

DanceAbility brings eclectic dance to Florence



“Don’t Leave Me” is an enthralling modern dance performance that celebrates creativity and the potential that is only possible when people with and without disabilities work together as equals. This is the first professional mixed-abilities performance ever to be shown in Florence. It is also the first time that DanceAbility International will perform in Florence.

“Don’t Leave Me” is being presented by the DanceAbility International dance company, in collaboration with the University of Oregon School of Architecture, which designed the set structures. The show explores how we are all dependent on each

other and how space determines action and vice versa. The dancers use the ever-changing set design as apparel, as furniture and as architecture. The human and architectural bodies act as a symbiotic community.

This cross-discipline collaboration of dance and architecture takes risks with frames and bodies. During a rehearsal, one of the dancers was high up on the designed structure and felt it start to shake. She immediately called out to the dancers below her “don’t leave me!”

This became the title of the piece.

It speaks to our interdependence and also the DanceAbility method belief that nobody should be left out or left behind. This performance will open audience’s hearts and minds. It shows the unlimited potential of people when disabilities are not viewed as something inferior. The dancers with and without disabilities create and express together as equals.

DanceAbility
International
performances surprise



and delight, as they dissolve labels and barriers.

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“Don’t Leave Me” will be performed at the Florence Events Center June 10, at 7 p.m.

DanceAbility International’s mission is to create opportunities for people with and without disabilities to dance and move together. Its vision is that through dance and movement, people from very diverse backgrounds experience the art of being together. The DanceAbility method began forming in 1988. The DanceAbility method uses improvisational dance to promote artistic expression and exploration between people with and without disabilities.

The method supports self-empowerment by offering ways that all individuals can participate fully in expressing their creative choices, including respecting one’s own limits. Following one’s own interest and desire, and applying that to the benefit of one’s community is a basic DanceAbility teaching. Alito Alessi, the founder of DanceAbility International, based in Eugene, Ore., has been involved with the evolution of contemporary dance for the past 35 years, and is internationally known as a pioneering

teacher and choreographer in the fields of contact improvisation and dance and disability.

He teaches month-long DanceAbility Teacher Certification Courses once or twice a year around the world. He is a Guggenheim Fellow and award-winning choreographer.

First, his choreographic/performance work with Karen Nelson, Mary Oslund and others broke gender barriers in the early 80s, with women lifting men and vice versa.

Since the 90s, he has focused more on choreographing with a mix of dancers with, and without, disabilities. Their vision is that through dance and movement, people from very diverse backgrounds experience the art of being together.

In addition to performing, they conduct recreational classes and workshops and train dance educators to be able to be more inclusive.

For more information or to interview founder Alito Alessi, contact Kathryn Gaines at 541-731-1643 or email kathryn@danceability.com.

For tickets to the June 10 performance at the FEC, visit www.eventcenter.org or call the box office at 541-997-1994.

