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Media Contact:
Josephine DiCesare
Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater
773.442.5916
Josephine@ensemblespanol.org

ENSEMBLE ESPAÑOL CONTINUES YEAR-LONG SALUTE TO FOUNDER DAME LIBBY KOMAIKO IN HOLIDAY CONCERT/CONCIERTO NAVIDEÑO AT NEIU FINE ARTS AUDITORIUM DEC. 14-15

Program Includes Three World Premieres by Carlos Rodriguez.

Ensemble Español Celebrates the Opening of the Dame Libby Komaiko Legacy Fund
with Pre-Show Juerga Flamenca Fundraiser Dec. 14

CHICAGO — Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater presents **Holiday Concert/Concierto Navideño** at the Northeastern Illinois University Fine Arts Auditorium, 3701 W. Bryn Mawr **7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 14 and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15**. The performances, featuring the full adult company and youth companies; José Barrios, guest Flamenco artist from Cordoba, Spain; U.S. guest soprano, Erica Rose Sauder and tenor Edgar Ricaud Saldivar, are part of the company's year-long salute to founder Dame Libby Komaiko who passed away earlier this year.

The program will include three world premieres choreographed by Carlos Rodriguez ("La Noche Sagrada," "Solares," Duende del Viento), whose two more recent works for Ensemble Español include "DeFalla, Out of the Box" (2017) and "Mar de Fuego" (2018); a U.S. Premiere, by Barrios ("Praecisus Umbilicus: Alegrias-Vidalita"); and popular selections from the company's repertoire including Komaiko's "Romance de Triana" and "La Era Romántica;" "El Baile de Luis Alonso," choreographed by Ensemble Español Artistic Director Irma Suárez Ruiz; "Madrileño" choreographed by Ruiz (section 1 & 2) and Barcelona's Paco Alonso, (section 3); "Danza del Molinero" choreographed by Antonio De Lucena and staged by Ensemble Español First Dancer José Torres; "Nuevamente Vivir (Live Again)" by former principal of the National Ballet of Spain, Paloma Gómez; and "Horizonte (Horizon)" choreographed and performed by Principal Dancer Monica Saucedo in dedication to Ensemble's late founder, Komaiko. More information about the works is featured in an addendum to this release.

Performance tickets for the Dec. 14 and Dec. 15 performance are \$20-\$30 (Seniors/Student \$5 off with valid ID); \$15 (Children under 12). For tickets or more information visit: EnsembleEspanol.org or call 773.442.4636.

RELATED SPECIAL EVENTS

Juerga Flamenca Fundraiser, Saturday, Dec.14 - \$75
Northeastern Illinois University Golden Eagles Room

Dame Libby Komaiko created and founded the Ensemble Español in 1976. After performing at Chicago, 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.

Komaiko inspired and changed the lives of countless dancers, students, and Spanish dance aficionados. In honor of her legacy and memory, the Ensemble has renamed its primary fund The Dame Libby Komaiko Legacy Fund. Ensemble Español celebrates the dedication of the fund at the **Juerga Flamenca Fundraiser, Saturday, Dec.14**. This event includes a **Pre-Performance Reception 6-7:15 p.m.**, featuring honorary awards and silent auction) **plus VIP Seating for the 7:30 p.m.** Juerga Flamenca Fundraiser tickets are \$75. For tickets or more information call Josephine DiCesare, Director of Operations at 773.442.5916 or via email at Josephine@ensemblespanol.org

Fireside Chat, Sunday, Dec.15, 1:30-2:30 p.m. - Free
Northeastern Illinois University Auditorium stage

Ensemble Español Artistic Director, Irma Suarez Ruiz and guest artist, Jose Barrios participate in a free pre show chat moderated by Chicago Tribune dance critic, Lauren Warnecke.

Ensemble Español, founded in 1976 by artistic director, Dame Libby Komaiko, is the premiere Spanish dance company and center in the U.S. to have a professional and unique residency at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago. Under the artistic direction of Irma Suarez Ruiz and executive leadership of Jorge Perez, company successors, the Ensemble continues its mission of preservation, presentation and promotion of Spanish dance and culture which also includes the exploration of the country's history in the; Flamenco, Folkloric, Classical and Escuela Bolera styles and identifies its influence on Latin American art and dance in both traditional and contemporary formats. They forge ahead as the leaders in Spanish dance and culture with a commitment to our communities, via performances, education, school residencies, academic university programs, festivals and tours. They remain committed to their roots in education and mission of educational, artistic, and social development. Their incredible rich history includes; serving over 30,000 students annually, training over 90 company dancers, training over 160 Youth Company dancers from ages twelve to eighteen, over 90 international guest artists and musicians from Spain and the Americas, over 2,600 scholarships awarded to talented aspiring dancers, musicians and educators, tours and residencies of U.S., including Hawaii, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Poland, Australia, Canada, China and Spain.

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ADDENDUM: Holiday Concert/Concierto Navideño Program Works

World Premieres by Carlos Rodriguez

“La Noche Sagrada”

La Noche Sagrada is inspired by the process of metamorphosis. The dancer is portraying a butterfly leaving its cocoon and venturing on to the next phase of life. The fabric represents the connection with one's past and origin, as it will always remain a part of the soul.

Choreographer: Carlos Rodriguez
Music: Juan Parrilla
Lighting Designer: Sarah Lackner
Dancer: Samantha Micklewright, Company Dancer

“Solares”

“Solares,” is a fusion of traditional styles of the legendary Caña from the 19th century, now mixed with modern Flamenco elements that is current in our time today. The significance of Solares in this dance is even where there is darkness; light can still be manifested and come to life through the movements and footwork of “Solares.”

Choreographer: Carlos Rodriguez
Music: Juan Debel
Lighting Designer: Sarah Lackner
Dancer: Luis Beltran, Company Dancer
Dancer Beltran dedicates his performance in this this work to those who've experienced darkness with the reminder that light is just a movement away.

“Duende del Viento”

Dancer Nalanie Molina dedicates her performance of this piece to Dame Libby Komaiko, for giving her the precious and valuable gift of Spanish Dance. Through this, she has found purpose and is honored to be part of Komaiko's legacy.

Choreographer: Carlos Rodriguez
Music: Rafael Campallo
Lighting Designer: Sarah Lackner
Dancer: Nalanie Molina, Apprentice Dancer

U.S. Premiere by José Barrios

“Praecisus Umbilicus (Alegrias-Vidalita)”

“Like dance, my memory always travels with you. Your voice first, your embrace, your happiness, your accompaniment, and also your absence. I dance and with you I sing. There is a beautiful bond of union between us that flows even through distance. It's indestructible, impossible to break. Ours can only be defined with one word. Love.” Jose Barrios

Choreographer & Dancer: José Barrios, Guest Artist from Cordoba
Music: Isaac Muñoz
Costume Designers: Pilar Carmona, Tallers Alacala, Sevilla
Lighting Designers: Dustin Derry & José Barrios

From the Company Repertoire

Dame Libby Komaiko Classics

“Romance de Triana”

This 20th Century Neo-Classical dance portrays Triana, the gypsy district of Seville (Sevilla...the "home" of Flamenco). The mysterious moods of this dance and the deep feelings implied are based on the great influence of Andalusian music on the classical music of Spain. Composer Isaac Albéniz, world renowned Spanish pianist and composer, was born in Camprodon, Catalonia May 29, 1860 and died May 18, 1909. Hailed as a child prodigy, he was the creator of numerous works for opera, orchestra, and piano, including the four-book suite, “Iberia.” This was Dame Libby’s first company commissioned work in honor of NEIU’s new president, Dr. Ronald Williams in 1977.

Choreography & Lighting Designer (1977): Dame Libby Komaiko

Music: Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) from “Iberia”

Costume Production: Paco Alonso

Dancers: José Torres, First Dancer, Crystal Ruiz, Julia Hinojosa, Juan Carlos Castellano, Principal Dancers, Olivia Serrano, Soloist, Frida Medina, Jonathan Pacheco, Company Dancers

“La Era Romántica”

Portraying the Romantic period, this work, in the Spanish classical style, is created to the music of La Zarzuela (Spain’s light opera).

Choreographer (1989): Dame Libby Komaiko

Music: Manuel de Falla (1860-1909), “Fanfare Sobre el Nombre”

Pablo Sorazabal (1807-1988) “Los Burladores” (excerpt) Zarzuela 1948

Amaden Vives (1871-1932) “La Doña Francisquita”

Costume Design & Production: Freddie Rocha

Lighting Designer: Michael Mix

Dancers: Company

Other Popular Works from the Company’s Repertoire

“El Baile de Luis Alonso” (Classical)

“El Baile de Luis Alonso” was based on a one act lyrical play written by Javier de Burgos. The play premiered in 1889 at the Teatro Español. Spanish composer Geronimo Gimenez saw the production and fell in love with it. On Feb. 27, 1896 the play became a zarzuela (Spain’s light opera) opening to great reviews in the Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid.

Choreographer & Costume Designer (2010): Irma Suárez Ruiz, Artistic Director

Music: Geronimo Gimenez Costume production: Luz Creations

Backdrop painting: Mayra Werner

Lighting Designer: Margaret Nelson

Dancers: Company

“Horizonte (Horizon)” (Neo-Classical)

Ensemble Español Company Dancer Monica Saucedo dedicates this work to the Ensemble’s founder, Dame Libby Komaiko, for her life’s work, love, dedication, and passion of Spanish dance, music, art, and education.

Choreographer and Dancer (2018): Monica Saucedo, Principal Dancer
Music: Ernesto Halffter (1905-1989)
Costume Designer: Dame Libby Komaiko
Costume Production: Luz Creations
Lighting Designer: Sarah Lackner

“Madrileño”

In Madrid, the chotis, or schotís is considered the most typical dance of the city since the 19th century and it is danced in all the traditional festivals. Some of the tunes, such as "Madrid, Madrid, Madrid", by the Mexican composer Agustín Lara, become very well known in all of Spain.

Choreographer for ballet sections 1 and 2: Irma Suárez Ruiz, Artistic Director
Choreographer (section 3) (1989): Paco Alonso, Guest Artist, Barcelona
Music: Tomás Bretón (1850-1923), Agustín Lara (1897-1970), Federico Moreno Torroba (1891-1982)
Guest Musicians: Erica Rose Sauder, Soprano Edgar Ricaud Saldivar, Tenor
Original Costume Design (1989): Paco Alonso
Costume Design Revival (2017): Irma Suárez Ruiz, Ensemble Español Artistic Director
Costume Production: Luz Creations
Sets: Backdrops Fantastics
Dancers: Company, Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Youth Company, Junior Division Tyler Luzietti, Spanish Dance II, Alvin Guitierrez, Intro to Spanish Dance

“Danza del Molinero (The Millers Dance)”

“The Millers Dance” is one of the most famous dances in the flamenco Farruca style from Manuel de Falla’s ballet, “The Three-Cornered Hat”.

Choreographer: Antonio Staged by (2018): José Torres
Music: Manuel de Falla
Costume Designers: José Greco and Emilio García from "La Elegancia" in New York
Lighting Designer: Sarah Lackner
Dancer: José Torres, First Dancer

“Nuevamente Vivir (Live Again)”

This Neoclassical work combining Spanish classical, contemporary and Flamenco styles is set to the music of German Academy Award-winning film score composer, Hans Zimmer. Gomez was inspired by this music while working closely with dancers, Crystal, Julia and Olivia, during their Spanish dance and Flamenco immersion studies in Madrid.

Choreography (2012): Paloma Gómez
Music: Hans Zimmer
Lighting Designer: Elias Morales
Dancers: Crystal Ruiz, Julia Hinojosa, Principal Dancers, Olivia Serrano, Soloist