Dear Alumni and Friends

This is the time of year we review the past year by noting accomplishments and gathering and reporting statistics. It is also a time when we say, “Job well done!” and “Look at what we have planned for next year!” In this e-newsletter we will focus on these two areas as we continue to celebrate alumni achievements.

It seems that each year we have a major project, and this year’s was our National Association of Schools of Dance reaccreditation process. Several of you participated in the alumni survey that was a part of this process. It is interesting to note that 100% of the survey respondents indicated that the department prepared them well for their post-graduate activities, and 79% of the respondents said they felt they were “extremely well” prepared. While we are very pleased with your satisfaction of your WMU dance education, I want you to know that we continue to update our curriculum based on your feedback. We want to provide the best dance education possible!

One statistic from the survey was a surprising one. Slightly fewer than 50% of the responding alumni indicated that they financially support dance organizations. Since I know that dancers are passionate about the arts, I had expected this number to be higher.

As you know, government support for the arts and public education is dwindling, and organizations are relying more heavily on donor support in order to provide top-notch experiences and opportunities for its students, artists and patrons. If it weren’t for donors to the Department of Dance, we wouldn’t be able to offer scholarships, travel to festivals, produce concerts, provide extensive guest artist residencies, present “Great Works,” and more....

Like many of you, I remember the days when I was barely scraping together a living as an artist/teacher. I also remember the first donation I made to an arts organization. At the time of my pledge my palms were sweaty and I was nervous. I thought, “Is this something I can afford?” I went ahead and picked up the phone and did it; I pledged a $25.00 gift. At the time it seemed like I was giving a huge amount of money! I have to say that I felt really good about making this gift because I felt I was supporting a most worthy organization, and I continue to give to the organization (and many more!) on an annual basis.

Many of you are already generous supporters of the department, and I thank you for your generosity. If you are not yet a supporter (and want that glorious sweaty feeling!!!!) please go to our website www.wmich.edu/dance and click on GIFTS TO DEPARTMENT for more information. If you wish to discuss a gift, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I promise that we will be good stewards of your gift.

I hope your summer is filled with sunshine!

Nina
• **Bethany Blanchard** (2006) will be performing in Las Vegas from May to September in an impersonation show called *Legends in Concert* that runs at the Imperial Palace. She sends “hellos” to everyone back home, and invites anyone who will be in the Las Vegas area to contact her. bethany.blanchard@hotmail.com

• **Lisa Bredahl** (1999) is working for Allen Edwin Homes, the leading home builder in West Michigan. She invites anyone who is interested in learning more to contact her. She is also still teaching dance and sends a special thanks to Amanda Whittaker, the business manager, for handling the daily operations. lisabredahl@yahoo.com

• **Courtney Champagne** (2004) interned at Meadowbrook Theatre for a year and has been working at the Lamia & Lamia Salon & Day Spa in Grosse Pointe Woods for the past two years. She is currently the Salon Manager. She still dances and teaches at her former studio and was cast as Victoria in the Grosse Pointe Theatre’s production of CATS. nydancer3@hotmail.com

• **Amanda Cooke** (2006) auditioned and was offered a company position with Detroit Dance Collective. She will soon be relocating to the east side of Michigan and is looking for dance studios that are hiring in that area. manda11783@aol.com

• **Derrick Evans** (2000) was recently in New Jersey choreographing for a recording showcase. He also visited Switzerland and is happy to report good weather, cheese, and chocolate. He was back in New York briefly in June, and then traveled to the Virginia School of the Arts and James Madison University to teach for five weeks. ilandevans@yahoo.com

• **Elaine Hoxie** (2002) performed with DRIP *paint in motion* at the Orlando Fringe Festival in late May. DRIP is a company that uses a unique twist of modern/contemporary dance with hints of belly dance, baton twirling, and gymnastics. A variety of paint colors are used to create pieces of art on the canvas, body, and floor. The artwork created during the show is then auctioned off at the end of the show. Visit www.droppaintinmotion.com for more info. elainehoxie@yahoo.com

• **Lacey Kelley** (2005) recently auditioned and was chosen as a cast member for the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s production of *Dr. Automic*. The show features a ballet within the opera, and Lacey was chosen as one of the eight dancers from an audition of 250 people. The show runs from November through January and is choreographed by Lucinda Childs. Lacey also toured with River North Chicago Dance Company at the end of April. laceykkelley@hotmail.com

• **Kristen Legg** (2002) is in Seattle and received the smART ventures grant from the Mayor’s Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs and his since been asked to serve on a panel for another grant. The experience has influenced her to put together a grant-writing workshop: a basic class for beginners and one just for dancers.

• **Diane Makas** is in the LA/OC area and is always looking for someone to teach a master class in any dance genre. She is offering her guest room to any alum that may be in the area. dmakasweber@hboilers.com


• **Lindsay Moore** (2006) is living in New York and will be joining the first national tour of *The Wedding Singer* in August. lindsay.l.moore@wmich.edu

• **Katina Childs-Muller** (1996) has spent the last year choreographing for dance teams and studios for the competition seasons. She was also a rehearsal assistant for Media City Ballet company cleaning a revival of Andrei Tremaine’s (formally with the Ballet Russe) ballet in a tribute show *The Men of the Ballet Russe*. Find out more at mediacityballet.org. Katina and her husband Otto were producers of the movie *What Love Is?*, a small independent film with Cuba Gooding Jr. Be sure and catch it on video that is soon to be released. Kat and Otto’s greatest production this year was the birth of their son Jadon Cole Muller on April 2nd. He joins big sister Chloe Rose 4, and big brother (and dancer) Nick Muller.

• **Sabrina Parshall** took a trip to Egypt and has posted the pictures from the trip on her website at http://www.sabrinarashall.com/egyppictures
Morella Petrozzi (1989) recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of her company, DANZA VIVA. She also choreographed Tierra Baldia, a new dance with an ecology theme. During April, Morella taught many dance classes at the British Institute and was also involved in some of their conferences. In October, she plans to move to Barcelona, Spain and continue dancing and taking classes in choreography and composition.

Kathleen Tenniswood-Powell is teaching part-time at Saint Mary’s Hall, a co-educational private school located in San Antonio, Texas. She also has a small studio in her home and works privately with several students and teachers. On weekends, Kathleen keeps busy teaching at workshops or examining with the Cecchetti Council of America. She was also recently appointed to the Board of Directors of The Arts Foundation of San Antonio. ktenniswood-powell@sbcglobal.net

Jessica Reschke (2005) is in the middle of her second contract with Jubilee in Las Vegas. In addition to performing, she is also doing tradeshow modeling and photo shoots. She has a new website; the URL is www.jessicareschke.com. Though very busy, Jessica still found time to take a vacation to Santiago, Chile, which she reports was amazing. jessabelle221@yahoo.com

Kathy (Gibson) Rivera (1997) is living in the suburbs of NYC and is happy to report that she is pregnant and due in August. She recently discovered an interesting website about the New York City Ballet’s production of Romeo & Juliet that she is happy to pass on. The URL is http://tragiclovenyc.com. kathy.m.rivera@gmail.com

Leonard Sullivan was in Atlanta this past January performing in Disney’s High School Musical. The show is highly successful and Leonard is part of the full national tour that started in May. After working in Atlanta, he made his NYC cabaret debut with a good friend. Leonard was also in Smokey Joe’s Café in San Jose. lenny47@mac.com

Wynter Thomas (1999) graduated with highest honors May 5, 2007 from Wayne State University with her Master’s in Public Relations/Organizational Communications. She plans to study abroad in Paris over the summer. wthomas@bcbsm.com

Brent Whitney is finishing up dancing with the Milwaukee Ballet and is moving to New York in June. While there, he will have a work/study scholarship with Steps on Broadway and plans to get certified as a personal trainer. He will also be auditioning for various contemporary ballet freelance jobs. brent_whitney@hotmail.com

Rebecca Yourison (2004) is still in St. Louis and will be getting married in 2008. She plans to settle with her husband in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and explore the promising dance opportunities that the Twin Cities have to offer. This past year she taught a class of a dozen teen boys that has challenged and delighted her throughout the year and is coming along well on a modern/jazz dance for the year-end recital. She invites anyone who may be in the St. Louis area to contact her. ladybugbec@hotmail.com

Congratulations to all our 2007 graduates!!
• The Department of Dance is pleased to announce that the Lindsey Canfield Thomas Jazz Enrichment Fund Endowment has been established at the minimum level through the generous donations of many alumni, faculty, staff and friends. In 2008, the Department should have a modest amount of money from the interest earned on the account to support a variety of jazz dance projects including guest artists and student support. Several alumni have made long-term pledges to this fund and this will allow the fund to grow faster, thus benefiting more students. Thank you for this lasting tribute to Lindsey!

• The Great Works Dance Project’s choreographer for 2007-08 will be Antony Tudor. Willy Shives, ballet master at the Joffrey Ballet, will stage Tudor’s “Dark Elegies” on WMU dancers in October 2007 and January 2008. We will be joining in a worldwide celebration of the centennial of Mr. Tudor’s birth. “Dark Elegies” is a dramatic 25-minute work that will challenge our dancers’ ability to convey strong emotion through movement. We are also working on a second “Great Work” for 2007-08, but plans have not been finalized.

• Partners in Dance has elected five new board members. They are (top to bottom): dance alumna Denise King; WMU alumna and Kalamazoo Public School educator Patricia Carlin; retired WMU theatre professor and chair D. Terry Williams; and retired WMU School of Music professor Bill Appel. The student representative to the board for 2007-2008 will be Ashley Howard.

• The Department of Dance has learned that former dance faculty member Luretta McCray passed away more than a year ago. The department does not have any details.
• Congratulations to Jane Baas who has been promoted to full professor. Jane joined the dance faculty in 1981 and has served the department in many capacities, including as academic advisor and department chair. She is the recipient of the Dean’s Teaching Award and the College of Fine Arts Outstanding Service Award. This promotion acknowledges Jane’s outstanding accomplishments as a scholar, artist, teacher, student advocate and volunteer. The rank of full professor is one of the highest honors that can be earned by university faculty, and Jane is most deserving.

• The Department of Dance is pleased to welcome Rhonda Cinotto to the dance faculty for the 2007-2008 academic year. Rhonda received M.F.A. and B.A. degrees in dance from the University of Washington. From 1997—2003, she was a member of Spectrum Dance Theatre, a professional repertoire company that toured throughout the Pacific Northwest and Mexico, Germany, and the Netherlands. While in the company she performed works by Anne Reinking, Dwight Rhoden, Daniel Buraczeski, Daniel Ezralow, Frank Chaves, Lar Lubovitch, Margo Sappington and Donald Byrd, among others. Ms. Cinotto served as Spectrum’s rehearsal director and was responsible for restaging and rehearsing works in the company’s repertoire. In 2005 Ms. Cinotto was a guest artist with the Chamber Dance Company, the resident professional company at the University of Washington, and became a company member while earning her Master of Fine Arts. In addition to performing, Ms. Cinotto has been teaching for over ten years at numerous schools in the Seattle area, including University of Washington, Spectrum Dance Theatre, and Arc Dance Productions. She has also choreographed for dance companies and public and private schools throughout the Pacific Northwest. Rhonda will teach modern and jazz and will work extensively with the freshman dance majors.

• During the 2006-07 academic year, the Department of Dance went through the rigorous National Association of Schools of Dance reaccreditation process. This process involved writing an extensive report about all aspects of the department and an on-site visit by an accreditation team. Though the department won’t hear about its reaccreditation status until September 2007, the site visitors’ report was very positive. They listed the following as departmental strengths:
  * A collegial faculty and staff that offers strong support to students and to each other
  * Stable and dedicated leadership
  * Support from the administration with strong support from the college dean
  * A positive and cohesive student community
  * Dancer Wellness Project
  * Great Works Dance Project
  * Exceptional contact with alumni
  * Financial and advocacy support from the community Partners in Dance organization
  * Excellent teaching facilities

Your participation in the alumni survey was of great help to us for this process and will continue to be considered as the department works to improve its offerings. Thank you!
• The Department of Dance continues to attract students from around the country, with 170 students auditioning for entrance in Fall or Spring 2007.

• The freshman class will be one of the largest in the last decade, with 28 students. Prospective students cite equal emphasis on ballet, jazz, and modern; performance opportunities and availability of scholarships as the three top reasons for applying to WMU.

• Dance majors Jeremy Neal and Tercell Waters were on the TV show “So You Think You Can Dance” in May 2007. Jeremy was invited to Las Vegas for the second round of the competition.

• Dance majors Jackie Nowicki and Matt Baker won scholarships to attend the American Dance Festival in North Carolina in June and July 2007.

• Dance major Kristi Mountz was selected as a technical production intern for the 2007 Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival. She was one of 11 interns selected from a pool of 100.

• The Great Works Dance Project began its second decade with the work of contemporary choreographer, Robert Battle. His dance “Alleluia” was featured in the Winter Concert of Dance.

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Have an update? Tell us about it!!

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jane.baas@wmich.edu
PARTNERS IN DANCE

Partners in Dance is Western Michigan University’s support organization dedicated to promoting greater awareness of dance and providing critically needed financial support for the special needs of WMU’s Department of Dance, including scholarships, visiting artists’ residencies, and the Great Works Dance Project. Membership levels begin at $35 for an individual and offer many worthwhile privileges, including discounts on tickets for Department of Dance concerts, opportunities for field trips to professional dance performances, and special Department of Dance mailings. Your membership in Partners in Dance will help us keep the art of dance healthy and strong. We invite you to join us in supporting dance by becoming a member or renewing your membership for the 2007-2008 season.

To join Partners in Dance please call 269-387-5830

WMU Department of Dance
Faculty—Staff
Jane Baas, Professor
Tony Calucci, Assistant Professor
Rhonda Cinotto, Faculty Specialist II
Wendy Cornish, Professor Emerita
David Curwen, Associate Professor
Anders Dahlberg, Part-time Instructor
Sharon Garber, Associate Professor
Dorothy Giovannini, Ballet Accompanist Coordinator
Clara Gamble, Professor Emerita
Rosemary Hubek, Office Coordinator
Nikol Mejeur, Part-time Instructor
Jeff Moehle, Modern/Jazz Accompanist Coordinator
Liz Mortens, Graduate Assistant
Nina Nelson, Professor and Chair
Debra Norton, Part-time Instructor
Carolyn Pavlik, Assistant Professor
Patricia Plasko, Education for the Arts
David Smith, Part-time Instructor
Janet E. Stillwell, Professor Emerita
Kathryn Williams, Part-time Instructor

2007-2008
Western Michigan University
Department of Dance
Entrance Audition Dates
October 19, 2007
November 9, 2007
February 22, 2008

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