

THE STUDIO

By: Gus Dick Andros

One day while I was dressing after class, I overheard the girls talking in their dressing room next door. "I'm looking for some one to buy my school in Brooklyn," Rhea was telling the girls.

"Hey, Rhea, where is your studio located?" I called out.

"It's around Flatbush and Church. Are you interested?"

"I'm not sure, but I'm choreographing a show in Brooklyn right now, if it is in the same neighborhood I would like to take a look." We made arrangements to meet on Wednesday, before I went to rehearsal.

Wednesday night, I met Rhea and her husband at their studio. It was on the second and third floors of the building. The store below was a children's clothing store named Kiddie's Land. At the first view I fell in love with the studio and its location. There were two studios, with the larger one being about 35' by 35' with six windows over looking Flatbush Avenue. There were hundreds of children and baby carriages on the avenue. I thought, this is a great location for a school, and it would be an advantageous move for me.

I guess curiosity was the reason I first questioned Rhea, because I really wasn't interested in taking on the responsibility of a school. I was already teaching in the Bronx and was rather content, but the job in the Bronx was a deadend and at thirty-five I thought it might be time to think about the future.

After giving it much thought, I asked my friend Eddy if he would loan me the money to buy the school. Of course, he wanted to see the studio first. He, like myself, saw the potential of such a school and was eager for me to take this opportunity. With his help I bought the studio and left the Bronx for good.

It didn't take long for me to realize that there was more to starting a school than just paying the money. I suddenly learned that if anyone was hurt on the property I would be personally responsible, and the only way to avoid personal bankruptcy was to incorporate.

I asked my friend Sid Gewanter, a lawyer, for help. He had to educate me in the ways of the business world, my expertise had been in the theater. He informed me that the first thing I had to do was to choose a name. I decided to call the school the Dick Andros Theatre Arts Center, Inc. Sid had to have a copy of the lease and a financial statement. After filling in form after form and writing the bylaws, Sid submitted my application to Albany. Until the paper work was completed, I couldn't get a phone or my electricity.

I was getting nervous the closer we got to completion, for I knew once the final papers were signed, there would be no backing out. This was the first time in my life that I was

taking complete responsibility for a project. But I knew once I was in control I could and would see it through.

There had to be at least three people to start a corporation: a president, a treasurer, and a secretary. I was to be the president and Sid and his wife would fill the other positions. There were to be 200 shares of stock. I paid a dollar a share and bought ninety-nine shares; Sid and his wife bought one share a piece. When all the legal work was finished, I bought out Sid and his wife. I now owned a hundred and one shares and no matter what happened, I would always be the biggest stock holder. The other ninety-nine shares would not be on the open market.

At this time I thought everything was ready, and I could devote my time to teaching--not so. I had to hire an insurance broker to handle liability, property, and health insurance. I next had to get an accountant to take care of the corporation, State, Federal, Payroll, Social Security, and occupancy taxes. Every quarter I would submit to him the figures for expenditures and income. Many times the accountant would say, "How did you come up with these figures?"

"Look, I'm a dancer, and you don't learn bookkeeping at ballet school," I would answer, and he would laugh. He was worth every penny I paid him.

Through my dancing I had met my lawyer, insurance broker, and accountant; and they stayed with me for the life of the school. I started the process of incorporating in the spring and luckily I was ready to open in the fall.

The school was so successful that I paid off the loan in six months, and any misgivings I may have had in the beginning were laid to rest. I operated this school happily for 14 years, and I am still the president of a corporation.