

Iowa City

Press-Citizen

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Choreographer plans local dance company

By Reed Dunn

Iowa City Press-Citizen

This is a good moment in his life.

Professionally speaking, Armando Duarte is ready to start an ambitious project.

It will be called Duarte Dance Works, for now. In three to five years, there is hope it

Theater will become a professional dance company, based in Iowa City. The company would perform a repertoire created by the choreographer and University of Iowa professor of dance.

The project is being introduced to the public this weekend in a pair of dance concerts, "Ten," which doubles as a celebration for Duarte, who is entering his 10th year on UI's dance faculty.

"We can see it as a celebration of the last 10 years, but I see it as a celebration of the next 10," he said.

A native of Brazil, Duarte combines a collection of eight dances — six reworked performances created at UI and two new pieces — for the

If you go

■ **What:** "Ten," a dance celebration of Armando Duarte.

■ **When:** 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

■ **Where:** Space/Place Theatre, University of Iowa North Hall.

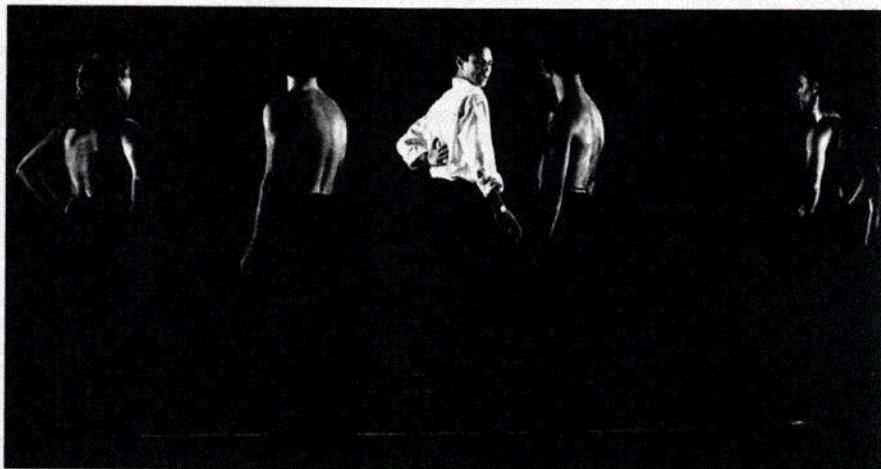
■ **How much:** \$12 for the general public and \$6 for UI students.

■ **Information:** 335-3041.

weekend concerts, which feature UI students, alumni and guest dancers from the Houston Ballet.

"Sometimes you can see a line in a choreographer," says Fernando Moraga, a Houston Ballet soloist and guest artist for "Ten." "All of these pieces are very special, very unique."

Dominic Walsh, a principal dancer with the Houston Ballet, has created 20 ballets for his own Houston-based company. He also is dancing in the weekend concert,



Press-Citizen / Danny Wilcox Frazier

Armando Duarte instructs dancers while rehearsing "Noir." Duarte, an associate professor in the University of Iowa Dance Department, is celebrating 10 years at UI with his production "Ten."

which he expects will be the beginning of something great.

"He's one of those choreographers that's on the track of using all the really nice techniques together," Walsh said. "I sort of resonate with the way he fuses things together."

Alessandra Herszkowicz, a Sao Paolo, Brazil-native, who now is a member of the Sandra Organ Dance Company, also is strongly behind the idea. She studied with Duarte for four years as a UI student, and thinks the concept is one that works well for a culture-hungry Iowa City.

"I think, if this becomes a company, it would be an amazing opportunity for students to stay here," she said. "I just think this could be an amazing thing for Iowa City."

As a choreographer, Duarte's work has been presented in Brazil, Argentina, Japan, Switzerland and the United States. He has created numerous dances — 26 in his last nine years — specifically for UI students and the annual Dance Gala.

"I think his work is very honest,"

Herszkowicz said. "It makes you bring something out of yourself."

Duarte hopes to bring something new out of himself with Duarte Dance Works. He wants to concentrate his spare time on creating the company, a goal he said will take no less than three full years, and continue his academic commitments to the dance department.

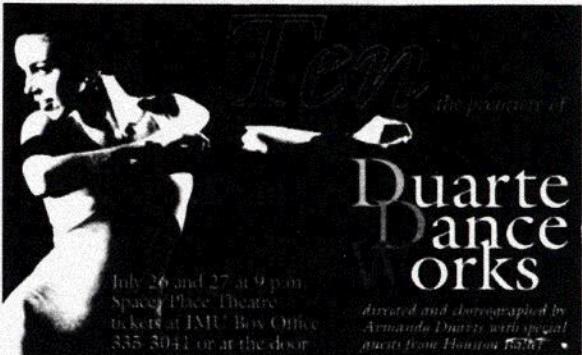
One advantage working in Duarte's favor is the existence of Hancher Auditorium, a premiere arts venue that strongly supports dance. Last season, the Houston Ballet pre-

sented "The Firebird," and performances from Ballet Folklórico de Mexico and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company appeared on the Hancher stage.

"Iowa City is very significant to arts in this country," Duarte said. "Hancher is a mirror of that."

For now, the focus is on building an audience and gaining the support of arts enthusiasts. This is the reason for "Ten."

"Iowa City — it's an environment that can support projects like this," Duarte said.



July 26 and 27 at 9 p.m.
Space/Place Theatre
tickets at IAU Box Office
335-3041 or at the door

directed and choreographed by
Armando Duarte with special
guests from Houston Ballet

Press-Citizen / Danny Wilcox Frazier

Armando Duarte speaks with lighting and sound engineers as Nicole Wong practices her dance piece, "Lay of Errantry."