

Daza Dance

BY MARIAM QURESHI

*“Dance till the stars come down
from the rafters. Dance, Dance,
Dance till you drop.”*

-W. H. Auden



Ever find yourself wishing you could spin gracefully around a ballroom like Fred Astaire or Ginger Rogers? If so, don't live your dance dreams through television shows like "Dancing with the Stars." Allow such inspiration to guide you to Daza Dance Ballroom Academy. Within their five-ballroom, 13,000-square-foot studio, you'll be able to learn dozens of dances and a repertoire of steps, from the foxtrot to samba to modern and lyrical dance.

Located in Johns Creek, Daza Dance is a premier academy. Their professional staff is dedicated to providing an enchanting and friendly environment where beginning and advanced students can reach their full dancing potential. Feeling a little self-conscious of shaking your good foot? Novices need not be intimidated; the learning experience is encouraging and supportive. Under the expert direction of Daza's instructors, students will garner confidence on the dance floor. In fact, some students even compete in national amateur competitions.

Liz Chester, Daza Dance's Chief Executive Officer, is an example of student turned competitor. "Within three months of dancing with my instructor, Antonio Daza, we were competing in regional and national ballroom competitions," she recalls. Chester and Daza met at a local dance studio, and immediately struck up a friendship. Chester turned to dance to heal her broken heart after losing her husband. Having recently retired from the corporate world, she found dance to be the best manner to spend her time. For Daza, moving to Atlanta from his home country of Venezuela was the perfect opportunity for him to fulfill his childhood dream of dancing professionally. "We became very good friends and realized that we both wanted to run our own dance academy," states Daza.

Both Daza and Chester knew that opening their own business required a great deal of research. However, they were excited about the challenge. After researching studios and attending seminars on the West Coast, they were energized to share their passion and enthusiasm for dance with Atlanta. Daza and Chester realized their collective dream when Daza Dance Ballroom Academy opened its doors in May 2008.

"Our first challenge opening the studio was to locate the perfect space. After a concerted effort of searching for six months, we found it and built our studio to include large ballrooms, each with state-of-the-art lighting and music," Chester explains. "There's never a lack of space for lessons, especially as three of the ballrooms have floating dance floors!"

Many of Daza's students and instructors compete in renowned competitions, including the Atlanta Open and the Heritage Classic Competition at the Grove Park Inn. "Daza Dance has placed in the three Top Studios at the Atlanta Open out of approximately 160 studios. We're most pleased that this happened within our first year of operation," beams Daza.

One of Daza Dance's main objectives was to develop a core of professional staff instructors. "As a trained instructor, I knew the importance of having superior teachers," says Daza. "Our vision was to provide trainers with a place to work that afforded job security and health benefits. Our studio is unlike anything in the Southeast, so we were able to attract experienced and talented instructors with our inviting, spa-like atmosphere. Additionally, we are truly interested in their needs and professional goals." Daza's staff is certainly dedicated. Within a year, they have grown from four instructors to over 20. As a member of the NDCA Dance Association, Daza attracts some of the best highly experienced professionals. If a student is interested in pursuing a career in teaching, Daza's Teachers' College allows one to do so. "This takes real commitment and time," advises Chester. "However, if you have the passion, the love of dance has no boundaries."

Daza Dance offers a wide range of programs; there are 50 group classes a week. Additionally, students can enroll in private or semi-private lessons. "We discuss with our students their goals. Whether it's to lose weight, fill a void in their lives, build a social network or prepare for a special occasion like a wedding, we want to help each dancer achieve his or her individual goals," says Chester.

Friday and Saturday nights prove to be electrifying as students are invited to attend dance parties. The dramatic lighting and DJ set the stage for students to show off their best moves. There is also the dinner and dance program with Altobell's Italian restaurant. For \$40, guests enjoy a fantastic meal followed by an evening of dancing (all guests are chauffeured between Daza and Altobell's).

"One of the most rewarding aspects of Daza is to watch others discover a passion and love for dance," describes Chester. "Dance is holistic in its benefits. It works wonders for the mind, body and spirit."

To learn more about the exciting programs at Daza Dance, please visit daza-danceatlanta.com or contact 678-910-9693.