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NEWS

Ballet matriarch passes on her love for the dance at her Fullerton studio

Lois Ellyn, who danced for Balanchine, has been teaching aspiring dancers since the 1960s.

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By LOU PONSI / Staff Writer
Published: April 16, 2014 Updated: 2:16 p.m.



NICK AGRO, NICK AGRO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Lois Ellyn Dance Studio, with its brown-brick facade on the left side and ground-to-ceiling windows on the right, looks more like an accountant's or attorney's office.

The unadorned building, partially obscured by two trees in the front, and bordered by a parking lot to the left and alley to the right, is where past meets the present in the centuries-old art of ballet.

Lois Ellyn provides the link.

As a performer, Ellyn studied under and performed with legends. As the owner of a decades-old studio, she has instructed generation after generation of budding ballerinas.

Ellyn is also the founder and artistic director of the Nouveau Chamber Ballet, a ballet company she started in 1986. The 60-member company performs at least three shows annually, in venues such as the Curtis Theatre in Brea and the Muckenthaler Cultural Center in Fullerton.

"It doesn't matter if you don't know anything or have

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and for children

Fullerton, who has been taking classes from Ellyn for seven years. "She brings out the best in everyone."

and adults

Information:

Julia Junn, 22, of Fullerton has been honing her ballet skills with Ellyn for three years.

714-526-3862 or [nouveauchamber](mailto:nouveauchamber@ballet.com)

ballet.com

"It's a very nurturing environment," Junn said. "She teaches you well and really pays attention to each of her dancers."

Ellyn won't tell her age, but the timeline of her career offers a hint.

The Anaheim native was 11 when she watched the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo perform in Los Angeles.

"That did it," she said. "It was just so glamorous ... the whole experience."

Before she was a teenager, Ellyn was studying under Bronislava Nijinska.

"Nijinska was very strict," she said. "You stood at attention when she walked in, and you didn't rest your elbow on the barre."

Ellyn was in her 20s when touring with the Slovinska Franklin Company, where she played the role of Stella in the ballet "A Streetcar Named Desire" in the early 1950s.

Ellyn was then recruited by George Balanchine, called the "greatest choreographer of our time" in 1970 by U.S. News & World Report. Under Balanchine, she performed with the New York City Ballet.

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