



**BORDERLINES
FILM FESTIVAL**

UNBOUND (12A)

Directors: John English, Tom Garner
Spain, 2024, 1 hour 32 minutes, English

Discrimination, body shaming and violence. This is ballet in 2025. But a group of defiant dancers, survivors of industry abuse, want to form a radical, diverse company that opens its doors to others who have suffered abuse, and give these talented survivors a chance to fight back, on stage. They find a run-down studio, and Chase Johnsey, a gender fluid dance insurgent, to direct them. But they have no money, no reputation, and Chase has never directed before. The dancers are brave, but young and deeply fragile. They must confront their traumas and find belief, if they are ever to take the stage again. It is a journey of pain, hope, and above all resistance - to fight for justice, change lives, & create groundbreaking, liberated ballet - one choreographed step at a time.

One critic writes "*Unbound helps give voice to the voiceless.*" One dancer commenting on their experience in the industry puts, "they want tall, skinny, beautiful...I am everything but." The documentary follows the full team with a focus on Lisa, Stanka (both founded Ballet de Barcelona), and Reo. Lisa and Stanka were both accepted into the industry at a young age, 12 and 11 respectively.

The group's artistic director Chase Johnsey is a fascinating individual turning the ballet world on its head, offering a vision of what ballet could be, open, inclusive, welcoming and healing for an industry that has for decades entrenched prejudices. This is, as commented, "revolutionary" as we follow this company's journey on their first major production. Through their strength of unity, belief in themselves and their hard work we are offered a glimpse of humanity at its best, where despair arises there is always hope - the indomitable spirit of humanity, one's belief for a better future and reality can be best found among these dancers.

Notes compiled by Alex Albion

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