Dear Dance Alumni and Friends,

This fall has been a whirlwind of activity! Before fall semester even began, we hosted two events. In collaboration with DanceWorks Chicago, our first ever “Back-to-School Dance Bootcamp” was held the last weekend in August and was a resounding success. The two-day workshop featured technique and repertory classes, an informal performance by DanceWorks Chicago, time for networking, and a mock audition to help students get back into the swing of things for the start of school. Immediately following the Bootcamp, Eddy Ocampo was in-residence for four days to work with Western Dance Project, creating a new work for the eleven company members.

The end of September brought Peter Chu and his company, chuthis., to Kalamazoo. Peter created a wonderful new work, One Sound Looking Back, for our students that they performed on a concert with chuthis at Chenery Auditorium. Next, the 2013 National Choreography Competition winner, Gabrielle Lamb, arrived to create her commissioned dance, Ritournelle, a whimsical work for nine dancers. Other fall guest artists included alumni Marlo Stafford Martin, Stephen Brotebeck, and Kia Smith as well as former faculty member Claudia Howard Queen. Orchesis outdid itself once again with sold-out performances of a wonderful concert in November. The semester closed with performances for packed, enthusiastic audiences at Art Hop & More and the Fall Showcase. We’ll be busy preparing for the 2014 Winter Gala Dance Concert as soon as we return from Winter Break in January. Read more about the concert inside this newsletter.

Finally, this month I signed a letter of agreement to assume the position of Associate Dean of the Lee Honors College. As you might suspect, after being affiliated with the Department of Dance in one way or another since 1974, I have mixed emotions. What many of you don’t know is that I started my first day on this campus in 1974 as an Honors College student, so this feels a bit like kismet. The good news is that I will continue to work with the many dance students who are members of the Lee Honors College, and I will also be able to continue to teach my favorite dance course, Dance Kinesiology. To facilitate the leadership transition while Dean Guyette and the dance faculty work to identify the next department chair, I will be splitting my time between dance chair duties and associate dean duties beginning January 2 through the end of spring semester.

May your holidays dance with light and laughter and be filled with time with those you love.

Jane
Alumni Updates

Amy Avery (BFA 1986)

Amy (Olds) Avery is excited to be back at WMU as a part-time Instructor in the Department of Dance where she is teaching Jazz, Tap, Modern and Dancer Wellness. Amy is graduating in May with her Masters of Science degree in Health and Physical Education from Emporia State University (ESU) in Emporia, Kansas. Recently, Amy was a presenter at the Kansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (KAHPERD) convention. While at the convention, Amy was presented with the Outstanding Graduate Student in Teaching award for the state of Kansas. Amy is also a Graduate Teaching Assistant at ESU and a part time faculty member in the Movement Science Department at GVSU.

Colleen Griffin (BA 2013)

In August, Colleen moved to San Francisco, CA with her partner, Joseph Hernandez, to begin her dance career at ODC/Dance. In September, she was awarded an ODC Theater Artist in Residence Administrative Fellowship with Amy Seiwert’s Imagery. Colleen is excited to announce that this January she will be moving into the Youth and Teen Program as Administrative Assistant and Dance Jam Manager for the school’s teen company under the direction of Kimi Okada. Colleen is eager to begin performing and teaching.

Joseph Hernandez (BFA 2013)

Upon graduation in 2013, Joseph relocated to San Francisco with his partner Colleen Griffin. He was blessed with the opportunity to dance a lead role in First Voice’s premiere production of MU: One Ocean, One World choreographed by Kimi Okada. The show toured through California and Illinois. Following the First Voice tour, Joseph joined ODC/Dance as a full-time, paid apprentice. He recently made his main stage debut with the company and has upcoming performances of The Velveteen Rabbit and APAP in New York. Joseph is looking forward to growing further as he continues his season with ODC/Dance.

Lonnie Poupard Jr. (BA 2009)

Lonnie lives in New York City and dances for Lucinda Childs. The company has spent the last two years touring with the renowned Phillip Glass/Robert Wilson opera Einstein On The Beach. He recently completed filming a short dance film with Gabrielle Lansner & Co. (working title The Birch Grove) in which he was featured. In addition to touring this spring, Lonnie has accepted a position as Production Manager with a regional touring dance competition. He continues to teach fitness classes at Refine Method in NYC and has been pursuing his own dance film projects and collaborations.
Alumni Updates (cont.)

Sarah Rabbers (BFA 2009)

After residing in Chicago for three years, Sarah Rabbers is back living in Michigan. Delicately balancing her time between dancing in Michigan and Chicago, her dance company, Tapestry Dance Company, is still thriving. Tapestry Dance Company performed at the eighth annual Oakland Dance Festival and, in the spring, will be performing their second full-length show. In Michigan, Sarah has begun teaching again with her mom at Dance Arts as well as teaching across the Midwest with Jason Michaels Energy Dance Source Association, and she continues to adjudicate dance competitions and choreograph. Recently, Sarah has been guest performing in different Nutcracker productions, allowing her to put on pointe shoes and play the “ballerina” role. Life and dancing is great!

Katie Reese (BA 2011)

Katie has recently switched agencies and signed with The Movement Talent Agency. She spent the month of August in various cities of China dancing for the former Pussycat Doll, Kaya Jones. Katie recently performed as a soloist in Alex Little’s premiere company show that Stacey Tooke, Liz Imperio, and Tabitha and Napoleon came to watch. She also choreographed for Kate Clark’s competition team at West Michigan Dance Center in Kalamazoo, MI. In November, Katie began her third season with Mashup Contemporary Dance Company and moved into her new studio apartment.

Hannah Stangebye (BFA 2013)

A lot has happened since Hanna’s recent graduation from WMU in April 2013. Hanna spent five weeks in Denver, CO studying with Colorado Ballet on full scholarship, where she had the opportunity to perform Bournonville’s La Sylphide and do some great networking. While in Denver, Hanna also performed at the Denver Art Museum with artist Nick Cave in his production Heard. In August, Hanna moved to San Francisco, CA to pursue her career as a professional dancer. She is currently an apprentice with Garrett + Moulton Productions under the direction of Janice Garrett and Charles Moulton. Hanna just finished her first performance with them as an understudy in a production entitled A Show of Hands. When she is not dancing, Hanna works for a start-up online resale company called liketwice.com as a buyer. In November, she will be heading off to Los Angeles for three weeks in order to train and be certified to teach Cardio Barre – a group fitness program that is based on the idea of low-impact cardio exercises and dance technique in order to be easier on the joints and create long, lean muscles. A new Cardio Barre studio has just opened in San Francisco and Hanna is excited to join their team once she finishes her training. Lastly, in January, Hanna will be working with The Garage as part of their Resident Artist Workshop (RAW) program. She will be choreographing and performing her own original work from April 9-10, 2014. So far, she has two other dancers (still looking for more) and a costume designer on board. Keep an eye out for Hanna’s Kickstarter campaign coming soon!

Heather Vaughan-Southard (BFA 1999)

Heather is the dance representative for the Michigan Arts Education Instruction and Assessment (MAEIA) project that is funded by the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Assessment Consortium. The group has been tasked with developing a blueprint, assessment specifications, and assessment items that describe and measure premiere arts training for the K-12 public school system. In addition to directing the K-8 dance program at Pleasant View Arts Academy in the Lansing School District, Heather is serving as Visiting Assistant Professor (fixed term) at Michigan State University in the Department of Theatre.
Each year, several guest artists from around the country visit Kalamazoo, MI to work with WMU dance students. This fall, Peter Chu, Artistic Director of chuthis., and dancer with Kidd Pivot, and Gabrielle Lamb, choreographer, dancer, and filmmaker, came to choreograph new works for the dance majors. I was fortunate enough to have been chosen as a cast member in these pieces. The residencies with Chu and Lamb were memorable highlights of my Fall Semester.

With two of his dancers from chuthis., Peter Chu spent a week with us during the month of September, and I learned so much from the whole process. To choose his cast, Chu held an audition but conducted it as if it were a class. He wanted to see how we learned, worked, and interacted with those around us. He introduced us to his very unique movement language, similar to the choreography in chuthis. and Kidd Pivot. Learning from Chu opened up a whole new method of exploring movement for me, challenging me to expand my knowledge about myself and the way I dance. Throughout his creation process, Chu taught us his movement patterns and based the piece on our personalities and strengths as dancers. The completed work incorporates spoken dialogue, followed by call-and-response reactions by the dancers. The piece was given the title, One Sound Looking Back.

Shortly following Chu’s residency, Gabrielle Lamb arrived to create her new work. Lamb won WMU’s second National Choreography Competition, chosen by WMU’s dance community last spring. We couldn’t have been more excited to have her with us! Lamb’s process was similar to Chu’s, beginning with an open audition to help choose her dancers. Her audition included brief floor and standing combinations with intricate hand and feet patterns. Lamb challenged us in these combinations to find patterns of connectivity and to be extremely specific with respect to how we move our bodies; this theme carried over to the development of her choreography. Lamb had us create our own phrases that described our childhood dance studio experience. This allows glimpses of our own personalities and personal histories to be seen within the piece. The final result of Lamb’s work is multifaceted with a wide range of themes. The piece begins with thoughtful solos and trios, transitions into humorous and chaotic group sections, and ends with a duet and a solo with a similar effect to that of the beginning. The work is entitled Ritournelle.

Peter Chu and Gabrielle Lamb’s residencies were great learning experiences for me. Not only did I learn about the rigorous creative process in my field of study, I also learned how to be a versatile dancer. Chu has a style of movement that is huge and explosive, and, in order to perform his piece, we had to put this style into our bodies. On the other hand, Lamb’s style is much more linear and full of complex and detailed body patterns, which we also had to learn and put into our bodies to perform her piece. These residencies are preparing my peers and me for the professional world because, as developing professionals, we must be quick learners and versatile dancers. I have taken what I’ve learned from both of our guest artists and am incorporating it into my movement vocabulary to further develop and improve as a dancer.
Photos From Our Fall Residencies

Peter Chu demonstrating with chuthis. member, Pam Chu

Cast of Marlo Martin’s *look at me with your eyes wide shut*

Gabrielle Lamb rehearsal

Gabrielle Lamb with junior Alex Hlavaty
The 2014 Winter Gala Dance Concert program will include two Great Works dances, two guest artist pieces, four faculty works, and three dances by student choreographers. Under the auspices of WMU’s Great Works Dance Program, choreographer and performer Peter Chu has created a new work, One Sound Looking Back, for 18 WMU dance majors. Mr. Chu is Artistic Director of chuthis., a project-based contemporary dance company that he formed in 2008, and has danced with distinguished companies such as BJM Danse, EZdanza, and Kidd Pivot. Recipient of the prestigious 2010 Capezio A.C.E. Award for Choreography, Mr. Chu’s works have been performed worldwide. He has choreographed works for Naomi Slikeman’s Catur, the ARTV series in Quebec, the ninth and tenth seasons of So You Think You Can Dance, Houston Met Dance Company, Orlando Ballet Theatre, and the Netherlands Dance Theatre Summer Intensive. In a unique form of collaborative composition, Mr. Chu created One Sound Looking Back by molding his explosive, contemporary style of movement around the individual personalities and strengths of the WMU dance students. Heightening the idiosyncratic nature of the work, One Sound Looking Back work is also set to music composed and produced by Djeff Houle specifically for the piece.

New York-based choreographer and performer Gabrielle Lamb’s new work, Ritournelle, will also be presented under the auspices of WMU’s Great Works Dance Program. A highly acclaimed choreographer, Ms. Lamb was awarded the 2009 National Choreographic Competition of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and the Grand Prize in Milwaukee Ballet’s 2013 Genesis International Choreographic Competition; BalletX, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ballet Memphis, Ballet Austin, among others, have presented her work. Ms. Lamb was a soloist at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal for nine years prior to joining the New York-based company, Morphoses, in 2009. Inspired by her reading of Jennifer Homans’ best-selling survey of ballet history, Apollo’s Angels, Ritournelle portrays a quasi-personal account of Ms. Lamb’s history in ballet: “Beginning with images of instruction, repetition and mentorship, [Ritournelle] continues through scenes of alienation and fierce competition and finally softens into acceptance and reconciliation,” she explains. Along with her personal experiences, evoking a similar creative process to that of Mr. Chu, Ms. Lamb indicates that “the strong personalities of the nine dancers shaped this series of vignettes” and relates that central to the creative process shared between her and the students was “a shared love of this incredibly difficult art form.”

The program will feature two commissioned works by guest artists. Eddy Ocampo, a choreographer, master jazz teacher, Artistic Director of Forum Dance Theatre, and Co-Artistic Director of LEVELdance has created a new work, Linea, for the members of WMU’s touring ensemble, Western Dance Project. Linea is the second commissioned work of Mr. Ocampo by the Western Dance Project, following the highly successful piDgeon in 2012. Seattle-based choreographer, teacher, Artistic Director of badmarmarDANCE, and WMU alumna, Marlo Martin has choreographed her new piece, look at me with your eyes wide shut, for the 27 sophomore dance majors. Nuanced, cool, yet highly athletic, look at me with your eyes wide shut, employs a wide variety of movement that works to express the myriad experiences and concomitant emotions associated with the concept of being seen.
Adding stylistic breadth to the program are four new works by WMU faculty members. Ravenfeather is a collaborative, contemporary dance work including music composed and conducted by Hartford-based Daniel Morel, live musical accompaniment by students from the School of Music, costuming by Kate McKenzie from the Department of Theatre, artwork by RosaLee Ward from the Frostic School of Art, and choreography by Kirsten Harvey. The piece was created on the principles of memetics. Within the context of a rehearsal process, the meme or unit of culture (idea, pattern of behavior, cultural norm) was observed and choreography was developed through the reproduction of the meme from dancer to dancer. Harvey’s work is supported in part by a grant from WMU’s Cultural Events Committee. Sharon Garber has choreographed a new ballet duet, Entrechat, which also features School of Music musicians: Bradley Wong, clarinet, and Helen Lukan, piano. Carolyn Pavlik has created a new modern dance, It Takes Two, for 10 dancers that portrays the complex nature of relationships within the simplicity of human interactions. Blending various styles and genres of dance as well as drawing inspiration from other great works of fine art, David Curwen’s Working Memory, set to J.S. Bach’s Violin Concerto in A minor, is a sprawling work. The work is organized into three contrasting sections: the first section echoes George Balanchine’s Concerto Barocco; the second section embraces a theatrical context, mixing conceptions of heaven and a girl on a swing; and the third section feeds off the visceral attack of Bach’s music to create a large complex structure of movement and style.

Completing the program, senior dance majors Connor Cornelius, Jesse Hoisington, and Emily Rayburn have had their work selected for the concert. Cornelius’ work, My Hyphen, is an intimate duet illustrating her relationship with her father. Hoisington and Rayburn have both choreographed solo dances. Hoisington’s piece is titled, A Biddable Breed, and Rayburn’s poignant work, Corey’s Promise, examines the rippling effect of a single broken promise.

For ticket information, call the Gilmore Theatre Ticket Office – (269) 387-6222
WMU Dancers in Taiwan and China

In May 2013, the Global Initiatives Grant and Differential Tuition funded Professor Sharon Garber, Associate Professor David Curwen, and 8 WMU dance students to travel to Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) in Taipei, Taiwan; Tsoying High School for the Performing Arts in Kaohsiung, Taiwan; Sichuan University’s JinJiang College in Pan Sheng, China; and Beijing, China. Juniors making the trip were Lucas Beachler, Jalisa Brown, Connor Cornelius, Tessa Cornwall, Julie-Ann Gambino, Julia Krueger, Alex Laya, and Brittny Tesner. Activities included:

- Classes, both taken and observed, in a variety of traditional Chinese dance and movement techniques, such as classical Chinese dance, Kung Fu, Tai Chi Do In, and Chinese folk dance
- Contact with student mentors, translators, and guides
- A performance at TNUA and joint performances with students from Tsoying High and JinJiang College
- Opportunities for a WMU student to teach classes in hip-hop technique at TNUA, Tsoying High School, and JinJiang College
- An opportunity for the WMU students to give feedback and assessment of student choreography at Tsoying High School
- Presentations of research and guest master classes taught by WMU faculty
- Trips to observe a professional dance company in Taiwan: Dance Forum Taipei
- Social events with faculty, administration, Board of Directors, and dance students in Taiwan and China
- Cultural excursion trips in Taipei, Kaohsiung, Chengdu, Pan Sheng, and Beijing

The goal for learning in this project was two-fold. The first goal was to challenge the students to rise physically and artistically to the rigors of different programs. These experiences included master classes and performances, as well as conducting themselves at all times as ambassadors of the department and the university. The second goal was to have an impact on the students’ senior capstone projects, which will include performance, creativity and theory. It was also meant to influence their global perspectives for career goals as they head toward graduation.

The students were exposed to the global nature of the professional dance world through their experiences of watching a professional rehearsal in Taiwan at Dance Forum Taipei. They were also able to feel firsthand the rigors of the training at TNUA as a pre-professional program and consider, perhaps for the first time, a semester of study abroad. They were reminded of the necessity for training in a diversity of styles and the need for dancers to pick up and/or master all forms of dance. They were given three performance opportunities that allowed them to recognize the difficulties and pressures of performing in new, unfamiliar settings. They also learned how travel, touring, and international foods might affect one’s strength and ability to perform consistently at their best.

One of the most powerful learning experiences, hopefully shared by both Eastern and Western students, came directly from the interactions that took place in and out of the studio. While language was always an issue, dance provided a common language that allowed for a more universal connection between the students. Although long-held political differences and mistrust between our two countries exist, as played out on the world stage, the current youth in China were completely fascinated with American culture and our students. They were treated like movie stars, and were often photographed. In this case, being ‘different’ was a very positive experience.
Professor Restages Historical Work on High School Students

Megan Slayter, Assistant Professor in the Department of Dance, has been named as the Cranbrook Schools Bravo Guest Artist for 2013/14. Slayter will work with advanced dancers at Cranbrook/Kingswood in Bloomfield Hills, MI to stage her reconstruction of Loïe Fuller’s work *La Mer*. *La Mer* was originally staged by Fuller in the early 1920s and is her grand interpretation of Claude Debussy’s sweeping musical score by the same title.

In 2011 Slayter and her research partner, Jessica Lindberg Coxe, worked with WMU dance students to reconstruct *La Mer* from historical records obtained through extensive research in library archives in Paris, London, New York, and San Francisco. The work was performed as part of the 2012 Winter Gala Dance Concert. Senior dance student Noelle Price, one of the WMU soloists, accompanied Slayter to assist in the staging of the work on Cranbrook/Kingswood students. It will be performed at Cranbrook’s Lerchen Hall on December 18, 2013 and May 2, 2014.
Spring 2014 Semester

Thu-Sat Jan 30-Feb 1  
Winter Gala Dance Concert, Shaw Theatre, Gilmore Theatre Complex at 8 pm Thu/Fri/Sat and 2 pm on Sat/Sun*

Fri Jan 31  
Great Works Dinner

Fri Mar 21  
Noon Dance Showing, MMR

Thu Mar 27  
Junior Jury Dances, Dance Studio B at 8 pm

Thu-Sun Apr 10-13  
Graduating Presentations in Dance, Dance Studio B at 8 pm Thu/Fri/Sat and 2 pm Sat/Sun

*Indicates there is an admission charge. Dance Studio B is located on the third floor of the Dalton Center

Faculty and Staff

Amy Avery – Part-time Instructor
Jane Baas – Department Chair
Peter Breithaupt – Publicity and Promotions Coordinator
Eugene Chua – Part-time Instructor
David Curwen – Associate Professor
Sharon Garber – Professor
Dorothy Giovanni – Ballet Accompanist Coordinator
Kirsten Harvey – Assistant Professor
Carolyn Koelbel – Modern Accompanist
Helen Lukan – Ballet Accompanist
Jeff Moehle – Modern Accompanist Coordinator
Whitney Moncrief – Assistant Professor
Nina Nelson – Professor
Debra Norton – Part-time Instructor
Carolyn Pavlik – Associate Professor
Patricia Plasko – Education for the Arts
Megan Slayter – Assistant Professor
Stacey Tyler – Office Coordinator
Kathryn Williams – Part-time Instructor

www.wmich.edu/dance