

DanceFest 2010 at Stamford's Palace

By Christina Hennessy, Staff Writer

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When asked to repeat the number of dancers who will be performing in Sunday's finale of DanceFest 2010 at Stamford's [Palace Theatre](#), director [Carol Bryan](#) paused and laughed.

"Yes, 370," she said. "It's big, and really very exciting."

This is the eighth year students from 18 area dance schools will converge at the downtown site to enjoy two weekends of education and performance. The participants, who pay a fee, are there on the recommendation of their directors.

After technical rehearsals Saturday, each dance school will perform a selection that displays their strengths during Sunday's performance, Bryan said.

"If they are strong in ballet, they will bring a ballet piece. If they are strong in tap, they will bring a tap piece. If they are strong in hip hop/ funk, they will bring a hip hop/funk piece," Bryan said.

The group, which includes girls and boys, will come together in the finale for an original piece that Bryan has choreographed.

[Annaliese Schulster](#), a student at [Ballet School of Stamford](#), has been coming to DanceFest for three years.

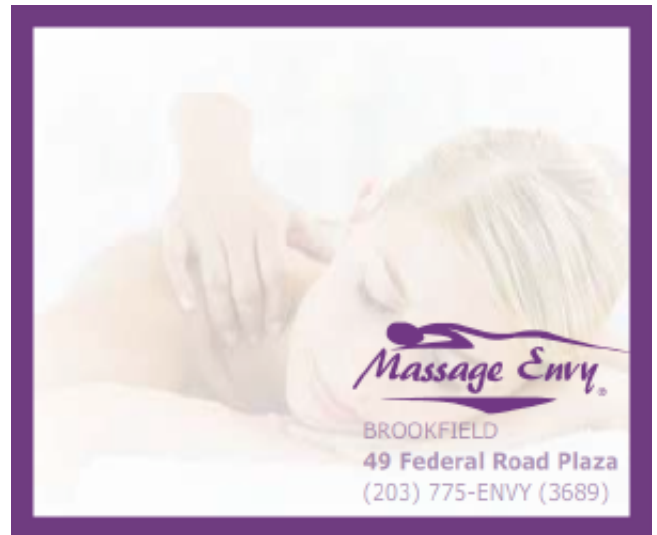
The 16-year-old has been studying ballet since age 5, but has used the festival as a way to learn more about contemporary dance. This year, she plans to check out Latin jazz.

"It's a great experience," she said. "You get to meet up with new people and learn a lot of styles."

Last weekend, students ranging from ages 10 to 18 had a chance to participate in master classes of different styles of dance, such as modern, Latin jazz, hip-hop, funk, contemporary, tap and ballet.

"They are all acclaimed professionals in their field," Bryan said.

Bryan is no stranger to dance, having performed professionally with the [American Ballet Theatre](#) and taught at many of the leading schools for the past 35 years. She created DanceFest through the [Stamford Center for the Arts](#), based on the request of the former executive director and artistic director of the organization, [George Moredock](#).



At the time, Bryan had been working as the agency's education coordinator and director of outreach programs. But when the Stamford Center for the Arts filed for bankruptcy in 2008, the DanceFest was without a producer and Bryan no longer held her post.

But given DanceFest's success, Bryan said she wanted to keep it going. So, she independently produced the event in 2009 and has done that again this year.

The organization has since emerged from bankruptcy and Bryan said she is now working part-time with the organization coordinating the same kind of programs she did in the past.

Palace Theatre is at 61 Atlantic St., Stamford. Sunday 6 p.m. \$32, \$15 17 and younger. For tickets, box office open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays; day-of open two hours before show. 203-325-4466, www.scalive.org.

Who's performing?

DanceFest 2010 has attracted participants from across the area. The list of dance schools expected to perform at the student festival beginning at 6 p.m., Sunday, at the Palace Theatre, 61 Atlantic St., are:

- [Armonk Center](#) for Dance, Armonk, N.Y.
- [Ballet Atlantic Academy](#), New Rochelle, N.Y.
- [Center Stage](#) Dance Studio, Stamford
- City Center Dance, White Plains, N.Y.
- [Darlen Arts Center](#), Darien
- Greenwich Dance Studio, Greenwich
- Monroe Dance Academy, Monroe
- New Canaan Dance Academy, New Canaan
- NewDance, Rye Brook, N.Y.
- New York Dance, Harrison, N.Y.
- [Performing Arts Center](#) of Connecticut, Trumbull
- Ridgefield Conservatory of Dance, Ridgefield
- [Roberta Pollard](#) Dance Studio, Stamford
- Stamford Performing Arts Center, Stamford

- [Studio B Dance Center](#), Eastchester, N.Y.
- The Ballet School of Stamford, Stamford
- The Pulse Performing Arts Studio, Bedford, N.Y.

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