

# Claire Spera

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## PROFESSIONAL FREELANCE WRITER - JOURNALIST

Profiles / Feature Stories / Reviews / Editing & Proofing / Creative Writing / Blogs / Marketing & PR

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### PROFILE

Accomplished writer with a strong blend of **Journalism, Creative Writing, Project Development** and **Administrative** expertise. Creative partner, collaborator, and assistant to editors of the *Austin American-Statesman*, *Santa Barbara News-Press*, *Santa Barbara Independent*, and *Neon Tommy*, as well as to staff of the Music Center, Los Angeles' premier performing arts complex. Comfortable writing for a cross-section of assignments in deadline-driven environments. Administrative/office experience in academic environments at the University of Texas at Austin, University of Southern California, Santa Barbara City College, and University of California at Santa Barbara. Superb writing, communication, spelling, and grammar skills. Extremely organized, prompt, professional, and a quick learner.

### EDUCATION

#### UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism

**M.A., Specialized Journalism (The Arts)**, 2010

- Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara grant for graduate study.

#### UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

**B.A., English; Minor: Dance & Performance Studies**, 2008

- Dean's List. National Society of Collegiate Scholars, May 2005-August 2008.

**UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA, SPAIN**, August 2007 – July 2008

**University of California Education Abroad: Full Immersion Program** (all courses taught in Spanish).

#### UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

- Majority of classes taken while still in high school during Summer Sessions.

**SANTA BARBARA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**, Distinguished Graduate, 2004 (GPA: 4.5)

- National Honor Society/California State Federation Seal Bearer. Santa Barbara High School Alumni Association scholarship.

### WRITING / RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- **ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT FREELANCE WRITER**

**Austin American-Statesman**, Austin, Texas (12/10 – Present)

Freelance dance and theater critic at Austin's daily paper. Reviewing and previewing everything from local productions (Ballet Austin, Tapestry Dance Company, Breaking String Theater, etc.) to international troupes, in all genres of dance and theater.

**Patch.com**, Los Angeles area, California (4/10 – 9/10)

Arts features and profiles of local arts organizations for this AOL-backed hyper-local news site.

**Santa Barbara News-Press/Scene Magazine**, Santa Barbara, California (8/08 – 9/10)

Covered dance in the Santa Barbara area for *Scene Magazine*, the weekly arts and entertainment insert of the *News-Press*, the city's daily paper. Interviewed dancers and artistic directors of local, national, and international dance companies, including Compañía Rafael Amargo of Spain, State Street Ballet of Santa Barbara, and Lar Lubovitch Dance Company of New York City. Wrote previews and reviews of

performances. Covered local festivals and other arts events, including the French Festival, Summer Solstice, and Old Spanish Days Fiesta. Also covered local news for the *News-Press* proper.

**Santa Barbara Independent**, Santa Barbara, California (10/08 – 8/09).

Covered theater arts and books/lectures for this weekly arts and entertainment publication. Wrote previews and reviews of theater and book tour/lecture events, including David Sedaris' book tour.

- **FELLOW**

**2010 National Endowment for the Arts/Arts Journalism Institute for Dance Criticism Fellowship at the American Dance Festival, Duke University**, Durham, North Carolina (6/10 – 7/10)

Selected by competitive application for this three-week fellowship.

Attended world-class performances at the American Dance Festival; wrote reviews; observed classes and participated in movement sessions; met with choreographers, dancers and funders.

- **BLOG CREATOR/E-CORRESPONDENT**

**Music Center – Los Angeles County Performing Arts Center**, Los Angeles, California (5/10 – 6/10)

Developed Music Center's first blog, used as a vehicle to promote events, performances and performing companies the complex hosts at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum. Initial assignment was to create posts centered on the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's performances at Walt Disney Concert Hall, chronicling company's last appearance in Los Angeles before its dissolution in 2011. Worked with Marketing Coordinator to cross-promote events on social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook. See <http://www.musiccenterla.tumblr.com>.

- **STAFF WRITER**

**Neon Tommy**, Los Angeles, California (9/09 – 5/10)

Covered dance and theater for USC Annenberg Digital News' student-run online publication. Articles included previews and reviews of Pilobolus Dance Theater, Joffrey Ballet and comedian Aasif Mandvi from *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. See <http://www.neontommy.com>.

- **PRODUCTION/MULTIMEDIA ASSISTANT**

**Annenberg TV News and Digital Lab**, USC, Los Angeles, California (8/09 – 5/10)

Student-run operation that produces a live newscast on weeknights, airing campus-wide. Developed story ideas and obtained archival footage from CNN Newsource.

- **ONLINE DICTIONARY EDITOR/RESEARCHER**

**Enlexica, Inc.**, Santa Barbara, California (9/08 – 4/09)

Edited, maintained, and researched new material for Enlexica's website, [www.123explore.com](http://www.123explore.com), consisting of online dictionaries and research guides covering over 3 million topics.

- **INTERN TO EDITOR**

**Santa Barbara News-Press/Scene Magazine**, Santa Barbara, California (5/06 – 8/06)

Wrote numerous pieces covering events during Old Spanish Days Fiesta Week and the French Festival. Interviewed dancers, musicians, and event organizers. Authored "hot spot" features on local cafés and bars.

- **ASSISTANT TO EDITOR/INTERN**, Arts & Calendar Department

**Santa Barbara Independent**, Santa Barbara, California (6/03 – 1/04)

Wrote publicity pieces for the 4th Annual Flamenco Arts Festival and "Close-Up" features on prominent local citizens. Reviewed copy, researched facts and assisted with design and illustrative materials.

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

**University of Texas, Austin**, Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology (11/10 – 2/11)

Positions through U'Temps, the University's temporary staffing solution, as front desk receptionist and assistant to graduate coordinator during recruiting season.

**University of California, Santa Barbara**, Institute for Coastal Studies (6/04 – 8/04 and 6/09 – 8/09)

Supported the Management Services Officer with various administrative and clerical tasks.

**Santa Barbara City College**, Dual Enrollment Program, Santa Barbara, California (9/08 – 5/09)  
Liaison between SBCC and 5 local high schools; gave presentations and fielded program questions.

- **ENGLISH TUTOR**, Granada, Spain (9/07 – 7/08)  
Taught English grammar, conversation, and writing lessons to two Spanish girls ages 13 and 15.
- **FLAMENCO DANCE INSTRUCTOR**  
**Linda Vega Dance Studio**, Santa Barbara, California (9/03 – 8/04)

### **SPECIAL SKILLS / ARTS BACKGROUND**

PC/MAC Proficient: Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, and iMovie  
HTML/Website Design Proficiency: Competent  
Knowledge of Associated Press Stylebook  
Spanish Language Proficiency: Fluent

Social Media—

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/claire.spera>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/claiorespera>

USC Annenberg Blog: [http://blogs.uscannenberg.org/claire\\_spera/](http://blogs.uscannenberg.org/claire_spera/)

Google Profile: <http://www.google.com/profiles/claire.spera>

*Extensive Ballet and Flamenco Performance Background:*

Diane Knowles' Academy of Dance and Santa Barbara Ballet Center—

Annual performances at Lobero, Granada, Center Stage, Arlington, Victoria Hall, and  
Marjorie Luke Theaters in Santa Barbara, 1990-2006.

Linda Vega Dance Studio—

Flamenco performer during week-long Old Spanish Days Fiesta festival and  
at local elementary schools and retirement homes, 1996-2006.

Counselor and Dance Instructor, Young Actor's Workshop in Santa Barbara, Summer 2001.