

ARTS Week dancers dish the details on the best week of their lives

DancesPIRiT®

APRIL 2007

BIENVENIDOS! A MIAMI!

The ultimate dance guide
to this Southern hotspot

HOW TO:

- › Master Italian Fouettés
- › Promote Yourself
- › Refine Your Fosse

PLUS

PREPPING FOR
DANCE CAMP

RAISING MONEY
TEAM STYLE
AND MORE!

BOOST YOUR
METABOLISM

dancespirit.com



NERVES OF
STEEL
HOW TO BEAT
YOUR JITTERS

OHMIGOD!
*Legally
Blonde*
COMES TO
BROADWAY

KELLY KOSHOSHEK OF
THE EDEN PRAIRIE HIGH
SCHOOL POM SQUAD

DANCE TEAM
GOES

Syrical

SHOULD COMPETITIONS
REWARD THESE SMOOTH MOVES?

ARTISTS-IN- TRAINING

Three diverse dancers tell us about youngARTS Week in Miami, where they grew as artists and made life-long friendships.

By Kate Lydon and Abigail Rasminsky


THIS YEAR, 7,300 high school seniors applied for a chance to compete in The National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) talent search and scholarship program. Just 141 in nine disciplines were selected. Their first reward was an all-expense-paid trip to youngARTS Week in Miami, where participants take part in master classes, workshops, studio exercises, interviews and exhibitions, and perform in an adjudicated showcase to vie for a portion of \$500,000 in scholarships awarded to the winners. Here, *Dance Spirit* talks to three of this year's 21 dance finalists—Geethanjali Vipulanandan, Angela Kenny and Isaac Winokur.

ANGELA KENNY, 18, knows what she wants: to be a professional dancer with a major company like American Ballet Theatre. And she's not sitting around in her tutu waiting to be discovered.

In 2004, Angela competed in the Youth America Grand Prix regionals, winning Youth Grand Prix in Texas and placing second (in the Junior Level) at the finals in NYC. Later that year, she sacrificed the security of home for top-notch training and moved to London to study at The Royal Ballet School's Upper School on full scholarship. She only visits home three times a year.

"The Royal Ballet is known for their clarity and purity and I think they're helping me define myself as an artist," says Angela. "My technique has really strengthened because of the stamina we're required to have." She starts classes at 9 am and finishes at 6:30 pm almost every night.

Last year, Angela danced at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, and was one of 14 RBS students chosen to perform at The Kennedy Center. She has also danced at Buckingham Palace twice—first for a gala to benefit the White Lodge Centre and then for the Queen's 80th b-day bash, which was televised on BBC. "It was



“When I’m not dancing or studying, I like to snorkel, scuba-dive, play with my dog and ride my four-wheeler or go geocaching.”
—Angela Kenny

amazing," she says. "I got to meet so many stars. The Queen was there, and 'Harry Potter,' too!"

Angela applied to youngARTS because she thought it sounded like a great opportunity and she was impressed by the list of dancers who had won awards in the past. "It was the time to do it," she says. It also provided her a unique group of opportunities—to perform, take master classes, network and make friends with other motivated young artists.

On the night of the youngARTS dancer showcase, Angela says she felt proud to be one of the six ballet dancers there. "Getting onstage and showing my particular art made me feel honored," she says. She was blown away by the tremendous support from her fellow dance competitors. "There was more applause coming from the wings than from the audience," she says. "Only

dancers know how hard it is to do what dancers do."

What other styles of dance impressed her most? "There was a beautiful Korean drum dancer there," she says. "And the Indian Classical dancers were brilliant." She even got to try it.

"I couldn't believe how hard Indian dance is! Their eyes and head move in opposite directions. It's very coordinated!"

All in all, she says, "It was amazing. Dancers who I'm pretty sure are going to be among the up-and-coming artists of my generation were there. At the time, you don't think you're one of them. But I was honored to be among, basically, greatness." —Kate Lydon

see it!

Rehearsing a Dream (2006):
This Oscar-nominated documentary about youngARTS Week will air on HBO this year.

APPLY FOR 2008:

Application deadline:

Oct. 1, 2007

For eligibility info, visit
nfaa.org/disciplines/dance.htm

Having grown up down South in The Woodlands, TX, 18-year-old **Geethanjali Vipulanandan** (or Geetha, as she's known to friends) has never been to her family's native Sri Lanka, but the country's culture is very close to her heart—and to her eyes, fingers, hands and feet.

At age 6, Geetha began training in Bharatanatyam, a type of classical Indian dance, in order to better understand her Hindu background, culture and tradition. Twelve years later, under the tutelage of her teacher, Dr. Rathma Kumar, Geetha has won awards (Best Footwork, Best Hand Gestures and Best Facial Expressions at a statewide dance competition) and performed before hundreds of people. She's also been hired as an assistant dance teacher at Anjali Center for the Performing Arts, where she still takes class. "I really have to thank dance for getting me connected with my culture," she says.

Continuing to train, perform and teach classical Indian dance in its traditional form is vital to Geetha—"It's a very ancient artform and it's important to keep that tradition because that's what it started with," she says—but she's beginning to experiment with dancing in unconventional ways. Recently, she choreographed the form's trademark facial expressions and high arm movements to Vivaldi, Mozart and Beethoven, and is thinking of adding some modern and ballet into the mix as well.

For the youngARTS showcase, Geetha performed *Ahasalingam*, a dance about Lord Shiva, the lord of the dance in Hindu mythology. After a few private coaching sessions with youngARTS' master classical Indian dance teacher, Vidya Murthy, her performance felt different. "My steps were sharper; there was more emotion on the stage. I used the space a lot more."

Aside from the thrill of performing before a packed audience, one of the real joys of youngARTS Week was identifying how various dance styles overlap: "Although each form is different," she says, "they share one common goal: They convey emotions too fine for words."

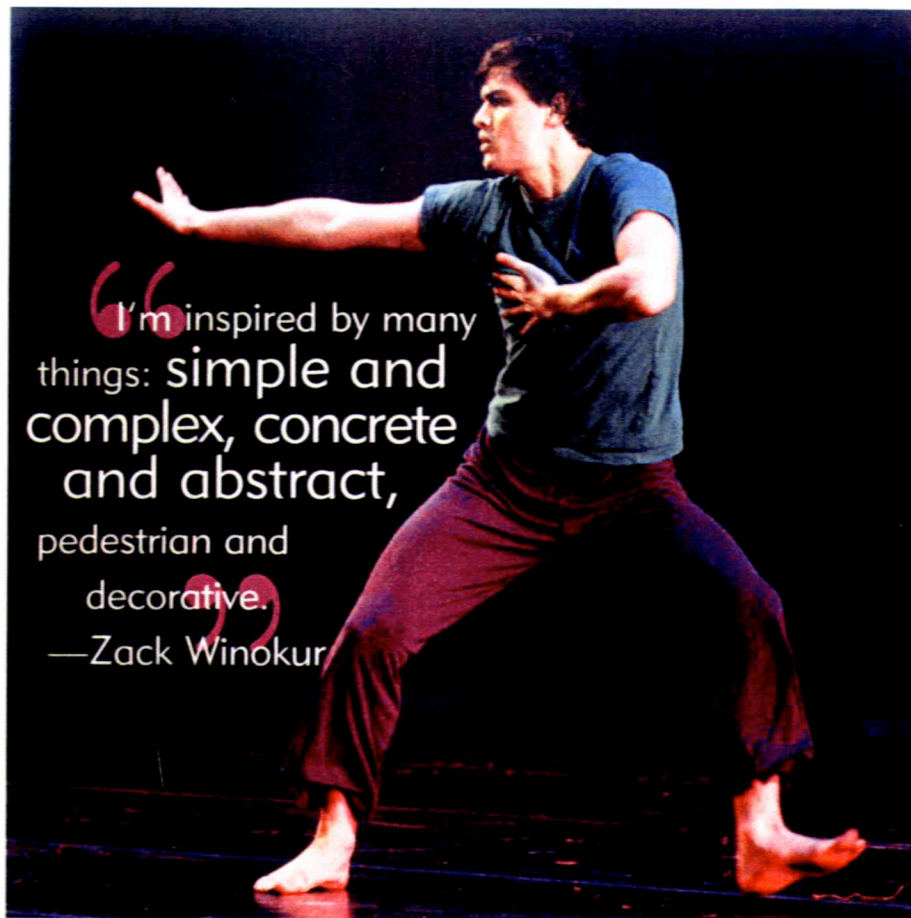
When asked whether she thinks she'll stay in touch with fellow youngARTS Weekers, Geetha turns both excited and nostalgic: "These artists have made such an impact on my life. I was really sad leaving them because you form a family of artists. Being able to join a family that can respect, understand and appreciate what you do—it's a feeling that's really hard to express in words."

—Abigail Rasminsky

Classical Indian Dance is really not for entertainment; it's more spiritual, so when you go onstage, it's a way of praying to God.
—Geethanjali Vipulanandan



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUAN E. CABRERA



“I’m inspired by many things: simple and complex, concrete and abstract, pedestrian and decorative.”
—Zack Winokur

ZACK WINOKUR, 18, has the guts, heart and curiosity of an independent dancer and choreographer. Last fall, he took a semester off from the Concord Academy in Boston, where he studies academics and dance, to live and work as a professional. He landed three great gigs with three cutting-edge choreographers: He went to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with David Parker and The Bang Group, worked with Kate Digby during her residency at The Yard on Martha’s Vineyard, and performed in Karole Armitage’s *In This Dream That Dogs Me* at NYC’s Duke Theater on 42nd Street.

“Working with Karole was incredibly holistically stimulating and enriching,” Zack says. “To sit there and keep my eyes and ears open and just really watch was great. The ideas she has—that movement should be as fleeting as thought, like a blaze of consciousness—have been significant to me on my own artistic road.”

Zack performed two solos at youngARTS that he co-choreographed with his teacher Richard Coltun. One was called *Gypsy Punk*, to the music of Gogol Bordello: “It’s a very low to the ground, gymnastic dance with lots of grand pliés and thrusts,” Zack says. The other piece, *Aleph Null*, to the music of Black Dice, is more introspective. “It starts

off pedestrian, then there’s a whimsical part that leads into a Greek frieze progression of specific gestures,” he says.

During youngARTS Week, Zack got the chance to study with yet another renowned modern dancer and choreographer, Ralph Lemon. “He made a profound impact on me,” says Zack. “He used words that could easily be changed into mantras, like ‘propulsion,’ ‘preservation’ and ‘generosity.’”

The most incredible thing about his time in Miami, though, was meeting the other participants in all genres. “I have been requesting work from fellow students I met,” he says. “I loved a photo that I saw there and I asked for a print so that I could think about it and maybe incorporate it into my work.”

Currently, Zack is choreographing a 40-minute solo exploring the formal harmonies between music, architecture and dance. Defne Bozkurt, an architecture student from Harvard, is creating the intricate sets. “Right now I like to think of myself as a designer—designing dances, my body, the spaces I work in, my lifestyle, my happiness,” Zack says.

“I foresee myself doing a lot of things,” he says. “I’m applying to Juilliard and I would really like to be there next year.” No matter what happens, we’re sure to see more of this young man in the future. —KL