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**CORPS de Ballet International**

**2014 CONFERENCE**  
16th Annual Teacher Conference  
In Pittsburg, Pennsylvania  
Honoring Lifetime Achievement Award  
Recipient Rochelle Zide-Booth



### *Member Updates*

**Sandra Perez** was awarded a grant from the Towson University College of Fine Arts and the Chesapeake Arts Center of Brooklyn Park Maryland. This project entitled *Shapesville: Where You Can Be U, a Community Project with the Chesapeake Arts Center* is based on the Book *Shapesville* ©2003 by Andy Mills and Rebecca Osborn, illustrations by Erica Neitz; used with permission from the publisher, Gurze Books, Carlsbad, CA. *Shapesville* is a delightful children's book that presents the message, "In Shapesville it's doesn't matter what size, shape or color you are because here everyone is a star!" Sandra will be conducting dance and arts integration workshops exploring these issues and will culminate in a depiction and adaptation of the book into a dance for Towson University and Chesapeake Arts Center students. Thanks to this generous funding 15 students will have the opportunity to create and perform dance with a special message.

**Sharon Oberst** choreographed a production of "Pride and Prejudice" for her university this past winter.

The University of California, Irvine is celebrating its 50th anniversary with the "Bright Past, Brilliant Future". The Dance Department was part of one of the original schools, so it too is celebrating 50 years. Professor **Molly Lynch** spearheaded a reconstruction of "Billy the Kid" to honor the Dance Department's founding chair Eugene Loring. The performances were a part of the department's annual Dance Visions production of faculty choreographed works in mid-February. The "Billy the Kid" production was staged by Howard Sayette, former ballet master of Oakland Ballet. The UCI dance students performed the ballet with the UCI Symphony Orchestra playing the Aaron Copland score. It was a wonderful production and a great celebration of the 50th!

**Elizabeth Lowe Ahearn** received a Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award in Choreography last spring. In September she served as a guest artist at Texas A&M and in November premiered a new work for the Goucher Repertory Dance Ensemble titled "Alone, Yet Not Alone." Additionally, she created a work for the Inertia Dance Company titled "Triptych" that premiered in December 2014.

### *Letter from the President ...*

Dear CORPS de Ballet International Member:

Thank you to all who were able to attend last year's 2014 Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was so exciting to see the synergy and energy created by the attendees, presenters, guest artists, panelists, and host. It was truly an exciting and inspirational conference and I hope you will enjoy reading about some of the wonderful events and memories throughout this newsletter. Thank you for your continued support of this organization and for your countless contributions to our field. CORPS de Ballet International is YOUR organization! You are its voice and its future. Therefore, this newsletter is a celebration of our members' achievements and contributions. Bravo!! Thank you for being so instrumental in shaping the future of ballet education. Please remember to log onto our new CORPS de Ballet International website for detailed information concerning our 17th Annual Teacher Conference Building Bridges: Community, Diversity, and Culture which will take place on Tuesday, June 23rd – Saturday, June 27th 2015 in Towson, Maryland. I invite you to join us and engage in an international dialogue about how we, as ballet teachers, choreographers, and mentors, can assist in diversifying the art form at its training level and beyond. I look forward to seeing you there.

With sincere appreciation,

Catherine Horta-Hayden, President

### *In Memoriam.....*

Grant Strate who passed away this year was an early supporter of CORPS de Ballet. <http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2015/02/10/canadian-dance-pioneer-grant-strate-dead-at-87.html>.

He attended our first conference in Toronto and then we honored him with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Some advice that he gave regarding working in a dance program at a university and having to deal with administrators struck a deep chord with me. He said, "Learn the beat, but never dance to their rhythm." I have repeated that mantra to myself many, many times. He was a delightful and insightful man....Sharon Oberst



## *Member Updates Continued...*

**Christine Knoblauch-O'Neal** performed her choreography *Miss Lily* in the faculty concert, *Dance Close-Up*, September 4-6, 2014. She then presented her research for the Performing Arts Department's Colloquium Speaker series "Restaging History: The Work of the Répétiteurs of the Antony Tudor Ballet Trust" on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Christine's choreography *Lugeo* appeared on the Washington University Dance Theatre concert, December 5-7 in which she was also the director. Christine also created a ballet residency for Amanda McKerrow and John Gardner in which they restaged Tudor's *Fandango* (performed in the WUDT concert), taught ballet classes, and participated in movement class for actors, composition class for dancers, an acting class, and a lecture class titled *What is Art?* On March 14<sup>th</sup> her work *Agita* will be performed by Common Thread Dance Company in St. Louis. And most recently, Christine was asked to be a Répétiteur for the Antony Tudor Ballet Trust and will begin learning several of the Tudor ballets for restaging.

University of Akron associate professor, **Cydney Spohn** and Philip Thomson, internationally acclaimed concert pianist and UA music professor, collaborated on *Dancing with Felix*, a new ballet for the University of Akron Dance Company spring concert. Composer Felix Blumenfeld (1863-1931) is the inspiration for the ballet's title and choreography. Blumenfeld was one of the most influential musical figures in Russia, but his work disappeared after his death. This collaboration has brought Blumenfeld's music back to life and on to the dance stage for the April premiere.

As an honorary member of CORPS, **Linda Hamilton** would like to announce her recently updated website for performers offering helpful tips and resources. Most of the dance community knows her through the monthly advice column in *Dance Magazine*. Her goal, as always, is to help reduce occupational stress in this community. You can visit the website at [www.drindahamilton.com](http://www.drindahamilton.com)

**Karen Lynn Smith** was selected as the 2014 Scholar-Artist by the National Dance Association. Her name goes into a list of 36 previous scholar-artists, including Bill Evans, Shirley Ririe, Eileene Lockhart, Gayle Kassing, and Elizabeth Hayes. The first NDA Scholar was selected in 1977. The designation of Scholar was changed in 1995 to include "Artist" in the title, and the first NDA Scholar/Artist was named in 1996. The award recognizes dance professionals who have a scholarly record extending more than 10 years, are currently producing scholarly materials or other creative works, have documented in-depth study of dance, and who are capable of communicating ideas and knowledge to selected arts groups. Over a 45 year tenure as a professor at Washington College, Karen developed the Dance Program, designed and implemented the Dance Minor, and directed the Dance Company. She has choreographed 89 dances in ballet, modern dance, tap, jazz, ballroom, theatrical, and world dance forms and four dances in 16th century court dance; designed and constructed more than 250 costumes for student dance productions, directed and choreographed pieces for 42 dance concerts and choreographed three musicals & two plays for the Washington College Drama Dept., and an opera and 29 Renaissance Christmas Dinners in collaboration with the college Music Department. She has presented hundreds of papers and workshops nationally and internationally and authored a textbook *Popular Dance: From Ballroom to Hip Hop* (2010). Karen also served as Executive Director of the MD Council for Dance for more than 30 years and is currently a Vice President of the International Dance Council/CID-UNESCO.

**Anjali Austin** performed in Port Townsend WA, March 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> as part of the fascinating graduating project that she has been working on for the past year entitled *Emancipating Boundaries*. It is a mixture of visual artists, actors, dancers, and musicians/vocalists.

**Lisa Gibbs** has a new found passion for advocating for the arts in education and in our communities. She is very interested in arts at the public policy level and how such policies are implemented. As such, she was on the planning committee for Alabama Arts Advocacy Day, March 11, 2015. The kickoff event on the evening of March 10 was a performance by Alabama native Donica Knight, an emerging country singer-songwriter. Guest speakers on March 11<sup>th</sup> included Jeff Poulin of Americans for the Arts, Al Head, the executive director of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, and Mike Ball, Alabama state legislator from district 10. After a morning of training and information sharing, they went to the state capitol and met with our legislators to encourage them to fund the arts in Alabama. (This event is modeled after Arts Advocacy Day, an annual event held in Washington, DC, sponsored by Americans for the Arts.) *The arts are an integral part of life. Making and supporting public policy in the arts boosts economic development, increases student achievement, and enhances our communities. Join us in Montgomery to show Alabama's policy makers that the arts matter to the citizens of the state, and to elicit active support for arts funding in all of Alabama's communities."*

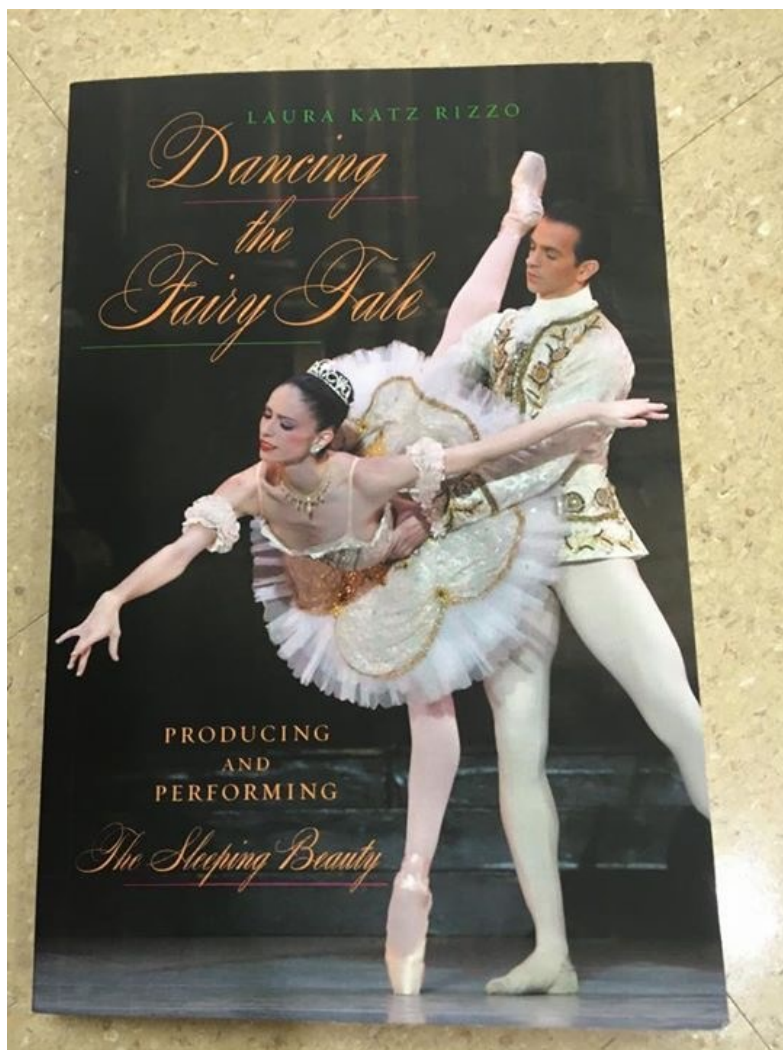
<https://alaaeorg.presencehost.net/arts-advocacy-day.html>

**Laura Katz Rizzo** is thrilled to be a new member of the CORPS de Ballet Board of Directors. This has been a busy academic year for her thus far. In September, she acted as a consultant to Moving History Productions on their television documentary series exploring the work of Women in shaping the culture of Philadelphia. Also in September, she performed a collaborative site specific work entitled, "Paths," created and performed with dancers Jillian Harris and Rhonda Moore and sculptor Sarah Haviland in which the dancers incorporated Haviland's sculpture, "Trio," installed at the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, New Jersey into their choreographic presentation at the annual Outlet Dance Project. In October, Katz conducted a brief residency with the Yale Ballet Company teaching master classes, and made a short guest visit to Mount Holyoke College where she taught a master technique and variations class and gave a brief lecture on "The Sleeping Beauty." That month Katz was also invited to be part of a prestigious panel following the screening of "Ballet 422," at the Philadelphia Film Festival. She also contributed as an absentee presenter to the October 2014, 38th World Congress on Dance Research in Tokyo, Japan.

In November, she was invited by Routledge Publishers to be a member of a panel along with Laura Horton, Global Library Communications Manager from Taylor & Francis, and Linda Wobbe, MLIS, Head of Collection Management from Saint Mary's College of California to contribute to the presentation, "Mobile Access – What the Library Wants: Mobiles as Discovery Enhancers," at the 34th Annual Conference on Serial and Book Acquisition in Charleston, South Carolina. She attended the November, 2014 Conference, Dramatic Architectures, Places of Drama, Drama of Place, at the Escola Superior Artística do Porto, Portugal where she was invited to present her paper, "The Architecture of Space as Embodied in Neo-classical Dance Choreography."

In February, she performed the first iteration of her new choreographic work, "Icarus Vs. Ancaru," at Temple University with colleague Nora Gibson. The piece was received well in the local press, and she has plans underway to work with film-maker Lauren Wolkstein to transform the dance into a short film. In mid February she attended the Festival of Original Theatre at the Centre for Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto, where she delivered a paper on her new research examining the work and life of wrestler/ballet dancer Ricki Starr. She has also been invited by Routledge to contribute a chapter on Starr to the upcoming collected edition of essays entitled, "Wrestling and Performance." Katz is most excited about the publication of her first book, *Dancing the Fairy Tale: Performing and Producing The Sleeping Beauty*, which is currently available. Hopefully all CORPS de Ballet members will consider not only reading and reviewing the book, but also assigning the text for their classes and perhaps bringing Katz to their institutions to discuss the book, and or conduct interdisciplinary master classes and/or workshops based on the research done for that project. She will speak at Pennsylvania Ballet about the project in March. An outgrowth of obtaining rights to photography for this book led to Katz organizing and curating a wonderful event at Temple University's Center for the Arts in April 2015. This event included interdisciplinary student workshops followed by a digital exhibition and lecture presentation/discussion conducted by Paul Kolnik (New York City Ballet's photographer of the past four decades) and 30 year member of NYCB, Kyra Nichols.

In March, Katz gave a paper presentation at the Society of Dance History Scholar's Special Topics Conference at the Peabody Institute, as well as at the Popular Culture Association's National Conference in New Orleans, LA. In addition to her external facing work, Katz is also busy teaching a repertory class facilitating a collaboration between second year dance students and five Jazz composers studying with the world renowned musician Dick Oatts. She is also teaching a graduate seminar in dance pedagogy, and directing the PBFA Program in Dance at Temple University. As part of this work, she attended the NE Regional ACDF where she taught and presented research, as well as attended the YAGP Finals in New York City in April as part of the competition's Dance in Higher Education initiative.







**Patrick Frantz** and his wife, Patricia Davis (ballerina, Pilates trainer/owner) have been hosting groups to Paris for the past 20 years. Whether it is to study dance and dance history in Paris or to experience the culture through photography, French language, or music, their company, L'Hôte de France, has organized trips for student groups to visit the Opéras Garnier and Bastille, the opera theatre and dressage at Versailles, classes at Centre National de Danse, the museums Orsay, Louvre, Bourdel, and Rodin. Frantz and Davis took Tauna Hunter's Mercyhurst dancers (see photo with Anne-Marie Sandrini, sharing her book) and will host Nola Nolen Holland's Slippery Rock University dancers and another group again in the summer 2015. If you are interested in more information for your own trip, please contact them at 818-458-3037 or by email [pdraffy@gmail.com](mailto:pdraffy@gmail.com).

**Tauna Hunter**, Professor and Chair of Dance at Mercyhurst University, is happy to announce the launch of its new BFA program this fall. Hunter traveled to China in August 2014 as part of a delegation to establish cultural exchange with the Liaoning Ballet of Shenyang. In February 2015 a delegation from China joined Mercyhurst Ballet Theatre and SoMar Dance Works in their concert *Beyond Words* presenting solos from *Coppelia*, *Don Quixote* and *Paquita* and partnering Mercyhurst dance majors in *Flower Festival in Ganzano*. Teacher/Choreographer, Wei Wu, taught master classes in ballet technique and worked with Hunter to provide coaching. Wei and Hunter are organizing more collaborations for the next academic year that will include internships and study abroad opportunities on both sides of the pacific. Hunter has spent the majority of her sabbatical leave working on this collaboration. Her faculty has taken to calling "sabbatical leave" a unicorn... "It doesn't really exist".

In January, Hunter traveled with her husband Michael Gleason, daughter Caitlin and eight dance majors to Paris for a study abroad experience that included master classes with Patti Raffy and Anne Marie Sandrini, Alexandre Munz, Patrick Franz, Evelyn Dusutter and Marc du Bouays all formerly of the Paris Opera Ballet. The group toured the Palace Garnier and the Bastille Theatre and attended four performances including the Moulin Rouge and of course saw all of the tourist attractions, enjoyed Parisian cuisine and immersed themselves in the culture. The attack on the *Charlie Hedbo* took place the day they visited Versailles adding an unexpected, but memorable and important historical event to the students education.

### Alexandre Munz.....

The University of Georgia Department of Dance hosted UGA Willson Center for the Humanities and the Arts Visiting Fellow, Alexandre Munz for 15 days in February. Alexandre taught a variety of classes including his SAFE®Floor, SAFE®Barre and Graphysiology methods. Throughout the residency he created an original work, *Defocus* with fourteen UGA dance majors and minors. It debuted in Atlanta, GA on March 7<sup>th</sup> at BalletFest, an annual regional ballet festival that brings dancers from GA and four surrounding states together for a festival of master classes and performances.

The University of Akron (UA) Dance Program hosted guest artist Alexandre Munz from March 12-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. While in residence, Alex taught daily classes in SAFE® Floor, SAFE® Barre, and choreographed a new work, *Youth With Caution*, for the University of Akron Dance Company spring concert premiering April 16 & 17<sup>th</sup>. During the first annual UA Dance Day event on March 13<sup>th</sup>, over sixty prospective dance students and dance educators from Ohio and neighboring states experienced and learned about Alex's somatic techniques and Graphysiology™. We are excited to have had Alex participate in Dance Day and extended this learning opportunity to the dance community!

## Memories from Pittsburg

I had the most terrific time dancing with that fabulous band the last night; it was inspiring and just plain fun. Watching the work of Alexandre Munz as always was a highlight as he so understands the way ballet can be painful and harmful and makes it all become healthy and positive. Then the life time achievement dinner for Chelly was uplifting; she is a model for all of us. I know that these remarks mirror others before me.

All the best..... Gigi Bennahum

What a truly special occasion it was to have Rochelle Zide-Booth as the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award honoree! It was so gratifying to be able to give back to her for sharing her life and legacy with us, and to see her moved as we shared the profound effects of her work on her students and colleagues. CORPS is a great organization in that way—its membership has such personal experience with the joys and challenges of teaching, and the Lifetime Achievement Award is one of the great ways it expresses gratitude and appreciation to those who work tirelessly to pass their knowledge of ballet on to the next generation. Kudos, all!.....Jessica Zeller