



IDTA

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Remembering

Phil Winston

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Although I write this piece with a very heavy and saddened heart, I also feel incredibly privileged to have been asked to share my thoughts about my much-loved friend, former President, Director and Examiner of the International Dance Teachers Association, Phil Winston.

What can I say about Phil that has not already been said? We all knew he was an icon of the dance world – exceptionally talented, hugely respected and gifted with an extraordinary creative mind. His knowledge, choreographic ability and understanding of dance across so many genres were second to none.

Long before I became an examiner, I knew of Phil. He had qualified as an examiner at a remarkably young age. I would eagerly attend his lectures at Congress, seminars and the Leicester Summer School. Whatever the subject, Phil had the ability to inspire. He had that rare gift of making everyone in the room want to learn more, think more deeply and strive to be better.

When I eventually became an examiner myself at the age of 30 Phil made me feel very welcome at my very first Examiners' Meeting. I have to admit that I was still very much in awe of him.

As time went on, I became involved in IDTA filming at the world-famous Phil Winston's Theatreworks College in Blackpool. Once again, I found myself in awe – not only of Phil, but of the dancers he had trained. They were beautifully disciplined, wonderfully versatile and instantly recognisable. You could always spot a "Philly".

At the end of the filming, Phil came over to me and, in true Phil fashion, gave me his thoughts. They were, shall we say, brutally honest. At the time I was absolutely horrified! Yet, as time passed, I realised that every point he had made was correct. That was Phil. His honesty was never intended to hurt; it came



Loraine Hastings and Phil Winston

from a genuine desire to make things better and from his unwavering love of dance. More often than not, he was right.

Not long afterwards, over dinner in a restaurant in Blackpool, we talked about that conversation. It was then that I discovered another side of Phil Winston. Behind the accomplished professional was a man of immense wisdom, kindness, loyalty and sensitivity. That evening marked the beginning of a friendship that would last for more than twenty years.

During those years we shared countless conversations, laughs, debates and, on occasion, tears. Phil never stopped surprising me. I remember being at venues where a piece of classical music would begin to play, and within seconds he would identify the composer, the work, the exact suite and, if it was from a ballet, precisely where it came from. His depth of knowledge was simply astonishing.

Phil's passion for the IDTA was unquestionable. He lived and breathed our Association. He cared deeply about its members and was never afraid to stand up for what he believed was right. His commitment,

integrity and dedication helped shape the IDTA for generations, and his influence will continue to be felt for many years to come.

On a personal level, I will miss our daily telephone calls, usually at some ridiculously early hour because we both seemed to believe the day started before everyone else's. Those conversations were never just about dance. We would solve the world's problems, put the world to rights, laugh until we cried and support one another through life's challenges.

Those who knew Phil professionally will remember his brilliance. Those fortunate enough to know him personally will remember his generosity, his loyalty and his selflessness.

Phil Winston was many things to many people – an outstanding teacher, choreographer, examiner, Director, President, mentor and visionary. He leaves behind an extraordinary legacy that will continue to inspire dancers and teachers for generations.

For me, however, beyond all of his remarkable achievements, he was simply my friend. I shall miss him more than words can ever express, and I will be forever grateful for the privilege of having known him.

Rest peacefully, Phil.

Thank you for everything.

Lorraine Hastings

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Saying goodbye to my dear friend Phil Winston

Saying goodbye to my dear friend Phil, a friendship that spans more than 40 years.

Phil was a choreographer of extraordinary talent, a creative genius, and an icon in the dance world. His vision, artistry and passion inspired countless people, and his legacy will live on in every life he touched and every performance he helped to bring to life.

To me, though he was simply Phil – my dear friend. We shared over four decades of laughter and tears. The laughter was too numerous to mention, and when life brought its inevitable challenges, the tears were shared too. Whenever one of us needed support, the other was there. Phil was always there for me, with kindness, understanding, unwavering loyalty, and a friendship to treasure forever.

Phil dedicated his life to the International Dance Teachers Association, serving with passion as a teacher, adjudicator, choreographer, mentor, examiner, lecturer, faculty member, director, and ultimately, as President of the Association – an honour that filled him with immense pride. His commitment to dance education and to nurturing future generations was extraordinary, and his influence on the profession will endure for many years to come.

His passion took him all over the world. Most recently, he travelled to China, where he examined, lectured, and reunited with old friends whilst making many new ones. Wherever he went people were drawn to his warmth, generosity, humour, and infectious personality. He had a remarkable gift for making everyone feel valued.

TheatreWorks College Blackpool was another of Phil's great loves. He trained hundreds of students, many who went on to enjoy successful careers in West End productions, on cruise ships around the world, in television and as dancers alongside some of the biggest names in entertainment. His influence was immense, not only through careers he helped shape but through the confidence, discipline, and love of dance he instilled into so many.



Linda Cook and Phil Winston

While the dance world has lost one of its brightest lights, I have lost someone even more precious – a lifelong friend. I will miss his warmth, his laughter, his extraordinary creativity, and, above all his unwavering friendship.

Thank you, Phil, for more than forty years of memories, laughter, support, and love. Your legacy will live on in the countless lives you inspired, and your friendship will remain in my heart forever. Dance on, my dear friend. You will be deeply missed, lovingly remembered and never forgotten.

Love Linda x

Linda Cook