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DANCERS CONVERGE ON LIC FOR FOURTH BLOOMS FESTIVAL

The upcoming Green Space Blooms festival, now in its fourth year, is currently the only modern dance festival held in Queens. “That is something special right there. It’s for the community at large,” said Valerie Green, artistic director of Dance Entropy, the company that produces the festival each year. The festival will be running weekends April 9-18 in Long Island City.

Green founded Dance Entropy in 1998, and its home at Green Space Studio in Long Island City now offers rehearsal and performance space rentals, as well as numerous movement programs, performances and classes. Green developed Green Space Blooms in 2007 as part of the company’s outreach effort to create a platform for the growing number of Queens choreographers and dancers and, in turn, to provide local audiences with the chance to experience modern dance and world music.

“We provide a venue for choreographers, dancers and musicians, and then after audiences see the performances, they are able to gain the support of their local community,” Green said.

Green is passionate about the importance of bringing cultural activities into Queens. Her company creates a bridge among creative artists looking to perform, and the local community in Queens, whom she believes are eager for opportunities to see quality live performances in the comfort of their own borough.

“The community needs a place in Queens for local choreographers to share their work. It’s the same choreographers and the same level of professional choreography being shown in Manhattan.” explained Green.

The mission of the festival is to put Long Island City on the map as a center for cultural opportunities in New York City. Audiences can expect to see dance solos, duets and trios directed by 29 choreographers—over half of whom are from Queens. Groups for the festival are selected through a competitive application process.



Photo: Sharon Harsa

“The goal is to feature a diverse amount of work,” said Green. She bases the decision on the quality of the dancing, unique and original choreography and the vision for the space itself. “Each piece is balanced to make a unified whole of each evening.”

Live music will also be integrated into each event. Every night will feature a post-performance reception where audiences will be exposed to ethnic musical styles and instruments from around the world, including Jewish klezmer, Japanese sanshin, a Native American Indian flute and woodwinds.

New to the festival this year are family performances on April 10 and April 17, with colorful and humorous themes that Green believes will appeal to all ages. In addition, her company offers classes on creative movement to children and seniors.

“It’s a way to connect the festival to the community, get the word out and lead the community to our space,” she said.

Green hopes that the festival will continue to attract even more natives from Queens in the years to come — both as participants and audience members.

Article by Rebecca Weiler