Mark Morris’s GLORIA at the Academy of Music

Five College Dance Department NewsLetter 2008–2009

CDD presented the final performances of Mark Morris’s masterpiece, GLORIA, on a concert of all live music and dance works at the Academy of Music in Northampton in March. This unique Town-Gown collaboration was a fitting culmination to a series of concerts last fall - at Mount Holyoke, Smith and UMSS, each featuring resident orchestras and choral ensembles.

Set to Vivaldi’s joyous choral music “Gloria in D”, played live by the Amherst College Orchestra and Choral Ensemble, GLORIA is “One of Morris’ masterpieces, beautiful, lush virtuosic—one of those pieces where you can see the unbelievable connection between movement and the music.” The Mark Morris Dance Group first premiered GLORIA in 1981 and the piece was restaged on five college dancers this fall under the direction of longtime Mark Morris company member, Marjorie Folkman.

This project afforded the 20 dancers who performed in the two casts a unique — and often challenging — inside experience of the demanding rhythmic and ensemble intricacies of Morris’s musical choreography. The project was supported in part by a NEA American Masterpieces grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

**FCDD STUDENT AND ALUM NEWS**

**Emily Alpren** (AC ‘02) recently received her MFA in Acting from AFI and is now in Los Angeles looking for work in film.

**Nora Ambrose** (SC MFA ‘87) continues to chair the Department of Dance at Slippery Rock U in Pennsylvania. She just completed a substantial, writing a sixth edition of her widely used book Learning about Dance, and a second edition of her new book on dance pedagogy, The Excellent Instructor and the Teaching of Dance Technique (both published by Kendall/Hunt Publishers). She was recently elected to the Commission on Accreditation for the National Association of Schools of Dance and serves as a site visitor for the association.

**Vanessa Anspaugh** (SC MFA ’08), **Maura Domo-hue** (SC MFA ’08), **Aretha Aoki** (MFA ’08), **Lily Gold** (HC ’08) and **Mary Reed** (HC ’08) produced Food for Thought in November 2009 for which Vanessa choreographed, Maura curated, and Aretha, Lily, and Mary performed. Vanessa recently presented a new work on DTW’s Fresh Tracks winter series.

**Christiana Axelsen** (MHC ’03) spent parts of 2009 touring in Boston, New York, San Francisco and Montana with Seattle-based contemporary dance company Zoe/Juniper. She now lives and dances in New York where she is a merit scholarship in the Professional Training Program at the Cunningham Studio. She is currently performing with several N.Y. choreographers including Jules Skloot (Hampshire ‘03).

**Katie Bailey** (MHC ’07) is a Pilates coordinator at Equinox Fitness Club in New York.

**Pele Bauch** (HC ’96) performed an excerpt from her new piece, H to Oh as part of Performance Mix Festival at Joyce SoHo in February ’09.

**Lisa Biggs** (AC ’93) is working on her PhD in Performance Studies at Northwestern University.

**Alexandra Botti** (SC ‘08) is working PR for TripAdvisor in Boston, teaching open adult classes part-time for Boston Ballet and training to teach elementary students.

**Strauss Bourque** (HC ’90) announced an exhibition of his work at the Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NYC, in a show entitled Leopards in the Temple, featuring established artists.

The Sankofa Dance Project hosted another thrilling summer workshop, this year led by the incomparable Chuck Davis; other members of the artistic team included Stafford Berry, Associate Artistic Director of the African American Dance Ensemble (North Carolina), Amaniya Payne, Director of the Muntu Dance Company (Chicago), Abdel Salaam, Director of the Forces of Nature Dance Company (New York), and Marilyn Sylla, Director of Bamidele and Dancers (Amherst). Additionally there were musicians galore - drummers, a blue grass band, an akonting player - as Master Choreographer Chuck Davis developed an extended version of “Blue Grass/Brown Earth” which traces the history of the West African akonting to the development of the American banjo. Once again, over fifty students participated including many youth from the greater Springfield area.

**HEADLINE?**

**Chuck Davis** came back in the fall to restage “Blue Grass/Brown Earth” for the University Dancer’s Winter Concert. This concert series set the scene for a marvelous degree ceremony in which Baba Chuck was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, the highest degree the University can bestow. It was thrilling to have Chuck Davis’s contribution to the University community as well as to arts and education nationally and internationally acknowledged by the Chancellor, the Provost and the Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, the highest administrators on the University campus. Art matters! Congratulations to Dr. Davis!
McArthur Fellowship recipient, world renowned choreographer, dancer, and founder of the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Liz Lerman was in residence at Hampshire College in November. She presented a series of Master Classes, participated in a panel discussion, “Dancing Through Science” and presented a keynote lecture/performance: “Ferocious Beauty: Genome.” This lively talk on art and science synergies was interspersed with performance and video excerpts from her evening-length performance work, Ferocious Beauty: Genome. This multimedia production was created in collaboration with scientists and educators, and explores the science and meaning of the human genome project, interpreted through movement, images and sound. Lerman’s residency and its many activities was co-sponsored by FCDD and Hampshire College’s Dance Department and Culture, Brain and Development Program.

David Dorfman was in residence at Smith College this fall, creating a new work for 18 dancers from Smith and the five colleges. Dorfman is a nationally renowned choreographer and artistic director of David Dorfman Dance—his company’s dancers and artistic collaborators have been honored with eight “Bessie” Awards. Dorfman describes his new piece, Dance To The Music/Every Body Is…, as “a celebration of the joy of dancing and the funk of living.”

In February, FCDD hosted Norah Zuniga Shaw in a lecture/demonstration on her recent interactive web project, SYNCHRONOUSOBJECTS (synchronousobjects.osu.edu), developed with renowned contemporary ballet choreographer, William Forsythe and designer Maria Shaw. Ms. Shaw is a Hampshire graduate and currently Assistant Professor and Director for Dance and Technology at Ohio State University.

Focusing on Forsythe’s complex ensemble dance One Flat Thing, reproduced, the project presents an original collection of screen-based visualizations (video, digital artwork, animation, and interactive graphics) that reveal interlocking systems of organization in the choreography. The project aims to appeal to a broad public from diverse fields including but not limited to dance. Forsythe explains, “The project starts from the recognition that choreography is an organizational practice that employs fundamental creative strategies relevant to many other domains.”

Shaw writes: “This was a deeply interdisciplinary project with folks from animation, design, geography, computer science, statistics, and architecture… It speaks to concerns with the nature of the ‘object’, relational aesthetics, and embodied epistemologies in the humanities.”

Nick Brentley (AC ’96) performed with the Philadelphia-based Tamia Dance Company on a brief tour to Jacob’s Pillow and the Bates Dance Festival before returning home to Washington, DC as a “sitter” for a production of Kisu Me. Kate at Toby’s Dinner Theater. Currently he works as a motivational dance-party instructor for NTA Entertainment Co. and is a member of the Lesoleil Dance Project.

Taša Brooks (AC ’16) is living in Melbourne, Australia working as a stage performer, choreographer and teacher. Her next show is Garshon’s Crazy for You. tashabrooks.com.

Wilke Brown (UM ’12) is dancing with Dance Theater X based in Philadelphia, an Afro/contemporary modern company directed by Charles O’Anderson. He performed with Dansa4Hua Repertory Ensemble in Philadelphia in September, ’10.

Julia Bromwell (AC ’14) graduated from NYU in May, ’10. Julia’s most recent play, Smart Goolie-opened in January 2009 at the Alliance Theater in Atlanta. allunteertheatre.org/performance.

Katherine Buchman (AC ’04) is a graduate student in the Yale School of Sound Design.

Bernard Bygott (AC ’10) performed in The Supper Club of Lost Causes at A Theater for the New City this past November. theaterforthecnycity.net/supperclub.htm.

Kat Callard (HC ’04) completed a graduate program in Childhood and Creative Arts in Learning at Lesley University in the spring of 2009. She is currently in her second year of teaching 2nd grade at Park.

Nichole Canuso (HC ’06) writes that the Nichole Canuso Dance Company (out of Philadelphia, PA) performed in a salon setting in Brooklyn, NY. nicholecanusodance.org.

Yanira Castro (AC ’14) is working on a new project: Wilderness, which will premiere in Fall 2010 with Dance Theater Workshop at the Old American Car Factory. More on her work can be viewed at her Web site, acarpetwoven.org.

Molly (Gershom) Tynes (HC ’15) was cast in the Paper Mill Playhouse’s new production of On the Town which opened in November 2009. Molly danced in the ensemble with a small featured role and understudied two of the principals. playbill.com/news/article/1038362.

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ART AND LIFE:
THE REAL WORLD BECKONS IN CURIOUS WAYS

While many FCD students come to college to pursue their dreams of professional dance and choreography, many more come with interdisciplinary interests, mixing dance and other academic studies - double and special majors abound. It is no surprise then that this mix continues after graduation, opening up a variety of hybrid career paths and art/life balances.

A number of graduates are able to pursue careers in their chosen field of interest right after graduation. Brandyee Lee (SC) became a featured dancer with Aliley II soon after graduation, and later toured nationally with Disney's "The Lion King". Tiffany Langlois (UM '04) began performing with Enigma Dance Kru from "America's Best Dance Crew" on MTV. Yanira Castro (AC) began choreographing and directing for her NYC-based company right after graduation, and continues an award-winning artistic career as "instigator and director" of, a CANARY TOIRSI, creating multi-disciplinary interactive environments with a variety of collaborators. Allie Wickham (HC) got involved in arts in medicine during her junior year, and after graduation last spring, moved to Gainesville, Florida, where she currently serves as Program Assistant for Shands Arts in Medicine and Coordinator for the Arts in Healthcare Certificate Program.

Many more grads find a balance between ongoing artistic pursuits and more steady employment in dance-related fields. Loren Robertson (MHC), a free-lance performer/choreographer in San Francisco, incorporates video in her performance projects, but also has a thriving video production business, documenting dance and performance in the Bay Area. Erica Johnson (UM), a founding member and current dancer with Boston-based Bosoma Dance Company is a practicing physical therapist, bringing her years of "insider" dance knowledge to her work as a PT. Ashley Hensel-Browning (HC) balances her personal creative projects as a choreographer-performer, with K-12 teaching and community projects, including school and community-based residencies in rural Vermont.

Still other FCD alumni combine their artistic pursuits with more conventional work outside of dance. Lucille Jun (AC ’08) is an active choreographer and performer who has been living in S. Korea, supporting her artistic pursuits by teaching K-12 English as a second-language classes. Sarah Seely (SC MFA) has taken an unusually creative and positive spin on the world of conventional day jobs, incorporating their dulling routines, physical settings and attire into the very fabric of her choreographic work. She is the founding director of, From the desk of Sarah Seely, "a company of professional dancers, actors, and artists who all work upwards of 40 hours a week sitting behind desks in corporate casual attire, assisting the busy executives of Manhattan."

FCDD is trying to become more proactive in helping students broaden their interdisciplinary studies and the possible career paths these open. We have recently introduced a new curricular profile emphasizing seven areas of Focus: Technique, Repertory and Performance; Choreography and Creative Studies; Dance Studies: History, Culture and Aesthetics; Dance and Technology; Dance Education and Community Outreach; Dance Science, Somatics and Arts Therapies; and Design, Production and Management. FCDD has also started hosting an annual Careers Panel, featuring alumni from a variety of dance and dance-related fields speaking with current students about their career paths and current work.

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incorporating student work: nobles.edu/home/news_item.asp?id=529. She also continues to perform with BoSoma Dance in Boston.

Alex Hammond (AC ’92) has just finished designing the TV pilot [Pilot? This show is in its second season] Lie to Me, starring Tim Roth and directed by Robert Schwentke (Flightplan), and produced by David Nevins (AC ’88). Prior to that he was the production designer for Ricky Gervais’ (The Office) first feature writing/directing job, This Side of Truth. Alec also received this year’s Princess Grace Statue Award from the Princess Grace Foundation which is their highest honor, given to a previous Princess Grace award winner for career achievement. Alec was also the Production Designer for the new film The Invention of Lying which opened in October, ’09.

Suzie (Heijari) Erkan (MHC ’94) worked in Vienna, Austria with Elio Gervasi (A) and Javier de Frutos (GB). After the birth of her daughter in ’06, she returned to moving and teaching, completing a basic certification in fitness and working as a Pilates and aerobics instructor. Last October she began teaching modern dance at the Girne American University, and she will soon be pursuing an M.A. in Education in Helsinki, Finland.

Heidi Henderson (SC MFA ’88) will be teaching at Bates Dance Festival Summer 2010 [part of title or not?]. She is also a ’10 recipient of the Fellowship in Choreography from the Rhode Island Council on the Arts, presenting work under the name “elephant JANE dance.” She is creating a new work on SC students this spring.

Ashley Hensel-Browning (HC ’07) is dancing and teaching in Springfield, VT, where she works as a choreographer and director with the Opera Theatre of Weston, most recently choreographing The Little Prince and directing Hansel and Gretel. Ashley’s teaching includes school-based residencies that focus on curriculum development and building community through movement. She regularly conducts community dance projects in libraries, studios, correctional facilities, and summer programs. dancewithashley.blogspot.com

Marlena Hubley (MHC ’06) graduated summa cum laude with a double degree in Anthropology and Dance. In October of ’06 she started working at 85 Broads, LLC, an exclusive global women’s network. She will leave 85 Broads this fall.

This fall the College of Humanities and Fine Arts received a gift of Barbara Morgan’s historic photographs. Morgan photographed modern dance in the 1930s and 40s, establishing the first American archive documenting the life force and rhythmic vitality of this significant period in the development of modern dance. Peggy Schwartz, Director of the Dance Program at UMass Amherst, is thrilled to give the Barbara Morgan collection a home. “We are truly honored to receive this gift,” she said. “These historic photos will inspire and educate our students, our audiences, and generations of dancers yet to come.” The Barbara Morgan archive images will be housed at the University Gallery and are being prepared for public viewing at the University Gallery, the teaching museum at UMass Amherst [Text missing?].
The FCDD had another busy year of Master Classes, Workshops and Lectures which rotated among the five campuses and were open to all five college students. There were Master Class- es taught by the companies of choreographers: Mark Morris, Liz Lerman, Black Grace, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem and Aliley 2, as well as Guest Artists Idan Cohen (contemporary Israel) and Diane Walker (Tap). Workshops were offered by Boston-based, BoSoma and Missy Vineyard (Alexander Technique). A long list of Lectures also added to the depth of FCDD offerings: Joe Setta (Capoeira), Maria Urruta, (New York Times dance critic Mauro Albarelo (Dance Criticism), Jacelyn Cearley (“Dance and Dancers in Germany 1900-2010”), Maida Withers (“On Site — Intée Site: Specific Works”), Ruth Rootberg (Alexander Technique), Richard Shaw (Rolfing); Steven Miller (Chiropractics), Marjorie Kulchin (Acu- puncture), Sara Hosteller (Massage and Body Mind Centering), Jimmy Ison (Tai Chi), Jennifer Winick (Trager), Karen Michaels (Zero Balancing) and Pam Parkhurst (Feltenkrais).
distrom performed T.O.E. Dance with Billib Brown in October at the Arizona Dance Festival, Tempe Center for the Arts. In November she and Brown performed another duet Once Upon a… at the inaugural 2009 Performance of the Massachusetts Dance Festival at the Boston University Theater.

UMass Faculty Peggy Schwartz continued her work as Artistic Director of the Sanka Dance Project, celebrating “African Routes in American Dance.” She organized the very successful 2009 summer intensive, led by the incomparable Chuck Davis and joined by other illustrious artists and teachers. She is cur- rently pursuing plans to continue this program now that the initial grant- ing cycle is complete. Last fall, Peggy helped secure the donation of a number photos by legendary dance photographer, Barbara Morgan and spearheaded other out- reach projects for the UM Dance Program, including connections with Boston Ballet.

Mount Holyoke College

and Smith College Artist in Residence, Marilyn Sylla, with her husband, musician sekou Sylla, completed a number of college and community residencies, including taking their ensemble, Barnsdale Dancers & Drummers, on a teach- ing and performing tour to Puerto Rico in Old San Juan, Caguas and Guayama. In January, they were in residence in Londonderry and Henhiller, NH, and over spring break, they will be in residence at Ursinus College in Collegeville, PA. Closer to home, they work in the healing arts in hospitals and home- less shelters through the organization Young Audiences of Massachusetts.

Marilyn will set a piece on the dance depart- ment at the Northfield Mount hermon school this spring. On a personal note, Marilyn was excited to complete a 5K walk/ run in Colorado Dec. 2009 six months after a total knee replacement.

Smith College Fac- ulty Lester Tome joined Smith College and the FCDD as a professor of dance history and theory in September. Tomi, who conducts research on the history of ballet in Cuba, gave a preeshow talk for a performance of the National Ballet of Cuba in Hamilton, Ontario, in early December. In this talk, Tome answered questions from Michael Crabbs, dance critic of the Toronto Star. During this trip, he is also delivered a lecture on Alicia Alonso at the Canadian Youth Ballet Ensemble.

UMass Amherst Faculty Thomas Vancant is very happy to be returning to the UMass Dance Department and the Five College Dance Depart- ment. He has also been busy creating work for various companies and other schools this year. His ballet Tauroire for City Ballet in Raleigh, NC was premiered at North Caro- lina School of the Arts in February. He is also busy choreographing a full- length dance production of Akadim and His Magic Lamp for Peverel Valley Ballet, to be premiered at the Academy of Music in Northampton, MA in March 2010. Tom is also choreographing a full-length version of The Firebird for the FCDD in the fall of 2010, to be presented on the UMass Am- herst, Smith, and Mount Holyoke campuses.

Smith College Staff

Musician Mike Vargas collaborated with chore- ographer Oscar Okachi, from Kenya at the Bates Dance Festival in August, performing with her live orchestro. In October, he participated for two days in the Kahn Institute’s Mu- sic and Science seminar and taught a workshop at Earthdance’s Improved Dance and Improvised Music Symposium. Last fall, Mike also composed music for choreographer David Hurwitz’s latest project, using the sounds of seagulls, trains and the Spanish countryside.

Smith College Faculty Susan Wattner added to her somatic practice experiences by taking a Continuum workshop with Emilie Conrad last summer. This fall, she performed in lecture- demonstrations with the Dancer’s Generators, which included a section of a duet she choreographed last year. She is making a new quartet and will restage a quartet for the DGS for a performance in March. For the fall Smith Faculty Concert, she made a dance that included 4 Dance Gener- ators and MFA situation, Caitlin Johnson. In the spring she will teach a site-specific repertory class in which a piece will be developed for one of the Smith Gardens. This is supported by a grant from the Smith Botanic Gardens.

Amherst College faculty Wendy Woodson pre- miered a new full-length theater piece in Novem- ber 2009. She Turned on the Light, at LaMaMa Experimental Theater in New York. This one- woman piece was written and directed by Woodson working in collaboration with performer Marina Libel (AC ‘alumna). Kathy Couch (AC alumna), designed the lights.
We mourn the passing of our beloved colleague, Rosalind de Mille, Emeritus of Smith College. Mr. de Mille was a founder and the first Chair of the Five College Dance Department. She held Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from USC and had an illustrious performing career before coming to Smith College. She was always a hug, a far cry from today’s norms in higher education. She would make the world a better place, and her humanity, inspired the blooms of flowers. Patience Mazzullo and Colle Gist created the scholasticFACULTY in 1975 and directed the department for twenty years. In 1985, Smith College Professor Susan Wainwright, who worked closely with Mr. de Mille for many years, wrote “You was a key player in the development of the Five College Dance Department, and was an elegant, inspiring, and loving boxing and colleagues and teacher.” Recent FCDI Chair and Hampshire College Professor David Pops has written, “I remember her study and hard work, and I always admired her generosity and warmth to students and colleagues was quite special. “Smith College akcama Storer-Weinstein ’80 writes, “She was one of the most influential teachers I had. She helped me understand myself—first as a human being and then as a dancer. She opened my eyes to what dance can mean and do.”

Jamie O’Brien

She teaches Hip Hop, Modern, Pilates and is the Office manager and later taught Creative Movement and served as an actor/dancer at Mills College and continu- tion of pre-professional, and transforms the choreo-

Loren Robertson (MHC ’06) is living in San Francisco and run-n-ning her own business, Loren R. Robertson Productions, which specializes in video and docu-mentaries for live performance (lorenrobertson.com). For the past three years she has been performing projects with Catherine Galasso Pagge, sor- velloblitz, the Lusty Lady Theatre, and with Jesse Hewitt, she also continues to make her own solo video/ performance work.

Emily Rosenberg (AC ’17) had a wonderful time in the southwest as a stitching and dressing apprentice at the Santa Fe Opera last summer. Colleen Stevens joined the Metropolitan Opera Compa-ny, where she was recently in costume for the part of the final 1–3 years. Her dissertation is a study of the choreography of the period on contemporary experimental- tion and dance.

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Lorentz Pinzler (AC ’90) is a Ph.D. student at Cornell and has supported on our behalf. These include two shared curriculums in ‘08, and in ‘09, and performed at Dance Theater Workshop in New York City. New York State teaching certifica-

Lorna Peterson

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