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Monday, May 16, 2011

Town Hall: Dancers' Bodies – Promoting Wellness

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When: Monday, May 16, 2011, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Where: Abrons Arts Center, Henry Street Settlement, Playhouse Theater, 466 Grand Street (corner of Pitt Street), New York, NY

Calling all stakeholders in dance! Dance/NYC and the Dance/USA Taskforce on Dancer Health invite you to join us in responding to the Taskforce's recent [call to action](#) to achieve the dancer aesthetic in a manner that promotes overall good health and protects the artist and performer. Led by Richard Gibbs, M.D., it provides a forum to discuss case stories from the perspective of the health professional, cultural critic and professional dancer, including New York City Ballet Principal Dancers Jenifer Ringer and Jared Angle. What words work to promote dancer wellness? What positive practices? What can we as a field do for our dancers?

Richard Gibbs, MD. After training with Perry Brunson and Vera Volkova, Richard Gibbs danced several years each with the Hamburg Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and First Chamber Dance Company. Richard then earned a degree in English from Harvard and an MD from Yale. At the invitation of the San Francisco Ballet in 1991, the Gibbs's created one of the nation's most progressive programs in dancer health in. Richard continues as the company's Supervising Physician. He lectures nationally on dancer health, and he continues to teach ballet having served on the staffs of the San Francisco Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, the Harvard Dance Program and Washington State's Summer Dance Labs. Richard is the founding Chair of Dance/USA's national Taskforce on Dancer Health, and he is the lead author of the Taskforce paper, Guidelines on Nutrition for Professional Companies. In 2006, Richard introduced the idea of a standardized preventive healthcare screen for professional companies. Over 35 companies across the U.S. and Canada are now using the Taskforce Screen and working together to bring better health to those who dance for a living. In 1996, the Gibbs's founded the San Francisco Free Clinic where they provide free medical care for people with no health insurance.

Jared Angle was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, where he began his dance training at age six with the Allegheny Ballet Academy. In the fall of 1996, he entered the School of American Ballet (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet, and for the 1997-98 he continued his studies at the School as a recipient of the Rudolf Nureyev Scholarship. Jared became an apprentice with New York City Ballet in March 1998 and joined the Company's corps de ballet in July of the same year. He was promoted to soloist in 2001 and to principal dancer in 2005.

Jared is a Princess Grace Dance Fellowship recipient for 2001-2002. In May of 2004, he appeared in the Live From Lincoln Center broadcast of "Lincoln Center Celebrates Balanchine 100," dancing in Liebeslieder Walzer, and his film work includes Columbia Pictures' feature film Center Stage. [View Jared's complete bio.](#)

Jennifer Edwards is a writer, culture critic, choreographer, and messaging consultant. She writes for the Arts and Living sections of The Huffington Post on topics including innovation in dance, culture, and wellness. The founder of [JenEd Productions](#), and co-creator of the [Home/Body Project](#), Edwards enjoys paring her passions for multi-media content, the written word, science, and technology. She will present her work entitled 'Building Stages Across Platforms: How New Media is Changing the Landscape of the Performing Arts' this May in Austria for the International University conference, Performing Arts Training Today, and this July in Chicago for the annual Dance / USA conference.

Her degrees, certifications, and accolades highlight her varied background and interests. Edwards holds a MFA in dance from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and was a professor of dance and choreography for several years. She holds RYT certification in Yoga philosophy, meditation, and physical practice and has taught yoga-informed stress management for the last 10 years for organizations including the American Heart Association and Columbia University Medical Center. She is a Spoken Word Slam Champion and an Award-winning performance poet and essayist. This September, Edwards will begin her post-graduate work in Organizational Change Management at Milano, The New School for Management and Urban Policy.

Melissa Gerson, a national leader in the eating disorder treatment community, entered the field of mental health after spending many years first, as a professional ballet dancer. Melissa trained at the School of American Ballet and upon graduating from the Professional Children's School in NYC, joined the corps of the Miami City Ballet in Florida. She was soon promoted to Soloist, performing featured roles in over fifty ballets until she retired in her mid-twenties. Ms. Gerson returned to New York City to study psychology at Columbia University where she went on to graduate magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. Melissa earned her master's degree in social work at New York University and completed NYU Psychoanalytic Institute's post-graduate program in psychodynamic psychotherapy. She continued post-graduate training at the Center for the Study of Anorexia and Bulimia and at the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis & Psychology. Melissa served as the primary mental health consultant for La Palestra Center for Preventative Medicine, NYC while concurrently building her private practice, with a specialty in eating disorders and body image concerns. In 2008, she founded Columbus Park Collaborative, a private eating disorder treatment center in New York City, where she now serves as Clinical Director. Since 2008, Melissa has developed, staffed, supervised and directed CPC's Day Treatment Program, an intensive treatment program for adolescents and adults with anorexia, bulimia and binge eating disorders. She also recently founded and launched Columbus Park Behavioral Health, LCSW, LLC, which is a training initiative for clinicians in the field of eating disorder treatment and a clinic for individuals in need of affordable treatment services. Melissa maintains a private practice, in which she specializes in the treatment of eating disorders, depression, and anxiety, with a sub-specialty in the treatment of performing artists and athletes.

Jenifer Ringer was born in New Bern, North Carolina, and was raised in Summerville, South Carolina, where she began her dance training at age 10 with local teachers. At the age of 12 she entered the Washington School of Ballet, where she studied for two years. After attending a summer session at the School of American Ballet (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet, Jenifer was invited to enter the Winter

Session at the School on a full scholarship. She became an apprentice with New York City Ballet in October 1989 and a member of the Company's corps de ballet in January 1990. Jenifer was promoted to soloist in 1995 and to principal dancer in 2000. She is a guest teacher at SAB and the Artistic Director of New York State's Summer School for the Arts ballet program. In 2002, Jenifer appeared in the Live From Lincoln Center broadcast of "New York City Ballet's Diamond Project: Ten Years of New Choreography," dancing in Mercurial Manoeuvres, and

in 2004 she appeared in the Live From Lincoln Center broadcast of "Lincoln Center Celebrates Balanchine 100," dancing in Liebeslieder Walzer. Jenifer received her B.A. in English from Fordham University in December 1997. In July of 2000 she married former NYCB Principal Dancer James Fayette. [View Jenifer's complete bio.](#)

Dance/NYC is a satellite of the national arts service organization Dance/USA. Its mission is to sustain and advance the professional dance field in New York City—serving as the voice, guide and infrastructure architect for all local dance artists and managers. The organization achieves this mission through three core program areas: advocacy and research, audience engagement and professional development. As a convener, Dance/NYC aims to connect and educate our constituency—strengthening the collective voice for dance.

Dance/NYC is grateful to the Abrons Arts Center for hosting this event. Dance/NYC Town Hall Meetings are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council. The program is also supported by the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

[< back](#)

[previous listing](#) • [next listing](#)