

## NDI celebrates John Lennon's legacy

On June 20, June 21 and June 22, 2009, 200 National Dance Institute (NDI) advanced dancers performed "Imagine, A Celebration of John Lennon" at LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts Concert Hall in Manhattan.

NDI's 2009 Event of the Year explored the magic of Lennon's iconic music while paying tribute to his memory and impact. Audiences were also dazzled by guest stars, Emmy and Oscar-winning actress, Cloris Leachman, along with her son, saxo-

phonist George Englund, Jr. Leachman led a tap-dancing chorus line, with musical accompaniment by her son, Englund, in an original work choreographed by NDI Founder Jacques d'Amboise entitled *A Cloris Line*, set to the music "When I'm 64."

"Imagine" was the culmination of a year-long study inspired by Lennon that wove together vignettes of his life with original choreography.

Dancers performed "Can't Buy Me Love," "I Saw Her Standing There," "A Day in the Life," "Whatching

the Wheels," "Give Peace a Chance," "Help!" and "Come Together." A highlight of the performance was "Imagine," created by movement taken from American Sign Language.

The 2009 Event of the Year performances featured young dancers from NDI's most advanced teams drawn from 30 partner NYC public schools. The performance was directed by Ellen Weinstein, who began choreographing for NDI in 1985 and was named artistic director in 1995.

"John Lennon is an example of a life trans-

formed by early exposure to music, art and poetry. A young brilliant mind, he found his voice through music and went on to use his fame and notoriety to make a difference in the world, fighting for causes that were close to his heart.

"As our National Dance Institute children joined together on stage to dance what has surely become a world-wide anthem, 'Imagine,' they embodied John Lennon's vision of a world at peace, reflecting his hopes and dreams of what the world could be 'living for today.' Through our children, Lennon's spirit and message shine on," said Weinstein.

This year in NDI programs, more than 35,000 New York City school children and their families discovered and were transformed by Lennon's enduring music, artwork and humanitarian efforts.

The National Dance Institute is a not-for-profit organization founded in



National Dance Institute children perform *Imagine, A Celebration of John Lennon* at LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts Concert Hall.

Photo by Angel Gardner.

the belief that the arts have a unique power to engage children and motivate them towards excellence. Using professional artists and a distinctive combination of dance classes and performances integrated with music, literature and the visual arts, children learn how to work together to reach for their personal

best.

More than two million children have participated in NDI programs. NDI was founded in 1976 by Jacques d'Amboise, and since 1995 has been under the artistic leadership of Ellen Weinstein. For more information, please log on to [www.nationaldance.org](http://www.nationaldance.org).