

January 2010

Volume 18, Issue 1

To The Pointe...

A newsletter produced by the Mercyhurst College Dance Department

Letter from the Dance Chair



VICTORY, The Mercyhurst College Dance Department received full accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD), fall 2009. The faculty and staff took a big sigh of relief and moved forward to reap the rewards of better working conditions for faculty, new staff and faculty hire and a better curriculum for the students. Life is good.

35 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION dedicated to presenting the Mercyhurst Dancers with returning alumni throughout the season including performances of Homecoming/Parents Weekend, *35 Years: A Celebration*, *35 Years: Raw Edges*, *35 Years: An Anniversary Gala* and numerous presentations by the Liturgical Dance Ensemble, Lake Erie Ballet and SoMar Dance Works.

Other News: We agreed in August to host the 2010 Northeast American College Dance Festival (ACDF) Conference, February 19-22. We are expecting 500 dancers, teachers, and choreographers from PA, NJ, NY, MD, OH and WY to participate in 75 classes, 5 student and faculty informal concerts and adjudication of faculty and student choreography over 4 concerts. Opening ceremonies at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center will include a warm welcome from President Gamble and *Erie Dances*, a presentation of professional Erie dancers including City Style Swing, Lake Erie Ballet, Shen and Bones Dance Group, SheWorks, SoMar Dance Works and Shabasharee. The conference will conclude with a gala performance showcasing the best of the 40 adjudicated choreographic works.

Sponsored by the Advancement Office, the department will be presenting in the danceSpace for the President's Associates meeting January 27 and Donors Appreciation Day will be held in conjunction with *35 Years: Raw Edges* followed by a reception honoring donors and dancers in celebration of our 35th anniversary.

I escorted two freshman dancers to the Youth American Grand Prix semi-final competition in Philadelphia January 8-9. Olivia Boyd was invited to attend the YAGP workshop and gala performance in NYC and a tribute to Vladamir Vasiliev. The Dance Department along with nine other colleges and universities will be holding auditions for the participants of the NYC finalists in March.

Personal Note: I'm healthy, happy and back to my too busy self. Every day is a blessing and again I thank all those who supported me through my battle with breast cancer. Honoring that support I proudly add *Breast Cancer Survivor* to my many accomplishments and encourage all women to "*Feel Your Boobies*" and get your mammograms.

I hope that you enjoy reading the rest of this newsletter with all the highlights of this anniversary year. Join me and the department on Facebook for minute by minute updates and our final performance May 1-2, *35 Years: An Anniversary Gala. Carpe Diem*, what better way to celebrate than with all of you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tauna Hunter".

Tauna Hunter, Dance Chair

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Congratulations to the Class of 2009



**Nora Beckenstein
Nicole Cerilli
Liz Clain-Stefanelli
Kirstie Corso
Justin Hogan
Amanda Johnson
Sarah Klock
Jackie Koehler
Cassie Powers
Caitlin Roberts
Lauren Stenroos**



Alumni Updates

Jay Kirk ('79), alumni and former faculty member of the Mercyhurst College Dance Department, was promoted to Associate Professor of Dance at Point Park University Conservatory of Performing Arts and was granted tenure in the fall of 2007. He has been at Point Park since completing graduate studies at University of Oklahoma in 2004.

John Crane ('98) and **Maureen Cavanaugh Crane** ('00) had a son, Benjamin, born in October 2009.

Megan Zuza ('00) is excited about caring for her son, Brendan, who was born in July 2009.

Kelly Markos ('01) is now working with film performance and performing at the Beverly Hills Film Festival as well as a few other local events.

Sylvia Cagle ('02) is working as a dance instructor at the Harrisburg Dance Conservatory.

Amanda Mountain ('04) took a job with The United Methodist Church and will be moving to NYC in December to work with the General Board of Global Ministries, connecting youth and young adults with the mission work of the church, while also finishing graduate school.

Janet Strukely ('04) is dancing as a company member with Ohio Dance Theatre. Her marriage took place recently in September 2009.

Gretchen Smith ('05) is currently healing from surgery and hopes to be back to teaching and ballet classes by January.

Sara Lawrence-Sucato ('06) is dancing as a company member with the Dancing Wheels of Cleveland. She married Steve Sucato in September 2009.

Bonnie Hair ('07) is teaching dance courses at a Montessori school in Cleveland.

Kara Jones ('07) is continuing to perform with the Radio City Rockettes and will be touring with them from Canada to Florida. She is also keeping busy teaching and being the administrator at the studio of Nancy Fountain and Daniel Simmons, as well as taking class regularly. She is in charge of a few creative dance workshops this summer and is hoping to work on certification in yoga or Pilates.

Dara Swisher ('08) is dancing with Braided Light Dance Project in Jacksonville, FL, where she recently moved with her fiancé.

Nicole Cerilli ('09) is dancing with Bodiography Contemporary Ballet in Pittsburgh, PA, as well as being offered opportunities with Atlantic City Ballet. She is also doing graduate school work while in Pittsburgh.

Kirstie Corso ('09) is a company member with Bodiography Contemporary Ballet in Pittsburgh, PA as well as completing graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh.

Sarah Klock ('09) is performing as Grover with Sesame Street Live on tour.

Jackie Koehler ('09) is in New York City working at the NY Kids Club teaching ballet for children. She also had the opportunity to dance in an anniversary show for Cirque du Soleil in Times Square.

Caitlin Roberts ('09) is working at four different dance schools in Connecticut teaching ballet, jazz, musical theater, tap, modern and creative movement. She also choreographed for and performed in Arabian in *The Nutcracker* for one of the dance schools.

Summer Adventures

Michelle Conroy ('10) interned with MacFadden Performing Arts Media, publishers of *Dance Magazine*, *Pointe*, *Dance Spirit*, and *Dance Teacher*, in NYC. She attended photo shoots, worked with the editorial and marketing staffs and assisted the web department. Her comments were also published in one of the magazine articles.

Sarah Hartmans ('10) taught ballet and modern at Zanadski Performing Arts Center, a local studio her former teacher started.

Jen Kitchens ('10) attended the Mercyhurst Summer Dance Experience.

Rachael Leavenworth ('10) had an Arts Administration Internship with the Lake Erie Ballet and also attended some classes at the Mercyhurst College Summer Dance Experience.

Emily Mohr ('10) went to the Bartholin International Ballet Seminar in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Trevor Sones ('10) was an intern at Broadway Dance Center in NYC. While in New York, he had the opportunity to be in the film *Step Up 3D* and was cast in a commercial. Trevor was also a guest artist for a summer intensive teaching jazz and contemporary dance.

Caitlin Burke ('11) attended and worked as an RA for the Mercyhurst Summer Dance Experience, as well as teaching for the dance intensive at her home studio.

Claire Hinde ('11) attended the ABT Collegiate Summer Intensive in NYC. She also worked as a counselor for kids at a day camp in her hometown. In addition, she was crowned as one of Dayton's Holiday at Home Princesses.

Brieanna Hynish ('11) worked as an RA at the Orlando Ballet summer intensive.

Sarah Mastrocola ('11) attended the ABT Collegiate Summer Intensive and performed one of the solos in the *Les Sylphides* excerpt for the final showing. She also went to the ABT Summer Intensive in Austin, TX where she worked as a mentor and had the privilege of assisting Roger Van Fleteren of the Alabama Ballet with rehearsing *Jardin Animé* for the students.



Christopher Taddiken ('11) participated in a community production of *Swan Lake* in Rochester, MI, held auditions for local middle school and high school performance ensembles, and spent a week at Mercyhurst training with Bruce Marks and rehearsing two of his pieces, "Inscape" and "The Parting."

Christine Wilbur ('11) attended ABT's Collegiate Summer Intensive in NYC this summer and had a wonderful experience there.

Anna Daught ('12) worked at a Ballerina Princess Camp this summer. She also taught ballet classes at home.

Samantha DeBoer ('12) attended the ABT Collegiate Summer Intensive as well as working as an RA at Orlando Ballet's summer intensive.

Amy Deer ('12) attended and worked as an RA for the Mercyhurst Summer Dance Experience.

Megan Dunphy ('12) worked as an RA at the Ballet Theatre Midwest Summer Intensive.

Heather Gorres ('12) helped with her home studio's recital and took classes there. She also went to the 2 week summer intensive at Ballet Magnificat!. Once home from that, she worked at her dad's auto repair shop as a secretary and spent a week at Lake Champlain with her boyfriend and family. Best of all, she got engaged one week before returning to Mercyhurst!

David Jakubson ('12) helped to rebuild his house this summer, as well as doing a workshop with Mystic Ballet in Mystic, CT.

Tori Scott ('12) attended the ABT Collegiate Summer Intensive in NYC.

Lindsey Smith ('12) took two courses (world literature and world history) through a local college, worked two jobs, participated in her home studio's summer dance intensive, taught dance classes, and had surgery on her leg.

Bridget Toms ('12) worked for Mercyhurst College and attended the Summer Dance Experience.

Madyson Foster ('13) danced at the Nashville Ballet intensive for three weeks, where she also met Mercyhurst alumna Lauren Stenroos. In August she competed in a state pageant, Miss Tennessee Teen-World, and received the interview award and 1st runner up.

Rachael Gnatowski ('13) went to Virginia Beach for senior week with two friends, had a graduation party, went to Kennywood, and took ballet classes at her home studio throughout the summer.

Giulia Parli ('13) attended the BalletMet Columbus five-week pre-professional summer intensive, and then took a two week vacation in Italy.

Emma Rishel ('13) attended the summer intensive at her home studio, CPYB, and also worked in the CPYB office as an intern.

Tess Sinke ('13) danced for six weeks with the School of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company, and also worked as an intern for the artistic director of the company.

Tauna Hunter, Dance Chair, spent her summer administrating the department's new Summer Dance Experience. She also spent her eleventh summer as a guest artist in residence at the Interlochen Center for the Arts where she taught ballet, pointe and variations. In addition, she choreographed two new works, *OOO La La* for students and *Love Songs* for faculty Hannah Baumgarten and Diego Salterini, the artistic directors of Miami's *Dance Now! Ensemble*. *Love Songs* premiered with *Dance Now! Ensemble* in fall 2009.

Welcome New Members of the Dance Department!

Olivia Boyd
 Alexa Bradley
 Rachel Brown
 Kelsey Chamberlain
 Ashley Cook
 Madyson Foster
 Hannah Fuller
 Rachael Gnatowski
 Carrington Lorenz



Jordan Muller
 Kristen Marincic
 Eileen McDonnell
 Rachel Meislin

Joshua Munoz
 Giulia Parli
 Rachel Rezler
 Elena Riggins
 Emma Rishel
 J. M. Rodriguez
 Tess Sinke
 Kathleen Warner
 Anastasia Welch

Congratulations!

Dean's List 2008-2009

Nora Beckenstein ('09)
 Nicole Cerilli ('09)
 Liz Clain-Stefanelli ('09)
 Kirstie Corso ('09)
 Amanda Johnson ('09)
 Caitlin Roberts ('09)
 Erin Alarcon ('10)
 Alyssa Alger ('10)

Michelle Conroy ('10)
 Amanda Fisher ('10)
 Rachael Leavenworth ('10)
 Jessica Borowczyk ('11)
 Claire Hinde ('11)
 Sarah Mastrocola ('11)
 Morgan Ostroski ('11)
 Christopher Taddiken ('11)

Kelly Clymer ('12)
 Anna Daught ('12)
 Amy Deer ('12)
 Megan Dunphy ('12)
 Heather Gorres ('12)
 Rachael Rezler ('12)
 Lindsey Smith ('12)
 Katie Spagnoletti ('12)

Awards

Jane L. Barr Scholarship Recipients

Alyssa Alger, Michelle Conroy, Claire Hinde,
 Rachael Leavenworth, Trevor Sones

Based on dance merit, CPA, dance service and goals these individuals have earned an endowed one year scholarship, due to their commitment to the dance department and its mission of service.

The David Palmer Service Award – Kirstie Corso ('09)

The Etoile Leadership Award – Nora Beckenstein ('09)

Nu Delta Alpha Academic Excellence Award – Nicole Cerilli ('09)

The Senior Spotlight Award – Amanda Johnson ('09)

Nu Delta Alpha

By: Michelle Conroy

The dance honor society, Nu Delta Alpha, is off to a fantastic start for the 2009-2010 year. Heading the organization this year are President, Michelle Conroy, Vice-President, Jessica Borowczyk, Secretary, Kelly Clymer, and Treasurer, Caitlin Burke. There are many proposed plans for the nineteen

members of the group. NDA will be contributing its services to the dance department's hosting of the American College Dance Festival this winter. Additionally, NDA plans to become more active in the Erie community and fulfill the mission of the organization to advocate

dance through service and academic achievement. NDA is also happy to represent the Mercyhurst Dance Department during its 35th anniversary celebration. The honor society will be helping to organize some of the celebratory activities during National Dance Week in the spring.

Lastly, the annual luncheon honoring the members and dance faculty was held in December.



Liturgical Dance Ensemble

By: Danielle Feller

The Liturgical Dance Ensemble is gearing up for an exciting and productive year for our 2009-2010 season. During fall term, liturgical was very focused on fundraising and advertisement for the year. President Danielle Feller, Vice President Jennifer Mihi, Secretary Christine Wilbur, and Treasurer Emily Mohr came together this year with hopes of making the mass performances, the outreach performances, and their community and departmental service even better than years' past.

The Mass of the Holy Spirit is always one of the Ensemble's favorite

masses at which to perform. This year 7 dancers volunteered their time and talents in order to present a great piece. The dancers worked with the Mercyhurst College choir as well as the string ensemble in their performance of "Ubi Caratas."

Fall term was also filled with many new and exciting fundraising ideas and efforts. At the Trey McIntyre Project performance on September 18, the Liturgical Dance Ensemble took charge of offering concessions before, during, and after the show. Thanks to the entire Ensemble's baking skills, the table was full

of fantastic things to eat and drink, keeping the entire audience happy and full of sweets. Toward the onset of the fall performance, the Ensemble rallied together and decorated 10 pairs of pointe shoes, which were then filled with potpourri. The decorated shoes displayed themes of the fall show including rainbow colors for *Déjà Vu*, old southern decoration for *Hard Times*, flowers and seeds for *Terra Mia*, and many representations to welcome in the *Nutcracker* season for our upcoming winter term. The Liturgical Dance Ensemble is looking into the winter and spring terms with much anticipation for their community outreach

performances at retirement homes such as Springhill Retirement Center, Independence Court, and Forest View Retirement Home. We hope to bring the joy of the upcoming holiday seasons to the entire Mercyhurst and Erie community. In the spring we look forward to taking a small group of dancers to Times Square to participate once again in Project Dance. The upcoming year is full of wonderful opportunities and the Liturgical Dance Ensemble is ready and excited for all of them.



Performance Calendar 2009-2010

- November 7 & 8 *35 Years: A Celebration*
- February 6 & 7 *35 Years: Raw Edges*
- May 1 & 2 *35 Years: An Anniversary Gala*
- Ongoing *Liturgical Dance Ensemble*

Dance Club

By: Erin Alarcon

Dance Club started the 2009-2010 school year with the strong momentum of last year's work. The organization took action in the first days of school with the success of Jumpstart, a week full of activities to welcome the new freshman dance majors into the department. The success of these activities, such as a progressive dinner and candlelight service, were made possible through the help of this year's

proactive and enthusiastic officers and members. The club is proud to welcome the new freshman members to this group including Madyson Foster and Eileen McDonnell, the freshman representatives for the year.

The first meetings of the year brought strong ideas and ambitions for the coming year. Bringing a greater appreciation of the arts into the college community and beyond has been of Dance Club's

main goals throughout the years, and the club anticipates that this year we can bring to fruition many of our new projects in order to facilitate this goal. As always, a large focus for the club is National Dance Week. This year, the club is looking forward to a campus wide Dance-a-thon to raise awareness and money for arts education. In order to make this a reality, the club will raise

funds through bake sales, flower sales at the performances, and a raffle, among other things. We are happy to have the Dance Department's support behind us and as always we thank all those who help us throughout the year to make our projects successful. We are looking forward to a wonderful year.

PAC Highlights

By: Emma Rishel

The Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center (PAC) offers many diverse options for those who want to escape the everyday world for an hour or two in an interesting performance. There are many different styles of dance that can satisfy everyone's palate. And, at just \$15 for Mercyhurst students, the PAC gives scholars an opportunity to see a phenomenal performance that goes for \$50 or more elsewhere.



The first dance show of the season, Trey McIntyre Project, was an amazing presentation of emotion, energy, and originality, so unlike anything that many watching had ever seen before. This was the first time Trey McIntyre came to the PAC and hopefully not the last. Streb, the troupe scheduled for February, is described as slam dancing mixed with human flight. Founded by Elizabeth Streb, this company will be giving a performance not to be missed.

Ailey II, formed by the modern dance legend Alvin Ailey, is made up of gifted students of The Ailey School and is slated to appear at the PAC in late March. This show will

include a unique combination of vigor and imagination by one of the most talented choreographers of the 20th century. The Tchaikovsky Ballet Theatre will also appear in March, presenting the timeless ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*. This beloved and well-known tale is perfect for families, with its luxurious sets and detailed costumes.

This past fall the dance department presented the first of its 35 year celebration performances. The department was thrilled to have guest artist and choreographer Bill Evans join them in this diverse performance. The innovative Raw Edges performance in February will involve works by

student choreographers, as well as an audience chat about the choreographic process. The 35th Anniversary Gala in the spring will feature a celebration of more than three decades of wonderful programs. Choreography to music by Bartok, Chopin, Ginastera, and Milhaud will leave audience members wanting more. Throughout the season, Mercyhurst alumni will make special guest appearances.

If you want to see a quality dance performance at a great rate, the PAC has the best offers. Everything from innovative modern dance to classical fairytale ballets, you will not want to miss a minute of it.

2009-2010 Guest Artists

By: Heather Gorres

The Mercyhurst Dance Department is once again welcoming a number of distinguished guest artists for the 2009-2010 school year including Diego Salterini, Bill Evans, and Carter Alexander. During the residencies, dancers will be taking master classes, rehearsing for upcoming performances, and having discussions about the artists' lives and careers in dance.

The first guest of fall term was Diego Salterini, a native of Italy who currently resides in Miami. Mr. Salterini's dance career began as a dancer and choreographer on Italian television and theatre shows, while also teaching jazz classes. He arrived in America in 1997 and worked with many different companies including Momentum Dance Company, Zanadu, and Ballet Flamenco La Rosa, among others. Mr. Salterini formed

Dance Now! Ensemble with Hannah Baumgarten, and has returned to Italy several times to perform. While in residence at Mercyhurst, Mr. Salterini set his piece *Terra Mia*, which was performed in the dance department's fall show, while also teaching master classes. Later in fall term, the dance department was privileged to have Bill Evans, who was in residence in fall 2007, return once again to work with the Mercyhurst dancers. He staged *Hard Times* for the fall show, one of several hundred choreographic works he has created for different companies and colleges. Mr. Evans earned a B.A. and M.F.A. from the University of Utah and is a Certified Laban Movement Analyst. Mr. Evans worked for 30 years as the artistic director of the Bill Evans Dance Company, which performed in all fifty states

as well as Canada and Mexico. He received the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts and two Awards for Excellence in Dance from the Albuquerque Arts Alliance and has been featured in Dance Magazine. Mr. Evans actively continues to teach, choreograph, and perform as a resident and guest artist around the country. In the spring, Carter Alexander will arrive to stage a piece for the Mercyhurst spring show. Mr. Alexander is currently a principal a principal teacher at the Miami City Ballet School. His dance training began with his mother in Wyoming, and he eventually moved on to Arts Magnet and Dallas Ballet Academy. Mr. Alexander later joined the Hartford Ballet and danced with the Kansas City Ballet

and Pennsylvania Ballet in principal and soloist roles. He has taught on the faculty of the Rock School as well as the Ballet Workshop New England in Boston as principal teacher for five years. Carter Alexander later became the artistic associate of the Massachusetts Youth Ballet and Assistant Director of The School of Ballet Arizona. The Mercyhurst Dancers are very privileged to dance with and get to know each of these guest artists from various parts of the world. They have valuable knowledge to offer as well as experience in many different dance forms.

ACDFA

By: Rachel Torgesen

This year the Mercyhurst College Dance Department has the privilege of hosting the annual American College Dance Festival (ACDF). On February 19-22, 500 dance students, teachers and choreographers from across the northeast region will flood to Mercyhurst's campus to participate in performances, workshops, panels and master classes taught by renowned faculty.

Students and faculty attending the festival have the opportunity to submit dance works to be adjudicated by a panel of judges. Pieces showing exceptional artistic merit are then chosen for the gala performance at the end of the festival. Mercyhurst College will be presenting two works to be adjudicated: one by senior Elizabeth Galloway titled "Running Up That Hill,"

and the other, "Symphonie Italienne," by faculty member Michael Gleason. Additionally, there is an informal showing at the festival for which choreographers may present works not for adjudication. Junior Sarah Mastrocola will be presenting a new choreographic work during that performance. The American College Dance Festival is a great

opportunity to take classes in different genres of dance and to learn from new instructors. It also offers the chance to meet many talented individuals from respected college dance programs across the region.



Lake Erie Ballet

By: Rachael Leavenworth

The Lake Erie Ballet is entering the 2009-1010 season under the direction of Executive Director Alethea Bodine and School Director Kirsten Carpenter. The company includes Mercyhurst dancers Jessica Borowczyk ('11),



Caitlin Burke ('11), Samantha DeBoer ('12), and Katie Spagnoletti ('12), joined by Apprentices Amy Deer ('12), Heather Gorres ('12), Sarah Hartmans ('10), and Tori Scott ('12), as well as LEB members Linnea Stureson and Jennifer Lane. The season for Lake Erie Ballet began with the 51st annual production of *The Nutcracker*. The production featured choreography not only

by Lake Erie Ballet faculty but also by Mercyhurst faculty members C. Noelle Partusch and Michael Gleason. The performances took place December 19th and 20th at the historic Warner Theatre. LEB's season will also include performances on February 12th and 13th entitled "Matters of the Heart," a combined performance with other local dance organizations. Finally,

Lake Erie Ballet will close out the season with a spring concert joining the company with the school to produce "Art Moves" on May 21st and 22nd at McDowell High School.

It is sure to be another busy year for Lake Erie Ballet and its participants. Be sure to support all of their efforts as they venture into the new season!

SoMar Dance Works

By: Sarah Hricko

"Daring, evocative, and slightly mad," SoMar DanceWorks, under directors Mark and Solveig Santillano, continues in its 10th season as a unique modern dance company located in Erie, Pa. Although the couple started out creating pieces for the two of them, which can still be seen in their current performances, they quickly expanded to include many Mercyhurst College dancers as well. The company strives to be dynamic and to evoke a variety of emotions in its pieces. This season's performances reflect the journey that SoMar has experienced and the growth it has accomplished.

Exploring new ideas and bringing back old ones, SoMar was very excited to

introduce audiences to its past ten years this past fall. Included in the show titled "SoMar So Far" were *Dance By Numbers: Pi*, *A Desperate Cry*, *Lord of the Lawn*, *Twine*, and excerpts from *Dis-Ease: A Coming Out*. The concert took place November 14th and 15th at the Harding Elementary School Auditorium in Erie.

Another piece in the concert, *Mark It with a B*, reflected literal growth. The piece brought humor to the evolution of a child from conception to maturity. "I love that SoMar can laugh at reality while depicting it through dance," one Mercyhurst dancer said. The past and upcoming pieces range in emotions and topics, from works that

touch on Bi-Polar disorder and mental illness to the social security system and relationships. SoMar was excited and grateful to work in collaboration with local musician and friend Dave Sturtevant for *Dis-Ease: A Coming Out*. The work brought audiences into the honest thoughts and daily personal struggles dealt with by individuals with mental illnesses. The performance was dedicated to Mark's sister who recently lost her battle with depression this past summer. The dance also used the lyrics of Dave Sturtevant's music to convey the message.

Other dances in the fall concert included the return of *A Desperate Cry*. This moving piece that explores

the subject of school shootings is a reminder of events such as the Virginia Tech incident. SoMar was proud to also perform that piece at the Mercyhurst Research Panel on October 27th in the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center (PAC), as the piece involved a lot of research on school shootings.

For audience members that want even more SoMar fun, they can look forward to another performance coming in the spring.



Summer Dance Experience

By: Kayla Clark

“As one door closes, another door opens.” Mercyhurst College Dance Department’s first annual Summer Dance Experience is a prime example of the aforementioned quote by Alexander Graham Bell.

During previous summers, the danceSpace was used by the Pennsylvania Governor’s School for the Arts (PGSA). Funding for PGSA was cut from the 2009-2010 government budget, leaving Mercyhurst College’s studios empty. Dance Department Chair Tauna Hunter turned this negative situation into a positive one by opening doors for dancers all over and creating Mercyhurst’s first Summer Dance Experience.

The Summer Dance Experience was flexible, allowing for dancers who wanted to dance every day as well as for those who wanted to take class once a week. Ten-class cards were available for all sessions, or one could pay by the class.

During June and August, modern and ballet classes were offered on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. They were taught by Mercyhurst College, Lake Erie Ballet, and guest faculty.

The July intensive included a daily session of classes (dance conditioning, modern, ballet, pointe, improvisation, and jazz), as well as two hours of

rehearsal. Each day concluded with a seminar on subjects such as stage make-up, dance psychology, liturgical dance, and personal marketing and auditioning. On campus housing and meals were available for dancers who were not from Erie. The four week intensive could also be used to gain college credit. The intensive concluded with a performance at the Walker Recital Hall. Faculty for the July intensive included Carla Hughes, Kirsten Carpenter, Christina Maria Adelhardt, Solveig Santillano, Tauna Hunter, Mark Santillano, Nate Johnson, Michael

Ms. Hunter did not just open doors for the 60 dancers who attended Mercyhurst College’s Summer Dance Experience – she offered them their own keys to use to open more doors for themselves in the future.



Celebrating 35 Years

By: Sarah Mastrocola

Busy with many activities and alumni visits, the Mercyhurst Dance Department is celebrating its 35th anniversary. All departmental performances this year center on the theme of the anniversary, and alumni have been scheduled for appearances in each performance. As Tauna Hunter, who is now in her 16th year as Dance Department Chair, said, “It’s a big year.”

In the fall performance, *35 Years: A Celebration*, alumni Janet Strukely (’04) and Sara Lawrence-Sucato (’06) each performed dramatic solos for the

concert. Alumni Bruce Snead (’02) and Carrie Millikan (’05) made appearances in the Parents’ Weekend performance, and Sylvia Blum (’02) also came in the fall to speak to the dancers of the department about her postgraduate experience.

For the winter concert, *35 Years: Raw Edges*, alumni Meredith Lyons (’03) and Noelle Lelakus (’08) will be performing alongside the debuts of student choreography for which *Raw Edges* is known.

Although the spring schedule for alumni appearances is not yet set, the department looks forward to the possibility

of Brendan LaPier (’03) and Lauren Stenroos (’09) visiting for the final concert of the year, *35 Years: An Anniversary Gala*.

In addition to the aforementioned alumni, Ms Hunter welcomes all interested alumni to talk, teach, or perform, as “We want to include as many as possible – we are working based on expressed interest,” she said.

The Dance Department is also observing its anniversary by hosting the American College Dance Festival (ACDF) in February. Dancers, choreographers, and teachers from across the Northeast region will

congregate at Mercyhurst for this dance event. Additionally, the Dance Department’s accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) correlates with this anniversary year. The 35th anniversary of the Dance Department is slated to be filled with many celebratory and extra events – it will certainly be a year to remember.

Friends of Dance!

Your tax-deductible contribution is recognized in performance programs and supports scholarships for study abroad, guest artists, master classes and residencies for dance majors

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Mercyhurst College Advancement Office, Mercyhurst College 501 East 38th St. Erie, PA
16546

Include your name and mailing address along with your check.

For information on Planned Giving Opportunities,
contact Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Linda Bennett at (814) 824-2241.

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