

Nouvelles du Ballet

Newsletter of Champaign Urbana Ballet

Ballet's New Partnership with Local Schools



Relevé straight and tall! Carrie Busey Elementary School students learn ballet techniques during P.E.

Thanks to generous donors like you, Champaign Urbana Ballet was able to expand significantly our community outreach efforts in 2006.

Our signature outreach program, **Tickets-for-Kids**, sent 140 local at-risk kids and families to a performance of *The Nutcracker*. Participating schools included Champaign's Carrie

Busey, Westview, Robeson, Southside and Stratton; Urbana's Martin Luther King and Washington Early Childhood; Mahomet's Early Childhood; and Tolono's Unity West Elementary.

CU Ballet's crowning achievement in outreach was our collaboration with Carrie Busey Elementary School.

Carrie Busey obtained a grant from the CU Schools Foundation to add a comprehensive enrichment program to the school curriculum centered around the themes of **ballet** and **The Nutcracker**.

CU Ballet developed an extensive package of enrichment lesson plans on various subjects. An extensive bibliography as well as the CU Ballet's *The Nutcracker* DVDs and audio CDs were included.

To bring this enrichment program to life, outreach specialists and dancers from CU Ballet made several visits to Carrie Busey. The students were treated to demonstrations of a ballet class and stage make-up as well as a sampling of ballet dances. Oohs and aahs were heard as the dancers made quick changes from their leotards into sumptuous and glittering costumes.

Several company dancers posed for gesture drawings and photographs for 4th and 5th grade art classes.

Michelle Ziegler, ballet mistress, along with company dancers provided introductory ballet lessons to all students during Physical Education classes. The students learned that ballet dancers develop athleticism and coordination as well as artistry.

"I enjoyed the performance and the experience was awesome... I don't think I will ever forget it."

Garret V., 4th grader
Carrie Busey School

Costume Shop Opens

Champaign Urbana Ballet moved its costumes and sets from temporary storage facilities into a single facility on West Clark Road in September, 2006. Peter Newman, the landlord, designed the facility especially to store our most precious assets in a manner that will allow them to endure for decades.

Outfitted by Steve Harper, Julie Gelke and others, the space will be dedicated early in 2007 to those who have tirelessly supported CU Ballet through volunteerism. Considered one of the best costume shops in the area, over 500 hand-sewn costumes are housed from wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling. It is quite a gorgeous sight to behold.

Champaign Urbana Ballet will commemorate our 10th Anniversary during the 2007-2008 season.

Watch for special celebration gala events!

From the Artistic Director



Deanna Doty,
Artistic Director

Greetings & happy new year to all! I am proud and excited to see CU Ballet thriving in its 9th season, with a 10-year anniversary on the horizon.

This year, the Ballet has seen the fruits of its 9 year labor in many ways that are highlighted in this newsletter. Also noteworthy is our capacity to stage two entirely new, big classic ballets two years in a row (*Swan Lake* and now *The Sleeping Beauty*), and the additions of physical and administrative structures to support the company in its endeavors.

We are somewhat of an anomaly in the dance world today. Ballet International, Ohio Ballet, and Oakland Ballet have all closed their doors in the past two years; Colorado Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Ballet West are going through periods of instability due to the resignations of their long time artistic directors; and even the Martha Graham Company could only afford a "New York Season" that was one performance long!

Why is CU Ballet thriving when others are folding?

We keep our costs down by depending on volunteer labor. We offer opportunities rather than money. We create an atmosphere that encourages learning, creating, and participat-

ing. People do not join CU Ballet to be a star in the next show, or join its ranks in order to promote their own child. People participate so that all of our families can enjoy this unique and wonderful experience. Without you, my dear dancers, parents, volunteers and sponsors, there is no CU Ballet. So join us today, and together let's create an enduring ballet tradition for our children, our community and our future.

Alumni Updates

Kate Hosier is training at the National Ballet School of Canada. This summer Kate hopes to be selected for NBS' summer exchange program to study at premier ballet schools in Europe such as The Royal Ballet School and Paris Opera Ballet School. In the spring performance, Kate will be dancing a role in *La Sylphide*.

Katie Leigh is studying ballet at North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC. In August 2006, she danced in Burklyn Ballet Theatre's production of *Aladdin* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland.

After attending American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School on full scholarship, **Devon Teuscher** joined the ABT Studio Company, a select company of 12 young dancers of outstanding potential who are handpicked from around the world. Studio Company dancers will train in the program for 1-2 years before joining ABT's main company or other leading national and international professional companies.

A Year of Firsts & Bests: 2006 Highlights

May 2006

Artistic director Deanna Doty presented a full-length *Swan Lake* at Parkland College Theatre to our biggest-ever spring audience of over 950, and we broke even on our spring show for the first time in CU Ballet history.

July 2006

CU Ballet officially hired Michelle Ziegler as company manager. Michelle's responsibilities will ensure that our organization communicates effectively with constituents and local arts groups, increasing awareness and our stature in the community.

August 2006

CU Ballet hosted its most successful fundraising event yet, *Soirée du Ballet: Inspired by the Muses*, with a Grecian theme and the most lively auction in town. Soirée attendees delighted in the Mediterranean delicacies and a short ballet performance by company dancers.

September 2006

CU Ballet instituted the first ever company member scholarship paying half tuition for a company dancer's ballet training for one year. The inaugural recipient was Claire Daly.

A Homegrown Nutcracker

Over two weekends in December, a cast of 100 and Sinfonia da Camera presented *The Nutcracker* to 4,322 audience members at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts – our biggest audience ever.

This year's production marked a special milestone for CU Ballet. Whereas previous productions had brought in guest artists, all the dancers including those in the principal roles – Claire Daly as Clara, Mason Anders as the Nutcracker Prince, and Michelle Ziegler

as the Sugar Plum Fairy – were trained by Deanna Doty, the company artistic director.

The audience delighted in many new set pieces by Andy Warfel, including a mirrored dais from which Clara and the Prince enjoy the Act II divertissement and unique hanging lights for Act II that elegantly complemented the delightful staging by Deanna Doty and Michelle Ziegler.

The beauty of the production was also enhanced by many new costumes that were

hand-sewn by a team under the guidance of the company costume mistress, Julie Gelke.

These new assets for *The Nutcracker* production were made possible by the generous donations of our business partners and individual donors, grants from the Illinois Arts Council, as well as countless hours of volunteer efforts by our passionate corps of volunteers. It is truly a community effort.

CU Ballet's *The Nutcracker* is fast becoming a valued holiday tradition for central Illinois. A glowing review in the *News-Gazette* exclaimed, "This should be the hottest ticket of the holiday season."



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Enriching & Inspiring the Community since 1998



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Be Enchanted by *The Sleeping Beauty*



*Felled by a curse,
awakened by a kiss...*

Considered the most beautiful of Tchaikovsky's works, *The Sleeping Beauty* is an enchanting fairy tale ballet that will showcase the great artistry of CU Ballet's dancers and designers. The May 2007 production, sponsored by Carle Foundation Hospital and Carle Clinic and Champaign Ballet Academy, will include classical chore-

ography, costumes, and scenery currently under construction by our talented volunteers and artistic staff.

Although the princess falls asleep in Act I, audiences certainly won't! This fairy tale ballet follows the well-known story of Princess Aurora - blessed by the Lilac Fairy, felled by the curse of the wicked Carabosse, and saved by true love's first kiss from the dashing Prince Désiré. The enchanting story comes to life vibrantly through the characters' dancing.

Deanna Doty envisions moments of overwhelming splendor onstage, with costumes and staging that pay tribute to the voluptuousness of the

music and the ballet's choreographic roots. Says Doty, "*The Sleeping Beauty* is one of the great ballets. I'm delighted that our company is in a position to mount it classically and beautifully. The dancers are especially excited and well prepared."

A new Saturday children's matinee with an abbreviated program that 4-7 year olds can enjoy with their parents will complement full performances of the grand ballet **May 18-20**.

Find more information about *The Sleeping Beauty* on our website at www.cuballet.com. Online ticket sales coming soon.