thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

Getting Press Coverage

by Lisa Kraus

To the Dance Community,

Every so often on the listserv there's a request from a writer gathering information for a season preview. Otherwise, you don't tend to hear from the press and there seems to be confusion about how to maximize your chances for getting your work covered. Here are some basics:

1) Develop a good press list. Find out which publications and writers cover dance (and possibly some that don't – yet) and to whom press releases should be sent.
2) Write press releases that describe the work you are doing in a detailed, specific way. A press release guideline is at http://www.webwire.com/FormatGuidelines.asp. Use quotes from earlier pieces written about your work and cite examples of important accomplishments while being mindful that 'hype' is not helpful. Press releases are not limited to performance announcements, but can function to keep the press informed of news related to your work. A press release might 'pitch' a particular story about your work that you think will interest readers. Some publications quote directly from releases, so the better they are written, the more chance they bring you for exposure.
3) For scheduled events like performances, send the press release six weeks beforehand. In the case of magazines and 'long lead' publications like Philadelphia Magazine, especially if you are looking for 'previews,' send three to four months ahead. Unlike audience members who may decide up to the last minute to attend an event, planning for coverage by publications is generally done well in advance.
4) List your upcoming events as soon as you know the dates on the Philadelphia Dance Calendar and Dance/UP's Planning Calendar. Writers refer to these for planning.
5) Cultivate good relationships. Just as in any business relationship, be courteous. If someone is helpful to you, thank them. And be wary of spamming, including press in fundraising appeals, etc.
6) Recognize that all publications have limitations in resources and are working to apportion their writers' and editors' time in a way that's consistent with their mission.

Philadelphia is now so attractive to dance artists that we have a multitude of companies and are rich with dance activity. Hopefully these guidelines may be helpful in getting more of the word out.

All the best,
Lisa Kraus
Editor, **thINKingDANCE.net**

[Note: Since I wrote this in January of 2012, thINKingDANCE has shifted its method of assigning pieces so that authors decide for themselves what they will cover. That makes writing a convincing, detailed press release all the more important! Our assigning takes place at or before the beginning of each month for the coming four weeks.]

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