



Dance Arts Now!

The official NHSDA Newsletter for Middle and High School Students
Spring Issue 2018

You can do anything you want, even if you are being told negative things.

Stay strong and find motivation...

Be fearless, be beautiful.

~ Misty Copeland, Principal Dancer/American Ballet Theatre

Exquisite dancer Misty Copeland sends these words to all our members, and in turn, our students pen their own messages of how Ms. Copeland inspires them.

Jordan Gaskin writes,

"She runs boldly around the stage like a creature accustomed to vast space ~ she raises her arms with the epic sweep of mighty wings. This is the essence of Misty Copeland, the first African American female Principal Dancer with the American Ballet Theatre), performing in 'Swan Lake.' I too am a dancer... The moment I first saw her dance, I knew I wanted to share that same experience with others." [See Jordan's article, p. 8]

And Akylah Cox now realizes that she "is not alone," for the ABT Principal Dancer mirrors how she developed a positive image of herself in the desire to dance. [See Akylah's article, p. 6]



Misty Copeland ~ 'Life in Motion'

Photo Credit: Gregg Delman

Courtesy of Squire Media & Management, Inc.

To learn more about Misty Copeland, visit: <http://mistycopeland.com/>

In this issue, discover through the creative process what colors our dreams...

Dancing with love in our hearts. ❤️

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"Join us for fun while learning and dancing!"

Kern Dance Alliance advocates for dance, supports dancers, and makes dance more accessible to greater populations in Kern County, California. As part of this mission, members of its NHSDA chapter share their artistic talents with **Books in Motion: DANCE + LITERACY**, a free educational program at the local library that encourages reading through dance.

In a post-performance workshop, children engage in movement as they are guided through a dancer's warm-up, followed by creating their own choreography and a craft, all based on a day's literary theme.

Bonus ~ children receive their own copy of the highlighted book to take home and share!

Learn more about the program at:
<http://kerndance.org/bim/>



Photo courtesy of KDA

Extra! Extra! Extra!

The National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) is honored to be recognized in the National Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP) List of Approved Student Programs. View the list of approved programs at:
<https://www.principals.org/.../nassp-approved-student-programs>



➡ *...And remember to follow NHSDA on social media (@nhsdaofficial)!*

News (cont.)



Newly Formed NHSDA Ensemble

NHSDA members of The Dance Conservatory of Maryland are motivated to grow as artists. They and faculty meet monthly to plan events that benefit the community and the chapter, including the NHSDA Showcase and designated volunteer projects.

Recently, DCM established its advanced NHSDA Ensemble, which director Barclay Gibbs believes “will go beyond technique toward a meaningful experience for our members and their audience.”

Sweet Dreams ~ In the Community

The Millbrook High School NHSDA chapter seeks to give back to the community. During the recent holidays, members sold candy canes for only a dollar with proceeds to ***Miracles in Motion***, a national program that offers a full dance experience for people with special needs. Technique classes and performance opportunities are all part of the program, which professional dancer Kim Moncrief founded to honor her son (also born with special needs).

The chapter plans dance activities “to spread kindness,” states its president, Christina Billman. Students post cards with words of encouragement throughout the school, and chapter member Molly Foster emphasizes that “It is important to help those with many setbacks to reach their dreams.”



News (cont.)

To Choose Art Over Drugs

Academy of Dance Arts

Adapted from Student Interviews with
Newscaster Chynna Lockett

Original Broadcast: SDBP Radio

The annual Choose Art...Addiction

Refrained performance showcases teen dancers, musicians, poets, and painters in Rapid City, South Dakota. The goal: art education must overcome drug abuse. The dancers both choreograph and perform, and in the process, collaborate with student visual artists to vividly enhance their compositional intent. The ***Choose Art Project*** is a unique partnership between the Academy of Dance Arts and Lifeways, a local nonprofit that provides prevention, early-intervention and outpatient treatment services for students-at-risk.

In one dance, a choreographer imagined bold black eyes within a bright orange background, and in



another, constrained movement mimicked a city scape. Whimsical tap rhythms depicted the Mad Hatter's tea chaos in still another piece.

Students described the performance as “empowering.” Listen to their uplifting interviews and read their complete transcript at: <http://listen.sdpb.org/post/dancers-choose-art-over-drug>



NHSDA Preferred Vendors Program ~ A Win-Win Opportunity!

The ***NHSDA Preferred Vendor Program*** offers companies exciting ways to increase awareness of their quality products and services PLUS special benefits for our NHSDA students.

Preferred Vendor Benefits

(some restrictions may apply)

- ✓ Webpage Listing
- ✓ ***Dance Arts Now!*** Newsletter Listing and 1/2 Page Advertisement
- ✓ Social Media Package
- ✓ Scholarship Sponsorship

Learn more about this great program at:
nhda-ndeo.org/preferredvendors





Photo by Scott Shaw

Train in New York City!

Gibney Dance proudly welcomes visiting students to our centers in NYC to study with our renowned faculty, get a glimpse of life as a professional artist, and take advantage of the resources our community has to offer.

Programs are available throughout the year for both Group and Individual study. NHSDA member discounts available on select programs.

Learn more at GibneyDance.org/Explore-Classes



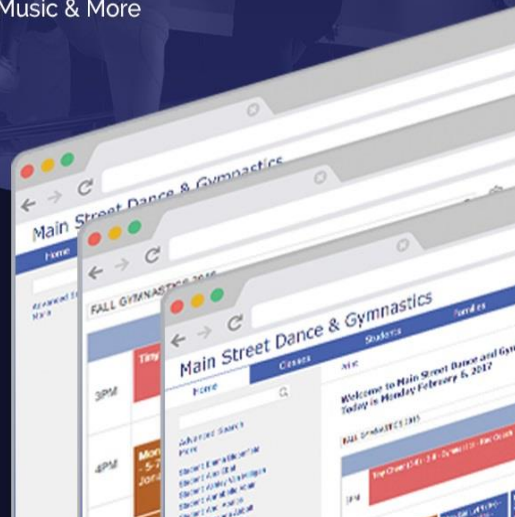
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A Dancer's Identity ~

Celebration of Lessons in Life

By: Akylah Cox

Advisor/Sponsor: Kathy Follensbee

Dr. Phillips High School Dance Magnet

Akylah is the recipient of the 2017 NHSDA Award, which she earned for her outstanding achievements in leadership, artistry, and academics.

I had always been the type of person to relish how others perceived me. At any cost, I strived to be the ultimate definition of *perfect*. With this mindset, I kept on a steady path through most of my preteen years...

However, I soon faced an unexpected challenge.

The dingy yellow walls remain ingrained in my conscience ~ the steel barre wrapped around the room as my sweaty hands gripped it with the little strength I had. To most, this scene is thought of as a place where little ballerinas aimlessly frolic up and down in multi-colored tutus. In reality, it was the biggest test of personal dexterity, pain capacity, and confidence I had ever experienced. I was 13 years old when my mother enrolled me at a local dance academy. She insisted it would provide the poise and structure imperative in my developmental years. Upon entering the studio, I began a visual scan of minute, often disturbing o.

Body Image ~ Muscular Versus Slender

Nothing could quite compare, however, to, the most prominent detail which was that I, an African American female with a naturally muscular build, was surrounded by Caucasian girls modeling slender physiques. The barrier between us was so distinctive that even the parents and instructors seemed to stare as if I was a foreign object.

Almost immediately I became self-conscious as I viewed my hourglass silhouette disguised by leotard and pink tights... attire unforgiving in every aspect. It took months to get over this

mental block; however, despite the contempt of negative onlookers, I improved quickly with the help of my Russian teacher.

As my rank and technique grew, so did the pressure. Girls sneered "She will never fit into the costumes" and coerced me into dangerous water diets to lose weight. My vulnerability was at an all-time low and I was willing to do anything to be the image of the ballerina on the posters that adorned the studio walls. After many years, I realized and *accepted* that I would never fit into this stringent societal mold.

Saving Grace

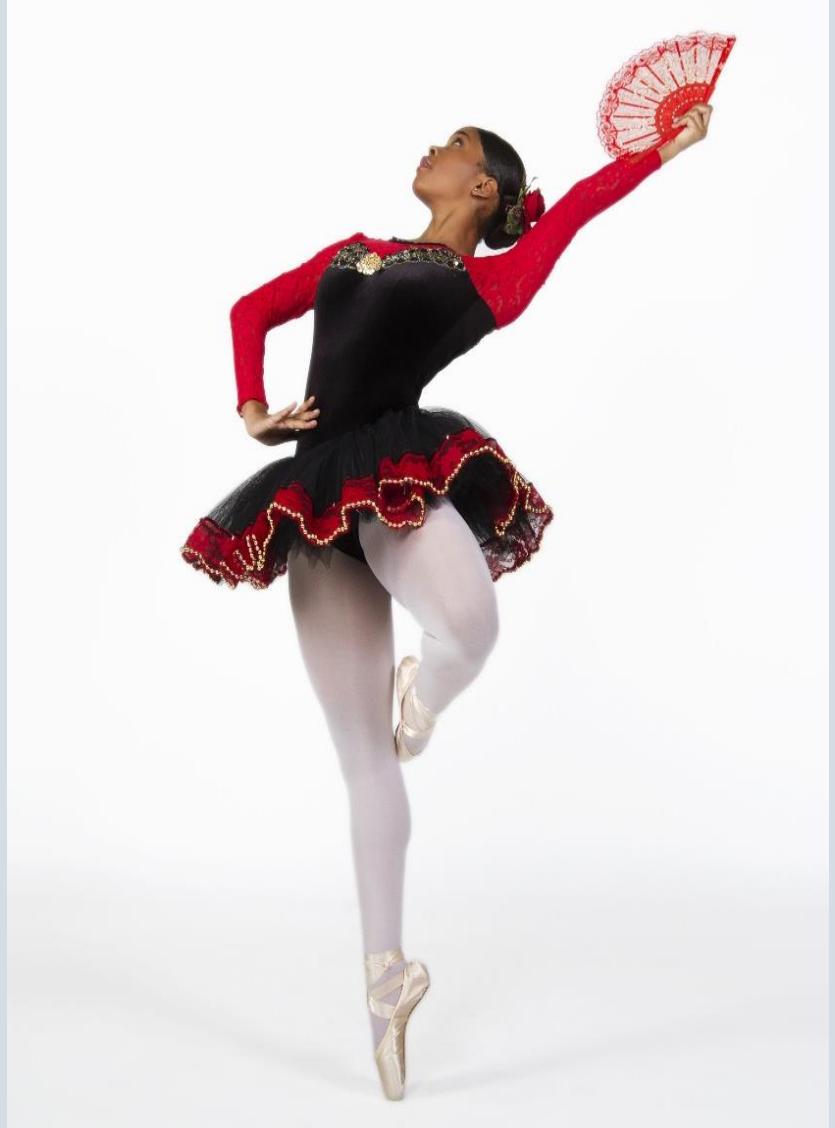
One of my saving graces was to audition for the Dance Magnet program at my zoned high school, which offered dance intensives with various concentrations. This ultimately took me away from the hierarchy of studio life, which then truly enlightened my perception of dance. The image presented of the dance room as a *sacred space* propelled my journey to become a true artist.

Realizations materialized that I had previously gone only through the motions, merely copying shapes rather than feeling deeply through the movement. In addition, inspirations emerged, such as Misty Copeland, the first African American ballerina to be a principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre. This icon showed me that I was not alone.

I am now serving as an ambassador for **Brown Girls Do Ballet**, an international nonprofit organization that advocates for increased diversity within the arts. In this role, I am fortunate to mentor young girls having difficult experiences like those that I had growing up and I hope they will be motivated to look beyond the barriers they are experiencing.

In modern times ~ with heavy weight on racial, gender, and identity unrest ~ people who dare to be different, to act, will eradicate negative labels and break destructive boundaries.

*Although I was not the ballerina on the posters, I challenged all perceptions by simply being me... **A Brown Ballerina.***



Escape: Creating Stillness

By: Jordan Gaskin

Advisor/Sponsor: Hope Hunter

Woodside Magnet High School

Denise Wall Dance Energy, Virginia Beach

As a magnet school recruiter and WHS dance company member, Jordan gives special presentations at local middle schools and in communities where children normally could not afford to attend a concert.

...Art imitates life, taking inspiration from personal experience. ~ Jordan Gaskin

The original intent of my choreography was to capture a snapshot of how I felt in the moment, and I needed to create a solo for college auditions and the upcoming competition season. I had feelings of being overwhelmed with all the choices I had to make, the fear of the unknown beyond my senior year, and the sense that I was carrying the weight of others' expectations on my shoulders. Nevertheless, I tapped into some of these facing anxieties and to draw upon those experiences as fuel for the piece.

Armed with Skills

For some of us dance is a brief career, but my studio director Denise Wall has exposed me to the real-life professional world, and renowned artists such as Misty Copeland act as inspiration. With this experience, I have found that I am blessed with two skills that set me apart from the average dancer: 1) the gift of teaching, and 2) the ability to comprehend and execute a correction. When Ms. Denise directs "push down into the floor in the prep," this approach frees me to complete more turns. While I assist the head ballet teacher, the young girls and boys happily apply my corrections, which then improves their technique. When a dancer is armed with these skills, he or she should truly make a lifelong career in dance, and these skills are key to continuing my life in the dance world. My future college degree should be a green light that will keep my choreography and performance from going unnoticed.

Overall, the creative process for my piece ran smoothly with the main challenge being ***to consistently remain clear about what I was expressing throughout the dance.*** Even if the audiences didn't pinpoint my exact meaning, I wanted them to follow with the arc of the story



without lyrics. I applied all my feelings and the power of line as material for both content and as emotional expression, ultimately to incorporate movement with instrumental music that would clearly reflect my theme... making the solo ***personal.***

openeye

By Choreographers: Maia Huang,
Julia Patston, Abby Ryan,
Emma Ryan, and Susan Zeh

Choreographic Advisor: Connor Cornelius
Chapter Advisor/Sponsor: Diane VanDerhei
INTUIT Dance!

“openeye” is a dance that we, a group of five girls, started in September and completed in June. Instead of having just one choreographer, we collaborated so to develop unexpected devices interwoven throughout the work.

Four main concepts based on improvisational explorations launched the dance:

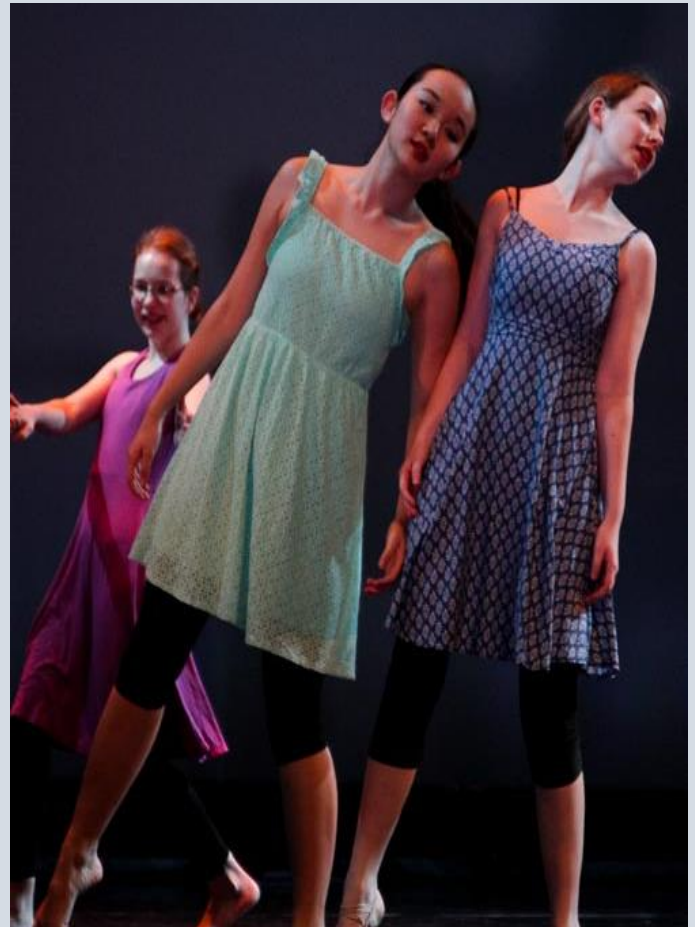
-  ***Puppet Master***
-  ***Flocking***
-  ***Consistent Contact***
-  ***Narrative***

Two of these images, ***Puppet Master*** and ***Narrative***, inspired the title ***openeye***, which would evolve in prolific ways.

From Concepts to Staging

In the ***Puppet Master*** improvisation, one or more ***Puppeteers*** figuratively or literally controlled one or more ***Puppets***. We incorporated this especially when three dancers poised on the ground were pushed and pulled to standing, when the whole group lifted one dancer like a hammock, and when a girl forced the others downward like falling dominos.

Flocking is an improvisational exercise in which the dancers follow a random leader in a role passed along throughout the work. Based on this concept we developed a set phrase of three dancers who formed a circle as they mimicked the other two dancers. Most of ***openeye*** branched off from ***Flocking*** as we incorporated more aspects of our ***Puppet Master*** phrase.



Consistent Contact was seen in the middle of the piece, when two groups, connected in some way, performed a duet in opposite corners of the stage. The concept was also seen when two girls holding each other's hands created a counterbalanced set, while the others danced acrobatically around and on them.

Originally, we didn't plan to have a set format, yet several identifiable moments surfaced within the ***Narrative***. The first big section demonstrated how two girls didn't get along. As they struggled to separate, the others encircled them. At a turning point, the same girls formed a bridge over the three other dancers, then all moved to the edges of the space before returning to the center. Our middle section represented the realization that negative actions lead to repercussions that harm others. Finally, in the last big section everyone congregated into

the center, clapping in a united syncopated rhythm.

Level Changes, Struggles, and Transformation

Level changes and facings became prominent elements throughout the dance. Initially, dancers positioned themselves at low levels, but then facings of half a phrase reversed direction and travelled throughout the space...with movements rebounding to and from center stage.

One aspect we struggled with was **timing**. Although we maintained a steady tempo throughout the piece, we could have contrasted speeding up with slowing down in a more dramatic way. This was due partly to our accompaniment comprised of clapping, which nevertheless helped us stay on the beat. This led to adding claps to certain dance sequences, giving a **Puppet Master versus Puppet** staccato quality.

As the dance evolved, we decided to keep our eyes open throughout to show the shift of our bodies because the audience could not necessarily see our faces. The driving **Narrative** explored how two dancers, struggling against each other at the very beginning, would finally realize that their external conflict had negatively affected the others ~ their eyes were finally opened through **openeye**.

*In retrospect,
we believe we blended
all the elements
that told a meaningful
story through dance.*



Mark Your Calendars!

- ✓ ***Dance a Difference Week, March 4-10***
- ✓ ***Thank a Dance Teacher Day, May 3***



Houston students cheer their teacher, Sanja Korman



Teaching Boys and Girls Dancing with Heart

By: Elizabeth (Chaille) Parry

Advisor/Sponsor: Bethany Hansen

Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts

Elizabeth participates in the Dance Conservatory and has been performing modern, ballet and jazz for 15 years. She hopes to attend a university to study dance and to open a studio of her own!

The E.C. (Elizabeth Chaille) Dance Company is a tuition free studio that I started in the summer of 2016. My goal: to help me develop skills as a choreographer and teacher, but most importantly to teach children the art of dance. Every Tuesday night my family helps transform the living room into a learning space for my dancers.

With four classes and 26 students (6 being boys!), ages 3-10, I teach basic modern and ballet techniques. The young dancers enjoy learning the basics, such as, how to pointe and flex their feet while balancing, hopping and turning! I smile to the little ones, "It doesn't matter if you kick yourself or miss a beat. It's about finding joy and feeling happy when you move and sway."



A few months ago, I decided that my dancers were ready to perform. Working many extra hours on top of teaching, a dance concert was in the making. With the help of my mom and my sister, we found costumes for each class, made a backdrop out of a cardboard box assembled with paint and tape, and reserved a church parish house.

The show opened with joyful audience applause, the dancers were amazing, and the process was a great learning opportunity for me as a teacher.



zcool.com.cn

Surprisingly, I was asked “Wow, you do this for free? I bet you would make a lot if you would charge for dance classes.” To me it’s not about the money, but teaching the passion of dance to young children as a way for them to express themselves with spirited movement.

Dance is such a beautiful art form that has done such good in my life, I wish to share this love with as many young dancers as I can throughout my career.



Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Parry





Lesson Plan for Ages 8 and Older

By: Elizabeth Parry

Advisor/Sponsor: Bethany Hansen

Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts



Start each class with a simple warm-up to wake up the entire body. The combination includes:

 *Pliés in parallel, first, and second positions*
 *Tendus in parallel and first positions*

 *Articulation through the feet*
 *Modern bell swings*




Goal: to allow children to reconnect with their physicality and to understand what is working in a comfortable way.


We then move to strengthen the body:

 *Crunches to center, right and left*
 *Sit-ups*
 *Planks*

 *Arm circles*
 *Calf lifts*

From there we do lots of technique, including:

 *Demi pliés and grand pliés in all positions*
 *Slow tendus*
 *Moving from demi to full point*

 *Keeping the body in alignment*
 *Balances into passés*
 *Modern C-curves*

Once the dancers are warmed up, we go into gentle stretches. I change the stretching series each week depending on the dancers' abilities.


Key: always remember to breath!

After the dancers have warmed up the entire body we move across the floor. This includes:

 *Leaps*
 *Skip*

 *Step hops*
 *Slides*

Movement phrases demonstrate our children's accomplishments that day.

Once comfortable with these exercises, we combine them all to create a dance that they will perform in the spring showcase! 

Spring Break Collage

Dancing in

Central Park!

**Advisor/Sponsor: Jessy Kronenberg
El Cerrito High School**

The students pictured here were rehearsing a piece designed as a compilation of all the classes they participated in while in NYC at Peridance, Broadway Dance Center, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater ~ ***Bravo!***





Dance Arts Now!

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