dance at illinois
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
College of Fine & Applied Arts
Synesthesia is a confluence of senses used to create new meaning. As students study contemporary technique, improvisation, anatomy, history, making dances, pursue minors in dance studies, anthropology, and biology, or bungee jump in Africa as part of study abroad, I wonder who is going to pull together what thread to make sense of this barrage of information and experience?

Our community has been collectively exploring domains of knowing—reflection, context, inquiry, agency, synthesis—through open approaches to becoming data as artists, teachers, and writers. Arise bold deep into synthesis—the moment when one makes sense of all the overlapping threads—it is emerging as a profound outcome of this cacophony of experiences. Professors and associate Diane Ackerman describes synthesis as “a garment of perception...woven together idea by idea.”

In this year’s Pivot, our articles focus on the synthesis activities of our faculty and students. Professor Rebecca Nettl-Fiol, graduate student Carinna Choea, and alumna Paige Cunningham all have unique, integrative approaches to teaching technique and we delight in the unexpected directions of students who are exploring performance, art, and architecture.

Connecting the pages are quotes from students who were asked by Professor Jennfer Monson to meditate about the confluence of technique, life, and freedom—a tapestry undergraduate Aaron White cafe “…living out loud.”

Looking back 2010–2011

We opened the year with a celebration of a new Graduate Dance Center dedicated to graduate research with 5,000 square feet of viewing/work/live/play space designed and built by students and faculty from the School of Architecture. Our space has two studios with integrated viewings/workspaces and a lounge.

Guest Articles

Intensive immersion deepens an experience and overloads the senses. Filmmaker Alla Kovgan was in residence in conjunction with dancer/collaborator Nora Chipaumire. Our students studied cinedance from morning to night, created short dance films, and enjoyed an intimate performance by Nora Chipaumire in the Krannert Art Museum gallery.

USA Central

In 2010–11 we celebrated the range and quality of artists who have chosen the landscape and culture of our country’s center as a place to make work. Faculty members Linda Lehovec and Renee Wadleigh participated in faculty exchanges, which brought to our campus Carl Flink, Department Chair at Minnesota and former dancer with the Limon Company; and Paige Cunningham, Assistant Professor at Columbia University and former dancer with Merce Cunningham (no relation)! Each artist created work at his/her respective school creating an explosion of dancing in our Midwest corridor.

Looking forward 2011–2012

Next year we will deepen our exploration of technique and performance with four diverse artists: Tracy Lang will be our Beverly Blossom and Carey Erickson Alumni Dance Award artist. Tracy is an Assistant Professor at Spelman College and will create a big, bold work for November Dance, which will celebrate American composers in collaboration with the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music.

Israeli artist Sahar Azimi will be in residence for Spring 2012 through the generous support of the Foundation for Jewish Culture. Sahar danced with the Batsheva Dance Company and is the Artistic Director of the Sahar Azimi Company. He will teach contemporary modern and ballet, incorporating principles from Gaga Naharin, improvisation, yoga, and Feldenkrais, and explore new directions in choreography.

Another immersive experience is in the works for Spring 2012 when radical political artist and pied piper of dance, Miguel Gutierrez, joins our community funded by a Miller Visiting Artist Grant. Highlights include Ineffable Intangible Sensational, a daily three-hour workshop; DEEP Aerobics, a large-scale bacchanal at the recreation center; and a performance of his expressionistic solo “Heavens What Have I Done” at Krannert Art Museum.

With an MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA in African American Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies, guest artist Ni’ja Whitson is the embodiment of a synthesis artist. She will be teaching hip-hop and capoeira and creating a new work for our Lecture Demonstration series.

by Jan Allin, Head, Dance at Illinois

I can say I know my body, I know that I have this internal voice telling me that I am unique.

Diane Ackerman, Memory's War: The Story of Alzheimer's Disease

2010-2011 Pivot, “Diane Ackerman’s Memory’s War: The Story of Alzheimer’s Disease.”

i can say i know my body. i know that i have this internal voice telling me that i am unique.

Diane Ackerman, Memory’s War: The Story of Alzheimer’s Disease

2010-2011 Pivot, “Diane Ackerman’s Memory’s War: The Story of Alzheimer’s Disease.”

i can say i know my body. i know that i have this internal voice telling me that i am unique.

Diane Ackerman, Memory’s War: The Story of Alzheimer’s Disease

2010-2011 Pivot, “Diane Ackerman’s Memory’s War: The Story of Alzheimer’s Disease.”

i can say i know my body. i know that i have this internal voice telling me that i am unique.

Diane Ackerman, Memory’s War: The Story of Alzheimer’s Disease

2010-2011 Pivot, “Diane Ackerman’s Memory’s War: The Story of Alzheimer’s Disease.”

i can say i know my body. i know that i have this internal voice telling me that i am unique.
For more than twenty years, Dance at Illinois has been offering courses in various somatic practices. This year we continued the tradition by offering Feldenkrais and Alexander Technique, which were taught by graduate student Catrina Choate-Heretoiu and Rebecca Neil-Foti, respectively. Although these approaches vary in practice and grounding principles, they share similar goals—increased awareness and movement efficiency. Catrina and Rebecca give us a brief introduction to their research and engagement with daily life.

**CATRINA CHODATE-HERETOIU**

My research involves integrating Feldenkrais concepts into ballet pedagogy. In my experience that ballet does not need to be a rigid form of kinesthetic discipline but rather, it can be an internal investigation that merges feeling, sensation, thought, and action into one holistic movement technique. I want to help dancers to be adaptable, offer mind/body/brain stimulation through dance so they may have a heightened experience of self while dancing, which hopefully will also affect their engagement with daily life.

**REBECCA NEIL-FOTI**

Influencing and integrating Alexander-T Technique principles into my dance classes, I have been a focus of mine for the past 20 years. How to bridge the gap between the clearly directed learning and subtle changes that occur during private Alexander lessons, to the full-blown physical movements that happen in a dance class, is often a quandary in bringing somatic practices into the dance technique setting. I have found featuring developmental movement as a lens for illuminating the Alexander principles and providing a link to the Alexander Technique that makes sense to dancers.

My teaching and point of view are always profoundly affected by Alexander principles, but the degree to which I choose to focus on them in technique classes varies according to the level, interests, and needs of the students. Described as a technique underlying all other techniques, the principles can be used to enhance one’s dexterity as a mover in all styles of choreography. Learning how to use one’s own body in an ultimately more valuable than learning specific skills.

In bringing Alexander principles into the dance class, it is important to me that the focus is ultimately on dancing. On maintaining the integrity of the choreographic intent or movement style. I want to help dancers to be adaptable, understand efficiency and articulation, and to access a range of dynamics. Through teaching the Alexander concepts, I hope to offer dancers choice over habit.
Amanda Gross (BFA '11) in Cynthia Oliver’s “WeMe YouMe MeMe NoMe.” Engaged in a continuous choreographic and theoretical context. dwelling. highlights of student interdisciplinary ventures. awareness. context. dwelling. awareness. awareness. awareness. context. dwelling. movement. everywhere. a dance journey in southern africa: everywhere but the studio.
dance at illinois

LOCATE CENTER AND GO FROM THERE

Katherine Roarty (BFA ’10)

“to go further, to discover, to prove you are beating at this moment with this heart.”

2011–2012

November

10–12 / November Dance

February

2–4 / February Dance

March

8–10 / StudioDance I

April

19–21 / StudioDance II

From top left: Sarah Haas (MFA ’11); Katherine Hamilton in Ercelyne McCoy’s “Color Me Wild”; Laura Brosch (BFA ’12) in Sarah Haas’s MFA Thesis Work; Mark Deler (BFA ’11) in Carl Fink’s “The Bleeding Heart”; Megan Murphy (BFA ’11) and Chad Miller (BFA ’12) in Hallie Aldrich’s “Basic Plumage.”

Opposite: Monica Remes (BFA ’12) and Wedee Kao (BFA ’11) in Carl Fink’s “The Bleeding Heart.”

to go further, to discover, to prove you are beating at this moment with this heart.

KATHERINE ROBERTY (BFA ’10)

"to go further, to discover, to prove you are beating at this moment with this heart."

KATHERINE ROBERTY (BFA ’10)
facultly highlights

• Jan Eckert served on the Rubik’s Cube Award Dance panel in New York City and authored an article on the Rubik’s Cube algorithm in *Computer Science Review,* 2011.

• Nadia Ezzeddine was named State Representative of the 2011 American College Dance Association National Congress in Orlando, Florida, and the International Congress of Qualitative Research in Istanbul, Turkey.

• Sara Hack’s work was performed during her second year at the Minnesota Fringe Festival and at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The work was also performed during the Dance Festival at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities in Minneapolis. Her work was published in late 2010.

• Rhymes to Get Kids Moving, *Excellence in Service for her leadership of the BFA Program. She also received the Faculty Award for her work in SIP (sustained immersive process)/watershed in various programs.

Jennifer Monson was invited to work with two companies—International Performing Arts Training Today in Leibnitz, Austria, the Academic Chairperson’s Conference in Arizona, and the National Dance Education Organization Conference in Arizona. Her work was performed in Champaign, Virginia, New York City, and beyond to begin working in various capacities within the dance field.

student/alumni accomplishments

• Cathy Young (BFA '10) was recently named Director of the Moving Image Program at Columbia College Chicago.

• Issi Warfel (BFA '11) is the Chair of the Department of Dance at Illinois and performed alongside several students in the DoCha Mobile Performance Dwelling.

Jennifer Monson was named a James Marsh Professor at the University of Michigan and showed her most recent work was performed by alumna Denise Posnak (MFA '06) at the Minneapolis Fringe Festival and at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities in Minneapolis. Her work was published in late 2010.

• Rebecca Nettl-Fiol’s new book, *Dance and the Alexander Technique* (Alwin Alemany Press), was published in June 2011. She was a guest speaker at the Alexander Technique Conference, presented Alexander Technique workshops in NYC, Bryn Mawr, and sponsored a presentation at the National Dance Education Organization Conference in Arizona.

• Kirstie Simson (MFA '11) was featured in *Dance Magazine*, May 2011, as an up-and-coming young choreographer.

• Isabelle Collazo (MFA '10) has been featured in numerous journals and on journal articles, and performed alongside several students in the DoCha Mobile Performance Dwelling. Her work was performed by alumna Elizabeth Johnson (MFA '03) at the Minneapolis Fringe Festival and at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities in Minneapolis. Her work was published in late 2010.

BFA class of 2011

Congratulations to the BFA class of 2011, who had a remarkable year. Their thesis concert series “Good Vibrations,” comprised of over 20 works, and their performing of Paige Cunningham’s work showed their long process of reflection, rigor, and embodiment. We wish them all the luck as they travel to dance festivals in Europe, attend graduate school for occupational therapy, intern at Jacob’s Pillow in Massachusetts, attend New York University for an MFA in Dance, volunteer in New Delhi, India; attend American Dance Festival in North Carolina, and move to Chicago, New York City, and beyond to begin working in various capacities within the dance field.

MFA class of 2011

This year’s MFA thesis work excavated gender, gender identity, neo-burlesque camp, surrealism, landscape, and performance for camera. We wish the MFA class of 2011 the best of luck as they collaborate with scholars on journal articles, work as visiting lecturers at universities, perform at universities, perform at Universities, perform at universities, and tour the United States in a sustainable mobile performance dwelling.

Up next: student/alumni accomplishments

• Rebecca Nettl-Fiol’s new book, *Dance and the Alexander Technique* (Alwin Alemany Press), was published in June 2011. She was a guest speaker at the Alexander Technique Conference, presented Alexander Technique workshops in NYC, Bryn Mawr, and sponsored a presentation at the National Dance Education Organization Conference in Arizona.

• Kirstie Simson (MFA '11) was featured in *Dance Magazine*, May 2011, as an up-and-coming young choreographer.

• Isabelle Collazo (MFA '10) has been featured in numerous journals and on journal articles, and performed alongside several students in the DoCha Mobile Performance Dwelling. Her work was performed by alumna Elizabeth Johnson (MFA '03) at the Minneapolis Fringe Festival and at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities in Minneapolis. Her work was published in late 2010.

BFA class of 2011

Congratulations to the BFA class of 2011, who had a remarkable year. Their thesis concert series “Good Vibrations,” comprised of over 20 works, and their performing of Paige Cunningham’s work showed their long process of reflection, rigor, and embodiment. We wish them all the luck as they travel to dance festivals in Europe, attend graduate school for occupational therapy, intern at Jacob’s Pillow in Massachusetts, attend New York University for an MFA in Dance, volunteer in New Delhi, India; attend American Dance Festival in North Carolina, and move to Chicago, New York City, and beyond to begin working in various capacities within the dance field.

MFA class of 2011

This year’s MFA thesis work excavated gender, gender identity, neo-burlesque camp, surrealism, landscape, and performance for camera. We wish the MFA class of 2011 the best of luck as they collaborate with scholars on journal articles, work as visiting lecturers at universities, perform at Universities, perform at Universities, perform at universities, and tour the United States in a sustainable mobile performance dwelling.
Dance at Illinois is an ERC for the development of the dance artist/leader. Join the excitement and play a pivotal role. Please consider giving a gift, big or small, to support and elevate our programming.

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank all dance contributors. We are profoundly grateful—we couldn’t do it without you! Listed to the right are donors to the Department of Dance from January 1, 2009, through May 23, 2011. We realize there may be mistakes or omissions from this list. We apologize and invite you to contact us regarding corrections on (237) 310-100.

To make a gift, please designate the desired fund on your check, made payable to the University of Illinois. For information about how to donate your check, please visit us at dance.illinois.edu/support-dance-at-illinois/how-to-donate

For information about how to donate online 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 IS AN ERC FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANCE ARTIST/LEADER. JOIN THE EXCITEMENT AND PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE. PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING A GIFT, BIG OR SMALL, TO SUPPORT AND ELEVATE OUR PROGRAMMING.

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank all dance contributors. We are profoundly grateful—we couldn’t do it without you! Listed to the right are donors to the Department of Dance from January 1, 2009, through May 23, 2011. We realize there may be mistakes or omissions from this list. We apologize and invite you to contact us regarding corrections on (237) 310-100.

To make a gift, please designate the desired fund on your check, made payable to the University of Illinois Foundation/Department of Dance, and mail to UIP, P.O. Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.

For information about how to donate online 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 IS AN ERC FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANCE ARTIST/LEADER. JOIN THE EXCITEMENT AND PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE. PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING A GIFT, BIG OR SMALL, TO SUPPORT AND ELEVATE OUR PROGRAMMING.

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank all dance contributors. We are profoundly grateful—we couldn’t do it without you! Listed to the right are donors to the Department of Dance from January 1, 2009, through May 23, 2011. We realize there may be mistakes or omissions from this list. We apologize and invite you to contact us regarding corrections on (237) 310-100.

To make a gift, please designate the desired fund on your check, made payable to the University of Illinois Foundation/Department of Dance, and mail to UIP, P.O. Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.

For information about how to donate online 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 IS AN ERC FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANCE ARTIST/LEADER. JOIN THE EXCITEMENT AND PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE. PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING A GIFT, BIG OR SMALL, TO SUPPORT AND ELEVATE OUR PROGRAMMING.

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank all dance contributors. We are profoundly grateful—we couldn’t do it without you! Listed to the right are donors to the Department of Dance from January 1, 2009, through May 23, 2011. We realize there may be mistakes or omissions from this list. We apologize and invite you to contact us regarding corrections on (237) 310-100.

To make a gift, please designate the desired fund on your check, made payable to the University of Illinois Foundation/Department of Dance, and mail to UIP, P.O. Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.

For information about how to donate online 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 IS AN ERC FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANCE ARTIST/LEADER. JOIN THE EXCITEMENT AND PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE. PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING A GIFT, BIG OR SMALL, TO SUPPORT AND ELEVATE OUR PROGRAMMING.

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank all dance contributors. We are profoundly grateful—we couldn’t do it without you! Listed to the right are donors to the Department of Dance from January 1, 2009, through May 23, 2011. We realize there may be mistakes or omissions from this list. We apologize and invite you to contact us regarding corrections on (237) 310-100.

To make a gift, please designate the desired fund on your check, made payable to the University of Illinois Foundation/Department of Dance, and mail to UIP, P.O. Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.

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

thank you for supporting the department of dance!
Chester Wolenski

By Patricia Knowles, Faculty Emerita, with contributions from Barbara Horne

Chester Wolenski (September 8, 1943–November 12, 2010) was an influential figure in the world of dance, particularly at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). His dedication to dance was profound, and he left a lasting legacy on the dance program at UIUC.

Chester’s dancing career began in his youth, and he was known for his agility and passion for dance. He was a part of the Limón Company for 41 years, during which he earned a number of prominent companies and teaching at Juilliard and many other dance centers. Chester was a guest artist at UIUC, where he choreographed, performed, and inspired students, earning himself a strong and devoted university/community following.

After retiring from full-time teaching, Chester continued to perform his “ritual” with him for as long as he was able. He was often seen around Urbana walking or riding his bicycle—always fit and trim. Several months ago, when he was no longer able to live by himself, his friends found a caring nursing facility for him in Chenoa, Illinois, where he entertained everyone with his drumming. You live on in our hearts, gentle Chester. We remember and thank you for your presence here.

Karen Keener

Karen Keener, who, along with her friend, Barbara Horne, led the efforts to establish the Department’s first named scholarship fund, The Vannie L. Sheiry Memorial Dance Scholarship, died on November 12, 2010, of an aggressive cancer at the age of 67. In her long career, she introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.”

Since 1994, 17 annual awards have been presented to a dance major who has demonstrated performing talent, with prior given to MFA students.

Vannie Sheiry, a long-time staff member at Illinois, was for many years the Department’s most faithful fan. She introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.” Her two friends saw that Vannie accessed dance concerts for as long as she was able, and when Vannie passed away, Karen gained support from Vannie’s family to establish a living memorial to Vannie that would recognize her passion for dance and the dance program at Illinois.

Karen Keener (September 8, 1943–November 12, 2010)

Karen Keener, who, along with her friend, Barbara Horne, led the efforts to establish the Department’s first named scholarship fund, The Vannie L. Sheiry Memorial Dance Scholarship, died on November 12, 2010, of an aggressive cancer at the age of 67. In her long career, she introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.”

Since 1994, 17 annual awards have been presented to a dance major who has demonstrated performing talent, with prior given to MFA students.

Vannie Sheiry, a long-time staff member at Illinois, was for many years the Department’s most faithful fan. She introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.” Her two friends saw that Vannie accessed dance concerts for as long as she was able, and when Vannie passed away, Karen gained support from Vannie’s family to establish a living memorial to Vannie that would recognize her passion for dance and the dance program at Illinois.

Karen Keener (September 8, 1943–November 12, 2010)

Karen Keener, who, along with her friend, Barbara Horne, led the efforts to establish the Department’s first named scholarship fund, The Vannie L. Sheiry Memorial Dance Scholarship, died on November 12, 2010, of an aggressive cancer at the age of 67. In her long career, she introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.”

Since 1994, 17 annual awards have been presented to a dance major who has demonstrated performing talent, with prior given to MFA students.

Vannie Sheiry, a long-time staff member at Illinois, was for many years the Department’s most faithful fan. She introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.” Her two friends saw that Vannie accessed dance concerts for as long as she was able, and when Vannie passed away, Karen gained support from Vannie’s family to establish a living memorial to Vannie that would recognize her passion for dance and the dance program at Illinois.

Karen Keener (September 8, 1943–November 12, 2010)

Karen Keener, who, along with her friend, Barbara Horne, led the efforts to establish the Department’s first named scholarship fund, The Vannie L. Sheiry Memorial Dance Scholarship, died on November 12, 2010, of an aggressive cancer at the age of 67. In her long career, she introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.”

Since 1994, 17 annual awards have been presented to a dance major who has demonstrated performing talent, with prior given to MFA students.

Vannie Sheiry, a long-time staff member at Illinois, was for many years the Department’s most faithful fan. She introduced her friend Karen Keener to Barbara Horne, and their three-way friendship intensified into a stewardship, a friendly, local “family.” Her two friends saw that Vannie accessed dance concerts for as long as she was able, and when Vannie passed away, Karen gained support from Vannie’s family to establish a living memorial to Vannie that would recognize her passion for dance and the dance program at Illinois.
“every experience and every question and answer wrapped up in your body waiting to be unleashed in a wild dance of life.”

LAURA BROSCH (BFA ’12)