

NYC Ballet dancer returns to Malibu for performance



Indiana Woodward of the New York City Ballet practices for her Concert On the Bluffs performance. Chris Bashaw/22nd Century Media

Chris Bashaw, Editor

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Indiana Woodward can't stop dancing.

"If I don't dance, I don't feel good," said the New York City Ballet dancer. "The feeling in my blood and bones doesn't feel nice if I don't."

While most people perk up in the mornings with a cup of coffee some stretching, Woodward said her day doesn't start off the right way without a little dance.

"I dance on my driveway by myself sometimes," she said. "Even when I'm on vacation, I have to dance around and do something."

Born in Paris, Woodward spent some of her early life in France, where her father lives. Even at an early age, her need to move with organized form was apparent.

"I would dance non-stop in the sun on the beach, and my dad would call it 'la danse du soleil,' or 'the dance of the sun,'" Woodward said. "He says he sees that kind of spirit on the stage from me, too."

Eventually, Woodward moved to Malibu, where her compulsion to dance began to take the shape of what is now her career with the NYC Ballet Company.

While she typically comes back to visit Malibu for friends and family, Woodward's most recent homecoming is particularly special to her, and something she hopes the community will find just as special.

At 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 12, at Malibu Bluffs Park, Woodward will open the City of Malibu's inaugural Concert on the Bluffs event with a solo dance to Malibu composer Gordon Sumner's "Shape of My Heart" – choreographed by her mother, Malibu resident Amanda Kofsky.

Woodward and three other dancers from the New York City Ballet will perform throughout the concert as well.

In her eyes, it's the kind of performance she wish she could have seen in Malibu when she was a student at Webster Elementary School, and beginning ballet classes with the late Yuri Grigoriev in Santa Monica.

"I feel so privileged to maybe spark some motivation in some other kids from Malibu. I think that's the other part of my job, to give back to the important places in my life, and Malibu's definitely one of them," Woodward said. "When I was here, there wasn't very much opportunity to perform or see ballets in Malibu."

Woodward studied under Grigoriev until she was 15. She attended Malibu High School throughout 10th grade. The summer following her completion of the 10th grade, Woodward attended a two-month summer course at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow.

While in Moscow, she received a surprising letter: The School of American Ballet in New York, to which she auditioned for earlier that year, accepted her on a scholarship.

"SAB was the only school I auditioned for who gave me a scholarship, and I wanted to go to a place that liked and believed in me in some sort of way, so I chose that school," she said.

Woodward said she also wasn't aware that SAB was a feeder school to the New York City Ballet, and surprised that after two years of her planned three-year program, the company wanted to take her on as an apprentice dancer.

She was surprised, because she was bracing to go through the most rigorous leg of her dance education when she was hired.

But, for Woodward, perhaps her success is as natural as her inclination to move.

"I don't know how to explain it," she said. "When you dance, it's just such a freedom of expression. I don't always speak very much to everyone or communicate in other ways, and dancing is the easiest way for me to communicate and not be afraid of anything."

A limited amount of tickets for the Concert on the Bluffs event will be sold on Sunday, June 12 at Malibu Bluffs Park, for a show start time of 4:30 p.m.

Visa, Master Card and cash are only accepted for onsite sales.

Parking will be available on Malibu Canyon Road and at Malibu City Hall, 23825 Stuart Ranch Road, and free shuttles will run 3-7 p.m.