

“I will dance as long as I am physically able”

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Laura Hernandez Rivero is 28 and she has spent 22 of them linked to the Spanish dance. At six years old she got involved with her mother —member of the Asturian Societies in Cuba— in the art world. From that moment on, she has not quitted the stage.

She is running the **Iberodance Company**, which was born after the fusion of the **Fusdanz Group** and the **dance school of the Cuba’s Federation of Asturian Associations** together with Andres Barreiro Hernandez. Twelve dancer-professors and dozens of alumni. They have made some performances from the Traces of Spain Festival to the Raul Soto in Memoriam Festival.

Besides being co-director of the company, you are one of the professors. What is the perspective of the Company?

There is a strong will to work and discipline is very strict in Iberodance. Cuba is open to the new emergence of dance schools, amateur dance groups and NGOs. I believe we have perspectives. We want to make a video clip to promote our work, show what we do and being recognized.”

How is your self-improvement?

The Federation has given us the chance to travel to Spain, to Asturias, and we have been trained hard there. It has been a marvelous experience, getting to know the roots of what we are dancing. The other thing is to having a prior knowledge of the culture; knowing the origin of our ancestors. My grand grandparents are from Asturias and it was gratifying for me.”

On the other hand, professors have come from abroad to Cuba to teach many things to us.

Lots of years have passed. The grandparents are gone, so the grand grandparents. If I could take the time back...For those who came to this land...What does this Company mean?

That’s the main goal of our school and really, it should be the goal of all of them. Spanish roots, African roots are threatened as time goes by. Modern trends are in opposite directions. Thus, we are responsible for keeping them alive in memory of those who came here to this island and planted their seed from Spain.

Much of the rhythms we have we use to name them *coming and going*. That is to say, Spaniards came to Cuba. Then, they got back to their land and took with them *rumba, guaguanco*. Afterwards, those rhythms mixed with flamenco rumba, tap-dancing. These dancing emerged and fused together there, which is, by all means, a spectacular show.”

You are a young dancer...How much time do you expect to be on the stages?

You sometimes need to be honest with yourself and say “it’s enough.” Your time is over and young talents push hard. This is part of our work policy. I will dance as long as I am physically able. I have a daughter —she is part of the Company—, and my body has changed. I am not 15 years old anymore. But I still love to teach my students.

***Iberodance* has had major performances. You performed at the National Theater...**

We performed there months ago. The marketing work was very good. The school gathers now lots of students. Tickets were sold immediately. We hope to repeat the experience as everything went well.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Diaz // CubaSi Translation Staff
