

Monday, November 6, 2023

A Celebration of the Life of Jennifer Muller

Company: Jennifer Muller/The Works

Venue: The Joyce Theater

Location: New York, NY

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Jennifer Muller/The Works will celebrate Founding Artistic Director Jennifer Muller (1944-2023) with a memorial at The Joyce Theater on Monday, November 6, 2023 at 7:30pm. Friends, members of the dance community and generations of her company members will come together to honor Jennifer's life and legacy with an evening of remembrances, historical footage and live performances, including excerpts from Jennifer's *Aria*, *Miserere Nobis*, *Tangle*, *Spotted Owl*, and *Speeds*. Also featured will be a special appearance by a member of The Limón Dance Company in *Sphinx*, originally created for Jennifer by José Limón when she was a dancer with his company.

Guest Speakers of the evening will include:

Mark Linn Baker, Actor, Director, Founder of New York Stage and Film

Marty Beller, Composer, Drummer for They Might Be Giants

Ronald K. Brown, Artistic Director of Evidence, A Dance Company

Henriette deVeer, Family Member

Tiffany Rea-Fisher, Artistic Director of EMERGE125

Brian McIver, JMTW Board Chair

Christopher Pilafian, Founding Member of JMTW

Jennifer Muller was a world-renowned artist who touched innumerable hearts and minds through her passion and creative spirit. She led with vision, perseverance, and a steadfast belief in creativity as an essential part of being human.

Join Jennifer's family of dancers, collaborators, staff and friends in celebrating her extraordinary contributions to the world. Admission to A Celebration of the Life of Jennifer Muller is free, with RSVP in advance. The event will be broadcast online at a later date.

RSVP

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=cMUpl4C1I0KAO0J9gA6BtpwRZbSQxCdFk2Zc67D-cp5UOVRKVTJEWfZORlgxSDNaNzVYM0xLOTJJQI4u>

Jennifer Muller/The Works is self-producing this Celebration of Life, and is turning to Jennifer's supporters to help finance theater crew expenses, dancer fees, and the costs of presenting historical footage. Despite sizable production expenses, JMTW isn't charging ticket fees to keep this event accessible for all.

Please consider making a contribution to support A Celebration of the Life of Jennifer Muller. For more info, please visit https://pentacle.formstack.com/forms/unique_donation_form_jennifer_muller_the_works,

"On behalf of the JMTW Board of Directors, past and present, we feel a great sadness losing the creative spirit that was Jennifer. She truly was an original, an innovator and an incredible talent. While we feel this tremendous loss, it has been an honor of a lifetime to work towards her common goal of opening hearts and minds around the world for nearly 50 years. Jennifer impacted the lives of countless professional dancers, choreographers, collaborators, dance companies and audiences, as well as thousands of children in the New York City education system. The legacy she leaves behind will be felt for generations to come." — Brian McIver, JMTW Board Chair

Jennifer Muller (October 16, 1944–March 29, 2023) was a creative force in the modern dance world for over 50 years. She was known for her visionary approach and innovation in dance and theater, her multi-disciplinary productions incorporating both spoken word and live and commissioned music, artist-inspired decor, and unusual production elements.

Dance was Muller's passion and creative voice since childhood. Creating pieces since age 7, she began dancing professionally at age 15 as a member of the Pearl Lang Dance Company. These formative years were followed by 9 years as Principal Dancer with the José Limón Company— during which she graduated from the Juilliard School—and 7 years as Associate Artistic Director of the Louis Falco Dance Company. She founded Jennifer Muller/The Works in 1974 and served as Artistic Director until she passed away. For 45 years, she led the company to global recognition for its dynamic theatricality, virtuosity, and humanity. The company toured to 39 countries on four continents, including a State Department tour of South and Central America, performed in 30 states, and self-produced 28 seasons in New York City. Throughout her career, Muller created over 125 pieces, including seven full evening productions.

Muller was highly respected in her field. She was chosen as a founding member of the World Arts Council in 2003—selected as one of 30 artists across six disciplines and the only American drawn from the dance field. In 2009, Muller was awarded a commissioning grant from The Joyce Theater's 25@25 initiative to create the piece, *Bench*. In 2010, she received the Trophy of Cultural Responsibility in recognition of her invaluable contributions to dance in South America. In 2011, she was awarded an "American Masterpieces: 3 Centuries of Artistic Genius Grant" to set her 1974 work *Speeds* on the UCSB Dance Company. The piece was accompanied by a scholarly conference, exhibit and publication entitled *Transformation & Continuance: Jennifer Muller and the Reshaping of American Modern Dance, 1959–Present*.

Muller was commissioned to create and re-stage dance works for 26 domestic and international repertory companies in nine countries. These included Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ohio Ballet (USA), Tanz-Forum (Germany), Ballet du Nord and Lyon Opera Ballet (France), Aterballetto (Italy), Bat Dor (Israel), Ballet Jazz de Montreal (Canada), Ballet Contemporaneo (Argentina) and Nederlands Dans Theater, NDT3, Krisztina de Chatel and, in 2019, Introdans (Netherlands), to name a few.

Internationally renowned as a consummate teacher and mentor of creative talent, Muller was one of the only choreographers of her generation to develop an original technique, based upon principles drawn from Eastern philosophy. TanzPlan Berlin's Center for Dance chose Muller Polarity Technique as one of seven unique, contemporary dance techniques for its publication/DVD *Tanztechnik 2010*. In addition to teaching Muller Polarity Technique worldwide, she headlined workshops in creativity, collaboration and choreography in France, England, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Argentina and the US. Additionally, she developed unique programs in creative thinking and non-verbal communication entitled *Creative Mind Workshops* for dancers and non-dancers alike. Inspired by Muller's technique and philosophical tenets, company alumni have gone on to faculty positions in universities, colleges and studios across the globe.

A dramatist as well as a movement artist, Muller was recognized as a "seminal influence on dance/theater" by choreographer and co-founder of Tanzform Köln, Jochen Ulrich. Muller choreographed productions for The Public Theater, 2nd Stage Theater, NY Stage & Film, Juilliard Opera Center and the New York City Opera, and in 2011, choreographed the new musical *The Spiral Show* in Beijing, China. She directed the Da Capo Players' production of Peter Maxwell Davis' *Le Jongleur*, authored scripts for NDT3 and JMTW, designed costumes, lights and decor under the designation *Stageworks*, and worked with directors Gail Edwards, Des McNuff, Ken Elliot, Mark Linn-Baker and Christopher Mataliano.

Muller was also known for her history of notable collaborations: she worked with artists Keith Haring, Sandro Chia, Tom Slaughter, as well as musicians Yoko Ono, Keith Jarrett, and Julia Kent. She established long-standing collaborative relationships with composers Burt Alcantara and Marty Beller, Tony Award-winning lighting designer Jeff Croiter, photographer Roberto Dutesco, and designers William Katz and Karen Small.

Jennifer Muller believed passionately in the importance and power of live dance. She devoted her life to this art form, which she experienced and framed as a medium of communication with the capacity to reach people from all walks of life. She encouraged dancers, creatives, students, and audiences to trust their humanity, deepen their imagination, and ultimately to connect in a shared and potentially transformative experience. From this essential mission unfurled more than 50 years of extraordinarily productive creativity and a monumental body of work that has reached countless people around the world.

Since 1974, Jennifer Muller/The Works has electrified world audiences with its passionate work and virtuosic dancers in 39 countries on four continents, 30 states in the USA and produced 28 NYC Seasons at City Center, The Joyce Theater, Cedar Lake and New York Live Arts among others. A byword for diversity, JMTW performs work that celebrates the human spirit with the belief that dance can promote cross-cultural understanding and act as a catalyst for positive change. JMTW has presented at major theaters and festivals worldwide, with performances in Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, Bangkok, Tel Aviv, Rome and Amsterdam to name a few. Recent appearances include Harbin, Tianjin and Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts.

In the US, JMTW has appeared in venues including Lincoln and Kennedy Centers, Jacob's Pillow, Alice Tully Hall, Jacob Javits Center, the United Nations, Kaatsbaan International Dance Center and St. Louis' Spring to Dance Festival among many others. In New York City, festivals include Bryant and Battery Park, Hudson Valley, Fire Island, Summer in the Square and Central Park Summerstage.

Since the beginning, JMTW has mentored creativity in all forms, educating youth and serving the community with vital outreach. JMTW's education programs - *Faces of Wonder* and *Imagine That!* - have provided crucial contemporary dance and arts awareness opportunities to thousands of youth in the NYC Public school system. Historically, JMTW has mentored 25 professionally-oriented students and 50 emerging

choreographers annually through its Scholarship Program and HATCH Presenting Series. Following Jennifer's passing, JMTW has temporarily paused these programs as the organization regroups, but remains committed to its advocacy for the relevance and appreciation of dance in all generations, communities and cultures.

Jennifer Muller/The Works conducts residencies throughout the US and abroad. Most recently, students have performed Muller's work at the University of Iowa, Long Island University (Brooklyn), Jacksonville University, UC Santa Barbara, Central Connecticut State University and LaGuardia Community College, with additional residencies in California, Virginia and Brazil. JMTW has developed numerous dance artists who have gone on to become directors and choreographers in their own right. These include Ronald K. Brown, Young Soon Kim, Pascal Rekoert, Michael Jahoda, Maria Naidu, Leda Meredith, Lana Carroll Heylock, Mario Bermudez Gil, Ed Burgess and Christopher Pilafian.

www.jmtw.org

https://www.instagram.com/jennifermuller_theworks/

<https://www.facebook.com/JenniferMullerTheWorks/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChnNMK8YE4KVIDY7hNMpTpw>

<https://vimeo.com/jennifermullertheworks>

All charitable contributions are fully tax-deductible. In this transitional period, fiscal sponsorship is provided by Unique Projects, Inc., a non-profit organization administered by Pentacle (DanceWorks Inc.). Pentacle is a non-profit management support organization for the performing arts. www.pentacle.org

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Schedule
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