spreading roots

By Jan Erkert, Head, Dance at Illinois

Philip Johnston, Linda Lehovec, Jennifer Monson, the research of our impressive scholar/artists Sara Hook, rather, the community is the curriculum.” In this model Community as Curriculum, “…the community is not itself in a horizontal dimension with no discernable center.

The faculty is developing a new approach to the curriculum that posits the dance artist/leader as central to our mission. Curriculums for the new millennium must respond to our ever-changing world where the Internet is a horizontal image to guide us. French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari used the metaphor of a rhizome, a plant that spreads itself in a horizontal dimension with no discernable center. It is a plant that posits the dance artist/leader as central to our mission. Curriculums for the new millennium must respond to our ever-changing world where the Internet is a horizontal image to guide us.

This theory has been further developed by Dave Cormier, who states in his article, Rhizomatic Education:

‘…detachable, connectable, reversible, and modifiable.’

In November Dance we will practice our abilities to be temporary culture they have begun to question not only the traditional way in which dance is produced, but also the way in which audiences see dance. To this end the Departments of Dance and Theater will collaborate to produce the completely revised premiere of The Hip Hop Project described as “a high-octane theatrical experience that insight the hip-hop nation using music, dance, and spoken word.” Providing cultural context for our students, this show will be choreographed by nationally renowned hip-hop artist Millicent Johnnie.”

Graduate students and faculty will create new works as we explore circular patterns of mentoring and learning. A screen dance festival premiering dances generated on local laptops will be shown in the lobby.

The Department of Dance received an American Masterpiece Grant from Dance USA and The National Endowment for the Arts to imagine a new collaborative project titled Trisha Brown. The Hip-Hop Project is the project director of a team of artists, which includes dance artist Archibald and Millicent Johnnie shared their own ideas and collaborations.

“…| the faculty worked along-side the technical staff at the Krannert Center to understand our traditional expectations of experiences in theatrical settings. The audience took a guided tour through the underbelly of Krannert encountering dances in hallways and settings.

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In all these projects we look forward to spreading our roots in strange and unexpected places.
The College of Fine and Applied Arts has been discussing the idea of shared resources, sustainable practices and collaboration as core values. In this spirit, David Chasco, Director of the School of Architecture, generously offered Dance the use of the second floor of an old, underused building belonging to Architecture. This year we began Phase I of the project, which was to create a dance studio dedicated to graduate student research. In the process we began working with Architecture Professors Roger Hubeli and Julie Larsen to create a flexible, floating studio out of sustainable materials. Student architects and dancers discussed the nature of a creative space and studied theoretical constructs to guide the design process. The students not only designed, but also built a floating studio out of a basketball court floor, which had been ripped out of a campus gymnasium and was destined for a landfill. The concept of the floating studio allows dancers to utilize the space while we seek larger funding to bring the entire building up to LEED certified standards.

We recently received a grant from the campus Student Sustainability Committee to complete Phase II, which will be the creation of a second floating studio and graduate offices. We look forward to a grand opening of the first studio in the Graduate Dance Center in the Fall of 2009. The creation of the Graduate Dance Center will allow us to truly meet the mission of our MFA program to foster substantive choreographic research that posits dance as a force in contemporary culture.

By Jan Erkert, Head, Dance at Illinois

the new graduate dance center

In the Fall of 2009, Olivia Award-winning actor and two time Bessie Award-winning director Laurie Carlos was in residence in the Departments of Dance and Theatre. This residency, made possible by support from the George A. Miller Visiting Professors and Scholars Fund from The Center for Advanced Study, left a lasting impact on all the students and faculty involved.

What do you know? What's your experience? How do you use it in your work?

Every day for three months, Laurie Carlos asked the same questions to her ensemble. Carlos worked with a motley group of University of Illinois Theater and Dance majors, challenging them to break down forms of resistance and to stay present in their work during rehearsals. Unlike typical theatrical productions, MAPLight was not end-focused. Carlos created a process-based work indicative of the ensemble's overall journey.

Carlos began each rehearsal by checking in with each ensemble member for twenty minutes. This ritual built a communal trust and helped to establish “what was in the room.” Carlos then selected individuals to hand-select a group to work with for the evening. A firm believer in satisfying personal desires as an artist, Carlos encouraged ensemble members to get what they wanted out of every rehearsal. Small groups were given twenty minutes to discuss how to incorporate the night’s prominent themes into a presentation. Carlos varied the amount of direction she gave to groups and presented guidelines with an air of malleability. Requirements such as contact improvisation, text from a script, cinematic themes and a repertory of songs were cited by Carlos to inform performances. The ensemble worked with musician Jason Finkelman to further develop their musical repertory.

In early December, the cast performed a show that can be best described as a snapshot. It featured some of the best work, as selected by Carlos and the ensemble, which had come out of their rehearsal process. The show’s progression was not cemented until the night before it opened. Luckily, by then Carlos had crafted a group of individuals who knew how to live in the present moment and go with the flow.

reactions on MAPLight

By Eline Schummert, Arts 2012

In the Fall of 2009, Olivia Award-winning actor and two time Bessie Award-winning director Laurie Carlos was in residence in the Departments of Dance and Theatre. This residency, made possible by support from the George A. Miller Visiting Professors and Scholars Fund from The Center for Advanced Study, left a lasting impact on all the students and faculty involved.
What style of yoga do you study? What drew you to this style? I have done several years of study at the BKS Iyengar Yoga Institute of Champaign. I responded to an ad in a yoga magazine that ended up being a really great beginning to my yoga journey. I then completed the certification in Spring 2010. I started practicing yoga at the Iyengar Yoga Institute of Champaign, where I took classes for several years. I was drawn to the Iyengar style because it is so mindful and intentional in the way it teaches. Iyengar yoga is a style that focuses on the alignment of the body and the precision of the movements, which is something that I find really appealing. I also really appreciate an Iyengar approach that allows me to refine my thoughts about myself and the ways in which I move. In addition, Iyengar yoga is very comprehensive, covering many different aspects of the practice, including anatomy, meditation, and philosophy. This aspect of the practice is incredibly valuable and clear.

What is involved with the certification? A yearlong study broken into 3-month pieces. We have assignments based on our study due every month and a quarterly exam every 3 months. I’ll eventually attend 3, 4-day retreats to get my certification which includes 250 hours of hatha yoga instruction. What is the certification? Why this particular organization? I’ve used this concept for many years in teaching dance, but yoga has allowed me to refine my thoughts about myself and the ways in which I move. In addition, Iyengar yoga is very comprehensive, covering many different aspects of the practice, including anatomy, meditation, and philosophy. This aspect of the practice is incredibly valuable and clear.

What principles overlap with your technique teaching? If you’re looking for ways of understanding your body, opening your body, or strengthening your body, it’s a practice that helps you figure out what you need to do to keep your body healthy as you go about your day for a long time. So many it’s hard to name, but I think one of the concepts that has had the most significant impact on my teaching is that proper alignment can be found using the bony structures, using only the muscles needed to maintain that alignment, as well as through the use of the breath. Releasing excess muscle allows the body to move more efficiently with fluidity and ease. What do you feel your yoga certification brings to Dance at Illinois? It’s totally changed my body. I am continually finding connections that I never thought about before—for example, finding the strength in the back of my torso and keeping the front open and soft, while simultaneously keeping breath in the back of the body/ribcage. I use this concept for many years in teaching dance, but yoga has allowed me to refine my thoughts about moving efficiently and easily, and give a language to use. What are some of the things that you have learned from your yoga practice that you incorporate into your teaching? I have learned a lot from my yoga practice that I incorporate into my teaching. For example, I have learned to be more mindful of my breathing and to use the breath as a tool to help me focus and ground myself. I have also learned to be more present in the moment and to be more receptive to the feedback that I receive from my students.

What does your practice affect your dancing? It’s changed my body in a way that I can take out into their lives. It’s a body practice that you can do anywhere, even when you have no money to spend on classes! It’s a great field connected to dance and other forms of body practice that helps you figure out what you need to do to keep your body healthy so you can dance for a long time. I’ve used this concept for many years in teaching dance, but yoga has allowed me to refine my thoughts about myself and the ways in which I move. In addition, Iyengar yoga is very comprehensive, covering many different aspects of the practice, including anatomy, meditation, and philosophy. This aspect of the practice is incredibly valuable and clear.

What are some of the things that you have learned from your yoga practice that you incorporate into your teaching? I have learned a lot from my yoga practice that I incorporate into my teaching. For example, I have learned to be more mindful of my breathing and to use the breath as a tool to help me focus and ground myself. I have also learned to be more present in the moment and to be more receptive to the feedback that I receive from my students.
Recognize center and go from there.

November 2009-2010 performance calendar

November
12–14 / November Dance: SFX

February
4–6 / February Dance

March
11–13 / StudioDance I

April
22–24 / StudioDance II

dance at illinois

Kyli Kleven in Jennifer Allen's The Summer of Mt. Redoubt
Christine Betsill, Maggie Phillips, and Carolyn Barry in Jan Erkert's Sensual Spaces
Jessica Cornish in Young-Sun Lee's Afternoon Illusion
Heather Smith, Renay Aumiller, and Nicholas Wagner in Linda Lehovec's Pass the Goddam Butter

Jayniece Carter, Kim McCarthy, and Aaron White in Paul Singh's Trigger
Dan Merlo, Photographer

Daniel R. James, Photographer

Dan Merlo, Photographer

Jayniece Carter, Kim McCarthy, and Aaron White in Paul Singh's Trigger

Dan Merlo, Photographer
creativity in all our endeavors. Let’s investigate the nature of creativity and to nurture our outstanding collection of disciplines, but we aspire to be the most innovative comprehensive college of arts in the world. We are a leader in building on a tradition of excellence in all of the arts. On behalf of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, I want to congratulate edge art that they produce.

**Applications, the Illinois Water Survey, and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications**

On behalf of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, I want to congratulate the Department of Dance on its many successes this year, including November's ReImagining the Proscenium and February's White Out.

The Department of Dance contributes greatly to these aspirations by exploring new definitions of dance, new ways of thinking and making, and new disciplinary combinations with other units as the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, the Illinois Water Survey, and the School of Architecture. I hope you enjoy reading about these collaborations and the cutting-edge art that they produce.

**faculty highlights**

- Tera O'Connor Dance performed Forum Earth at the Symbiosis Arts Center in NYC, California, and Texas.
- Monroe presented at the Planet U Conference in Illinois, lead workshops of Monst in Chicago and taught Alexander Technique to Linda Monroe about Linda Monroe’s certification on page 11.
- Hook presented Solid Days, a full evening of her work, in Cambridge, MA, and adjudicated ACDFA (Read more on page 11).
- Oliver performed with Baba Miller Company in Ohio, Illinois, and Montana.
- Walkley produced 2 Days of Dance at the Five Points Theater in Chicago.
- Traeger's interactive art installation Flying Poppies opened at the Festival of India in New York City and he presented his research Soundbite Surfing and Natural Navigators at EAEA (Emergency Abstract Art) in Florida and Pennsylvania, respectively.
- Johnson choreographed a film for the walk with Nicole Roush in Illinois, Kentucky, and Belgium.
- Ekelet was a guest artist at the Rain Woodbury summer workshop in Utah, Columbia College in Chicago, and Colorado College.
- Simmon performed at California, Chicago, Taiwan and Cambodia and taught in Water, UK, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands (Read more about his MFA's visit to Taiwan and Cambodia on page 11).

**future plans**

BFA class of 2009

It was an exciting year for the Senior class—performing in a variety of venues, inspired students, and garden plot in addition to performances in the Krannert Center while simultaneously rehearsing, choreographing, and producing four different Senior Concerts. Now the real fun begins for the class of 2009 as they head off to New York City, Chicago, Massachusetts and beyond. In addition to dancing and choreographing, several graduates have expressed interest in graduate school for kinesiology and physical therapy or getting certified in personal training and yoga. Other graduates will be using their teaching skills in public and private settings. We wish them the best of luck.

**MFA class of 2009**

Renay Aufrut and Laura Chiaromonte traveled to Taiwan, Cambodia, and this fall with Assistant Professor Kirstie Simson where they taught workshops and performed in this community.

After their trip Renay Aufrut moved to Chicago to continue her investigations in performance and choreography and will be joining the faculty at Beloit College as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the fall.

Laura Chiaromonte will be making a small film documentary about her summer travels and plans on producing a teaching and choreography in Chicago’s CompTia in Spring 2010. Upon her arrival back to the US, Laura plans on returning to the artist community in Chicago to continue teaching workshops, choreographing and performing.

Angeline Holmes will be moving to New York City in the fall where she will continue her Alexander training. She will also be working for FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) conducting campus outreach. In New York University. Holmes plans to continue applying her training in teaching hip-hop and contemporary dance, furthering her development as a choreographer, and working with an eye on discovering the natural abilities of children through dance.

Kirstie Simons brings Dance to Illinois at Taiwan and Cambodia

This June, Assistant Professor Kirstie Simson traveled with recent MFA graduates Renay Aufrut and Laura Chiaromonte to Taiwan and Cambodia. The goal of the trip was to carry a message of peace and caring through an exchange of art and culture.

During their time in Taiwan they taught classes for the Taipei Dance Community and performed at the Taipei Artist Village, an artist residency center. They also had the opportunity to choreograph with a tai chi master who is over 90 years old.

In Cambodia, they visited An Chom Pond’s school, Cambodian Living Arts World Education, to work with the masters and students at his school and children in the community. An Chom Pond works for Amnisty International and is a spokesperson for peace that gave lectures around the world. They also taught workshops in Southern Cambodia at a center for Cambodian dancers who were injured in accidents involving mines. These documented their journey in order to share it with colleagues and peers in the US. To find out more about their trip, they turned to a film documentary by Laura Chiaromonte.

**A Message from Dean Robert Graves**

On behalf of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, I want to congratulate the Department of Dance on its many successes this year, including November’s ReImagining the Proscenium and February’s White Out.

Building on a tradition of excellence in all of its units, the College of Fine and Applied Arts aspires to be the most innovative comprehensive college of arts in the world. We are a leader in arts and arts education not only because of our outstanding collection of disciplines, but we also harness our combined potential to inves- tigate the nature of creativity and to nurture creativity in all our endeavors.

The Department of Dance contributes greatly to these aspirations by exploring new definitions of dance, new ways of thinking and making, and new disciplinary combinations with other units as the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, the Illinois Water Survey, and the School of Architecture. I hope you enjoy reading about these collaborations and the cutting-edge art that they produce.

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ARTISTS/LEADERS. JOIN THE EXCITEMENT AND PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE. PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING
thank you for supporting the department of dance!

production/enrichment fund
An unrestricted fund established for innovative pro-
degnment and departmental needs such as the
fund on your check, made payable to the
of Dance, and mail to UIF, P.O. Box 3429,

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dance department scholarship fund
This fund provides scholarships for students to participate in
in workshops around the world that can be

grants scholars an opportunity to study at one of the
world's largest contemporary dance festivals, ImPulsTanz

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08-09 student scholarship recipients
Vera L. Sherly Memorial Scholarship (Est. 1994)

moe family dance award (est. 1994)

beverly blossom and carey erickson alumni award (est. 2007)

undergraduate excellence

graduate excellence

undergraduate above and beyond award

graduate above and beyond award

scholarships impact students’ lives

The summer of 2008 was the most significant of my life. I was offered the opportunity to study abroad in Senegal and

potential powerhouse award

department awards

summer study scholarship

thomas m. newell prize for student choreography (est. 2002)

hope goldman

award for outstanding student choreography

patricia knowles graduate travel award (est. 2006)

for students to participate in
to teach, perform, and choreograph. This fund enables students to make valuable
careers and is open to contributions at any time through the
University of Illinois Foundation.

To make a gift, please designate the desired
fund on your check, made payable to the
University of Illinois Foundation.

For information about how
to donate please visit us at
dance.illinois.edu/support-dance-at-illinois/how-to-donate

thank you for supporting the department of dance!
dance at illinois in residence at franklin middle school

Students enrolled in this year’s Teaching Workshop class had the unique experience of teaching at Franklin Middle School in Champaign. Under the direction and mentorship of Jan Erkert, Department Head, students learned about technical aspects of teaching dance and, although it took a few classes, the Franklin students opened up and showed us their dancing personalities. It was exciting to see the students applying what they know is interested in the Summer Intensive and combinations.

In their first class plan, basic knowledge of anatomy and kinesiology, giving corrections, and creating dance exercises and combinations.

Confidence was one of our main objectives for the students and, although it took a few classes, the Franklin students opened up and showed us their dancing personalities. It was exciting to see the students applying what they know is interested in the Summer Intensive and combinations.

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