2019
The Year of the Rose
Impact Report
Even in the final days of her life, Dame Libby Komaiko remained involved in almost every aspect of Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater, the company she founded in 1975.

Executive director Jorge Pérez, who started training with Komaiko in 1985, sat at her bedside in the ICU, consulting about music and costumes for an upcoming show. “We worked harder because we knew that the company was keeping her going,” Pérez says.

Komaiko died in February, at 69, and in her memory Ensemble Español pressed ahead, trying to match her passion and tenacity. “There was no downtime to mourn the way you normally would,” Pérez says. “We just kept working.”
The company is dedicating its appearance at the Auditorium Theatre’s Made in Chicago dance series to Komaiko, as it did in June with its American Spanish Dance and Music Festival. Like the six world premieres featured there, this repertory concert will showcase the company’s trademark flamboyant costuming and kaleidoscopic lighting.

The program, a double bill with the Latino-focused outfit Cerqua Rivera, includes artistic director Irma Suárez Ruiz’s Pasión Oculta, a high-octane modern flamenco piece, and Komaiko’s Ecos de España, a boisterous folkloric dance set to the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s Capriccio Espagnol. The night also marks the return of the company’s premier dancer, Claudia Pizarro, an exhilarating performer who was on leave for part of last season. “The theme is passion,” says Pérez of the lineup. “It’s hot, it’s Latin. This is the hottest ticket in Chicago.”

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Photograph by Stephanie Bassos.
Perform
Through Dance

19 dancers in the Adult Company
23 dancers in the Youth Company
4 Concerts with 1,730 in attendance
2 Sold out Holiday Concerts seating 860
Total Audience served: 12,000

Prepare
Through Education in the Paso a Paso Program

Tales of Spain
Presented 5 performances at NEIU auditorium

Ritmos de España
Presented 7 performances at CPS schools

Residencies
Conducted 6 Residencies at CPS schools serving 220 students

Taught more than 8,000 students from the Greater Chicagoland Area
Introducing Our 2020 “25 to Watch”

**Luis Beltran** has an intrepid mix of charisma, confidence and sex appeal. He seduces audiences with a fair share of tantalizing machismo, but it’s not boorish, and it’s balanced by a blithe and jaunty stage presence in Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater’s folk dance repertoire. Beltran manages to find the nuances in each Spanish style — folkloric, flamenco, classical and contemporary — but shines most in the company’s big, bold, unabashed and spectacularly over-the-top group works.

The native Ecuadorian started dancing with an outreach program hosted by Chicago’s Ensemble Español at age 7, then rose through the ranks to join the company in his late teens. Now 25, he’s on track to rise to the top of a company whose Spanish dancers are among the best in the world.  

— Lauren Warnecke
Hosted 300 Spanish Dance Workshops

Taught more than 8,000 students from the Greater Chicagoland Area

Provided 20 Professional Development classes to our youth and adult companies from Spanish Dance Professionals
Promote Through Collaborations

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Old Town School of Folk Music  The Chicago High School for the Arts
Breella  HMS Media  csa
Dance for Life Chicago  SHAPE lived
A&A Ballet CENTER FOR DANCE
Best in Chicago dance in 2019:
Stunning performances in a year of transition

Northeastern Illinois University Auditorium, Chicago
Auditorium Theatre, Chicago
North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, Skokie
Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago
Touhill Center for the Performing Arts, St. Louis
Blue Bell Auditorium, Pennsylvania

“Passionate”
Dance Magazine

“Fiery Form” - “Theatrical Dream”
Chicago Sun-Times

“Stunning”
St. Louis Today

“Innovative”
See Chicago Dance

“Breathtaking” - “Sensual” - “Greatest Hits”
Chicago Tribune

“Wowed Audience” - “Amazing”
The New York Times
Highlights

Closed the **Raised in Chicago, Ready for the World** Campaign 2 months ahead of schedule raising a total of **$1,502,000**

Reached nearly **50,000 individuals** with our artistic and educational programming

Implemented our first **summer dance camp for children** age 7 to 12

**7 World Premiere Choreographies**

Launched the **Dame Libby Komaiko Legacy Fund**, a fundraiser campaign dedicated to ensuring that Dame Libby’s legacy will continue through the work of Ensemble Español
HIGHLIGHTING

JULIA HINOJOSA

Born and raised in Chicago. Principal Dancer and Artistic Director of the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Youth Company.

ABOUT JULIA

She coordinates and teaches for the Ensemble Español’s educational outreach programs at schools throughout Chicago.

She graduated with honors from Northeastern Illinois University with a degree in English, and a minor in Dance, studying ballet, modern and jazz.

She earned a master’s degree from Columbia College in Arts Management.

- **2000** Begins her Spanish dance studies with Dame Libby Komaiko
- **2005** Becomes a Company Dancer
- **2014** Becomes a full-time dancer
- **2017** Is awarded with the Negocios Now 40 Under 40
Youth Company

Founded in 1985 by Dame Libby Komaiko and Lillian C. Heminover, executive board member, and Fine Arts coordinator at Frederick Funston School, the training program offers intensive training to serious, young artists.

The **Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Youth Company** serves as the pre-professional training program to the organization’s professional company.

It’s comprised of two divisions: the **Junior Division**, for ages between 10 and 18; and, the **Senior Division**, which is for 18+. Auditions are held annually.

They routinely perform at the American Spanish Dance and Music Festival, at the annual Holiday Concerts and for the Our Chance to Dance Youth Festival as well as performances throughout Chicago and Illinois.

In 2012, the Youth Company undertook a summer Flamenco intensive program in Madrid, Spain. Learning from masters such as Carmela Greco, María Torres, Joaquín Ruiz, Paloma Gómez and Carolina Arias.

Youth Company dancers receive a scholarship worth $10,000 annually which includes training with local professional Spanish Dance instructors and guest artists from Spain, performance opportunities, costumes and rehearsal wear. As part of their scholarship, dancers are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA while adhering to a rigorous rehearsal schedule, making them excellent role models in their community.
PASO A PASO
Arts Education Program

Provides multi-formatted instruction in four styles of Spanish dance, including Flamenco, Folkloric, Classical, and Escuela Bolera to young students and dancers, stressing the historical, cultural, and creative contributions of Spanish dance to the arts.

BAILAMOS! RESIDENCIES
An in-school standards based residency program that emphasizes Spanish dance technique for personal expression, health, well-being, teamwork and creativity. Based on an eight week schedule and suitable for kindergarten through high school.

TABLAO TALKS
A dancer, musician and / or vocalist guest speaker comes to your classroom during lunch to share the history and styles of Spanish dance in an intimate and casual way.

RITMOS DE ESPAÑA
A 45 minute lecture / demo led by a professional dancer. This performance is suitable for kindergarten through high school and perfect for small to large assemblies.

TALES OF SPAIN
This lecture / demo performance takes place at our NEIU Auditorium and features 8 - 18 professional dancers leading audiences through the variety of Spanish dance styles and their significance on traditional and contemporary culture.
2019 Income
July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

Total: $1,164,862

2019 Expense
July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

Total: $1,184,387
Dance Chicagoans of the Year:

Jorge Perez and Irma Suárez Ruiz lead Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater forward

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