

ALEXANDRA ZAHARIAS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

New Board President at the Helm

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The Board of Directors of Alexandra Ballet has named Greg Chastain as President upon retirement of long-time board member and president, David Lucas.

Chastain has served on the board for two years, and brings with him a dynamic appreciation for the arts. Employed by Bemis Company, Inc., as Director of Sales, Paper Packaging Division, he is a long-standing supporter of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Repertory Theatre, and Dance St. Louis, and brings to Alexandra Ballet a considerable understanding of the arts scene here in St. Louis.

Eager to spread his enthusiasm for the arts in general, and for ballet in particular, Chastain has authored an article entitled "*Ballet for Daddies*," an entertaining and informative comparison of the world of ballet to the world of professional sports, intended to help teach sports-oriented fathers an appreciation of the art form. (See "*Ballet for Daddies*" on page 4)

Artistic Director Alexandra Zaharias had this response about the new president, "Greg is a knowledgeable, approachable leader, and will certainly make a wonderful president for our board. He knows how to communicate effectively, and believes in the team approach."

"On top of that," she continued, "He's a lot of fun to be around. That enthusiasm of his is contagious."

Chastain had this to say, "We have a dedicated core group of volunteers at Alexandra Ballet, and I'm excited to lead the Board of Directors of this fine organization."



According to Chastain, the board will be tightly focused on development and marketing this year. He takes over at a critical time in the life of the non-profit organization, and expresses a positive attitude about the job that lies ahead.

"We need to retire the debt we took on last season in order to host the Regional Dance America MidStates ballet festival, without putting a constraint on the artistic vision of the company," he explains, adding, "We have a great product to offer, and we need to get the word out to the community about it. Alexandra Ballet's Board of Directors and dedicated volunteers will make sure this happens in an organized and professional manner."

Reaching New Heights with Boeing



Research has shown that children involved in the arts are more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, read for pleasure, be elected to class office, participate in a math or science fair, or participate in youth groups*. Unfortunately, as schools are striving to "leave no child behind," their budgets for arts education are shrinking to an all time low. Parents must look to organizations outside the school system to balance their children's instruction in academia with lessons in the arts.

Arts organizations are experiencing their own financial struggles as they face the challenge to produce quality programs that will fill the gap. For example, Alexandra Ballet has provided thousands of students the opportunity to attend free live performances through annual **Young People's Performances**.

(Continued on Page 2)

Alexandra Ballet is Funded in Party By:



And For Our Next Performance...

The Great Russian Nutcracker

November 18, 7:30 pm
November 19, 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm
Blanche M. Touhill
Performing Arts Center
Tickets: Touhill Box Office
314-516-4949

Back by popular demand, Alexandra Ballet hosts Moscow Ballet's *Great Russian Nutcracker* for the third thrilling year! Due to the wonderful response last year, Moscow Ballet has added another performance to their schedule here in St. Louis. Local dancers representing more than a dozen area ballet schools participate in this production, and have been rehearsed by the gifted ballet mistresses of Alexandra Ballet. They join the prestigious 50-member Russian company in this dazzling holiday tradition. Alexandra Ballet is proud to provide the community once again with this truly exciting experience—an incredible production unsurpassed in the St. Louis region!

The Nutcracker

Sugar Plum Parties

November 25

9:15 am, 10:45 am, and 12:15 pm

Presented by Saint Louis Galleria

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

Start your holiday season by joining the talented dancers of Alexandra Ballet for this wonderful tradition at the Famous Barr Court in the lower level of the Saint Louis Galleria. The event begins with "sugar plum" treats and holiday crafts for the children, followed by an entertaining, narrated version of *The Nutcracker*, abbreviated to adapt to young audiences. This is the perfect opportunity to introduce your child to the beautiful world of ballet. Tickets are free, but registration is required before each performance.

An Evening of Romance

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Paquita

March 18, 2006, 7:30 pm

March 19, 2006, 2:00 pm

Blanche M. Touhill

Performing Arts Center

Tickets: Touhill Box Office

314-516-4949

WORLD PREMIERE!

Join the talented dancers of Alexandra Ballet, incredible guest artists, and children from Alexandra School of Ballet for the world premiere of Marek Cholewa's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Based on Shakespeare's comedic tale of adventures and misadventures, mortals and fairies, romance and mischief, this production is set to the lyrical score by Felix Mendelssohn. The evening ends with the majestic classical ballet with Spanish flair, *Paquita*, staged by Zhanna Dubrovskaya of Salt Creek Ballet.

Alexandra Ballet Expands Scholarship Program

In 2001, Alexandra Ballet established a scholarship fund, which has since enabled several dancers to continue their training with the Company in the event of financial need. Later that year, the fund was appropriately named the "Dace Dindonis Scholarship Fund," in memory of the Company's long-time colleague and friend who suddenly passed away. Dindonis was a prolific, award-winning choreographer who created more than 85 works during her twenty-year career. Her work with Alexandra Ballet included *Harlequinade*, *Coppélia*, *Aubade*, and many others.

Since the inception of the fund, a scholarship performance has been offered each year to help raise the resources needed to supply the scholarship fund. We are pleased that the funds raised have enabled us to offer three scholarships each year since the fund was created.

The success of the scholarship fund has encouraged us to begin the process of expanding the program beyond current Company members, enabling all qualified, underserved students in the St. Louis region the opportunity to study and train with Alexandra Ballet. Scholarships, funded by foundations and corporations in the area, would provide funds to cover recipients' Company classes, fees, uniforms, and RDA MidStates Festival expenses.

Applicants will be required to complete a scholarship application and audition for the Company in the spring of 2006.

Work has begun to establish guidelines and submit requests for funding to local organizations, corporations, and individuals. We hope to be able to offer several additional scholarships for the 2006-2007 season, and look forward to sharing more information about the expanded scholarship fund as it becomes available.

If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund and enable a deserving young person the opportunity to receive the best dance training in St. Louis, please send in your donation with the attached donor form and check the box marked "scholarship fund." You'll see a great return on your investment!

Reaching New Heights with Boeing

(continued from page 1)

Children from the rural areas of our region to the inner city of St. Louis have experienced the excitement of *Musical, Magical, Moving* (2005), *The Sleeping Beauty* (2004), *Alice in Wonderland* (2003), *La Fille Mal Gardée* (2002), *Coppelia* (2001), and other thrilling ballet productions. With an annual budget approaching \$10,000 for this one educational program alone, Alexandra Ballet must turn to the community it serves to help fund this comprehensive fine arts initiative.

Fortunately, more and more corporations are recognizing the value of arts education, and are lending a hand to provide these experiences to young people who might never have the opportunity otherwise.

Boeing is one of the organizations leading the way in this effort. The Boeing Employees Community Fund is an employee-owned and managed charitable giving fund that supports community service agencies in regions where Boeing employees live and work. Through a generous grant of \$3,000, this fund

has helped to ensure that the **Young People's Performance** of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be presented on March 17, 2006 at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center. As always, another full house is expected for both morning and afternoon performances on that day—a special day that the dancers and staff of Alexandra Ballet eagerly anticipate each year.

It makes sense that a company that values "leadership, integrity, quality...people working together...a diverse and involved team," would partner with Alexandra Ballet to instill these traits in the next generation. We are grateful for the contribution from **Boeing**, and look forward to a continued partnership in the future.

If you or your company would like to make a contribution to Alexandra Ballet's **2006 Young People's Performance** of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, please contact our office at 314-469-6222, or email us at alexandra@alexandraballet.com.

*Source: Dr. Shirley Brice Heath, Stanford University, for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

From Russia with Love: A Dancer's Travelogue

Last summer, Alexandra Ballet alumna Andrea Lucas was one of a small group of dancers given the rare opportunity to study ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia, at the invitation of Marek Cholewa, Professor of Dance at Butler University. Andrea kept a journal of her activities, and has agreed to share her account of some of the extraordinary things she experienced.

May 23-24, 2005

...After taking off from Indianapolis, we headed to New York City. I saw the beautiful New York skyline once again, and it was so agonizing to know I wasn't going to get off the plane to enjoy it. But I remembered that I am going to get to experience new and exciting places, instead, maybe even more magnificent than New York...

...When we landed in Prague, it was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. The buildings and the perfect landscape looked like something straight out of a painting. Everything looked so lush and pure that I could not help thinking how lucky I was just to see this part of the world...now I am officially on my way to St. Petersburg...

May 25

"St. Petersburg is quite different compared to U.S. cities. The architecture is so beautiful and elegant that you can just imagine the way it looked so long ago. I saw the Mariinsky Theatre today on our way to ballet class...It is a beautiful green building, gilded in gold, and it looks exactly like I have seen in so many books while growing up.

...had ballet class, pointe class, and character dance today. The character teacher is extremely beautiful. She was a former ballerina with the Kirov...and her beautiful port de bras and expressive eyes were mesmerizing....

May 26

"...after class, we went to the Hermitage with the group. Miss Ruffo was right when she told me how spectacular it is. The entire building is art. The building's exterior is magnificent, and every single room is covered from top to bottom with beautiful art, and even gold. I was able to see original paintings from Picaso, da Vinci, & Gougin...I am definitely looking forward to going to again to see more of the museum's 300 rooms!

May 27

"...The ballet classes are amazing... After only three days I already feel I am stronger and am improving. The ballet classes taught by Madame Nina are tough but well rounded. Class moves VERY fast, but we get lots of good attention and corrections...

May 28

"I cannot begin to describe the emotions I felt today. I saw the Kirov (Mariinsky) Ballet perform for the first time at the Mariinsky Theatre. I am having trouble finding words to describe what I just experienced. It was as if every single pas de deux in all of my favorite ballets as a child

were put into one performance and performed by the greatest dancers in the world—and performed in the greatest, most famous theatre in the world!

"...It was a Gala Performance consisting of several pas de deux...I saw *La Fille Mal Gardée*, *Don Quixote*, *Le Corsaire*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Olegin*, *Flower Festival*, and *The Dying Swan* solo. I wept and was overcome with emotion when I heard the music begin. I have grown up with that music and have seen old videos and photos of Anna Pavlova performing that role she originated, and it was absolutely amazing to see it performed in Russia.

"...I have never watched a performance quite like it, not just because of the phenomenal dancing, but because the audience was like nothing I had seen before. People were completely packed, shoulder-to-shoulder everywhere in the theatre, and I have never been surrounded by so many enthusiastic ballet fans! People applauded and cheered even before the music began or the dancers danced, because they were so excited for what was to come.

"...I feel so fortunate to have begun studying here and experiencing so many great ballet performances at the very city and theatre where so many great dancers performed so long ago.

June 1, 2005

"...wonderful day in Russia! I rushed home after class to eat dinner and prepare to go see *Don Quixote*—what an experience! One of my all-time favorite ballets on the Mariinsky stage! I was able to get a seat close to the stage, and it was so exciting to be so close to the dancers while they were dancing that I could see every emotion on their faces! My favorite dancer was not Kitri (who I thought it would be), but the Queen of the Dryads. She was tall and very leggy, with amazing strength, stamina, and grace. She is quite an inspiration, and something for me to strive toward.

June 3

"This day was absolutely amazing! There are not enough words to describe how lucky I feel. I cannot believe I just saw *La Bayadère* at the Mariinsky Theatre!! Everything was absolutely astonishing. The dancers are out-of-this-world incredible, and every aspect and detail was remarkable. I got chills up and down my spine as I saw the Kingdom of the Shades begin. I could not believe that I was lucky enough to have performed that piece just a few weeks earlier with my company, and there I was, now sitting in the Mariinsky watching the Kirov perform it!

"Some people might be intimidated by these dancers and ask themselves, 'why bother dancing?' when they know they will never look like the Russian dancers. I am greatly inspired, though, by these artists...watching them makes me fall in love with ballet all over again.

June 4

"...after seeing the beautiful palace at Peterhof (there is without a doubt no other place on earth like it), we were off to the Mariinsky again.

Tonight, we saw *The Nutcracker*! The story here in Russia is much different...the snowflakes wear black, mice were dressed as humans, and the Sugarplum Fairy never danced—she did, however, have a beautiful pink dress! I enjoyed the ballet, but I still love the good old Christmas version I grew up with more.

June 6

"...saw *Swan Lake* tonight. The corps de ballet was perfect, every leg was in sync, and every arm was identical. It was like a dream to watch...Tomorrow night we see *The Sleeping Beauty*, and are back in class early in the morning—time to get to work and strive to be like the wonderful dancers we are seeing every night.

June 7,

"...quite stressful at the performance tonight. It was a packed house...for *The Sleeping Beauty*...it felt as though everyone in St. Petersburg wanted to see this performance tonight! It was very hard to get a good view, and ended up switching seats about five times...exhausting but fun.

June 9,

"...We learned some new barre combinations in Character class today, and then a Gypsy dance, where we got to wear long, flowing, beautiful skirts. It was very difficult to pick up the steps, but in the end it was great fun to dance.

June 12,

"...went to see the Mariinsky perform Balanchine's *Jewels*...This company is so well trained that they can dance any style and make it look like the best in the world. The audience loves the Balanchine and contemporary works just as much as the classics! At the end of *Jewels*, a massive bouquet of white flowers was presented on stage to the prima ballerina, and the audience kept cheering for more and more curtain calls. I can't wait to see them perform *Serenade* on Tuesday!

June 14,

"...saw *Serenade*, which was a dream come true for me. I love Tchaikovsky's score, and I love the wonderful choreography. I hope someday to dance in this ballet...

June 21,

"...our final full day of our trip. I still cannot believe I have gotten the chance to see so many beautiful things; castles, palaces, paintings, and spectacular performances at the historic Mariinsky every day throughout this trip. I had the most challenging classes of my life with amazing teachers, and I truly am thankful that my mom and dad were so supportive about the trip. I am so grateful that Mr. Cholewa invited me, and worked so hard to make great things happen...I will miss the beautiful sights of St. Petersburg, but am looking forward to going home and seeing the faces of my family once again. I will dream of returning someday to this wonderful city."

"What is it? Where did it come from? What does it mean?" These are some of the questions you may be asking about the art form known as ballet. The word itself comes from the Italian word, *ballare*, "to dance". Ballet began to develop in the 15th and 16th centuries when Italian nobility performed dramas utilizing dance, mime, song and recitation to music with lavish settings and costumes. As these extravaganzas evolved toward an emphasis on dance and perfection of form, ballet came into being.

Just as baseball evolved from the days when Abner Doubleday "invented" the game, so ballet has changed over the years. Who would ever have thought of putting cork in a bat back then?

One of the early patrons of ballet was Louis XIV who established the Royal Academy of Dance in Paris in 1671. The academy brought innovations such as women dancers and during this period, Pierre Beauchamp, the king's Dancing Master, codified the technical aspects of ballet and named the 5 positions of the feet. These positions are starting and ending points for intricate ballet movements. In each position the legs are "turned out" at the hip and the weight is evenly distributed on the feet. The positions of the arms (*port de bras*) complete the balance of the dancer.

Louis XIV is really sort of the George Halas of ballet. He brought all of the best together to form a great team and with all those great minds together, innovation had to occur.

As with any art form, ballet evolved through many stages over the centuries. In 1760 Jean Georges Noverre published "Letters on Dancing and Ballet". Noverre wanted to eliminate meaningless gestures and the leather masks used up until that point to indicate emotions. He felt that the language of dance itself, not just its technical precision and virtuosity, but when performed with feeling, could express meaning just as acting. Classic ballet thus refers to the technical movements and positions of ballet and romantic ballet refers to the tales told through the act of the dance.

Football started out with leather helmets, and as the players got smarter about playing, the equipment changed too. And as the game became more sophisticated, more plays like the forward pass became refined and more precise in their execution.

In the 18th century Marie Camargo used shortened skirts and heelless slippers to allow for greater leg extension and perfected the *entrechat* or "interweaving" leap during which the feet are crossed rapidly. In 1729 Marie Sallé and her partner danced without leather masks that weren't dropped until Noverre's influence years later. Around 1838 dancing tights were invented that allowed for more freedom of movement and in the 1880's the very short *tutu* was devised by Italian ballerinas.

Every sport's uniform changes with fashion and functionality; so did the "uniform" of ballet.

In 1832 ballet entered its "golden age" when La Sylphide was danced by Marie Taglioni at the Paris Opéra. Nymphs, gnomes and pixies were now open to interpretation through dance. Taglioni was also one of the first to use shoes with blocked toes that were invented around 1820. This was the start of *pointe* dancing. Some ballets from this period still in the 21st century repertoire are *Giselle* from 1841 and *Coppélia* from 1870.

This is analogous to the Babe Ruth Era of baseball. You have a slugger out there changing the game forever. Football kickers started wearing flat toed shoes and got more accurate in field goal kicking. Remember the Ice Bowl?

In the 18th century Peter the Great brought European dance to St. Petersburg, Russia. Great teachers and choreographers were brought to Russia and in 1825 the Moscow Ballet, now the Bolshoi Ballet, was founded. A major foreign influence on Russian ballet was the French choreographer Marius Petipa who went to Russia in 1847. His greatest triumphs were the Tchaikovsky ballets such as *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. The virtuoso dancer Enrico Cecchetti danced and taught in Russia for many years in the late 19th century.

It's sort of like the World Football League going to Europe and teaching a bunch of soccer players how to play football.

In the early 20th century Sergey Diaghilev determined to take the best of Russian arts to the West and formed a troupe of Russian dancers to perform in Paris. Michel Fokine was the choreographer and such works as *The Firebird* and *Scheherazade* were performed. Many famous dancers such as Anna Pavlova would emerge from this group.

Diaghilev can be compared to Bill Walsh. When Walsh developed the "West Coast Offense" his assistant coaches were in high demand everywhere to install it for other teams (except at the University of Nebraska).

Another development in Russia at this time was the emergence of American Isadora Duncan who danced in flowing costumes to the works of great composers. She became a major force in what was to become known as modern dance.

This is sort of like the first time the Statue of Liberty play was ever run. No one had ever seen it before and everyone got excited.

Two apprentices of Diaghilev, Dame Marie Rambert and Dame Ninette de Valois, from Poland and Ireland respectively, went to England and were very influential in the development of ballet there. De Valois started the Vic-Wells Ballet in 1931. It then became the Sadler's Wells Ballet and then the Royal Ballet based at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, and recognized today as one of the world's premier companies.

It's pretty much like the Dallas Texans becoming the Dallas Cowboys and becoming a dynasty in the NFL.

In the United States, another Diaghilev protégé, George Balanchine, started the School of American Ballet in 1934. Balanchine created full length story ballets but is primarily associated with plotless works in which dancers move to music. Balanchine's genius was to make any kind of music seem as if it were written for ballet. Balanchine generally choreographed more for women than men and thus developed the "Balanchine-type" of ballerina, long-legged, fast-moving and technically excellent, more of the classic type than romantic. Balanchine directed various ballet companies but the New York City Ballet, formed in 1948, earned international recognition when it appeared in London at Covent Garden in 1950.

This is like the big, fast agile quarterback you see in the NFL today ala Mike Vick, Dante Cul-

pepper and Donovan McNabb. There's a set of physical skills that fit the role.

As you watch the ballet, pay close attention to the movement of the dance. The dancer should be expressive and able to respond to the physical demands of the dance. The *corps de ballet* performs as a unit. Watch for expression, unison actions, graceful movement of the arms and accuracy in the movement of the feet. No one dancer should stand out.

Can the quarterback execute fakes and buy time in the pocket? Are the linemen all working together to open up holes for the runner?

The *coryphées* lead the *corps de ballet* and may dance some of the smaller parts. The soloists dance alone and the *principes* dance the lead roles. Great principle dancers are *prima ballerinas* and virtuosic males are *premier danseurs*.

During a *pas de deux* (dance for two performers) watch the interaction between the two dancers, the technical skills, and the expression. Observe how they interpret the music.

Can the quarterback look off a defender and are he and his receivers getting the same read from the defense? Is the guard pulling in time and leading the running back through the hole? Is the franchise player getting to the other team's quarterback?

The story or *libretto* must be simple to be interpreted but not so simple as to be too obvious. The costumes must be designed with the correct weight and balance for the choreography and must take into account the effect of light on the materials and the groupings of the choreographer.

Once you figure out the other team's game plan you know what defense to use. If they make the game plan too tough, they can't execute it. If it's too easy, you stop them cold after the first series and all the fans lose interest.

The choreographer generally must be or have been a dancer to understand the limitations of movement. Some choreographers work closely with their dancers so a change in cast could alter the choreography. The choreographer must also understand music, different cultures and the rules of composition for visual arts such as the interaction of foreground and background and other interactions of color and sound.

If you haven't played the game at some level, how are you going to coach? You have to know what it's like out there in the trenches when the heat is on.

The ballet should relax you, entertain you and the more you see the more you'll enjoy!

So sit back and enjoy. You're here to support your child. No other reason matters.

REFERENCES

- The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th Edition 1973, William Benton, Publisher.
- The Language of Ballet, Thalia Mara, Princeton Book Company, 1966.
- My Ballet Book, Tom Ettinger and Bill Jaspersohn, Harper Festival, 1993.

Your tax-deductible donation will help us continue our mission to educate, elevate and enrich St. Louis communities for generations to come.

Yes, I want to support Alexandra Ballet with the following gift:

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SpotLight On... CiCi Houston

The Board of Directors of Alexandra Ballet has announced the selection of CiCi Houston as the new Company Administrator, ending the year long search to fill this position for the non-profit ballet company.

Houston, a graduate of Virginia School of the Arts, was born in Detroit, Michigan, but has danced professionally in New York, Wisconsin, and Italy. She has enjoyed an extensive performing career in both classical ballet and modern dance, having been a company member of both St. Louis Ballet and Atrek dance companies since coming to St. Louis. Her repertoire includes principal roles in classical XIX Century repertoire, many Balanchine ballets, and numerous contemporary works. She joined the faculty of Alexandra School of Ballet in 2003, and turned in an unforgettable performance with the Company in their 2004 production of A Sleeping Beauty in the role of Carabosse. She was offered the position of Ballet Mistress that year, and has been staging and rehearsing productions for Alexandra Ballet since that time.

Artistic Director Alexandra Zaharias is delighted with the appointment. "CiCi shares both my philosophy and my artistic vision," she says, "and has the depth of knowledge and experience necessary for this job." "Being the daughter of symphony mu-

sicians, she has grown up with a love of music and the arts, and this has enhanced every part of her training," says Zaharias. "The result is a well-rounded, experienced artist who makes a competent administrator for the artistic mission of Alexandra Ballet, as well as an excellent role model for the dancers."

In addition to her job as Company Administrator, Houston will continue to teach at the school and serve as Ballet Mistress with the Company. This summer, she staged a new classical work for the Company, Minkus Divertissements, on the First Company.

"It was a joy to set this piece on the dancers," says Houston. "We have such a positive group of dancers this year who are willing to work very hard." "Rehearsals have gone very smoothly," she continued, "because they picked up the choreography so quickly."

In addition to the Minkus piece, Houston set the Polonaise dance for this spring's production of Paquita on a group of dancers from the Junior Company and the Ap-

prentices of Alexandra Ballet. The youngsters impressed Houston, who said, "A lot of these children are new to the Company, but did a wonderful job keeping up with the more experienced dancers." She describes the piece as "a character dance exemplifying the children in the royal court of Spain," and added, "This piece is quite challenging for a group of young dancers, but they rose to the challenge, and it's great to be able to employ this group more than we have in the past."



As for her selection as Company Administrator, Houston is excited with the job ahead. Her position will include administrative and organizational duties concerned with

running the non-profit ballet company. "I'm happy to be offered the post," she says, "And eager to have yet another opportunity to contribute to Alexandra Ballet."

THE GREAT RUSSIAN NUTCRACKER BALLET RECEPTION!

Preceding Both Evening Performances of *The Great Russian Nutcracker*

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ALEXANDRA ZAHARIAS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Alumni News

•**Ian Archer-Watters** contacted us from his tour as a member of Les Ballets Grandiva in New York City, and is happy to be back in a professional company. Archer-Watters, a former member of Paul Mejia's Forth Worth Ballet, resumed his professional career last year after a stint as Major Gifts Manager with the New York City Ballet. He leaves for Venice, Italy, in April to tour with the company.

•**Elizabeth Ferrell** stopped by in August with her family to visit with Miss A. A dancer with American Ballet Theatre from 1985 to 1998, Ferrell is now a member of New York City Opera Ballet, and enjoys the chance to perform regularly at Lincoln Center in NYC. In addition to performing, Ferrell also teaches at the school for Ballet Hispanico. She resides in New York with her husband and two daughters.

•**Taryn Griggs** called with news of wedding bells. On September 18, Taryn married Christopher Yon, recipient of the Bessie Award for Choreography in modern dance. Taryn and Christopher will be in Dublin, Ireland for three months working with John Scott and his dance company. Best wishes, Taryn!

•**Rachel Peppin** was also home in St. Louis to bring Miss A the exciting news of her engagement to Robert Parker, Principal Dancer with Birmingham Royal Ballet (UK). Peppin, herself a principal dancer with BRB, retired at the end of last season after dancing the lead role with Parker in the BRB production of Romeo and Juliet. Rachel is working to become a certified Pilates instructor. A spring wedding is planned.

Be An Angel...

Though you may not be able to make a sizable monetary donation to our non-profit organization, you may still make a substantial contribution to the Company in the way of durable goods or services. In each issue of the Alexandra Ballet Newsletter, we will publish a "wish-list" of items or services specifically needed to continue our mission to educate, elevate, and enrich St. Louis through the art of dance.

WE ARE IN NEED OF:

- CD burner for the office computer (for recording music and promotional material)
- Blank VHS tapes and Hi8/Digital 8 camcorder tapes (for rehearsal purposes)
- Miscellaneous office supplies
- Portable TV with attached VCR and DVD player (to transport for publicity purposes)
- Technically skilled individual willing to create a DVD of performance shorts (to be used as supplemental material to accompany grant applications)

If you are able to provide an item on this list, please contact our office by email at alexandra@alexandraballet.com, or by calling our office at 314-469-6222. We will direct your donation to the proper individual, and provide you with a receipt for your tax-deductible donation. Every little bit helps, so please . . . **be an angel!**