

from the dean

This is a period of unprecedented uncertainty and challenge. They are trying times, but also times to illuminate more vividly than ever the essential role the arts play in our lives. This is the powerful reality that informs the astonishing array of art making and learning that happens every day at the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

And these are times for joyful anniversary celebrations. This summer, we look forward with great anticipation to a celebration of 100 years of dance at Michigan. Faculty member Jessica Fogel has been engaged in deep research, with help from the staff at the Bentley Historical Library, and has discovered—among other heretofore unknown facts—that dance courses were on the books at Michigan as early as 1909. The SMTD brought dance into the fold as a department in 1974 and into its name in 2006. But even prior to that, all evidence indicates there was a lively dance scene on campus, not just in the curriculum, but with dance clubs, J-Hops, social dances, annual performances, and visiting guest artists of the caliber of Martha Graham.

Celebrating Dance at U-M is by no means a retrospective exercise. Like the discipline itself, the celebration is all about the new. Our dynamic dance department, under the sage leadership of its chair Angela Kane and the talents of its extraordinary faculty, is a veritable engine of new work and interdisciplinary activity. It's the future of Dance at Michigan we celebrate. Read all about plans for the centenary celebration on p. 8 and mark your calendars for June 10-14!

In the meantime, on March 21st, we celebrated twenty-five years of musical theatre at Michigan. If you were at Hill Auditorium that night, you know what I mean. If you weren't, you might enjoy the full-color photo spread in the center of this issue showing highlights from that remarkable evening. One crucial element *was* missing: Judy Dow Rumelhart. At the last minute, this Ann Arbor native so central to the creation and sustenance of musical theatre at Michigan was unable to attend. We missed you, Judy!

At the end of the evening, musical theatre department chair Brent Wagner was presented with a box of thank-you letters from his students, a heartfelt and distinctively appropriate gesture of appreciation. The indefatigable Mr. Wagner has to be thanked AND congratulated on this tour de force. Brent acknowledged March 21st was the biggest show he's put on yet. But that's okay. He had five minutes to recover before returning to preparations for the May Musical Theatre Senior Showcase in Ann Arbor and New York City!

Best wishes,



Christopher Kendall, Dean
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

