

International History

The 1980s were marked by the ADF's move onto the global stage. As worldwide recognition of American modern dance grew, the ADF assumed an active international role. In 1984, it created the International Choreographers Residency Program, through which more than 405 choreographers from around the world have studied and choreographed at ADF to date. That program's success led to the creation of the International Choreographers Commissioning Program (ICCP) in 1987, which offers especially talented international choreographers a chance to create new works using ADF dancers during a six-week residency. In 1999, ADF initiated a new residency program designed to enhance choreographers' skills in arts management.

The scene of the American debut of Japanese Butoh in 1982 and French modern dance in 1983, the ADF subsequently hosted the first North American engagements by major dance companies from Argentina, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Finland, Indonesia, India, Italy, Korea, Venezuela and Zaire. In 1984 ADF held its first international modern dance festival as part of its 50th anniversary celebration and most recently for its 70th anniversary.

In 1984, ADF took off in an even more surprising direction—temporarily re-rooting itself offering classes, workshops and performances with world-renowned dance companies and faculty. These mini-ADFs have included ADF/Japan (1984 and 1986); ADF/Korea (1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2002, 2004); ADF/India (1990); ADF West (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1992); and ADF/Russia (1992, 1997, 2000).

In 1987, ADF's first linkage program began in Guangzhou, China. ADF sent faculty to teach modern dance classes to students and teachers at the Guangdong Modern Dance Academy, and brought Chinese dancers/choreographers to the U.S. These dancers, trained in traditional dance and ballet, were for the first time given the opportunity to express their own thoughts and feelings in choreography and the freedom to develop new approaches to dance that could be applied to their own heritage. The students who participated in these teaching residencies went on to form China's first modern dance company, the Guangdong Modern Dance Company which made its US debut during the 1991 season and completed its first US tour in the fall of 1997. In addition, a young artist from the company, Mr. Shen Wei, was invited to participate in ADF's ICCP in 1995, and in 2000 he formed his own company at ADF. Each year since then, ADF has commissioned him to create a new work, which has been premiered at the Festival to critical acclaim. In addition to China, ADF has developed specially designed international collaborative projects with dance institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Ghana, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zaire.