



GLORYA HALLELUJAH!

PHILANTHROPIST GLORYA KAUFMAN SPEARHEADS NEW USC DANCE SCHOOL. BY LIBBY SLATE

ONE NIGHT IN NOVEMBER 2011, DR. ROBERT Cutietta, dean of the school of music at USC, had dinner on campus before a dance performance. Among his guests was a woman he'd not previously met, invited by one of his dining companions: Los Angeles philanthropist Glorya Kaufman.

Kaufman was already noted for the series *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at the Music Center* and for *Glorya Kaufman Hall* at UCLA. "I love dance," she told Cutietta. "Why is there no dance [education program] at USC? Let's change that."

And change it she did. One year later, USC unveiled plans for the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, headquartered at the USC Glorya Kaufman International Dance Center, made possible by a multimillion-dollar donation from Kaufman. Groundbreaking took place in April 2014; the first freshman class of 33 students began taking courses last year, elsewhere on campus.

Located on the site of the former student health center, near the campus's five other arts schools,

the Dance Center officially opens Oct. 5.

The school's motto, "The New Movement," captures the philosophy behind the curriculum.

"Why even go to college—why take four years out—if your career ends at 30?" says Cutietta, now also dean of the dance school, whose own daughter is a retired dancer at age 32. "If you want to be a ballerina, without a career after 30, that's fine. But if you want a career in dance that lasts a lifetime,

The new Dance Center at USC is the equivalent of five stories tall but with only three levels, providing cathedral ceilings for four first-floor studios.

with choreographic and other skills, we can give you a career in dance. We're not training dancers. We're making dance-makers. The whole curriculum is built around that."

The curriculum, which leads to a BFA in dance, was developed by Jodie Gates, director and vice dean of the school. A former principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet and Pennsylvania Ballet, Gates was an associate professor of dance at UC Irvine

prior to her USC post. Her vision incorporates an interdisciplinary, collaborative approach to dance, creating what she calls a "hybrid" art form that includes practice and performance, music and choreography, but also classes in new media, writing and critical thinking, the dancer's role in society, even dance management and entrepreneurship. Non-major offerings include Afro-Cuban dance and tap dance.

The Dance Center, designed by Pfeiffer Partners Architects and built by MATT Construction, is almost 55,000 square feet. It's the equivalent of five stories tall but with only three levels, providing cathedral ceilings for four first-floor studios ranging in size from 2,300 to 2,500 square feet. Each studio is named for the jewel tone in which it is painted, per Kaufman's specifications; the first letters of the four colors—amethyst, red, topaz and sapphire—spell out ARTS.

Everything about the design inspires movement. The stunning lobby, in white and hues of purple, features a sweeping grand staircase, walls that seem to undulate and a chandelier composed of several art deco fixtures culled from Kaufman's own collection. There are curves everywhere; a hallway simulates a dancer's leg. Wooden ledges provide a barre for stretching. Natural light floods

the lobby and studios.

The studios are what Cuttieta calls a "box in box" design. Floors don't touch the walls; sound and vibrations don't bleed through from one studio to another. Floors are "sprung," cushioned beneath. Studios have flat-screen TVs and pianos. A performance studio doubles as a black box theater.

The dance center is also home to the new USC Choreographic Institute. Advisor William Forsythe's work is the focus of "Futures in Motion," a discussion with collaborator Norah Zuniga Shaw Oct. 14; "Site-Specific Forsythe" at LACMA Oct. 15-16; and "Celebrate Forsythe" at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Oct. 21-23.

The building has already lived up to expectations. Says sophomore Celine Kiner, 19, "As artists, we crave a visually stimulating environment to inspire us daily. The gorgeous curving lines throughout the building, the grandeur of the staircase, the artistic design of the chandelier and sconces, and more, allow us to run with our imagination in our workspace. And of course, the copious amounts of space in each room ensure that we don't feel at all boxed in. Instead, we are free to move and create."

And, says Gates, "everybody who has walked in here so far has said, 'The energy here is wonderful. I want to dance!'" 