

OCTOBER 2011

Newsletter

Costume Measurements

Don't be surprised to see Kimberly show up to class with a tape measure in hand...it's costume measurement time! Every student participating in our Annual Performance will be measured for costumes. Please make every effort to be in class during this important time.



Yearbook Update

Yearbook co-chairs Beth Wright and Nancy Chaney have assembled a terrific team to undertake the exciting process of creating MMPAC's first ever yearbook. The yearbook, representing the *entire* studio, will cover events from the 2011 Annual Performance through picture day in 2012. The Team is currently collecting photographs. They will be photographing various classes and special events throughout the year, and they also welcome photos submitted from families. Please note the following parameters for submission of personal photos:

- Photos must be in high resolution, digital format (no cell phone photos)
- Photos should be emailed to yearbook@mmpac.com (3 photos per email) or put on a disk drive and given to front desk staff (dance photos only)
- Photos should be only from the time period that the yearbook is covering (May 2011 Annual Performance through March 1, 2012)
- Include the following info with your submission: full name, phone number, email address, description of the photo (when and where taken, full names of the dancers in the photo, and the studio where the students dance - New Market or Frederick)
- The Team anticipates receiving many submissions and will be selecting those photos that best represent all facets of the studio.

We are very excited about creating this special keepsake, which will be ready in May 2012. If you have any questions, email yearbook@mmpac.com or speak directly with Beth or Nancy.

The Hills are Alive!

Congratulations to MMPAC student Caroline Coleman who will grace the stage

as Brigitta in Olney Theatre's production of *The Sound of Music!* The show will run from Nov. 19-Dec. 28, with both matinee and evening performances. We are very proud of her and hope it becomes one of her "Favorite Things!" Ticket info available at www.olneytheatre.org.

M&MMPAC Award Winners

Sydney Kavanaugh and Charlotte Koogle are the September winners of our first ever M&MMPAC awards! They were recognized by their teachers for their hard work, focus, and preparedness for class. Different students will be awarded every month. Congratulations to Sydney and Charlotte. Enjoy the M&Ms!



Student Spotlight: Lexie Thrash

Wake up at 6:45 a.m. Check phone for the e-mailed daily schedule. Shower. Walk a mile to class. Check-in for classes. Take three one-hour morning classes. Eat lunch. Take afternoon classes. Eat dinner. Rehearse from 7 to 10 p.m. Get back to room at 11 p.m. Check in with "floor dad." Sleep. Repeat.

While most students spend their summers sleeping in, new MMPAC teacher and high school senior, Lexie Thrash, 16, spent three weeks of July dancing away the days from dawn to dusk. She was selected by audition to attend Broadway Theatre Project, a prestigious three-week long musical theater workshop held in Tampa, FL, at the University of South Florida. And her journey there started at MMPAC.

Artistic Director Deb McWaters visited MMPAC for a full afternoon workshop, Lexie said. During which, the class learned two different Fosse combinations and spent valuable question and answer time with Deb. After the workshop, Lexie, along with six other students, spent one on one time with Deb in order to get feedback on the 16-bar cut song and monologue they had prepared. Deb provided feedback for Lexie following her audition. "Afterward she smiled and told me she loved my monologue (from "The Days and Nights of Beebe Finstermaker" play) and that I had a very "sweet" singing voice," Lexie said. "Personal corrections I most likely wouldn't have gotten in a larger audition setting. It was a huge honor that we got to audition so intimately."

Once at the intensive, the reality set in for Lexie, she wasn't the only talented

individual invited to the program. "There is SO much talent out there," Lexie said. "So many people have the same passion, and there are always people who are going to be better than you and working harder than you. That was hard for me to digest... the fact that I thought I had to be working hard and stuff, but then I realized I had been kind of bopping along and just getting by."

With the demanding daily schedule, Lexie recommends future participants know what they're getting into before the first morning classes start. "Be prepared for no sleep," Lexie said. "Be prepared to be completely independent and responsible for yourself. Be prepared to work hard at work 150% every day. Take care of yourself, and know what you're going into - this is an intensive with some of the best in the business."

Looking back, Lexie wishes she would have realized sooner the importance of being at the intensive for herself and no one else, she said. "It was easy to get caught up in everyone else's talent, but I had to remind myself that I was accepted there too, and I belonged there just as much as everyone else," Lexie said.

For future BTP hopefuls, Lexie offers some words of advice. "Be humble," she said. "Even if you think you're good and have it all down pat, you never quite do. You're always learning. Never feel like you have it all in the bag." It's also important to be yourself, know who you are and what you're going for in order to soak it all in, Lexie said. And most importantly, don't get discouraged. "Squeeze every little bit out of it that you can," Lexie said. "It is honestly one of the best experiences you could ever have and I highly recommend it."

Teacher Spotlight: Nicole Ruark

MMPAC will soon be wishing "Перерыв ноги!" to its resident musical theatre extraordinaire, Nicole Ruark. That's "break a leg!" in Russian. Nicole will serve as the choreographer for the new adaptation of "Talking With" by Jane Martin as part of the American-Russian Theater Symposium (ARTS). The production kicks off Nov. 17 in Washington, DC and will travel to St. Petersburg, Russia, in the winter months.

Nicole's collegiate work for a professor's production in DC helped give her leg up on the competition when her professor's first choice for choreographer, a well-known artist in NYC, became unavailable due to current obligations. "His agent would not ratify the contract due to his current obligation working on a new Broadway musical," Nicole said. "She remembered a piece I had done in the show we worked on and thought that my work would fit the 'look' she wanted for this show."

Her responsibilities as choreographer vary depending on which country the show is in. "I am responsible for conducting the dance portion of the audition as well as being a partner in selecting the cast," Nicole said. "I will then travel to DC to choreograph and rehearse the piece."

Because of her teaching obligations at MMPAC during the week, Nicole has a dance captain for nights she can't make rehearsal.

Outside of the country, Nicole's responsibilities will include transitioning the work into a new space and choreographing a piece for the Russian equivalent of

the Actor's Studio, Nicole said. But her job as choreographer doesn't stop with the stage production. It continues into the world of sharing cultures.

Throughout my time there I will be involved in taking and teaching classes as part of the symposium geared toward sharing culture through art," Nicole said. "I also will have the chance to work with one of the Maryinsky (formerly Kirov) Ballet's choreographers to create a joint piece.

Nicole will spend 10 days in Russia. Her dance travels have taken her to locations in both North and South America, but this marks her first Asian adventure. It's an adventure she is very excited to start. "I am most excited about the opportunity to work in a city whose tradition includes the great acting teacher Stanislavski as well as the playwright Chekhov and legendary writers such as Dostoyevsky and Pushkin," Nicole said. "They have such a tradition of the arts and passion for the work. Plus it is always exciting to be part of a new musical."

For dancers wishing their careers will take a similar route, Nicole has some words of advice. "Open as many doors as possible," Nicole said. "By that I mean, study everything and experience as many styles and choreographers as you can. Don't define yourself too early by saying 'I don't do....or I can't....' You never know what doors will open for you. Have the skills and experience to enter as many as possible."