



# Boston University's Dance Theatre Group Alumni Newsletter

Vol. 48 Fall 2018

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A Note from Micki	1
DTG Happenings	1
Dance Showcase	2
Spotlight: Billy	2
Origins Preview	3
Faculty Update	3
Alumni Update	4
Donation History	5

## BACKSTAGE CREW

### Contributing Writers:

Haley Abram  
 Olivia Blaisdell  
 Zeina Fayad  
 Stephanie Shin  
 Micki Taylor-Pinney

### Editor/Designer:

Holly Moniz

## A Note From Micki

Hello DTGers,

And happy fall! At BU, we expect changes each fall semester: seeing new freshman in classes and realizing that the graduates aren't in classes or the office any more. This year brings additional changes as Ann has moved from full-to part-time status. By the time this newsletter goes to print, we hope to have a new Assistant Coordinator of Dance in place (We do! Check out BU Dance on Facebook to find out who). We are fortunate that the department allowed me to re-write the position Ann Brown Allen held for 40 years and create a second assistant position. Having someone in this capacity will allow us to grow our non-credit and recreational programs and share the workload of other programs. Lynda Rieman, our tireless "other" assistant coordinator and theater manager, and I look forward to this new chapter.

After several semesters, Peter DiMuro had to pass on being our third DTG mentor because his performing company, including Ann, is involved in new and expanding ventures. DTG has initiated the Ann Mentoring Project, seeking donations to be able to have Ann continue providing our choreographers with her generous and detailed feedback. We welcomed Billy McLaughlin as our third mentor, and he made it through the first showing of fourteen student pieces! It is always a rewarding experience to see the pieces progress over the semester and to see what is on the minds of the students. We'll look forward to traveling to Plymouth State in New Hampshire for the regional ACDA in April, and I'll particularly enjoy being a participant rather than the host!

It is always a pleasure to hear of the changes you are experiencing in your life. It has been rewarding to hire DTG alum to teach here at BU, including Anna Schechinger Guestella, who is teaching Aerial Silks Core Fundamentals, and Liz Roncka who is now also teaching as many pole dance circuit classes as we can fit into the schedule. I look forward to seeing Karesia Batan at the Boston Center for the Arts as a performer with Beth Soll in November. How delighted I am to see so many DTG alum dancing and performing in Boston: Nozama, under the direction of Gracie Novikoff and Natalie Schierra, leads the head count with Urbanity close behind. Hats off to Kristin Wagner and Sarah Thorne for their new venture, "...that's what she said." And how is it possible that Amanda Oo has a daughter taking one of our teen aerial classes? I loved seeing Claire Enterline and her son, Barrett, this summer in Maine, and the pictures of DTG alum visiting Sigita Cahoon and her new baby in California. What a community you've built! I hope you'll continue staying in touch with each other, with dance, and (if I can put in a plug) with BU Friends of DTG, too. Help us build on your legacy as a member of the DTG alumni family.

Sending love and best wishes,

*Micki*

## Dance Theatre Group Happenings

### Stephanie Shin ('19)

Fall 2018 has been a whirlwind of a semester! We welcomed many new faces and reunited with several returning members. We are also excited to have a new mentor, Billy McLaughlin, join us this semester! As for E-board, we have Zeina Fayad shifting into the VP position, Claire-Solene Becka joining as our Secretary, Ali Gazzola remaining as treasurer, Haley Abram moving to PR, and Olivia Blaisdell returning as Concert Coordinator.

Our first general meeting was one of the largest we've ever had in recent years! After introducing each member and the choreographers for the semester, we took our bi-annual modern class with Micki Taylor-Pinney. What an atmosphere it is to dance in a

room with other people who love to move! The week after Micki's class, Ann Brown Allen taught Pilates, putting us into "perfect Pilates posture" as Ann says.

Next, we had a master class with Liv Schaffer, a member of AXIS Dance Company. Her curriculum examines the marriage between death and dance. Throughout the class, she fostered an open environment where we could be free to be vulnerable. It was an incredibly unique experience that we could share together as a group. In the weeks that follow, we will have a lighting workshop with Liz Roncka and our lighting director Lynda Reiman; another wonderful acro/partnering class with Jun Kuribayashi; and close out our semester classes with a master class from Billy McLaughlin.

We've also been able to bond together as a company by attending the Dance Showcase, various individual cast bonding events, a fun contemporary class taught by alum Colleen Roddy, and more! We're also very excited that our YouTube channel is officially up and running! Please subscribe to our channel at: <https://bit.ly/2J7Y1Ww>

And of course, Origins 2018 is in great progress! We have 15 student choreographers this year and faculty pieces by Margot Parsons and Lindsey Leduc. As always, it is so rewarding to see how the pieces evolve throughout such a short amount of time. We have truly innovative and interesting work being prepared this semester, so we can't wait to see you there this November 16-17!

# Dance Showcase

Haley Abram ('19)

This year's Dance Showcase was another wonderful combination of faculty work and guest performances with pieces from new and familiar faces. The show had a diverse range of styles including ballet, hip-hop, modern, and aerial dance.

The showcase featured many pieces from our esteemed dance faculty. Margot Parsons presented a brand new work titled "Waltz". The ballet trio was set to three waltzes from Chopin and included DTG and BU alum Christine McDowell, who now teaches beginning ballet at BU. Marin Orlosky Randow presented a solo hoop piece in addition to a silks trio with Anna Guastella and student Dana Hammerstrom. DeAnna Pellechia's company KAIROS Dance Theater performed an excerpt, "Timber," from their evening length performance *Ministry of 9*. The dancers, including current and former DTG members Olivia Blaisdell and Kristin Wagner, marched and rolled around the stage wearing only one six-inch heel. Liz Roncka performed a powerful improvisational solo.

In addition to our BU faculty, we also had several performances from groups within the Boston dance community. Boston Ballet II joined the show once again, bringing a lovely duet from *Swan Lake* and an upbeat Samuel Kurkjian ensemble piece reconstructed by Peter Stark. There were also two pieces from Reach, Boston University's summer teen dance outreach program. "About Me" was choreographed and performed by Brian Washburn and Wendy O'Byrne with the dancers who were a part of the program this past summer. They also opened the show with a contemporary quartet.

The Dance Showcase was one of the first bonding events of the year for Dance Theatre Group, and it was a wonderful way to start out our semester! It is always enjoyable to watch dance with other dance lovers, and it is even better to see our friends and faculty performing as well. It is also such a great introduction to the immense talent we have surrounding us here at Boston University. It reminds us how lucky we are to have these professionals guiding us through our dance careers.



Courtesy of Maximal Images



Courtesy of Golden Lion Photography

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**617-353-1597 | budance@bu.edu**

## Spotlight On: William "Billy" McLaughlin

Zeina Fayad ('20)

This semester in Dance Theatre Group, we are welcoming a new mentor. Sitting alongside veterans Micki and Ann is William "Billy" McLaughlin, the Chair of the Dance Department at Boston Arts Academy.



Courtesy of Boston Arts Academy

Billy is not a stranger to the Boston dance scene: he has danced with a number of Boston based companies such as Impulse Dance Company, Concert Dance Company of Boston, and Boston Dance Collective, as well as other companies across the country. He also has extensive experience in a mentor role. At Boston Arts Academy, Billy works

closely with dance majors, having guided one of our own DTG members, Angelica Breece-Sullivan, in her high school career. Billy has been Co-Director and Artistic Director of Boston University's Dance Collective Summer Outreach Program, also known as Reach, working closely with our own Micki Taylor-Pinney. He has also worked at Boston Ballet, The Boston Conservatory, Concord Academy Summer Stages, and other notable programs as a staff member and consultant.

In addition to being an accomplished dancer and counselor, Billy also has a long history in choreography. He has taken part in The Great City Schools National Convention, Choreographer's Lab at Jacob's Pillow, and has been awarded with a SURDNA Artist Fellowship and the Outstanding Educator Advocate Award in Dance at the Arts/Learning Artful Stem Symposium.

We are very happy to welcome Billy and his energy to DTG. During our first two showings, he has challenged choreographers to think outside the box, usually having them get up off their feet to alter existing movement during his feedback portion of the showings. He encourages choreographers in a

constructive and collaborative way and values each student's unique vision. We look forward to continue getting to know Billy and to keep learning from his artistry!

### UPCOMING CONCERTS

#### NOVEMBER:

*Origins 2018*

Friday, Nov 16 at 8pm

Saturday, Nov 17 at 4pm & 8pm

BU Dance Theater

#### DECEMBER:

*Aurora Borealis 2018: A & B*

Sunday, Dec 2 at 4pm (A) & 6pm (B)

Monday, Dec 3 at 7pm (A) & 9pm (B)

BU Dance Theater



# Origins 2018 Preview

By Olivia Blaisdell ('20, '22)



Even in my fourth semester as Concert Coordinator, the choreographers keep finding ways to keep me on my toes. This semester's Origins 2018 is a little different than its predecessors: quite a few choreographers have chosen to present pieces that speak to our current political climate. Let me give you a sneak peek of what to expect to see in this semester's concert.

Stephanie Shin, our president of Dance Theatre Group, is depicting her experience this summer on internship as a female in the male-dominated computer science industry. The piece opens with the cast in line downstage adjusting themselves as if looking in a mirror. While somewhat comical, this pedestrian introduction sets an eerie tone from the get-go. We're excited to see how the rest of the piece will unfold.

Amy Green and Sigrid Neptun are pairing up to dance about their passion for the well-

being of our environment. At one point in the piece, they create an image that evokes two strangers sitting on a beach with a mutual respect for our Earth. And their quirky movement qualities complement one another so well that I have no doubt that they will craft some fun and enlightening choreography.

I have taken on the daunting role of choreographing while simultaneously performing my Concert Coordinator duties. The kernel of my piece began with the idea of identity. As the piece has developed, I've tried to establish two identity roles that follow the rules I've created for interacting with one another – but what happens if one individual doesn't want to follow the rules? You'll have to come to the show to find out!

As you can see, DTG has a lot to say at this Origins 2018 concert on November 16 and 17. You won't want to miss it!

## Faculty Updates

**Ramelle Adams** is still working full-time at BU with additional part-time work as a House Manager at the BU Dance Theater, a Movement instructor at the Gardner Pilot Academy, and a CNA at a skilled nursing unit in Lincoln. New this fall is her creation of Yoga Groove, a mix of yoga and dance, which she is teaching at BU in the evenings. Think fast-paced, simple combinations integrating yoga asanas and dance to a driving beat, with a little Buti Yoga thrown in, and you get the idea of the peak part of class. At the Gardner School, Ramelle loves her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class this year where Mindful Movement has replaced Yoga Movement at the request of the program. She and the students are having a wonderful time creating the class from scratch with elements of yoga, dance, and improvisation. Kaitlyn has happily settled in to her new life and work in Washington, D.C. where everything is going extremely well, though she misses New England friends and weather. Jesse has just landed a great programming job after teaching himself to program last year and following up with a bootcamp intensive last spring.

**Ann Brown Allen's** first year of retirement, and she's still surrounded by the people she adores: the students and dance faculty at BU. Her summer and fall were filled by Peter DiMuro's "Public Displays of Motion." The work was performed at Villa Victoria in the South End, Jacob's Pillow, on the Esplanade with the Landmark Orchestra, in the Fens with the Fog x FLO installation, and in Kenmore

Square on the mall with the "Open House" concrete furniture installation. Currently, the piece is in residence at the Gardner Museum, where it has been named one of the top 24 tickets to dance by Dance Magazine. Ann is choreographing "Mything Links" for her children's theater group. She's also returned to her Pilates teacher's studio and continues to take workshops and courses. She is looking forward to the concert season, especially Origins 2018.

**Margot Parsons** was thrilled to be the first person honored by The Dance Complex "Living Legacy" series on April 6 and 7 this past spring. The dancers, Marin Orlosky Randow, and she were excited to perform to sold-out audiences both nights. She spent the summer teaching at Boston Ballet, teaching the delightful children from the BU Summer Camp, subbing at many local dance studios, and choreographing a new trio for the BU Dance Showcase. She has sadly given up teaching the Advanced Beginning Ballet at BU (she still teaches the Low and High Intermediate Ballet!) and after 27 years stopped teaching her morning class at The Dance Complex. For the fall, the lively Ballet Rep dancers will present a new work as part of the DTG November show, and her company, DanceVisions, is working on a 45-minute piece to be presented sometime next spring. As she has said many times, the faculty and students in the dance program at BU are the best! "Thank you to each of you for enriching my life." | [www.dancevisions.net](http://www.dancevisions.net)

**Lynda Rieman** had a full summer: July with family & friends in Michigan and August booked solid in the dance theater. September weekends have been open, so she has been spending her time in the White Mountains of New Hampshire peak-grabbing with her guy – so far they have done Jackson, Madison, Webster, and Carrigan. She is looking forward to a very busy fall/winter theater schedule starting the third weekend in October. Her aerial class is moving forward, and she is proud that her class is now making duets.

This semester, **Micki Taylor-Pinney** is having fun teaching her enthusiastic beginning modern dance students, watching the progress of her composition students, and learning how her aesthetics students look at dance. Her summer started with a sunny trip to Greece with a college friend and a restorative vacation on the coast of Maine with her husband. In between, it was a summer filled with daily adventures with children and teens; six weeks of camp and the Reach program had her spending more time in the studio than at her computer! She was pleased to have two of the Reach pieces on the Dance Showcase program. This year, she enjoyed watching the show as an audience member rather than from backstage as a performer. Every day, she appreciates her hard-working, dedicated office workers and feels grateful for having such a committed and inspiring faculty.

# Alumni Updates

**Karesia Batan ('06)** is in her 5th year of the Queensboro Dance Festival. This summer, the festival toured throughout the borough of Queens. They partnered with RIOULT Dance NY and Jessica Lang Dance: they also produced a Mongolian Troupe as their first visit to NYC! She is still dancing for Beth Soll (someone who taught at BU before Micki), and will be doing a lecture-demonstration at the Boston Center for the Arts on Veteran's Day.

**Sigita Cahoon ('03)** just had a baby girl, Amelia Ray, in June. She is just the best! Sigita also still works at University of Southern California as an OB/GYN teaching faculty member.

**Aiko (Ruch) Callahan ('05, '07)** is currently awaiting the arrival of her second daughter with her husband, Anthony, and daughter, Stella. She works part-time for Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital as an outpatient physical therapist, where she is part of the Dance and the Ehlers-Danlos Special Interest Groups. She is looking forward to getting back to some dancing after this baby!

**Ami Dave ('08, '12)** is dancing with her 5-month-old daughter and enjoying her new job as an attorney with the Tennessee Department of Human Services. She and her husband are loving parenthood!

**Joanna Diallo ('06)** graduated with her MBA from the Foster School of Business at the University of Washington in June, and she started a new job in October as the Managing Director of Global Health Information Systems at the University of Washington Dept. of Global Health in Seattle. She's still dancing... her favorite right now is "The Floss," which she learned from her 5 year old daughter.

**Charles Howes ('09)** was recently married; he and his husband are enjoying life out west in Fort Collins, Colorado! He has been taking class and was excited to be able to perform twice over the past year: once as a guest artist with a local dance company and again as part of a site-specific immersive theater performance.

**Amber Kieley ('06)** performed in her final dance concert at ODC Theater in San Francisco before retiring from Mary Sano and Her Duncan Dancers – a company she has been with since 2007. Amber continues to teach dance, yoga, and mindfulness to children in Los Angeles.

**Na'ama Landau ('16)** has had a whirlwind year! She moved from Baltimore to New

Zealand to work for education tech company Crimson Education and, about 8 months in, they relocated her to Shanghai! While in New Zealand, she visited with current DTG members **Stephanie Shin ('19)** and **Amy Green ('19)**. She has found fantastic dance studios while abroad and is so grateful for the global connections dance and DTG has given her.

**Shannon Luchs ('13)** is living in Brooklyn and works in homeless services in Manhattan. She is in her third season with IKADA Contemporary Dance Company. She will be featured in IKADA's annual show "Share the Stage" at the Manhattan Movement and Arts Center on November 10, 2018.

**Amy Marcinkowski ('04)** and her husband, Gabor, had a wonderful wedding in upstate NY this past August and plan to honeymoon in New Zealand in November. She is currently a practicing radiologist in Syracuse and loving it. Yoga and dance are still a part of her life, just not enough! She's looking forward to the next DTG alumni reunion.

**Erin McNulty ('11)** has just begun her third season with Boston Ballet's Education & Community Initiatives. This year, in addition to being a Teaching Artist, she is taking on a new role as Instructional Coach, supporting all of the community-based faculty and working on curriculum and resource development. Erin is also teaching ballet at the Torit Montessori School on Beacon Hill, and improvisation and composition at Wilmington Dance Academy. Erin's big artistic accomplishment this year was premiering her first dance film in September! *Deviation, Twice Removed* was a collaboration between herself and fellow DTG alum **Carolyn Harper (SAR '13, '15)**, as well as filmmakers Chris Di Nunzio and Skip Shea and musician Josh Knowles.

**Joan Murray ('94)** feels grateful for the opportunities she had at BU, having just thanked her dad (for the 1,000th time) for paying for BU... "8 semesters of Modern Dance with Micki Taylor-Pinney. What did that cost?!" She also feels deeply connected to the small town where she lives – teaching, singing, and recently picking up the ukulele.

**Courtney Wagner Peerless ('09)** has been working as a Physician Assistant for a whopping three and a half years now (time flies!) practicing emergency medicine. She's embarking on a personal research/passion project about hospital cultures, factors associated with career longevity/burnout, and what allows PAs to thrive. She still lives in Boston with her husband and fierce 11-pound shih tzu-puddle, Piper. Many may recognize

Piper from Courtney's sister, **Kristin Wagner's ('12)**, social media posts - she babysits frequently, so Piper is an aficionado of the arts. Courtney just ran her first half marathon and can't wait to sign up for another. She also still loves traveling the country/world with her husband - next stop will be Israel next month.

**Charlene Williams ('15, '18)** graduated with her MSW from BU this past May. She was also recently promoted to Student Services Coordinator at her current job with Year Up Greater Boston. She has continued dancing, going on her fourth year with Rainbow Tribe Dance Company along with other DTG alums **Natalie Schiera ('12)** and **Cristin (Collins) Caplan ('10)**. She can't wait to come see Origins 2018 in November!

**Eunice Woods ('09)** continues her work as an actress in Chicago. She is performing in "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time" at the Steppenwolf Theatre Company through October, then will extend her stay there as an understudy in November for "Familiar," written by playwright and actress Danaï Gurira.

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The Ann Mentorship Project and The ACDA Travel Fund



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