

Looking Back, Looking Forward

35 Years of Dance for Life from those who've been part of it

Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater

For 35 years, [Dance for Life](#) has presented a one-of-a-kind evening showcasing the variety and artistry of Chicago dance and raising funds to support preventative healthcare and critical medical needs of Chicago's professional dance community. This year, the Chicago Dance Health Fund celebrates that legacy with a program of stellar dance on Saturday, August 22 at [The Auditorium](#). The program features 12 works—repertoire from 10 companies, the revival of a community piece, and a world premiere finale by Randy Duncan.

[Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater](#) brings back to The Auditorium its 2025 premiere *Antecesoras/Ancestors*, choreographed by Associate Artistic Director Jose Torres to traditional flamenco music. Created as part of the company's 50th anniversary tribute to the songs and rhythms of Seville in Andalucía, the work pays homage to those who came before us in the world of Spanish dance and music.



Photo by Dean Paul

Associate Artistic Director Jose Torres has been involved with Dance for Life in various ways for more than 15 years—first as a dancer/performer, then as a committee member, and most recently as a donor. He said, “I am HONORED beyond measure to be involved with Dance for Life in any way that I can.” He shares more thoughts below.

What are some of your earliest/favorite memories of participating in Dance for Life?

My earliest memory of participating in Dance for Life is performing Dame Libby Komaiko's *Bolero* more than 15 years ago. My favorite memory of that time was all of the connections we made with our colleagues in other dance companies and the feeling of support and community backstage and in the wings. I will never forget that feeling.

After 35 years, why do you think Dance for Life, and supporting the Chicago Dance Health Fund, remains important this year and beyond?

As changes in government funding, healthcare laws, and state policy continue to destabilize the landscape for insurance coverage, it is paramount that the Chicago dance community has a support system like the Chicago Dance Health Fund. We can't control what happens at the state and federal levels, but we can impact our community in a positive way to support them through these headwinds.

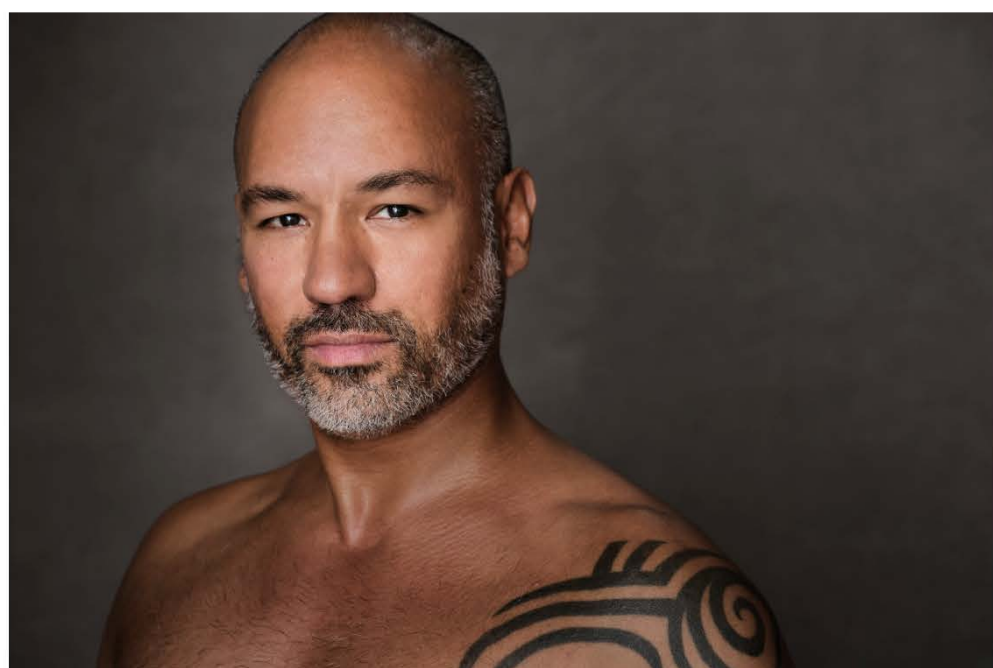


Photo by Joel Maisonet