



# National Dance Week 2013

## Message

The ancients had it right. They understood the vital role that dance and music play in connecting us to the gods, to our communities and indeed, to our inner selves. Dance and music were the major mediums through which our disparate ancestors experienced, honored and celebrated the “big picture” and practiced an intrinsically holistic approach to life. They possessed an innate understanding that human life is a profound body, mind and spirit union and therefore their rituals wove together and honored multiple aspects of existence. When they danced, they nurtured and ignited their spirits while exercising their bodies, and they included everything from education and rites of passage to contemplation and celebration in the mix. Sometimes the entire community danced and sometimes it was up to the master dancers and musicians to communicate universal truths through their skilled performances and ceremonies. These dance rituals were in essence all about uniting, healing and strengthening the community and of course our current overextended and often disconnected society could certainly do with a wee bit of uniting and healing. From April 22 leading up to International Dance Day on April 29 let’s all remember why we dance. Yes, when we dance it feels good, but it’s much more than that. As humans we are far more than flesh and blood and logical thinking, and the essence of dance profoundly addresses the “far more”. Happy National Dance Week and International Dance Day to all!

## Vicki Adams Willis

### Co-founder & Artistic Director of Decidedly Jazz Danceworks



Vicki carries on a family tradition that began when her mother, Alice Murdoch Adams opened one of the first dance schools in Calgary in the 1920’s. Vicki’s passion for dance and jazz has taken her literally all over the globe. Besides teaching and choreographing for countless organizations, including the renowned School at Jacob’s Pillow, she founded the Jazz Division in the Faculty of Fine Arts’ Program of Dance at the University of Calgary in 1978, and co-founded Decidedly Jazz Danceworks in 1984 where she enthusiastically continues in her role as Artistic Director. Vicki has received U of C’s Superior Teacher Award, Global Television’s Women of Vision Award, The

City of Calgary’s Community Achievement Award for the Arts, and an Alberta Centennial Medal. She has also had a U of C Fine Arts Entrance Award named in her honour, has been recognized by U of C’s Women’s Resource Centre, was named one of the University of Calgary’s Top 40 Alumni and received the Established Artist Award at the 2009 Mayor’s Evening for Business and the Arts.