



About The Company

Diavolo company members are dancers, gymnasts, actors, athletes...and always teammates. Under the guidance of artistic director and founder Jacques Heim, they collaboratively develop work on oversized surrealistic sets and structures. Everyday items...doors, chairs, stairways, provide the backdrop for dramatic movement – leaping, flying, twirling – to create metaphors for the challenge of relationships, the absurdities of life, and the struggle to maintain our humanity in the shadow of a technological world. Founded in 1992, in Los Angeles, the company was nominated for two Lester Horton awards in 1993, and in 1995, Diavolo was named “Best of the Fest” by the London Independent and Critic’s Choice by The Guardian at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Since then, Diavolo has been nominated several times for numerous awards, including four 2001 Lester Horton Awards and two 2003 Lester Horton Awards. In 1998, the company opened the performance series at the new Getty Center Museum in Los Angeles, and also in 1998 Diavolo created its first full evening length work "Catapult"--which was commissioned by the National Dance Project and nearly a dozen prominent performing arts centers around the United States. The 1998-99 season marked Diavolo's first full North American Tour, and subsequent seasons have seen the company perform in over 30 States and also in international venues in such countries as Japan, Mexico, and Chile. Diavolo has been providing educational and community outreach programming since its inception in 1992. In 1998, coinciding with the company’s first national tour, the educational program really began to blossom, with residencies requested and provided at most stops on the tour. Since then, the program has rapidly grown. Diavolo has developed numerous educational workshops, residencies, and interactive school concert performances, that have reached over 100,000 students and adults in communities nationwide and in the Los Angeles Area. The workshops and residencies use specific techniques and exercises to develop trust and teamwork skills. As a non-profit organization, Diavolo has been funded over the years by many individuals, organizations, grants and foundations, including The National Endowment for the Arts, California Arts Council, LA County Arts Commission, City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, The Skirball Foundation, The Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, The Grammy Foundation, and The James Irvine Foundation, to name a few. Diavolo proudly moved into a new 6,300 square foot studio in July 2002, in the heart of downtown Los Angeles at The Brewery Arts Complex, and the studio is rapidly becoming a central hub for the dance community in Los Angeles. Due to the unusual and innovative way that Diavolo works with architectural structures, the creative team at Cirque du Soleil was inspired to engage in a creative partnership with Artistic Director Jacques Heim to work on future projects. Ultimately, Mr Heim was chosen to choreograph the newest permanent Cirque show in Las Vegas, entitled “Ka”, opening in Feb of 2005.



Jacques Heim, Artistic Director

Jacques Heim was born in Paris. He earned a BFA in theatre, dance and film from Middlebury College, as well as a Certificate for Analysis and Criticism of Dance from the University of Surrey in England. Heim moved to Los Angeles in 1989 and attended California Institute for the Arts, where he received a MFA in choreography. In 1992, Heim founded Diavolo Dance Theater. He was the recipient of the 1992 Martha Hill Choreography Award by the American Dance Festival, and the 1992 Special Prize of the Jury at the Sixth Saitama International Dance Festival in Saitama, Japan. He was nominated for the 1996 and 2000 CalArts/Alpert Awards in the Arts for Dance. In 1998 and 1999 Heim was nominated for a Lester Horton award for Best Choreography. In 1999, Heim received a James Irvine Foundation Fellowship in choreography, and a Fellowship from the Brody Arts Fund. In summer 2001, Heim was one of three choreographers chosen to create a piece for the Ballet Pacifica Annual Choreographic Workshop. He has been named one of the “Faces to Watch in the Arts” by The Los Angeles Times and one of the “100 Coolest People in L.A.” by Buzz Magazine. Heim recently completed teaching Intensive Movement for Actors at U.C.L.A. and Cal State Los Angeles. Due to the unusual and innovative way that Diavolo works with architectural structures, the creative team at Cirque du Soleil was inspired to hire Jacques Heim to choreograph their newest permanent show in Las Vegas, entitled “Ka”, which will have its grand opening in February of 2005.

Artistic Vision

MISSION STATEMENT

Diavolo redefines dance through dynamic movement, enlightening communities through trust, teamwork, and individual expression.

As Modern society becomes more complex with new technologies and marvelous possibilities, the everyday act of survival becomes increasingly fraught with danger and anxiety. My work investigates the latent absurdities of contemporary human life and seeks to recontextualize those absurdities through the body, exploring the influences of the environment, possessions and relationships. My aim is to capture and comment upon the ironic and frequently humorous patterns, as well as the darker consequences, of human behavior. I am also searching to expand the boundaries of what is considered to be dance by trying to create movement that offers audiences a cinematic experience of powerful images and abstract narratives.

Through the company, I try to convey an appreciation for movement by breaking down barriers to dance via a vocabulary based on everyday activities. Diavolo is made up of



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people of varied abilities and training - dancers, gymnasts, rock climbers, and actors - all of whom are teammates. Building a team that allows for complete trust has been essential to creating a kind of work where dancers are inspired to take serious risks. Architectural structures or sculpted adaptations of everyday items - sofas, doors, stairs - provide the backdrop for dramatic and risky movement, revealing metaphors for the challenge of maintaining human relationships in modern environments.

The Creative Process

Collaboration, interconnectivity and relationships play important roles in my work. When asked about my process, I often think of a quote I once read by essayist Roger Rosenblatt: "The best in art and life comes from a center, something urgent and powerful - an idea or emotion that insists on its being. From that insistence, a shape emerges and creates its own structure out of passion. If you begin with structure, you have to make up the passion. And that's very hard to do." I am really excited about exploring the very tension that exists between passion and structure. I am concerned with how we navigate this terrain, how we adapt to it, and finally, how we remain free. Although no two Diavolo pieces are created identically, they do always start with a passionate idea - born out of artwork that moved me in a certain way, or an exchange I watched between two people on the street, for example. I immediately decide on an idea for a constructivist set piece. Whether found or constructed, I choose the set because of its role in our lives - its architectural qualities, its geometric shapes and its mechanical functionality. In short, it must be something striking, as landscape or as object, that compels exploration and the desire to understand the ways in which it influences human behavior.

Using a structured improvisation process, I engage dancers in a journey of "working out" with a new prop for at least six weeks - exploring the set's possibilities, and cultivating the story behind the work. Sometimes the process takes more time, or goes off in an entirely new direction. It helps me toss out any preconceptions with which I might have entered the process, and allows the piece to emerge. After the improvisation period is over, I develop the structure and movement script, setting the piece and developing metaphoric content. Most commonly, once the movement has been set, the music is then laid onto the piece. My work is never static, and pieces will change from performance to performance, sometimes quite radically over the course of a year.

-Jacques Heim