



ICDF Newsflash

June 2020

Staying connected - to the Lord and to each other



This month we continue on the theme of *“Staying Connected - to the Lord and to each other”* as we bring you the story of the submission of the ICDF Foundation to the International Council of Dance for International World Dance Day 2020. This was the first time we have taken part in such an event.

Apart ... yet together

A dance of prayer for World Dance Day 2020

Called “*Apart ... yet together*” this dance is the International Christian Dance Fellowship (ICDF) Foundation’s gift of encouragement to dancers worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The International Council of Dance (CID), a partner of UNESCO, called for videos from dancers all over the world on the general theme “Youth-Dance-Video”. The Foundation’s preliminary submission on faith and hope was accepted days before the cut-off date so we hurriedly put together a dance work with the expertise of the Urquhart family – dancer Celine, choreographer Corinne and cameraperson Robert.

The Chair of the International Christian Dance Fellowship Foundation, Jennifer Dennis, invited Celine to dance a solo for International World Dance Day in a church on the theme - hope, faith and love.

Celine Urquhart, aged 16, is an Australian Ballet student with the John Cranko Schule associated with the Stuttgart Ballet Company, Germany since May 2019. Like dance students across the world, classes have been closed and Celine has had to return to Sydney for the foreseeable future. Ballet training continues on the back deck of the family home coupled with class being zoomed from Germany late in the afternoon once a day. This is a huge disruption to the training program of young elite dancers.

The Foundation commissioned a film of Celine dancing in the oldest church in Sydney. The Church on the Hill, formerly known as St Philip’s Church, is of historical importance being built on the site of the earliest church in the colony. It provides the backdrop to a dancer’s journey of faith.

Corinne Urquhart, a choreographer and trained RAD ballet teacher, developed the dance to the song “You Say” by US singer and songwriter Lauren Daigle. The theme of the dance is the spiritual journey of a young dancer from insecurity and introspection to the comfort and confidence of faith in God. The ICDF Foundation anticipates that this dance will be an uplifting prayer for young dancers worldwide who are affected by the pandemic.



While the dance was filmed in an unusually empty church on a lonely Sunday morning in downtown Sydney, the light from the stained glass windows shone on the white clad dancer, reminding us of our vulnerability yet strength we have in our Lord Jesus. While Celine danced her prayer for dancers worldwide, the usual church service was being zoomed into homes and apartments across Sydney - also apart yet together!

We hope you will also be blessed by this dance!

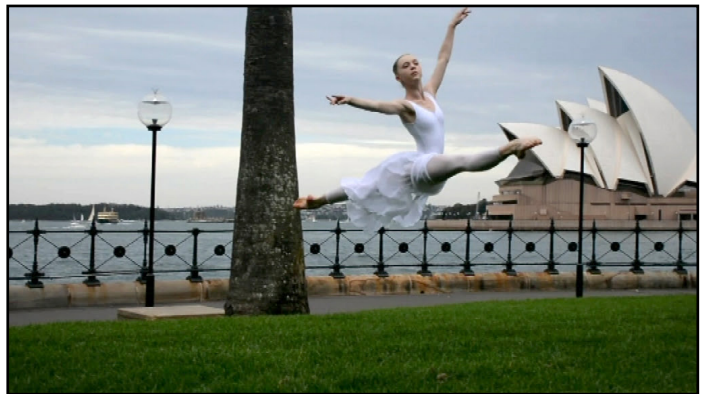
<https://foundation.icdf.com/en/node/254>

Jenny Dennis

Apart ... yet together (the back story)

Corinne Urquhart, director/choreographer, here talks on the choreography process. Corinne is a trained and registered R.A.D. Ballet teacher and experienced contemporary dancer and choreographer. She has directed 'Emotive Arts Contemporary Dance Company' for many years (previously also known as Crea Ruach Creative Arts) and has been involved in numerous dance events such as Platform Shorts, Project Dance and Abundance Concerts. Here are her thoughts:

"Jenny Dennis, Chair of the Foundation, invited Celine and me Friday 24 April to create a dance on Celine for International Dance Day 2020 - Wednesday 29 April - to be completed over the weekend to meet the submission deadline. The aim of the dance was to encourage the dance community during the pandemic. Celine, my daughter, is highly impacted as she is missing her training and is separated from her friends and teachers in Germany. Celine is working very hard to maintain her strength at home, but eagerly awaits the day when she can return to the John Cranko Schule In Stuttgart.



Celine and I wanted the dance to be about a young dancer holding onto her hopes and dreams during this time of disruption.

We chose two locations to set the story. Jenny wanted to film in one of the oldest churches in Sydney. We added the park under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, opposite the Opera House. I used a circular structure for the piece: The dancer moves between these locations.

The locations chosen symbolize many things. The Church building represents people gathering and celebrating their unity through faith in Christ. The empty building symbolises the current separation from each other required through self-isolation and social distancing. Celine dances between the empty pews, gesturing that she still feels connected to her friends, even when apart. The Opera House symbolises Celine holding onto her hopes and dreams for her future - her desire of becoming a professional ballerina. The Bridge is a symbol of faith as it facilitates a connection between disconnected places: the present and the future. We do not know what the near future holds in the aftermath of this pandemic? Yet God's promises of love, goodness and provision are the unseen assurances we have in Christ.

The song 'You say' by Lauren Daigle, a popular US songwriter and singer, focuses on promises to us from God: in this dance, to encourage young people to find their identity in God as they grow into adulthood. The chorus 'I believe' repeats 3 times, with the dynamic rising each time. In the first chorus Celine gently courus in the sanctuary of the church, a place seen to as being closest to the heart of God. The second time, the fouetté entournant action shows an increase in strength of faith, and the third time, Celine jetés with great vigour and freedom, onto the grass in front of the opera house - expressing her hope for the future.

It was a wonderful privilege to work with my daughter on this dance. I deeply respect her technical ability, overseas training, hard work and sensitivity of expression and wonderful appreciation of dance as an artform."

Corinne Urquhart