**Ted Thomas Long Biography** (467 words / 3052 characters)

A native New Yorker received his early dance training at the Bernice Johnson Cultural Arts Center in Queens NY, and then attended La Guardia High School of Performing Arts in New York City. A scholarship student at the Alvin Ailey American Dance School, The Joffrey Ballet School and The Dance Theater of Harlem, Mr. Thomas went on to receive his Bachelors of Fine Arts in dance performance from SUNY Purchase College Conservatory of Dance. There he earned various awards for outstanding achievement, most notably the university’s Presidential Scholarship as well as the Harry Belafonte Award for the Arts. Upon graduation, Mr. Thomas received the Thayer Fellowship Award for professional potential in the arts. Mr. Thomas earned his Master of the Arts in Dance in Higher Education from New York University, which has given him a wide range of experiences in all facets of dance. Additionally, he worked for two years as a full time faculty member, advisor, and artist in residence at Barnard College, New York where his duties included teaching Modern and Ballet classes, mentoring undergraduate dance students, choreographing in faculty concerts, and setting and overseeing works by major choreographers.

As a professional dancer Mr. Thomas’ career has afforded him the opportunity to perform with The Paul Taylor Dance Company, where he was featured in the 2008 Academy Award Nominated documentary film “Dancemaker'' as well as an recipient of the Princess Grace Award while with the Elisa Monte Dance Company. He has also danced with The Nikolais & Louis Dance Company, Ballet Hispanico of New York and Rebecca Kelly Ballet, among others. These experiences have given him the opportunity to be an active member of the worldwide arts community.

Currently, Mr. Thomas is a Connecticut State and ABT® National Training Curriculum Certified Dance Teacher and has worked as a Theater/Production manager, Choreographer and Teacher for the Wilton, Greenwich and New Canaan Connecticut Public School systems. He co-owns and operates a ballet school and regional not-for-profit ballet company in New Canaan, Connecticut, as well as directs and choreographs for Thomas/Ortiz Dance Company and the Ted Thomas Dance Foundation, a 501©3 professional dance organization now based in New Canaan, CT which he started in 2001. His students have performed professional ballets choreographed by Lew Christiansen from the San Francisco Ballet and George Balanchine’s Valse Fantasia set by Ms. BJ Sills. His professional company has been presented at Jacob’s Pillow MA, Dance Theater Workshop NY, Ailey Citicorp Theater NY, Southern Vermont Dance Festival’s Redfern Arts Center VT, Dance St. Louis and other venues throughout the United States. Mr. Thomas also serves on several boards and contribute to the fund raising and donor development of organizations that combat illiteracy and child abuse in Westchester, NY and Southern Fairfield, CT. Mr. Thomas is proud to have received the 2018 Connecticut Fellowship Award for Artistic Excellence in Dance and Choreography.

**Ted Thomas Short Biography** (113 words / 679 characters)

A native New Yorker, Ted Thomas attended the High School for Performing Arts (NYC) before receiving his B.F.A. from the State University of New York at Purchase. He went on to earn a Master of Arts degree in dance and higher education from New York University. He danced with Ballet Hispanico, Elisa Monte, and the Murray Louis and Nikolais Company prior to joining the Paul Taylor Dance Company in 1996. Subsequently, while choreographing and continuing to perform with Thomas/Ortiz Dance, Mr. Thomas was for two years Artist-in-Residence at Barnard College, Columbia University. He is an Associate Director of The New England Academy of Dance and The New England Dance Theater.

**Frances Ortiz Long Biography** (293 words / 1875 characters)

Born in Puerto Rico, Frances Ortiz started her early dance training at the Royal Academy of Ballet in Orlando, FL and continued her training at the New World School of the Arts High School in Miami. She has been awarded full scholarships at several prestigious institutions including; The Alvin Ailey American Dance School, The Jose Limon Dance Institute, The Martha Graham School of Dance and The Dance Theater of Harlem. Ms. Ortiz received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the State University of New York, Conservatory of the Performing Arts, College at Purchase. She then went on to earn a Master of Arts in Dance in Higher Education from New York University. Upon graduating she received the award for “Outstanding Achievement in Choreography” from the Department of Music and Performing Arts Professionals.

Ms. Ortiz has directed, choreographed and staged full length ballets and musicals in Connecticut and New York including The Nutcracker, Coppelia, Guys and Dolls and Little Abner to name a few, as well as her own works. In 1998 while working to establish her own dance company, Ms. Ortiz was commissioned to choreograph works on the students at New York University and Yale University.

In 2001 she co-founded the contemporary dance company Thomas/Ortiz Dance with her husband Ted Thomas, which is dedicated to developing new audiences through its groundbreaking narrative and thought-provoking works. The company is committed to expanding the knowledge and appreciation of dance through live performance and the implementation of community-based outreach, educational programs and artistic activities. Additionally, Ms. Ortiz co-owns and teaches at her private ballet institution in Connecticut, The New England Academy of Dance in New Canaan. She is a Connecticut State and American Ballet Theater Certified dance teacher and tenured with the Greenwich Public Schools.

**Frances Ortiz Short Biography** (106 words / 590 characters)

A native of Puerto Rico, Frances Ortiz studied at The New World School of the Arts in Miami, FL prior to earning her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance at the State University of New York at Purchase College. While studying for her M.A. degree at New York University, she performed with Kevin Wynn, Tim Martin, and Carl Paris. Ms. Ortiz has taught dance and has been a guest choreographer at Yale University. Frances and her twin sister Ginna Ortiz are co-owners of the New England Academy of Dance in New Canaan, CT, and Frances is co-Artistic Director of the New England Dance Theater.

**Ginna Ortiz Biography** (100 words / 577 characters)

Ginna Ortiz was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico where she began her early dance training. She studied at the New World School of the Arts in Miami, FL, and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Purchase College. A recipient of scholarships to both the Richmond Ballet and Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH), Ms. Ortiz danced with DTH from 1994 to 1998 and subsequently continued to work with independent choreographers in New York City. Ginna is presently the co-owner of the New England Academy of Dance in New Canaan, CT, and co-Artistic Director of the New England Dance Theater.

**Thomas Ortiz Dance Long Company Biography** (365 words / 2445 characters)

Melding his urban athleticism with her Latin sensuality, and combining their choreographic and musical sensibilities, Ted Thomas and Frances Ortiz founded Thomas/Ortiz Dance in 2001 in order to introduce a fresh and emotionally engaging new vision to contemporary dance.

The company of twelve dancers from culturally diverse backgrounds performs a repertoire that explores a multitude of thought-provoking and socially-relevant themes, while at times being content to present non-mimetic dance that strives to captivate because of its technique, musicality, and originality—in short because of its “mere” choreography.

*For Love or Grace* delves into issues surrounding an individual’s self-examination of sexuality and religion. *Winter Sky* exposes the effect of alcoholism on a relationship. *Reflections* depicts a young woman’s search for self-identity and self-approval. *Undamely* shows six ravishing women in a tour de force to music by Vivaldi, that, while primarily focusing on formal qualities of composition and musical synergy, also subtly reflects female propriety. Reviewing a Thomas/Ortiz Dance showcase in New York City in 2004, Christina Giraldi of Show Business Weekly wrote, “Ethereal and rejoicing, intriguing, lighthearted, sexually charged, political, thoughtful – these are adjectives that only attempt to describe the eclectic collection of pieces performed... Thomas/Ortiz is a young company which displays much talent and promise.”

Thomas/Ortiz Dance made its debut at The Bronx Academy of Art and Dance in 2001. Among many other venues, the company has since performed at Joyce SoHo (NY) 2005, Clune Center for the Arts (CT), 2005, DeBaun Center for the Performing Arts (NJ), 2006, Dance Theater Workshop, 2006 & 2007; Broadway Cares, Dancing at the Crossroads Time Square (NY) 2007, Alvin Ailey Citigroup Theater (NY), 2008; American Dance Guild at Dance New Amsterdam (NY), 2009; John Prinz and Friends at the Ailey Citigroup Theater (NY), 2009; Dance New York Festival, Lincoln Center (NY) 2009; Master Dance Series, Orlando (FL),2010; Nazareth College, Rochester (NY), 2010, Latin Choreographer festival (NY) 2010.

Their 2005 presentation at the Merce Cunningham Studios was singled out as a “Critic’s Pick” in Show Business Weekly, and in 2010 they were commissioned to create a work for Connecticut Ballet (CT), resulting in “Corelli”, which premiered at July 2010 at the Katherine Hepburn Theater (CT).

**Thomas/Ortiz Dance Short Company Biography** (125 words / 853 characters)

Thomas/Ortiz Dance presents the choreographic works of Ted Thomas and Frances Ortiz, with a focus on developing a musical, athletic and sensual approach to dance. Melding his urban athleticism with her Latin sensuality, the husband and wife team founded Thomas/Ortiz Dance in 2001, introducing a fresh and emotionally engaging new vision to contemporary dance. The company of twelve dancers from culturally diverse backgrounds performs a repertoire which explores a multitude of thought-provoking and socially-relevant themes. Mr. Thomas and Ms. Ortiz inspire younger generations to participate in dance as an outlet for creative expression, and as a way of developing a healthy lifestyle through the arts. Thomas/Ortiz conducts a wide variety of community-based outreach programs and activities, including classes, lecture demonstrations and workshops.

**Ted Thomas Dance Foundation Biography** (62 words / 410 characters)

The Ted Thomas Dance Foundation is the 501©3 non-for-profit organization whose mission is to facilitate the Thomas/Ortiz dance company to spread the art of dance across the country and around the world. The basic audiences of the Foundation’s activities range from socio-economically disadvantaged communities throughout the New England States, New York, New Jersey and abroad to all lovers of dance worldwide.