

ITHACA BALLET NEWS

FALL 2006

Peter and the Wolf Opens the Ithaca Ballet's 2006-'07 Season

Greetings, Ithaca Ballet alumni and faithful supporters.

The Ithaca Ballet suffered an enormous loss this past year with the death of Larry Brantley on Valentine's Day. The impact of this loss was profound, both on a personal and professional level, and it affected everyone in the extended Ballet family. Larry was an artist, a teacher, a retired dancer, a choreographer, and to me, specifically, an ex-partner, a friend, a trusted advisor, a brother. As General Manager, Larry took care of the diddly details of running the company so that I could concentrate on teaching and coaching my dancers and staging ballets.

In his absence, we somehow rallied to produce a spectacular Winter Rep show and then closed out the 2005-2006 season with a gorgeous production of *Cinderella*. We at the Ithaca Ballet have realized that we can go on, and indeed, we must go on. Thinking of Larry and how much he loved the Ithaca Ballet, we have planned a truly special season.

In the fall, we will be reviving *Peter and the Wolf*, with choreography by Lavinia Reid. The last time we performed *Peter and the Wolf*, alumni Micki Kolberg and Jonah Bokaer played Peter and the Wolf! That was nine years ago, so this classic is overdue to be shown again and is sure to be enjoyed by children of all ages.

Holiday time brings the ever-popular *Nutcracker*, certainly an Ithaca favorite. It is no secret that I feel our version by Lavinia Reid is funnier, more entertaining, and more beautiful than many professional productions.

If contemporary dance is more your cup of tea, the Ithaca Ballet will be presenting a loving tribute to long-time Company Manager Larry Brantley at the one-
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Larry Brantley and Cindy Reid as the Sugar Plum Cavalier and Sugar Plum Fairy in a 1983 production of *The Nutcracker*.



From left: Alumnae Heather MacNeill, Lena Rose Magee, and Anna Nolan-Wheatley in a previous *Peter and the Wolf*.

Thank You for supporting *the Larry Brantley* Young Choreographers Fund!

Since Larry's death in February 2006, the Ithaca Ballet has received a tremendous outpouring of support from the community. This has enabled the ballet to establish a special endowment in Larry's name: the Larry Brantley Young Choreographers Fund. Donations to this fund will be used to support young aspiring choreographers at the Ballet Center and in the community at large.

So please consider making a donation to Larry's fund, which honors his legacy as an award-winning choreographer and beloved dance instructor. Designate the amount of your donation that should be earmarked for the scholarship on the enclosed insert and return in the envelope provided. Thanks again!

A Message from the Board of Directors

Hello again from the Ithaca Ballet's board of directors. First and foremost, I would like to extend my deep-felt thanks to all of you who donated to the Ithaca Ballet this year. Many of you sent generous donations in memory of our beloved Larry Brantley, and thanks to you, a scholarship fund for young choreographers has been established in his name. As a non-profit community arts organization, we rely on donations to keep us going. You truly are our lifeblood, and we appreciate you so very much.

We also owe many thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers, without whom we couldn't have made it this far. In the aftermath of Larry's death, several volunteers—some board members, some parents of Ballet Center students, others just friends of Larry—have stepped forward and assumed many of his responsibilities as general manager of the Ithaca Ballet.

This has given the board and artistic staff a chance to catch its collective breath, assess the ballet's gravest needs, and do a careful search for a new manager. With all of his myriads talents, Larry can never be replaced, but the board hopes to retain a skilled and energetic manager soon. In the meantime, our volunteers continue to sustain us. In particular, I must thank Leah Cook, Ann Lynn, and Julia Studier, whose energy, skill, patience, humor, and grace keep my ship afloat. Thanks also to Lisa Romm-White and

Betsy Schermerhorn, who pitched in when times were tough.

The production that is closest to our hearts this season is our Winter Repertory performance, which will be dedicated in memory of Larry Brantley and will showcase some of his best-loved pieces of choreography. Larry's legacy of wonderful choreography will be with the ballet forever, and performing it is our way of helping to keep his memory alive.

On the business side, there are two important items I'd like to bring to your attention. First, the Ithaca Ballet Parents Group (IBPG) will have its first meeting of the season on Tuesday, September 19 (see sidebar at right). I strongly urge all of you to join the IBPG or contact Ann Lynn about how you can help.

Second, the board of directors will hold its annual membership meeting at **7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 19, at 105 Sheldon Road.** All members of the Ballet Guild of Ithaca, Inc., are welcome.

We've enclosed an insert for purchasing 2006-'07 season tickets; making a donation to the ballet and Larry's fund; and sending us your alumni news. Our aim is to make it easier for you to get performance tickets, support the ballet, and keep in touch.

I hope you're all looking forward to the upcoming season as much as I am. See you at *Peter and the Wolf*!

Melissa Schmidt
President, Board of Directors

Join the IBPG!

The purpose of the Ithaca Ballet Parents Group (IBPG) is to provide support to the Ithaca Ballet Company and the Ballet Center of Ithaca (school) to ensure a positive learning environment for the children and effective communication between ballet families and the ballet administration. Currently, the major activities of the IBPG are to run the concession stands at the performances and help coordinate activities related to *Nutcracker* performances. Depending upon the interests of parents, we are open to other activities.

Membership in the IBPG is free and open to anyone in the Ithaca Ballet community, including adult alumni and parents of former dancers. The current chair of the IBPG is Ann Lynn. Anyone interested in becoming active with the IBPG may contact Ann at 257-4757 or alynn@ithaca.edu.

The IBPG meets monthly, usually the first Wednesday of each month from 6:00-7:30 p.m., unless scheduling conflicts require a different date. Our intent is to meet before monthly Ithaca Ballet board meetings (second Thursday of each month). Because of conflicts associated with the beginning of school, the September meeting will be on Tuesday, September 19, at 6:00 p.m. at Ann Lynn's house, 420 Hanshaw Road. "Drop-ins" are welcome.

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year anniversary of his death. More than 20 years of Larry's award-winning ballets will be included in this show we're calling *All-Brantley* on February 9-10, 2007.

We will conclude our performance season with the Ithaca premiere of Lavinia Reid's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on April 28-29, 2007. We are very excited to be able to present a premiere in this year's season. Our audience has responded so positively to the premieres of the last couple of years, including the full-length *Romeo and Juliet*, by Rafael Grigorian, and *Sentimen-*

tal Journey, by Bonnie Valant-Spaight; and it is essential to the vibrancy and



Alumnae Eryn Cash (left) and Lindsey Staley in the ballet's premiere of *Romeo & Juliet* in 2005.

ongoing growth and development of any ballet company to continue to add new works to its repertoire.

But new productions—which entail new choreography, sets, and costumes—are expensive. We depend on the generosity of private donations to create new works and to fund the company's unglamorous but totally necessary operating expenses. With your ongoing support, the Ithaca Ballet will continue to grow and thrive long into the future. As Larry always said, "The show must go on."

Cindy Reid
Co-Artistic Director

News of Alumni From Far And Near



Monica Bilson and Greg O'Brien write, "We were so shocked and saddened to hear about Larry's passing. We both have many fond memories of him, and we know how important he was to Ithaca Ballet! Please send our condolences to the Reids and Benny. We live in New Hampshire now. We moved here after Monica got her PhD and was hired as a literature professor at an arts college here. Greg will be retiring from Galumph in a year or so and is preparing for a second career as a social studies teacher. His son, Aidan, is 14, and we have a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Regan. She is quite a handful!" Stay in touch with Monica and Greg at 64 Stone St., Concord, NH 03301; monicob@hotmail.com.

Jonah Bokaer, who was featured in the spring 2006 *Ithaca Ballet News*, has been in the national news this year. First, he was seen on Page 28 of the January *Dance Magazine* as one of "Twenty-Five Young Dancers to Watch." Then on April 9, on the dance page of the Arts & Leisure section of the *New York Sunday Times*, the first words in the article were "Jonah Bokaer." It went on to describe Jonah's new arts center in Brooklyn called Chez Bushwick.

Eryn Lotsie Cash (Ithaca High '05) was a lead dancer in many roles. She showed herself to be a talented choreographer in several works, particularly her *Brush on Silk*, which was featured in February's winter repertory performance. Eryn is at the New School University's Joffrey Ballet School pursuing a BFA.

Starting at the Ithaca Ballet as a *Nutcracker* party boy in 1991, **Christopher Fairbank** progressed to

lead roles in many productions. Leaving Ithaca, Chris danced with the Columbia (South Carolina) City Ballet, then became a principal dancer with the San Antonio (Texas) Ballet. Now he has his own company, the Tri-Coastal Ballet, in Kyle, Texas. He and his wife, Pam, have a baby daughter.

Peter McHugh (Lansing High '06) will be a composition major at SUNY Purchase this fall. Peter comes from a family of musicians. Since beginning as a party boy in the 1998 *Nutcracker*, Peter has danced many roles, including the *Nutcracker* himself against his father, Tom McHugh, in the role of the Mouse King.

Ithaca Ballet alumna and national twirling champion **Tara Rose McParlin** (Dryden High '01) attended college at the University of Tennessee, where she was head twirler for the athletic department and danced with the college ballet. Tara continued for a master's degree in science and individualized education and will be teaching third grade. She now resides in Pensacola, Florida, and is engaged to U.S. Air Force First Lieutenant Stephen Dgialo.

After dancing with Ithaca Ballet for an extra year, **Rachel Myers** (Homeschool '05) has chosen to attend the Dance Conservatory at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. "I am very excited about the conservatory's program," she

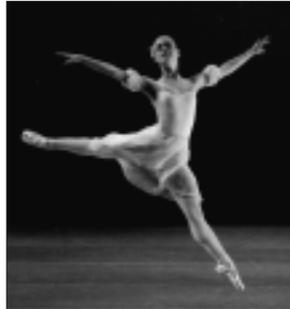
writes. "It is a very small program and is affiliated with Cincinnati Ballet as well as Dayton Ballet. I'm looking forward to dancing with them. I'd love to hear from anyone who would like to keep in touch. E-mail me at musancer2@yahoo.com."

Tom Nicholas (Ithaca High '01) has become engaged to Emily Rose Patterson, a fellow dancer in the Joffrey Ballet. A spring wedding in Newport, Rhode Island, is planned.

Samantha Sprague (Ithaca High '02 and Senior Dancer with Ithaca Ballet '98-'02) completed her pre-professional training at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet this past June. Samantha has been

hired by Tulsa Ballet Theatre, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and will dance in their newly-formed second company, Tulsa Ballet II. Samantha has already been cast to perform with the main company when they present Balanchine's *Serenade* in September. She danced many memorable roles with Ithaca Ballet, including Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* and the Sugar Plum Fairy to sold-out audiences at the newly-reopened Historic State Theatre in *Nutcracker* '01. Say hello to Sam at kitty3681@aol.com.

After dancing at the Saratoga Dance Intensive program this summer, **Lindsey Staley** (Ithaca High '06) will be attending Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana, one of the outstanding schools of higher education for dance in America. You will remember Lindsey as the lovely Dewdrop Fairy in our last *Nutcracker*. Lindsey can be reached at pindsey11@aol.com.



Samantha Sprague in Winter variation of Laszlo Berdo's Seasons.



Alumna Rachel Myers as a Snowflake in Nutcracker.

Ballet Enjoys Large Enrollment at 2006 Summer Camp

This summer, the Ballet Guild of Ithaca summer dance camp was attended by more than 30 students ranging in age from 8-17. This year's faculty included Camp Director Cindy Reid, Gunilla Lieberman, Amanda Moretti, Nancy Gaspar, Micki Kol-

berg, and Eryn Lotsie Cash. Workshops were given by guests Martin Hillier in acting, alumnus Aphra Kline in singing, as well as Anna Goehner in hip-hop dance.

Award winners for perfect attendance to the six-week program were

Emma Fitzpatrick and Laura Carstensen.

The camp concluded with an impressive performance of 10 pieces at the Ballet Center Studio, including three choreographed by the students themselves.

Ballet Guild of Ithaca, Inc.
P.O. Box 4341
Ithaca, NY 14852-4341

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[www.ITHACABALLET.org!](http://www.ITHACABALLET.org)

Upcoming Events Calendar — Fall/Winter 2006

September 6: Classes start at the Ballet Center of Ithaca. Call 257-6066 or visit www.ithacaballet.org for class schedules and fees.

September 9: Auditions for the Ithaca Ballet Company's 2006-'07 season will be held at 12:30 p.m. at the Ballet Center of Ithaca, 504-506 N. Plain St., in downtown Ithaca.

October 14 & 15: Ithaca Ballet presents Lavinia Reid's *Peter and the Wolf* at Ithaca's State Theatre. Saturday and Sunday at 3:00 p.m. Tickets on sale at the Clinton House Ticket Center, 800-284-8422, or online at www.ithacaevents.com. Tickets are also available at the door one hour before curtain.

November 26: Ithaca Ballet presents *The Nutcracker* with the Finger Lakes Symphony Orchestra. Location to be determined. For more information, call 277-1967.

December 8-10: Ithaca Ballet presents *The Nutcracker* at Ithaca's State Theatre. Friday at 7:30 p.m. Saturday and

Sunday at 3:00 p.m. Tickets available at the Clinton House Ticket Center, 800-284-8422, or online at www.ithacaevents.com. Tickets are also available at the door one hour before curtain.



Right: The Waltz of the Flowers in Act II of *The Nutcracker*.

ITHACA BALLET

Join us at The State Theatre for Peter and the Wolf on Saturday, October 14, and Sunday, October 15, at 3:00 p.m.