

**Conchita Espinosa Academy
Conservatory of the Arts**

**12975 SW 6th Street
Miami, Florida 33184**

305-227-1149

305-227-1150

305-227-1151

**Parent-Student Handbook
2007-2008**

*Continuing to Bring Understanding, Creativity,
Knowledge, and Passion to the Lives of Students for
over 70 years!*

Founder – Conchita Espinosa

Director – Maribel Zubieta Diaz

Mzubietadiaz@ConchitaEspinosa.com

Artistic Director – Ronn Daniels

Rdaniels@ConchitaEspinosa.com

Activities Director – Maria Ofelia Armas

Mgarmas@ConchitaEspinosa.com



Dear Conservatory Parents and Students,

Welcome to Conchita Espinosa Academy Conservatory of the Arts!

*Man does not live by bread alone ... Art is as vital a need to
humanity as the wheat in the fields; it is the means of
communication that transcends time and language.*

The arts are an integral part of a complete education. They allow us to enhance our mental as well as our physical health, sharpen our visual skills, develop motor skills and coordination, and satisfy our spiritual needs to create and share beauty. In order for us to accomplish this goal, we need the cooperation and support of knowledgeable and informed parents. We look forward to a rewarding year, one that will allow you and your child to live life more fully and deeply, and we look forward to working with you.

History

Our founder, Conchita Espinosa, dedicated her life to guiding our youth. At 14, she graduated from the International Conservatory in Havana, continued her studies under Jasha Fischerman and Joaquin Nin, and performed in Mexico, Cuba and the U.S. This formidable pedagogue founded her own conservatory in Havana in 1933. By 1959, it had grown into an elementary school and arts conservatory with over 450 students. The late composer Ernesto Lecuona, considered by many to be one of Cuba's most distinguished musicians, declared, "You were born to teach. You have the divine gift of transforming the student and accomplishing the maximum, always bringing out his personality. That is a gift of God."

Throughout the years Conchita Espinosa Academy of the Arts has been blessed with some of the best teachers who shared Conchita's dedication to arts education. In the past we have been fortunate to have teachers like Martha Mahr, Rosita Segovia, Dulce Anaya, Michael Fokine, Elena del Cueto, etc. We continue to have the finest teachers available working with our students.

Statement of Goals

The CEA Conservatory of the Arts is comprised of a comprehensive fine arts program that facilitates student participation in the world of music, dance, and the visual and martial arts. We believe that exposure and involvement in the arts promote the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, and commitment to that which is so essentially and beautifully human. The Conservatory ensures a learning environment that is respectful, orderly, supportive and safe. In such an environment each student can learn, feel valued, and develop his or her unique talents and abilities.

Understanding of self and self-acceptance through the use of the God-given materials of body and mind, the learning of physical and mental control, the ability to think clearly and logically, as well the ability to imagine, visualize and create are developed as a requisite for self-expression. The nurturing of a student's growth by a good teacher is essential for developing a mentally, physically and emotionally healthy student. Our teachers have been carefully selected for their superb ability in this and other areas.

The satisfaction of a job well done is something artists achieve since they are rewarded through their own accomplishments. This is not a reward that someone else gives them; it is a reward they receive through and from their own efforts. To witness the "proof" of accomplishment through the movement of one's own body, the painting of beautiful art, or the making of beautiful music is not comparable to anything else. Passing a test cannot begin to compare to the feeling one gets when one actually creates through the use of all of one's mental, physical and emotional faculties.

Only a few students ever go on to a career as a dancer, musical or visual artist, but all of our conservatory students have the *opportunity* to go on to more fulfilling and rewarding lives as wonderful human beings!

Faculty

Our conservatory faculty is handpicked for their excellent teaching skills. They enjoy a superb reputation in their respective areas of expertise. We are fortunate to avail ourselves of their knowledge, experience, skill and caring natures.

While their professional credentials are excellent, equally important is our faculty's ability to impart the special qualities that we value for our children. The teachers' involvement in their art goes beyond professional performance or presentation. Students are inspired and instilled with values that encompass the qualities of respect for self and others, self-discipline, responsibility for their actions as well as their possessions, and immediate satisfaction and feedback from a job well done.

A resume of each teacher's training and experience is presented at the end of this handbook.

Classes

Classes are open to students of all ages: children, teens, adults; beginner through professional in all Arts disciplines and subjects. Classes are grouped primarily by ability and secondarily by age. Teachers place their students in class after much consideration of these factors as well as the ability for the pupils to have an easy and comfortable social interaction among themselves.

Registration and Tuition

Registration and tuition are payable in the Main Office in the school building. Tuition is based on one yearly fee, September through May. For your convenience, tuition may be divided into nine (9) equal monthly payments.

Dress Code

No dance or music bags that carry inappropriate pictures or slogans will be permitted. In addition, no clothes with inappropriate monikers may be used. Only dance shoes may be worn in dance studios and dance shoes should not be worn outdoors. Uniforms for specific disciplines are listed under the discipline.

MUSIC

Music subjects are taught privately in Piano, Guitar, Percussion, Trumpet, Saxophone and Violin. Music Theory/Solfege and recorders are taught in groups.

You are vital to your child's success. Please have him/her practice at least 15 minutes every day. Check your child's notebook each week. Teachers make notes in it, and it is a convenient way to communicate with the teacher. Also know that you are welcome to attend your child's private music classes. Attending at least once a month can encourage your child as well as his/her teacher.

The gift of music you are giving is one he/she will cherish for a lifetime. It is making him/her a better-rounded person and increasing his/her ability to think.

Music exams will take place twice a year. Your child's music grade reflects his/her exam, attendance, class participation, and study at home. Please discuss this with your child and feel free to contact the teacher if you need to.

No uniforms are required for music classes. These students are required to wash their hands thoroughly before class.

DANCE

Dance subjects are taught in separate classes for Ballet, Spanish Dance, Tap, Jazz, Cuban Dance, Modern Afro-Cuban Dance and Lyrical. Lessons are organized into groups; however, private lessons are also available by special arrangement only through the Conservatory Office.

Hair must be pulled back in a bun, away from the face. No jewelry of any kind is allowed other than stud earrings.

Ballet & Lyrical:

Ballet shoes should fit snugly so that no material can be pinched at the back of the heel when the foot is pointed. This means they cannot be bought with "growing room" as this does not allow the use of the correct muscles and can cause injury. Do not be tempted to use the drawstring to make the shoes "fit" as this can cause irreparable damage to the Achilles tendon at the back of the foot. The elastics should be sewn at the spot where the heel, when compressed, forms a right angle with the sides of the shoe.

Girls: Leotards and hair accessories (available at the Conservatory Little Store) are colored according to the particular class. They are pink, light blue, red, lilac, navy, cobalt, forest green, purple, gray and black. Pink tights and pink ballet slippers are available at Dancing Supplies Depot. Pink, light blue, red, and lilac groups do not wear tights, they wear pink bobby socks.

Boys: White t-shirt, black tights, black ballet slippers

Jazz:

Girls: Turquoise and black leotard, Black hair accessory (both available at the Conservatory "Little Store,") Black jazz pants and black jazz shoes (available at Dancing Supplies Depot.)

Boys: Red CEA t-shirt, black jazz pants, black dance sneakers (available at Dancing Supplies Depot.).

Tap:

Tap shoes should fit snugly but not tightly. If the shoes are too large, the ability to make sound is hampered and the feet can be injured. Taps should be the “screw-on” type for students of 3 or more years of experience. The taps should be attached tightly, as the screws tend to loosen through wear.

Girls: Black leotard, special black CEA shorts (available at the Conservatory “Little Store,) pink tights and black tap shoes (available at Dancing Supplies Depot.)

Tap shoes may differ from class to class; therefore, the teacher must first be consulted.

Boys: Royal Blue CEA t-shirt, black dance pants, black tap shoes.

Spanish Dance:

Girls: Red, blue or black leotard according to level (available at the Conservatory Little Store). Skirts, pink tights and black Spanish Dance shoes are available at Dancing Supplies Depot. Dancers in Kindergarten, Pre-Primary, First and Second Grade do not wear tights; they wear pink bobby socks.

Cuban Dance and Modern Afro-Cuban Dance:

Girls: Cuban Dance skirt, Rose (elementary) leotard, Fuchsia (middle school) leotard will be sold at the Conservatory Little Store. Tan character shoes and pink tights are available at Dancing Supplies Depot; skirt available for sale at Conservatory Little Store.

Afro-Cuban Dance – black leotard, black jazz pants

Boys: Black CEA t-shirt, black dance pants available at the Conservatory Little Store, black dance sneakers available at Dancing Supplies Depot.

KARATE, THEATER, VISUAL ARTS**Karate/Martial Arts**

Girls & Boys: Colored belt according to level. White “Gi” is available from the instructor.

Theater

CEA burgundy sweat pants, CEA polo shirt, sneakers, a composition notebook and pencil are also necessary.

Visual Arts

No uniforms are required for visual art classes. These students are required to wash their hands thoroughly before class.

Arrival and Dismissal

In 1st through 8th grades children are to proceed to the classrooms by themselves. This promotes independence and positive self-esteem. All children are to proceed directly to their assigned after-school classroom upon being dismissed from their Conservatory class. Students are only released to those adults whose names are on the appropriate application. If someone else needs to pick up the child, you must notify the office in writing. If a student is not participating in after school care, he/she should be picked up by a parent immediately upon completion of the student's class or classes.

Off Campus students should arrive no earlier than 10-15 minutes before class and be picked up immediately after class has ended.

Parents please note: Only students are allowed in the Conservatory.

Attendance and Tardiness

Perfect attendance certificates are awarded to students missing no more than 3 unexcused classes a year. Unexcused absences reflect an insincere attitude and may be cause for removal from the Conservatory. A note from the parent or guardian must follow all absences stating the reason for the absences. Three tardiness marks are equal to one unexcused absence. A great deal of discipline is needed to maintain quality development in your child as an artist and a person, and therefore consistent attendance is essential. This will ensure that being "left behind" won't occur in class. It will also help your child understand the value of dedication and commitment that is all too easy to ignore nowadays, and remind them that hard work is part of life. If a child is injured, he or she should attend class by watching and not be taken home early or stay in after school.

Classroom Etiquette

The traditions in a dance class are longstanding and show respect for the dance as well as for the teacher and students. Students should show the same respect for all of the arts classes.

At least 5 minutes before class, students should be prepared for class and quietly waiting in the area designated by the hall monitor. Students should enter the classroom quietly, taking their place as assigned by the

teacher. No food, drink, or gum is allowed. Students should thank the teacher upon completion of class. At the end of a dance class, it is customary to applaud the teacher as a way of saying thank you.

Cell phones owned by students should be turned off for the length of time spent in the Conservatory.

Class Length

Dance classes are 45 to 55 minutes in length.

Music classes (private) are 30 minutes in length.

Karate/Martial Arts classes are 55 minutes in length.

Visual arts classes are from 50 minutes to 2 hours in length.

Visitors

Students can be easily distracted so classes are closed and not open for visitors.

Open Classes

Parents and relatives may attend Open Classes the week of November 26, 2007 and at the designated spring class.

Progress Reports and Examinations

The Conservatory will give a progress report to each student in each class during the weeks of November 26, 2007 and March 10, 2008.

Conservatory exams will be given from May 20 through May 26, 2008. You are also encouraged to contact the Conservatory at any time during the year to check on your child's progress.

Home Practice

Students are urged to practice at home whenever possible. Since homework is not usually assigned, it must be left up to the student to accept the responsibility and maintain the desire to improve. Practice leads to improvement; improvement leads to success; success leads to awareness of self worth; self worth leads to a healthy individual capable of contributing to our entire community.

Festival

This year the Festival will occur on Saturday, May 17 at Dade County Auditorium. The rehearsal in the auditorium will be on Thursday, May 15.

Costumes

Fittings for costumes will be conducted during the appropriate class sometime in October.

Costumes will be ordered no later than December 1st. This is necessary since the costume companies require that amount of lead-time for the manufacture of ready-made costumes. Although we cannot guarantee the price of each costume due to the prices charged by the costume companies, they generally cost between \$100 and \$150 each. A deposit of \$60 per costume must be submitted to the Conservatory office by December 1st. Any deposit not made at this time will result in no costume being ordered.

Rehearsals

It may be necessary to require students to attend extra rehearsals as Festival time draws near. There will be no charge for this extra time, but attendance is absolutely mandatory.

Attendance not only helps achieve a good performance, but also demonstrates respect for others as part of the "team."

Extra-Curricular Activities

Trips will be organized at various times throughout the year for students of all the arts disciplines where they can attend performances, workshops, and other special events. These trips will be available at reduced cost or free of charge depending on the nature of the event.

Dressing Room & Hall Monitors

Adult monitors will supervise the students before and after classes both in the halls and dressing rooms. Students participating in the Academy's after-school program will be sent to their Conservatory class in time to change clothes if necessary. Students from off campus should arrive before class in enough time to change clothes so that they may enter class on time.

Parent-Conservatory Communication

Parents wishing to speak with Administration or Faculty should arrange an appointment by telephone or E-mail with the Artistic Director. Parents and visitors are not allowed in the dressing rooms or classrooms unless special permission is granted in advance.

"Crew"

Students 12 years of age and older may volunteer to serve as part of a team that will aid in special projects for the Conservatory.

Apprentice Program

We will be recruiting a few gifted students interested in serving as class demonstrators or as assistants. Please let us know if you are interested. Special classes will also be offered to prepare these students for this position. Only those students willing to make a firm commitment will be considered.

Parents for the Arts (PFA)

We are fortunate to have enthusiastic, dedicated parents who are eager to extend their children's education by their support of the Conservatory and its activities. Our PFA (Parents for the Arts) participate in taking students on field trips, decorating our conservatory hallways, fund-raising for the "little extras" for costumes, and encouraging students and teachers in their endeavors. Forms for volunteering for the PFA are available in the school office or at Conservatory meetings.

Administrator Biographies

Ronn Daniels (Artistic Director) received the "President's Award" from the Dance Masters of America in the summer of 2002 in recognition of his contribution to tap and jazz dance to teachers and students throughout the world. He is an internationally recognized Master Tap and Jazz teacher who has written numerous articles on Tap and Jazz for *Dance* magazine. He has judged for many dance competitions including the North American Tap Dance Festival, the Australian National Fred Astaire Performing Arts Championships, and the World Tap Dance Championships in Germany. Ronn has created tap and jazz Dance Training Manuals and Videos for Teachers, has taught throughout North America, as well as in Hong Kong, New Zealand, Europe, Brazil, and Australia, and has taught and/or trained some of today's finest teachers, choreographers and performers. Ronn has taught at C.E.A. because, "It's a place where art, morals and educational standards are most important."

Maria Ofelia Armas (Activities Director) was born in Havana, Cuba. When she was 3 months old, her family left Cuba and moved to the United States. She was raised in Miami, where at a very early age she began her arts training at Conchita Espinosa Academy. Here she trained in theater, piano, guitar, ballet and Spanish dances. She trained under the direction of international luminaries such as Cuca Martinez, Antonio Losada, Griselda Nogueras, Martha Mahr and the world renowned Rosita Segovia. Eventually she rose to become a soloist with the Ballet Español Rosita Segovia Junior Dance Company. Maria Ofelia received a Bachelor of Arts degree with high honors (magna cum laude) from the University of Miami

and a Master of Arts degree with high honors (*magna cum laude*) from the University of Miami. She has been certified as a family mediator with the Florida Supreme Court. She has been a part of CEA for many years. She currently serves as the Director of Special Events at the CEA Arts Conservatory. Her position with the Conservatory is the ideal outlet for her passion for working with young people and the arts. She lives in Miami with her husband, Alfredo and her two children Gabriella and Alfred.

Faculty Biographies

Judy Ann Bassing (Jazz and Tap), a recipient of six Los Angeles Drama-Logue awards and the San Diego Circle Critics award for outstanding choreography, has choreographed and/or directed professional productions such as *Funny Girl*, *Guys and Dolls* and numerous others. She has been guest master teacher throughout Europe (France, Germany, the Czech Republic, etc.) as well as in New York City and throughout the United States. She has been on the staff of prestigious arts schools in Germany and France and a master teacher for every major Dance Teacher Organization in the United States in Tap and Jazz. She was on the faculty of Ronn Daniels Academy of Dance (Miami) and the Broadway Dance Center (New York City) for many years. Her exciting and inspiring teaching style is a delight to all of her students, and their abilities are enhanced with superb technique and joy.

Danella Bedford (Ballet, Jazz, and Ballet, Lyrical Department Head) is originally from the United Kingdom where she trained from age 6 at the Bristol School of Dancing in ballet, tap, jazz, modern and character dancing. She then went on to further her studies at the Royal Ballet School where she was head student. She graduated in 1993, receiving her Teaching Diploma with distinction under the direction of Valerie Adams, and remained an additional year as Assistant Director. In 1994 she moved to Charlotte, N.C., where she taught at the North Carolina Dance Theater and the Charlotte School of Ballet, as well as performed with the Charlotte Youth Ballet as a guest artist. She has performed in many musical theatre productions and is currently a rehearsal mistress and a soloist with Momentum Dance Company in Miami under the direction of Delma Iles. She has taught at Conchita Espinosa Academy for 9 years and would like to thank everyone for all the love and support she has received throughout the years.

Freddick Bratcher (Modern Dance, Jazz) began his dance training while in high school in San Francisco where he danced with the San Francisco Opera Ballet and San Diego Ballet. He later toured with the Donald McKayle Inner City Repertory Company of Los Angeles, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Company, and Martha Graham Dance Company. Mr. Bratcher was recruited to Miami in late 1976 to become the Artistic Director and Dance Master of Fusion Dance Company. In 1980 Mr. Bratcher started his own dance company. Mr. Bratcher has taught throughout the United States, including the University of Florida, Florida State University, Butler University, as well as in Tokyo, Japan, and Bogota, Colombia. As a professional choreographer, Mr. Bratcher has created over 50 works, some of which have premiered with companies such as Fusion, Ballet Concerto of Miami, Miami Ballet, Dance Kaleidoscope of Indianapolis, Vinette Carrol Repertory, and many television specials and commercials. He currently teaches jazz, modern, and composition at the New World School of the Arts.

Marisol Caballero (Piano) is a graduate in Piano of the Academia de la Colonia Española in Camaguey, Cuba. She continued her studies at the National School of the Arts in Havana. During her professional career in Cuba, Ms. Caballero held the position of director of the piano department at Jose Marin Varona School of Music. As a performer she was active as accompanist with the National Cultural Council.

Mariana Carreras (Violin) holds a Masters Degree in Music Performance from the University of Miami, a Bachelor's Degree from FIU and is a graduate from the Conservatory Amadeo Roldan and the Conservatory Manuel Saumell in Havana, Cuba. Ms. Carreras has extensive orchestral and teaching experience. She has played with the New Philharmonic Orchestra, the Florida Grand Opera Orchestra, the Naples Philharmonic, Miami City Ballet Orchestra, the West Palm Beach Opera Orchestra, and has accompanied tenor Andrea Bocelli in concerts. She also has several years of experience teaching children and adults.

Irmah del Valle (Modern Afro-Cuban Dance, Cuban Dance, Ballet) graduated from the National School of the Arts in Cuba specializing in Modern Dance, Afro-Cuban Dance and Ballet. As a soloist in the Joven Guardia of the National Cuban Ballet she performed feature roles of classical and contemporary works under the direction of Laura Alonso, Ballet Mistress of the NCB. In 1994 she was a finalist in the International Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi, where she was highly praised for her technique and artistic quality. She danced with the Taller Coreografico de la UNAM in Mexico, New York and Los Angeles for the past four years. She has been a dance professor of the Cuballet in Cuba, Argentina, and Mexico as well as a dancer with Momentum Dance Company.

Ibette Fernandez (Voice, Piano) won several voice and choir competitions in her native Cuba. She is a graduate of EVA, Vocational School of Arts, Pinar del Rio, Cuba, the National School of Arts and the Superior Institute of Arts in Havana, Cuba. She has performed with the Frank Fernandez Symphony Orchestra, the National School of Arts Chamber Choir and the Santiago de Cuba National Choir. She has been a music, piano, and harmony teacher since 2004. Ms. Fernandez is currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Piano Performance and Music Education at Florida International University (FIU).

Alina Gonzalez (Piano) received her training at the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba majoring in Piano Performance, and graduated in 1991 from Conservatorio de Musica Amadeo Roldan. She has served on the jury at the Dade County Youth Fair and Exposition. She is currently pursuing a degree in Music Education at Florida International University.

Rey Guerra (Guitar and Guitar Orchestra) Born in Cuba, Rey began his studies in guitar in his hometown of Santa Clara, with the teacher Domingo Carvajal, studied at the Instituto de Arte Superior of Havana, and graduated in 1982. Has won several international awards since 1974, when he won the “Amadeo Roldan” National Guitar Contest in Havana, and again in 1985. Most recently, in 2002 Rey was a nominee for the Latin Grammy Awards. He has performed in many of the most prestigious theaters in the world: the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, La Fenice Theater in Venice, Italy, National Auditorium in Mexico, Cecilia Meireles Concert Hall in Brazil, and the Maestranza Theater in Seville, Spain, among many others. He is considered the best interpreter of the guitar works of Leo Brouwer and has been recording since 1983.

Maria Victoria Gutierrez (Ballet) is a broadly experienced, disciplined and focused dance professional having begun her professional career as a performer in the National Ballet of Cuba, touring worldwide in France, the Soviet Union, Japan, China, Germany, Czech Republic, Korea and Mexico. She taught here at Conchita Espinosa Academy for seven years and her teaching and choreographic abilities were utilized by the Vocational Ballet School and “Casa de la Cultura,” in Cuba. Additionally in the United States, she taught at The Georgia Dance Conservatory in Marietta, GA, and the Brenda Jericevich Academy of Dance, the Back Stage Jane School in Georgia. Her teaching experience, enthusiasm, dedication and leadership abilities are a welcome contribution to our Conservatory.

Monica Isla (Ballet) graduated from the National School of the Arts in Havana, Cuba. She was a member of the Ballet of Camaguey and first dancer for the Pro-Danza Company. Having won a silver medal at the Alicia Alonso First International Ballet Competition, she also attended the International Dance Competition in Nagoya, Japan and the competition in Jackson, MS, USA. She has been on tour to Jamaica, Peru, Panama, Canada, Mexico, Uruguay and Argentina. She taught at the University of Mexico, Martha Mahr Academy of Ballet and the School of the Ballet Concierto of Puerto Rico as well as a soloist with their Company.

Ruben “Tutty” Jimenez (Percussion) was born in Havana, Cuba in 1948, Tutty studied music at the reknown Escuela Sergio Restano in Havana, under the tutelage of percussion master Fausto Garcia and music theory and solfeggio with his father, Generoso Jimenez. In Cuba the 1970s, Tutty performed with the Orquestras Beny More and Instituto Cubano de Radio y Television (I.C.R.T.). In the 1980s, he performed extensively in Venezuela with Television Orquesta, Sinfonica de Venezuela, and Orquesta Radio Caracas. In Miami, Tutty has performed with a wide spectrum of orchestras and performers, including the Florida Chamber Orchestra, the Miami Symphony Orchestra and the Danzon by Six, and with such extraordinary talents as Gabriela Spanic, Paquito D’Rivera, Juan Pablo Torres, Camilo Sesto and Tropicana All-Stars.

Frank Llerena (Martial Arts) a graduate of the University of Havana, has over thirty years of experience as a karate instructor. Mr. Llerena was promoted to Black Belt by Oknawan Master Y. Toguchi in Washington D.C. and currently holds a 6th degree in Okinawa Karate Do, which unites several systems of martial arts.

Maria “Loly” Lopez (Theater, Voice) was born in Manati, Puerto Rico. She studied music at Loyola University and The Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education from the University of Puerto Rico. Her studies in music, dance and drama have given her the opportunity to travel and appear on T.V in Puerto Rico, the U.S., Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and other countries. She has been a member of the Vocal Quartet Cheris as well as recorded with various artists. Ms. Loly has been a member of the Opera de Puerto Rico (Nabucco), the prestigious international Casal's Festival among others.

Deborah Marlin (Art) received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and teacher certification in Art, K – 12, from Southern Illinois University with focus on studio drawing and painting and art education. Mrs. Marlin then pursued a career in kitchen and bath design and architectural planning with firms in Nashville, Chicago and Lakeland. As the mother of two beautiful children she continued design work from home and then returned to teaching art. She has been teaching at middle school and high school levels for 10 years. When not at school, Mrs. Marlin continues to pursue her passion for art through watercolor painting and mosaic.

Leiza Mendez (Spanish Dance) a native of Cuba, performed 12 years with Alicia Alonso's Ballet Español de Cuba. She has participated in numerous international festivals of dance. In 1992 she won second place in el Primer Certamen de Danza Española y Flamenco in Madrid. She has performed with Compañía Maria Serrano and Duende Ballet Español.

Marisol Moreno (Spanish Dance) a native of Madrid, was artistically guided by Pacita Tomas, Joaquin Villa, and Juan Sierra. She has traveled extensively in Spain and Europe, becoming a part of the Flamenco de Cristobal Reyes Company, dancing with noted artists such as Adrian Galia, Antonio Canales, and Joaquin Cortes. At present, she continues to dance professionally throughout the Americas and Europe, and has established a school and dance company in Cancun, Mexico with her husband, the dancer, **Raul Salcedo**, who is also a guest teacher and Festival choreographer for CEA.

Ileana Raymat (Music Theory) Born in Cuba, her first studies were at the Guillermo Tomás Conservatory, where she specialized in guitar. Ileana has a B.A. in Music with a major in saxophone from the Instituto Superior del Arte in Havana, Cuba, and a Masters in Education with a concentration in Child Music Education with a specialization in Early Childhood and Elementary. Ileana played with the all-women orchestra ANACAONA for eight years. While living in Ecuador, she was guest lecturer on Early Childhood and Elementary music education for the Symphonic Orchestra of Ecuador. She has been a teacher since 1990. Ms. Raymat has participated in concerts held in Spain, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Jamaica, and Mexico, among other countries.

Mirtha de la Torre (Guitar) is a graduate of the prestigious Havana University's "Instituto Superior de Arte" with a degree as a classical guitar performer. She completed post-graduate studies in Madrid, Spain. For over 30 years she performed in Cuba, Spain, France, Russia, Turkey, Mexico and the U.S. She has enjoyed a long career of teaching music in Cuba, Spain, and the U.S.

Patricia Strauss (Ballet) has performed with several companies in which she was soloist or principal dancer, including Les Ballet-Jazz of Montreal, Minnesota Dance Company, Rondo Dance Theater, and Het National Ballet of Holland. Her performing and choreographic experience range from classical ballet to Broadway musical, and modern and jazz-ballet. She worked with the Alvin Ailey apprentice company and was invited by Paul Taylor to understudy repertoire. In addition to performing Ms. Strauss has taught ballet, modern and jazz with many major dance schools and has been a resident and guest teacher for the School of Richmond Ballet, New World School of the Arts, Walt Disney World, Audre Mendel & Jurgen Schneider's Vaganova Seminar, Lake Michigan College, Urdang Academy of London, Sarasota Ballet, Ballet Eddy Toussaint, Ballet Florida, Harvard University, and Harvard Ballet Company. Ms. Strauss has choreographed extensively for dance companies, television, film and musical theater and was the artistic director of her own company and school in Miami. Ms. Strauss has choreographed many musicals and was resident choreographer for Turtle Lane Playhouse. She spent 11 years as full-time classical ballet teacher for the Boston Ballet School. For the past two years she has been a full-time faculty member for the Miami City Ballet School, teaching intermediate to advanced level ballet.

Jose Ramon Urbay (Trumpet, Piano, Music Theory) was born in Cuba. For 30 years he served as Music Director and Conductor of the National Ballet of Cuba and the Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra of Havana. Maestro Urbay has performed as guest conductor in several major theatres and festivals in the world including the Metropolitan Opera House of New York, the Kennedy Center, Liceo of Barcelona, Bolshoi of Moscow, Grand Theatre of Monte Carlo, Champs Elysses in Paris and the Edinburgh International Festival in Scotland. He has also conducted in Italy, Australia, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Luxembourg, Holland and Mexico among others. In 2002, Maestro Urbay was honored with a Grammy nomination for the Best Classical Crossover CD with The Music of Ernesto Lecuona. He is associate conductor and arranger of the Florida Chamber Orchestra and professor of music at Conchita Espinosa Academy of the Arts.

Marlene Urbay (Piano, Music Department Head), a brilliant musician, began studying piano and music at age five at the Alejandro Garcia Caturla Conservatory in Havana. She continued studying at Cuba's National School of the Arts, graduating in 1980 with a specialization in choral conducting. That same year she entered the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana and earned a degree in orchestral conducting with the highest honors in 1985. She became music director of the National Ballet of Cuba and remained in that position until 1991 when she requested political asylum in Madrid, Spain. In 1995, she earned a Master Degree in Orchestra Conducting at the University of Miami where she was Associate Conductor for two years. She has been a guest conductor in Spain, Japan, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Peru and Mexico. In 1987, she was the first woman to receive an award at the Third International G. Fitelberg Competition in Poland. She is the founder of the Florida Chamber Orchestra and recently recorded the CD *Memories of Cuba*. She heads the music department at CEA where our children are greatly benefiting from her extraordinary talent and her gift of transmitting her knowledge and love of music.

Amendments

The Academy reserves the rights to modify, amend, delete, or add to this handbook, as it deems necessary in its sole discretion and at any time.

Conchita Espinosa
Founder

Maribel Z. Díaz
Director

Ronn Daniels
Artistic Director

Maria Ofelia Armas
Activities Director