

FRANCISCO MARTINEZ

Dance Workshops

MEET THE ARTIST:

Francisco Martinez is artistic director of *Francisco Martinez Dancetheatre* and the choreographer of a collection of works ranging from ballet to modern dance in form, and from dramatic to lyrical to comic in style. A native of Mexico and a resident of Los Angeles, Mr. Martinez and his company share the goal of building appreciation for and participation in classical dance. Mr. Martinez began his training at La Casa de la Cultura in Monterrey, Mexico. When he was 12 years old his family relocated to Los Angeles, where he studied dance at the Inner City Cultural Center with Donald McKayle and Don Martin. After attending the University of Arizona, Mr. Martinez continued his training in New York at the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab and the Martha Graham School. In 1975 he accepted a four-year scholarship to the Dance Department at Texas Christian University, during which time he became a member of the Fort Worth Ballet, spending the final two seasons as soloist and principal dancer. He also began to choreograph, creating 15 works between 1975 and 1978 and earning high praise from the press. Following a brief season with the Nevada Dance Theatre in Las Vegas, Mr. Martinez returned to Los Angeles, where he founded Francisco Martinez Dancetheatre in 1981.

During the past decade he has developed a repertory of more than 50 works. His choreography boasts a rich background of ballet and modern dance, and has been called “sophisticated,” “a kaleidoscope of ideas and moods” and “eclectic.” In residence at Plaza de la Raza in East Los Angeles, Mr. Martinez and his talented company work at increasing the participation of the local Hispanic community in classical dance. As director of the Ballet Department, Mr. Martinez teaches dance to young people from low-income families, providing gifted students with the training they require in order to secure future Hispanic representatives in ballet, both on stage and in the audience.



ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

Using guided techniques of ballet, modern dance and improvisational movement, Mr. Martinez gives students a strong awareness and understanding of the basic elements of dance and choreography. Movement exercises introduce important concepts such as force, energy, time and space, also providing insight into how these elements are used in the development of choreography. Participants are challenged to stretch their individual skills as they are led in the exploration of the tools of dance: improvisation, communication, expression and the body. Warm-up activities provide insight into the importance of preparation, while cool down stretches emphasize continuity and follow-through. As the art of dance is examined, students learn the importance of trust and cooperation, as well as the compelling need for attention to detail. Workshops may be tailored to meet the particular curricular requirements of each class, but all participants benefit from exposure to the critical needs for focus, concentration, recall, reverence and self-awareness. Multiple session workshops can culminate in a student-choreographed presentation, with participants learning about elements of production and performance behavior.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

- Please have the students wear nametags for the workshop. It saves time if they are made beforehand!
- Review the importance of listening and observing. Ask the students what it means to be a good listener. What does it mean to be a good observer? Why is it important in daily life? Why is it important when the artist is here?
- Please encourage the students to dress appropriately – in clothes that allow them to move comfortably.
- Review students' ideas about dance, underscoring the idea that it is both personal and universal, and that everyone's ideas will be both different and related. Discuss the importance of being able to express oneself through movement and dance. Where can they use this skill in their lives? What professions utilize the skills learned in a dance class (focus, discipline, creative problem-solving, controlling the body and challenging energy into expressive communication, etc.)?

AFTER THE WORKSHOP:

- Review the major points presented in the workshops. What were the most important ideas? What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn about dance? What did they learn about themselves?
- Practice the warm-ups, skills and creative explorations done in class so students can attain more comfort, ability and involvement in movement and dance.