

Alumni Profile

Dante Puleio - Dance MFA Program



Career

What made you get into the career that you are in?

My career path and I found each other when I began formal dance training at 19 years old and I've never looked back. Teaching and choreographing have become aspects of my performing practice that the faculty at UCI encouraged me to analyze and hone. My mentors helped shape my perspective as an educator and cultivated my creativity as a choreographer.

How do you hope to make a difference?

I hope to be able to make a difference by passing down all I've learned during my career as a modern dancer with the Limón Dance Company and from my experience as a musical theatre performer with national and international touring Broadway shows. Sharing my understanding of the historical lineage that I've had the privilege of being part of for the past 20 years is my priority as an educator and dance maker.

Your Time at UCI

What program were you in?

MFA in Dance at The Claire Trevor School of the Arts

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

UCI offers a wide variety of reputable voices and practicing professionals that I was confident could guide me from my career as a performer with the Limón Dance Company to fulfilling my potential as an informed educator and creative choreographer. There are a variety of supportive platforms to grow and promote the engaged artist and returning professional.

Reflections

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

I knew there was a level of potential that I could not reach on my own.

Was there one thing or one person at UCI that really helped or made a difference in your graduate/postdoctoral career? If so, tell us about whomever or what it was?

Loretta Livingston and Mary Corey allowed me to discover who I was and helped guide me towards who I wanted to be, not only as a researcher and educator but as a mentor and colleague.

Did you do any research while at UCI and what was it?

- How would you explain your research to your grandparent? How would you help someone understand the importance/significance of this research?

My research explored the significance of American modern dance created during the middle of the 20th century being performed for audiences today. This specific era of dance history is important because this body of work was and continues to be the springboard for artistic practices and endeavors today. Due to the ephemerality of dance, these works are on the verge of being lost as the people who created and danced them are no longer able to bring them to life. I was interested in seeing, if and how, by contextualizing this work it might make it more accessible to the current and next generation of artists and audiences.

- What has impressed you most about the subject matter that you chose for your research/degree while at UCI?

I've only scratched the surface, I am impressed by how much more there is still to learn.

Alumni Life

What are you currently up to?

*I am a Visiting Assistant Professor at University of Florida. This past summer I choreographed and performed a TEDx Talk in upstate New York. This fall I am presenting at the 2018 National Dance Education Organization Conference and I will be at Jacob's Pillow as part of a reconstruction of a 1938 work choreographed by Ted Shawn. This spring I will be staging José Limón's *Traitor*, creating a new piece for University of Florida, and teaching at Hamburg Contemporary School of Dance in Germany.*

What advice do you have for a new graduate student?

Allow yourself to say "I don't know".... then go find out the answer!

What advice would you give to a current graduate student as they look towards their future careers?

Hold on to what it is to be a student and bring that with you when you're the one in front of the classroom.

What person inspires you?

My students, colleagues, and mentors inspire me to be who they think I am and know I can be.