

DANCE

Dancing for dollars

ALL-STAR LINEUP TO PERFORM AT FUNDRAISING EVENT



Duet partners Michael Cook and Natalia Magnicaballi will appear in "Prelude."

By Robert Johnson
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

With the economy in the state it is in, it isn't getting any easier to send your dance student to college. Joe Lanteri, founder and director of the New York City Dance Alliance, wants to help.

On Monday, the Dance Alliance will host "Prelude," a fundraising concert at the Joyce Theater in New York. This benefit will help underwrite a scholarship program that Lanteri hopes will award \$1 million next year to young dancers seeking higher education.

An impressive roster of Dance Alliance alumni have signed up to perform. The lineup features Jon Bond of Cedar Lake, Clifton Brown of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Christina Dooling of Complexions, Whitney Jensen of Boston Ballet, Christian Tworzyanski of New York City

Prelude

Where: Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave. at 19th Street, New York

When: Monday at 7:30 p.m.

How much: \$125; call (855) NYC-5678 or visit nycdance.com.

Ballet, and Travis Wall of the television show "So You Think You Can Dance."

In addition, Miguel Quinones of Parsons Dance Company and duet partners Natalia Magnicaballi and Michael Cook from the Suzanne Farrell Ballet will appear as guest artists.

The evening will feature several new works, plus choreographer David Parsons' ever-popular solo "Caught" and George Balanchine's classic "Meditation."

For Lanteri, who lives in Mahwah and teaches jazz

dance at the Juilliard School and at STEPS on Broadway, raising money for college scholarships is a new endeavor. The Dance Alliance, which he founded 17 years ago, is a commercial venture, enrolling more than 15,000 young people each year as it tours cities throughout America, offering workshops and weekend dance competitions.

Yet the Dance Alliance's focus, Lanteri says, is education, and a college education is getting harder and harder for middle-class families to afford.

"I hear the conversations. I know the parents. I've watched the kids grow up," Lanteri says. "I've listened to every scenario, and it's not always encouraging."

With tuition for a four-year college program now averaging tens of thousands of dollars, Lanteri's goal — \$1 million — would only go so far. Yet, to compare it to some



Joe Lanteri is the founder and director of the New York City Dance Alliance.

other programs ... the Dizzy Feet Foundation, launched in 2009, grants only \$10,000 in annual scholarships to dancers. The Youth America Grand Prix has awarded approximately \$2 million in scholarships over the course of 11 years, enabling some ballet students to attend elite

international academies and American colleges.

Lanteri doesn't plan to raise the \$1 million all by himself. The New York City Dance Alliance Foundation, which opened in October, will serve as a clearinghouse for scholarship money that the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Marymount Manhattan College in New York and Point Park College in Pittsburgh already have earmarked for recruiting talented freshmen into their dance programs.

Yet Lanteri feels the Dance Alliance has the potential to raise much more.

"We have a very strong grassroots following," he says. "We've got dance studios across the country looking to do some fundraising for the foundation. If they all just sent in loose change collected at the registration desk, that would be phenomenal."

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