



The Dance Begins:

Pierre Dulaine was born in Jaffa, Palestine in 1944. His Irish father was serving with the British Army stationed in Palestine; his mother is part Palestinian and part French. In 1948 his parents had to flee the troubles leaving their home behind for the creation of the state of Israel. After 8 months of wandering around first in Cyprus, then in England and Ireland, Pierre's family settled in Amman, Jordan. Growing up in Amman, Pierre learned to speak French at school, Arabic on the street and English at home. In 1956, because of the problems in Egypt and the Suez Canal, Pierre's parents had to flee yet again, leaving everything behind. With a stop in Beirut the family resettled in Birmingham, England, where one year later at age 14, Pierre began his dancing career.

By the time Pierre was 18 he took his Associate Degree as a professional dancer. And at 21, he took his three majors exams in Ballroom, Latin and Olde Tyme all in one day, a feat that had not been accomplished before. Not only did Pierre pass the exams, but he passed with Highly Commended and became a full member of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.

With this early success under his belt, Pierre soon went on to twice win the "Duel of the Giants" at the Royal Albert Hall in London and captured the "All England Professional Latin American Championship". In 1971 Pierre worked as a solo dancer at the famous *Talk of the Town* in London's West End, as well as at a late, late Night Club called *L'Hirondelle* where he made friends with many interesting 'artistes'. Pierre next went to Nairobi, Kenya and worked in *Cabaret* with the world renowned Bluebell Troupe from Paris at the Nairobi Casino for a year. Finally, Pierre signed on as a cruise director on a ship sailing out of New York City to the Caribbean Islands. In 1972, "I got off of the cruise ship thinking I would be in New York City for a two-week holiday but I got a job at an Arthur Murray dance studio and I have been in New York ever since."

In 1973, with a background in ballet, Yvonne Marceau came into Arthur Murray's for a teacher's job and in January 1976 Pierre and Yvonne became dance partners. They went to England to study for three months with John DelRoy and emerged as a dance team that won numerous awards and accolades, including the 1977, '78, '79 and '82 British Exhibition Championships, Dance Magazine's award for excellence, the National Dance Council of America award, the Dance Educators of America Award, and the Americans for the Arts "Arts in Education" 2005 award.

In 1984, Pierre and Yvonne started the American Ballroom Theater Company. They made their company debut at the Dance Theatre Workshop in October 1984 and in March 1986 did a two-week engagement at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. After that start, their company traveled all over the US, Europe and the Far East. In July 1989 Pierre and Yvonne joined the workshop for Tommy Tune's Broadway show *Grand Hotel* and danced on Broadway for 2 ½ years, finishing with a five month run in London's West End.

Pierre has been called a "Dancer and Teacher extraordinaire" by the New York Times and (with Yvonne) has received the Astaire Award for "Best Dancing on Broadway" in *Grand Hotel*. He has been a faculty member of both the School of American Ballet and the Juilliard School.



Raison d'etre for *Dancing Classrooms* by Pierre Dulaine

The reason for my involvement with children goes all the way back to my own teenage years in England. Having spent 13 years in the Middle East, I arrived in England as a very shy child with a heavy accent, settling in the midlands, in Birmingham. Several children in my school class went to a dancing school that happened to be on a main road near my house. I decided this would be fun to try but soon learned it would take a lot of work to catch up to the other students so private lessons were necessary.

To pay for my weekly half-hour lesson I did a morning paper-round and washed cars on weekends. Eventually I passed my Bronze test and joined the other students in the Silver class. One Sunday afternoon I attended a dance competition as a spectator at the local Garryowen Ballroom; unfortunately without my father's consent since Sundays were reserved only for religious things. But that afternoon something stirred inside me.....I knew I wanted to become a champion.

Dance changed my whole life!

With a lot of enjoyable hard work it gave me everything I dreamed of. From being very shy I became confident; my accent no longer mattered to me. I learned to stand up straight and shake hands with a positive attitude that received attention. I became the champion of my dreams.

While performing evenings on Broadway in the musical *Grand Hotel* my days were free to volunteer at the Professional Performing Arts School. I saw myself in the eyes of the children, saw the love and fun they had moving together and remembered what it did for me and watched what it did for them.

But there were so many other children in New York City that did not have the same opportunity and so *Dancing Classrooms* was born. This outlet for expression, musically and emotionally, connects their positive feelings for one another, focuses their physical energy and builds their self-esteem and social skills.

The rest is history.