe, both feet facing outward, the right arm is raised above the head and the left arm is outstretched horizontally. In fourth position the right heel is placed at center of the left heel and toes with the right arm slightly curved above the head and the left arm is raised perpendicular to the chest. In fifth position the right foot is placed in front of the left foot facing outward. There is space between the legs and both arms are raised in a slight curve above the head.⁶ Common ballet positions include the arabesque, in which the dancer extends one leg backward in a straight line and the attitude wherein the leg is extended forward or backward with a bent knee.⁷ Turning steps include the pirouette, a turn on one leg with the other leg raised. The fouette is also a turning step in which the free leg "whips" around to provide momentum for the turns.⁸

Modern dance, on the other hand, is a tradition of theatrical dance unique to the 20th century. It was performed in 1926 by Ruth St.

⁶ "Ballet," Encarta Concise Encyclopedia, www.encyarta.ms.com, 1998.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Denis, Ted Shawn with their Denishawn company at the Manila Grand Opera House.⁹ Kathe Hauser from Austria came in 1932 and started a modern school dance.¹⁰ Then in 1937 Trudl Dubsky came to the Philippines and taught modern dance at the Academy of Music and foreign dances at the University of the Philippines. She married Herbert Zipper, a conductor of the Manila Symphony Orchestra.¹¹ Alice Reyes pioneered modern dance in the Philippines by establishing the Alice Reyes and Modern Dance Company at the CCP in 1970.

There are certain broad traits that are evident in modern dance, such as the inclination for one artist to act as both choreographer and performer. The artist can also be in charge of the set, costume, and lighting. Unlike ballet where the choreographer choreographs for a group or solo dancer.¹² Modern dance looked beyond dominant tradition of Western theatrical and sought earlier or non-Western sources for inspiration.¹³ For example, Isadora Duncan, an American choreographer who laid the groundwork for the 20th century modern dance movement, used an expressive dance style based on ancient

⁹ Villaruz, "Ballet," Philippine Dance, vol. 5 of CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts ed., Nicanor Tiongson (Manila: CCP, 1994), 67.

¹⁰ Ibid., 54.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Villaruz, "Ballet," CCP Encyclopedia, 67.

¹³ "Modern Dance," Encarta Concise Encyclopedia, www.encarta.msn.com, 1998.

Greek dances. Her movements were free and flowing, inspired by natural phenomena such as wind and waves. She danced barefoot rather than in ballet slippers. She also wore a tunic instead of a corseted ballet costume.¹⁴ Ruth St. Denis based her choreography on the dance styles of India, Egypt and Asia.¹⁵ Other modern dance choreographers like Martha Graham turned to basic human movement experiences such as breathing and walking. These natural actions were turned to dance movements, called "contraction" and "release" techniques.¹⁶

Another form of dance brought by the American colonial is jazz. Its movements are similar to ballet but uses a linear rather than a rounded pattern. There is pressure and tension on the body with each execution of the movements. Instead of fluidity like ballet, jazz demands snappy and sharp executions on the dance steps.¹⁷ This type of dance was first performed in the Philippines at a bodabil or variety show. The term vaudeville is derived from the Middle French village *chanson du vau de Vire*, song of the Vale of Vire. It is a valley in Calvados, France noted for satirical folksongs.¹⁸ In the Philippines, the word bodabil stemmed from a

¹⁴ "Modern Dance," Encarta Concise Encyclopedia, www.encarta.msn.com, 1998.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Villaruz, "Modern dance," CCP Encyclopedia, 92.

¹⁷ "Jazz Dance," American Ballet Theatre's Online Dictionary www.abt.com, 1996.

¹⁸ "Vaudeville," The Random House Dictionary of the English Language 2nd ed., 1987.

show called **vod-a-vil** by Lou Borromeo, a famous pianist during the American era.¹⁹

Emergence of Dance Companies

The beginning of dance companies in the Philippines started in the 1930's with Austrian ballet dancer, Trudl Dubsky-Zipper. She formed the Manila Ballet Moderne. Dubsky-Zipper and her group performed annual concerts and minor shows in between at the Metropolitan Theater. However, Dubsky-Zipper and her dancers did not received any fees.²⁰ Then in the 1950's, Ricardo Cassell, born in Chicago, Illinois, had his own school.²¹ The Studio Dance Group was formed in 1953. He wanted to give professional experiences to the dancers by performing and not just being in a class. His group gave annual concerts but again the dancers had no artistic fees.²² However, the school was forced to close in the late 1950s when the enrollment dropped due to "puritanical attitude of religious authorities towards the study of ballet."²³ There was a ban in ballet during the 1950's, when Catholic schools prohibited their students from taking ballet lessons. At that time, ballet was considered "immoral"

¹⁹ Villaruz, "Bodabil dancing," CCP Encyclopedia, 72.

²⁰ Basilio Esteban Villaruz, personal interview, March 11, 1998.

²¹ Villaruz, "Artists and Organizations," CCP Encyclopedia, 193.

²² Basilio Esteban Villaruz, interview.

because steps in ballet exposes most parts of the body and interaction of male and female on stage was not allowed.²⁴

During the late 1960s, Dance Theater Philippines and Hariraya Dance Company both ballet dance companies, emerged in the dance world. Hariraya Dance Company received a subsidy of P50,000 from Jose Mari Locsin of Silay City. And at that time, P50,000 was a large amount of money and was sufficient to run a dance company.²⁵ In 1968, Dance Theater Philippines was founded by Julie Borromeo, well known for her wide-ranging work in ballet, jazz and stylized ethnic dance, along with Felicitas Layag-Radiac and Eddie Elejar, choreographer and considered as the country's danseur noble during his time.²⁶ It produced both Filipino and western ballet pieces. The company performed in schools and earned a weekly allowance of P35.²⁷

In 1969, the Alice Reyes Modern Dance Company was formed. It was then renamed as the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Dance Workshop and Company, after the first CCP summer workshop became a success. It was renamed again as the CCP Dance company in 1974 and

²³ Alejandro, 57.

²⁴ Alejandro, 57.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Villaruz, "Artists and Organizations," *Philippine Dance*, vol. 5 of *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts*, ed., Nicanor Tiongson (Manila: CCP, 1994), 203.

²⁷ Villaruz, interview.

finally in 1984 was known as Ballet Philippines.²⁸ The major contribution of Ballet Philippines to dance is its collaboration with Filipino artists. Musical scores based on folklore and legends were composed by Filipino artists. It allowed a western form of dance to become Filipinized. The dance company also holds an annual summer dance workshop to invite dance teachers, students and choreographers both locally and abroad.²⁹

In a sense, the 1960s became the mark of the beginning of professional dancers because their dancers received artistic fees. It was also in the 1960s that the first dance company to focus on the dance medium of jazz was formed, the Julie Borromeo Dance Company. It was the first group that introduced group dancing on television.³⁰ The dance company was headed by Julie Borromeo, a native of Cebu City. Her first lesson in ballet was under Ricardo Cassell. She also trained in jazz dance and modern dance. She co-founded the Dance Theater Philippines in 1968 with Felicita Layag-Radaic and Eddie Elejar.³¹ She was artistic director of Philippine Ballet Theater in 1990.

In the 1980s, other jazz companies became active in the world of dance such as The Met Dance Company, which was headed by Rene

²⁸ "Artists and Organizations," *Philippine Dance*, vol 5 of *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts* ed., Nicanor Tiongson (Manila: CCP, 1994), 185.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

³⁰ Villaruz, "Julie Borromeo Dance Company," *Philippine Dance* vol. 5 of *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts*, 214.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 191.

Hofilena and now by Veda Banez. Then there were also the VIP dancers who did back up for the Vilma Santos Show. Another company is Whiplash, which is formed by former Met Dancers because of artistic differences. The Adrenalin Dancers perform regularly in pop concerts and television shows.³² There is Hotlegs, that still actively performs with other artists on stage as back-up dancers. Its original member, Douglas Nierras, left to form Powerdance.

Modern Jazz in the Philippines

In order to understand fully the dance medium Powerdance uses, it is necessary to look at a brief history of modern jazz in the Philippines. It also includes the misconceptions and notions of society regarding modern jazz.

The origin of jazz dance is traced to Africa and the Caribbean and was brought to the United States by Negroes who were taken as slaves. "Jazz dancing" according to African American dancer Joe Nash is more accurate if it was described as "American theater dance"—the style that is used in Broadway and Hollywood musicals.³³ Nash also points out the following points about jazz dance.

³² Ibid.

³³ Joe Nash quoted in Joseph Mazo, "The Real Thing: Defining what is Jazz Dancing," Dance Magazine March 1994, 66.

True jazz doesn't have a vocabulary except the one you find in the black community; it uses vernacular movement like the shimmy the fishtail, the mooche and the shorty george. These steps are as defined as an arabesque or a battement, and they make up the foundation of true jazz. Just because you use jazz music doesn't mean you're making jazz dance.³⁴

However, it does not imply that authentic jazz is better than theater dance or vice versa. What Nash points out is that "choreographers have taken elements of true, vernacular jazz and incorporated them into a wider-ranging form of presentation."³⁵ Another noted choreographer, Katherine Dunham, stressed that "one can't teach jazz because jazz is an attitude and you can't teach attitude."³⁶ A dancer should not perform steps without having the feel for the music and the feel of the dance itself. Real jazz is folk dancing which stemmed from the black community. Like any other form of folk dance, Nash explains, "jazz must be theatricalized" for stage presentation.³⁷ This is where the choreographers come into play. They take elements of a folk heritage and expand these into specific techniques for the style of what is now known as jazz dancing.³⁸

Its movements are syncopated and use body isolations, or the separate movement of one body part while the rest of the body remains

³⁴ Mazo, "The Real Thing," 66.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Mazo, "The Real Thing," 66.

³⁷ Ibid.

still or moves in some other way.³⁹ It is not only danced to jazz music but also to pop, rhythm and blues, rock and disco music.

Jazz dance in the Philippines was first performed in *bodabil* or variety shows at the Manila Grand Opera House and the Clover Theater.⁴⁰ The bodabil shows were done on stage that featured singing, dancing, acrobats, mimes and "skits." One of the pioneers in establishing a school concentrated on jazz was Julie Borromeo. When one speaks of jazz dance, one thinks of clubs and cabarets. Since the Filipino society did not have a high regard for clubs and cabaret, it developed a notion that such a form of dancing was not respectable. The stereotyping of jazz could possibly be because are venues for carnal pleasures. Since jazz dance conforms to popular dance steps, its artistic embodiment is lost when it is not performed on stage.⁴¹ As a result, it led to the limited exposure of jazz dance.⁴²

However, in the 1980s, jazz dancing became commercialized art. Dance companies were hired for talent to appear as back-up dancers for other artists both on stage and television. These dance companies

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Cayou, 66.

⁴⁰ Ma. Cherish Garcia, "Jazz Dance," *Philippine Dance* vol. 5 of *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts*, 82.

⁴¹ Twyla Tharp, *Push Comes to Shove: An Autobiography* (NY: Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1992), 54.

⁴² Douglas Nierras, personal interview, February 20, 1998.

would often appear on variety shows in the evenings and noontime shows. Variety shows have been a part of the Filipino culture since the onset of bodabil during the American occupation. But the television served as the medium for the exposure of the dance companies. It can also be implied that the dancers became trendsetters for new dance steps. Since people copied what is seen on television, it was easy for the dance companies to be accepted. This could also be the start of people accepting jazz as another form of dance and no longer confining themselves to the idea that ballet and modern dance are the only legitimate forms of dance.

showpieces for the International Jazz Festival in Mexico in 1990,. After their performance in Mexico, the company went to New York and trained with renowned dance artists Phil Black and Alvin Ailey. Then April 1991, they performed "The Body Sings Too Part II" at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. They went to Europe as Presidential delegate to the "East Meets West" Economic Summit of March 1993. In January 1994, they were chosen as delegate to the ASEAN Tourist Forum East in Singapore. And in July 1996 the company joined the Asian Dance Festival as the Philippines representative in Tokyo, Japan.⁴⁷ On February 21, 1998, the group performed in Intramuros with a concert called "Bulong-Bulong, Paniwalain at Mga Bagay-Bagay na Hindi Nasabi." It was an all-Filipino dance concert, where popular Filipino compositions such as "Anak" by Freddie Aguilar and "Magdalena" by Florante were used as music accompaniment.

In their ten years of existence the company has performed actively on stage as well as on television with other artists. They also perform for product launching shows such as Honda and Avon both in 1996. Powerdance also runs a studio where dance mediums such as ballet, jazz, and hip-hop are taught.

⁴⁶ East Meets West, souvenir program, March 1993.

⁴⁷ "East Meets West", souvenir program, March 1993.

CHAPTER 3

POWERDANCE

Historical Background of Powerdance

Powerdance was founded in 1988 by Douglas Nierras as a private dance company.

Although its training technique is jazz, its performance medium is show dance. Show dancing uses all forms like folk, ethnic, Hip-hop, ballet and jazz.⁴³ The company was the first to utilize the concept of show dance as art and discipline not just for entertainment.⁴⁴ It is also the highest paid dance group in the Philippines.⁴⁵

Their first concert was "Passions", a valentine concert of Louie Reyes they were featured as guest artists. Immediately after, they were contracted to perform as regular featured artists in the weekly television show "Shades."⁴⁶ Then in September 2, 1989, the company launched a dance concert at the CCP Main Theater entitled "The Body Sings". They were also picked as representative to the ASEAN Festival of Songs for 1989 to 1994. Another solo concert called "Tacos, Tamales, Burritos at Iba Pa" was performed at the CCP Main Theater, as a preview of their

⁴³ Douglas Nierras, interview.

⁴⁴ Marge Enriquez, "Powerdance: Oozing with Appeal and Rawness," Philippine Daily Inquirer (22 Nov 1995), C7.

⁴⁵ Douglas Nierras, interview.

The Man Behind Powerdance

Douglas Nierras was born on May 28, 1954 in Leyte, Tacloban. His dance training started at the age of four when his older siblings would teach him folk dance. He was accepted as a scholar to the CCP Dance School (Ballet Philippines) in 1974 and was trained in classical ballet and modern dance. He was also the sound and stage manager for Ballet Philippines. He became a member of the UP Filipiniana in 1976 and studied speech and drama.⁴⁸

A dramatic change occurred in his dancing career when he left for the United States. Since his background training only was only in classical ballet and modern dance, he never imagined that "jazz was his true calling."⁴⁹ Jazz in the Philippines was not considered respectable at that time. It was a medium used more for entertainment in night clubs and vaudeville shows. When he was exposed to the dance form of jazz, he saw it fit for his body type, heavy-boned and compact and not as light as a danseur (male ballet dancer). He therefore transferred all his interest and creative energies into it. (See Figure 2: Douglas Nierras' at a Class).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Douglas Nierras, interview.



Figure 2

Douglas Nierras at a Class, taken May 12, 1998

Prior to the birth of Powerdance, Nierras was a member of the now defunct Manila Metropolis Ballet in 1978. Because of conflicts with how the company was run, he and nine other members left to form Hotlegs. However, as Hotlegs evolved, relationships between the members of the dance company changed also. According to Nierras, younger members did not want to be dictated by the older members. He also realized that he could not nurture his creative needs while in the company. And that there were artistic differences between him and Tats Manahan, the founder of Hotlegs. Nierras wanted the group to concentrate more on theatrical shows instead of commercial dancing. For these reasons,

according to Douglas Nierras he left Hotlegs to form Powerdance—an ideal working professional group of dancers.⁵⁰ A group where he can instill his own ideas of what a professional dance company should be.

Since Powerdance was born, he has been the moving spirit behind the company. He trains his dancers like “thoroughbreds girding for a race.”⁵¹ A training that is both physically and mentally demanding. Nierras trains his dancers to defy the human body's potential. He is also one of the few choreographers who has proven that dance can be profitable without compromising aesthetics and principles. In short, Nierras knows he is gifted and utilizes this gift for profit.

Members of Powerdance

Becoming a member of Powerdance is “dependent on the desire of the individual,” to be in the company.⁵² Nierras demands 100% permanence and 100% professionalism from each dancers that joins the company. They become 100% members, dancers and teachers for Powerdance.⁵³

⁵⁰Douglas Nierras, interview.

⁵¹“Powerdance: Taking It Off,” November 4, 1995, souvenir programs.

⁵² Douglas Nierras, interview.

⁵³ Ibid.

In order to become a member, individuals start attending classes offered in the Powerdance studio. A scholarship program is offered to those who have potentials in fulfilling the responsibilities of a company member. A potential member is expected to learn fast and to develop his/her skills to the fullest. Eventually, once in the scholarship program, the individual is asked to participate in some shows as a junior member.

Today, 1998, the company consists of eight core members. Not only do these dancers perform their craft; they are also the teachers in the Powerdance Studio. In addition, they also train Mondays to Fridays for two hours with Douglas Nierras. The following is a brief history of each of the dancers. The purpose of the brief history of the dancers is to describe their dance training and educational attainment. It also shows that a dancer can still become a professional in his/her field and at the same time possess a degree that may not even be related to their career.

Before joining Powerdance in 1989, James Laforteza trained with Rene Hofilena at the UST Salinggawi Dance Troupe. He graduated with a Communications Arts degree from UST in 1988.⁵⁴ While in Powerdance, he had the opportunity to study jazz in New York with Cecilia Martha and Phil Black and in Los Angeles with Joe Tremain and the Bupree Dance

⁵⁴ Nierras, interview.

Company in 1990.⁵⁵ He teaches Beginners and Intermediate Jazz classes and Ballroom classes. He is the Studio Manager for Powerdance Studio handling the basic operations of the studio.

Liesl Lopez Vito Laforteza is one of the original members of the company. She trained in classical ballet under Lydia Gaston. In 1983, she joined Ballet Philippines and continued her training in classical ballet and in modern dance. She also studied at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Frankfurt, Germany under Russel Falen in 1985. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree major in Dance at the University of the Philippines in 1988.⁵⁶ She also trained with Phil Black, Cecilia Martha and Bill Prudich. She is married to co-dancer James Laforteza and handles Aerobics classes at the Powerdance Studio.

Mimi Villareal studied modern dance with Corazon Inigo and Agnes Locsin at the University of the Philippines. She also trained with Gener Caringal at the CCP. Her classical ballet training was handled by Tita Radaic, Vela Damian, Ester Rimpos, Sonia Domingo and Steve Villaruz.⁵⁷ She joined Powerdance in 1991 and is currently teaching Intermediate jazz at the studio.

⁵⁵ James Laforteza, personal interview, March 13, 1998.

⁵⁶ "East Meets West", souvenir program, March 1993.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Danny Marshall is a native of Tacloban. He started training with Andy Abad and Jess de Pas. He is one of the senior members and teaches Intermediate Jazz or Jazz II class. His philosophy in dance does not deal with the ability of the student to execute a step perfectly but rather emphasizes on the "feel" a student shows when performing a step.⁵⁸

Joseph Laforteza trained with the Metropolitan Dance Theater under Veda Banez Alonzo from 1991 to 1993. He then joined Powerdance in March 1994 and currently handles the Hip Hop classes in the studio.⁵⁹

Julie Alagde was a former member of the Philippine Team for gymnastics in 1991. Her gymnastics team is the pioneer team in rhythmic gymnastics. She came to Powerdance in February 1996. She was not in school at that time and decided to enroll as a regular student in Powerdance Studio. Only a few days after her first class attendance in the studio, she was invited to perform with the company for a show. The greatest surprise for Julie was when she was asked to teach a class for the summer workshop in April 1996.⁶⁰ She is the youngest member of the company. She teaches Jazz I and Hip Hop for the summer workshop.

⁵⁸ "Hit the Power-Dance this Summer," souvenir program, June 1, 1996.

⁵⁹ "East Meets West," souvenir program.

⁶⁰ Julie Alagde, member of Powerdance, interview, March 18, 1998.

Avel Bautista is the newest member of the company. He has been a core member for one year. Prior to joining the company, he was involved with UP Filipiniana in 1996. And graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. After two summer workshops with Powerdance, he was invited as a scholar. He was also invited to perform in several shows before becoming a core member. Avel teaches Ballroom and Junior Jazz for the summer workshop.⁶¹

Vinya Pamplona has been taking ballet classes since the age of ten at the Makiling Dance Company in Los Banos. She went to the National Center for the Arts during her high school years, continuing with her dance training in ballet, modern ballet and modern dance. However, when she was accepted at the University of the Philippines, she took a different turn in her dancing education and enrolled in Interior Design. After finishing her degree, she took summer dance workshops with Jaime Del Prado at Sweatshop Studio. Then in 1995 she joined the summer workshop of Powerdance. Because the "passion to dance was still alive," Vinya decided to take formal lessons with the company.⁶² She has been a core company member for two years. She currently teaches Aerobics and Children's Ballet.⁶³ (See Figure 3: Company Members p. 27).

⁶¹ Avel Bautista, personal interview, March 18, 1998.

⁶² Vinya Pamplona, personal interview, March 25, 1998.

⁶³ Ibid.

Figure 3

Company Members



James Laforteza



Liesl Laforteza



Mimi Villareal



Danny Marshall



Joseph Laforteza



Julie Alagde



Vinya Pamplona

Objectives of Powerdance

Aside from the artistic performance the dance company delivers, certain objectives and goals are followed. The main objective of the dance company is to educate younger people in the art of dance.⁶⁴ This is the main reason why classes and summer dance workshops are offered to the public. The company wants to be able to train younger people to come up to a professional level of performance. And at the same time, it seeks to destroy the notion that dancing is not a professional career. But it can be a full-time and life-long career.⁶⁵ One of the dance company's goal is to put up an annual concert. This is to inform the people of the form of dance it does, which is jazz; to generate money for the studio, mainly for rent and other bills; and to attract new members.⁶⁶

Powerdance the Studio

Powerdance The Studio is located at the sixth level, rear carpark of Shangri-La in EDSA cor. Shaw Blvd. It has been the home of Powerdance the company since 1994. The studio offers classes in Jazz, Ballet, Hiphop, Aerobics, Ballroom, Practical Self-Defense and a program for Body

⁶⁴ Douglas Nierras, interview.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ James Laforteza, personal interview, March 13, 1998.

Building. Hiphop is a another term for street dance or funk. Its movements are more acrobatic, such as backflips and forward are incorporated in the dance. With the exception of the Practical Self-defense and Body

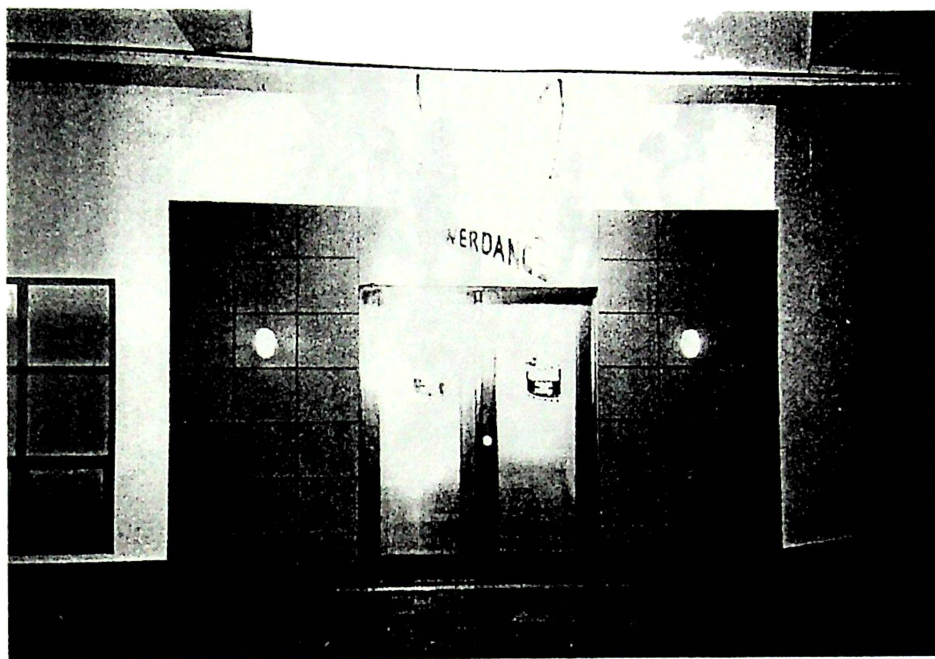


Figure 4

Facade of Powerdance Studio, taken on April 24, 1998.

Building program, the classes are taught by the core company members of Powerdance.

To enroll in the classes offered by the studio, there is an annual registration fee of P1,500. Individuals are given three types of options. For P850 a month, students can take one type of class such as ballroom, aerobics, gym and self-defense. (See Figure 5 and Figure 5.1 for Aerobics Class). For P1,250 a month, two types of classes may be taken. While the third option, unlimited or dance program is P1,750 a month. This option allows the students of the type of class s/he wishes to take. It includes

Figure 5
Aerobics Class

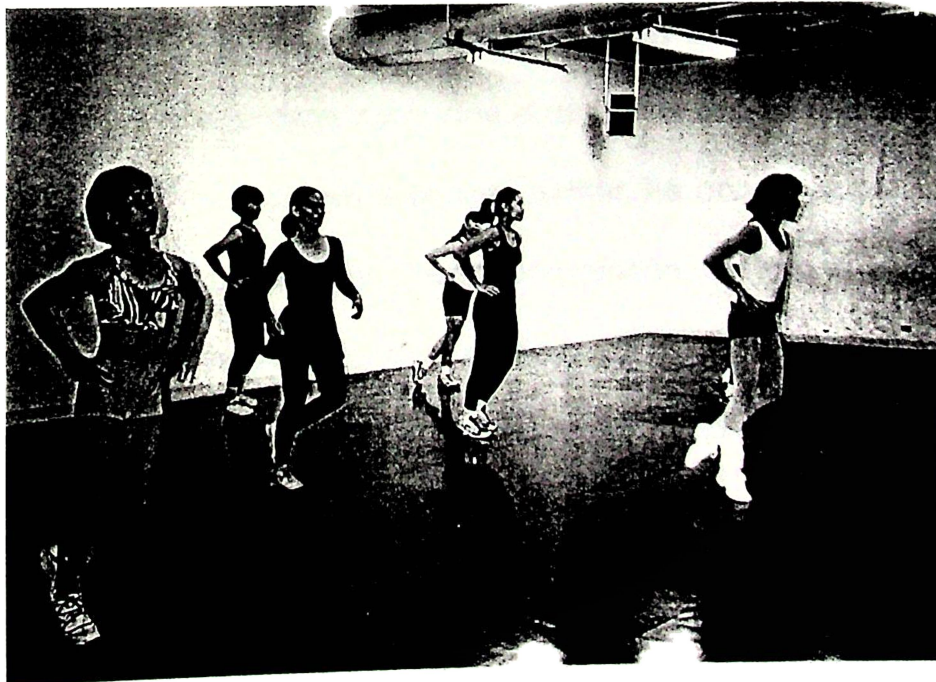
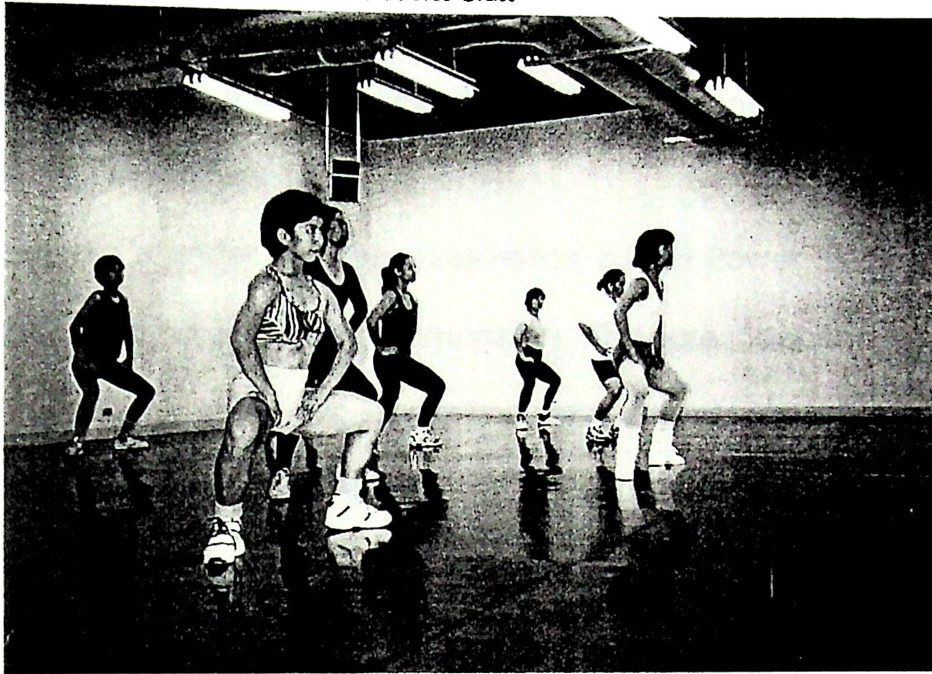


Figure 5.1
Aerobics Class—Jump Step

jazz, ballet and hip-hop. (See Table 1: Schedule of Classes in Powerdance Studio which lists the schedules for each of the classes offered in the studio. It also includes the address, phone number, gym hours and registration fees, p. 32).

The studio is under another corporation called Power Studios Inc. Powerdance is an adjunct to the corporation. They are independent but at the same time co-existing or co-dependent. Powerdance as a dance company helps in the image building and the promotion of the Powerdance Studio which is under Power Studio Inc. It provides the dance company a home and a venue for teaching.⁶⁷ It is unfortunate that additional information about the Power Studio Inc., could not be obtained. However, Nierras did stress several times during the interview that Powerdance the dance company and Power Studio Inc are two separate entities. When asked to explain further, he only explained that Power Studio Inc is still a very young corporation, having only been established for four years. Additional information as to how the two "entities" became an adjunct to one another was not provided.

⁶⁷ Douglas Nierras, interview.

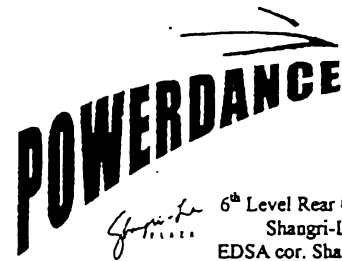
Table 1

Schedule of classes offered in the studio

TIME	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
9-10							
10-11						ADULT BALLET	
11-12						JAZZ ONE	
12-1						HIP-HOP	
1-2	P R O - J A Z Z					SELF-DEFENSE	
2-3						JAZZ TWO	
3-4							
4-5							
5-6	JAZZ ONE	HIP-HOP	JAZZ ONE	HIP-HOP	JAZZ ONE		
6-7	B E N C H A E R O						
7-8	BALLROOM	JAZZ TWO	BALLROOM	JAZZ TWO	BALLROOM		

GYM HOURS:
Monday to Friday: 12 pm to 8 pm
Saturday and Sunday: 10 am to 4 pm

Call or Fax us at Tel. No.
633-64-17



6th Level Rear Carpark
Shangri-La Plaza
EDSA cor. Shaw Blvd.
Mandaluyong City

RATES:
Annual Registration Fee: P1,500
1 Type of Class (3x/week): P850*
2 Types of Class (3x/week): P1,250*
Unlimited or Dance Program: P1,750**
Studio Rental: P500/hour
*Only for Ballroom, Aerobics, Gym, and Self-Defense
** Includes Jazz, Ballet, and Hip-Hop

(Source: This form of flyer is given to potential customers or regular students available at the front desk.)

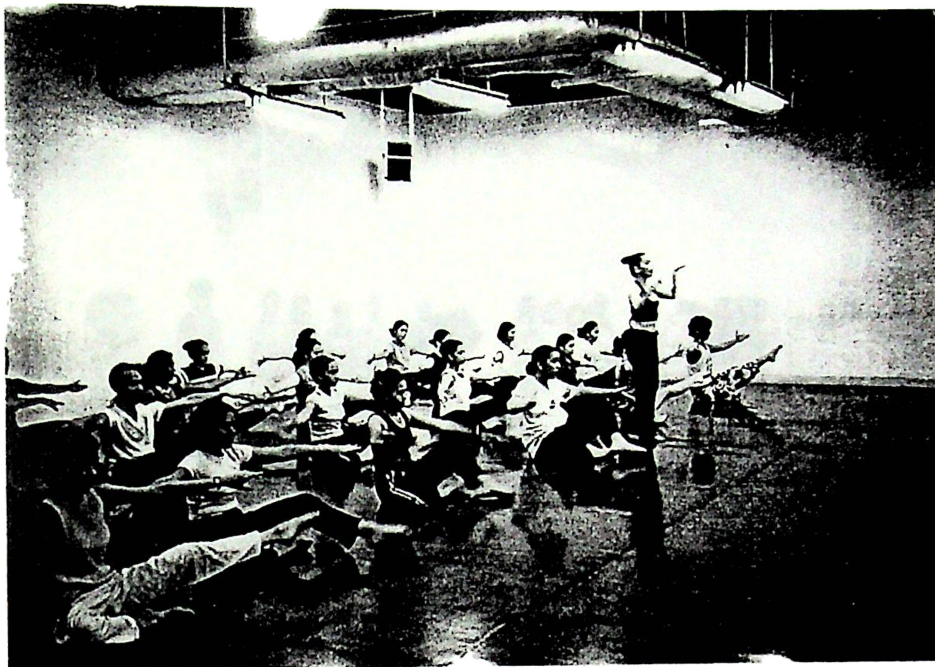
Modern Jazz Class

This section gives a brief sketch of what goes on in an actual jazz class. It is one of the classes offered by Powerdance. (See Figures 6, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 for Jazz I Class). Just like classical ballet and modern dance, jazz also requires an individual to take formal training. When taking a jazz class, a student goes through several phases: warm-up, center work I, corners, center work II, and cool down.⁶⁸ As the dance instructor demonstrates each step, the student must imitate it carefully and correctly in order to fully benefit from the class.

The purpose of the warm-up phase is to stimulate circulation of the blood to the major muscle groups of thighs, spine, abdomen and

Figure 6

Jazz I Class



Jazz I—Rib Isolation

Figure 6.2

Two Students Execute a Step



Figure 6.3

Students Learn Battement

shoulders. It is a series of stretching that is done for about fifteen minutes. (See Figure 7: Basic Stretching for the Legs).



Figure 7

Basic stretching for the legs

Source: Pro Jazz class or advance jazz class, photograph taken on May 12, 1998.

It is to prevent muscle pulls and cramps from the body parts mentioned above. More attention is given to the muscles of legs and feet since these support the weight of the body. (See Figure 7.1 and 7.2 for Leg Lunges).

Center work I deals with body isolation. It is the separate movement of one body part while the rest of the body remains still or moves in another way.⁶⁹ Isolation is one of the basic characteristics of jazz

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

Figure 7.1

Leg Lunges

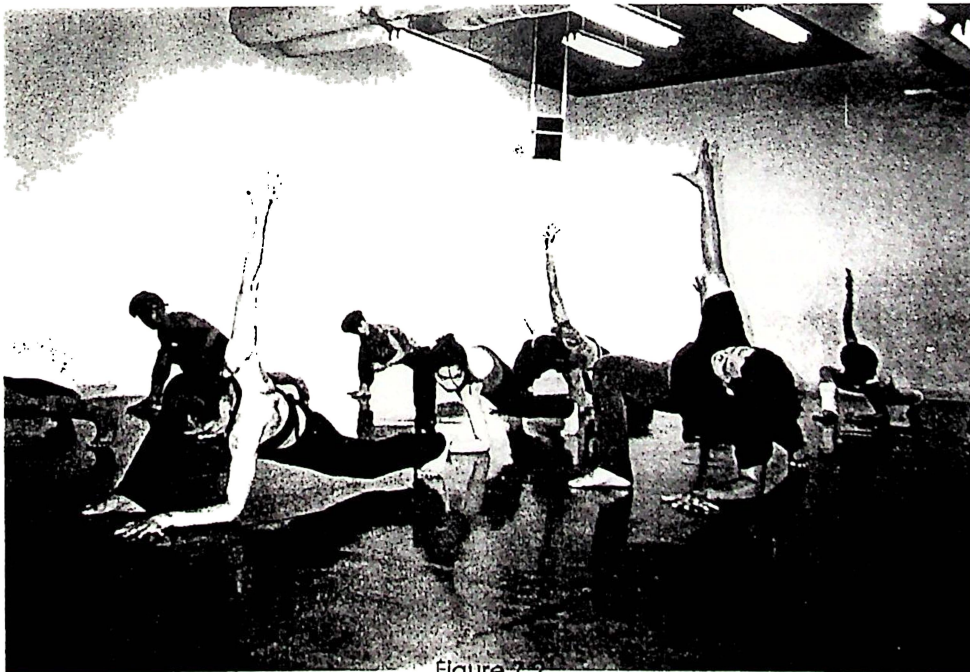
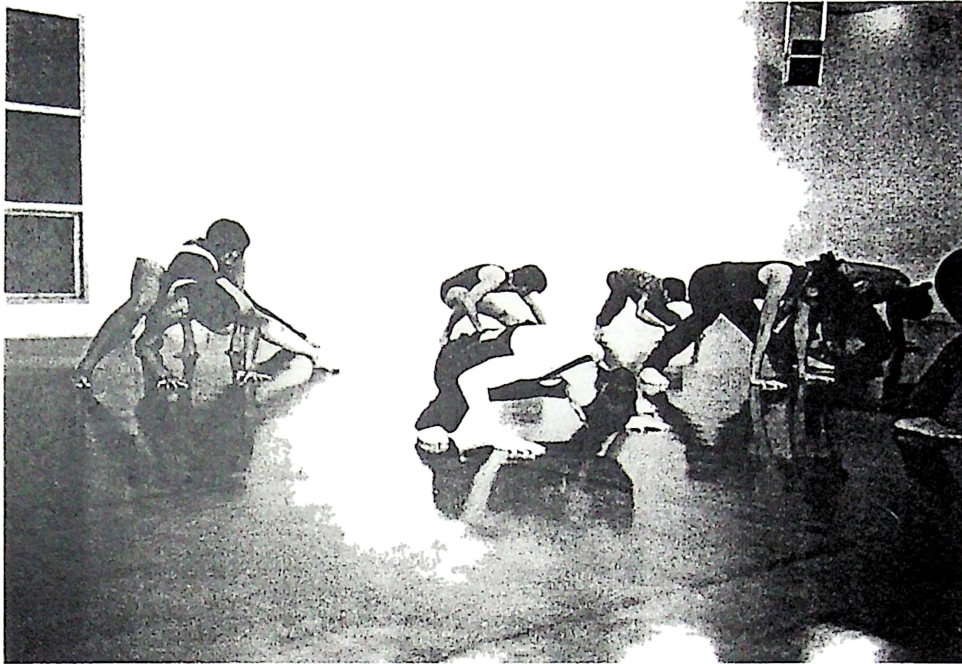


Figure 7.2

Leg Lunges with Right Arm Up

dance. Figure 8, shows an example of a body isolation known as rib a isolation.

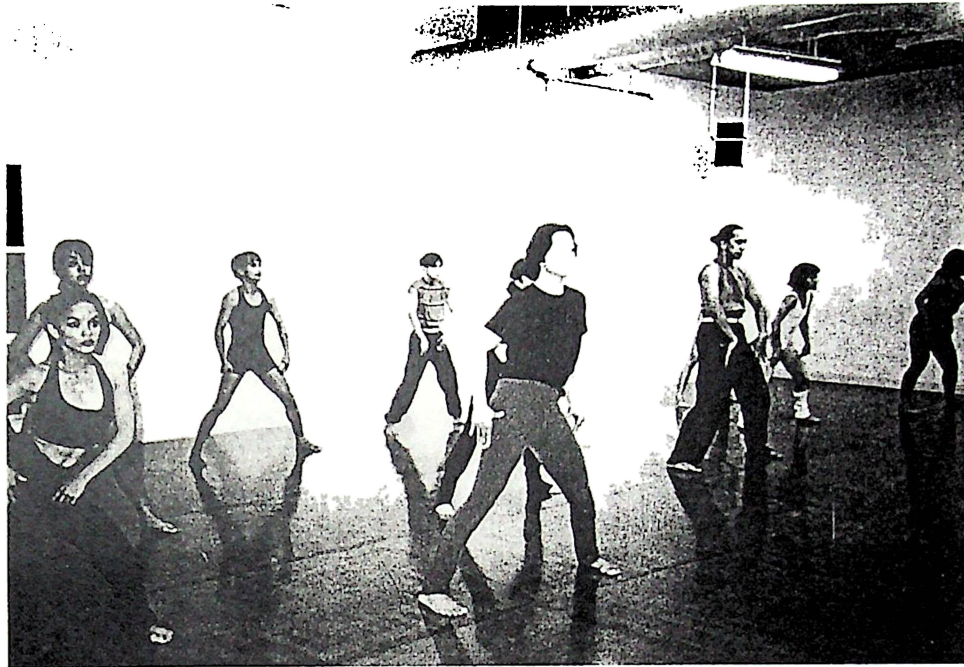


Figure 8

Rib isolation

Source: Pro Jazz or advance jazz class, photograph taken on May 12, 1998.

The movement concentrates on the rib area of the body. It is very important that students develop good techniques in this kind of movement. The development of good techniques for body isolation movement should include the ability to emphasize either of two qualities: (1) a smooth and continuous quality, as in a smooth headroll; and (2) a sharp and direct quality, as in a head snap from one side to the other.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Ibid.

The third phase of a jazz class is "corners". It allows the students to move across the studio floor using movements to improve on techniques. These movements could be a series of kicks or *battement*, a series of turns, or a series of jumps (See Figure 9 and 9.1 for Turns and Jumps). A battement is a an exercise in which the working leg, or the leg executing the movement, is raised from the hip into the air and brought down again. The body must be straight while this is done.⁷¹ (Figure 9.2 shows an example of a grand *battement*).

Center work II or choreography is a combination of the techniques. The dance instructor executes a combination of dance steps which the students copy afterwards. The choreography taught is accompanied by music.

The last phase of the jazz class is the "cool down." It is the same stretching exercises done in the warm up phase but at a slower pace. This allows the body to gradually decrease its activities. It also allows the body to reduce heart rate.

⁷¹ "Battement," [American Ballet Theatre Online Dictionary](#), 1996.

Figure 9

Turns



Figure 9.1

Jumps



Figure 9.2

A grand *battement* during corner phase of the class May 12, 1998

Activities

Powerdance prepares for two main activities annually, the summer dance workshop from April to May and its concert in August.

Powerdance sets up a dance workshop open for young kids and adults held at the Powerdance Studio. It is a seven-week intensive dance training program in Jazz, Hip-Hop, and Ballet. At the end of the seven weeks, a recital concert is held at the University of the Philippines Main Theater, Diliman. It features the participants of the workshop along with Powerdance. Aside from its public contribution, the workshop also serves

as a source of income for the studio from the registration fees of the students and ticket sales for the recital.⁷²

1998 marks their fourth annual Summer Dance and Fitness Workshop entitled "Powerdance Moves to the Movies." The very first summer workshop was in 1995 entitled "C'mon Let's Powerdance." Then it was followed by "Hit the Power—Dance this Summer in 1996." In 1997, the summer workshop entitled "Powerdance Summer Dance Circus" was held.

The theme for the summer workshop stems from brainstorming of the entire company. After a theme is chosen, letters are sent for advertisement sponsors with a list of the advertising fees (See Table 2: Price Range of Paid Advertisement). Each letter sent to potential sponsors is numbered systematically to monitor the letters that are sent back to the dance company. Letters that are not sent back to the dance company are traced. This precaution is done to avoid fraud solicitations by other individuals not working for the dance company but using the Powerdance name.⁷³

⁷² Julie Alagde, interview.

⁷³ Mimi Villareal, personal interview, May 1, 1998.

Table 2

Price range of paid advertisement



POWERDANCE MOVIES TO THE MOVIES

ADVERTISING CONTRACT
ADVERTISER'S COPY

The undersigned agrees to advertise in the souvenir program of "POWERDANCE MOVES TO THE MOVIES" 1998 Summer Dance and Fitness Workshop as follows:

☐ Back Cover	P 10,000	Advertisement layout is ☐ provided by the undersigned. ☐ provided by Powerdance.
☐ Inside Front Cover	P 8,000	
☐ Inside Back Cover	P 8,000	
☐ Full Page	P 5,000	
☐ Half Page	P 3,000	
☐ Quarter Page	P 1,750	
☐ Donor	P 500	

Name of solicitor: _____

Name of advertiser: _____

Authorized signature: _____

*Please make all checks payable to POWER STUDIO, INC.

(Source: Sample sponsorship letter, May 1, 1998.)

Flyers and posters are posted or distributed three weeks prior to registration week. The registration process is held for about a week. The entire fee for the workshop is P5000 per student. This fee is just for workshop. It does not include costume allowance needed for the recital. Each student is responsible for their own costumes. When registration is completed, the students are grouped into two sections, according to age. From here on, training starts for each section.

During the training, students are given a minimum of ten tickets to sell for the recital. The students are also responsible for their own costumes for the recital. Two weeks before the recital date, pictorials are held for the participants with their respective groups. These photos are

if working for Powerdance provides the mean to raise a family, as in the case of married couple James and Liesl Laforteza, then their salary is adequate.

For their summer dance workshops and annual concert, sponsors are sought out for solicitation. Letters of sponsorship are sent in June for the annual concert, usually held in August. To become a major sponsor, the solicitation requirement is P350,000. Then the second bracket is P250,000 and partial sponsorship is P150,000.⁷⁹ It entitles the sponsors to media exposure through posters, flyers and souvenir programs.

Organizational Structure

According to Jack Kamerman and Rosanne Martorella, authors of Performers and Performances: The Social Organization of Artistic Work, a performing arts company has two distinct hierarchies: artistic and nonartistic. The artistic side of a company is composed of an artistic director, production staff and dancers. The nonartistic is the administrative body that handles the financial needs of the company.⁸⁰

In the Philippines only one dance company, so far, follows this ideal—Ballet Philippines. The Artistic Director and its department is

⁷⁹ Mimi Villareal, interview.

⁸⁰ Jack Kamerman and Rosanne Martorella, Performers and Performances: The Social Organization of Artistic Work (New York: Praeger, 1983), 99.

responsible for the product (show) while the Executive Director and its department are responsible for the financial matters required to produce the product.⁸¹ This, may be due to the fact that the dance company has been in existence for almost thirty years. Since its birth in 1970, it has evolved and adapted the necessary style of management for its survival, such as the ideal structure presented earlier in this paragraph.

However such ideals are not always practiced by performing arts groups in order to function properly and Powerdance is one of them. The artistic and nonartistic areas are not divided but are intertwined with each other. The artistic director not only choreographs but also manages the entire company and does the accounting of the dancer's fees. In turn, the dancer dances, teaches and handles production aspects and promotions at the same time.

Several factors may be discussed why Powerdance follows this process. One, compared to the manpower of Ballet Philippines, Powerdance only makes up one fourth of its size. Including the manager, founder, and artistic director Douglas Nierras and the eighth core company members, there is a total of nine bodies that make up the entire dance company. So, if the administrative tasks are divided among them, then there will be nobody left to dance and vice versa. The idea

⁸¹ Cecille Manikan, Executive Director of Ballet Philippines, Ballet Philippines office, interview, April 14, 1996.

of hiring people for the administrative positions has been tried but proved fruitless.⁸² For one thing, the level of dedication a dancer puts in to accomplish a task is not the same for someone who is not as dedicated to his/her craft. A dancer knows that a task must be done, such as soliciting for sponsors, to the best of his/her ability. If the task is not done properly, then the result can be of numerous things: no sponsors to support their summer workshop or profit from their annual concert. The success of Ballet Philippines is most of the administrative staff were ex-dancers for the company. They have given up performing because of age and placed their dedication instead in administrative work.⁸³ In the case of Powerdance, the dancers that are involved right now still enjoy performing. And those who have left the company have moved to other career paths not related to dance or is just not interested in administrative work.

Another factor is Nierras wants Powerdance not to be just an ordinary dance company but "an entity in itself." It is a term he used many times during the interview. It could mean that he wants Powerdance to be viewed as a living organism. Powerdance should still exists even if he or the other members of the company leaves. By

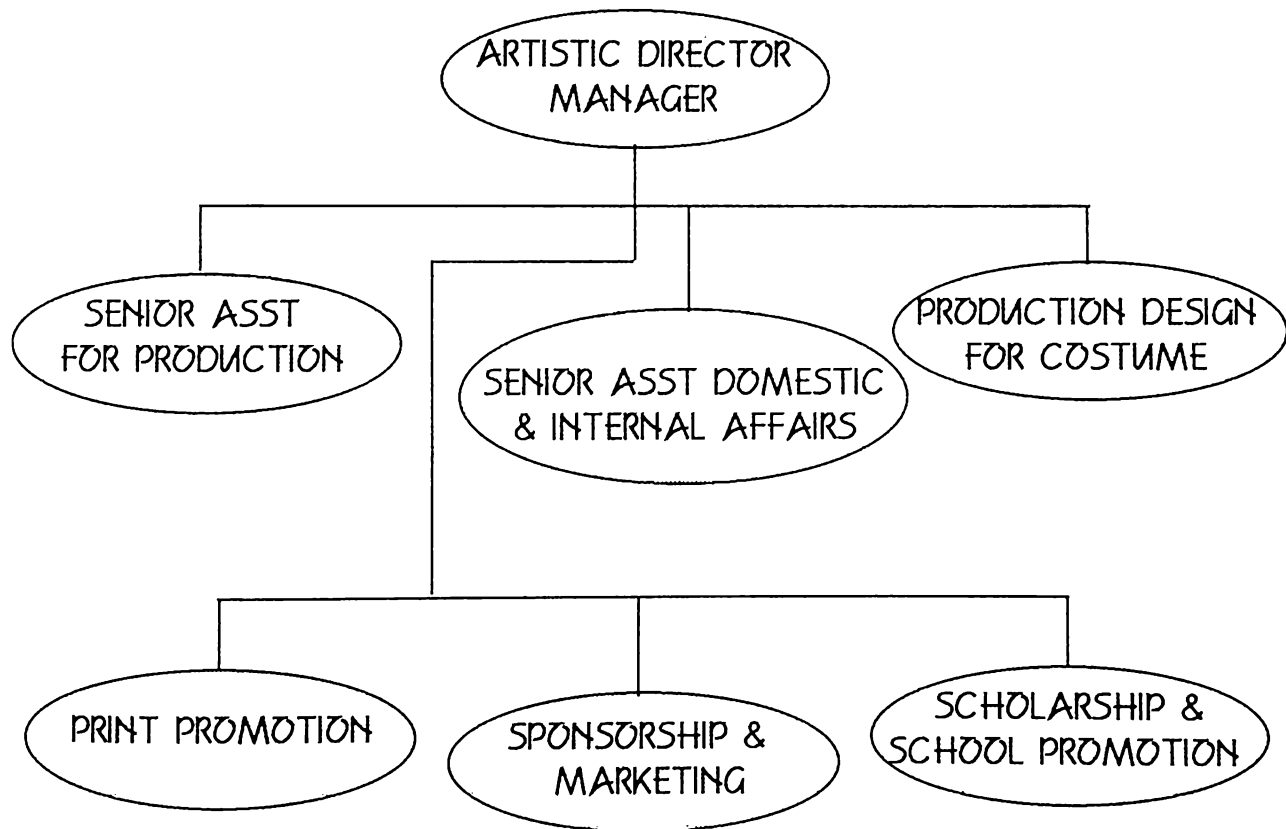
⁸²James Laforteza, interview.

⁸³ Cecille Manikan, interview.

Figure 10

Organizational Structure of Powerdance

(Based on Interview with Douglas Nierras)



Organizational Culture of Powerdance

This part of the study defines the working relationships of the members of Powerdance with each other. It also defines the organizational culture the company thrives in.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, culture generally refers to the customary ways of thinking and behaving of particular population or society.⁸⁴ Another definition of culture is the pattern of basic assumptions used by individuals and groups to deal with the organization and its environment.⁸⁵ The culture of an organization is its personality, atmosphere. It also defines appropriate behavior and bonds, it motivates individuals, and it governs the way a company processes information, internal relations, and values.⁸⁶ The effectiveness of any organization lies heavily on human behavior. People are the most common resource in any organization. Psychologically speaking, each person is different. Each has his/her own beliefs, backgrounds, different capabilities of learning, different attitudes and different ways of handling stress.⁸⁷

Culture within Powerdance centers the bond the dancers share with each other. They all have a common goal, to succeed in their craft

⁸⁴ "Culture," The Little Oxford Dictionary 7th ed.

⁸⁵ James Gibson, John Ivancevich, James Donnelly, Organizations: Behavior, Structure, Processes (Bain Bridge, Ill: Business One Irwin, 1994), 7

⁸⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁷ Organizations, 7

both mentally and physically. Another goal the members of the dance company share is to ensure the longevity of the company. By sharing the same goals, it creates a togetherness among the members. But sometimes this bond breaks when Douglas dominates the picture. For example, I have witnessed several of the company rehearsals and occasionally a dancer would execute the wrong step. When this happens, Douglas stops the rehearsal and puts the dancer on "the spot." This is when rehearsal is stopped and the dancer is asked to execute the choreography in front of the rest of the group. He asks the dancer to tell him verbally what kind of dance movement was supposed to be expected. After the dancer explains, the dancer must repeat the steps several times. Of course, this event is always accompanied by shouting and even verbal abuse from Douglas Nierras. This type of behavior is not unique especially to a dance group. It is an effective way to instill discipline to make that distinction that he has full authority over the group. However, when a dancer is put on "the spot," the rest of the dancers do not become sympathetic. The matter is treated as though the worst act anybody can commit. None of them speaks to the dancer or sympathizes with him/her. The dancer is basically "left out" until Douglas interacts with him/her again. This situation may not be healthy and could be one of the reasons why other dancers have left. Aside from the

physical demands the dancers endure, they must also meet the emotional demands of Powerdance. Again, this type of culture probably makes the members a stronger dancer both mentally and physically. When circumstances as mentioned before do not occur, the members enjoy each other's company through conversations, going to movies, etc.

Becoming a member of Powerdance is like being born into a family. Each is expected to help out in any way possible for the company to succeed. Just like a parent, Douglas Nierras nurtures and raises his dancers to fully understand the mental and physical disciplines of dance. He nurtures his dancers by letting them realize the mistakes they make along the way. However, as mentioned earlier, Nierras is not a soft spoken parent who accepts mistakes from his children. Without his strictness, the dancers would not learn the disciplines of dance.

There is a very strict code of trust and respect the company instills in the members. It implies that members are not allowed to talk behind each other's back. If there is a conflict between members, the responsible party should discuss the situation within the company.

Envy is a word not even entertained within the group. There is no such thing as whisperings or bickering. Regular company meetings are held to discuss both personal and professional qualms. These qualms

could be about the performances of the dancers. Powerdance makes it clear that each member is treated with equal respect whether a senior or junior member.

Just like a family, Powerdance experiences joy, hardship, hard work and, even vacation together. Once in a while, the company makes it a point to leave the country and learn new things about its craft. The company visits the United States to further expand its knowledge in dance by going to musical and Broadway shows. They buy video tapes and books that they may need for their dance program and personal growth. While in the United States, they also train with top choreographers at their own expense. Going back to the discussion of the members' salary, to be able to afford such a commodity must mean that they are earning more than an adequate amount.

Choreography

Fortunately, this researcher was able to watch two of their solo concerts, "Powerdance: Taking it Off" on November 4, 1995 and "Powerdance: The Very First Formal Classical Concert" in August 1996. This experience helped clarify the importance of Douglas Nierras' "spartan discipline."⁸⁸ The researcher does not think he treats his dancers

⁸⁸ "Powerdance: Taking It Off," souvenir program, November 4, 1995.

with an iron fist for his own pleasure. He teaches them all he knows in order for them to be as good as he is or better, and to propagate the art of dance. Professor Grace Odal of UP Manila, who saw a videotape of one concert, said, "his choreography is exploratory, acrobatic and it stretches the limit of the human body."⁸⁹ Nierras idea of movements goes beyond the limit of the body. He wants his dancers to exceed the skills of a professional dancer.

Nierras was asked if jazz techniques can be "Filipinized" in the manner that Ballet Philippines has done with ethnic ballet. Nierras was pensive for a while before he answered. According to him, he does not express his Filipinoness by being nationalistic. But the mere fact that the choreographic intent is Filipino, the dancers are Filipino, the music is Filipino and showcases a Filipino sentiment, these are enough to label a choreography as Filipino. Aside from these, there are similar Filipino themes evident in most of Powerdance concerts: comic relief, a fight scene to win over a girl and worship of God. These themes can be seen in most Tagalog movies or romance novels.

⁸⁹ Grace Odal, personal interview, May 25.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The body is like a machine. It passes years of extensive training in order to execute the steps in dance with grace and beauty. Dance companies train the body and at the same time keep the art of dancing alive within the culture. They devote their time, energy, and talent in dance. They show their talent through concerts and at the same time educate the viewing public about the form of dance they use: ballet, modern dance or jazz. Powerdance is one of these companies dedicated to the propagation of dance. They do not concentrate on one form of dance but instead incorporate all of the various forms: jazz, ballet, modern dance, hiphop, and ballroom in its concerts. This type of repertoire caters to the public because of its variety and the extraordinary choreography. Attending a concert of Powerdance is like watching a noontime variety show, wherein one can experience singing, dancing to popular songs and comic relief. The members also have a tremendous amount of dedication and loyalty to their dance company. Why else would they sacrifice all of their time between dancing and administrative work, if not to ensure the longevity of Powerdance.

Aside from the problem of acquiring the necessary data, there are other problems significant with the dance company. One of these is the

fact that the dance company does not have a written mission-vision statement. This is very important to any organization. It becomes the backbone of the organization which focuses members of the goals for the company. This is important to have especially for succeeding dancers in Powerdance. As of now, passing down goals and objectives of the company is done through word of mouth.

Also, another problem is the lack of proper documentation of Powerdance. The company does not keep a complete file of its souvenir programs. These contain the history of Powerdance. The company has a collection of its concerts on videotapes but do not allowed them to be viewed by outsiders, especially students who want to study Powerdance. Maybe the company can rent the videotapes for a fee to people who are interested in watching their previous concerts inside the Studio. The company seems so involved with the commercialization of dance for profit that it forgets to help educate the people.

Powerdance may be controlled by an authoritarian figure, but Douglas Nierras has every right to act the way he acts. If it is an effective way to get a job done or to instill discipline, then the superb skills and techniques his dancers possess speak for themselves.

Recommendations for Further Study

An area recommended for further study is the management aspect of Powerdance or any private dance company. Since this study touched only a small aspect of management, there is still a wide area to explore. Future studies may include the type of audience or potential audience Powerdance attracts or will attract. Because of the dance form they used, unlike ballet which caters to the elite, what type of audience does Powerdance attract? Also, maybe with further prodding, Power Studio Inc. can be studied and determine the exact relationship it has with the dance company.

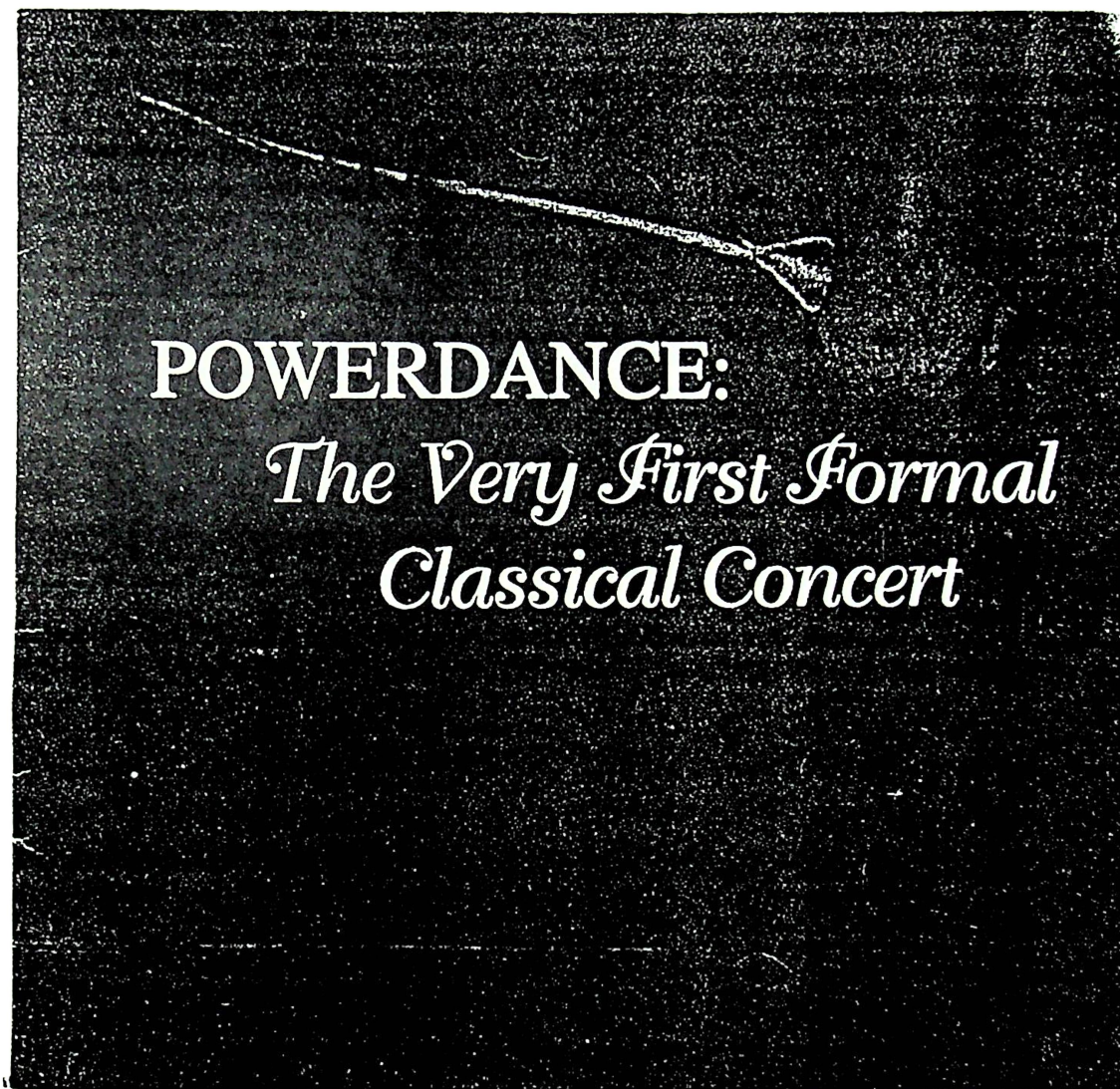
Another area of study is the artistic or choreographic content of their performances. Jazz, which is of African-Caribbean descent, has been assimilated to our culture. In that aspect, one can investigate if there are movements or steps in jazz that have a Filipino quality. Just as ballet can have a neo-Filipino style, can that same principle of indigenization be applied to jazz. What criteria will be followed in order for jazz to be recognized as Filipino? Is it the movements? the music accompaniment? or is it already very Filipino because the dancers themselves are native Filipinos? Another aspect for further study is the socio-cultural, of a dance company. What in Philippine history allowed for

Powerdance to be accepted? And what part of Filipino culture paved the way for a dance company to appeal to the masses?

Dance companies are the primary movers in the world of modern dance. Through their talents, the art of dance is propagated and the public is able to experience the beauty of the human body in motion. Without them, the art of dance can remain stagnant in time.

APPENDIX A

PHOTOCOPY OF SOUVENIR PROGRAM OF "THE VERY FIRST FORMAL CONCERT





POWERDANCE: *The Very First Formal Classical Concert*

*Featuring Powerdance as choreographed and directed by
Douglas Nierras*

Lighting Design
Joaquin Jose Aranda

Set Concept Design
*Leo Rialp
Rico Ancheta*

Photography
Raymund Isaac

Set Execution
Rico Ancheta

Message

*I
often ask myself why
I dance, why I create,
experiment and explore endless
possibilities for human movement.*

*It is not merely to explore the exciting and
dynamic relationship of music and sound with
the physics of anatomical kinetics.*

*Neither is it merely to express deep seated emotions and
passion in a visibly physical manner seen from tens of
meters away.*

*It is not even to merely see sculptural forms in motion nor
harmonious forces in concert or opposing forces in discord.*

*And definitely not merely to unleash bodies in an ordered
composition to translate ideas, stories, feelings, and visions.*

*No matter how substantial, interesting, intelligent, or worthwhile
they may be;*

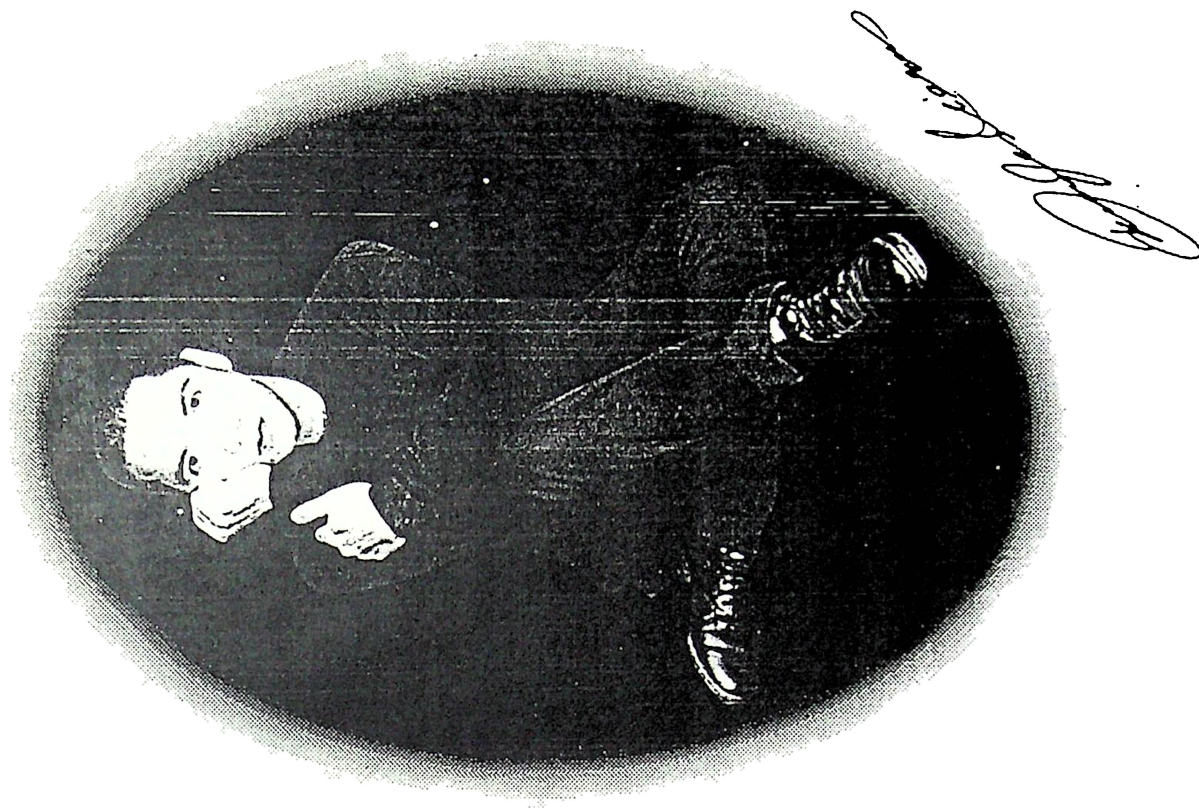
*The reason for dance has been, is, and will always be, only
to address the most basic need of every human being;*

TO FEEL, GIVE AND RECEIVE LOVE.

*And when dance has been consummated, it is then
that we can say:*

WE HAVE TOUCHED THE FACE OF GOD.

*It is for this that makes every dancer
forever thankful, AMEN!*



Classical Prayer

A Time for Everything

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3

Voice: Ms. Zenaida Anusilor

Featuring students from the Southeast Asian Institute for the Deaf

Trainer: Ms. Thelma Tagle

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose
under the heaven:*

*A time to kill, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to
pluck up that which is planted;*

*A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a
time to build up;*

*A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a
time to dance;*

*A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

*A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to
cast away;*

*A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a
time to speak;*

*A time to love, and a time to hate, a time of war, and a time of
peace.*

*What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?
I have seen the travail, which God hath given the sons of men
to be exercised in it.*

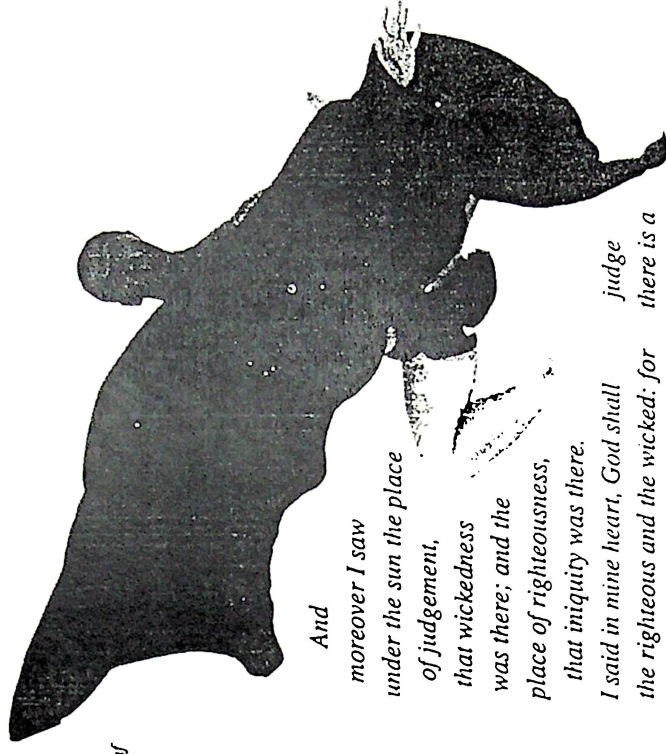
*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set
the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work
that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*

*I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice,
and to do good in his life.*

*And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the
good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.*

*I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing
can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it,
that men should fear before him.*

*That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already
been; and God requireth that which is past.*



*And
moreover I saw
under the sun the place
of judgement,
that wickedness
was there; and the
place of righteousness,
that iniquity was there.*

*I said in mine heart, God shall judge
the righteous and the wicked: for there is a
time there for every purpose and for every purpose
and for every work.*

*I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of
men, that*

*God might manifest them, and that they might see that
they themselves are beasts.*

*For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts;
even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth
the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that man hath
no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity*

*All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to
dust again.*

*Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and
the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?*

*Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than
that a man should rejoice in his own works: for that is
his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be
after him?*

POWER DANCE...the History

SERENDIPITY...is often described as "something good happened on the way to." This word encapsulizes how DOUGLAS NIERRAS and his POWERDANCE discovered their destiny.

DOUGLAS NIERRAS - the most passionate advocate of jazz dance theater. This well-liked man, an unexpected dreamer and idealist. What's more, quixotic idea of contemporary jazz dance is now an astonishing reality with the conception of a professional jazz dance company. And voila! POWERDANCE was born in 1988.

POWERDANCE promises to stick to the highest standard of dancing from a single idea, down to its professional dance artist whose dedication to their craft is not just hype but their essence, thus making them the "PREMIERE/MULTIMEDIA'S DANCE COMPANY" in the country.

Barely four weeks after it was formed, they had their stage performance debut as guest artist in the Valentine concert of Ms. Louie Reyes dubbed as "Passions." Since then, numerous offers came their way. From weekly TV shows SHADE and RSVP, POWERDANCE has enjoyed notable performances for television, stage, and cinema here and abroad. They have worked with the world-class Filipino artist and directors the country has ever produced.

Their international accomplishments and remarkable performances include:

- The Body Sings
- representative to the ASEAN Festival of Songs (1989-1994)
- the Festival Internacional de Jazz de Mexico (1990)
- The Body Sings Too (II) (CCP, April 3, 1993)
- Fundango sa Museo (Music Museum, 1991)
- I feel the Earth Move (Star Complex, 1993)
- delegate to the ASEAN Tourist Forum East (Singapore, January 1994)
- Presidential delegate to Europe for "East Meets West" Economic Summit (March 1993)
- Philippine representative to the Asian Dance Festival (Tokyo, Japan July 1996)

Douglas dissects his image, his emotions to create dance flawlessly. These are the basic feelings that his dancers have transformed style into actual meaning.

It is therefore their greatest obsession to touch the lives of every being by bringing jazz dance through their craftsmanship on this field.

Dreams fulfilled. Success far beyond expectations. All for the simple love of expression...Dance. DOUGLAS and POWERDANCE, indeed - the new chapter

Moonlight Classics

Concierto for Piano and Orchestra no. 2 3rd movement

by: Rachmatineff

*Philippe Entremont with the New York
Philharmonic (conducted by: Leonard Bernstein)*

*Piano Sonata No. 14 in C sharp Minor
Op. 27 No. 2 Moonlight*

by: London Philharmonic Orchestra

Vincent

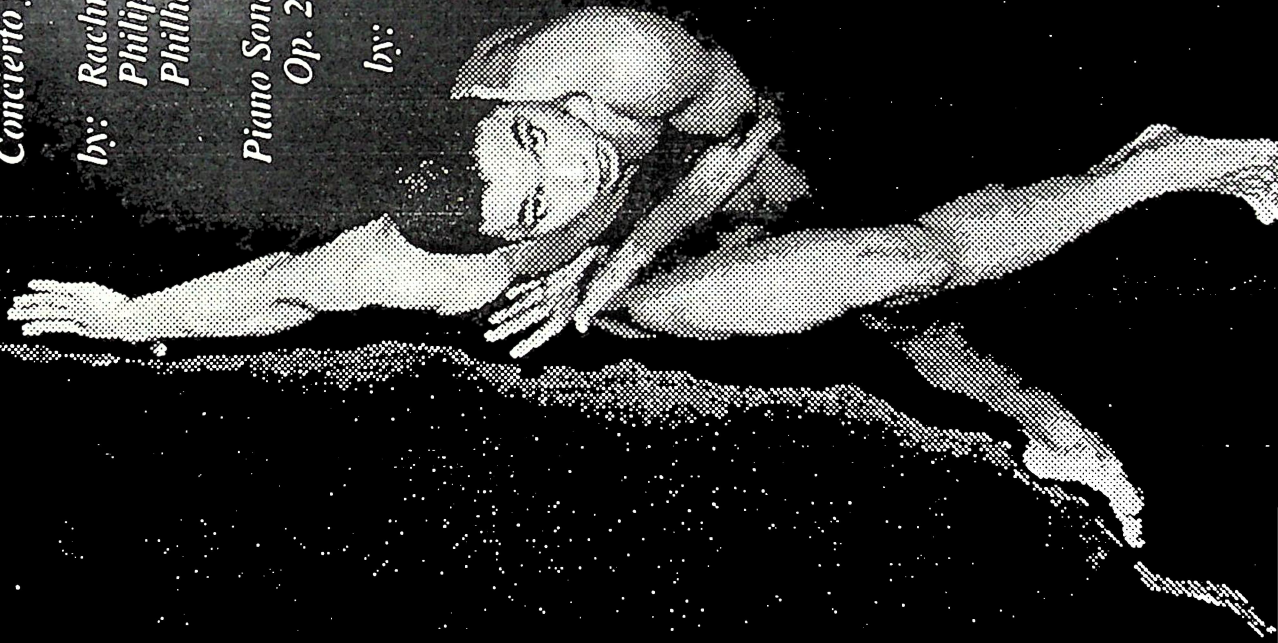
by: Don Mac Lean

Cast: James Laforieza Julie Alagie

Joseph Laforieza Vinia Pauplona

Yek Mabaquiao Yan Manalo

Chito Mabaquiao Avel Bautista



Classics My

Father Loves

Song performed by Tony Bennett
I Left My heart in San Francisco
(Cross-Cory)

The Shadow of Your Smile
(Mandel-Webster)

Lazy Afternoon (Latouch-Moross)

Tender is the Night (Webster-Fain)

Who Can I Turn To (Bricusse-Newly)

Cast in order of appearance

Danny Marshall

Joseph Laforteza / Yek Mabaquiao

James Laforteza / Julie Alagile

Chito Mabaquiao / Vinia Pamplona



Classico Argentino

Music from the original cast album of Forever Tango

Lissandro Adrover-Musical Director

Cast

"CELOS"

*Danny Marshall
Van Mandlo
Avel Bautista
Julie Alagde*

"La Compareita"

*James Lafortez
Vania Pamplona*

"El Choclo"

*Chito Mabaquiao
Yek Mabaquiao*



Saturday Night "Classical" Fever

Hit song taken from the Disco circuit of the Late

70's

In New York

You Make Me Feel Mighty Real

I Love the Night Life

Freak Out

Disco Lullaby

Nothing's Gonna Keep Me From You

If All We're Gonna Do is Dance, I'm Going Home

I Will Survive

Cast: Danny Marshall - as Rico

Joseph LaForteza - as Lola

Yek Mabaquiao - as Tonette

James LaForteza - Bar Tender

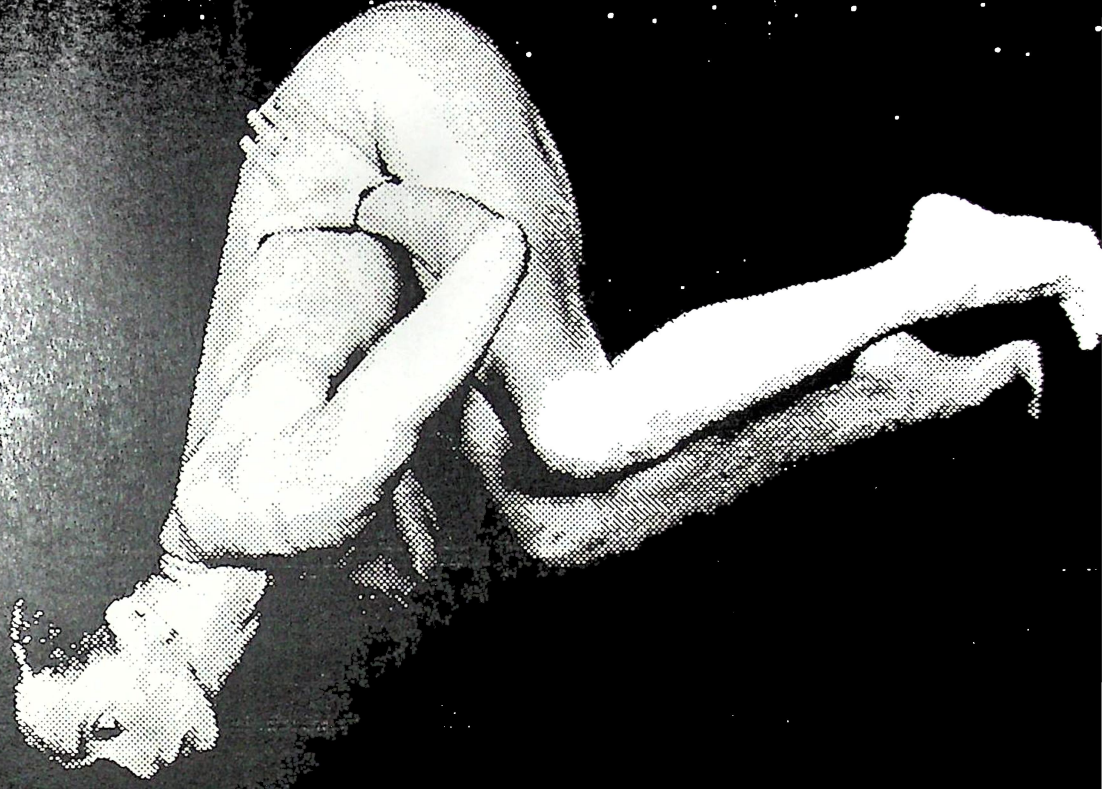
Chito Mabaquiao - Waiter

Party People:

Vinia Pamplona

Julie Alagde

Van Mando



“Sentimental Classics”

Prelude No. 20 - Chopin
Could it be Magic (Manilow-Anderson)

A. King Singers
B. Barry Manilow

*Concierto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 2nd
movement*

Rachmaninoff

All by Myself

Written and performed by: Eric Carmen

Cast: Yek Mabaquiao
James Laforceza
Vinia Pamplona
Joseph Laforceza
Julie Alagde
Chito Mabaquiao



Ung-pung

ilipino Klasiks

Ang Tangi kong Pag-ibig
Composed by: *Constancio de Guzman*
Interpreted by: *Marco Sison*

Bituing Marikit
Composed by: *Nicanor Abelardo*
Interpreted by: *Jacqui Magno*

Hindi Kita Malinot
Composed by: *Josefino Cenizal*
Interpreted by: *Janno Gibbs*

Cast: *James Laforteza* *Julie Alagde*
Joseph Laforteza *Vinia Pamplona*
Yek Mabaquiao *Van Manalo*
Chito Mabaquiao *Avel Bautista*
Danny Marshall



Desiderata

*Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.*

*As far as possible without surrender
be on good terms with all persons.*

*Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant;
they too have their story.*

*Avoid loud and aggressive persons,
they are vexations to the spirit.*

*If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain and bitter; for always
there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.*

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble;

it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs;

for the world is full of trickery.

But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;

many persons strive for high ideas;

and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection.

Neither be cynical about love;

for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment

it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years,

gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.

But do not distress yourself with imaginings.

Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe,

no less than the trees and the stars;

you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you,

no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God,

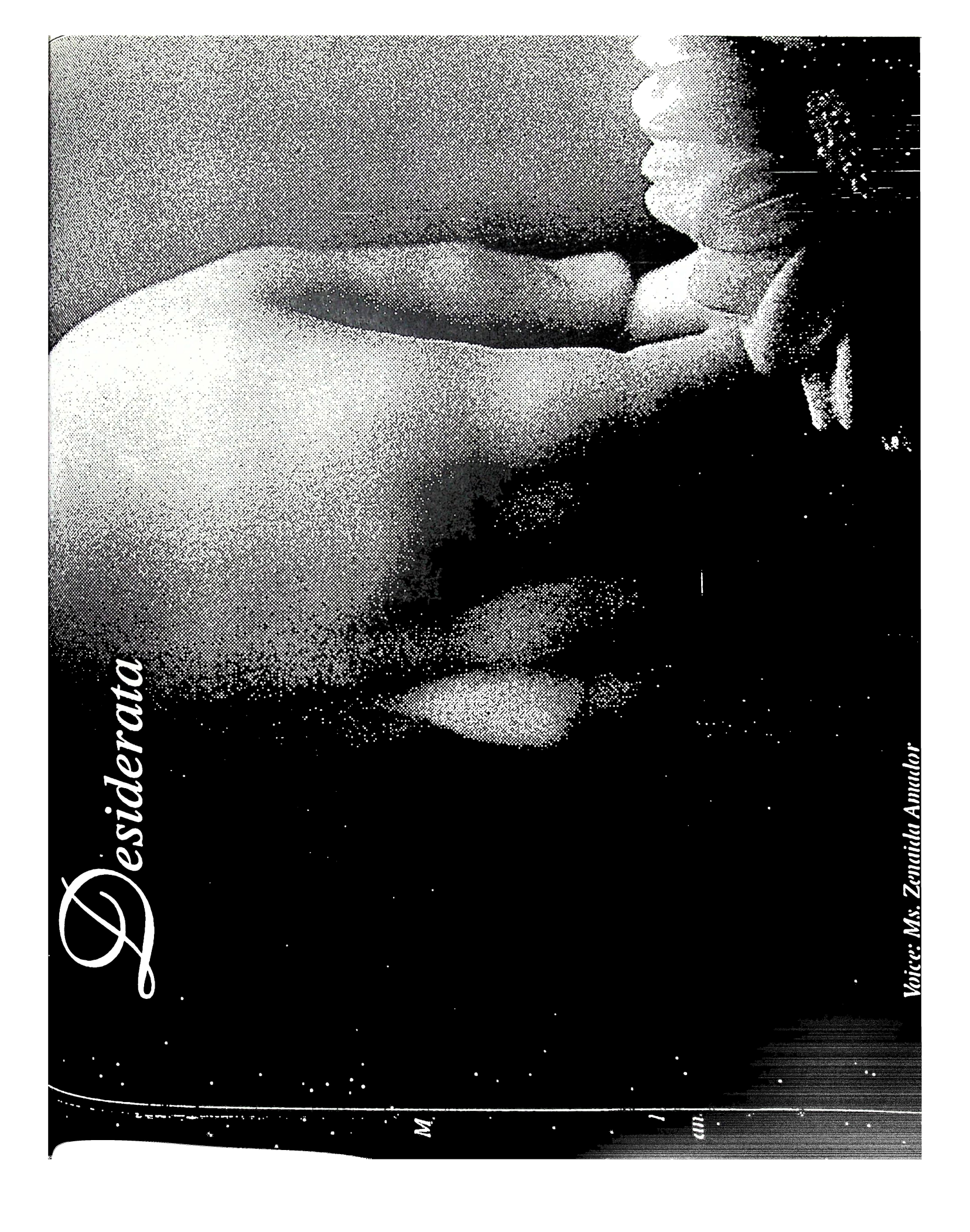
whatever you conceive Him to be,

and whatever your labors and aspirations,

in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be carefull. Strive to be happy.



Desiderata

Voice: Ms. Zenaida Amador

Wag - Big... Ampalaya at Asukal ...

Jana maging klasiks ”

Cast

“Ang Huling El Bimbo” (E. Buendia)

Interpreted by : Eraserheads

James Laforeza / Julie Alagde

Joseph Laforeza / Yek Mabaquiao

Danny Marshall / Vinia Pamplona

Chito Mabaquiao

“Muntik Nang Maabot” (M. Marfil-F. Marquez)

Interpreted by: True Faith

Danny Marshall

James Laforeza

Joseph Laforeza

Vinia Pamplona

“Five Years” (Dacasin-Del Mundo)

Interpreted by: by

Sugarliccup

James Laforeza

Yek Mabaquiao

Joseph Laforeza

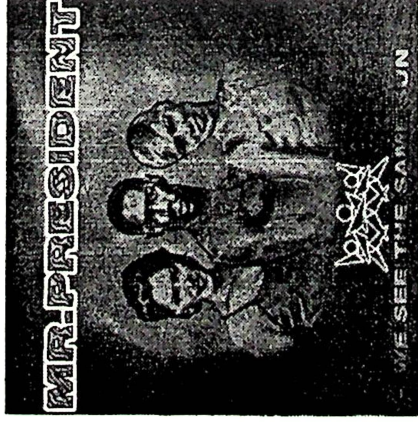
Julie Alagde

Chito Mabaquiao

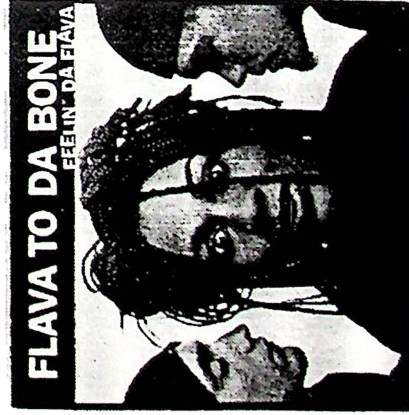


dance hits

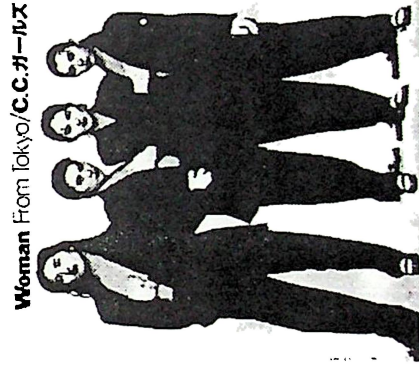
FROM AROUND THE WORLD!



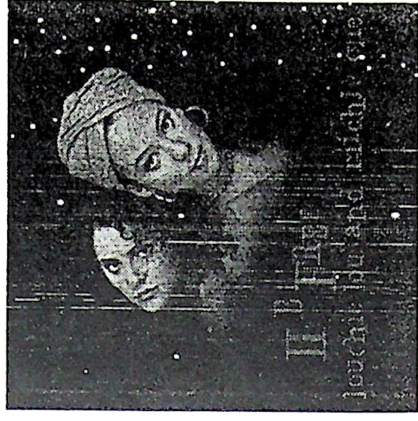
MR. PRESIDENT
We See The Same Sun
featuring "Coco Jamboo"



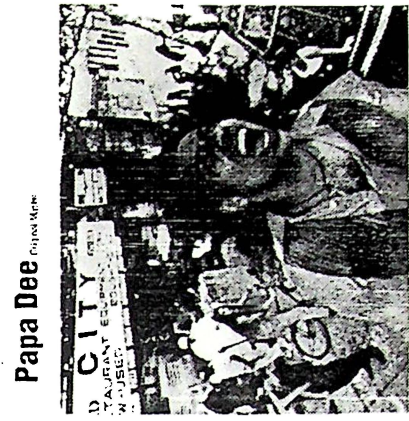
FLAVA TO THE BONE
Feelin' Da Flava
featuring "Even If The Rain"



C.C. GIRLS
Woman From Tokyo
featuring "Epicurean Blue"



LOUCHIE LOU AND MICHIE ONE
Il B Free
featuring "Get Down On It"



PAPA DEE
Original Master
featuring "The First Cut Is The Deepest"





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zab
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Kuh Ledesma

AKUHS^{TIC}

Cafe

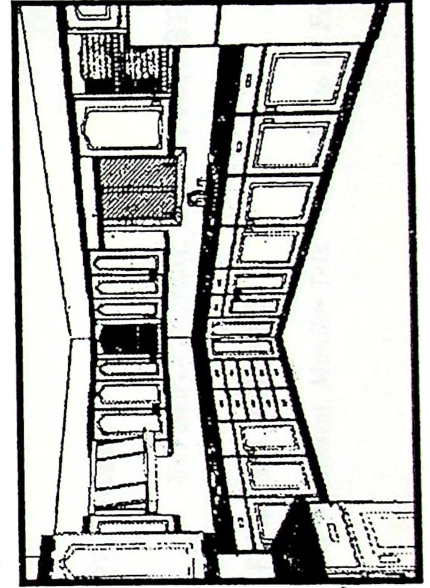
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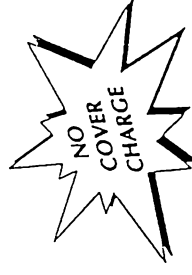


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S

To. Douglas Nierras and Powerdance

*Congratulations
and more Power !!!*

From: The Thirdline, Inc.
Talent Management/Concert Production/Rehearsal Studio

*Apo Hiking Society Lynn Sherman Ugoy-Ugoy Band
Mon David Jacqui Magno Bayang Barrios John Lesaca
Mike Hanopol Taboo*

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER FOR SUMMER DANCE WORKSHOP



Dear Sir or Madam:

GREETINGS FROM POWERDANCE!

After three very successful years, POWERDANCE The Studio is currently holding its 4th annual Summer Dance and Fitness Workshop entitled "POWERDANCE MOVES TO THE MOVIES" from April 13 to May 30, 1998. This workshop is a seven-week intensive dance training program in Jazz, Hip-Hop, and Ballet for children in the morning sections, as well as Jazz, Hip-Hop, Ballet, and Ballroom for adults in the afternoon and early evening sections.

To culminate this program of activities is a grand recital concert of the same title to be held at the U.P. Theater on May 30, 1998. This concert will feature the participants of the workshop alongside the country's premiere Jazz/Showdance company, POWERDANCE, as choreographed by DOUGLAS NIERRAS - Artistic Director of POWERDANCE and the members of POWERDANCE.

From the first summer dance workshop, "CMON LET'S POWERDANCE" (1995), to "HIT THE POWER - DANCE THIS SUMMER" (1996), to last year's "POWERDANCE SUMMER DANCE CIRCUS" (1997), each recital concert has proven to be a showcase of music, magic, and newly found dancing abilities. Our workshop participants, which include students of all levels, young professionals, executives, homemakers, and dance enthusiasts, can all attest that this workshop and recital concert was an experience that not only enhanced their physical well-being, but also developed in them discipline, creativity, and good-will.

In this regard, we would like to enlist your support in the form of an advertisement in our souvenir program. In doing so, you are helping us to reach more and more people, especially the young minds, to share in an educational, creative, and enjoyable undertaking, and to provide avenues for different people to express, appreciate, and practice art through dance thereby forming more sensitive, considerate, fulfilled, and well-rounded individuals.

We look forward to your favorable response. THANK YOU and GOD BLESS!

Sincerely,


AVEL BAUTISTA
Marketing Coordinator

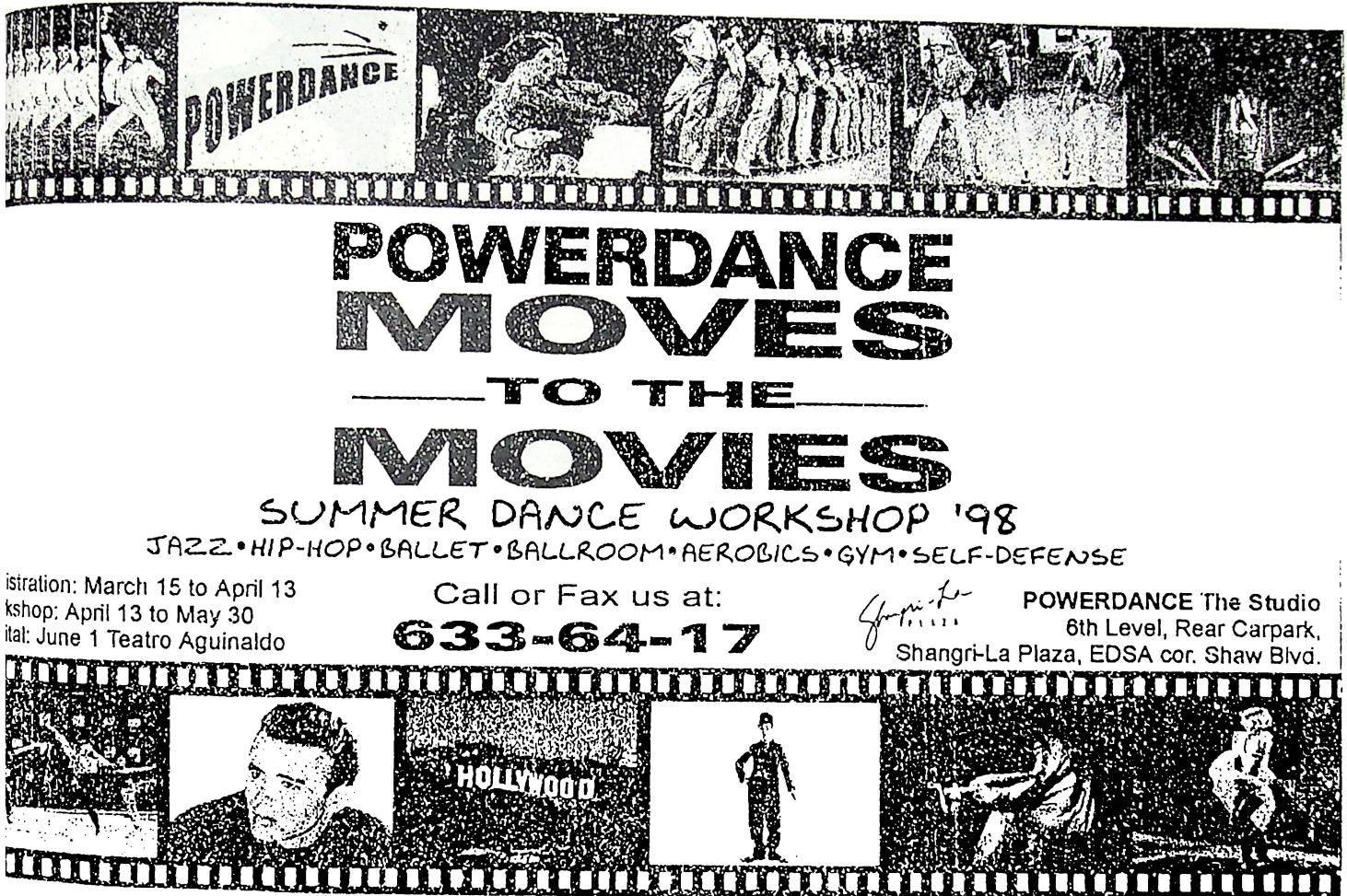
Noted by:

JAMES LAFORTEZA
Studio Manager


DOUGLAS NIERRAS
Artistic Director - POWERDANCE

APPENDIX B

FLYER AND TICKET FOR SUMMER DANCE WORKSHOP



**POWERDANCE
MOVES
— TO THE —
MOVIES**

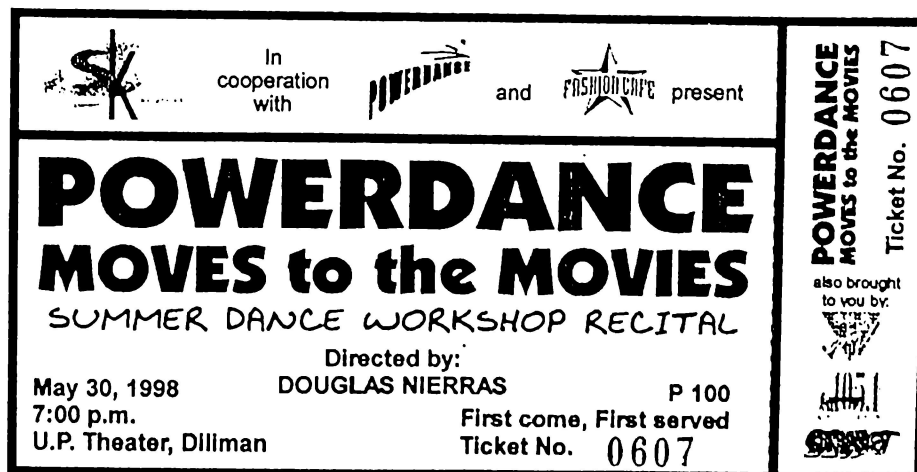
SUMMER DANCE WORKSHOP '98

JAZZ • HIP-HOP • BALLET • BALLROOM • AEROBICS • GYM • SELF-DEFENSE

Registration: March 15 to April 13
Workshop: April 13 to May 30
Recital: June 1 Teatro Aguinaldo

Call or Fax us at:
633-64-17

For more info POWERDANCE The Studio
8th Level, Rear Carpark,
Shangri-La Plaza, EDSA cor. Shaw Blvd.



SK In cooperation with **POWERDANCE** and **FASHION CAFE** present

**POWERDANCE
MOVES to the MOVIES**

SUMMER DANCE WORKSHOP RECITAL

Directed by:
DOUGLAS NIERRAS

May 30, 1998
7:00 p.m.
U.P. Theater, Diliman

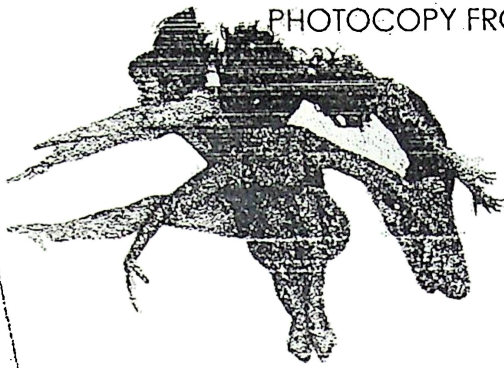
P 100
First come, First served
Ticket No. **0607**

**POWERDANCE
MOVES to the MOVIES**
also brought
to you by:
SK
Ticket No. **0607**

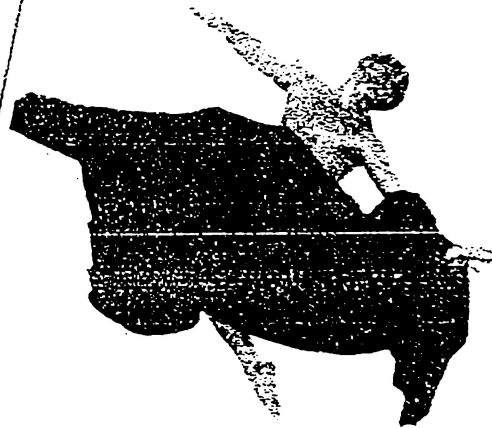
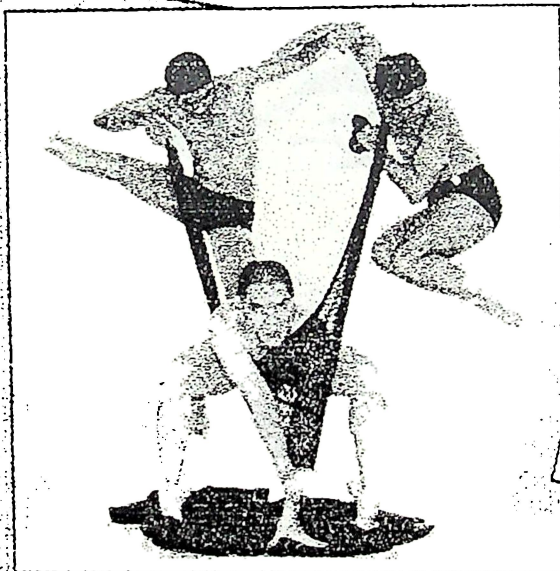
Ticket courtesy of: **POTEN-CEE®** Vitamin C

APPENDIX D

PHOTOCOPY FROM "POWERDANCE TAKING LEEF"



PHOTOCOPY FROM "POWERDANCE: TAKING IT OFF" SOUVENIR PROGRAM



APPENDIX E

, TABLEAU "EAST MEETS WEST" SOUVENIR PROGRAM



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