

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

## Jennifer Muller, Founder of Jennifer Muller/The Works, Has Passed Away

Company: Jennifer Muller/The Works  
Venue: Jennifer Muller/The Works  
Location: New York, NY

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Jennifer Muller/The Works announces with great sadness the passing of its Founding Artistic Director, Jennifer Muller. Jennifer was a world-renowned choreographer, artist, and dear friend. She died peacefully in her home early Wednesday morning, March 29.

Jennifer Muller touched innumerable hearts and minds around the world, making a monumental impact through her passionate commitment to creative imagination and human connection. She came of age dancing in the company of José Limón, became Associate Artistic Director of the Louis Falco Dance Company and, in 1974, founded Jennifer Muller/The Works. JMTW gained global recognition, performing in 39 countries on four continents and 30 states in the USA, and was dubbed an "American Ambassador of Dance" by The New York Times. A born artist and collaborator, Muller devoted her career to multi-disciplinary expression of the human condition, blending dance and theater in her choreographic work. A gifted leader and organizer, she also conceived the successful all-female choreographer festival Women/Create! in New York City. Her innovative Muller Polarity Technique continues to influence and inspire dancers worldwide. We mourn the loss of an iconic, renowned artist and will gather to celebrate her life at a later date. Details to follow in the coming months.

"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." said JMTW Board Chair Brian McIver.

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 Speedson 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 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 McAnuff, Ken Elliot, Mark Linn-Baker and Christopher Mataliano.

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

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.

#### About the Company

Jennifer Muller/The Works has electrified world audiences with its passionate work and superb dancers in 39 countries on four continents, 30 States in the USA and produced 28 NYC Seasons at City Center, the Joyce, Cedar Lake and New York Live Arts among others. JMTW has performed at major theaters and festivals worldwide, spanning hemispheres from Buenos Aires to Montreal and circumnavigating the globe from Shanghai to Moscow, with performances in Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, Bangkok, Tel Aviv, Rome and Amsterdam to name a few.

A byword for diversity since its inception in 1974, 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 presents exhilarating dances that showcase emotional authenticity and social consciousness. In the US, JMTW has appeared in venues such as Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, 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.

Devoted to mentoring creativity in all its forms, educating youth and serving the community with vital outreach, JMTW's education programs - Faces of Wonder, Imagine That! and HATCH Presenting Series - have reached over 4,000 NYC youth and have mentored 50 emerging choreographers annually. JMTW conducts residencies throughout the US and abroad. 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, Mario Bermudez Gil, Ed Burgess and Christopher Pilafian.

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Schedule  
April 11, 2023: 8:00pm

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