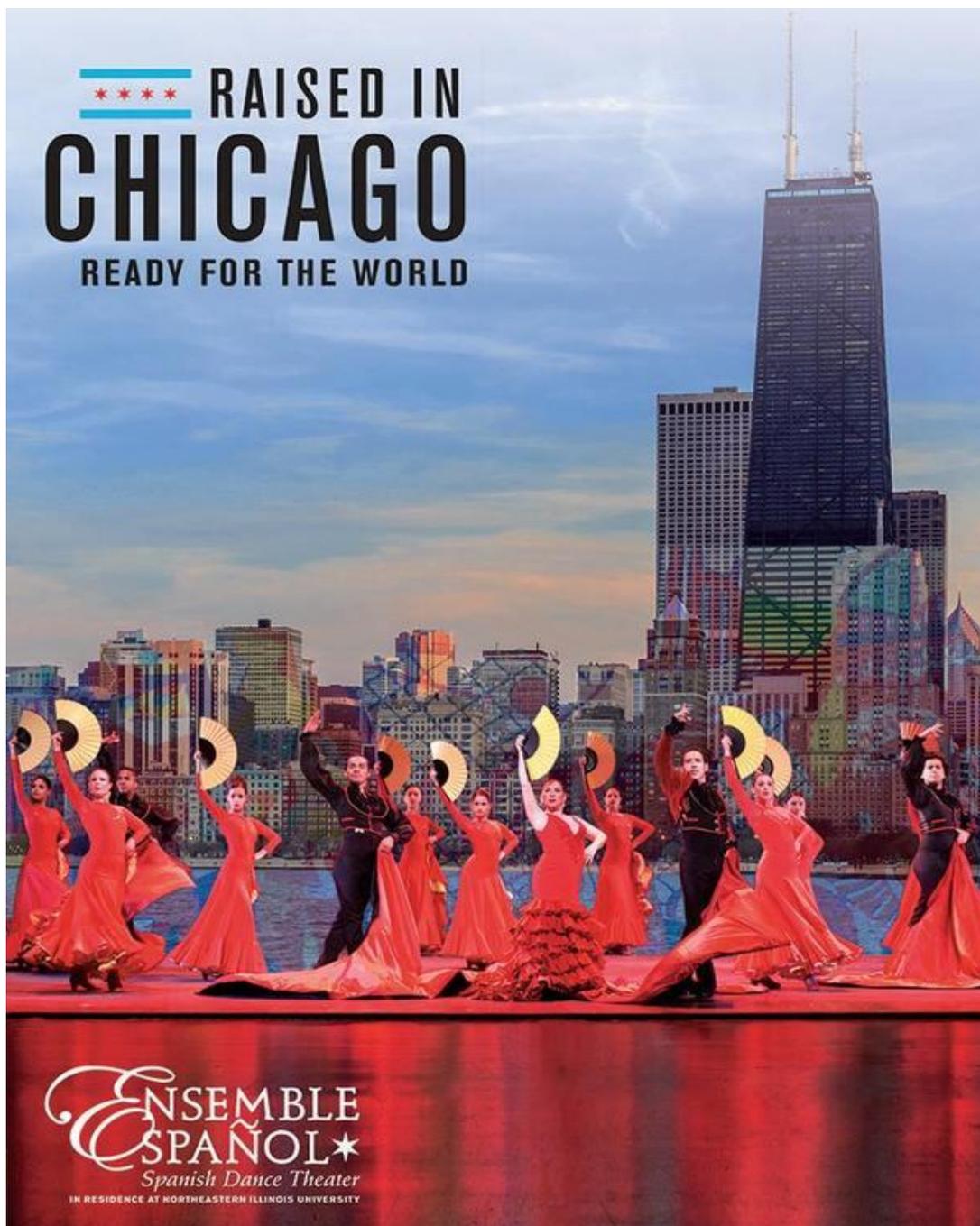




**ENSEMBLE ESPAÑOL REACHES \$1.5 MILLION MATCH GRANT
FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN WITH THE CAERUS FOUNDATION INC. AHEAD
OF SCHEDULE**

**COMPANY CELEBRATES KICK-OFF OF NEW DAME LIBBY KOMAIKO
LEGACY FUND WITH
JUERGA FLAMENCA FUNDRAISER SEPT. 29**



In 2016 The Caerus Foundation awarded Ensemble Español (EE) a Growth Grant in the amount of \$500,000 with the challenge to raise an additional \$500,000 over three years ending on June 30, 2019, which would then be matched by the Foundation with an additional \$500,000. Our challenge goal was reached and exceeded by \$2,000 this past April 5 two months ahead of schedule, and Caerus Foundation awarded that matching final \$500,000 bringing the total raised from this effort to \$1,502,000. Olé!

The campaign has helped support the following notable achievements:

- Presentation of the annual American Spanish Dance and Music Festivals, featuring world-renowned artists and musicians and new world premiere works
- Production of the annual Holiday Family Concerts at Northeastern Illinois University
- Establishment of a full-time professional performance/teaching core company starting with four dancers/teachers
- The transitioning of staff and dancers to fair market wages for their full- and part-time employment
- An increase in the educational programming of the company from 21,000 students served in 2017 to 32,000 in 2019
- Hosting of six interns
- Creation of a youth company board
- Development of our new, mobile-friendly bilingual website
- Increased presence on social media including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube
- Performed at the Joyce Theater in New York
- Our premiere tour to Spain in 2016
- The addition of an extra arts education staff member and part-time marketing person
- Securing services of professional marketing and public relations firms
- Designed dancer apprentice program
- The training of three new Spanish dance teachers
- Six community residencies, two added community workshops, increase in attendance at workshop classes
- The addition of 168 new donors for a total of 460 representing individuals, foundations, and corporations
- Over 50,000 audience members served annually
- Increased endowment support

A special thank you to Carolyn Aguila, former development director, Richard Dee, vice chair of EE executive board and managing director of philanthropy and administration at Dance St. Louis; Josephine DiCesare, director of operations and finance of EE; Gail Kalver, president of Gail Kalver arts management Inc.; and the NEIU Foundation for their creative contributions and support.

"How exciting and grateful to have been given this opportunity to help grow the company and our wonderful outreach educational programs serving so many students and audience members in our communities. Muchisimas Gracias!" **Irma Suarez Ruiz**, Artistic Director

Most importantly, the Raised in Chicago, Ready for the World campaign honored all of the artists in the Ensemble beginning with our beloved founder, Dame Libby Komaiko, as displayed on the beautiful artwork designs thanks to partner and donor GamePlan Creative; Patricia Aguilar, managing partner; and Tom O'Grady, partner and chief creative officer. Thank you to HMS Media, Idea Marketing Group, Brella Productions, and Miguel Garcia, EE's Marketing Coordinator and videographer, for their creative video and website contributions.

Thank you to photographers Dean Paul and Joel Maisonet and to the NEIU marketing and public relations teams for their partnership and support.

“Truly honored to have had such an amazing growth opportunity for our dancers, teachers and the many students and audiences served thanks to this growth grant match by the Caerus Foundation. Our dedicated staff, boards, committees and partners worked tirelessly to successfully reach this goal celebrating the arts and education of Spanish dance, music and culture. Gracias! Olé! Jorge Perez, Executive and Associate Artistic Director of the EE

DAME LIBBY KOMAIKO LEGACY FUND (1949-2019)

“In this spirit we are happy to announce our beloved founders newly established Dame Libby Komaiko Legacy Fund in honor of the gift she has left us with her Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater here at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago. Gracias Dama Libby de todo corazon.” Irma Suarez Ruiz and Jorge Perez

Dame Libby Komaiko created and founded the Ensemble Español in 1976. After performing for the University community in 1974, in accompaniment with concert pianist and mother, Dorothy Komaiko, she became the University’s artist in residence. Two years later she created the Ensemble with five Northeastern students. Today the company trains and houses 43 dancers. Dame Libby passed away on Feb. 2, 2019. She inspired and changed the lives of countless dancers, students, and Spanish dance aficionados.

To honor her legacy and memory, the Ensemble has launched *The Dame Libby Komaiko Legacy Fund for Ensemble Español*. The fund will support the same initiatives that meant so much to Dame Libby and will ensure that her wish for the Ensemble to continue to bring the passion of Spanish dance to all will be honored.

Join us on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2019, at Latinicity from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for our **Juerga Flamenca fundraiser**, our official opening celebration of the *Dame Libby Komaiko Legacy Fund*. Bring your dancing shoes and castanets for a flamenco fiesta with guest musicians, Patricia Ortega, singer, and David Chiriboga on guitar, along with dancers from Ensemble Español.

For more information and reservations call Josephine DiCesare, director of operations at (773) 442-5916 or visit <https://www.ensembleespanol.org/event/juerga-flamenca-fundraiser/>

Dame Libby Komaiko
1949-2019

For more than 50 years, Dame Libby Komaiko’s extraordinary career embodied art, education, and cultural integrity. Her passionate advocacy of culturally specific art was well known, and her devotion to higher education recognized by artists and educators throughout Chicago.

Born in Chicago June 30, 1949, and raised in Evanston, Ill., Komaiko started her dance training as a young girl, studying with Elisa Stigler at the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University. As a teen, she studied and performed jazz, modern and musical theater with the famed Gus Giordano. By age 18, she auditioned for the legendary Jose Greco, and was given the opportunity to train and perform with his world-famous Spanish Dance Company. Her journey into Spanish dance led her to the company of Lola Montes, and she studied with Maria Alba, Nana Lorca, Edo, Manolo Vargas and many others. She partnered with the late Roberto Lorca for many years.

In 1975, she founded the Ensemble Español —and what began as a company of five student dancers is now a full company of 40 dancers, musicians, singers. Komaiko choreographed 60 works and produced the majority of the company's ballets, which now number near 135 original works.

In 1983, she was awarded the “Lazo de Dama de Isabel la Católica” by the Spanish Royal Court and government. This honor was bestowed for her superlative work in spreading the cultural and artistic values of Spain throughout the United States. She was the first American choreographer to receive this honor.

Komaiko was the recipient of many awards and civic honors, including the coveted Ruth Page Award (2003), the International Latino Cultural Center Lifetime Achievement Award (2004), and most recently, she received the first Legacy Award from Audience Architects for her commitment to the arts community. She was a professor emerita at Northeastern Illinois University, and was given the Distinguished Alumni Award by the school in 2015.

For more information on our donor programs and sponsorships please contact **Kimberly Grigsby, Development Manager of the Ensemble Español at (773) 620-6046 or via email at Kim@EnsembleEspanol.org**

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