RUBBERBANDANCE GROUP FUSES HIP HOP, CLASSICAL BALLET, AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE ON JORGENSEN STAGE

Wed, Mar 23, 2016 at 7:30 pm

Award-winning choreographer Victor Quijada brings his fluid fusion of hip hop-inspired movement, ballet, and contemporary dance to UConn’s Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Wednesday evening, March 23 when his Montreal-based RUBBERBANDance Group takes the stage to perform *Empirical Quotient*, a theatrical examination of personal identity, relationships, and power struggles. Praised by the *Boston Globe* as having the formal clarity and controlled elegance of classical dance and the raw, athletic exuberance of street dance, the genre blending production begins at 7:30 pm. Doors open at 7:00 pm.

“My early works juxtaposed the influences from hip-hop culture with my classical and formal concert dance experiences,” says Quijada. “Since 2002, I have experimented by pushing raw urban dance forms through a contemporary filter, modifying and manipulating them to varying degrees. In composing *Empirical Quotient* I attempted to go further in my research and development, purposely pushing the boundaries to elaborate upon the idea of our instinct for gregariousness and travelling in packs, and without imposing a narrative thread, create characters for the production’s six dancers in a way that illuminates the theme of relationships, always at the heart of my artistic approach.”

To help guide the creation of *Empirical Quotient*, (which he debuted in November of 2013), Quijada says he used a bit of high school algebra.

“I was trying to discover if there was a way to take what we all experience as humans — our histories, our stories, our journeys, our experiences — and formulize that as an algebraic equation,” says Quijada, who did, in fact, invent a formula which became his creative touchstone while composing and rehearsing the piece: “identity plus changes that occur through time equal perspective plus nostalgia divided by regret”.

“That formula reflected *Empirical Quotient*s interlacing theme, which is that self-perception and one’s sense of identity are transformed by time and by each person’s experiences, leaving a touch of nostalgia, and sometimes even regret, trailing in their wake,” says Quijada.

Quijada says the 70-minute performance, in which he does not play a dancer’s role, illuminates relational issues such as dependence, rejection, empathy, and acceptance, “all woven together in a complex display of athleticism and precision”.

Quijada says he has advice for audience members searching for an insight by which to better appreciate his signature choreographic style:

“Although one might see sparks of break dance or ballet or even yoga in the performance, RUBBERBANDance is a new genre unto itself. Try to appreciate it as a new generational child,
knowing it’s born of these traditional forms, but as a child, it’s not really a cut-and-paste of the mother’s and father’s features. View it as a new whole; a new form unto itself,” says Quijada.

From the hip-hop clubs of his native Los Angeles to a performance career with acclaimed postmodern and ballet companies such as THARP!, Ballet Tech, and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, Quijada has a rare perspective on a large spectrum of dance aesthetics, possessing knowledge and experience that spans from the street corner to the concert hall.

Impelled to explore his own choreographic voice, Victor founded RUBBERBANDance Group in 2002. His work eloquently re-imagines, deconstructs, and applies choreographic principles to hip-hop ideology, examining humanity through a unique fusion of expressive genres. He has created more than 24 short and full-length pieces both within the company structure and in commissions, and has toured with his company across North America and Europe.

Quijada developed the RUBBERBAND Method as a bridge to connect diverse movement styles. He teaches this technique internationally at conservatories, universities, and festivals, and coaches dancers to transition masterfully between opposing dance worlds, enabling them to combine balletic lines and grace, contemporary angles and distortion, and capoeira-like fluidity and inversions with hip-hop dynamics and break power-moves. Since 2011, Victor has directed the intensive summer dance workshop at the Academy of Domaine Forget, and since 2010, has acted as choreographer at the annual Springboard Danse Montréal event. He was artist-in-residence at the Cinquième Salle of Place des Arts in Montreal from 2007 to 2011, and was recently named artist-in-residence at the new Kaufman School of Dance at the University of Southern California for the 2015-2016 season.

This year the University of Connecticut’s Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts proudly celebrates its 60th anniversary. Established in December of 1955, Jorgensen has grown to become the largest college-based presenting program in New England. Each season Jorgensen enriches the lives of students, faculty, staff, and area residents with 30 to 35 diverse performances from nationally and internationally acclaimed artists and ensembles ranging from classical music to world music and dance, classical ballet and contemporary dance, comedy, family programming, and contemporary entertainment. Dedicated to University of Connecticut president Albert N. Jorgensen, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts continues to follow his vision of the University as the state’s educational and cultural leader.

Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts is located at 2132 Hillside Road on the UConn campus in Storrs. Tickets are available now online. Floor seating - $40, Mezzanine seating - $37, Balcony seating - $34.

For tickets and information, call the Box Office at 860.486.4226, Monday through Friday, 10 am - 5 pm, and 90 minutes prior to events, or order online at jorgensen.uconn.edu. Convenient $5 event parking is available in the North Garage. Free parking is available in Lots 9, F, and L. For a detailed parking map, go to park.uconn.edu.

#  #  #