



Pas de Chat

Volume 11, Number 4

Newsletter of The Stapleton School of the Performing Arts

March 2006

From the desk of the Executive Director

Dear Stapleton families,

It's hard to believe that I have been here for two months already! It has been a whirlwind of activity, including preparations for our spring ballet, *La Fille Mal Gardée*; auditions and casting for *Annie*, the first production of our theatre arts division; programming new classes, including the expansion of our adult program and the addition of new dance classes; preparations for the upcoming end of year dance demonstrations; and planning for summer (and the school year beyond). As hectic as it has been, I am loving every minute of being part of this wonderful Stapleton family. A big thank-you to the faculty for making me feel so warm and welcome from the moment I arrived! I also appreciate all of the familiar (and new) faces that have popped into the office to say "Hi" (or ask about that darn cast on my left wrist)!!

It is a joy to come to work every day with people who are passionate about what they do. Our faculty is acutely aware of the impact they have on our children, and they strive to help them be successful, responsible individuals. Beginning this month, we will

be including periodic articles in the Pas de Chat, called "Faculty Features". These profiles will help you learn more about the wonderful, talented team of professionals we have here at SSPA.

Another semi-regular feature will be the "Board of Directors Update", designed to keep you informed about the work our board is conducting behind the scenes. These dynamic people share our vision and selflessly give their time and energy to help our school succeed. As is often the case, their work often goes unnoticed. I hope that this feature will help keep our families connected to the valuable work these folks are doing.

Please make your plans now to be entertained by us in May! The Youth Company has been working diligently on *La Fille Mal Gardée*; and over seventy adults, teens and children have been rehearsing tirelessly for the Theatre Company production of the family favorite, *Annie*. Attending these shows is sure to be the easiest (and most entertaining) way to show your support for the Stapleton School!

Sharon Burns

Let Us Entertain You & Your Family!

Stapleton Ballet presents
La Fille mal Gardée

A playful young girl falls in love with her neighbor, but her strict mother has other plans for her! The classical comic ballet *La Fille Mal Gardée* (translation: the poorly chaperoned daughter) is one of the earliest full-length ballets, dating back to the late 18th century. It is a light, romantic story of two young lovers: Lisa and Colas, who outsmart Lisa's domineering mother, Madame Simone, who wants her to marry Alain, the idiot son of a wealthy farmer. This rustic and charming ballet features bright, happy dancing and lots of humor. Faculty member Charles Torres will perform the role of Alain; and Spencer Lewis (2005 Nutcracker Prince) returns to dance the role of Colas. This light-hearted, charming ballet offers wonderful family entertainment.

Performances are Saturday May 6 at 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. at the Marin Center Showcase Theater. Seats are limited and we are hoping for two sold out shows. Please support our school by attending this wonderful Stapleton Youth Company Ballet production. Tickets are available from the Marin Center box office at 499-6800.

Stapleton Theatre Company
Annie

An orphan, Annie, and her dog Sandy are placed in the lap of luxury for a week as a part of a publicity campaign for the rich and sometimes heartless Oliver Warbucks. However, Annie's stay turns out to be much more than anyone had bargained for as she works her way into everyone's heart and learns a few things for herself. Everyone knows the classic, heartwarming story of Annie, and this production promises to breathe new life into this familiar, much-loved story! Actors, young and old, have been rehearsing since early February. In fact, the only member of the cast that hasn't been working yet is Sandy, the dog! After a county-wide "star search", the dog is now in place and will be going through the paces with the two young ladies that will be sharing the starring role of Annie. The production also features spectacularly choreographed dance numbers and a live orchestra!

The Stapleton Theatre Company is proud to present six performances of Annie, from May 5 through May 14. Show times are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 and Sundays at 2:00. Advance tickets may be purchased through the SSPA office, and you will save \$4 per ticket (general) over door prices.

See you at the shows!

CALENDAR CORNER

Apr. 3-June 11
Session 4
Tuition Now Due

May 6 ~ 1:00 & 5:00 p.m.
La Fille mal Gardée
Showcase Theatre, Marin Center

May 5-7 & May 12-14
Stapleton Theatre Company's
ANNIE
The Playhouse, San Anselmo

Jun 4 & 11
Dance Demonstrations

Board of Directors Update

On the heels of a board retreat held in January, the Board of Directors has been working diligently, undertaking a number of strategic projects designed to enhance our school. Outreach, marketing and assessment of school programs are areas in which the Board has taken a proactive approach.

This group of dedicated volunteers work behind the scenes and some of you may not know who they are! The current Board President is Martha Lee; others serving on the board include Bernie O'Halloran, Lorien Fenton, Evan Ross, and Virginia Stapleton. Recent appointees to the board include Julie Kimball, Grant "Buzz" Halsing, and Karen Thouvenin. Many of you know Julie through her work as our volunteer coordinator. Buzz and Karen formerly served on the Town Players Advisory Board, and bring experience and enthusiasm to the SSPA Board.

Maureen Maguire recently resigned from the board, after serving several terms. Maureen is a long-time supporter of Virginia and the school, and played a significant role in our board's development. Maureen is the mother of dancer Shanna Kohn. The Board and the school thank and acknowledge Maureen for all of her contributions!

Several of the projects the Board has in development include a scholarship program, both to formalize the application process and identify funding to support scholarships; design of a marketing piece including text and photos that capture the essence of our school and its history; and an outreach program to grandparents of students.

If you would like more information on the Board, please email me at sharon@stapletonschool.org.

Got Buns?

All dancers' hair must be secured in a bun for class.

Faculty feature: *Janelle Baumsteiger*

Janelle is a native San Franciscan, and was raised in Mill Valley, on Mt. Tam. She began dancing as a young child, and luckily, has never stopped! As a youngster, Janelle loved to perform for family and friends. She began her ballet training at age 8, and eventually danced with the Marin Ballet for five years. Janelle also loved German folk dancing and danced with German clubs throughout High School, before graduating from Tamalpais H.S. in 1983. Janelle continued her education as a dance major at Sonoma State University, after embarking on what she calls her "bravest deed...so far": a three-month solo journey through Europe!

Dancing seems to have "blessed" Janelle's life. She met her husband, Jeff, at a German May Day dance in Strawberry. They were married two years later, and a German band entertained at their reception. Their first dance was a waltz to Blue Danube!

Janelle and Jeff have four children, who have inherited their mother's love for dance. They are: Josh (18), Rebecca (17), Lizzie (13), and Philip (10). Janelle met Virginia Stapleton when Josh was taking a ballet class with a friend from pre school! After Lizzie was born, Janelle began taking adult classes at SSPA. Her passion and love for dance was reignited and she was inspired by the SSPA philosophy. In 1996, Janelle joined the SSPA faculty. All of Janelle's children have performed in the Stapleton Nutcracker. This past year, it was very special to see Janelle perform with three of her four children.

When Janelle is not dancing or teaching, she lives in San Anselmo with one husband, four kids, seven chickens, two outdoor cats (Pumpkin & Kiki), one indoor turtle (Capone) and an indoor fish. She and Jeff enjoy dancing together, working in their garden, and spending time with their kids.

Jazzercise®: Check your baggage at the door!

We all carry excess baggage, and I don't just mean pounds! Bad moods, exercise phobias, stress, pms, body image issues, lack of motivation. It's time to check your baggage at the door and join one of our great Jazzercise classes!

Our certified instructor, Deborah Russo, is one of the most friendly and encouraging people you will ever meet. Deborah's warm and welcoming style makes it easy to leave the baggage behind, and come in for a good workout. When you love your workout, the re-

sults come easy. The Jazzercise blend of aerobics, yoga, Pilates and kickboxing movements, all set to fresh music, is an invigorating workout for all fitness levels. We now offer Jazzercise **five days a week from 8:45 to 9:45 a.m.** It is perfectly timed so you can come right after dropping off the kids at school. We also offer early morning class on Mon, Wed and Fri from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. And our newest class, Jazzercise Lite, is catering to pre and post natal Moms, although all fitness levels are welcome. This class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Jazzercise is a fun (and very affordable) way to work out regularly. Monthly passes begin as low as \$40! Even if you only get to two classes per week, that's just \$5 per class. Call or email Deborah at 451-8192x3 or russojazz@yahoo.com for more info.

Pilates

Strengthens and Tones

Have you heard or read about Pilates and contemplated taking a class? We've just made it easy for you! We are pleased to offer this new Pilates program in conjunction with the San Anselmo Recreation Dept. Jamaica Janowicz, a certified Pilates instructor, is now offering mat classes two days per week, at our Greenfield studio. Pilates focuses on abdominal and back strength, flexibility, and spinal mobility. Come join us and get a great workout in a fun and pleasant atmosphere! Class meets on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays, from 10 to 11:00 a.m. The eight week session runs from 4/18-6/8; and a discount is offered if you sign up for both days. Sign up for two days for just \$153 (a savings of \$13). One day per week is \$83 for eight weeks. Call 258-4640 or 454-5759 for additional information.

APRIL 15th IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER...

Need a tax write off? Our annual Direct Appeal Campaign needs you...sounds like a perfect match! Donor envelopes are available in the main studio lobby.

BalletFocus

New Adult Program

We are pleased to announce that Catherine Sim, formerly of San Francisco Dance Theater, Oakland Ballet, and Chair, College of Marin Dance Dept., is joining us to teach a special "**BalletFocus**" class for adults on Wednesday evenings. BalletFocus is a one hour class which addresses specific areas of ballet, a few at a time. It includes clear explanations, individual attention, simple combinations and working tools. Areas of focus include dance and technique, phrasing, musicality, timing vs. rhythm, and expression. Students should have some prior dance training. The new class begins Wed. April 5 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., at our Fourth Street studio. A six class card is just \$66. For more information, please call 454-5759.

Hip Hop

...is totally happening! We have a small group of students taking the Wednesday Hip Hop class with Liza Matlack, and they are having a blast! They're enjoying high energy music while they learn all the funky moves as seen in all the hottest music videos. The class is for students ages 10 to 14 years, meets on Wednesday (early release day) from 2:35 to 3:35 at the main studio and will be ongoing through the end of the school year. We are hoping to add a few more students and work on a routine for the end of year dance demos. If you want to join the fun, give us a call at 454-5759.

We Need Your Help!

Are you getting our emails?

We have begun doing regular email blasts to keep our school community informed of new programs, special events, and other important news. If you are NOT receiving these emails (subject: SSPA Announcements), please notify me by sending an email to sharon@stapletonschool.org. I will add your name to the email list. Thanks!

Come see our spring production of *La Fille mal Gardée*, a humorous and entertaining comic ballet, great for all ages!

The tear-off coupon is for Stapleton School students and offers \$3 discount off a youth ticket with the purchase of an adult ticket. We really want to encourage all of our families to attend and support the work of our Youth Company and staff on this wonderful project.

The coupon must be presented in person at the Marin Center Box Office to receive the discount. (Not valid with phone orders.) Thank you!

\$3 off

La Fille mal Gardée

This coupon entitles this Stapleton dancer to \$3 off the price of a youth ticket with the purchase of an adult ticket.