THE COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

FRIENDS OF BROCKPORT DANCE NEWSLETTER

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FACULTY ADVISOR: BILL EVANS EDITOR: ELIZABETH OSBORN ASSOCIATE EDITOR: ERIN LOWDEN

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Fall 2011 semester proved to be vibrant, memorable, and as busy as ever for the Department of Dance! We welcomed two new full-time faculty members, as well as our largest class of incoming new dance majors (page 5); produced three departmental performances, one of which toured for a one-night-only performance in Rochester (page 2); saw Sankofa receive an award from the Arts and Cultural Council of Greater Rochester (below); traveled to Minneapolis to learn, network, and meet with dance educators at the NDEO national conference (page 3); and exchanged learning environments with London and Stavanger, Norway (page 4). It has been a delightfully eventful few months, to say the least. You will also notice a couple new names this issue. I am excited to take the helm as Friends of Brockport Dance newsletter editor from the capable hands of MFA graduate Vanessa Van Wormer. With the December 2011 graduation of undergraduate Associate Editor Jessica Moore, I have sophomore dance major Erin Lowden on board as my Associate Editor. This spring is shaping up to be as engaging as ever, here in Brockport and in the Rochester area. As always, you can check out our website for more content, updated on a weekly basis by Blog Editor, Hannah Seidel. And, if you have any exciting alumni news to share, we would love to hear it! As always, thank you for your continued support.

www.friendsofbrockportdance.org

Photo by Rebecca McArthur

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SANKOFA RECEIVES ARTS AWARD BY JANET SCHROEDER

On Thursday, November 17, 2011, Sankofa African Dance and Drum Ensemble received a Special Recognition Award from the Arts and Cultural Council of Greater Rochester at their 28th Annual Arts Awards luncheon where they also performed. The ensemble has already begun preparations for their annual spring concert, through department-wide residency work with guest artist Zelma Badu-Younge. Sankofa's spring concert, which will feature a vibrant work by Badu-Younge, will be held in Hartwell Theater April 26-29, 2012.

Something Experienced By Adrian Safar

Photo by Rebecca Puretz

Eight works. Two theses. Almost thirty dancers. Three concerts. One department. Opening the 2011 College at Brockport dance season was an amazing concert of unique and wrenching performances. DANCE/Hartwell opened this fall with a thesis work by Rebecca McArthur who took us on revolving group of duets with dancers weaving and melting through a chain of assistance and pure effortlessness. By the time the lights were out and the audience's meditation came to a close a sense of confidence and an air of pleasure was palpable. Closing the evening Mariko Yamada presented her thesis. Limes anyone? In a sectioned work she took us on an abstract and genius trip with dancers whose hair twirling, staccato but fluid struggles with pantomime opera ended the night in a stage of green limes and Greek statues. The audience lingered in the Hartwell Theatre lobby after the concert. Dancers, eyes bright, shoulders prideful and with a sense of accomplishment, were greeted by an audience both satisfied and yearning for what comes next.

A Look at DANCE/Strasser By Janet Schroeder

Works of student choreography presented in the fall 2011 DANCE/Strasser concert were nicely crafted, beautifully performed and offered a striking variety of moods. Some concertgoers have argued the concert was all doom and gloom, but with further consideration, each piece indeed managed to set a fresh and different tone. While contemplative, the mood of the solo *Spoken as a Whisper* should not be confused with sadness. The quiet simplicity of the choreography by Juliana Utz kept the dancer on one quarter of the stage's width but utilized its entire depth. Through precise, clearly articulated movements, dancer Caitlin Thurgood captivated the audience with her clear focus and soft gaze. While continually looking back to where she began, Thurgood's expression wasn't one of longing for the past, but instead was one of peace and contentment. Shannon Freeman choreographed a trio titled *The Breaking Point*. Freeman, along with dancers Caitlin Milizia and Lauren Palmieri put the audience under a spell as they traveled from the upstage right corner of the stage towards the audience. In the midst of even, sustained steps, each dancer was caught up externally in her own gestural world and internally on something about which we as an audience could only speculate. Brief moments of individual dancers breaking free from the constraints of her fellow travelers accented this beautiful meditation on relationships and control. Three pieces on the program projected a 'Thriller' vibe, but perhaps it was just the spirit of Halloween weekend. They included *Y2K*, by Tom Ciccone, *Medicine Hat*, by Trent Furnace, and *Gestural Response*, by Sarah Bennett. Other pieces on the program were *Reticent*, by Jessie Sector, *Ensuing Ataraxia*, by Nicole Kaplan, *Projected from Above*, by Ian Heckman, *Noah's Dance*, by Grace Cohen, *June*, by Corina Ferro, and *(2kNO2)2*, by Jessica Lynch. Illuminating all the works on the program were lighting designs using all new lighting fixtures installed by Director of Dance Production, Benoit Beauchamp.

Photo by Rebecca Puretz

DANSCORE A Commitment to Artistic Excellence By Marielys Burgos Melendez

The nationally renowned faculty of the department of dance recently presented their choreographic work in DANSCORE, the annual faculty concert. Graduate and undergraduate dance majors delighted spectators with their extraordinary performance skills. During the evenings of November 16th and 17th the concert was held at Hartwell Dance Theater. The Hochstein School of Music and Dance in Rochester hosted the subsequent Saturday evening concert in a collaborative effort to integrate the dance community of Rochester and The College at Brockport. As an audience member I experienced humor, irony, celebration, camaraderie, love, and intrigue through a variety of dance styles that evoked powerful and breathtaking images. DANSCORE was made possible thanks the arduous work of artists like lightning designer Benoit Beauchamp, sound director Gregory Ketchum, costume designer Heidi Henderson, and artistic director Maura Keefe. The concert featured a total of nine dance pieces created by professors James Hansen, Mariah Maloney, Suzanne Oliver, Kevin Warner, William Evans, Darwin Prioleau, Maura Keefe, Karl Rogers, and Vanessa VanWormer, MFA '11. DANSCORE was a demonstration of the department of dance's commitment to artistic excellence.

Photo by Rebecca Puretz

DEPARTMENT WELCOMES TWO NEW FACULTY MEMBERS BY ANNA CORVERA

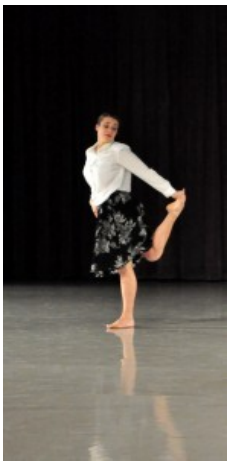
Assistant Professor Karl Rogers, originally from Oklahoma, started dancing at Knox College, continued his dance training at Columbia College and received an MFA in Dance (Choreography) from Ohio State University. Rogers then moved to New York City and danced with choreographers David Dorfman and Terry Creach, among others. After teaching at various colleges and universities as a guest artist, he went back to the classroom and is now working towards a PhD in Dance Studies from Ohio State. Rogers sees himself as an "artist/scholar" and is interested in "bridging those two worlds and bringing [to Brockport] excitement and expertise in both." Current projects include preparing his own company Red Dirt Dance to perform an evening of work in Rochester this spring, collaborating with Heidi Henderson on a week-long installation for museums, performing with David Dorfman Dance, and writing his dissertation Camping Dance/Dancing Camp: Contemporary Stagings of a Queer Aesthetic.

Assistant Professor, Music Director for Dance Tamara Wilcox is originally from Pennsylvania, and made her first connections between music and dance at Allegheny College, earning a BA in Music. She received a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano Performance from Eastern Michigan University, and stayed at EMU for eleven years as a Full-Time Dance Musician and Adjunct Lecturer for the Dance Program. Current projects include collaborating and performing with Bill Evans Dance, and performing with the Brockport Chamber Orchestra. Tamara's goals for Brockport include building collaborative relationships with musicians on campus and at other music schools in the area in order to bring more live music to the Brockport Dance Department studios and stage, integrating the use of technology as a compositional tool in the music component of the dance curriculum, and "leading Brockport dance students on a journey of artistic growth and self-discovery through the discipline of music."

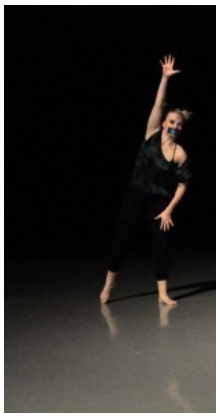
BROCKPORT WELL-REPRESENTED AT NATIONAL CONFERNECE BY HANNAH SEIDEL

This past October, six graduate students attended the National Dance Education Organization conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This year's conference was titled "Collaborations: Different Identities, Mutual Paths." Two students, Yuko Hashimoto and Hannah Seidel, presented sessions investigating this theme from unique angles. Hashimoto, winner of the Ann Zirulnik conference scholarship, offered "A Comparison of Traditional Dances from Japan and Korea," which emerged from a collaboration with recent MA graduate Sunghae Park. Seidel's presentation, "Teaching Touch," drew upon her work with survivors of domestic violence in New York City as a member of Gibney Dance. Falon Baltzell, Anna Corvera, Rebecca McArthur, and Elizabeth Osborn also attended the conference, and shared their valuable experiences with fellow students at a recent meeting of the campus chapter of NDEO. The department faculty were also well represented with William Evans, Suzanne Oliver, Darwin Prioleau, Juanita Suarez, Kevin Warner, and Tamara Wilcox presenting or participating in sessions. Students from Brockport and elsewhere were privileged to work with Evans as part of the Passing On the Legacy series, which culminated in a performance at the closing ceremonies of the conference. Oliver facilitated a Higher Education Special Interest Group, co-presented a paper, and performed in the Master Artist Collaboration. Wilcox offered "Score Interpretation for Dancers with Minimal Music Literacy," and Warner "Discovering Nijinsky: the Role of Collaboration in a Dance-Themed Drama." FOBD would like to offer congratulations to Dean Darwin Prioleau, the new President of NDEO's Board of Directors.

Dancing from Norway to Brockport By Elzabeth Osborn



This fall, the Department of Dance hosted two guest students from the University of Stavanger in Norway as part of an educational exchange program. Brockport students Kaitlyn Marquette and Robin Wonka went to Norway (more on their adventures to come), while Elise Aabakken from Oslo and Karin Midgard from Harnar arrived here late in August and spent the semester with us. Aabakken and Midgard are both fourth year university students studying dance performance and education in Stavanger. Each of the girls had spent a year in the United States growing up, Aabakken when she was seven and Midgard when she was 18. They both wished to spend more time living, studying, and dancing in America, and the exchange program presented a perfect opportunity. The College at Brockport offers the only exchange program for dance students at the University of Stavanger outside of Europe, making the decision a relatively simple one for both students. Part of the appeal of studying in the U.S. is the cultural acceptance of standing out, being noticed, and celebrating one's own successes, marking a decided difference from Norwegian culture. Both young women thrived here at the Brockport Department of Dance, speaking highly of the safe, welcoming, supportive environment created by students and faculty. Elise and Karin both have plans to finish their degrees at Stavanger before moving to Oslo, where dance classes are free of charge and they can audition and perform with companies supported by public and private funding in Norway. Midgard is also pursuing an education degree to teach dance and English, and has expressed a desire to travel more extensively, while Aabakken is studying acting and theatre improvisation to enhance her performance skills and make her more marketable. They both animatedly expressed that their favorite thing about Brockport is the people; they have created a fantastic network of friends and fellow artists in their short time here. As Midgard pointed out so beautifully, it is important to be where you are, and to appreciate how lucky we are to be studying the art of dance that we share a passion for; we are the truly self-actualized!



Photos by Rebecca Puretz

To London and Back By Nicole Kaplan

Last spring, juniors Christy Benincasa and Jeanine Donohue spent the second semester of their sophomore year hand in hand in southwest London where they attended Roehampton University. Together they enrolled in a full course schedule that included Ballet, Contact Improvisation and various movement intensives; individually, Christy registered for Dance Science, and World Music and Dance, while Jeanine attended People and Organizations, and Epistemology. While Roehampton does not generally offer many performance opportunities in the spring, the girls were not left unmoved. Christy noted how innovative London's dance scene was as a whole, and Jeanine added how the informal (after-hours) dance scene was just as inspiring and alive. "Some of the most exciting dancing I did was outside of the classroom and in London at different dance centers."(Benincasa) Jeanine expressed a strong sentiment for the University life in London, and noted how quickly the campus turned into a community, "The school did a great job of bringing the campus together, I was only there one semester and I felt like I knew almost everyone." The student government at Roehampton played a strong role in creating this dynamic, as well as the faculty members that the girls encountered during their stay. Both dancers conveyed a strong respect for their contact improvisation instructor Lalitariaja, who provided an exceptionally safe space for the dancers to explore personal and creative boundaries in an otherwise foreign environment. Both dancers say that their trip was life-changing, and that the relationships they built while overseas were extremely unique and like nothing they have ever experienced before. As Jeanine said, "The people I met, cultures I indulged in, food I tasted and the general things I was able to see and learn about have forever impacted me and I am more than grateful."

New Dancers Showcase Features Largest Incoming Class

In early December, over fifty young dancers gathered in the Rose L. Strasser Studio to perform for their parents, friends and families. In the annual concert, directed by William Evans and coordinated by MFA candidate Falon Baltzell, new dance majors were cast for works created by graduate students and adjunct lecturer, Vanessa Van Wormer. The diverse show featured styles ranging from hip hop, tap, Afro-Brazilian, classical ballet, and modern. The record 53 new dancers is a testament to the strength of the dance department at Brockport. According to Evans, undergraduate program director, no changes have been made in the number of students accepted into the dance program; the change has come in the increasing number of students choosing Brockport over other schools and other departments. The new dancers, including freshmen and transfer students join the growing number of graduate students as well, currently totaling 23 in the MA and MFA programs.

Faculty and Alumni News Highlights

- Associate Professor James Hansen presented original works at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival's Inside/Out Series.
- Assistant Professor Mariah Maloney choreographed and performed for the La MaMa Moves! Festival in New York City.
- Associate Professor Juanita Suarez performed with Latina Dance Theater Project, of which she is a co-founder, at the Passaporte: Danca in Brazil.
- Brockport alum Adrienne Wilson received tenure at Auburn University.
- Kelly Ferris-Lester, Brockport MFA and Assistant Professor at the University of Southern Mississippi was named to the board of the National Dance Educator's Organization.
- 2011 MFA graduates Andrea Vazquez and Jason Aryeh are both teaching in tenure-track positions at Texas A&M International and Elon University.

Spring 2012 Promises a Wealth of Dance Performances

- Department of Dance Guest Artist Jonah Bokaer, Hartwell Dance Theater, February 2 and 3, 7:30pm
- Alumni Showcase, Hartwell Dance Theater, February 23, 6:30pm
- Bill Evans Dance Company, Hochstein School of Music and Dance, March 18, 3:00pm
- DANCE/Hartwell, Hartwell Dance Theater, March 29-31, 7:30pm
- DANCE/Strasser, Rose L. Strasser Studio, April 12-14, 7:30pm *Featuring MFA Thesis work by Sarah Bennett*
- Hannah Seidel MFA Thesis Concert, Artisanworks, April 22, 1:30pm and 3:30pm
- Sankofa, Hartwell Dance Theater, April 26-28, 6:00pm and April 29, 2:00pm
- Graduation Dances, Hartwell Dance Theater, May 11, 6:00pm
- *Coming in our spring issue*: A tribute to retiring dance professor, Jacquie Davis and Fall 2012 concert dedication in her honor.

Ian Heckman Awarded Rosemary Fisher Memorial Scholarship

Undergraduate Ian Heckman, a dual major in dance and philosophy was the 2011 recipient of the Rosemary Fisher Memorial Scholarship. This award was made possible by the generosity of Friends of Brockport Dance Jerry Fischer and Joyce DeHaan. It is awarded to a student of dance with great promise in honor of the late Rosemary Fisher. Of Joyce and Jerry, with whom Ian has become close, he says, "Jerry and Joyce are quite possibly the most caring, supportive friends one could ask for. They are definitely one of the most positive influences in my life, and I am grateful for their involvement in my path as an artist and as a person in general."

The College at Brockport Department of Dance

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New Dancers 2011

Over the past 40 years, The Department of Dance has grown to become one of the leading programs in the country, and has been recognized as a "Program of Distinction" at the College at Brockport. Our faculty, students, and programs are recognized for artistic excellence and physical/intellectual rigor. Many students require the financial assistance afforded by scholarship programs like the ones offered through the Friends of Brockport Dance (FOBD) to support their education. Scholarships and other financial awards assist The College at Brockport dancers as they lay the foundation to become leaders in the field of dance as choreographers, performers, educators, scholars and administrators, in the Rochester area, nationally and abroad.

The Friends of Brockport Dance functions as:

- Engaged, informed, active members of the Greater Rochester arts community who recognize the significance of arts and education.
- An organization dedicated to supporting the Brockport Department of Dance as a world-class higher education dance community.

Visit us at:

WWW.FRIENDSOFBROCKPORTDANCE.ORG

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