



NO DAMSELS IN DISTRESS

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTIST
ANGELA HICK'S TEACHES YOUNG
DANCERS TO BE THEIR OWN HERO
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Angela Hicks Performs at the Center for the Arts of Bonita Springs Artist Studios at the Promenade. Shelly Salter/ Special to The Banner

ON POINT

ANGELA HICKS TEACHES FAIRY PRINCESSES HOW TO WRITE THEIR OWN HAPPY ENDINGS...

By PATRICE SHIELDS
Special to The Banner

It just wasn't working. "I can't," said the four-year old girl in a pink tutu about the ballet move she just couldn't get. But in Angela Hick's "Ballet Fairytale" class, damsels in distress need not apply.

"Yes, you can," answered Hicks resolutely. "You just need to bend at the knees."

On a recent Tuesday afternoon Hicks, a visual and performing artist, was teaching more than just ballet to a group of three and four year old girls attending the class at the Center for the Arts of Bonita Springs.

She was teaching seven tiny dancers that they are the choreographers of their lives story.

"Through dance I have achieved self-discipline as the greatest lesson to guiding me through life. When I practice I am literally looking into a mirror to see where my body moves and imagining where it needs to be," said Hicks. "I apply that to my career and personal life, constantly reviewing where I am today and think what can I do to bring myself where I want to be... need to be."

Craig Price, Performing Arts Director at the Center for the Arts of Bonita Springs, called Hicks a unique talent and teacher.

"She is accomplished in so many disciplines of dance and is able to teach all of these styles to such a broad range of age groups, from young children to adults," he said.

For Hicks, dancing is something she has been doing since she could walk.

"The house I grew up in and my parent's jewelry store were my first studios. Just counting training in dance schools, I have been dancing a total of

seventeen years," she said. "At age five I started ballet in a dance academy. I then continued into Pointe, jazz, hip-hop, modern, ballroom, Latin, and Polynesian. Along side of that, I also practiced belly dance from the instruction of my grandmother. She was a belly dance performer and instructor at a belly dance school that was next to her etiquette school in Michigan in the 70's."

Yet it wasn't until she was 13-years-old that she knew this was her calling.

"When I was thirteen years old, I was dancing behind my instructor in ballet, closely following her steps and thought, 'This is what I want to do for the rest of my life, be a professional dancer,'" Hicks said.

When Hicks is not teaching dance, she is performing at cultural fairs, Zorba's Greek Restaurant in Bonita Springs, as well as special events throughout Florida and Los Angeles.

She has performed her sword balancing act at an exclusive vintner dinner for the Naples Winter Wine Festival, where attendees paid a minimum of \$8,500 per couple to enjoy the festivities.

Hick's captivating sword balancing dance, performed with her sister Jessica, mesmerizes crowds and was born from her desire to overcome aichmophobia, the fear of sharp objects.

While studying the different styles of belly dance and the props used for shows, she came across the idea of dancing with a sword.

Initially Hicks dismissed the idea due to her fear, however, one week later she had a sharp double edge Turkish Scimitar Sword in her hands and she was ready to break free from her fear.

In 2001 Hicks began the self-training process of sword balancing, using her grandmother's old school etiquette technique of balancing books on her head for posture and grace.

So as Hicks placed golden tiaras on the heads of the seven tiny ballerinas sitting cross-legged in a circle around her during class, she brings all together.

"Now what was that story we were telling?" she asks the group. "Rapunzel," the tiny voices echo in chorus.

Yes, Rapunzel was saved by a prince.

However, the lesson Hicks imparts on her ballerinas is a different one learned from her sword dancing. "You are the most important person you can depend on...make that person strong," she said with a smile.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

To learn more about the dance classes Angela Hicks teaches at the Center for the Arts of Bonita Springs call (239) 495-8989 or visit www.artcenterbonita.org. You can learn more about Hicks on her website www.swordbalancer.com.



Angela Hicks teaches Ballet Fairytale at the Center for the Arts of Bonita Springs. Patrice Shields/ Special to The Banner (3)



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