

**LISA ULLMANN TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
REPORT**

**Covering Letter**

Name: Tenika Shauna Mahoney

Location: New York City, USA

Dates: 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012 – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012

Duration: 2 Weeks

The aims for my project were to travel to the USA to undertake 12 dance classes a week on a short course at the New York Broadway Dance Centre (BDC) over a 4-week period, and focus on six different choreographers thus enabling me to obtain invaluable cultural influences in dance styles so as to further develop my current skills as a dancer, choreographer and teacher. Unfortunately due to personal financial reasons I decided to shorten the length of my journey from four weeks to two weeks and focus on one specific choreographer.

This is the story of my Journey...

20<sup>th</sup> August 1:10pm: Heathrow Airport, London UK  
Heading to JFK, New York, USA



As I landed in the 'Big Apple' the excitement had officially kicked in. For the two weeks I was there I generated a two-week timetable to correctly monitor the classes I was going to attend. As previously mentioned due to personal financial reasons I would only be staying in New York for two weeks, so with this in mind I decided to focus on one choreographer by the name of Leslie Feliciano.



Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, **Leslie Feliciano** has been active as a choreographer for over ten years. Known for his dynamic personality and infectious approach to dance, Leslie, in addition to teaching at Broadway Dance Centre, also teaches regularly at Crunch gyms in New York City, as well as at many international locales. He has led workshops and conventions in such varied countries as Australia, Japan, Peru, Slovenia, Sweden, and Dubai.

In addition to his extensive travels, Leslie has worked with platinum recording artists Paulina Rubio and Miguel Bose and most notably, staged Alejandro Sanz's Alma Al Arie world tour. In Spain, Leslie wrote, produced, and directed Hip-Hop Time, a television program for children that taught the fundamentals of Hip-Hop. His work has been

showcased in numerous European television commercials and in such popular awards shows as the Amigo Awards, the Latin American equivalent of the Grammys. Leslie's choreographic style seamlessly blends the influence of his Latin roots, street trends, and any kind of music that inspires movement. At once tough and lyrical, defiant and jubilant, his dances capture the multifaceted characteristics of Hip-Hop. Drawing movements from all types of dance—modern, jazz, lyrical—Leslie's choreography is an organic hybrid of various traditions distilled into his own inimitable style. Leslie's teaching is informed by his Dewbee jammin' philosophy, which he describes as the "force that kicks in when you have no energy." Known for his unflagging intensity in class, he espouses the idea that the spiritual transcends the physical: "When the body shuts down, your Dewbee kicks in and you handle your business." Most importantly however, he believes that having fun in class is paramount: "It doesn't work if you don't smile!"

www.broadwaydancecenter.com/schedule/schedule\_hiphop.shtml

Time	GRIMES Int Adv HH	LUAM Adv Beg HH	GRIMES Int Adv HH	MITCHELL Adv Beg SJ	LUAM Int HH	BEV Beg HH/F	JAMIE Adv Beg HH
4:30-6:00 pm							NINJA AL, Voguing
5:00-8:30 pm	Ms VEE Adv Beg HH		EPHRAT Beg Hse		Ms VEE AL Fpn		
6:00-7:30 pm	FOGLIA Int Adv SH	BEV Bas HH/F	CHIO Adv Beg JF	BEV AL HH/F	CHIO Beg JF	MURAKAMI Int JF	LA JON Int HH
7:30-9:00 pm	RHAPSODY Int Adv SJ	JERMAINE Int JFH/SJ	RHAPSODY Int Adv SJ	JERMAINE Int JFH/SJ	PETERS Beg HH	LUAM Int Adv HH	TAMIA & TAMARA Beg OH
7:30-9:30 pm		BEV AL Funk	PETERS Beg HH	BEV Bas HH/F		Q Beg HH/Fnk	
7:30-9:30 pm		LOCKEROO AL Wacking		LOCKEROO AL Wacking			
9:00-10:30 pm	MURRAY Bas HH/Fnk	ERIC J Adv Beg HSJ	SPEK Bas Lkr	ERIC J Adv Beg HSJ	JAMIE Adv Beg JF		
	ERIC J Beg HH	LUAM Int Adv HH	SCHWARTZ & J. JENKINS Int Adv HH	LUAM Int Adv HH	EPHRAT Beg Bkrn		
	TAMIA & TAMARA Adv Beg DH	BRIAN & SCOTT Int SJ	FOGLIA Int Adv SH	TAMIA & TAMARA Beg DH	NINJA Int Adv Voguing		
		FUTURE AL Hse		FUTURE AL Hse			

**Levels & Experience**

Level	Experience
All Levels	Any level welcome. The teacher will adjust the class to the needs of the students.
Basic	0-2 years training
Beginner	2-5 years training Basic understanding of discipline and general dance terminology
Advanced Beginner	5-8 years training Good understanding and proficiency in discipline and general dance terminology
Intermediate	8-10 years training
Advanced	10+ Pre-professional and professional

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The first class I attended was Leslie Feliciano's Hip Hop Advanced-Beginners class. Although I have been training for many years in the style of Hip Hop I thought it would be a good idea to take a class at a lower level to see how adjustable the class would be as each choreographer/dance teacher teach differently. Also based on the key table on the BDC (Broadway Dance Centre) website, Advanced Beginners was the correct level for myself to be taking.



My first thought being at BDC was to visually document everything. This was so I would come back to England overloaded with inspiration for my choreography and so I could document my time in New York in as much detail throughout this report. Unfortunately due to the high level of privacy clear signs where displayed throughout



the studios restricting participants to recorded or take pictures of choreography without the consent of the choreographer, fortunately Feliciano agreed for myself to take a few images for my report, as long as I assured him it was for that purpose only.

The first class I attended consisted of Leslie firstly introducing himself and the style that we would be expecting to practice in that class and future classes. He went into detail about how he will be teaching the class and what he will be expecting from us as his participants. One thing that I loved was how he continually insisted on letting us all know that his classes are about enjoying dance whether one is a professional or somebody that dances for a hobby, learning something new and most importantly having “Fun”. He wanted the class to understand that focusing on trying to get each move correct is not his main aim.

We began the session with a lengthy warm-up focusing on every part of the body starting from the head, working down to the feet, followed by controlled stretches. We then headed straight into the choreography.



At first I felt very rusty and stiff as I had not done any intense dance training for nearly a year, but with that in mind I was more than energised to get back into the swing of Hip Hop Dance. I picked up on several different qualities of Feliciano’s classes which I automatically thought would be great for me to implement into teaching Hip Hop back in the UK in London. Aspects such as:

- ◆ Giving brief detailed explanations on specific Hip Hop moves which were created in Brooklyn and Harlem – This could be an aspect I integrate into my classes, thus giving more understanding of the Hip Hop dance form to the class
- ◆ Taking short intervals for each participant to catch up and or ask about certain moves they are unsure about.

- ◆ Splitting the class into two big groups so that each group can PERFORM to each other.

As I attended more and more of Feliciano's classes, he went onto discuss the importance of not just going to class to learn Hip hop dance but attending 'JAMS' (Free-styling sessions that last from 2-3 hours, where dancers have the chance to demonstrate their unique styles, pick up on new and reintroduce old-skool Hip Hop moves and most importantly gain further inspiration for choreography). I related to this as I sometimes find I have a limited capacity with my choreography compared to what I want to demonstrate, this resulting in me incorporating a lot of repetition into my material.

Overall my main aim was to obtain invaluable cultural influences in dance styles to further and develop my current skills as a dancer, choreographer and teacher. I can 100% say that this has been achieved. Being in the heart of where the style of Hip Hop dance was born and is still evolving, enabled me to realise there is much more I can incorporate into my teaching methods, knowledge of Hip hop dance and most importantly choreography technique. I would definitely say that attending Broadway Dance Center has given me what I wanted to achieve and discover and more. My ability to utilise different but effective techniques in class has proven to be successful, my passion for dance has grown even further that I am intending to either go back to NYC next summer for 30 days and take classes 5 days a week or enroll on the BDC international student visa programme, where I will be taking 6 different styles of dance on a full time course over 3 months. My decision on which route to take will depend on finances.

Future candidates who are interested in applying for the LUTSF, will most definitely find that this organisation is one of not so many companies who are contributing to helping passionate dancers, teachers, choreographers etc in expanding their skills and knowledge of many dance forms, I thank everyone at the LUTSF for giving me the opportunity to embark upon my journey which for the last 2 years I have been wanting to do. I now want to influence many other dancers to reach out to different countries to explore what they love by seeking help through organisations like the LUTSF.

More Images of my journey...

