

Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2011 – WMU Department of dance



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Welcome – by Nina Nelson

Dear Dance Alumni and Friends:

To say the fall semester has been busy is an understatement. Students and faculty have engaged in groundbreaking creative and performance projects and are making plans for other extraordinary activities for the Spring and Summer semesters.

We have been so fortunate to have had numerous gifted guest artists in residence. Each has challenged the dance majors to strive for new choreographic, performance and intellectual heights. Choreographer Eddy Ocampo created a new work for the Western Dance Project the week before students were scheduled to return to campus in the fall. Quickly following the start of the semester Lauren Edson (winner of the Great Works Dance Project National Choreography Competition) created a new dance that will be in the Winter Gala Dance Concert and represent WMU at the east central regional conference of the American College Dance Festival. The day Lauren left Kalamazoo, John Gardner and Amanda McKerrow arrived to stage Antony Tudor's *Fandango*. In October, choreographer Nelly van Bommel and DanceWorks Chicago were in residence

at the same time. WMU dance commissioned Nelly to create a new work that can be performed by WMU dancers, DanceWorks Chicago dancers, and a joint cast of WMU and DanceWorks Chicago dancers. We followed all of that with a successful fourth year of Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars at which we raised \$15,000 for dance major scholarships. The semester finished with another successful Orchesis Dance Concert.

And this doesn't even scratch the surface of what we do! Are you tired yet?

I have so much admiration and respect for our students and faculty. Their passion, commitment and stamina are at the highest levels. I think our audience members, friends, and donors see these traits as well. The alumni news updates are evidence that these characteristics carry over into our alumni's work.

I hope you enjoy reading departmental and alumni news!

With warmest wishes for a joyous holiday season,

Nina



Pictured bottom left:
Orchesis dancers

Pictured top right: Ruth Wisner

Pictured bottom right:
Dance Faculty Emeriti
Wendy Cornish & Clara Gamble, & HPER Emerita
Jean Friedel

Alumni News

Bethany 09 & Emily Blanchard 03 BA in Dance

Bethany, along with fellow alum Emily Blanchard, is a Rockette again this year. This is Bethany's 2nd year while Emily is starting her 5th. Bethany will be doing the Radio City Christmas Spectacular in Nashville and Emily will be doing the same show, but in Boston and Durham. Here they are pictured together last year for the Christmas show.

Sarah Bombard 2011 BA in Interior Design, Minors in Dance and General Business

Sarah is currently teaching dance at Moves Dance Studio in North Aurora, IL. Along with teaching she is coaching the JV dance team at Batavia High School. Sarah also performs with The Dance Foundation Company Chicago. They have done a variety of performances including Dance Chicago. They are currently preparing for their end of the year show that will occur in March. The company is then going on tour in Italy at the end of June.

Francesca Bourgault 2008 BA in Dance

Francesca is excited to announce that on July 6, 2011, she and her partner were legally civilly united in the state of Illinois. They have planned a spiritual commitment ceremony for May 2012. In dance, Francesca was glad to be back at WMU to design lights for the 2011 Orchestral Dance Concert. When not designing in Chicago she serves as technical director at Links Hall and teaches dance at Chase Park through Design Dance. www.francescabourgault.webs.com

John Bradley 1985 BA in Dance

John's professional early music ensemble Polyhymnia, www.polyhymnia-nyc.org, is once again the recipient of grant awards from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and the NY State Council on the Arts. They are enjoying a successful season in NY, with increasing audiences and challenging music. John is also working at New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study in the Graduate Admissions Department. The Gallatin School is a perfect match for John; lots of artists with varied interests. John would love to hear from classmates, so if alumni are in NY and want to meet, drop him a line. john@polyhymnia-nyc.org or jwb0@nyu.edu.

Rebecca (Yourison) Culp 2004 BA in Dance

Rebecca is an apprentice with the Saint Paul City Ballet Company in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She's enjoying the chance to perform frequently and is cleaning up her Vaganova technique in company classes. She teaches part-time at two dance studios in the Twin Cities area and is a full-time mom to ten-month-old Elliana. Elliana loves to bounce and brings a lot of joy to the family.



Alumni News

Shannon Einhardt 2007 BA in Dance

Shannon is currently co-owner of Dance Expressions Dance Studio in St. Clair Shores, MI. She also teaches at TCH Dance Academy in Birmingham, MI. Shannon is artistic director and dancer for Allure Dance Company and was awarded the Maggie Allesee New Choreography Award on October 1st for a work she choreographed for Allure Dance Company.



Michelle Hodgkin Elliott 1985 BFA in Dance

Michelle is currently a Para-educator at Patterson Elementary School in 2nd grade and K-5 that she loves! Her 12 year-old daughter, Maddie, just performed in the Breakfast with Santa with Young People's Ballet Theatre in Flint Township, Michigan. Maddie was in the "Frosty the Snowman" ballet on pointe. Michelle's other daughter, Katherine, is enjoying her junior year in high school and has taken a break from dance. Katherine busies herself with studies, friends, and training for track. Michelle's husband, Craig, is still flying hot air balloons and in sales. Michelle and Maddie will be performing March 1-4, 2012 with Young People's Ballet Theatre of U of M-Flint Theatre. They are performing in the YPBT children's ballet "Heidi" choreographed by Dale Brannon of Kentucky. The lead dancer is Alan Obuzar from Pittsburgh. Michelle will be playing the part of Peter's blind grandmother. Her nephew now attends WMU and she looks forward to visiting.

Jennifer Fiero 1998 BS

Jennifer is currently working for New Buffalo Area Schools building a dance program, where she also teaches show choir and drama. She loves watching her students grow and gain self-confidence as they learn how to love and appreciate dance. Jennifer's motto is "Dance is for everyone" and she truly feels that way. She is currently working on her masters in secondary education and should be finished by next winter. She also coaches JV cheerleading, color guard and is choreographing the musical Wizard of Oz. Her son, Jacob, is 18 and an avid ice hockey player and her daughter, Taylor, is 9 and loves to dance. Next fall her son will be a WMU student in the engineering department. Jennifer is so excited that he chose Western for his undergraduate degree.

Stacey (Enos) Galla 2001 BA in Dance

Stacey will be teaching a dance class at Glen Ellyn Park District though December, but will stop in January since she is due on the 30th with her fourth baby. This newest addition is a girl who will join her five year-old son, Nolan, three year-old daughter, Natalie, and her eighteen month-old daughter, Noelle. She plans to resume teaching dance and fitness classes, as she is Zumba fitness certified and Stott Pilates trained, at Sunshine Dance Project, a new dance studio that has opened in Glen Ellyn.

Alumni News

Lari Lawrence-Gist 2001 BA in Dance

Lari is the Director of Dance at the Citadel Dance and Music Center in Benton Harbor. They are located in the Arts District and partner with many fellow artists, such as the Southwest MI Symphony Orchestra, on many projects. The dance company keeps Lari very busy while her husband, Derron, is kept very busy as an Executive Chef of four restaurants in South Haven where they live. They both love what they do!



Scott Hamilton 2008 BBA in Marketing Minor in Dance

Scott is currently performing with the International tour of My Fair Lady (Ensemble/Dance Captain). He is also a backup dancer for Darren Criss-Oxygen Network, backup singer/dancer for Oprah Winfrey & Rosie O'Donnell Discovery Network, backup singer/dancer for Rosie O'Donnell on Oprah's Finale Surprise Spectacular-CBS, Mickey in Damn Yankees-Lyceum Theatre, and teacher and resident choreographer-Pay Group Theatre NY.

Tiffany Alexandra Taylor Huzar 2007 BFA in Dance, 2010 MFA at U of O

Alexandra Taylor currently lives in NYC choreographing and performing with her company (Alex)xandra Taylor Dance (ATD), and performing with Esther M Palmer, SINecdoche Dance, and other local artists. As one of the founders of the trans-national TransForm Dance Collective, Alex premiered in the Kitchen at the first TransForm concert in San Diego, Ca (2011) and her work in progress, *So we go there*, where nothing is waiting at Alexandra Beller's Choreolab in June. She is currently working on three new projects for the TransForm March: a 2012 concert in South Carolina, including one long distance collaboration project with fellow grad Marcie Mamura. You can see their process exchanged via werealwayssomewhereelse.blogspot.com. Alex was one of the dancers featured in the photo book *STUDIO SESSIONS: Collaborations with Dancers* by dance photographer friend, Ari Denison. Keep up with ATD at alexandrataylordance.blogspot.com. Photo by Ari Denison.



Lisa LaMarre 2005 BA in Dance

Lisa is happy to announce that she has started LaMarre and Dancers, an explorative group of modern dancers focused on site-specific interdisciplinary collaborations including live improvisation performances and meaningful choreographic works. Lisa has had the opportunity to bring the art of dance to some incredible new spaces this past year. These spaces include: Museum of Contemporary Art – Detroit, Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit, Work.Detroit, Detroit Music TV, an avant-garde opera, WNUR's Airplay Show in Chicago, and more! Sharing her art with these new communities has been equally important as producing works for traditional stage spaces. Lisa is still a guest dancer with DDCdances and will continue to choreograph and perform for the educated dance audience, but it is her goal to expose movement to all audiences. www.lisalamarre.webs.com. www.lisalamarreanddancers.webs.com.

Alumni News

Erin Lamont 2002 BA in Dance BBA Marketing

Erin had several bookings. She is a featured character, "Crystal", a burlesque dancer/choreographer on CSI:NY Season 8. Erin also has her own burlesque group, The Lalas, who were featured on the Morton Report: www.themortonreport.com/celebrity/an-interview-with-the-creator-of-the-lalas-burlesque-erin-lamont/. Erin signed with a new choreography agent and her "Lalas Couture" Burlesque line is now being sold in over ten retail stores nationwide! Follow the Lalas by www.facebook.com/thelalasburlesque or www.twitter.com/lalasburlesque.

Erin Malley 2001 BFA in Dance

Erin has settled into San Francisco and is beginning a four-part, multi-media dance series inspired by the fiction *Haruki Murakami*. The first installment, "Hotel in a Bottle", will be presented at CounterPULSE February 10-11, 2012.

Jennifer Mesch 1997 BA in Dance

Jennifer is living in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She still works as a cardiac sonographer but she recently switched to pediatrics. She is continuing to make things happen with the Jen Mesch Dance Conspiracy. New this year is a class she made up called "Rebel Ballet!" in which dancers can enjoy a ballet class with non-traditional music, dress, and behavior. She is currently scheming to curate an evening-length performance of responses to Nijinsky's scandalous "L'apres-midi d'un faune." She continues to perform with live musicians who are dedicated to improvisation, and is generally a very serious person.

Katina Childs-Muller 1996 BFA in Dance

Katina is still enjoying being a mom to her 4 kids that she refers to as "The Muller Family Circus". Her oldest, step-son Nick, is presently dancing on Disney Cruise Lines and just finished a tour with Odyssey Dance Theatre. Katina is a proud mom and dance teacher! The other kids in her crew are 8, 4, and 2 years old. When she is not busy being a mom, she loves teaching dance at three dance studios as well as part time in the public schools. Her greatest joy is bringing dance to kids that would not typically get the opportunity. Hearing her elementary school boys ask for more ballet just fills her heart with joy. Katina also started directing and choreographing musicals for Broadway Bound Players and found a new love of directing. She has been hired as rehearsal director for the intriguing dance company Ballet Magique. Check out their web page www.balletmagique.com. Katina can also be seen on 3 episodes of *Mobbed* coming up on Fox after *Idol*. She misses her WMU buddies and the staff on a regular basis and cherishes every memory as well as all the sweat shared in the studios!

Alumni News

Rachel Nadler 2011 BA in Dance

Rachel is living in Chicago and is a member of the Suna Dance Company. Suna is a brand new company that focuses on site-specific work. They had their first performance in November, to great success! In December, Rachel will be performing a jazz piece by freelance choreographer Molly Stolz at the Chicago Freelance Dance showing at Lou Conte Dance Studio. Rachel also works at the Kids Club at the Lakeview Athletic Club and is excited about all the amazing dance opportunities in Chicago.

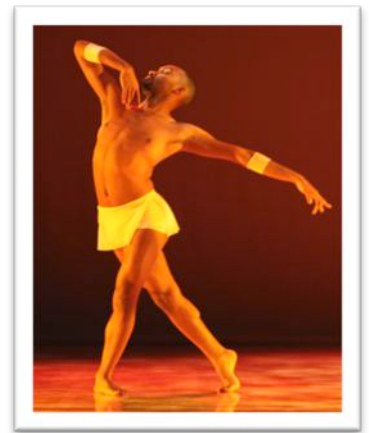


Janet O'Rourke (Schoen) 2003 BFA in Dance

Janet lives in Ferndale, Michigan and has been enjoying married life for a year and half now. She is currently teaching creative movement and ballet classes at the EDE Center for Dance while working full time as a manager at the Banana Republic store in Novi.

Edgar L. Page 2007 BA in Dance

Edgar is currently in his third season with the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble. He has learned to wear many hats as a full time company member, costumer, driver, school liaison, student advisor, assistant to the newly established CLEO 2 Apprentice Company and Director of the CPRD Trainin' Group and Youth Ensemble. This year he toured internationally with the company to New Zealand and served as the company spokesperson while learning dances and interacting with the Maori people of Aotearoa. Of the experience he said "You can't help but be moved by a people who have intricately woven dance into the fiber of their lives! It wasn't just for show or to wear a pretty costume, it was ritual. Everyone danced and everyone sang. The most powerful warriors were the best dancers. This is based on how clean and precise their footwork was executed. I fell in love with the culture and the people of Aotearoa!" Edgar is looking forward to more unique adventures in dance and attending graduate school in the future.



Carolyn Pampalone 2010 BFA in Dance

After moving to NYC in January and dancing with JT Lotus Dance Company, Carolyn accepted her contract with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines. She quickly moved from NYC to spend the rest of the year traveling and dancing in the eastern Mediterranean. Carolyn enjoyed working with the Magicians, Luca Volpe as Rebecca Lee to expand into Aerial work, Acro-Balance Adagio, and Magic. Carolyn looks forward to continuing her professional career and traveling in 2012. www.carolynpampalone.com.

Erica Pederson 2011 BFA in Dance

Erica Pederson was just signed as a dancer with the Aluminum Show. <http://www.aluminum-show.com/> She will be one of eight dancers in this show. Performances will start in March during their month long tour in Russia.

Morella Petrozzi

Morella, with her company Danza Viva, finished performing at the XXIII International Festival in Lima with her latest work FAIRE CATTLEYA which received great critique as well as having a full house each night. They were also invited to perform at Movimiento Continuo festival in Bogota-Columbia last September.

Alumni News

Lonnie Poupard Jr. 2009 BA in Dance

Lonnie has had a busy and exciting year! In May he performed at the Met Opera in "Orfeo ed Eurydice" choreographed by Mark Morris. Later in the summer he spent a month in the mountain of NY at a creative residency with WalkingTalking/Catherine Miller and performed with her at Jacobs Pillow. In September, Lonnie accepted a position with Lucinda Childs and recently began working on the opera "Einstein on the Beach" by Robert Wilson and music direction by Phillip Glass. "Einstein" will be previewing at Power Center in Ann Arbor in January before starting an international tour. Lonnie also dances for Jody Oberfelder Dance Projects in the city and in his spare time teaches at a boutique fitness studio, "Refine", which was named best new workout of 2011 by The New Yorker magazine.



Sarah Rabbers 2009 BFA in Dance

Sarah has established her own company Tapestry Dance Company (www.facebook.com/pages/Tapestry-Dance-Company/139455512822992). She has been busy choreographing and states that it has "been great". On November 16th they premiered her new work, "Who" based on an art exhibit called "Domestic Dreams" by Valerie Mann. Also, it was performed December 4th at Chicago Freelance Dance. Other than that, Sarah teaches four days a week at three different studios in Chicago.

Kathryn Reese 2011 BA in Dance

Kathryn moved to Los Angeles, CA in August. She recently worked with pop artist Collette Car on two music videos, "No I.D." and "Sex" that airs on commercial breaks during GLEE and can be found online. Kathryn was a featured dancer in those and she is also in a contemporary dance company called MashUp where she performed in San Francisco and Los Angeles. In the film, A Very Harold and Kumar Christmas that just released, Kathryn can be seen in the Music Hall dance scene as a Rockette. She also danced with the all girl group "Flirt" as one of their guest dancers. She just booked two gigs: one is "A Snow White Christmas" and the second is a panto show in which she is one of four dancers. The show will be airing at the El Porto Theatre in L.A. Kathryn will be dancing at the Bellagio in Las Vegas for New Years as well as for Eplus Productions.



Mary Sue (Miller) Reese 2004 BFA in Dance

Mary Sue just completed her Master's in Early Childhood Education with a type 04 certification. During her student teaching in a progressive Kindergarten classroom, she was able to share her love for movement by dancing everyday with the children. They started each morning with the "Morning Groove" which they choreographed together. Their favorite way to dance was to "free style" and therefore, they had regular dance parties. Post student teaching, Mary Sue has returned to her job at the Chicago Children's Museum and resumed her role as Lead Educator and Program Manager for Early Learning. She lives in Chicago with her new hubby as well!

Alumni News

Joan Robertson 1983 BA in Dance

Joan is touring campuses with her daughter, Molly, including Western's campus. She can't believe that her daughter is a senior in high school already and that they are checking out nursing programs together this winter. Joan is still teaching special education in Grand Blanc, as she has been for the last 18 years. She just recently celebrated her 50th birthday as well!

Michelle (Kaiser) Romo 2006 BA in Dance

Michelle is enjoying motherhood in So Cal where her husband serves in the Marine Corps. She has two sweet baby boys, ages two and half and eight months. She does miss teaching dance and hopes to return to it when her kids are a little older.

Ashley Rop 2011 BFA in Dance

Ashley is finishing up her time as the guest dance teacher at Creative Arts/Gifted and Talented Program in Benton Harbor, MI. She was guest teaching for the last three months while their regular teacher, another alumna, Nancy Skinner, was on maternity leave. Ashley has started as the Operation Coordinator for the Gilmore Keyboard Festival. She is still teaching at Academy of Dance Arts in Portage and The Citadel in Benton Harbor, with other dance alumni.

Courtney Sartor 2009 BA in Dance

Courtney is doing stress testing on the east side of the state, but is also teaching a dance and fitness class that she finds fun. Courtney loves reading all the alumni updates and seeing what everyone is doing in their lives.

Amanda (Pease) Smith 2009 BA in Dance

Amanda is currently teaching dance in Portage and Kalamazoo, MI area.



Kia Smith 2010 BA in Dance

Kia danced in Dayton Contemporary Dance Company II from 2010-2011 and now she is dancing and touring with Lula Washington Dance Theatre in Los Angeles, CA. This July she plans to do a volunteer program in Kenya through Performing Arts Abroad where she will be teaching dance workshops.



Noel (Powers) Stanton 2006 BFA in Dance

Noel is in her sixth season with Inaside Chicago Dance and they just had a successful concert at the Harris Theatre for Music and Dance in Chicago. Other big news: In September, Noel recently opened her own dance studio in Schaumburg, Illinois, just outside Chicago. Rise Dance Center already has a very large student population! www.risedancecenter.com

Alumni News

Jenny Stulberg 2006 BFA in Dance

Jenny is in her second and final year of graduate school at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She was awarded a graduate assistantship this year through the Dance Department and will graduate this coming May with her MFA in Dance. As a member of the *Second Avenue Dance Company* at Tisch, she has had the privilege of performing new works by guest choreographers Kate Weare and Sydney Skybetter as well as setting several of her own pieces. Along with her masters, she is in the process of obtaining her yoga certification through Tara Marie Perri's *Mind Body Dancer* a 200 hour Teacher Training which she will also complete in May of this year. She is still in love with New York City and thoroughly enjoying being back in the university setting. She wishes health and happiness to everyone back in Kzoo and wherever else her fellow alumni may reside.



Colleen T. Sullivan 2003 BFA in Dance

Colleen currently lives in NYC studying nursing at New York University. She will graduate in May with her BSN and will have her RN license once she sits for the NCLEX. Her plans for after graduation are to move back to the Detroit area and start her nursing career!



Lutin Tanner 1995 BA in Dance

Minor in Theatre

Lutin is very busy between rehearsals and shows, including splitting time between Rasta Thomas' Bad Boys of Dance (Light Designer, PSM & Tech Director), Earl Mosley Institute of the Arts (Lighting Designer & Tech Director), and Garth Fagan Dance (PSM). Lutin also has to split time with family. Lutin has added a picture of Lucien, his 7 year-old son in his ballet class at Alvin Ailey.

Susie Thiel 2001 BFA in Dance 2011 MFA in Dance U of M

Susie is currently a dance lecturer and dance program coordinator of the new dance minor at the University of Kentucky, Department of Theatre. Find out more about Susie's program by going to the following url: <http://www.kentucky.com/2011/09/04/1869020/rich-copley-the-stage-is-set-for.html>



Tercell Waters 2010 BFA in Dance

Tercell began his second season as a member of Complexions Contemporary Ballet in August. This season, under the direction of Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson, he has had the opportunity to perform in two world premiere ballets by Dwight. "Places, Please" which is the company's new closing piece and "What Come, Thereafter" which is the send off piece for Desmond, as this will be his last season as a touring member of the company. Tercell has also enjoyed touring to Los Angeles, Houston, Austin, Lafayette, and Salt Lake City this season. He looks forward to the rest of the season with the company, including two weeks at the Joyce Theatre in New York City and becoming an uncle soon after that. Photo by Andrea Mohin of the New York Times (appeared in the New York Times and on nytimes.com on 11/22/2011. Desmond Richardson foreground with Tercell in back.)



Faculty News



Pictured Left:

Front Row: Valerie Elg, Lonnie Poupard, Jr., Jeremy Neal, & Adrienne Odmark

Back Row: Leigh Babisz, Ryan Schmidt, Jane Baas, Jackie Nowicki & Marissa Staniec

Pictured Below: Kim Beachum

Gaver, Tracy Monaco, Jane Baas & Lindsay Mack

Jane Baas – Senior Faculty Member

Jane traveled to Washington, D.C. to present at the Annual Meeting of the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science in October. While there, she had a delightful mini-reunion with alums pictured to the right. Jane also gathered with alums for fun and frivolity when in NYC in June with her hubby, Keith, to celebrate their 31st wedding anniversary. Alums from NYC are pictured above. Who knows where the hug queen will turn up next?



David Curwen

David was awarded a \$10,000 College of Fine Arts interdisciplinary grant to create a new work titled *Jinsha*. He partnered local attorney Danielle Streed in this year's Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars scholarship fundraising event.

Sharon Garber

Sharon has been invited to teach the audition class for the Flint Youth Ballet company. One of the adjudicators will be from the Balanchine Trust because the company will be dancing Balanchine's *Serenade* in the near future. Later this year, Shari will serve on the grant review panel for WMU's Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award. She

Kirsten Harvey

Kirsten presented her research in a movement workshop at the October National Dance Education Organization conference in Minneapolis. Her presentation was titled, "Dancing Faces: Teaching the Technique of Emotion." Kirsten is expecting her second child in January 2012.

Whitney Moncrief

Whitney completed her master's degree this summer. In November, she represented the Department of Dance at the senior showcase and audition weekend at the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, TX. Whitney is the advisor for Orchesis Dance Society this year.

Carolyn Pavlik

Carolyn has been making preparations for the paperback edition of her book, *Site Dance: Choreographers and Lures of Alternative Spaces*.

Faculty News



Megan Slayter with
new baby
daughter, Annalise!

Megan Slayter Assistant Professor of Dance

This has been a very busy year for Megan. Her daughter, Annalise Rebecca Jubenville, was born on August 23rd. She is a “theatre baby” already, spending time with her mom while she works on productions. Anna loves looking at the light board while Megan writes cues. This past semester Megan continued her Loie Fuller research with trips to museum archives in San Francisco and New York. She found it great to catch up with so many alums while she was there! Research has led to the restaging of one of Fuller’s group works. “La Mer” is Fuller’s grand interpretation of Debussy’s sweeping musical score. Nymphs play among waves while an elegant siren commands the ever-changing waters that are depicted by 1500 square feet of silk! “La Mer” will be performed in the Winter Gala Dance Concert in February.

Dance Department Contact Information

Phone: 269-387-5830

Mailing Address:

Department of Dance
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1903 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5417

Debra (DeMuro) Norton WMU Part-Time Faculty

In September Deb kicked off her 10th year of running the dance program at Woods Lake Elementary – A Magnet Center for the Arts. She is also teaching dance for the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra’s “Kids in Tune” pilot year after-school program at Woods Lake. Deb continues to teach for Ballet Arts, Education for the Arts, and WMU. She received a grant to attend the National Dance Education Organization’s annual conference this past October in Minneapolis. In December she performed in the Nutcracker with Ballet Arts Ensemble & the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra followed by an additional weekend performance with the Battle Creek Symphony. Deb and her husband performed the roles of Clara & Fritz’s parents. Deb will be choreographing WMU School of Music’s performance of Aaron Copland’s “The Tender Land” in February. Most importantly, She and her husband just celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary!



Debra Norton
smiles for the
camera.

Faculty News



Kathy Williams
while judging the
2011 Dancing
with the
WMU/Kazoo Stars
– Latin Style

Kathy Williams Part Time Instructor

Kathryn has been blessed with another busy year in dance. Now in her 18th year as a part time Faculty at WMU she has been teaching many classes such as "Experiencing Dance" with Professor Megan Slayter; "Roots of Jazz" class with class "proms" at the end in honor of the late Lindsey Thomas; and "Dance in Elementary Schools" class. Kathy choreographed "Annie" and the Elvis-inspired "All Shook Up" at the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, along with summer classes for children age 5-8 and 11-14 in Creative Movement and Dance for Young Actors. She choreographed and coached dance numbers for the Kalamazoo County United Teen Talent Show program, uniting teens for educational and performance opportunities. WMU's Partners in Dance awarded Kathy and faculty emerita Clara Gamble with the Community Dance Advocacy Award. Kathy taught dance, drama and art classes again for The Gilmore Piano Camp for Children, and during other summer hours she choreographed the irreverent but hilarious "Urinetown" musical for the professional Farmers Alley Theatre in downtown Kalamazoo. Nominated for best choreography for professional Michigan musical theatre choreography, she attended the prestigious Ocsar Wilde's Awards in Detroit with other Kalamazoo entertainers and artist nominees. Not one to sit still for long, Kathy choreographed the new musical "The Wedding Singer" and the dance intensive "Thoroughly Modern Millie" musicals for Portage Northern High School. Kathy also served as a clinician for the first time for the Michigan Youth Arts Festival, teaching a swing based musical theatre piece. Her year has been topped with the honor of being chosen this fall for Kalamazoo Arts Council's Community Medal of Arts Award, recognizing Kathy's eclectic body of work for the last thirty-seven years as a dancer, educator and choreographer. Kathy was honored, humbled and proud and continues to learn about and explore this language of communication called dance. She wishes her friends-old and new-"happy holidays!"

2012 Great Works Dinner

Partners in Dance is busy making final preparations for the annual Great Works dinner on Friday, February 3, 2012. The dinner will be at the CityScape Events Center in downtown Kalamazoo. This year's honorary hostess will be Mrs. Ruth Wiser, winner of the November 2011 Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars scholarship fundraising event. The event will start with a cash bar at 5:00 after which dinner will be served. Following dinner there will be a short program with remarks by Mrs. Wiser, Julie Nakagawa, artistic director of DanceWorks Chicago, and Lauren Edson, winner of the 2011 Great Works Dance Project National Choreography Competition. Jerry French will be honored with the Community Dance Advocacy Award. After the dinner and program, all attendees will see the Winter Gala Dance Concert in the Williams Theatre of the Gilmore Theatre Complex. The cost for the dinner is \$65 for Partners in Dance members and \$75 for others.

For more information about the Great Works dinner or to register for the dinner, please contact the dance department at 269-387-5830.

Takes Two To Tango Help Us Go Paperless



The Department of Dance is offering a paperless option!

If you wish to receive our posters, invitations, and news through email then please email us at dance-info@wmich.edu with your name and email address and let us know if you would prefer not to receive paper copies.

If you do not wish to receive either print or email news from us please feel free to call us (269-387-5830) or email us with your name and the request that you be removed from our mailing lists.

We are looking forward to this earth friendly option and hope you join us!



Picture on Left:

Katie Mattar

Jesse Hoisington

Katy Copeland

Orchesis

Picture on Right:

Katie Mattar, Joseph Hernandez, Dani Mattar, Genna Carey & Karina Conley

Student Run, Student Produced, Student Performed

The ever-popular Orchesis Dance Concert had 6 performances during the first weekend in December. Once again, the students performed to near-capacity audiences. The concert featured eleven dances in a variety of styles ranging from hip hop, classic jazz, contemporary ballet on pointe to modern dance. This year Orchesis hired Francesca Bourgault, one of our dance alumni, to design lights for the concert. Francesca is currently the resident lighting designer for The Moving Architects and the Dance Union series at the Fasseas White Box Theater. She is also the technical director at Links Hall. She also designs lights and serves as a stage manager at the Academy of Movement and Music and for their professional company, MOMENTA. Francesca also teaches for Design Dance at Chase Park.

Current WMU students were responsible for the rest of the concert: they choreographed, performed, developed publicity and designed the concert programs. In addition, students served as stage manager, light board operator, sound operator and running crew. As the Orchesis advisor, Whitney Moncrief oversaw all concert preparations and performances. Congratulations to Orchesis for another wonderful concert!

New Scholarship Endowment

DANCE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES PLEDGE FOR NEW SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT

A generous anonymous donor is establishing a new scholarship endowment in the Department of Dance. For the next five years, the donor will add \$5,000 per year to the endowment, while providing a \$1,000 scholarship each of those five years to a deserving dance student. This scholarship will be awarded to a student who demonstrates financial need. We are so grateful for the thoughtfulness of this donor.

Student Investment Projects

A New Departmental Initiative

This year the department has launched two student investment projects made possible with funding from differential tuition. The first project brought together choreographer Nelly van Bommel and professional dance company DanceWorks Chicago. During two five-day residencies in October, Nelly van Bommel created a dance that can be performed by WMU dancers, DanceWorks Chicago dancers, or with a joint WMU/DanceWorks Chicago cast. The dance, titled *Addio Amore*, was performed by the joint cast at the Chenery Auditorium DanceWorks Chicago concert. Another joint performance of *Addio Amore* will be on January 12 at the Harris Theatre for Music and Dance. This will be part of the Harris Theatre's "Eat to the Beat" lunchtime performance series.

Julie Nakagawa, artistic director of DanceWorks Chicago taught numerous master classes, including a community master class. Company members also taught master classes and participated in panel discussions. Andreas Böttcher, chief executive officer of the DanceWorks Chicago, spoke with students in the dance management class. Nelly also taught master classes that gave great insights into her creative process. The project was designed so that all dance majors would have the opportunity to interact with the guest artists.

The second student investment project will be a professional immersion trip to New York City for 15 junior and senior dance majors. In early March 2012, students will spend four days in New York City taking master classes, seeing performances, meeting choreographers, and interacting with WMU dance alumni who live in New York. Gina Gibney, artistic director of Gina Gibney Dance and director of the Gibney Dance Center will serve as the host for this project.

The Department of Dance developed the student investment projects to help forge and reinforce artistic/business relationships that will play key roles in the development of our students.

On Left: Nelly van Bommel & Whitney Moncrief



On Right: Nelly van Bommel rehearses with her company members



Western Dance Project



Western Dance Project dancers returned to campus the week before fall classes began to work with choreographer Eddy Ocampo who was commissioned to create a new dance for the group. The dance, titled *PiDgeon*, challenged the dancers' technique and performance skills with its complex structure, physical precision and unique gestural movements. The dance was subsequently performed at the Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars scholarship fundraising event, the Oakland Dance Festival, and at the Dance Chicago Festival. This is the third year in a row that the Western Dance Project has been invited to perform at this Chicago event. Faculty member David Curwen is the artistic director of the Western Dance Project and there are 13 dancers in the company this year.

Eddy Ocampo was a member of Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago from 1994-2000, and has worked with other important companies in Chicago such as River North Chicago Dance Company and Joel Hall Dancers. As a master teacher, Mr. Ocampo has taught in Europe, Mexico, Canada, Turkey, the Russian Republic and throughout the U.S. He is also the founding artistic director the American Jazz Dance Festival-New Generation in the Russian Republic and continues to travel to Russia yearly to spread his passion for jazz dance. As a choreographer, Mr. Ocampo's works can be seen on such companies as Houston Metropolitan Dance Company, Odyssey Dance Theatre (Salt Lake City, UT), Kannon Dance (St. Petersburg, Russia), Lisa Clark Dancers (San Francisco, CA), Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, Thodos Dance Chicago, Eisenhower Dance Ensemble and many regional ballet companies across the U.S. Mr. Ocampo received the Dance Chicago 2004 Outstanding Choreography Award as well as the Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation Choreography Award for Dance Chicago in 2005 and 2007. Mr. Ocampo was featured in the June 2005 issue of Dance Teacher Magazine as well as named one of the best jazz dance teachers in the country by Dance Spirit Magazine.

In October, hip hop artist Suavé came to campus to create a hip hop dance for the company. Suavé, who is based in Chicago, has been a regular guest artist for one of WMU dance's student hip hop organizations. Suavé is the artistic director of Hip Hop ConnXion, Hip Hop Force and Future Force dance troupes. He was an original member of Culture Shock Chicago and he has performed with P-Diddy, Nelly and Ja Rule.

Please contact David Curwen at 269-387-5707 or david.curwen@wmich.edu if you would like the Western Dance Project to perform and/or present master classes at your organization.

Photos above taken by student, Ashley Deran

Winter Gala Dance Concert



This year's Winter Gala Dance Concert will feature three commissions, two Great Works, and dances by faculty and a junior dance major. We are pleased that the department has permission to perform another Antony Tudor ballet. *Fandango* is a ballet on pointe for five women that had its premiere in 1963 at the Metropolitan Opera Ballet Studio. The setting is a public square in southern Spain. The five women, each with distinctive personalities, vie for each other's attention and engage in friendly rivalry. The piano music is by Antonio Soler, and is also titled *Fandango*. The department performed *Dark Elegies* by Mr. Tudor in 2008. Faculty member Megan Slayter and her research partner Jessica Lindberg Coxe have reconstructed their third Loïe Fuller work entitled *La Mer*. *La Mer* is Loïe Fuller's grand interpretation of Debussy's sweeping musical score. Nymphs play among the waves while an elegant siren commands the ever changing waters to dance with her until calming at the shore. Department of Dance students performed Fuller's *Fire Dance* and *Lily* in previous Winter Gala Dance Concerts.

Lauren Edson, winner of the Great Works Dance Project National Choreography Competition, has created a new work titled *Foreground*. This beautifully structured dance boasts athleticism, elegant partnering and detailed gestural phrases. For this 15-minute work, Edson was inspired by the feelings of isolation that often lurk below the surface and the notion of a collective loneliness. Nelly van Bommel choreographed *Addio Amore*, a 22-minute tour de force that captures the playful and communal spirit of traditional European and Middle Eastern folk music. Chicago-based choreographer Eddy Ocampo created a dance titled *PiDgeon* for members of the Western Dance Project, the department's touring ensemble. This quirky dance, with movement inspired by observing pigeons, showcases the technical talent of the company.

David Curwen's dance *Jinsha* is a collaborative multimedia project he has created with art and music faculty and staff from the university's Information Technology area. Kirsten Harvey has created a jazz dance titled *Black Iris*. The dance uses improvisation and structured choreography and was inspired by perceptions about violent women. *Like a Butterfly* was choreographed by junior BFA dance major Katie Mattar. The dance premiered in the December Orchestral Dance Concert. This entertaining, comedic group dance is based on spunky skater kids who are taking over the streets of Tokyo, fighting for their freedom of expression.

The Winter Gala Dance Concert is at 8 pm on February 2, 3, 4, 10 and 11 and at 2 pm on February 4 and 12. The concert will be in the D. Terry Williams Theatre in the Gilmore Theatre Complex on WMU's campus. For tickets please call the Gilmore Box Office at 269-387-6222.

Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars – Latin Style

The fourth Dancing with the WMU/Kazoo Stars scholarship fundraiser was held on November 4 on the Miller Auditorium stage. The event drew record attendance with 260 people there to applaud the celebrity dancers and support the Department of Dance. The event raised \$13,500 through admissions, popular votes and smaller donations. An anonymous donor contributed another \$1,500 to bring the total scholarship dollars raised to \$15,000. Some of that money will be added to the Partners in Dance Endowed Scholarship Fund and rest has been set aside for tuition scholarships for the 2012-13 academic year.

This year's celebrity dancers were Nick Andreadis, Dean of WMU Lee Honors College; Susan B. Anthony, International Opera Diva; Andy Dominianni, Anchor at WWMT-TV Newschannel 3; Lori Moore, Morning host at 590 WKZO; Harvey Myers, Retired Pfizer Chemist and Community Advocate; Greg Rosine, WMU Vice President of Government Affairs and University Relations; Danielle Streed, Estate Planning Attorney at Redmond, Streed and Yokom; and Ruth Wiser, Retired Sara Lee Executive and Community Volunteer.

Ruth Wiser was the judges' grand prize and "people's choice" winner. She danced the mambo with dance major Joseph Hernandez. Lori Moore won second place, dancing the cha cha with dance major Jesse Hoisington. The third place winner was Andy Dominianni. He danced the samba with dance major Connor Cornelius. Former WMU dance faculty member Tony Calucci choreographed the celebrity dances.

The Mayor of Kalamazoo and 2008 "Stars" winner, Bobby Hopewell, served as one of the judges. Other judges were Kathryn Williams, Musical Theatre Choreographer and WMU faculty member, and D. Terry Williams who is a Professor and Chair Emeritus of WMU's Department of Theatre.

D. Terry Williams, Sharon Williams and dance faculty member Sharon Garber entertained the crowd with a waltz and tango. The Western Dance Project performed an excerpt from Eddy Ocampo's dance titled piDgeon, and Joseph Hernandez thanked the audience for their support of the dance department. Chair Nina Nelson served as the emcee for the evening.

Partners in Dance co-hosted this special event with the Department of Dance.

