

Early Years Training ~

I am a graduate of The National Ballet School of Canada. The bulk of my formal training in ballet was with Joyce Sheitze, at The School of Dance in Ottawa. Celia Franca was still involved with The School of Dance and it was always a thrill to take her variations classes.

Miss Franca was responsible for giving me my very first paid dancing opportunity. I was the lead pas-de-deux in the ballet portion Miss Franca choreographed for The Canadian Opera Company's production of Die Fledermaus at the O'Keefe Centre, with celebrated opera star Maureen Forrester. We did eight performances which allowed me to travel, with pointe shoes dangling from my backpack, to Europe to audition for a professional dance company.

Professional Dancer ~

I was accepted into the corps de ballet of [The Dutch National Ballet](#), Amsterdam. It was a dream – a company with three house choreographers, full orchestra, amazing dancers from all over the world and in a city of museums, canals, history, and acceptance of the human spirit. I danced in over 30 ballets during my seven years, rode my bicycle to and from rehearsals and performances, took life-drawing classes at the Van Gogh Museum, travelled, and met many lifetime friends.

Finding Contemporary Dance ~

I love classical ballet, but as a dancer leaned into the big broad movements, rooted strength and earthy tones of contemporary dance. During my down time at the Dutch National Ballet, I started taking extra classes in modern dance in Paris. Later once returned to Canada I was a Canada Council grant recipient to train with modern dance icons such as David Earle, Kenny Pearl, Risa Steinberg, Linda Rabin, and Peggy Baker, across Canada and NYC. In my last year at the Dutch National Ballet my feet were not able to do a whole day's worth of rehearsals as well as lengthy classical performances at night in pointe shoes. I came up with some interesting solutions – but those stories

are for another time!

On one break from the company and through my dear friend's suggestion I flew to Montreal to audition for the contemporary repertory company, Judith Marcuse Dance Company. They needed someone to replace an injured dancer who couldn't continue the tour, and I was asked to join immediately. Back in Amsterdam I was about to perform one of the four signets in Rudi Van Dantzig's new Swan Lake, and after much gnashing of teeth and all-night turmoil, I decided to go with the new adventure and leave pointe work.

Modern and Contemporary Dancer ~

The Judith Marcuse Repertory Dance Co. (1984-1991) was a contemporary ballet/modern dance company with seasoned dancers which did extensive touring. Judith not only choreographed herself but was able to attract the work of well-known international modern choreographers such as Ohad Naharin, Christopher House, Grant Strate, Mark Morris and Lar Lubovitch. We went to Asia, all across Canada and up and down the USA. It was the first time I really had any understanding of how dancers survive physically and artistically outside a big state-supported company would do. Unlike the companies in Europe where we had a year-round contract, paid vacation and pension, here dancers had contracts for maybe half the year and the rest was made up with other jobs and short dance contracts.

One such contract was when I went to Tokyo to perform as dancer in the opera Aida at the Tokyo dome with 65,000 people in the stadium and many many in the cast including a live circus of elephants, tigers and bears.

First Teaching ~

As company dancers with Judith Marcuse, we each took turns giving classes in the communities we visited on our cross-Canada tours. I always was keen to jump in, yet often overwhelmed by the numbers and differing levels of experience of those who would eagerly show up to take my class. At that point I felt so green and was frazzled just trying to make the tape machine work! But now I realize that one of my favourite classes to teach is one with large numbers and variety of

abilities and backgrounds. I've learned how to let the unexpected create opportunities for more creativity.

Mother of Two ~

My first daughter was born in 1991 and soon play and dance on the floor was a daily exploration and great fun. Seeing the effort and joy in achieving these baby moves from the ground up led me to become fascinated with movement other than those that I recognized – from dance technique. I discovered Anne Green Gilbert at the [Creative Dance Centre](#) in Seattle. Through Gilbert's Teachers Institute (2000-2008) I learned what has become a foundational practice in all my teaching, directing and choreographing, namely Brain-Compatible Dance. Together with Best Teaching Practices, the Brain-Compatible Dance training combines movement and dance with what we know from those who study how the brain learns.

My Teaching Philosophy ~

I believe a brain-compatible dance class addresses some of our school cultures' stressors, including bullying and lack of vitality and mindfulness. I have seen empathy born in my classes whether working with students or teachers and whether in Northern Ontario, downtown Toronto, or Victoria, BC. This dance experience reaches down deep in unexpected ways even for veteran teachers, jaded caregivers and surly teens. The techniques are fresh and direct; they bring a sense of joy and ease to all who participate in their use. I see children of all learning styles, right through to seniors enabled by these techniques and succeeding in the expression and art of joyful movement. I am interested in questioning how each of our natural movements affect our learning, growth and socialization. I am interested in how a person's movement patterns change over time as their life stories take different turns.

Teaching Now & in the Future ~

I am a Senior Teaching Artist available to teach in-person or online, and presently among other projects

for [The National Ballet of Canada](#), [Canadian Opera Company](#), and [Canadian Children's Opera Company](#). I am passionate to pass on what I do to teachers and those interested in private sessions and at conferences offering Professional Development workshops.

It's an ongoing dialogue ~

I am keen to be in conversation with artists from all genres and participate in communities with the art of dance. I have made a full circle back to my first training grounds in Toronto, and bring with me a wealth of stories, people, and experiences I look forward to sharing with you.

Connect at annemarie@cabridance.com

“Joy, expertise, and compassion. Annemarie sees movement, at all levels, as key to living well.” - Michael Trent, Director of Performing Arts, Metcalf Foundation