



BEHIND THE SCENES

a publication of the Board of Directors
AMHERST BALLET THEATRE COMPANY

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From your Artistic Director...

WELCOME TO A NEW and exciting year at Amherst Ballet. As the new Artistic Director, I would like to convey to you some of my initial goals, ideas, and objectives for the future of the school and the company. My first priority is to maintain the standard of excellence that the community has come to expect from the administration and the faculty. Each of us plays an important role in maintaining the stability of the current school while continuing to build on an innovative and enduring legacy. By accepting the position of artistic director I hope to be a leader of the vision for Amherst Ballet, I have agreed to support the current mission statement and strengthen its context.

AMHERST BALLET'S MISSION STATEMENT

AMHERST BALLET IS dedicated to dance education and professional training. Through nurturing and inspiring local young dancers, we help them strive toward an understanding of artistic excellence, discipline, leadership and a lifelong appreciation of dance...

Bearing this in mind, my initial year at Amherst Ballet will help to reinforce the current standards. By providing stimulating and creative exercises during technique classes, I hope to foster an appreciation for all aspects of classical ballet. My teaching philosophy incorporates history, choreography, artistry, and musicality into each dancers training. The dancers in the Upper School will be given numerous performance opportunities. Performing classical repertoire and original choreography enhances the student's classroom training and provides a crucial bridge into the world of the dance professional. As Artistic Director I am looking forward to augmenting the

students dance education in new ways, exploring creative ideas, and inspiring the artist within each dancer.

So... Get ready for another busy year! A performance is planned for the opening of the Eric Carle Museum located on the campus of Hampshire College. We are proud to be involved with the opening of the museum. Students from the Lower School will be performing a

short ballet I am choreographing inspired by the Flower Fairy book series. In addition, Founder Therese Donohue will be choreographing a Chinese Bell Dance for this special occasion. The students are scheduled to perform on Sunday November 24th during the all-day festivities. And we are thrilled to be working with the Moscow Ballet *Great Russian Nutcracker*, rehearsing local children for the December 16th performance at the UMass Fine Arts Center.

The Amherst Ballet Theatre Company will be performing again this year for *First Night*, the New Years Eve celebration that takes place in Northampton. These venues are wonderful opportunities for our young dancers.

The tradition of the Upper School's December Presentation will continue with a performance at the Amherst Regional Middle School on Friday Dec. 13 at 7:00 PM. The public is invited and all Lower School families are encouraged to attend. The program will include demonstrations from ballet, pointe, jazz, and modern classes. New choreography that is being prepared for *First Night* will also be included in the evening's program.

Even in the midst of fall... with all the colorful foliage, students and faculty of Amherst Ballet are preparing



for the annual Repertoire Performance. The date to mark on your calendar is Saturday May 3, 2003.

I am choreographing a ballet based on the music of Alexander Glazunov, *The Seasons*. The WINTER section has been cast and rehearsals have already begun as this piece will be performed as a part of the *First Night* repertoire. In addition, faculty member Samantha Kenney has agreed to choreograph a new modern piece titled *Alam Al-Mithral*.

Another great opportunity for our dancers is being offered by faculty member Jennifer Rockwell who is teaching a class called *Health Issues for the Young Dancer* on Tuesdays.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all the wonderful staff, faculty, parents, and students at Amherst Ballet for their understanding and support during my transition as artistic director. We are poised to have another great year!

Wendy Holmes

From your Board President. . .

GROWING PAINS

We all experience them one way or another. The dancer struggling to maintain balance after a summer growth spurt, or to maintain focus amid the many distractions of the widening high school social world. Those of us with a few more years under our belts may find ourselves growing out instead of up. And with each added year, we suffer the increasing aches and pains associated with physical activity of any sort. Amherst Ballet itself is in growth mode. Our increasing enrollment creates a battle of the bulge of sorts, as our staff struggles each year to find time slots and space within the building to fit all the pupils and class offerings. In addition, the Company is offering more performance opportunities these days, from the upcoming Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art event to *First Night* to summer school performances at local nursing homes. We have a new artistic hierarchy, a larger faculty, more pianists, and a bigger budget than ever.

Amidst all this growth, the Board of Directors strives to clearly identify and tackle its responsibilities associated with running a nonprofit arts organization that has doubled its budget in the last three years.

We have plenty of new talent to help us deal with these growing pains. The board now has 13 members, up from seven just a year ago. Although we're only two months into the school year, new board members are already making their mark on the organization. In addition to the fabulous desserts she's prepared for several Company functions (watch for them at future bake sales and company picnics) Susana Breña has proven energetic and adept at building a sense of community at Amherst Ballet. Susana, a recent Mexico City transplant and mother of two dancers, has assumed leadership of the social committee. This group is exploring new ways for dancers, staff and families to enjoy the kind of camaraderie that begins in the classroom. Kathy Glime-LaMotte, a speech/language pathologist in the public school system and also a ballet mom, brings a similar interest in community. She is already a familiar face to many of us, having signed up for duty at our tag sales, at last year's gala dinner and other functions. Lawyer and ballet dad James Duda avoids legalese as he offers sage council during our board

deliberations. His insights and gift for plain speech are helping us cut to the core of numerous issues associated with a growing organization. He's taken on the task of updating our bylaws, which has earned him the respect and gratitude of the rest of the board. John Urschel, currently a graduate student in the UMass Public Policy and Administration program, brings a wealth of fundraising and nonprofit arts management experience to Amherst Ballet. A Certified Fundraising Executive, John chairs the fundraising committee, and has us exploring several new strategies to take us a step beyond the tried and true pie and wrapping paper sales. He might be working with the social committee on some of these ideas; John has expressed a desire to don his tuxedo and go dancing, perhaps at a future Amherst Ballet gala event. John is also overhauling our web site. Barry Lanstein and Howard Sonoda, both parents of upper school dancers and both with professional accounting experience, are on the finance committee and are helping to modernize our recordkeeping system. Howard has us exploring and marketing ideas, particularly with respect to the local business community. Yossi Klement brings both artistic and management experience: as a former trumpet player for several classical music orchestras around the world and a recent graduate of the Isenberg School of Management. Yossi is chipping in as we embark on a strategic planning process. Last



SVETLANA SAFRONOVA OF THE MOSCOW BALLET offered two Master Classes to Amherst Ballet Upper School Dancers. In class, Elizabeth Lenson gets a correction (left). Lydia Wileden, Svetlana, Mariel Lugosh-Ecker, and Kirsten LaMotte (left to right), hanging out after class.




but not least, as Artistic Director, Wendy Holmes also sits on the board.

These new members join returning board members Cathy Osman, Andrea Leibson, Ned Woodbridge, Pam Glaven, and myself.

And don't forget Barbara Kauff at the front desk. Barbara has a dance resume as long and sparkling as a *Nutcracker* Christmas tree. It seems she brings a smile and a bundle of great new ideas to work every day. If you don't already know her, introduce yourself to Barbara next time you get a chance.

Jerry Schoen

AMHERST



Ballet

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Founder
Administrative Director

WENDY HOLMES
Artistic Director

CATHERINE FAIR
Lower School Director

BARBARA LAZARUS KAUFF
Project Development

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Amherst Ballet Welcomes New Faculty

It is a pleasure to welcome to Amherst Ballet three new faculty members who bring new voice, new experience and new movement styles to our students.

KATRINA HAWLEY: teaches Modern Dance. She is a dancer and choreographer who recently moved to the Pioneer Valley. Katrina graduated *summa cum laude* from Temple University in 1999 and she went on to receive her Certification in Movement Analysis from the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York. She premiered *Flying Through Rainbows and Other Silent Stories* and *The End of Winter* with The Treehouse Shakers, a New York based children's movement theater company. A Wyoming native, Katrina has

also spent time at Western Wyoming College where she presented original works with the Desert Dance Theater and most recently co-founded Hawley/Martin Dance Company here in the Valley.

SAMANTHA (SAM) KENNEY: holds a BFA in Dance and graduated *cum laude* from the State University of New York at Purchase's Conservatory of Dance. Sam joined Amherst Ballet this past summer and continues teaching Modern I, Jazz III and IV this fall. Her past

experience as a performer and children's rehearsal administrator and director in previous Nutcrackers makes her a valuable co-rehearsal director with Therese Donohue for the upcoming Moscow Ballet *Nutcracker* performance at the Fine Arts Center. Sam was Assistant Artistic Director and Resident Choreographer of the Company of Music, Theatre and Dance, a children's performing company in Jackson, New Jersey and brings a rich and varied background in Ballet, Modern, Jazz and Musical Theatre to Amherst Ballet. Sam is currently a Teaching Fellow at Smith College where she is pursuing her Masters Degree in Dance.

MEG STARKWEATHER: teaches our littlest dancers on Saturday mornings as well as Jazz I. She received her training at Amherst Ballet Centre and performed in the premier performance of ABTCO in 1978. She studied dance full time until graduating from high school a year early in 1979. After a summer at San Francisco Ballet and a year dancing in New York she left dance to do her BS Degree in Mechanical Engineering. Meg worked for IBM as an Engineer and then returned to UMass to do her PhD. in Polymer Science. Meg has two children, Nicolai age 9 and Imani age 4, who are both studying dance.

Barbara Lazarus Kauff



From your Administrative Director. . .

IT HAS BEEN a very busy fall enrolling 132 students from thirteen towns. The Upper School has an unprecedented enrollment of thirty-six students while the Lower School has ninety-six students. I am indebted to Barbara Kauff at the front desk for all the help she is giving me to keep this busy enterprise organized. I have also been busy helping our new Artistic Director, Wendy Holmes, get acclimated. My fantasies of retirement are

fading fast this fall as I step in to help Ms. Holmes with three community performances before the end of the year.

I volunteered to set a celebration Chinese Bell Dance for the opening of the Eric Carle Museum on Nov. 24th. I also volunteered to take on the opportunity for Amherst Ballet to work with the *Moscow Ballet Nutcracker* and rehearse sixty children in nine different parts for the Dec. 16th performance at the UMass FAC. Faculty

member Sam Kenney will assist me in the job as well as some of our Upper School students. I look forward to being involved with a professional company from Russia and to seeing a beautifully danced production with gorgeous scenery and costumes.

I enjoyed attending alumna Kira Lamb's wedding on Labor Day week-end at the Salem Cross Inn. She married dancer Michael Morris and they are living in Los Angeles. Kira is

licensed in Pilates and massage therapy.

This past year marked the passing of two of my three ballet teachers. My college ballet teacher, Alma Loth passed away at age ninety, and Audrey Estey, founder of the *Princeton Ballet*, died at age ninety-three. I was able to attend the memorial service in Princeton for Audrey. It was great to touch base with so many people from my past years in Princeton thirty years ago!

Therese Brady Donohue



ALUMNA KIRA LAMB weds Michael Morris.

KEEPING UP WITH

Lindsay Feltman. . .Company Dancer

“SOME PEOPLE LOVE SPORTS AND can’t get enough,” Lindsay Feltman says. “I love dance and can’t get enough.” Lindsay started trying to get enough of dance when she was five with her first class



at Amherst Ballet. She’s been there ever since. Some of the highlights of her AB performances include two numbers in *An Evening with Johann Sebastian Bach—Italian Concerto* and a solo in *Little Fugue*. In *The Magician’s Nephew* her roles included a star, a flower and the dog.

“I enjoyed the Bach performance the most because the music was so inspiring,” Lindsay says. “I felt that I could really let go and dance.” But her role as the dog also was memorable, in part because she got to scrap with the cat, played by her good friend Libby Woodbridge.

Ballet has always been Lindsay’s favorite type of dance: “I like the precision of it. Although I have explored different types of dance at Amherst Ballet, I find that I have a hard time when I have too much freedom.”

Freedom, at least in terms of free time, is not something that Lindsay has a lot of these days. As a senior at Mahar Regional

High School in Orange, she is deeply immersed in school activities as well as looking at colleges. At school, Lindsay is a member of the National Honor Society, the Student Council, the National Club that works with exchange students and the Prom Committee. She also plays saxophone in the concert band and is on the yearbook staff.

What she knows about college at this point is that she hopes to be in the city (“I’m tired of living in the country!”) and that she most likely will major in art, perhaps interior design.

But that’s next year, and for now, she says her only hobby is dance. She especially enjoys the other dancers: “Even though I don’t go to Amherst High School, I still feel like I fit in because the girls I dance with are so welcoming. I enjoy walking into the dressing room and hearing about everyone’s interesting lives outside of ballet.”

Not getting enough of dance is something that Lindsay expects to last a lifetime. “I enjoy the discipline and effort that I have to put into each class. I can work my body and my mind. It’s my passion.”

*Lindsay was interviewed by
Karen List*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, November 24
12-4PM

OPENING OF THE ERIC CARLE MUSEUM OF PICTURE BOOK ART

Selected Lower School students performing

Tuesday, November 26
THANKSGIVING VACATION BEGINS

Classes resume
Monday, December 2

Friday, December 13 — 7PM
Amherst Middle School

Auditorium
UPPER SCHOOL PRESENTATION NIGHT

Class room work and choreography in progress
Meet the Faculty!
Public invited.
Admission \$5 at-the-door
Children \$3

Saturday December 14 –
Friday December 20

LOWER SCHOOL VISITORS WEEK

Parents invited to observe classes

Monday, December 16–7:30PM

MOSCOW BALLET NUTCRACKER

UMass FAC Concert Hall

Saturday, December 21
No classes

VACATION BEGINS

Tuesday, December 31
FIRST NIGHT DANCE PERFORMANCE

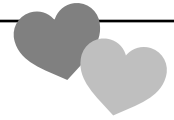
Academy of Music
3:00 – 3:45PM
Please come!

Saturday, January. 4
CLASSES RESUME

FLORENCE SAVINGS BANK CUSTOMERS’ CHOICE

COMMUNITY GRANTS In February 2003, FSB will split \$50,000 among their customers’ favorite local non-profit group. Each customer of the bank gets one vote. If you are a customer of FSB pick up a ballot at the bank or go on-line at www.florencesavings.com and cast your vote for Amherst Ballet. Votes must be in by December 31, 2002. Thank you for your support!

SPRINGTIME IN BOSTON, WITH ROMEO AND JULIET



AMHERST BALLET is organizing a group outing to Boston Ballet's *Romeo and Juliet* next May. All members of the Amherst Ballet community—dancers, staff, board, families and friends are invited to come. We'll take advantage of

Boston Ballet's group sales program to get ticket discounts ranging from 20 to 50%. Tentative date is May 18, but watch for upcoming alerts to confirm this, along with specific pricing and signup information. It should be a

great way to celebrate the end of the season.

An excerpt from the program description: Set to Sergei Prokofiev's ravishing score, choreographer Rudi van Dantzig's interpretation of William Shakespeare's

timeless story traces the trajectory of star-crossed love, from joy and passion to misunderstanding and death. With magnificent sets and costumes, the production fully captures the splendor of 16th-century Verona.



Amherst Ballet Summer Workshops

AMHERST BALLET HELD three different workshops during the summer. Therese Donohue directed the first two. The last week of June concentrated on dragonflies for eleven children ages 7-10. Catherine Fair and Wendy Holmes taught the choreography. Therese Donohue taught the art classes in which each dancer painted their costume to replicate a real dragonfly. They studied dragonflies up close with their binoculars at the pond across the street and found each one in our dragonfly reference book. A performance

took place on the last day for parents.

The second workshop, July 8-19, was the first time that Amherst Ballet has offered a two-week workshop for ages 8-10. This workshop focused on Eastern European National Dance with Catherine Fair and Elizabeth Rising teaching. Mrs. Donohue choreographed a bell dance and ran the art classes in which the ten students made Eastern European type costumes that they painted with flowers. They also made elaborate flower headpieces with dancing ribbons. The second week

of this workshop the dancers were taken on tour with the help of volunteer parent drivers, to perform at SunBride Nursing Home in Hadley, Amherst Nursing Home, and The Bangs Senior Center in Amherst. Two groups of Adventure Playground from Wildwood School next door and from Fort River came to the studio to see performances. The children loved performing and were so well received, we plan to repeat this experience next summer focusing on different countries.

The final two-week workshop of the summer was directed by Catherine Fair for dancers ages 10-16, July 22nd – August 2nd.

These two weeks were totally focused on technical training to improve each dancer who attended. Eleven dancers studied dance with Elizabeth Rising, Catherine Fair, Samantha Kenney, Wendy Holmes, drama with Katherine Mayfield, and art with Annie Asebrook. On the final day of the workshop there was an open house for parents with shortened classes to watch, and an art exhibit to attend.

If you are interested in having your child attend one of next summer's workshops, leave your name at the front desk for early notification and registration.

SUMMER WORKSHOP #2 dancers Elora Simkins (top left) and Robin Palmer (top right). Summer Workshop #3 dancers Mariana Wald, Rachel Bean, and Sarah Klugman (lower left to right).



CONTEST

FOR DANCERS

ARTWORK needed for the cover of the *School Directory*

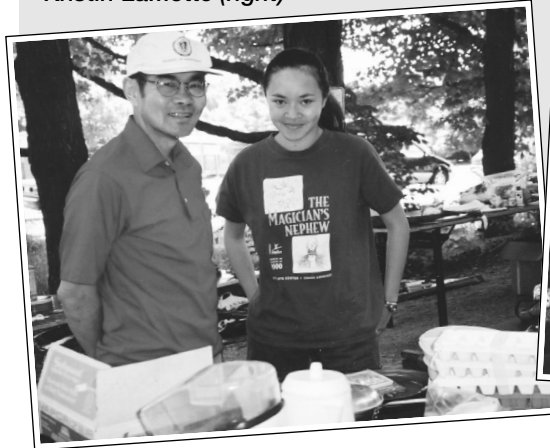
Please submit your 8 1/2" X 11" art soon!

 **DON'T DELAY**

Deadline: Saturday Dec. 21 (last day of classes this year)

PITCHING IN AT THE 2ND ANNUAL TAG SALE

Howard and Soliel Sonada, (left) and Lydia Wileden, Elizabeth Berry and Kristin LaMotte (right)



The Heart and Soul of Music and Dance

WHEN I MEET someone for the first time, and we get to talking about what we do for a living, I usually get a blank stare when I tell people I play piano for ballet classes. They can't qualify the job as a "career," and can't commiserate because I don't work in an office. They don't understand why I'd want to sit there, hour after hour in a sometimes steamy studio, and play three-minute piano pieces.

Having played piano since I was four, music has always been at the center of my life. As for dance, when I was two, I started walking around on my tiptoes, and my parents signed me up for ballet classes a few years later. I danced for several years (and still dance the tango when time permits). For me, both music and dance are structured art forms within which intense expression of the human heart and soul can take place.

When I play for classes, I enjoy coffering my heart, soul, and talent as a channel through which creative energy can flow to the dancers, to use however they want to use it. When I'm getting into the music, and the dancers are getting into the dance, it's a communion of sorts—I can almost feel the energy going out of the music to them, and returning to me as they dance. It becomes a circle of sharing artistic and expressive energy. When things

really get going, I get shivers. Those moments of "communion" make all the hours worthwhile.

As a musician, playing for dance classes is better than performing: I can offer beautiful music to those who enjoy it, yet I never have to worry about stage fright or shaky fingers. I'm grateful that I have the skills and talent to support young people in their exploration of movement and in the expression of their souls. Though our society values many things more than it does self-expression, I believe that self-expression is one of the highest human values, and I am proud to foster that value in young men and women. Even if a dancer never becomes a professional, I know that his or her life is enriched simply by the experience of dance.

When I'm making music, or dancing, or writing, I feel happy and complete. I love being an artist, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to share what I love.

Katherine Mayfield, Amherst Ballet's Head Pianist, is the author of Acting A to Z and Smart Actors, Foolish Choices

KATHERINE MAYFIELD playing for Summer Workshop dancers



NEW CLASS

Health Issues for the Young Dancer

THOUGH MANY of you at Amherst Ballet know me as a teacher, dancer and choreographer, I am also a student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. This semester I am very excited to be applying a very important part of my education here at Amherst Ballet. *Health Issues for the Young Dancer* is a class developed as my senior project at UMass that incorporates principals of anatomy, dance physiology, injury prevention, and nutrition. It is open to the Upper School students, and is turning out to be a success. The dancers who are taking the class are enthusiastic and intelligent students who ask good questions, and are grasping the material well.

Health Issues for the Young Dancer is a class that I have wanted to implement here at

Amherst Ballet ever since I began studying these subjects at UMass with Dr. Andrea Watkins. It is important for dancers to start learning about these issues at a young age, so that they can understand how their bodies work and what they need to do to take care of them as they continue to dance. What I have learned has completely changed the way I dance and teach, and how I approach both. Now I want to share that information with young dancers, so that they can start taking care of themselves and their bodies earlier.

There have been some parents and students who have expressed an interest in the course but could not attend at the time the class is held. My hope is that I will be able to expand the class next year to cover slightly more material.

It will be a continuation for those who are taking it this year, but will also give other dancers a chance to be a part of it. It is very encouraging to have an artistic director who is enthusiastic and supportive about the class.

When you understand how your body works, what it can and can't do, and what injuries dancers are at risk for, you are better able to be healthy as a dancer into your adult life

Jennifer Rockwell

JENNIFER ROCKWELL in class with Lydia Wileden, Alicia Kane, and Denise Howard-Corrin.



AMHERST BALLET THEATRE COMPANY CONTRIBUTORS 2002

THANK YOU to the following contributors whose donations arrived after our last newsletter.

\$1000 +

John Urschel

\$100 - \$250

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THIS NEWSLETTER will serve as one of our fund-raising appeals. Please use the enclosed contribution card and envelope to show your support.

We appreciate all contributions from \$1 up!

THANK YOU!

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BEHIND THE SCENES
EDITORS Therese Brady Donohue,
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DESIGN Pamela Glaven

Moscow Ballet's
GREAT RUSSIAN
Sutcracker



UMASS Fine Arts Center, Amherst
Mon. December 16, 2002 7:30 PM
Benefit for Providence Behavioral Health Hospital
Children's Mental Health Services
Box Office: (413) 545-2511 or (800) 999-UMAS
Therese Brady Donohue, Amherst Ballet ♦ Local Children's Dance Coordinator