The World Dance Day Festival in Lebanon

hosted by the Lebanese American University (LAU) Byblos, Campus

in Partnership with Byblos Municipality
Who are we?

We are a group of people (Dancers, Dance enthusiasts, Supports of the Arts, Educators and so on) who are concerned with Dance and its situation in Lebanon and ultimately its exposure to dance abroad.
What do we want?

Essentially, our goal is to see the Lebanese dance field grow and expand its roots nationally and internationally as well. We comprehend that for our dreams and goals to be realized Lebanese dancers need more international connections and educational opportunities, as well as stronger connections and ties to each other locally.
How?

Thus we began work on the idea to create a forum where dancers can receive training and connections to other dancers and institutions (both local and international).

Also, due to the lack of monetary resources in the dance community in Lebanon our objective was augmented with the need to be able to offer all the services and workshops for free to all participants.
Why Byblos?

First, Byblos’s proximity to a large educational institution (LAU) which is a supporter and encourager of the arts in Lebanon.

Second, the Byblos Municipality is a vigorous entity which greatly supports the arts and cultural activities.

Third, the location (away from the crowds and noise of Beirut) lends itself to a week of festivities and educational activities and also allows for people who do not live in Beirut (close to several other festivals and events) to have dance opportunities and benefit.

Fourth and finally, historically speaking, Byblos is a point of interaction and development. We think it can continue to be so now and in the future.
International Dance Day (World Dance Day) is celebrated on April 29th. The holiday was introduced in 1982 by the International Dance Committee of the UNESCO International Theatre Institute. The date was suggested by Pyotr Gusev to commemorate the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre.
Among the goals of the Dance Day are to increase the awareness of the importance of dance among the general public, as well as to persuade governments all over the world to provide a proper place for dance in all systems of education, from primary to higher.

As we mentioned previously, Our goal is to enhance the dance awareness of the Lebanese Dance public by offering a string of workshops, performances and activities which people (dancers and non-dancers) can attend and/or participate in. We strive to make this a yearly event in Byblos with the first year to be April 2011.
II- Mission of the World Dance Day Festival in Lebanon (WDDFL)

The Mission of the Festival is to:

• Enhance public understanding and appreciation of the art form (dance) and its cultural and historical significance.
• Provide a sound scientific/aesthetic base for professional education and training of young dancers and a forum for integrating and disseminating information on dance education.
• Expose Lebanese dancers/choreographers/teachers to international work through workshops which are practical as well as lecture based. These workshops will be taught by international artists from Europe, United States, Canada, Russia and other countries as well.
• Encourage and support the creation of new dance works by both established and emerging choreographers in Lebanon and the Middle East.
• Preserve our Lebanese dance heritage through continued presentation of classic works, as well as through archival efforts.
• Build wider national and international audiences for Lebanese dance and dance in general.
• To enhance public awareness of the area of Byblos and its artistic, historic and geographic importance.
• Draw the attention of the government to the need for emphasis, attention and focus on arts education.
• Highlight the need for a higher educational institute where local talents can graduate with a high level of dance expertise, thus allowing for less need of foreign talent.
The vision of the WDDFL is committed to serving the needs of dance, dancers, choreographers and professionals in dance-related fields (in Lebanon and the Middle East). As the needs of the field change and grow, the Festival's program will be expanded and altered over the years to help accommodate these regions as best needed. WDDFL programs are developed based on the previously mentioned mission statement.
IV- Categories of the Festival

EDUCATION: Professional training programs for dancers, choreographers, and teachers.

- Academic Sessions which last 5-10 days (attracting students from different areas of Lebanon and other Middle Eastern Countries) where local and foreign artists come to teach students.

- Dance Professionals Workshop (both intensive and extended) where artists come from Abroad to teach other professionals in Lebanon.
PERFORMANCES: Series of residencies and performances by major established companies as well as emerging artists from around the world.

- A 5-10 day event where workshops and performances are given at LAU Byblos.
- One big event to take place at the end of the festival period (Grand Gala).

AWARDS: Awards and scholarships will be awarded (when available and appropriate). These awards contribute status and importance to accomplished dance figures and to the profession itself.
V- Specifics for the 2011 Festival

Dates:
April 3rd will be the official opening ceremony and the close of the ceremony will be April 9th. The closing will be a grand concert.

Offerings:
Workshops will be offered by local and foreign artists. Concerts will take place at different times and locations throughout the week.

2011 Organizers/Sponsors:
LAU School of Arts and Sciences (Byblos Campus), Byblos Municipality, Dancewear.