



# ON POINTE

September  
2009

Newsletter of the Marblehead School of Ballet and North Shore Civic Ballet

## MSB/NSCB Director Receives Lifetime Achievement Award



Paula K. Shiff Receiving Lifetime Achievement Award from Salem State President Patricia Maguire Meservey

At what age can one hope to find true love? For Paula K. Shiff, the director of the Marblehead School of Ballet and North Shore Civic Ballet, the answer came at a very young age. As Ms. Shiff explained, "From my first glance at a dance class I was mesmerized. My sister was taking a dance class and my mother took me along to watch. I told her that I wanted to dance but she said I was too young. As I grew my obsession grew and I and begged and begged until she said yes. *I was four years old.* My exhausted mother finally agreed to sign me up for classes."

It was this passion - this obsession - that led to Salem State College awarding Ms. Shiff with the Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award, the first person in the field of dance to receive it. The path that led to that wonderful night in May is one full of joy and hard work.

Her training began at the Boston Ballet under the direction of E. Virginia Williams, founder and director of Boston Ballet. She performed for many years with Boston Ballet, received a BS degree from U of Mass, Amherst, and continued her studies in New York at the American Ballet Theatre and the Martha Graham Studio. Eventually, she returned to Boston Ballet.

E. Virginia Williams encouraged her to consider bringing classical ballet to the North Shore. And so the Marblehead School of Ballet was created in 1971. She was determined to have a school providing quality education and individual attention for all, allowing aspiring professionals and avocational dancers of all ages to achieve their goals.

From the beginning MSB had a full ballet curriculum, modern dance, jazz, scholarship program, related academics (anatomy, injury prevention, Sutton movement notation, interdisciplinary arts, music theory, dance history and more). MSB offered a great variety of specialized programs & courses over the years.

To help students understand the relationship between dance and the other cultural arts, Ms. Shiff brought inspiring guest teachers & choreographers, musicians, sculptors, painters, and photographers to work in class with the dancers. She also took dancers on field trips to master classes, dance, music, and theatre performances, museums and other enrichment activities. She took the advanced dancers to New York, many of whom received scholarships at Joffrey Ballet. Ms. Shiff's teaching philosophy has been a commitment to excellence for each individual dancer, a problem solving approach to bring each dancer to their best potential.

There have been many collaborations over the years, one of which was working with Valerie Sutton, the innovator of Sutton Movement Notation and an expert in Bournonville technique. This led to helping to write a ballet dictionary using Notation, working with Walnut Hill dancers, as well as other exciting projects.

She was among the first in the Boston community to attend the first dance medicine seminar in New York. Team teaching with physical therapist Christine Ploski led to the development of the stretch and strength class and other cross training courses; Pilates, Gyrokinesis, yoga and special cross - training programs for skaters.

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## Ruth N. Shiff Memorial Fund by Paula K. Shiff



Ruth N. Shiff

My mother always teased that she should have zigged instead of zagged when taking me to my first dance class. But she did zag, and here we are. The school was built on the foundation of her strength and personality. She was here every day and used to say that she had the best job there ever was. It was always a pleasure, she had tenure, and it only cost her coffee and the daily papers!

In 1998 Mom died, and there are many of you now in the school who did not know her. She was the greeter, the mentor, the advisor and a second mother to many of our students. She never took credit for her good deeds and never asked for recognition, but her work was fundamental to the success of both the Marblehead School of Ballet and the North Shore Civic Ballet.

Shortly after her death we established the Ruth N. Shiff Memorial Fund. The fund has helped support the Summer Dance Intensives, purchased educational materials and, most importantly, helped many students over the years with scholarship subsidies for their class tuition.

Mrs. Shiff believed in the school and the company so strongly that she gave selflessly to them. It is with this in mind that we request your assistance in keeping this fund strong and its work alive.

Contributions are tax deductible and may be made in honor of, or in memory of, a relative, friend, or an event. Or you may simply wish to support dance. Checks may be made payable to the Ruth N. Shiff Memorial Fund and mailed c/o the Marblehead School of Ballet, 115 Pleasant Street, Marblehead, MA 01945.

Finally, I would like to express my unending gratitude to my mother for the many years she spent helping to create this special experience with the arts that has touched so many lives. My mother was, and still is, the wind beneath my wings!

## Pas de Deux

In what has become an annual tradition, Charles Dalerçi of Paris, France, returned for the Summer Dance Intensive. Charles, who studies at a conservatory in Avignon, enjoyed the individualized instruction of MSB director Paula K. Shiff so much that he once again extended his stay two additional weeks. During his visit he worked very hard six days a week, taking the time to enjoy some of what our country has to offer, such as museums, shopping, barbecues, and even a children's birthday party.

This year Charles brought a friend. Like Charles, his friend Elisa Laristan is also from France, where she studies dance at a conservatory in Paris. Although she could only stay two weeks, Elisa enjoyed her time here so much that she hopes to return next year and bring a few friends. If things continue in this manner perhaps we will have to offer French as part of the Summer Dance Intensive.



Charles and Elisa

It was a pleasure having Charles and Elisa here, and it was a real joy watching them perform a Pas de Deux. We truly hope that they can return next summer.

## Marblehead Library Sponsors Lecture Series on the History of Ballet

Myrna Wormser will present a series of multimedia lectures on Ballet, its history and place in the arts. Ms. Wormser performed with the National Ballet of Canada and the New York City and the Santa Fe Operas. She has taught at numerous schools including the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. In addition, she has choreographed plays, opera and ballets in the United States, Canada and Europe. The course will meet on six Sunday afternoons in the Meeting room on the lower floor of the Abbot Library from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. The dates are October 4, 11, 18, and 25, and November 8 and 15.

## Events: September – December 2009

- Sep. 10 – Oct. 15** Belly dancing series, Thursdays at 7 PM. Taught by Xylinia.
- Sep. 22 – Oct. 26** Salsa, six week series, Mondays at 7:30 PM. Singles welcome – no partner necessary. No class on October 12.
- Sep. 18- Oct. 23** Fridays, six weeks series: Intermediate Argentine Tango at 6:30 PM, Ballroom at 7:30 PM and Beginner Argentine Tango at 8:30 PM.
- Sep. 12** Let's Dance Together for ages 2 ½ to 4 begins with Mary Lee Karlins.
- Sep. 13** National Dance Week: MSB students ask your dance teacher for a special coupon and bring a friend to class.
- Sep. 13** **Jeanette Neille will teach a Jazz Master Class from 2-4.**
- Sep. 18** **NSCB will perform new choreography by Ivan Korn at Salem State College.**
- Sep. 26 – Nov. 28** Saturdays from 2:00 – 3:00, Repertory class taught by Ivan Korn. Performance TBA.
- Sep. 29 – Nov. 3** Tuesdays from 5:15 to 6:30 Mary Lee Karlins a Child/Teen Improvisation and Composition class. Performance date TBA.
- Sep. 29 – Dec. 1** Tuesdays from 6:45 – 8:15, Repertory class taught by Mary Lee Karlins. Performance TBA
- Dec. 18** Holiday dance party for salsa and ballroom students. TBA.
- Nov. 1 – Dec. 5** **Online auction** at <http://ballet.cmarket.com>. All proceeds benefit the NSCB.

## Graduations

It is that time of year again, when the students we have watched grow up graduate from High School and head to college. We wish them well and hope that they will come and visit (and maybe take a few classes).



Mollie Frederiksen will attend Holyoke College.



Emily Pautler will attend Bay State College to study Physical Therapy.

## Alumni News

Katy Muise is off to California to pursue her dreams. We all wish her well!

A number of people have dropped by the school this summer to take classes or to just say hello, including Julie Pappas, Jennie Edwards, Megan Kartstein, and Sabrina Rosenberg.



Kelly Walsh will attend Stonehill College where she will study nursing.



Erin McAuliffe graduated from Beverly High School. She will spend a year in Germany before attending college.

## NSCB to Perform at Salem State College

The NSCB will be one of the dance companies participating in The Celebration of North Shore Dance. The NSCB will perform new choreography by Ivan Korn. The performance will be at the Mainstage Theater on September 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 P.M. General admission is \$15 and is \$10 for students and seniors. It is free with an SSC student ID.

# Director Receives Lifetime Achievement Award (continued)

It also led to the development of a Dance Medicine Clinic at MSB. Ms. Shiff went on to teach ballet to children with physical disabilities at Shaugnessy Rehabilitation Hospital. MSB continues its strong collaboration with David Roberts of North Shore Physical Therapy. He has been a tremendous help to MSB.

The lifetime recipient believes that an important development in the artistry of a dancer is performance. A performance vehicle, North Shore Civic Ballet, a not-for profit dance company, was established by Paula K. Shiff with Florence C. Whipple in 1974. Florence taught at the studio from its first year, teaching modern and a comprehensive creative movement program. Both choreographed for performances, and designed residency programs for schools, theatre performances, and the general public. NSCB, a one time member of National Association of Regional Ballet, has been home to an ever-changing group of seasoned professionals and aspiring young dancers, performing on the North Shore and throughout Greater Boston. Its members have gone on to professional careers in ballet companies, modern and musical theatre as choreographers, teachers, arts administrators, actors, physical therapists and more. They have been in companies such as: Eliot Feld, Alvin Ailey, Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, and other groups known nationally and internationally.

In addition to directing and teaching at MSB and NSCB, Ms. Shiff has taught at Salem State College, North Shore Community College and been a guest teacher and coach throughout New England.

Thirty-eight years into this flourishing career, Ms. Shiff looks positively to the future of dance.

"Dance enriches all of life, teaching discipline, grace, self-control, musicality, and other qualities that carry over into all professions. We learn *to* dance and we learn *from* dance. We celebrate the elegance and power and range of the human form, the beauty of storytelling, the mastery of the musician, the visual artist, and the sculptor.

We are committed to this artistic world with its deep roots in history and theatre and we welcome all opportunities to expand our horizons."

Paula K. Shiff

## Wish List

We are in need of people and donations that will help make Fiesta De Baile and our holiday auction successful fund raisers. Some of our needs include:

<b>Volunteers to help plan, prepare, and work at the Fiesta De Baile</b>	<b>New or used piano in good condition New or used piano bench or stool in good condition</b>	<b>Items for our-holiday auction</b>
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**Also see the MSB wish list on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).**

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