A Note from Micki

Dear DTGers,

Happy fall! As the days get shorter, it is a great time to hunker down in the studio. I recently reviewed BU’s Strategic Report - A Change in Culture and Philosophy: One BU. The emphasis is on creating a culture of "constructive debate and creative intellectual engagement" with "cooperative work across departments." While it would have been nice to see "arts" mentioned specifically, there is a focus on communication and cross-disciplinary learning. I thought, could we suggest a new slogan "Everything that is important in education, I practiced in dance class"? What do you think?

We have our own Dance Lab, where we get to connect theories of science, communication and art as we organize our bones and muscles to interpret and explore ideas. We honor those of the past who codified dance vocabulary and concepts. We create our own understanding of how bodies work here and now. Our lab is a place to take risks, be imaginative and work thoughtfully.

Taking class is a social exchange where as students, we connect to those of different backgrounds and experiences, while teachers pass down their dance knowledge. We all learn from each other. “Clarity and charity” was my mom’s favorite expression about teaching, which I think can be applied to just about anything.

In watching dance, be it in the studio, on stage, or on video in the theory classes, we experience empathetic communication. If we are open and curious, we imagine ourselves in someone else's situation and gain knowledge about others. It is a kind of life-long learning and literacy that transfers to all areas of our life.

So, everything you learned in kindergarten may be an important first step, but seeing dance class as a place for knowledge, imagination and sharing isn't such a big leap.

Thank you for your role in the continuum of dance here at BU.

Sending love and best wishes,

Micki

Dance Theatre Group Happenings

Carly Chiniz DTG President ('18)

Fall 2016 is turning out to be another great semester for DTG. As always, DTG is one of the best parts of returning to BU after the long summer break. After reconnecting with old friends and meeting all the new faces, it was exciting to hear the kernels of all the choreographers ready to start the semester. Micki started us off with her traditional modern class and Ann led us in an up-beat afro-jazz class the following week.

Former Pilobolus dancer, Jun Kuribayashi taught us an acro class and new ways of connecting to one another through partnering. We also had a contemporary class taught by DeAnna Pellecchia and a jazz class taught by DTG alum Christin Caplan. It was especially fun to hear Christin’s own DTG memories and see an alum so successful in the Boston dance scene.

At the end of September, a group of DTG dancers attended the Dance Showcase. It was such a fantastic show, and even included a funky, groovy piece featuring our very own mentors, Micki and Ann! We got dinner as a group together beforehand and really enjoyed the night of bonding.

For the rest of the semester, we are hard at work preparing for Origins 2016 with mentorship from Micki, Ann, and Peter DiMuro. The show will be November 18th and 19th in the BU Dance Theatre. We also look forward to attending the New England Conference of the American College Dance Association! The conference will take place March 23rd-26th at SUNY Potsdam in New York. It is sure to be a great year for DTG!
AXIS Residency Preview

Colleen Roddy ('15, '17)

This spring, the BU Arts Initiative in collaboration with the Dance Program, Disability Services and Sargent College's Occupational Therapy Program will be co-hosting a week long residency with AXIS Dance Company from Oakland, California. AXIS, is a company comprised of dancers with and without disabilities that create innovative work to alter perceptions of dance and disabilities. Beginning in 1987, this company has performed across the United States and abroad receiving many honors for their work. Since the company’s inception, it has expanded to be more than just a company with repertoire, but a company with a community division that brings dance into studios, schools and various community centers to increase knowledge about dance and disabilities.

While AXIS is at BU, they will be teaching a technique class to students enrolled in credit dance classes and a master class for DTG members. They will be performing in schools for children in the Boston area and an evening performance at the BU Dance Theater. Additionally, they will give a day long seminar discussing accessibility in the arts.

We are appreciative of the BU Arts Initiative for choosing dance as the medium for this cross disciplinary residency in order to increase knowledge and awareness of disabilities and its impact in the arts field. This is an unbelievable opportunity for individuals from all backgrounds, whether it is dancers, individuals with various physical or cognitive disabilities, or students and faculty in rehabilitation programs to come together and discover how dance and disability can be integrated to promote change in society.

DTG Beyond the Classroom

Anna Cox ('17)

While members of Dance Theatre Group do spend a great deal of time in L240, we love to spend time outside of the studio as well! DTG hosts bonding events each semester. This fall, we had dinner together at the GSU and attended the Boston University Dance Showcase at the BU Dance Theater. Many new freshman came to the dinner and it was great for everyone to get to know one another and mingle outside of the classroom.

The concert was an incredible opportunity for members to see local companies perform, including some of our very own BU Dance Program faculty. We absolutely loved it when Micki, Ann and Margot hit the stage in their wigs and performed to “Shake your Groove Thing”. This piece was so unexpected yet delightful, letting everyone see the personalities of some of our favorite instructors. For those new to Boston, this was a wonderful introduction to the city’s vibrant dance community. Besides watching the concert, the new members had the chance to see how L240 transforms into a beautiful performance space- one that we will be performing in soon!

As the semester moves forward, we will continue to host bonding events for dancers to take a break from the studying, dancing, and choreographing. Last year we had a blast watching old videos of Origins and Visions. We plan to watch videos together again. This is a great time for new members to see what we have done in the past, and for upperclassmen to reminisce about pieces they have been in. Events like these give us the opportunity to share our love for dance and form friendships beyond the studio.

Save the Date!

Boston University’s Dance Theatre Group presents Origins 2016

Friday, November 18th, 8pm
Saturday, November 19th, 4pm & 8pm

S10 BU Students (with I.D.)
S14 General Public

Boston University Dance Theater
915 Commonwealth Ave. (entrance on Buck St.)
Box Office: 617-353-2500
www.danceorigins2016.eventbrite.com

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The show began with a solo dancer cocooned in a silk, and ended with 12 men jumping to great heights with both power and grace. Each of the 9 other pieces presented varied from the one before it; the night as a whole was full of surprises, variation, and most of all, beautiful and interesting movement.

One of the pieces that stood out was the second piece, “Blue Girl Gold”, choreographed by DeAnna Pellecchia. Immediately, a single dancer center stage began to move doll-like, establishing the very unique, specific style of the piece. The quality of the movement was at first smooth, but tense as if the dancer was trying to push a rock wall with every part of her body. Then as she continued dancing, the dynamic shifted momentarily with a switch in focus or a complete collapse, to only continue moving slowly. She repeated this gesture, propping her head up with her hand underneath her chin, slowly raising her head, to collapse again to the ground. As three other dancers entered, all costumed in pink dresses with red, rosy cheeks, this doll-like movement continued. One moment in the piece that stood out was when all four dancers were admiring themselves to the audience, as if in front of a mirror. Keeping their hands by their face and making kissy faces to the front, they continually got faster and faster to a point where it was almost spastic. The dancers costuming and facial expressions suggested they were mimicking someone’s idea of perfection, acting how they were supposed to act and looking as they were supposed to look. It looked like a parody addressing the unequal standards that women are faced with. “Blue Girl Gold” was effective in conveying the intent through the dancers exceptional movement and performance.

“Stand & Change”, choreographed by Colleen Roddy, showed a symbiotic relationship, as the two dancers were constantly either sharing weight, lifting each other up, or moving in unison as if always connected. “Hot Flashback”, choreographed by Lynn Modell, was a delightful end to the first act. The audience laughed and cheered along to classic songs from the 60’s and 70’s with the dancers’ movement reminiscent of that time period.

One of the more inventive pieces of the show was “Body Talk”, created and performed by Paul Laurey and Liz Roncka. They began by moving to a tango-influenced sound score as they carved the negative space around each other, but never really making contact. Both dancers moved like their bones and muscles were completely guiding them through this exploration of partnering and unique movement that was floppy, but controlled. Then they abruptly halted the piece and began having a casual conversation. As we listened to the dialogue unfold, it sounded as if we were in an anatomy class or a physical therapy appointment. Roncka was identifying Laurey’s joints as he laid there limp on the floor. Once the dialogue got going, it directed the piece to a more humorous storyline.

The last piece was the best way to end the whole showcase. “Legion La Superior”, choreographed by Jaime Sierra, presented 12 strong, energetic and powerful men from Boston Ballet II. The piece was full of tension from the beginning as they entered one by one with slow lunges. Wearing only short spandex, the costuming accentuated the tension in their muscles and allowed the audience to see the tension between the individual dancers. There was strength in numbers, but each one of them individually was just as powerful. At one point there was one man lifted on the backs of the other men, running to be catapulted and caught. This moment defined their athleticism. The audience was consistently screaming from excitement and clapping from joy. This piece was a true grand finale.

Ultimately, every single piece offered a different part to the showcase as a whole. The full production had a little bit of everything for different audience members, and all types of audiences could find enjoyment in it. While each dance was so diverse, each dance was beautifully created and performed.
Alumni Updates

Amyko Ishizaki ('09) started her Graduate Studies at Penn State in the Art History Department studying Chinese Art and Calligraphy! This school year she also started teaching beginning ballet classes to six year olds at the ballet school where she works as their administrative assistant.

Alicia Lindauer ('03) is kicking off her third year living in Colorado with her husband, 4 year old daughter and 2 year old son. She’s busy working full time to advance our country’s renewable energy goals, spending time with family, getting outside as much as possible in the Colorado sunshine, and, of course, dancing! She recently joined a dance collective based in Golden, CO and is excited to be dancing, performing and choreographing again!

Julia Ong ('08) left Wilmer in August to start a one year clerkship in the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts. She works close to the ICA and was able to see BalletX perform this October! She hasn’t attend regular dance classes, but gets her dance fix with some awesome drop in Zumba classes at the Z Spot.

Jackie (Rubin) Simon ('04) celebrated the birth of her first child Zoe Rose in April. Zoe already has several pairs of ballet shoes and tutus!

Denise Niebisch Payne ('90) fondly remembers every year of dance with DTG under the amazing wings of Micki, Ann and Ramelle. She now lives in Nashville, Tennessee with her husband and two boys, serving as the Operations Manager for the nationally syndicated radio show KeepTheFaith. Best job she ever had though was creating the DTG “Visions” poster!

Sarah King-Wanless Aaron works for a government contractor as part of their corporate support team and is working on an MBA with a concentration in HR. Her oldest child just started her third year at NYU Shanghai and there is a chance her second child could be attending school in Boston in the fall.

Ami Dave ('08) is working as an attorney in Memphis, Tennessee, bringing products liability actions against car manufacturers. She ran the "7 Bridges Marathon" in Chattanooga with her husband on Oct. 16 – her second full marathon - and has been using Micki's stretches in recovery!

Gabrielle Orcha ('06) has relocated to LA and set up shop as a Performance Artist, choreographer, writer and coach.

Stephanie Creary ('98) is now an assistant professor at Cornell University researching all of the things that bothered her about working in the real world. She enjoys helping her students and research assistants find meaning in their work no matter what that work is (i.e., real-world preparation). This summer she spent a month implementing a cervical cancer prevention program in rural Uganda, where they saw almost 400 patients, treated 33 women to prevent cancer, and trained 6 local healthcare workers to keep the project going into the future. To top it off she got to hike into the mountains and spend an afternoon with a family of wild mountain gorillas!

Mikaela Ringquist ('12) recently moved to New York City. She is enjoying exploring the dance scene in the Big Apple, while managing the implementation of a U.S. Department of State program focusing on cultural repatriation in Afghanistan.

Angie Lin Hannum ('07) has been ballet faculty at Ballet Rincon for four years. This last year, collaborating with a musician, she choreographed and set a site specific piece called Nocturnal Currents at the Tucson Museum of Art. She says it was great fun and very rewarding to introduce her middle and high school ballet students to other areas of dance performance. She also welcomed a baby girl Aurora Reyne on June 10th and she is quickly becoming a dance studio baby.

Dierdre Halloran ('11) is finishing her veterinary degree in May, and is very excited to get her career started. She is looking to care for the pets of people with financial contrictions. Maybe that will be back in Boston, who knows! She's sad to say that this last year of vet school also means her last year with the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine Dance Collective, so she’ll be dancing my heart out with the other graduate students their our annual spring showcase. As always, missing the DTG family and friends she made oh so long ago!

Vivian He ('13) has been working towards physical school applications while teaching climbing technique and working in home health. She is still dancing, though sadly more at clubs than on stage!

Anna Schechinger ('10, '12) lives in Acton and is teaching English at Belmont High School in Belmont, MA. She still swings by BU every Wednesday for aerals silks and apparatus classes, and she is looking forward to performing again this December!

Kelly Monahon ('04) and Joe welcomed Joseph Bernard Piscopio on 7/27/16. He is wonderful! She also expanded the Alpine Dance Studio to include 3 spaces now, so that is a little crazy!

Meghan Riling ('09) is back at BU. This summer, she worked with the lovely teens in the Reach program, teaching some modern and Haitian dance classes, and now she's a full-time doctoral student in the School of Education, which means she is happily back at the barre in Margot's ballet class. She's also continuing to perform with Jean Appolon Expressions.

Claire Enterline ('06) is working for the Maine Coastal Program as their Marine Science Coordinator and teaching a weekly Vinyasa class at Wicked Good Yoga in Wiscasset. She would love to have DTG alum in class if anyone is in the area!

Kelli Sciarra ('03) is currently living and teaching high school mathematics in Warwick, New York. Kelli is a second year doctoral student at Fordham University Graduate School of Education in Lincoln Center (talk about a dancer's dream location!) pursuing a lifelong dream of earning her PhD. While spare time is currently a thing of the past, Kelli is still very involved in the dance community with her daughter, Mackenzie (age 7), who takes ballet, jazz, hip-hop, and tap. Kelli still keeps in touch with DTGers from years ago, and wants to wish current DTGers an amazing fall concert!

Amber Held ('06) got married in July 2016 to Joseph Kieley in Ojai, CA where they performed a duet to Elton John's song "Tiny Dancer". Amber is in her tenth year studying the technique and choreography of Isadora Duncan dance with Mary Sano.
Margot Parsons’ summer was filled with teaching at Boston Ballet, Ballet Theater of Boston, Dean College and The Dance Complex. Her company, DanceVisions, Inc., performed every weekend in June and two of the concerts were in the Dance Theater at BU featuring lighting by Lynda Rieman and a Q&A moderated by dance historian, Iris Fanger. This fall, her ballet class are filled with energetic and talented dancers. The faculty show in September was fun with Micki, Ann, and Margot dancing in a campy piece by Lynn Modell where they were morphed into another identity from the 60’s. Two members of her company also performed a solo and duet in the faculty concert. She created a new piece entitled “And so it began: Tornado/Dream” for the Harvard Ballet Company’s production based on the Wizard of Oz. For the DTG show in November, the Ballet Rep group of seven elegant dancers will present a new and physically demanding piece. 2017 promises to be an exciting year with the 35th anniversary of her company. She is making plans for performances in June. She continues to teach at Boston College and the Dance Complex, but my heart is with the committed and kind BU dancers who bring such humanity to the classroom and to their work. “Thank you always to Micki whose hard work keeps the dance program a vital part of BU.”

Micki Taylor-Pinne: In June, Micki finished up a year-long project developing a curriculum, dance pathways and lesson plans for an elementary school residency she’s been involved with for 8 years. She followed this with a trip to southern France and Spain with a dear friend that she danced with as an undergraduate. This summer, Reach was a big focus. Working with teenagers and bringing their performances and workshops into inner city community centers is extremely gratifying. Preparing for and dancing with her peers in Lynn Modell's piece for the Dance Showcase was a hoot and a welcome diversion. She is enjoying time in the studio and classroom as that is the best part of the job! She is grateful for having such a fantastic faculty generously sharing their knowledge with our students. And for her family and friends who remind her that keeping that work/life balance is vitally important.

Lynda Rieman spent this past year drumming up new business for the Dance Theater in August and it was a total success! The theater hosted Beantown Tap Festival, Dance to Save, Koltun Ballet, Boston Community Dance Project and Urbanity Dance presenting Boston’s Contemporary Dance Festival. The fall semester is now booked every weekend. She is currently working on the third bungee piece with Colleen Roddy to be performed in the DTG concert in November 2016. For October 2017 she has begun work as the production manager on a project with Wellesley College to present “Bandaloup” a dance company primarily known around the world for dancing on the sides of mountains and buildings.

Ann Brown Allen began the semester having a grand time in Lynn Modell’s ‘Hot Flashback’ for the Dance Showcase. Her Pilates and Ballet classes are flourishing. She’s choreographing “Monopoly” for the Driscoll Troupe of the Freelance Players. She’s rehearsing a piece by 94 year old Dorothy Elizabeth Tucker with ‘Round the Corner Movers’ and preparing for ‘Gum Drops and Funny Uncle’ with Peter DiMuro’s ‘Public Displays of Motion’. She gave up her 30 year summer camp position in anticipation of having shoulder surgery, but was told she had too much mobility and not enough pain to justify it. Ann is looking forward to another year of Dance Theater Group and mentoring with Micki and Peter.

Ramelle Adams is now putting both her new certifications, for the RYS 200 yoga instructor and the CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) to good use. She is in full swing teaching yoga at BU and subbing occasionally at other studios. At BU she is channeling her passion for dance into her yoga barre class where she gets a bit of freedom to choreograph the yoga barre and peak yoga vignettes to music. Inversions are the new frontier, and though vertigo is a bit of an obstacle, she is having fun with balancing on her arms as well as her legs. As a welcome contrast, she is also teaching a Deep Stretch yoga class weekly, where she gets to teach stretching for a full hour. As a relatively inflexible dancer, she is loving the luxury of giving students lots of time to stretch. On weekends she is working as a CNA at a local rehabilitation facility. Her final new venture is developing and leading teambuilding sessions as a new offering at FitRec. The most fun is the Team Triangle activity which involves balancing on low beams and collecting items along the way. Kaitlyn and Jesse are doing well with no major changes in work or interests. Kaitlyn is still working in the financial sector; Jesse is balancing music and farming with weekend work at the Dance Theater.

Origins Preview:

Holly Moniz ('17, '19)

Sitting in the Boston University Dance Theater, I watch as choreographers present the progress of their pieces to this semester’s mentors at second showing. Although the room is filled with a nervous energy that so many choreographers feel as they await mentor feedback, I can’t help but feel excited for Origins 2016 because so many of the pieces have captured my attention.

Lauren Sava has taken an experimental approach in choreographing her first piece for Dance Theatre Group. Through improvisation exercises, she has put together a piece in which her dancers move through the space while simultaneously speaking single words and short phrases.

Carly Chinitz, Dance Theatre Group’s president, has crafted a piece that puts a modern twist on a traditional genre. Her large cast of dancers are obviously reveling in the sassy movement vocabulary as they “Sugarfoot” and “Charleston” across the stage, constantly jumping in and out of the wings while clapping their hands and stomping their feet.

Colleen Roddy and Lynda Rieman have returned to tackle yet another bungee piece. This semester, though, they’ve upped the ante: their aerialists and dancers are joined onstage by four five-foot platforms that are jumped on, crawled under, and carried across the stage. They’ve structured a chaos that keeps its onlookers engaged and amazed by the performers’ physical feats.

The Origins 2016 production is going to be filled with pieces from the entire stylistic spectrum, from modern to jazz to aerial and more. With such a vast array of pieces preparing for our show, I am sure that all in attendance will find a dance that suits their personal tastes and preferences. We look forward to you joining us at Origins 2016 as we share with you what we love to do... dance!
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