



# dance at illinois

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
College of Fine & Applied Arts

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# pivot

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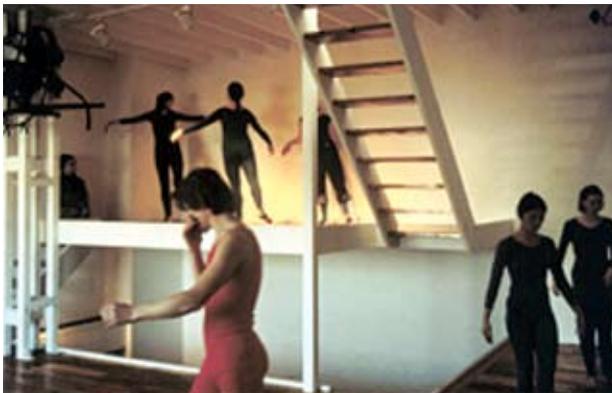
# re-imagining our legacy

From Jan Erkert, Head, Dance at Illinois

- Merce Cunningham and John Cage



Daniel R. James, Photographer



- Onsite works then and now: (top, 2008) Kimber Andrews' (MFA 2008) *Going Nowhere Fast*; (bottom, 1976) Baker Studio — *Performance Loft*

As this is a politically charged year, a quote by former U.S. president Harry Truman seems appropriate, "There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know." As we began the process of re-imagining our future, it seemed important to ask, "What is our legacy and how will this history facilitate our next steps?" So the faculty gathered around Pat Knowles, our former Department Head, to hear the stories.

We heard about Merce Cunningham and John Cage stopping here on their first college residency in the 1960s creating outlandish happenings. Our Department championed these first guest artist programs in order to provide links between the then very separate worlds of professional artists and dance educators. Today our faculty *are* practicing artists thanks to our University's leadership in creative solutions to the academic/professional split. Our faculty are artistic directors of major national companies, they are internationally renowned guest artists traveling the globe, they bridge the world between theory and practice, they write books and make dances, they are at the cutting edge of developing interactive technology and they are passionate teachers who engage students as collaborative partners in the creative process.

We have a long history as leaders of cross-domain activities, not only between our natural partners of music and theater, but also with other arts, sciences and humanities. Our Department was a hotbed of innovative activities in the 50s and 60s as the arts intersected with the social and political atmosphere of the day. This year, we were privileged to perform *D-Man in the Waters* by Bill T. Jones. In order to con-

nect with the political and social context of its making, we collaborated with groups as diverse as Planned Parenthood, the School of Social Work and the Greater Champaign AIDS Project. Dance Department founder Margaret Erlanger forged strong collaborations between dance and architecture which continues today through our joint interests in not only space and time, but also in sustainability. Site-specific works were developed and performed here on our campus long before the word site-specific was known to the dance community. Today, our performers are exploding both on and off the stage as our students magically transform a parking lot, their dorm room, a library or an old house in the neighborhood.

We also learned that we have long been leaders in the development of dance curriculums through our leadership in the National Association for Schools of Dance and we have spawned innovative somatic thinkers such as Joan Skinner, John Rolland and Nancy Topf. Today with our faculty based in a variety of somatic, anatomical and creative approaches, we are asking how we might restructure the current silos of physical training, creative processes and theoretical inquiry. As we go through the task of re-designing the curriculum for the 21st century, we will need to respond to a very different world, but we will be making informed choices grounded in our rich history of innovation.

We hope you will visit our website, [www.dance.illinois.edu](http://www.dance.illinois.edu), and join us as we re-imagine the future.

## looking back 2007–2008

*A Message from Dean Robert Graves*

The University of Illinois Department of Dance has had a remarkable year. Under Jan Erkert's energetic leadership, the Department has strengthened its presence nationally. Its faculty have set new standards of excellence. Its students have taken dance to the local public in creative ways.

Dance faculty have garnered major national awards this year while performances of their work were presented far and near. Tere O'Connor's masterwork, *Winter Belly*, was performed by Dance alumni at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York—and on stage at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts during the Department's *Festival Dance 2008*. Jan Erkert created a piece that was performed in the gardens of the University of Illinois president's house at sunset—both projects were part of new fundraising initiatives aimed at strengthening and enhancing the future of the program. In addition, Professor Rebecca Netti-Fiol co-edited a collection of essays and interviews with some of today's most successful dance professionals, *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* (University of Illinois Press, 2008), which has been warmly received by reviewers and critics.

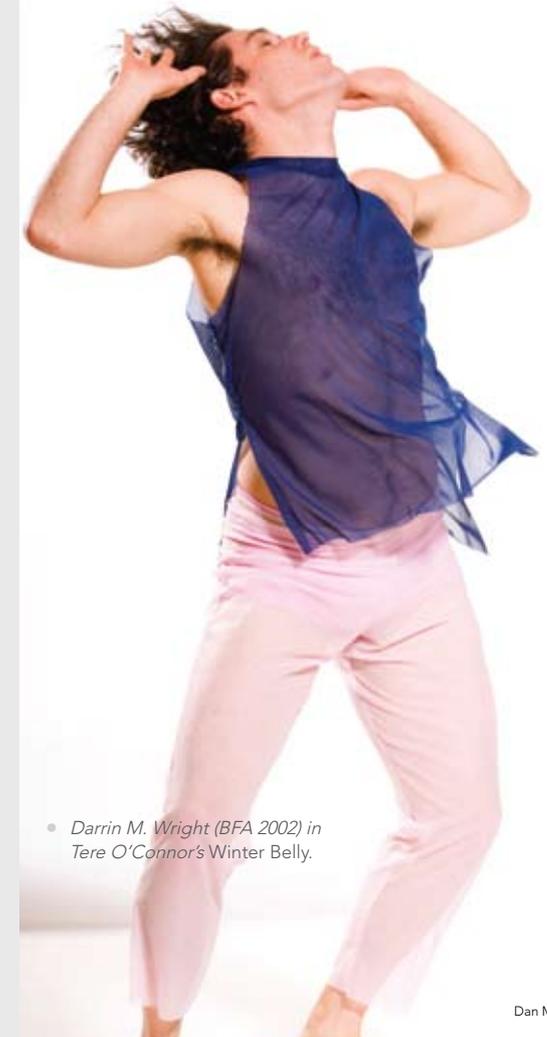


In this new edition of *Pivot*, please take a moment to learn about the many activities that put our Dance Department at the forefront of academic training programs in the country. While faculty are accomplished practitioners of their discipline, they are keenly focused on student success. This year's incoming class of students was the most diverse ever recruited and reflects the rich educational experience within the Arts at Illinois. Dance students learned the importance of arts outreach by staging dances in the large atrium of the new Architecture building (Temple Hoyne Buell Hall), on the campus' quadrangle and outside the main Library. Students and faculty have also made connections in Urbana and Champaign partnering with local arts organizations such as 40 North | 88 West and performing at the Boneyard Arts Festival.

The Department performances featured a range of work including Bill T. Jones' *D-Man in the Waters* supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and Dance/USA. Dance alumni were welcomed back to campus—en masse—for a memorable weekend of performances, guest speakers and alumni gatherings for the first "Dance: Behind the Scenes" weekend in partnership with the University of Illinois Alumni Association. Alumni of the program enjoyed this opportunity to re-engage with those on campus and celebrate their activities and achievements since their own graduation.

I invite you not only to read about our Department of Dance in these pages, I encourage you to experience Dance at Illinois from the audience—wherever that may be.

# 07/08

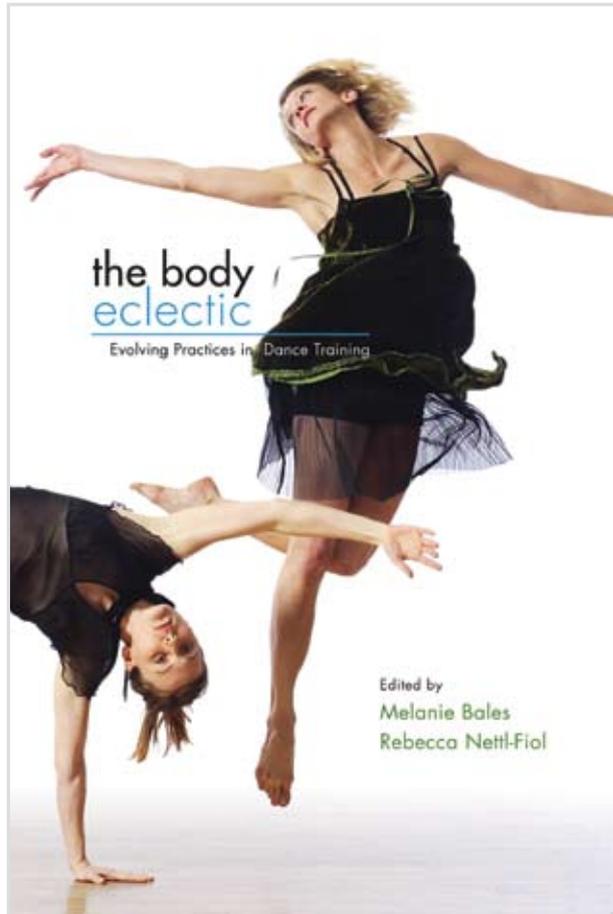


• Darrin M. Wright (BFA 2002) in Tere O'Connor's *Winter Belly*.

Dan Merlo, Photographer

# *the body eclectic* is published!

By Associate Professor Rebecca Nettl-Fiol



- Associate Professor Rebecca Nettl-Fiol's new book *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* co-edited with Melanie Bales (MFA 1983)
- "Rich with anecdotes and a treasure trove of citations and references, this book will give dance teachers, scholars, graduate students, and dancers a fascinating read." — Dance Magazine, June 2008

At long last, my co-edited book with U of I alum Melanie Bales was published by the University of Illinois Press in February, 2008! *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* was born from conversations Melanie and I were having in the late 1990s about the shifts we were seeing in dance training. After receiving an enthusiastic response from a roundtable we presented on the topic at the Dancing in the Millennium conference in 2000, we launched into the project, collecting and soliciting essays, interviewing dance artists and writing articles. In the book, we examine two essential processes in contemporary dance training: the inclusion of somatic practices and the collaging and juxtaposing of movement forms. To illustrate the themes, we also include training stories of 16 contemporary dance artists, including U of I alums Chris Aiken, Kathleen Fisher and Karen Graham.

My latest writing project is a co-authored book with U of I alum and fellow Alexander Technique teacher, Luc Vanier, projected for publication by the U of I Press. We are in the process of writing about our research and teaching experience in training dancers utilizing principles of the Alexander Technique and developmental movement.

These frameworks provide us with systems and tools for looking at dance training through a different point of view. The book, tentatively titled *Dance and the Alexander Technique: Exploring the Missing Link*, will include a DVD that illus-

trates the movement examples described throughout the book. The "missing link" refers to the work of anatomist and anthropologist Raymond A. Dart, who discovered and named the Australopithecus, which he called the "missing link" between apes and humans. In our training with Joan and Alex Murray, this exploration of developmental and evolutionary sequences, known as the Dart Procedures, became a lively and dynamic way of understanding Alexander's principles.

We are excited to share this valuable information with the dance community.

- Co-author, Luc Vanier (MFA 2001) works with Jessica Ray (MFA 2005) on spirals





• *Tori Heeb and Stephen West in John Toenjes' Songs of the Elastic Halloon.*

## movement, sound and interactive media

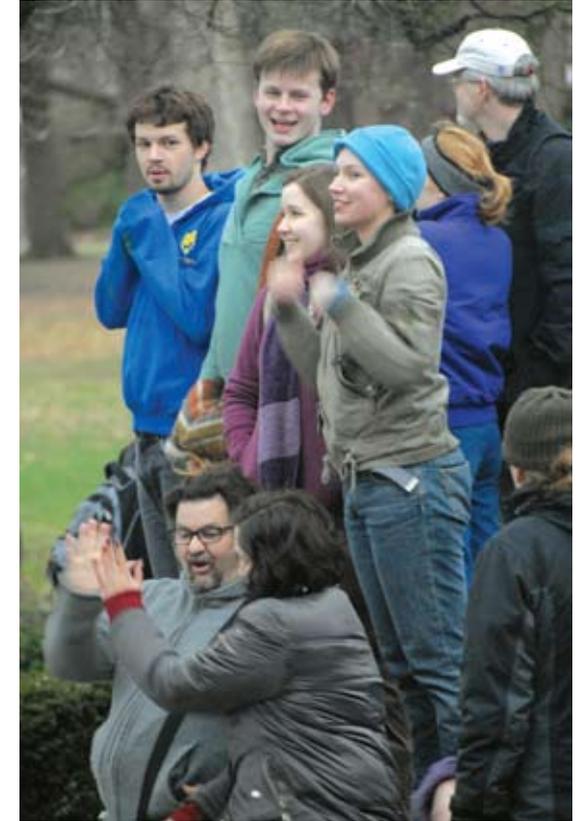
*By Associate Professor\* John Toenjes, Music Director*

This past year at the *November Playhouse Dance* concert, I directed a team of dancers and computer programmers in the creation of a computer-interactive dance work entitled *Songs of the Elastic Halloon*. This work establishes a sort of a four-ring environment of music, video, art and dance improvisation, challenging the performers to create, live on stage, an evolving 3-dimensional, music-video-movement texture. The dancer/singer/video painters use wii® game controllers to create and control 3-D sonified video spheres, and use another custom computer device which I created to “paint” the walls of a 3-D theater scape in response to the dance and music. This painting device is now being installed in the Orpheum Children’s

Museum in Champaign as an interactive artwork, separate from the dance. This is an example of a new paradigm being realized in computer arts, where one art form shares creative possibilities with another, and distinctions between them are blurred. This trend was also visible in much of the work shown at the 2008 6th Annual Spark Festival of Electronic Music and Arts, in Minneapolis, where my team performed another of our computer-assisted music and video improvisational environments, *Leonardo’s Chimes*.

*\*pending board of trustees approval*

Daniel R. James, Photographer



“(Illinois faculty) are passionate teachers who engage students as collaborative partners in the creative process.” — Jan Erkert

creative process

# dr. cynthia oliver researches calypso dancing

By Alyssa Schoeneman, BFA 2010

Associate Professor of Dance Cynthia Oliver's current research and upcoming performance project focuses on Calypso dancing as a signifier of Caribbean identity in the transnation. Her work describes how Caribbean people use Calypso to facilitate self identification as well as to identify with one another across geographical, national and sometimes aesthetic borders. With complex identities based in migration and interruption, from slavery, indentured servitude, straight through to extended vacationers, Caribbean people come from and have spread throughout the globe. Due to their complex histories and present, Caribbean people create identities based less on genealogical lineage than on cultural threads. Calypso is one of the threads that tie them together.

To bring her work to the stage, Oliver will utilize notions of "rupture" in sound, movement and text. She will reproduce Caribbean radio and live music events where DJs break the natural progression of a song by talking over the music or by stopping it to insert sweet talk or political commentary.

Oliver's creative process involves both academic and physical explorations. When asked which part of the process she found more engaging, Oliver said, "That's like asking someone to choose one child over another. They both are equally engaging to me because they address the subject in different ways. They both inform each other, they use different muscles and they are both wicked hard—neither is an easy process."

Oliver's work has been significantly influenced by black avant garde theater and contributes to Oliver's non-linear style. German Filmmaker Marcus Behrens, who directed Oliver's *AfroSocialiteLifeDiva* is collaborating with Oliver, contributing a video montage that will inform and accentuate the flow of

the work. Bessie Award-winning composer Jason Finkelman will create music and a sound design, while Benny Gomes will design the costumes for the project.

Oliver's piece will be performed by Caribbean nationals reared in the Caribbean region proper, the U.K., and in Caribbean Centers in the U.S. and Canada. Entitled *Rigidigidim De Bamba De*, the piece is set to premiere in the fall of 2009 at the Painted Bride Art Center in Philadelphia. *Rigidigidim* is thus far funded by the Rockefeller MultiArts Production Arts Fund (the MAP Fund), the University of Illinois Research Board and the U of I Creative Research Award.

Oliver will use her research to inform her teaching and her choreography at the U of I. While her choreography may not focus on transnationalism specifically, her graduate course, *Moving Across Cultures*, will examine the theoretical underpinnings around transnationalist concerns through a multitude of contemporary artists.

crea

Carolina Kroon, Photographer



• Cynthia Oliver in her work *Closer than Skin*

# creative process

## expressive arts group

By Renay Aumiller, MFA 2009

As part of the Dance Department's Celebration Project in association with the reconstruction of Bill T. Jones' *D-Man in the Waters*, I had the unique opportunity to work with the Carle Expressive Arts Group, which is a diverse assemblage of people who are dealing with HIV or AIDS in their life. This group, led by Julia Kellman, a professor in the School of Art and Design, graciously allowed me to share a video of *D-Man* with them at an informal brunch. Each person then created an individual work of art in response to what they saw, which were then displayed on the plasma screens in the lobby of Krannert Center during the run of *Festival Dance 2008*.

Their responses to the work and process of dance making were exquisite in how they translated images from one art form to another, creating various interpretations of the visuals relevant in *D-Man* and carrying the concepts of community, awareness and celebration into their personal lives. One project was a series of sixteen black and white photographs of hands that belonged to those living with HIV and AIDS; each hand presented personalized messages. Another participant's poem responded to the water imagery of *D-Man*, depicting his own life as a series of ripples and fishtails of cause and effect situations.

A big thanks goes to the group for wiggling their FISHTAILS through this collaboration and creating several RIPPLES within every one of us.



Daniel R. James, Photographer

• Nicholas Wagner, Matthew Johnson and Kuan-Yu Chen in the reconstruction of Bill T. Jones' *D-Man in the Waters*

an extraordinary faculty is gathering

view the journeys and projects of our entire faculty:

[www.dance.illinois.edu](http://www.dance.illinois.edu)

- Jan Erkert, Professor, *Department Head*
  - Beverly Blossom, *Professor Emeritus*
  - John Dayger, *Visiting Lecturer*
  - Sara Hook, *Associate Professor*
  - Philip Johnston, *Lecturer*
  - Patricia Knowles, *Professor Emeritus*
  - Kate Kuper, *Visiting Lecturer*
  - Linda Lehovec, *Associate Professor, BFA Program Director*
  - Putu Oka Mardiani, *Instructor*
  - Jennifer Monson, *Professor*
  - Rebecca Netti-Fiol, *Associate Professor*
  - Tere O'Connor, *Professor*
  - Cynthia Oliver, *Associate Professor*
  - Kirstie Simson, *Assistant Professor*
  - John Toenjes, *Associate Professor\**
  - Renée Wadleigh, *Professor, MFA Director*
  - Yutian Wong, *Assistant Professor*
- \*pending board of trustees approval*

### Guest Artists in Residence

#### 2007–2008

Germaul Barnes  
Catherine Cabeen  
Djibril Camara  
Denis Chiaramonte  
Richard Colton  
Janet Lilly  
Ligia Pinheiro  
Richard Siegal  
Christian von Howard

#### 2008–2009

Christian Burns  
Laurie Carlos  
Denis Chiaramonte  
lyun Harrison  
Kyoko Ibe  
Ted Johnson  
Paul Singh, *BFA 2005*

# dance at illinois

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Main Photo. *Esteban Donoso in Rebecca Netti-Fiol's Heart at Low Tide, Dan Merlo, photographer*

1. *Alitra Cartman in Germaul Barnes' When the Brook Meets the River, Dan Merlo, photographer*

2. *Erin Sansone in Cynthia Oliver's Rapture, Dan Merlo, photographer*

3. *Linda Lehovec's Three Barks Away from a Howl, Dan Merlo, photographer*

4. *Alumnus Leslie Cuyjet (BFA 2003) in Tere O'Connor's Winter Belly, Daniel R. James, photographer*

5. *Architecture student John Clark in a collaborative project between dance and landscape architecture for the interdisciplinary class Performing Space of Professor Tere O'Connor (Dance) and Professor David Hays (Landscape Architecture)*

6. *Christopher Knowlton and Amanda Pesch in Steve May's senior thesis project Boogie Down Bedroom Bodies, Daniel R. James, photographer*



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6



College of Fine and Applied Arts  
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[www.dance.illinois.edu](http://www.dance.illinois.edu)

# around the globe

## highlights of a remarkable year

- Seven alumni perform in O'Connor's *Winter Belly* at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in **NYC**
- O'Connor & Erkert perform in **Latvia**
- Tere O'Connor & Dancers perform in **Ireland**
- Monson performs and attends Eco-feminist Art Conference in **Israel**
- Oliver researches cultures in the **Caribbean**
- Undergraduate Kyli Kleven has a scholarship to attend ImPulzTanz in **Vienna**
- Graduate students Esteban Donoso and Christine Betsill perform in **Ecuador**
- Netti-Fiol delivers papers in **Australia**
- Hook adjudicates ACDFA in **California**
- Toenjes builds an interactive water site in **Milwaukee**
- Johnston dances in **Italy**
- Wadleigh attends ImPulzTanz in **Vienna**
- Wong delivers papers in **NYC**
- Dance at Illinois hosts dance musicians and professors from **across the U.S.** at the International Guild of Musicians in Dance semi-annual conference
- Undergraduate Kristen Waltermann attends workshops in **Italy**
- Graduate Laura Chiamonte and undergraduate Melissa Pillarella travel to **Bali** to perform with Mardiani
- Lehovec attends the American College Dance Festival Board meeting in **Kansas City**
- Our students perform the reconstruction of Bill T. Jones' *D-Man in the Waters* in **Boston**
- Our students perform in gala concert at ACDFA in **Madison, Wisconsin**
- O'Connor takes a group of students to Bebe Miller's Concert in **Chicago**
- Shadows — Nicholas Wagner, Whitney Hubbard, Rosemary Robertson, Nichole Johnson travel to **NYC** for Mark Morris Summer Intensive
- Simson is **everywhere** — Paris; Moab, Utah; Greece; Italy; Spain; Netherlands; NYC; Chicago; Wales

# scholarships

This past year, we honored Joan and Alex Murray at a reception during *November Playhouse Dance 2007* in appreciation of their immense contributions to the field of the Alexander Technique and for their generosity in sharing their expertise with the students and faculty of the Department of Dance. We also want to thank sincerely Jacquelyn and Donald Carducci, Richard Erickson, Marilyn Moe Fiedler, Mary Elizabeth Hamstrom, Barbara Horne, Karen Keener, Patricia Knowles, Wanda and Bruno Netti, and the late Vannie Sheiry, who have provided ongoing scholarships for our students and our program.



• (from left to right) Rebecca Netti-Fiol with award recipients Renay Aumiller and William Schneider; Karen Keener with award recipient Chun-Chen Chang; Marilyn Moe Fiedler with award recipient Kimber Andrews; Patricia Knowles with award recipient Christine Betsill

## 07–08 student scholarship recipients

Lisa Carducci Memorial Scholarship—Kyli Kleven

Vannie L. Sheiry Memorial Dance Scholarship—  
Chun-Chen Chang

Moe Family Dance Award—Kimber Andrews

Patricia Knowles Graduate Travel Award—Christine Betsill

Mary Elizabeth Hamstrom Award—Renay Aumiller

Wanda M. Netti Prize for Student Choreography—  
Renay Aumiller, William Schneider

## department awards

Outstanding Service Award—Rebecca O’Connell,  
Lauren Vandivier, Michelle Scurlock

Undergraduate Above and Beyond Award—  
Grace Courvoisier

Graduate Above and Beyond Award—Sonia Warfel

Undergraduate Summer Study Award—Rebecca Crystal,  
Alyssa Schoeneman

Outstanding Solo Performance Award—Janis Dingels

Potential Powerhouse Award—Erin Sansone

Excellence in Performance Award—Michelle Scurlock

Senior Magnolia Award—Alitra Cartman

Emerging Choreographic Award—Talia Kraft

Excellence in Choreography Award—Rebecca O’Connell

Undergraduate Excellence Award—Whitney Hubbard

Graduate Excellence Award—Esteban Donoso

## dance department scholarship fund

This fund allows for students to participate in festivals and workshops. The Department also has four endowed scholarship awards and one endowed alumni award that welcome contributions all year long through the University of Illinois Foundation:

- Vannie L. Sheiry Memorial Dance Fund (Est. 1994)—Awarded in recognition of outstanding performance
- Moe Family Dance Award Fund (Est. 1996)—Awarded to a student with the potential for unique contributions to the profession which may lie outside the realm of performance in the traditional sense
- Wanda M. Netti Prize for Student Choreography (Est. 2002)—Rewards and encourages student creative work
- Patricia Knowles Graduate Travel Award (Est. 2006)—Awarded to a Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) candidate to be used for travel and study that deepens his or her artistic life
- Beverly Blossom and Carey Erickson Alumni Dance Award (Est. 2007)—This award enables Alumni to return to the campus to teach, perform, choreograph and otherwise enhance Dance at Illinois



• (from left to right) Mary Elizabeth Hamstrom Scholarship recipient Renay Aumiller; Lisa Carducci Memorial Scholarship award recipient Kyli Kleven; Department honorees Joan and Alex Murray with Philip Johnston and Rebecca Netti-Fiol



- Tere O'Connor, Chancellor Richard Herman, Richard Erickson, Beverly Blossom and Jan Erkert at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City. Following the performance of Winter Belly, Herman announced a new endowed gift, the Beverly Blossom and Carey Erickson Alumni Dance Award, given by Richard Erickson.

## from the chancellor

### Illinois alumni perform at Baryshnikov Arts Center in NYC

*On a magical autumn evening at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City, I witnessed an indelible dance performance. Illinois faculty member Tere O'Connor's Winter Belly, like all great works of art, was beautiful, evocative and engaging. The performance reminded me why we need these moments more than ever. For without dance, indeed without the arts, we would never have a vehicle for our dreams. We would never have the words and the steps to name the unnamed. It closes the distance between our minds and hearts, the disconnect between the physical and mental and perhaps most importantly, the gulf between love and hate. That's why I am so excited about the growing stature in the arts community of our Department of Dance. I hope you will join me in vigorously supporting this crucial art form at Illinois.*

– Chancellor Richard Herman

Richard Erickson established this endowment in memory of his brother, Carey, and in honor of Carey's mentor, Beverly Blossom. The award will enable Alumni to return to the campus to teach, perform, choreograph and otherwise enhance Dance at Illinois.



• Carey Erickson

## beverly blossom and carey erickson alumni dance award

### Beverly Blossom

Beverly Blossom has been called "The Doyenne of Robust Eccentricity" by Deborah Jowitz, dance critic for the *Village Voice* of New York City. After receiving a bachelor's degree from Roosevelt College in 1950, Blossom went to New York City to continue professional dance training with the modern dance celebrities of the day and eventually joined the Alwin Nikolais Dance Company, where she performed from 1953 to 1963. In 1957 Blossom was granted a Fulbright Fellowship for a year in Europe to study with Mary Wigman in West Berlin. In the 1960s, she participated in the development of multi-media theater in the East Village as dance curator of the Bridge Theater and a collaborator with actor-poet-writer Roberts Blossom, who invented filmstage theater. Blossom was a professor at the University of Illinois Dance Department from 1967 until 1990. Now in her eighties, she continues to perform and sponsor concert choreography. Blossom has received numerous awards including a NY Bessie Award. During the last three years she has been working on a documentary film.

### Carey Erickson (1950-1990)

After earning his BA at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1972 where he was mentored by Beverly Blossom and a master's degree in dance from California Institute for the Arts, Carey Erickson went on to train in New York City with Hanya Holm, Viola Farber and Maggie Black. He choreographed and danced in New York before he was left paralyzed by a diving accident in 1983 in which he suffered a broken neck. During his incapacitation he choreographed for the Manhattan Performance Ensemble's "Spinal Series," making dances for a group of wheelchair-bound performance artists. After four months of rehabilitation he fully recovered and was able to continue dance and performance art. Carey Erickson died in 1990.

# be a pivotal force — donate now!

DANCE AT ILLINOIS IS POISED TO BECOME AN EPICENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DANCE ARTISTS/LEADERS. JOIN THE EXCITEMENT AND PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE. PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING A GIFT, BIG OR SMALL, TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FUNDS:

## production/enrichment fund

An unrestricted fund established for innovative programming and departmental needs such as the ability to bring in diverse guest artists who provide fresh ideas and new perspectives and to fund alumni residencies. Both enable our students to make valuable connections that will benefit their future careers.

## dance department scholarship fund

This fund provides scholarships for students to participate in summer festivals around the world. These summer experiences can be a turning point in a student's education. The Department also has four endowed scholarship awards and one endowed alumni award — the Vannie L. Sheiry Memorial Dance Fund, the Moe Family Dance Award Fund, the Wanda M. Nettel Prize Award for Student Choreography, the Patricia Knowles Graduate Travel Award and the Beverly Blossom and Carey Erickson Alumni Dance Award that are open to contributions at any time through the University of Illinois Foundation.

We also take this opportunity to recognize and thank all dance contributors. Your gifts are reflected in all the many exciting stories you are reading about in this edition of *Pivot!* We are profoundly grateful — we couldn't do it without you! Listed to the right are donors to the Department of Dance from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. We realize there may be mistakes or omissions from this list. We apologize and invite you to contact us regarding corrections at (217) 333-1010.

To make a gift, please designate the desired fund on your check, made payable to the University of Illinois Foundation/ Department of Dance, and mail to UIF, P.O. Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.

To donate online please visit us at [www.dance.illinois.edu](http://www.dance.illinois.edu)

thank you for supporting the department of dance!

## contributors

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# featured alumni



“...everyone’s continuing encouragement changed my life and put me back on track to be uniquely and bravely myself.”

Dancers love to be obsessed — otherwise, why would we do what we do? For me, dancing in a great piece is like falling in love — I can’t think about anything else, my body is tingling, my mind is racing ... and the more obsessed I feel, the better I like it! Last fall, I found myself dreaming about *Winter Belly* at night — the sounds, the slicing weighted movement, the unexpected encounters between people, but most of all the rhythms and cadences of the dance like deep conversation. Tere O’Connor’s rhythms precede and supersede music — they are the rhythms of instinct, breathing, screaming, laughing ... multi-layered, often jagged and interrupted, yet seemingly inevitable.

Right along with the passion was the laughter; what better combination exists than that? I have never laughed as hard during a rehearsal process as I did in Tere’s rehearsals. One of the things he does so brilliantly is to create a self-contained universe within his pieces that enfolds both the dancer and the audience and holds us in its grip. He does the same in rehearsal, where his disarming humor gave us all the freedom to push ourselves to the edge. Tere understands that as hu-

- U of I alumni (left to right) Patricia Weidman (BFA 2003), Krista Nelson (BFA 2005) and Cathy Young (MFA 2003) in Tere O’Connor’s *Winter Belly*.

mans we can live in hilarity and despair at the same time, both of these poles co-exist, and we jump between them at a moment's notice.

One of the most profound aspects for me of returning "home" to the U of I was a heightened awareness of time passing, and the different stages of an artist's life. The other dancers in the piece are in the thick of their performing careers; I am at the other end of the chute — now a college professor and mother, performing a few times a year, and often wistfully yearning for that full-time, full-on immersion in rehearsal and performance that I had in my 20s and 30s. What a gift to be in the studio and on stage with artists at that point in their careers, all of whom are so skilled and mature I cannot believe they were my students just 5 years ago! I learned so much from them during this process; their vision and passion recharged my batteries and reminded me of why I dance and why I would not want to live any other way.

The two years I spent at the University of Illinois were some of the most powerful of my life. My graduate education truly has been the "gift that keeps on giving."

Please visit our website for the latest news on our Alumni!

[www.dance.illinois.edu](http://www.dance.illinois.edu)

## future plans

### BFA class of 2008

The class of 2008 rides off in multiple directions ... (literally—one senior, Amy Swanson, is undertaking a 72-day bike ride across the country). Graduates are going to Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Washington D.C. and staying in C-U. Several graduates will be working with children in schools and in studios—one studio in the Chicagoland area that two graduates are starting themselves! Most are planning on continuing to perform and to choreograph their own work, many in collaboration with alumni and classmates. Several members of this class have expressed interest in eventually returning to graduate school.



- *Graduating BFA Class of 2008 in guest artist Germaul Barnes' When the Brook Meets the River. (alphabetical order) Alitra Cartman, Ellen Deutsch, Janis Dingels, Whitney Hubbard, Steve May, Kinsey McCartor, Rebecca O'Connell, Corie Patterson, Rosemary Robertson, Michelle Scurlock, Elizabeth Staab, Amy Swanson, Lauren Vandivier, Lesley Werle, Vienna Willems*

### MFA class of 2008

Kimber Andrews has been invited to be a resident fellow for the 2008 Dance Omni International Dance Collective in New York this summer. She will be in the Champaign-Urbana area next year teaching the Writing For Video Courses for the Art and Design Department and continuing her research into the meaning of "place" (both in life and performance).

Esteban Donoso has been invited to be a choreographic Fellow at Summer Stages in Concord, Massachusetts, with fellow U of I MFA Dance candidate Laura Chiaramonte. He is also currently working on a project with German choreographer Sonja Augart and he is making a solo for former Illinois Dance faculty member Erika Randall which will be performed in Ecuador. This fall he will be joining the faculty of Beloit College as visiting assistant professor.

Chun-Chen Chang will be moving to New York to continue her art practices. She has been invited to be a guest artist at Iowa State University next year and to attend the Summer Arts Program directed by Robert Wilson at the Watermill Center in New York with full tuition provided by the Byrd Hoffman Watermill Foundation. This summer she will also be joining Kirstie Simson in dance improvisation research and performance in Greece.



- *Esteban Donoso, Chun-Chen Chang and Kimber Andrews (under piano)*

# looking forward

our students will be dancing with not one, but many masters in 2008–2009

Mohatma Gandhi said, “I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could.” And so as we re-imagine our world, we are committed to playfully experimenting within our traditional venues.

Next year’s faculty will explode the space with *November Dance: Re-imagining the Proscenium* as the audience will be treated to a journey through the underbelly of the Krannert Stages, encountering performers along the way. *February Dance* is the new name for *Festival Dance*, and it will be a *White Out* performed on a white floor. Rebecca Nettle-Fiol will reconstruct *Paper Song* (1998), performed within a cascade of white paper created by visiting visual artist Kyoko Ibe. Tere O’Connor will create a white silent space in the lobby where audience members can experience up-close happenings by dancers, visual artists and architects. Thanks to the new fund given generously by Richard Erickson — The Beverly Blossom and Carey Erickson Alumni Dance Award — we will be inviting alumnus Paul Singh, BFA 2005, to create a work for our students weaving our past and future as he shares his work with the next generation.

Our local and national community will be invited to educational formats such as *Dance: Behind the Scenes* in conjunction with the U of I Alumni Association. Tere O’Connor is conjuring up a program to connect with our alumni in New York called *Blab, Look & Go* an opportunity for alumni to connect through active viewing and discussions of contemporary work.

Our site-specific works, dance for camera and numerous collaborations with other art forms will spill into many spaces. In collaboration with the Krannert Art Museum (KAM), Kirstie Simson will create movement within Kyoko Ibe’s paper installation at KAM and Sara Hook will make us laugh as we see the results of her wacky collaboration with theater director Bob Anderson, in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Jennifer Monson will follow the aquifers, stirring up the social and political issues surrounding our most important element — water.

Our guests this year will be invited into a learning laboratory, a two-way street of creative exchanges. Dance and Theatre will jointly bring in Obie and Bessie Award winning director Laurie Carlos to stir up process based inter-disciplinary explorations. Iyun Harrison from Jamaica, and former dancer with Alvin Ailey Company and Dance Theater of Harlem, will teach technique, and Christian Burns will teach master classes in ballet. Ted Johnston will improvise with Kirstie Simson in *November Dance*. Denis Chiamonte and Putu Oka Mardiani will be back, by popular demand, teaching Capoeira and Balinese Dance. The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts will present Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Bebe Miller, Mark Morris Dance Group, Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, the Russian National Ballet, Compañía Flamenco José Porcel, Song & Dance Ensemble of West Africa, Cirque Éloize: Nebbia, and National Acrobats of China.

Stephen Schreiber, Photographer



• Paul Singh, center, BFA 2005



• Laurie Carlos

# performance calendar 2008–2009

## september 2008

26 Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, 7:30p

## october

10 Compañía Flamenco José Porcel, 7:30p

## november

12 Song & Dance Ensemble of West Africa, 7p

13–15 November Dance: Re-Imaging the Proscenium, 6 & 8p

14–15 Undergraduate Audition and Open House

19–20 Bebe Miller: Necessary Beauty, 7:30p

## december

5 Laurie Carlos Process-Based Work, TBA

5 Champaign-Urbana Ballet: Nutcracker, 7:30p

6 Champaign-Urbana Ballet: Nutcracker, 2 & 7:30p

7 Champaign-Urbana Ballet: Nutcracker, 2 & 7p

## january 2009

23 Russian National Ballet: Sleeping Beauty, 7p

24 Russian National Ballet: Sleeping Beauty, 2 & 7p

## february

4–5 Graduate Audition

5–7 February Dance: White Out, 7:30p

6–7 Undergraduate Audition and Open House

10–11 National Acrobats of China, 7p

## march

2 Undergraduate Audition

3–4 Cirque Éloize: Nebbia, 7p

12 Studiodance I, 7:30p

13–14 Studiodance I, 7 & 9p

13–14 Mark Morris Dance Group: Romeo & Juliet, 7:30p

## april

21 Ronald K. Brown / Evidence, 7:30p

23 Studiodance II, 7:30p

24–25 Studiodance II, 7 & 9p

## may

1–2 Senior Thesis Concert, TBA

for ticket information

[www.krannertcenter.com/tickets](http://www.krannertcenter.com/tickets)

(217) 333-6280 or (800) 527-2849

[www.dance.illinois.edu](http://www.dance.illinois.edu)

# sold out performance at carnegie hall

By Sonia Warfel, MFA 2010

This year fellow MFA Candidate Laura Chiamonte and I collaborated with celebrated baritone Nathan Gunn and his wife, pianist Julie Gunn, on an original music recital at Carnegie Hall. We created an immersive hour-long performance featuring the music of Frank Ferko, Samuel Barber and Olivier Messiaen.

We worked together to re-imagine the delivery of classical music concerts creating a full visual/kinesthetic environment threaded throughout the concert. Laura created full-stage video projections of moving text and photographic imagery. Laura and I collaborated on the choreography, which I performed as solo movement counterpoint to Julie and Nathan onstage.

Despite the challenges the team faced incorporating such disparate elements into the traditional art song recital format, the movement and imagery ultimately served to strengthen the audience's emotional connection to the music. Music critic Anthony Thommasini of *The New York Times* wrote, "... the performance was involving, courageous, and touching." (*New York Times*, April 16, 2008)

Our sold out house was enthusiastically receptive to the performance. "...they exploded in wild applause, calling back the performers over and over. I doubt Kreisler and Rachmaninoff were ever accorded such an ovation in Carnegie Hall." (*New York Sun*, April 17, 2008)



• MFA candidates Sonia Warfel and Laura Chiamonte  
• Julie and Nathan Gunn with Sonia Warfel (right) at curtain call



Philip Johnston, Photographer

• Rebecca Nettle-Fiol's modern class at the summer high school dance intensive

## summer high school dance intensive

Students of the third annual University of Illinois Summer High School Dance Intensive were challenged in many new ways this year. In addition to the rigorous schedule of ballet, modern, jazz and tap technique classes, these talented young dancers were given a unique window into the life of a professional dancer with lessons in yoga, strength and conditioning, anatomy, kinesiology and somatics. They even found time to study dance history! Students toured the campus while eating their

favorite ice cream, watched movies and even soaked in the spa to relieve their sore muscles. On the last day, family and friends were treated to a performance that included combinations from class as well as faculty repertory. If you or someone you know is interested in the Summer Intensive for June 2009, please contact us at (217) 333-1010 or [dance@illinois.edu](mailto:dance@illinois.edu).

## in memory of Roslyn Mae Boxerman Woolf (1931-2007)

Roslyn Mae Boxerman (BA 1952) was involved with dance from a young age, traveling to various locales for instruction and performance. Receiving a BA in Physical Education and Dance, Woolf was one of the first graduates of the University of Illinois' modern dance program. She was active in Orchesis, The Daily Illini, the Illini Union Committee and the Illini Theatre Guild Production Crew. She was married to David Woolf, a professional musician, and was the mother of three. Remembered for her community activism, Woolf was a highly creative and dedicated teacher who was well loved and respected by generations of students, parents and teachers alike.



• Woolf, third from right

# transitions

## success rewarded

Congratulations go to Associate Professor\* John Toenjes who has just been awarded tenure at the University of Illinois! This is a much deserved honor for JT and we look forward to the continued development of his expansive work in the area of interactive dance/music.

*\*pending board of trustees approval*

## a step up

Cindi Howard, our incredibly capable Program Coordinator has been promoted to Assistant to the Head. In this new role, Cindi will manage the entire administrative wing of the Department, keeping us all on track.

## fond farewell

We say a fond farewell to Lindy Loyet Lewis, present Assistant to the Head, who in her short tenure at the Dance Department, has completely transformed us. She was instrumental in orchestrating the new newsletter and website; crucial to all our marketing and fundraising efforts. In addition she was behind the scenes of numerous public events such as *Dance: Behind the Scenes*, *Dances at Sunset at the President's House* and performances at the Baryshnikov Center in NYC. We wish her the best in her life as she returns to Chicago. She will be missed!

these people play an extraordinary role in the activities of the department and we're grateful for their dedication and collaboration.

### Staff

Kate Insolia, Graduate Assistant  
Ken Beck, Specialist in Music  
Laura Chiaramonte, Graduate Video Media Coordinator  
Kimberly Hardin, Physical Therapist  
Cindi Howard, Program Coordinator  
Daniel R. James, Production Coordinator  
Sarah Kent, Manager of Systems Services  
Lindy Loyet Lewis, Assistant to the Head  
Kinsey McCartor, Intern  
Erin Mangian, Intern  
Steve May, Assistant Video Media Coordinator  
Rebecca O'Connell, Assistant Video Media Coordinator  
Vienna Willems, Assistant Video Media Coordinator

### Accompanists

Brian Behrns  
Jason Finkelman  
Daniel Fry  
Beverly Hillmer  
Gordon Kay  
Mark McKnight

### Other Special Partners

40 North | 88 West, Wilbur Applebaum, Dena Bagger, Jill Burlingame, Carle Expressive Arts Group, Chin-Fei Chan, Lynn Chaney, Circles, Sandra Conic, Leanne Courson, Lisa DeAngelis, Daryn Denzer, Anne DeVelder, Greater Champaign AIDS Project, Nathan and Julie Gunn, Chancellor Richard and Susan Herman, Karyl Wackerlin Photography, Julia Kellman, Wynn Korr, Teri McCarthy, Joanne Manaster, Sean Murphy Lights, Inc., Joan and Alex Murray, Bette Rosenstein & John Brix, Planned Parenthood Teen Education Program, Todd Presson, Surface 51, Gray Sutton, University of Illinois Alumni Association, Ellen Warmbrunn, Laura Wilhelm-Barr, Eleanor Unsworth, Allen Wehrman, Jonah Weisskopf, President Joseph B. and Mary White

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Lindy Loyet Lewis, Editor  
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