Dancing at 100
Celebrating a Century of Dance at the University of Michigan 1909-2009
Dance has added immeasurably to the richness of the academic and cultural life of the University of Michigan. From its informal beginnings as an extracurricular activity to its first appearance in the curriculum in 1909 to the creation of a Department of Dance in 1974, this art form has taken its rightful place as a subject of both study and practice.

A marriage of art, athleticism, creativity and intellect, dance is a means of communication from the heart and mind of the choreographer to the eloquence and expression of the human body.

Sincerely,

Mary Sue Coleman
President, University of Michigan

Since its early form a century ago, and especially since it was first established as a department in 1974, dance at the University of Michigan has developed dramatically. The department’s first chair, Elizabeth Bergmann, working with the support of Paul Boylan (later to become Dean of the School of Music), instigated the initiative to move dance from the Department of Physical Education into a discrete department within what is now the School of Music, Theatre & Dance. The energy and momentum behind that transformation created an environment open to artistic freedom, to experimentation, and growth. The department’s mission statement speaks to this:

“[To foster] the student’s creative voice, the department draws upon and extends the legacies of modern dance, embracing the abundant theoretical, historical, and interdisciplinary resources on campus and in the community.”

Much has been accomplished in the years since 1974: a faculty roster of increasing stature and size; a nonstop line-up of visitors—stars and seminal dancers brought in for performances and master classes — many of them now our own alumni; the annual Power Center dance concerts, growing in sophistication, scope, and interdisciplinary collaboration; an historic milestone in 2006, when the strength of the department was officially recognized by accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Dance. This imprimatur acknowledged what we already knew — the department’s standing as one of the finest dance programs in the nation.

We hope you enjoy this marvelous commemorative book, illustrated with rare archival photos that Department-of-Dance faculty member Jessica Fogel discovered over the course of her research for the 100th Anniversary. Celebrating Dance at Michigan is by no means a retrospective exercise. Like the discipline itself, the celebration is all about the new. Our dynamic Department of Dance, under the leadership of its current chair, Angela Kane, and the diverse talents of its extraordinary faculty, is a fountain of new work and interdisciplinary activity. It is the future of Dance at Michigan that we celebrate!

Christopher Kendall
Looking Back, Dancing Forward: The First 100 Years at the University of Michigan
Jessica Fogel

When I was asked to give a lecture in 2005 on the history of the University of Michigan’s Department of Dance, I had no idea what my initial investigations would reveal. I was unaware of any formal dance being taught at UM before Dr. Betty Pease joined the faculty in 1950. I went to the Bentley Historical Library to find more information on Pease, and was astonished to find a wealth of materials about dance on campus dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century.

I learned that dance had a lively presence at UM from the moment it was first placed officially on the books as a course in aesthetic dancing for female students in 1909. The meticulously kept scrapbooks of the Department of Women’s Physical Education revealed a continuous stream of articles and notices, detailing student and faculty dance activities, guest artist performances, and residencies. Stashes of photos boxed at the Bentley display groups of female students frolicking on lawns in Greek tunics, tossing balloons, whipping scarves, or indoors paired up as cloggers, grouped in plastiques on platforms, framed by huge palladium windows, and much more.

For the past year, I have continued to research this history, with the generous support of Bentley archivist Nancy Bartlett and with the invaluable research assistance of Bette Shifman, Cassie Schmidt, and Rachel Lwin. Clues have emerged from the diverse resources available at the Bentley — newspaper clippings; newsletters; articles from The Michigan Daily; synopses of club activities from the annual yearbook the Michiganensian; pamphlets put out by the Women’s Athletic Association; faculty correspondence; Regents Reports; necrology files; The UM Encyclopedic Survey, Annual Reports of the Department of Women’s Physical Education; and photos. I have been focused in particular on the development of modern dance on campus. But there are stories woven in here that embrace many other dance genres, including clogging, tap, folk dance, ballet, and social dance.

I discovered that alumni from every era have gone on to make significant contributions to the field of dance. Beginning in the early 1920s, prominent guest artists taught and performed here. Interviews with alumni have offered new perspectives on earlier eras. It has been exciting to bring to light the work of early UM dance faculty members and their students, to try to discover their influences, the ideas and methods they were promoting, and what their contributions have been to the field. Whatever we are doing today in dance at UM rests squarely on the shoulders of these early dance education pioneers. The dance faculty and students at UM have blazed a long trail, establishing dance as a significant field of research within the academy, both as a scholarly and professional pursuit.

As 2009 approached, I realized we had a centennial looming, and so our department embarked on our plans for a celebration of 100 years of dance. The essays that follow highlight our rich legacy and celebrate our connection to the past while looking ahead to future directions. This essay is an abbreviated version of a longer account which I plan to publish with specific citations at a later date.
While dance was first offered as a course in 1909, there had been a variety of extracurricular performances and social dances well before that date. As a curricular activity, dance found a foothold in part to address the need to improve women students’ health. A prevailing belief among physicians in the late 19th century was that women had a limited amount of energy that should be devoted to their primary functions of reproduction and childrearing. To engage in intellectual activities would rob women of this energy.

It was this kind of thinking that had to be overcome in the fight for women to gain admission to colleges and which also fueled the establishment of courses in physical training for women at the university. Women teachers could argue that women students needed physical training in order to build the stamina necessary to withstand the intellectual rigor of college study, and to maintain their health as future mothers. The first women who led the programs in physical training at UM were medical doctors.

The same year that women were first admitted to the University, the UM Senate recommended a Department of Hygiene and Physical Culture. The following statement appeared in the Regents Proceedings of 1870:

“There is no other spectacle of want of symmetry in the development of a human being so glaring and so painful as that of a cultivated mind inhabiting a neglected, feeble, and incompetent body. And the declaration is confirmed by the fact that the principal modern writers on education — Roger Ascham, Bacon, Cowley, Milton, Locke, Rousseau, Dr. Arnold, Horace Mann and Herbert Spencer — have insisted upon the equal rights and the equal needs of the body and the mind, with reference to systematic training … All our educational authorities sanctioned physical education and all our educational institutions neglected it."

No actions were taken on this recommendation until 1894.

In 1870 Ruth St. Denis’ mother, Ruth Emma Hull, was in the first class of women admitted to UM medical school, which at the time promoted homeopathic methods. Hull’s educational pursuits are emblematic of women’s focus on health and dress reform in this era. Many women were fighting against constrictive corsets and garments, which limited physical activity. They rejected inactivity as a remedy for women’s maladies. Ruth Emma Hull’s thesis, written in 1872 and entitled *Vis Medicatrix Naturae*, promoted natural methods of healing — fresh air, sunshine, sleep, pure water. She made herself the subject of her study. She claimed that country walks, rest, and a careful diet cured her life-long headaches. A few years later, Hull enthusiastically embraced Delsarte’s system of exercise, which she taught to her daughter Ruth. Ruth St. Denis (1879-1968), a contemporary of Isadora Duncan, became one of the first and most important modern dance pioneers in the U.S.

Enrollment of women grew steadily at UM, and by 1890, when there were over 350 women students, the Women’s League was founded as the governing body for women students. In 1894, the Waterman Gym was erected as a facility for male students. Women were allowed to take classes there a couple
of mornings a week. Women strongly advocated for their own building and in 1896 the Barbour Gymnasium for Women was opened, becoming the center of social events for women on campus.

That same year, Dr. Eliza Mosher, a graduate of UM Medical School, joined the faculty as the first Dean of Women. She was also the first woman appointed at a professorial rank at UM. As Professor of Hygiene, Dean Mosher organized the program in physical training for women, taught courses in hygiene, and conducted medical exams for all incoming female students. Medical gymnastics, which consisted of exercises aimed at improving overall health, was a strong component of physical culture at this time. In 1897-1898, the courses in physical training for women at UM included “correctives” to improve posture and structural weaknesses, Swedish gymnastics, basketball, tennis, and bicycling.
Dance entered the curriculum at UM under the administration of Catherine Bigelow, the Director of Physical Training for Women from 1909-1914. There was great advancement in coursework and recreation for women under Bigelow’s leadership. Physical training had been mandatory for UM students since 1898, but under Bigelow the traditional emphasis on calisthenics was decreased, while such courses as aesthetic dancing were offered. Clues as to the nature of these first classes of aesthetic dance can be found in the educational background of Catherine Bigelow.

Born in Great Falls, NH, in 1878, Bigelow attended the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics from 1895-1897. This was one of the first institutions to train women to become physical education teachers. Graduates of the school went on to head programs in physical education throughout the country. Amy Homans, director of the school, hired faculty who were not only accomplished athletes, but who could teach students how to teach. In addition to practical courses in physical training, there were theory courses in hygiene, physiology, anatomy, theory of gymnastics, and teaching methods. The students were also trained to be effective administrative leaders within the male realm of learning institutions. They were encouraged to participate in national associations and to network through reunions and conferences. Homans set up a very effective “old girls network.”

Bigelow likely studied dance with Ethel Perrin at Boston Normal School in 1897, the year dance was introduced there. Ten years later, in 1907, Perrin taught at UM for one year and then became supervisor of Physical Education in the Detroit school system where she remained until 1923. At Boston Normal, Perrin’s title was “Instructor in Applied Anthropometry, Dancing and Games.” In 1906 Perrin published a book, A Handbook of Rhythmic Balance Exercises, consisting of a series of charts for teaching social and folk dances.

In 1898, Melvin Ballou Gilbert (1847-1919) became Perrin’s colleague at Boston Normal School. He was instrumental in integrating dance into Physical Education with a movement system he and Dudley Sargent devised called “Aesthetic Dancing.” Aesthetic dance was based on ballet technique, without the use of pointe work. It was comprised of systematic and progressive exercises that Gilbert published in numerous manuals. Social dance routines, including directions for schottisches and polkas, are outlined in Gilbert’s manuals. The emphasis was on the healthful and aesthetic attributes of dancing and proper etiquette. Bigelow probably modeled her UM courses in aesthetic dance after Perrin’s and Gilbert’s. Besides its application to Gilbert’s system, the term “aesthetic dance” was applied to early solo modern dancers such as Maud Allan, Isadora Duncan, and Ruth St. Denis. The implication was that this kind of dance aimed for higher truths and morality and was to be distinguished from the “lower” forms of dance prevalent in vaudeville. From 1909-1924, the dance courses offered by UM’s Department of Women’s Physical Education were listed consistently...
as Aesthetic Dance and Advanced Aesthetic Dance. There were also courses in corrective gymnastics, general gymnastics, folk dancing, and “playground games and dances” for teaching children. Perrin and Bigelow are among seven graduates of Boston Normal School who compiled the 1902 publication of *One Hundred and Fifty Gymnastic Games*. The UM course in playground games and dances was presumably modeled after the kinds of activities described in this book.

Bigelow also studied Swedish gymnastics at Boston Normal. This system was seen as a support to skills and strength needed in playing sports. In 1909, when Palmer Field was dedicated as the new women’s athletic field, Bigelow introduced track and field work for women, an innovation which ran counter to some of the prevailing ideas of the time in regard to sports for women. Competition in athletic games was seen as unladylike.

Alice Evans, educated at Smith College, became Director of the Barbour Gymnasium from 1914-1919, followed by Marion Wood as director from 1919-1923. Wood emphasized “health as an ideal, good fun in physical activity, sportsmanship in playing games, elimination of overemphasis on athletic attitude, and participation in some activity by every girl.” Evans and Wood oversaw the student dance performances. In 1915-1916, the UM’s Women’s Athletic Association organized a dance club. A 1916 *Michiganensian* yearbook recounts a performance of *The Myth of Persephone*, which included dancing by a cast of 35 students. It is listed under Women’s Athletics and its description follows pictures of the women’s basketball, baseball, and hockey teams. Lest we worry about the masculinizing of women in athletic activities, a photo of the dance performance features women posing in a decorous tableau, pure and innocent in long white dresses, close to nature, the feminine ideal.
Early Performance Traditions at UM

In 1905, the Women’s Athletic Association (WAA) was established at UM to promote gymnastics, athletics, and recreational activities for women. The WAA supported much of the dance activity on campus for the next several decades. In 1910, the first Lantern Night was sponsored by the WAA. Held annually on the last Friday in May in conjunction with Field Day, the celebration included a picnic and the dancing of the Maypole. Lantern Night began with senior women marching with Japanese lanterns from the library to Palmer Field, where other women students were gathered in a block M formation. The seniors aligned themselves with the M and passed the lanterns to the juniors, who then moved to the outside of the “M” outlining it with the lanterns. Then the juniors presented the sophomores with hoops decorated with flowers, who in turn passed some kind of symbol to the freshmen.

Pageants that included dancing were presented in the interval between the picnic supper on Palmer Field and the Lantern Night procession. In 1924, these pageants became a freshman class activity. In 1933, the freshmen women varied from tradition and held a Lantern Night dance indoors at the Michigan League. By 1934, the block M formation was no longer done by hordes of female students, but rather by an honor guard of students from each of the classes. By the 1940s, Lantern Night evolved into a sing competition, very similar to the Greek Week singing competitions that are held today.

The 1920s: Natural Dancing

The 1920s were a transformational time for physical education for women at UM and for all genres of dance, nationally and internationally. Many new trends and innovations in ballet, “natural” or “interpretive” dance, folk dance, and social dance emerged in this decade.

In 1921, the Regents authorized a professional program in physical education — a four-year curriculum leading to a bachelor of science degree with a major in physical education. It was under its auspices that dance continued to develop on campus. Also in 1921, the School of Education was established as one of the professional schools at UM. Dancing was framed within education, an acceptable domain for women, and aimed at preparing teachers rather than professional dancers.

In 1923, Dr. Margaret Bell became the Director of Women’s Physical Education, as well as Associate Professor of Physical Education in the Division of Hygiene and a physician in the University Health Service. She was promoted to full professor in 1924. Born in Chicago in 1888, Bell went to the progressive University of Chicago Laboratory School, founded by John Dewey, who would have been the director when Bell was a student, and was graduated from the University High School of the University of Chicago in 1907. She was graduated from the Sargent School of Physical Education in Boston in 1910. Returning to Chicago, she taught high school physical education...
for five years, and then entered Rush Medical College, where she got her M.D. in 1921. Bell was intent on making UM’s Department of Women’s Physical Education a leader in the field. She advocated for graduate work for women, which was eventually granted in 1931, when coed graduate classes were offered in conjunction with courses in the men’s Department of Physical Education. The Ph.D. in Physical Education was first offered in 1938 within the School of Education.

An extraordinary administrator with an impeccable work ethic, Bell remained Director of Women’s Physical Education until 1956. Under her leadership, there was an ongoing evolution of dance on campus. She hired the dance teachers, beginning with Janet Cummings in 1924, all the way through to Esther Pease in 1950. In 1934, Dr. Bell was Dance Section Advisor for the American Physical Education Association.

During the decade of the 1920s, most of the dance teachers came straight out of Margaret Newell H’Doubler’s classes at University of Wisconsin, where she established dance courses in 1919 and created the first dance major in the U.S. in 1926. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin and of Teachers College, Columbia University, H’Doubler had no interest in training professionals. Rather, she felt that expressive movement cultivated kinesthetic and rhythmic awareness, contributing to the student’s overall development. Her ideas reflected the progressive educational ideals of John Dewey, a philosopher and educational reformer who was a member of UM’s Department of Philosophy from 1884-1894. After leaving UM, Dewey established the University Laboratory Schools at the University of Chicago. In 1904 Dewey began teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University, where he remained on the faculty until his death in 1952. There, he exerted a strong influence on early dance educators such as H’Doubler. Dewey emphasized the power of experiential learning and promoted learning that encouraged a sense of community, citizenship, and service. These values are reflected in H’Doubler’s 1925 publication, *Dance and Its Place in Education*.

H’Doubler emphasized scientific investigations of fundamental movement patterns, improvisational investigations of movement concepts, musicality, and self-expression through the creation of dances. In looking at the dance exams given at UM in the 1920s, one can see that both creativity and the acquisition of specific skills were emphasized — both the natural dancing students and the clogging students had to create their own movement routines for their final exams in 1924.

UM course descriptions also echo H’Doubler’s philosophies. By 1924, courses are no longer listed as "physical training," but rather as "physical education," a step up philosophically. Suddenly there is no longer just a title for a dance course, but an entire description, and the word "aesthetic" has disappeared. The bulletin lists a curriculum that includes dance each semester, including courses in folk dance, natural dance, and a course simply called "dance technique," which is described as follows: "A study of the origin and evolution of dancing, the meaning of the dance, its growth as an art and in relation to other arts, its value as an educational agent, costuming, and methods of teaching."

Ione Johnson, who taught at UM from 1927-1930, wrote: “We study technique or form and the fundamental laws controlling the body and mind, and we try to educate the mind through the body … We are interested in the dance not as an objective, but in what it does for the individual. If it fulfills its purpose, it will enable the student to appreciate art in any field in life (*Michigan Daily*, January 19, 1929).”

During the decade of the 1920s, there was an explosion of dance appreciation and practice in the
U.S. John Martin, the dance critic for the *New York Times*, who played an important role in educating the American public about the emerging field of modern dance, details this activity in a remarkable article from 1928 whose headline proclaims: “Over America the Dance Wave Sweeps.” Martin uses the term “the modern dance movement” in this article, possibly for the first time.

“All of a sudden and seemingly without any sort of warning, America has awakened to find herself face to face with a huge revival of dancing. Dancing, whether ballroom, theatre or concert hall, is swayed by three major influences: arts, athletics, and the liberalizing of social standards: and at the point where their three rising curves may be said to converge, the modern dance movement has its genesis.”

1923 was a big year for guest artists in dance at UM. Irene Castle came to campus, as did Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, and their Denishawn Company. By this time, Denishawn was a national phenomenon, with branch schools opening in several U.S. cities. Martha Graham, Charles Weidman, and Louise Brooks were among the nine dancers who were performing with Denishawn on the 1923 national tour, so this would have been Graham’s first of several appearances on a UM stage. Louis Horst also toured with them as Music Director.

Janet Cummings was a strong advocate for dance as an instructor on campus from 1924-1927. In a *Daily* article, Cummings was praised by Portia Mansfield and Charlotte Perry, of the Perry Mansfield School in Steamboat Springs, CO. Mansfield and Perry came to visit the women’s physical education dance classes at UM in December 1924. Quoting Miss Mansfield: “In most of the professional dancing schools I have visited, they train the students chiefly in the ballet type of dancing because there is a great demand for this on the stage, but I believe that even professionals should have the sort of work that you give. The interpretive type is the only thing for educational institutions. Toe dancing is not only lacking in qualities which develop one physically, but it may be actually harmful if not carefully supervised in the case of each individual dancer. In our work we use some of the ballet dancing but emphasize chiefly the interpretive type.”

On January 21, 1925, notwithstanding Miss Mansfield’s remarks about the dangers of ballet, a *Daily* article announces a new course in ballet dancing. “Ballet dancing and work in Russian and Spanish folk dancing will be included in the curricula open for election in the Department of Physical Education next semester. The new course will be open only to students who have had some work in ballet technique and it will be conducted by Miss Ruth Price. Classes in fencing, swimming, basketball, and natural dancing will be open for election next semester. In the required work the women will be free to elect clogging, natural dancing, games or elementary swimming.”

On January 6, 1925, there is a notice in the *Michigan Daily* that Cummings organized a new society, Orchesis. “While the society is in the process of forming, interest in dancing will be the only requisite for membership, although it is hoped to make it an invitational society based on talent and accomplishment in artistic dancing, as is the case in other universities where the society has been organized. Wisconsin, Oregon, Northwestern, and Wellesley have established Orchesis. Wisconsin founded the society.”

In May 1925, the Freshman Pageant at the Lantern Night, organized by Janet Cummings, presented a production that had been mounted at Wisconsin entitled *Once Upon a Time*. There were several articles in the *Daily* leading up to the pageant — quite an air of expectation was created. This kind of extensive coverage of dance performances was typical of the *Daily* throughout the 1920s and 1930s and points toward the importance of these performance traditions in the lives of the women students. One article describes the different group dances in the production, which included a “Ball Group, a Crystal Group, a Dream Group, Mother Goose Dances, a Pan Group, and a Waltz Group.” Another lists all the performers taking part. Marian Van Tuyl, class of 1928, who went on to found the Department of Dance at Mills College.
played the part of the prince. Besides Marian Van Tuyl, another graduate from this era, Rose Strasser, was active in UM’s dance scene. She went on to found and chair the Department of Dance at SUNY Brockport.

In 1927, when Denishawn returned to UM for a performance, they were already on the wane and received a mixed review from the Daily. “There was an absence of all those qualities commonly attributed to great dancing,” according to William Lewis who wrote the piece. “The first part of the program was uninteresting … Music visualizations which composed the second part was more entertaining.” He then goes on to single out Doris Humphrey as a dancer to watch: “Doris Humphrey … did strangely athletic dance with a novel and effective finish to much applause. This talented young lady is apt to be lost to the revues, as was Louise Brooks, a former member of the company.” Little did Lewis know that in the next year Humphrey would break ties with Denishawn, emerge as a major dance artist in her own right, and return to UM as a guest artist, her works soon to be set on UM students.

In the 1930s, there were two prime teachers of dance at UM, both of whom were strong advocates for dance on campus and nationally. The first was Emily Vidal White, on the faculty from 1930-1935. The second was Ruth (“Rusty”) Hadley Bloomer, who taught from 1935-1943.

The field of modern dance was developing rapidly at this time. The German modern dancers were very influential in both the 1920s and 1930s. First Graham, then Humphrey and Weidman, had broken from Denishawn and established their own schools and companies. These pioneers were dependent upon universities to support their companies in performance and in teaching residencies, touring to colleges widely on the so-called “gymnasium circuit,” and in turn, the universities were dependent upon the professional dance artists for inspirational training and the shaping of the new art of modern dance. Summer study at Bennington with the major dance pioneers advanced the training of dance educators and stimulated the desire for in-depth investigations of the new movement theories and techniques. During their years at UM, both White and Bloomer studied summers at Bennington and in Christmas courses at the modern dance pioneers’ studios in New York City. Both brought major guest artists to UM for teaching residencies and performances. Both were active leaders in the newly formed National Dance Section of the American Physical Educational Association, chairing committees, giving papers, and publishing articles. Both advocated for aligning dance with other arts disciplines, notably music and theatre, indicating the first inklings of an effort to move dance away from Physical Education.

In this decade of the Great Depression, dancers took on significant topics, expressing racial, social, and political identities. The WPA and the Federal Dance Theatre, The Dance Repertory Theatre, and the New Dance Group tackled themes of social protest. White urged her students toward more social awareness. “If only the college student were more aware of the social scene, social themes could be used to good advantage,” White stated in an article from 1935. Michigan Daily reviewers blasted the seeming frivolities of Denishawn and praised the “modernist impulse” in such visiting German dancers as Harald Kreutzberg and Yvonne Georgi. On January 9 and 10, 1930, Kreutzberg and Georgi performed at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, presenting two completely different programs each night. In a January 1931 Daily review of Denishawn, Kreutzberg and Georgi are mentioned in this context: “Lately the modernist impulse [largely traceable to German dance pioneer Mary Wigman] has forced us to receive the Dance as an intensifying medium for conveying ideas, as a means to penetrating an expressive characterization. We have seen the results of these more exacting demands of the dance as an art medium in the two local recitals of Kreutzberg and Georgi, in which
an unbelievable suppleness of motion was in constant touch with mind, in which single dances had more than a diffuse decorative appeal an imaginative unity [sic]."

In May 1931, there are four articles in the Daily leading up to a performance by Martha Graham at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, the first an article by Graham herself, entitled "The Case for the American Dancer." Here is her opening paragraph:

"Interest in the dance as an art and from America, is new — even to dancers themselves, fettered as they have been, together with the general public, to things European. Recognition of the place the dance is destined to hold in the future of the people has been slow in coming — but to a few of the initiate and the lay, it is already a peculiarly great force, an exciting and glorious vitality, that is gradually assuming a form. Although she may not yet know it, America is cradling an art that is destined to be a ruler, in that its urge is masculine and creative rather than imitative."

Later she catalogs European influences that had become "decadent" in their transfer to U.S. soil, ranging from Diaghilev to Spanish dance to Oriental dance, "and last to German dance, nearest to us of all, dangerously near, the voice of a determined, tired, but forever mentally undefeated people." Graham condemns the dance culture of the U.S. "which had become in their misuse of borrowed forms and cultures not unlike a Roman holiday, equally obscene in their lack of artistic integrity." Graham concludes the article as follows:

"We are an essentially dramatic country. We build in mass and are built in mass, spiritually and physically. We have two primitive sources, dangerous and hard to handle in the arts, but of intense psychic significance — the Indian and the negro. That these influence us is certain — the negro with his rhythms of disintegration, the Indian by his intense integration, his sense of ritualistic tribal drama. Our greatest dance form will eventually be an orchestration of various physical rhythms and spiritual melodies in mass movement. It is life as seen though our eyes and manifested in our art that is essential and of value to the future of the dance."

Graham performed in two different programs in May 1931. She opened the dramatic season as the leader of the Chorus in Sophocles' Electra. According to the preview in the Daily, "The entire Chorus of Theban women will be played by a group of simple, almost peasant women. Miss Graham, the Leader of the Chorus, will be played as a 'fey' creature — slightly mad, and gifted with second sight into the future."

Graham also appeared in a program of solo dances, at a matinee on May 28, preceding a performance of Strindberg's The Father. Her solo concert included Four Insincerities (Prokofiev), Lamentation (Kodály), Primitive Dolorosa (Villa-Lobos), Primitive Mysteries (Villa-Lobos), Adolescence (Hindemith), Rhapsodies (Bartók), Harlequinade (Toch), and Fragments (Horst). She received a positive review from W. J. Gorman in the Daily: "Miss Graham's sensitivity to the qualities of [complex states of mind] is deep and clear. She articulates her sensitivity in precise forms which evoke in us a sympathy and understanding that could be given only by very great words or very great music."

On June 2 and 3, 1932, Martha Graham appeared for a second year in a row at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, presenting three world premieres: Offering, to music by Villa–Lobos, Ecstatic Dance, and Bacchanale No. 2. The sponsor was the University Dramatic Series.

According to Emily White, "the emphasis [in her courses] was placed on experiencing the elements of music in movement." White was born August 12, 1898, in Staten Island and was educated at the private Botsford School. She also studied at the Savage School of Physical Education, from which she graduated in
1917. She trained for 10 years at the Ruth Doing School of Rhythmics and received a BS from Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1930. White lists studies in Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Chicago and in New York as part of her educational training. Her teaching load included courses in rhythms, a “music drama course,” and “music-play production.” White was also in charge of the ballet and modern dance clubs, which had enrollments of about 15-20 members throughout the 1930s. Freshmen in the School of Music were required to take one semester of dance as part of their physical education requirement. On March 30 and 31, 1931, a program of “rhythm work” featuring two student works was given at the Barbour Gym for the Conference of the Middle West Association of Directors of Physical Education for Women in Colleges and Universities.

In April, 1932, a symposium was held on campus, apparently the second dance symposium to be held in the U.S. Dr. Bell officiated. UM met with four other colleges — Michigan State Normal at Ypsilanti (later to become Eastern Michigan University), Western State Teachers College at Kalamazoo, the Battle Creek Physical Education School, and the Detroit Teachers College. The latter school was represented by Ruth Murray. UM was represented by the junior women's physical education majors who had been studying with White. Dr. Bell's role as officiator for the symposium indicated the importance of this gathering.

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**Alliances with Other Arts Disciplines**

Emily White was possibly the first dance instructor at UM who aligned dance with the other arts in curricular offerings, finding alliances beyond Physical Education. In 1933 White co-taught a new course with Professor Valentine Windt, much beloved Director of Play Production in the Department of Speech. Windt was hired in 1928 and taught for 28 years, during which time he directed 247 productions. Windt trained in New York City with some of the original members of the Moscow Art Theatre, a group of actors under the guidance of Stanislavsky.

In 1934, there are four articles about the course. “Mr. Windt hopes eventually that it will be possible to have the unification of all the arts such as music and dancing, in the theatre, which is truly the meeting place of the arts; and the work done this semester is the first step toward that goal (Michigan Daily, January 2, 1934).” In another article, White states: “Although this is only a beginning, it has aroused considerable interest among the students and has made them more appreciatively aware of the relationships between the arts. Each department in turn was enriched by what it received and through what it contributed to other departments. … Today, more and more schools are recognizing that dance as a vital art form has a contribution to make of cultural and social significance.”

On January 21, 1934, in a Michigan Daily article entitled “Miss White Cites Dance as Medium for Self-Direction,” White talks about the male students in the course: “An outstanding result of this two years’ experience was the interest and response of the men … It was interesting to note their acceptance and enthusiastic participation in techniques of modern dance. After class it was the men who stayed to ask questions and practice movements. They sensed immediately the dramatic effect of falls and the stage values of movement of different qualities, particularly those in resistance, tension and release. The girls worked harder because men were present and the men… were determined not to be outdone by the girls.”

The Doris Humphrey - José Limón tradition has been a strong influence at UM since the 1930s. White and Bloomer studied with Humphrey at Bennington and in New York City. In 1933, UM dancers performed Parade by Doris Humphrey, to music by Tcherepine. In 1934 her Water Study, choreographed in 1928, was presented at UM Dance Club's spring recital. The work, performed in silence and emulating the unmetered rise and fall of waves, is an early embodiment of Humphrey's movement principles of fall and recovery. In January, 1935, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman gave a demonstration of technique and dance composition in a matinee at the Lydia
Mendelssohn Theatre. This was the first national tour of the Humphrey Weidman Company; José Limón appeared with them. Past and current Dance faculty have continued the tradition. Elizabeth Bergmann, who studied with Limón at Juilliard and taught in his studio, offered Limón classes at UM. Gay Delanghe also taught Limón technique. Peter Sparling not only performed as a soloist with Martha Graham, but also performed with Limón and has passed down his traditions in some of his technique classes.

In a May 1935 Daily article, the following statement is made: "Whereas the ballet was restricted to coquettish, effeminate gesture, movement today is vigorous and direct. The modern dance … the term is transitory … is a direct medium of expression rather than a link in a series of tableau or a presentation of a narrative." This notion of modern dance "as a direct medium of expression" closely echoes John Martin's words in a 1928 article. He states that dancing "bends its efforts wholly to the production of direct kinesthetic sensations."

The names of courses changed from "rhythms" to "modern dance" in 1937 after White left, while Ruth Bloomer was head of dance. Bloomer came on board to head the dance program at UM in 1935. Bloomer studied with Martha Hill while getting her BS degree in Physical Education at New York University. Before coming to UM, she taught for three years at the University of Oregon, where she started the first West Coast Dance Symposium as a plan for representatives from western universities to meet annually to study the latest developments in dance. She also studied at Bennington in the summers, serving as a general assistant in its first session in 1934 and the next year was on staff as the official photographer. On October 11, 1936, an article from the Ann Arbor News concludes: "Miss Bloomer … has brought many new ideas with her from Bennington. She is anxious to do choreographic work with her students and is very eager to get them interested in the new school of modern dance. Already there has been a big turnout for the dance group and Miss Bloomer is looking forward to a successful year for her pupils." This is the first article in the Department of Women's Physical Education scrapbook that uses the term "choreography." Bloomer was chairman of the Moving Picture Committee of the National Dance Section of the American Physical Education Association. In May, 1936, she made color films of UM dancers, which cannot be located.

An alumna of this era, Elaine Hamilton Haas, held Bloomer in high esteem, according to Mark Schwerin, who interviewed Haas's husband in 2005. “[Elaine] participated as a dancer in Freshman Pageant and was also invited to take part in UM's Modern Dance Club. Invitation to join the club was selective and reserved for students who were more advanced. [As a member of the club, she] participated in numerous programs, demonstrations, recitals and concerts each semester and performed before audiences ranging from 25 to 2,000 people. After the 1936-37 academic year, she was among club members recognized for their 'outstanding work,' while in the spring of 1937, she was one of six members selected to perform for the newly created Michigan Dance Council at the Detroit Institute of Art. Students, along with director Bloomer, performed before 1,200 people. On another occasion, she was selected to perform for Graham herself to demonstrate how dance was being taught at UM, receiving instructions from the dance legend. Hamilton graduated from UM in 1939 with a degree in elementary education.”
There was a shift in the field of dance with the country’s entry into WWII. Many of the male dancers had enlisted. The Bennington School of Dance closed. Dances by the leading modern dance artists were less overtly political. Bloomer remained at UM until 1943, when she left to teach at Denison College and subsequently at Connecticut College, where she and Martha Hill were responsible for launching the American Dance Festival in 1948. Bloomer remained at ADF and on the Connecticut College dance faculty, co-directing the summer dance festival there until her death from a stroke at the age of 52 on April 17, 1959.

From 1943-1947, Ms. Josephine Yantis, University of Colorado (BS) and University of Oregon (MS), was in charge of dance at UM. Yantis divided the dance club into three parts—ballet, modern, and tap clubs. Each group met separately to work on dances and then gathered monthly to demonstrate their works in progress. Yantis was said to assist in the development of coed dancers. The coed nature of the clubs extended through the era of Dr. Laban in the late 1940s. This is also the period when Jeanne Parsons Bostian was a student at UM, and in a Daily article from March 15, 1945, Parsons is listed as the student head of the Modern Dance Club. Bostian went on to a strong professional dance career, performing with Ted Shawn at Jacob’s Pillow, studying with Anthony Tudor and Hanya Holm, and dancing with Myra Kinch and Dancers. She was selected by Agnes DeMille for the role of Dream Laurie in the first national tour of Oklahoma! In the 1950s and 1960s, Jeanne was on the dance faculty at UM, where she was a mentor for Gay Delanghe. Today she lives in Ann Arbor, where she continues to present her choreography.

In 1947, Dr. Juana de Laban came to UM to head the dance program, arriving with a flourish. A Daily article from October, 1947, details her extensive experience and background. “With her experience and knowledge in the field of dance creation, the new advisor of the dance clubs hopes to encourage the club members to gain a new conception of the great possibilities of modern dance and ballet.”

Born on October 21, 1910, Laban was the oldest daughter of Rudolf von Laban, the world-famous movement analyst, choreographer, and dancer who developed the Labanotation dance notation system, and Maya Lenares, an Italian opera singer. Juana de Laban’s early years were dominated by the tutelage of her father. By 1934, she had earned a diploma from the Royal Hungarian Academy in Budapest where she specialized in the national dances of Hungary. At the onset of WWII in 1938, she immigrated to the United States. In 1939, Laban and dance partner Frances Bartha toured together and opened the Laban Dance Studio in New York City. She began her American academic training at Yale University in 1941, earning her MFA in 1943, with a thesis entitled The Masque as a Forerunner of English Opera 1600-1640, and a Ph.D. in 1947, with a dissertation entitled The Dance in American Theatre: An Analytical History of the Dance on the New York Stage, 1750-1821.

Drama dance classes were organized by the Play Production Department with Professor Windt in 1947. Presumably this was a continuation or re-institution of the courses that were first begun by White and Windt in the 1930s. Seventy-two students were enrolled, men and women. The classes emphasized basic modern dance techniques, dramatic movement expression, improvisation, pantomime, gesture action, and basic music understanding of rhythm, form, dynamic, and melody.

BEFORE HER DEPARTURE IN 1950, LABAN ORGANIZED A DANCE FESTIVAL WEEK AT UM THAT INCLUDED A DANCE EXHIBIT IN RACKHAM, A FILM SHOWING OF HISTORICAL PAGEANT OF THE DANCE, A DANCE CONCERT BY THE BALLET AND MODERN DANCE CLUBS, AND A DANCE CONCERT BY THE "TRIO" SOPHIE MASLOW, JANE DUDLEY, AND WILLIAM BALES.


ON MAY 13, 1954, PROFESSOR PEAZE PROPOSED AN ACTIVITY SEQUENCE FOR A DANCE MAJOR, TO INCLUDE MODERN DANCE, SOCIAL DANCE, FOLK DANCE, SQUARE DANCE, DANCE COMPOSITION, DANCE WORKSHOP, AND CHILDREN’S RHYTHM, AS WELL AS COURSES IN THE HISTORY OF DANCE, KINESIOLOGY, AND COSTUME HISTORY. DANCE CONTINUED TO BE TAUGHT THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS. PEASE WAS APPARENTLY COMFORTABLE IN THIS SETTING, AND WHILE SHE CONTINUED TO BUILD THE PROGRAM AND EXPAND THE CURRICULUM, SHE DID NOT HAVE A STRONG DRIVE TO MOVE DANCE OUT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

THE UM ENCYCLOPEDIC SURVEY (GJELSNESS, RUTH AND WILFRED B. SHAW, ED.) INCLUDES AN ARTICLE FROM THE 1950S ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPEAKS TO THE POPULARITY OF DANCE IN THE DEPARTMENT IN THIS ERA, NOTING THE CREATION OF FILMS ABOUT DANCE AT UM MADE IN 1955-56, WHICH CANNOT BE LOCATED. IT ALSO INCLUDES A STATEMENT ABOUT PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THEIR FUTURE ROLES AS WIVES AND MOTHERS.

A GRADUATE OF THIS ERA IS JEANNINE GALETTI, WHO RECEIVED HER MA IN 1955 WHILE TEACHING FULL-TIME AT EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, WHERE SHEヘADED THE DANCE DIVISION FOR MANY YEARS. SHE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL DANCE ASSOCIATION IN 1973 AND WAS ALSO ACTIVE IN STATE ORGANIZATIONS.

SALLY (DOHSE) LANIUS, NOW 81 YEARS OLD AND LIVING IN LIVONIA MI, STUDIED WITH DR. LABAN AT UM FROM 1948-1950. LANIUS FOUND LABAN TO BE AN IMPORTANT, DEMANDING, AND EXCELLENT TEACHER AND MENTOR. SHE RECALLS LEARNING LABANOTATION FROM HER, AS WELL AS STUDYING DANCE TECHNIQUE AND PERFORMING IN LABAN PRODUCTIONS OF THE TROJAN WOMEN AND PICTURED HERE AT TOP RIGHT IN HANSEL AND GRETEL AT THE LYDIA MENDELSSOHN THEATRE. WHILE AT UM, LANIUS TOOK MASTER CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS WITH WILLIAM BALES AND MARGARET H’DOUBLER AND STILL HAS DETAILED NOTES ON THE SESSIONS WITH THOSE VISITING TEACHERS. LANIUS HAS TAUGHT DANCE TO CHILDREN AND CURRENTLY TEACHES HULA DANCE TO SENIORS AND ADULT WORSHIP THROUGH MOVEMENT IN LIVONIA.
In a 1958 bulletin from UM School of Education, the program in dance education is described as follows:

“Dance education is a relatively new career field for women. Within the past twenty-five years it has been given increased emphasis in the schools of our nation because of its merit. Teacher training institutions have found it necessary to develop a specialized curriculum for the preparation of dance educators in order to meet standards of sound educational practice. Most of these curriculums have a foundation in physical education with an added emphasis upon the arts … Students may elect the four-year undergraduate program in the Department of Physical Education for Women, concentrating or ‘majoring’ in dance. Professional preparation includes training in basic movement skills, a variety of dance activities, swimming, and some sports activities. Also included are courses in dance history and philosophy, dance production, and methods of teaching."

Graduate study in dance is also detailed, with degrees granted in the Master of Arts or Master of Science, the Doctor of Education, and the Doctor of Philosophy. A limited number of teaching fellowships were offered. Although there are scant records of graduate degrees in dance before the MFA degree was established in the 1970s, there are a number of dissertations on record, Pease’s being the earliest in 1953.

In the larger field, new branches of dance were developing, as artists such as Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor left Graham to establish their own companies, and Alwin Nikolais, a student of pioneer Hanya Holm, developed his own company and school. These artists moved away from the psychological and narrative dramas of Graham and Humphrey, and, especially in the case of Cunningham, towards new ideas that embraced movement for movement’s sake.

Sarah Martens, MA 1975, and Ellen Brown Bogart, BS Education 1972, MA Education 1974
Ellen Brown Bogart (bottom photo) taught at The Boston Conservatory of Music, danced and choreographed in Boston, and then danced in New York City with Rosalind Newman and Dancers.

The 1960s: The Beginning of the Dance Boom

The importance of the arts in the national life of the U.S. strengthened during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Many dance departments moved out of physical education into departments of theatre, drama, or music. Following a push toward professionalism, there was a strong desire among many dance educators to establish dance as an arts discipline in its own right. This was sometimes in conflict with other dance educators, who wanted dance to remain a student-centered learning experience with an emphasis on process and growth for all rather than on professional training for an elite group. Moreover, professional training required a more authoritarian teaching style that ran counter to the H’Doubleresque teaching methods that had taken root early on.

Within another decade and a half, this conflict was to be resolved at UM by the creation of professional training programs and the BFA, BFA with Dance Certification, and MFA degrees. These degrees provided professional training while still embracing an option for those students interested in teaching. The MFAs also taught introductory level courses in dance that gave any student access to an experience in dance.

The Bergmann Era

In 1961, Pease hired Elizabeth Bergmann, who was central to the training of UM dancers for the next 20 years. Bergmann earned her MA in Education at UM in 1963 while teaching full-time. Other Pease hires included Jeanne Parsons Bostian, who taught periodically in the 1960s, and Gay Delanghe, who was mentored by Bergmann and then went on to teach with her, first as a graduate student in the mid-1960s and then as a full-time faculty member beginning in 1972. Vera Embree, who taught at UM 1968-1986, was an important teacher for the department for two decades as well. Also on the faculty was music director Quin Adamson. While the formation of a separate
dance department was not achieved immediately, the professional leanings of Bergmann were clear, and the drive toward the establishment of a department gained significant momentum when she took over the direction of the dance program upon Pease’s retirement.

The 1960s were a time of great political and social upheaval and artistic experimentation. Dance artists of the Judson Dance Theater had a huge impact on the field nationally and internationally. They performed in Ann Arbor in 1964 and 1965 as a part of the ONCE Festivals, a series of avant-garde music concerts given in Ann Arbor incorporating theatrical, dance, and multi-media elements, with one memorable performance taking place on the rooftop of a parking structure. A paring down of movement to its essentials, the dismissal of narrative, the exposure of process, and the embrace of untrained performers alongside technically trained dancers were some of the concerns of the 60s dance experimenters.

Susan (Adams) Harrigan received her master’s in physical education at UM in 1965, the same year as Gay Delanghe. Both Delanghe and Harrigan were mentored by Bergmann, whose technique classes they relished, even while they earned no academic credit for them. A course Harrigan remembers well was Dance and Related Arts, taught by Pease, in which students learned about music, visual art, and architecture, particularly of the 19th and 20th centuries. Harrigan recalls Paul Taylor’s performances on campus in 1964 and 1965. Taylor was the first modern dance company to be presented by University Musical Society. Harrigan went on to direct the dance program at the Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy (SASA) from 1984-2008. Over the years she sent many of her talented students to enroll as dance majors at UM and SASA has been a regular performing venue for the Freshman Touring Company.

In 1974, 65 years after dance entered the curriculum at UM, Elizabeth Bergmann and Paul Boylan were finally able to move dance out of Physical Education to the (then) School of Music and create a Department of Dance, where the work of students and faculty could blossom. As developed by Bergmann, the strong model of the department as a professional training ground within a major research university became the foundation for continuous development.

I leave Liz Bergmann and Paul Boylan to tell the momentous story of the creation of the Department of Dance, and Peter Sparling, Betsy Goolian, and Angela Kane to fill in from the 1980s to the present moment (please see their essays elsewhere in this booklet). An essay by Cecile Keith-Brown highlights the work of faculty member Vera Embree, and also included is an essay about longtime faculty member and former chair, Gay Delanghe.

Dancing Forward
From its humble beginnings as a course offering in physical training to the current moment, dance has emerged as a full-fledged discipline, establishing strong relationships throughout the University and well beyond. University partners who have greatly augmented the Department's creative and scholarly resources include Arts on Earth, the Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies, the Center for World Performance Studies, the Duderstadt Center, the Institute for the Humanities, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, the UM Museum of Art, Nichols Arboretum and Matthaei Botanical Gardens, the Office of Minority Affairs, the Office of the Vice President for Research, the University Musical Society, and many others too numerous to name. Many of these collaborations are detailed in the essays and timeline featured in this booklet.

Closer to home, we have been blessed with some unique systems of support that have enabled us to produce work of the highest caliber. In 1985, the same year I joined the faculty, Dean Paul Boylan established the office of University Productions (UProd) as the centralized producing agency for the mainstage musical, dance, opera, and drama productions put on by the School, and hired Jeffrey Kuras as its director, a post he still holds. In addition to creating all of the scenery, properties, costumes, and lighting, as well as managing the marketing, ticketing, theatres, and financing for the departments’ staged productions, UProd was charged...
I attended UM from 1965-1967. I graduated with a BS degree in Education with a concentration in dance. The Department of Dance, as it is today, did not exist. I received training not only in dance, but also in kinesiology, physiology, education, and the arts. At the time, I was not too happy about courses like volleyball officiating, tennis, and gymnastics. I resented placing ‘my art’ in this context. In keeping with the rebelliousness of the times, we thought we were pushing the limits of thinking about dance and all things and we were very passionate about it. We redefined music and movement. We were thinking about the parameters of space, energy, line, sound, and light. We were also thinking about alternate spaces to perform dance. The wonderful part of my experience at UM was the unlimited opportunity to explore all aspects of dance and theatre with few restrictions. I had encouragement from my professors, especially Dr. Esther Pease. There were opportunities to work with outstanding professionals and crossover projects with theatre, art and music. Whatever I could think up, I could do. I took advantage of it all.

Michelle Levine Millman, BS Education, 1967
Currently directs the company Companeros de Flamenco and is a master teacher of Pilates

by the dean to foster collaboration among the myriad academic departments that come into play. This provided the Department of Dance with extraordinary resources and sumptuous productions, rare in university settings, greatly enhancing the quality of dance produced at UM.

Another hero of the Department of Dance is Staging and Lighting Supervisor Mary Cole, hired in 1986. In addition to stage managing and lighting our countless productions with grace, vision, and artistry, Mary has supervised the production and lighting courses and has been the lighting designer for Ann Arbor Dance Works, a collective of UM dance faculty members formed in 1985. Over the years, the department could not have stayed afloat without the superb administrative support of such staff as Jerri Puvogel, Bonnie Kerschbaum, Suzanne Jones, Cheryl Israel, Sara Grosky, Samantha Strayer and Carla Mickler-Konz. Our technique classes have been accompanied by stellar musicians over the years, including our two current Music Directors, Stephen Rush and Christian Matjias, as well as Glenn Bering, Daniel Bernard Roumain, Liz Olson, Deborah Demsick, Quin Adamson, and so many more.

Although I have largely focused on the history of modern dance at UM, our ballet faculty, notably our longtime colleague Judy Rice, joined more recently by Melissa Beck-Matijas, have truly elevated the training of our dancers in daily classes which form a strong base for studies of diverse movement techniques.

This year, the Department celebrates its 35th anniversary. Our department has recently been refreshed by the additions of faculty member Amy Chavasse (2006) and new chair Angela Kane (2007). Two landmarks of 2006 were the renaming of the School of Music to the School of Music, Theatre & Dance, and the achievement of accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Dance. The accreditation process allowed for a rigorous overview of curricula. Interestingly, some of the new directions echo the old, building upon decades of ongoing investigations in the field. A desire to connect dance students to social issues is a trend, linking dance to citizenship. The hybrid nature of training in modern dance techniques, world dance techniques, ballet, yoga and Pilates is more valued. Improvisation is regaining a stronger foothold in our curriculum. Interest in somatic training brings dance closer to some of its physical education roots. Angela Kane’s essay references the expansion of scholarship in graduate work.

Over the quarter century I have been here, there have been many changes and evolutions, and yet there has also been constancy. Our work has been grounded in our daily immersion in the passionate tasks at hand: dancing, and making dances, renewing, extending, and communicating what we know, moving toward what we have yet to discover, searching for new inspirations, informing each other in an ongoing dance of mutual exchange between student and teacher. Each year we gear up to greet a new class and watch another one take flight. Our roots keep spreading, and we take great pride in our alumni’s diverse accomplishments, contributing to the field as performers, choreographers, teachers and scholars.

Acknowledgments
My research has been made possible by the multifaceted resources of UM’s Bentley Historical Library providing me with a variety of primary source materials. Additionally many secondary sources have supported my research. A selected bibliography is located at the back of this booklet.

Besides the Bentley staff named earlier, I am very grateful to the many people who have contributed to the production of this booklet. I am particularly indebted to Kerianne M. Tupac for her generous and tireless work on the design and layout, and to Betsy Goolian for her gracious and expert editing. Many thanks to Robin Wilson for her diligent assistance with proofreading, scanning and detailing. Hearty thanks are due also to Charlotte Fogel, Beth Genné, and Jeffrey Kuras for their insightful editorial comments. I am very appreciative of Elizabeth Bergmann for supplying valuable information and photos, and to alumni Jeanne Parsons Bostian, Jeannine Galetti, Susie Harrigan, and Sally Lanius, who provided important information through interviews. Many thanks are due to student assistants Aidan Feldman for photo scanning, and to Tara Sheena for sifting through microfilm to find the 1931 Graham ad that I knew must exist. A special thanks to all those contributing essays and statements to the booklet. Together we have been able to tell the story of dance at UM, and are well poised to dance forward into the next 100 years.
I arrived in Ann Arbor in 1961, full of excitement and enthusiasm, ready to share myself as a teacher, performer, and choreographer. A Juilliard graduate, I had been active as a professional dancer and on the faculty at the José Limón Dance Studio when I accepted a full-time teaching position at UM. The dance faculty at the time consisted of Betty Pease, the dance coordinator, Quin Adamson, dance accompanist, Patty Kimmel, teaching assistant, and myself. There were a few part-time faculty such as Nancy Carol Abbey and Pauline Soffa. Gay Delanghe, who later returned as faculty and eventually as chair of dance, was a senior. During the 1960s, Vera Embree was added to the dance faculty, bringing new techniques and perspectives as well as a public school expertise to the faculty.

One of my first acts was to give a faculty concert with Quin and Patty, along with James Payton, who agreed to come from New York to dance as my partner. We used physical education’s posture, figure, and carriage lights — wrapped in aluminum foil — to focus properly on the stage at Barbour Gymnasium.

As structured in 1961, students who wanted to major in dance had to major in physical education as well, in the School of Education. Physical education was also a requirement at UM and dance could be taken to satisfy that credit. As a consequence, there were far more students taking dance to satisfy requirements than out of a love for the art form. Since Betty Pease felt strongly that students should choreograph and not be choreographed upon, there were no student dancers to work with for my creative outlet.

In 1963, I started the Ann Arbor Dance Theatre, a faculty performance and choreography collective (which survived in various incarnations until becoming Dance Gallery Foundation around 1985), then sponsored by the Ann Arbor Recreation Department. Many of the UM students danced both for the dance division and AADT. The Association of Producing Artists (APA), a renowned theatre company from New York, was in residence each year and included us in their productions, and we had our own dance performances, produced two to three times a year.

I resigned from UM twice between 1961 and 1971. In 1965, I became the first full-time director for the creative and cultural arts division of the Ann Arbor Recreation Department. Following that year I had my first child. Upon my rehire in 1967, Selma Odom had been added to the faculty and there was much activity, including the lively presence of students such as Christine Dakin, Dana Reitz, Diane Elliot, and Marcia Wardell, all of whom went on to professional dance careers. In 1969, I left again, this time to accompany my husband for a year in Berlin. During that absence, Betty Pease announced her retirement. I applied for the position she had vacated, Dance Coordinator, and, after a national search, was offered the position.
In the fall of 1971, I was ensconced in a little office at the top of the stairs in Barbour Gym, just outside the dance studio. As Dance Coordinator for the Department of Women's Physical Education in the School of Education, I felt that the limitations of those programs did not serve the needs and desires of the students who wanted to be in dance, but it was the students who triggered the push to create a separate Department of Dance. Many of them were in the School of Education simply because it offered dance. Most of them wanted to concentrate on performing careers rather than taking teaching courses and physical education requirements. Many students asked to graduate without their teaching credentials, unheard of in the School of Education. Otto Graf, who was chair of the honors department in LS&A, was allowing students to create their own dance major programs through independent study.

By then, our dance activities were attracting attention. Paul Boylan, who later became Dean of the School of Music, suggested that we consider moving dance to the School of Music. Though there was no budget in the School of Music to support the department, the compensation for us was academic freedom. With Boylan's strong support a plan was hatched.

Since a departmental move meant a change in the structure of the University, it had to be approved by the Board of Regents. A bitter struggle began. Neither the School of Education nor the Department of Women's Physical Education wanted to lose dance. Argument after argument was presented, e.g., if dance were removed from education, physical education majors would have no access to dance. However, the physical education majors rarely took dance and, to illustrate that point, that semester there weren't any physical education students taking dance. Another argument was the loss of teaching certification for the dance students, but few of them wanted to teach. While physical education majors typically headed toward a career in education, the majority of the dance students wanted to be performers. It's likely the budget loss to the Department of Women's Physical Education if dance were moved was another reason for the resistance.

As the struggle continued, I took our case to the Regents to defend the need for dance to move out of physical education. Paul Hunsicker, the Physical Education Chair at the time, presented his justifications to keep dance under physical education and I gave an impassioned speech why dance needed to be moved. Later that day, listening to WUOM, I was startled to hear the announcer say that regular programming was being interrupted for a special news bulletin. Just minutes before, the Board of Regents had voted to move the dance division into the School of Music, effective July 1, 1974, and make it a full-fledged department. That was how I got the news that I was to head the new Department of Dance in the School of Music. For the rest of the day the radio station repeated the news bulletin and devoted quite a bit of time to a replay of the events leading up to it.

It was the major news event of the week and the hottest topic on campus.

It all happened so fast. The July 1st deadline for the move was just six weeks away. I was named Associate Professor, with tenure — the first tenured position in the dance faculty — and head of the department. Without delay, we created a BFA and an MFA degree-granting curriculum. Gay Delanghe, who joined the dance faculty in 1972 was invaluable in helping build the curriculum and the artistic vision. Both Gay and Vera contributed immeasurably as choreographers and as teachers and mentors to our student body.

When we became a department, there were 135 undergraduate students and 34 graduate students with a focus on dance; in addition we were teaching about 200 general students each semester. This was far too many to conduct a high-level professional program. We determined that forty-eight was the optimum number, given the number of faculty then on staff. The use of graduate students as teaching fellows also increased our teaching staff and allowed us to move ahead.

In the meantime, physical education had been moved out of Barbour Gym, leaving dance as the only program left in the building. The University wanted to tear down both Barbour and Waterman gymnasiums and to build a new structure in the L created by the Margaret Bell pool and the new recreation building. The Dance Building would be incorporated as an addition to that facility. The move was completed in the spring of 1977.

Thanks to some nimble design work by UM architects, we were able to add much-needed space to the original plan. The move, however, was not without problems: the first rain warped the Studio B floor and required replacement. Additionally, there were no windows that could open. I put my foot down; thankfully, they listened. We were also thrilled that we could create a production room and a student lounge at the end of the main floor. I think the student lounge has since been made into offices as the department has grown, but on my last trip back all the furniture was still the same, and my treasured couch and orange rug in the chair's office were still there, over 30 years later.

Considering that we had very little time to create a new curriculum, design a building, teach our classes,
and perform and choreograph major works, I think the faculty did an extraordinary job.

Life in the School of Music was exciting, rewarding, and challenging; we shared some wonderful programs together. In the fall of 1975, the entire campus adopted a common theme: the medieval period. The School of Music decided to perform Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. Tom Hilbish conducted the UM chorus and orchestra in the Power Center. Alan Billings from the Department of Theatre & Drama built an elaborate set in the old School of Art building and I was able to choreograph on the set even with height restrictions that had our dancers ducking down through rehearsals. It seemed as if everyone danced in it: Vera danced the figure of Fate; Christine Dakin, who was in the Martha Graham Company, came back as a soloist, and Gay danced two solos as well. Many wonderful students who have gone into the profession danced in it as well — twenty-one dancers in all.

Every performance sold out and it was reviewed in *Dance Magazine*. As a companion piece to *Carmina*, Gay Delanghe choreographed *Seven Deadly Sins* to a score by UM composer William Albright.

The next year, 1976, I choreographed Holst’s *The Planets*, accompanied by the University Symphony Orchestra, which we took to Jackson, MI, where the Jackson Symphony, conducted by Jerry Bilik, played it live as we danced. Suzannah Payton Newman was guest faculty during my sabbatical in the fall of 1977. Following Suzannah’s year with us, husband and wife team Willie Feuer and Susan Mathke joined the faculty.

When the School of Music celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1979, we did a wonderful program with Gian Carlo Menotti. I choreographed *The Unicorn, the Gorgon, and the Manticore* and as its companion piece, *Help, Help the Globolinks*, staged by Menotti and choreographed by Alwin Nikolais. In preparation for the performance, the whole production team was flown to New York where we met with Menotti in his Park Avenue apartment to discuss the production, and, in particular, his ideas about the *Unicorn*. A recording of the performance was nominated for a Grammy Award that year. Menotti was so impressed with *The Unicorn* that he requested it be performed at the Spoleto Festival in North Carolina.

In 1974 we hosted the American Dance Guild’s national conference and were able to show off the then-new Power...
Center with a concert of UM dance. We hosted the Congress on Research in Dance conference in May of 1979.

In 1979, I received the Distinguished Faculty Award, the highest honor that a faculty member can receive at UM. In the spring of 1980, we were selected by adjudication to perform at the American College Dance Festival Association gala concert at the University of Illinois, with my dance, *Beacon*.

In the fall of 1980, I took a leave of absence to accompany my husband to California where he had accepted a new job. I returned for one more year, from 1981-1982, and the following year I was asked to chair the dance department at California State University at Long Beach. I agreed and took another leave of absence from UM, never to return again as faculty.

My years at UM were incredibly rewarding and fulfilling. I had many opportunities to grow as a performer, choreographer, administrator and teacher. I will always treasure my years in Ann Arbor and I look with great fondness on all those I encountered and in all the ways I was able to spread my wings. Thank you.

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Significant developments sometimes begin in the most casual way. While Elizabeth Bergmann and I were having lunch at the Michigan League more than three decades ago, the topic of the dance program naturally arose. She was the sustaining presence in dance on campus; I was an untenured assistant professor. But I had recently been appointed director of the UM Division at Interlochen, and knew Gay Delanghe, who headed the program in modern dance at the National Music Camp. I had also just been elected to the executive committee of the School of Music, and Liz thought that I might be a useful ally in finding a home for dance that would be more hospitable artistically than the Department of Physical Education, where dance had been a “program” (whatever that meant) for many years.

Liz raised the possibility of affiliation with the School of Music, and the more we talked, the more sensible it seemed to both of us. I carried this suggestion to the executive committee and was given authorization to explore a formal transfer of the dance program to our school.

In my work at Interlochen, I reported to the University’s Vice President for Academic Affairs, Alan Smith, and felt comfortable discussing with him the possibility of bringing about this transfer. He indicated that given the highly decentralized organization of the University, receiving agreement from the Department of Physical Education and the School of Education (of which it was a part at the time) could prove to be difficult.

He was right: they adamantly opposed giving up the program. I don’t think they gave a hoot about the artistic ideals of dance, but they jealously guarded the sizeable credit-hour production of a small, poorly paid faculty. It seemed also that they considered a certain legitimacy and respect to have been added to their jock image by the presence among them of “artistes.” Whatever the motivation, they mounted considerable effort to retain a component to which they had previously paid very little attention.

As is typical in academe, much discussion, debate, disagreement, and yet more discussion ensued, but eventually the matter was brought before the Regents of the University for a decision. Some members of the Department of Physical Education argued vociferously against the proposed transfer. I represented the School of Music at the meeting, but Vice President Smith had privately asked me not to say a word. He had done his homework, felt that he knew in advance what the sentiment of the Regents would be, and indeed the transfer was approved by a unanimous vote.

At the time, I felt this to be a great victory for the School of Music. With seasoned hindsight, I now
recognize the transfer to have been much more a victory for the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the dance faculty, whose wishes in the matter ultimately carried more weight with the University administration and the Regents than any argument for the status quo could muster. A magnificent characteristic of UM is that whenever quality is at issue, there really is not an issue.

By the time dance had become a department in the School of Music, I had been appointed Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and in that role was able to oversee the development of the curriculum for a BFA degree in dance. Elizabeth Bergmann served as chair of the department and was an ideal leader during those early critical years, providing strong administrative leadership. She also choreographed a large and brilliant production of Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana* that is fondly remembered to this day. That production was fabulous (in the best sense of the word); it introduced the Department of Dance to Ann Arbor and to the world as the then-newest component of the School of Music, operating according to its high standards, with the great advantage of its resources, and most of all within the framework of a congenial artistic and intellectual home.

Dance thrived in the School of Music, but physically remained for a while in its old quarters. When the demolition of Barbour Gymnasium was being planned, some of the old tensions with physical education arose anew: understandably, they felt no responsibility to provide new space for a component that had been ripped untimely from their wounded breast. A new building specifically for dance was simply not possible at the time because of funding constraints, but an ingenious solution was found with the help of Paul Spradlin (who was then in charge of plant extension at the University). An open space behind the recently constructed Central Campus Recreation Building was offered as a place where a facility could be built, with one major brick wall — the existing rear of CCRB, of course — as well as all principal infrastructures already in place. Essentially, a big “lean-to” behind CCRB was proposed. There was only one catch: a huge steam tunnel along the east side of this site would be preposterously expensive to move, and would therefore set a limit to the size of the new structure. The proposed size was slightly smaller than the dance faculty considered essential. I thought that we might have reached an impasse, and since the University, not the School of Music, had the wherewithal to pay for this structure, I felt that my options were limited to supporting the needs of the department without making insupportable demands. Liz Bergmann, whose tenacity and devotion to the department could always be relied upon, once again offered the needed perspective: if the upper level studios could be cantilevered a few feet east above the steam tunnel, she believed the space would be adequate. Obviously, I’ve never forgotten that she, a “mere dancer,” developed this idea, not an architect, space planner, nor any of the University’s building extension experts. That facility was built, and it has been a good home for the Department of Dance for more than thirty years.

It is my fond hope that a new building on the North Campus will soon allow dance to take its rightful, hard-earned place among major music, theatre, and musical-theatre facilities there. Spiritual and philosophical alliances are indisputably important; so too is physical propinquity significant in promoting synergies among the arts. This seems to me the next logical step for dance in what is, after all, now named the School of Music, Theatre, & Dance.

The Department of Dance has gained nationwide recognition as one of the finest training programs of its kind in American higher education. I’m eternally grateful to have been a first-hand witness to so many of the achievements that we happily celebrate this centennial year of dance at Michigan. All best wishes for the next 100 years!

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What an adventure, we were like a small tribe exploring dance, art, the world from our home in Barbour Gym. We loved dance, young and fierce, we thought we were wonderful, and had the chance to make it true. Liz Bergmann and the faculty put the best of all kinds of dance in front of us, demanded and gave us freedom to make it ours. They introduced us to a wide and disparate community of dance lovers. We collaborated and learned from each other, from musicians, filmmakers, artists, learned how to put things on stage, danced in the Ann Arbor community, in parks, churches. Leaving to explore the outside dance world was possible and terrifying. Armed and inspired, what I took with me has been a part of me ever since.

Christine Dakin, BA 1972, photo by Jack Mitchell

Dakin joined the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1976, where she was a principal dancer, performing Graham’s central roles in such works as Appalachian Spring, Lamentation, and Clytemnestra. Dakin became Artistic Director of the company and is now Artistic Director Laureate. She continues to perform and is on the faculty at Harvard University.
What do you say about someone who changed your life? Opened your eyes? Touched your heart? Taught you the importance of your culture and to appreciate others? Someone who could warm your soul with a smile? Knock you into appropriate behavior with a look? Someone who was the model of grace, professionalism, style, excellence in their field, hard work, humility, strength and love?

How can you convince anyone that a person like that really lived? And you were fortunate enough to study with them? That remarkable person was a professor of dance at UM. Her name was Vera Embree and she was an amazing woman.

A writer, choreographer, director and producer, Vera Embree joined the dance faculty in 1968, and was an important force in the Schools of Education and then Music through 1986, inspiring many dancers who joined the professional realm, as well as positions in educational institutions. Born in 1921, she grew up in Raleigh, NC, and received a BS in physical education from the Hampton Institute in Hampton, VA, where she was a member of the Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group. She trained with Limón and Ailey in New York and began her professional teaching career in the public schools of Maryland, Indiana, and Michigan. At UM, in addition to her dedicated teaching in the areas of modern dance — Limón, Horton and Dunham technique, African dance, dance history, methods of teaching and supervision of student teachers — she choreographed major works for the department’s annual concerts. She was founder and director of the Contemporary Dance Company of Detroit, served as artist-in-residence at Marygrove College, and was named Dance Teacher of the Year in Higher Education in 1982. She also served as chair of the Dance Committee of the Michigan Council for the Arts. In 1984, the Michigan Legislature honored Vera Embree with a resolution that bestowed on her “a unanimous accolade of tribute and praise for her outstanding contributions to the betterment of the art of dance within the Great Lakes State” and proclaimed her “a Michigan citizen most deserving of our recognition.”

As a student, I remember that Ms. Embree’s non-majors classes were always packed. Everyone was welcome in the African dance class and everyone would perform, regardless of skill or experience. Sometimes it felt like there were 100 people on stage. Her major classes were exhausting, fast-paced and fun. I remember looking at her moving in and out of the floor and thinking, ‘how can she do that so easily at her age.’ She was an amazing dancer as well as teacher. She demonstrated an enormous love of dance. Each movement was precise but full of emotion. She insisted that as a student you understand that every turn of the head or the hand was defining a moment in the dance experience.

She was a demanding teacher and choreographer but a loving mentor for those of us who were trying to figure out what to do with our lives and how to accomplish our dreams. Her door was always open to future stars such as David Alan Grier and Madonna, as well as those clearly lacking talent, like myself. She turned no one away. She knew everyone who there was to know in African American modern dance such as Alvin Ailey, Katherine Dunham, Donald McKayle. It seemed like Ms. Embree knew anyone from Detroit who danced. She had taught most of the African American professionals working in New York City who were originally from Detroit.

A Remembrance: Vera Embree (1921 - 2004)

Cecile Keith-Brown, BFA 1977

Top: Vera Embree, photo by Jose Sanchez; Bottom: Shauna Steele, MFA 2006, performing in Vera Embree’s Four Women, choreographed in the 1970s and restaged by Cecile Keith-Brown in 2005 on the University Dance Company.
When Dean Paul Boylan asked me to step in for departing chair David Gregory in 1988, I was at first shocked, flattered, and fearful for my creative life. My colleagues and I had been flourishing under — and protected by — David's administrative oversight, setting us free to create Ann Arbor Dance Works, teach and choreograph for the students, and explore the wonders and resources of a major research university. But I was also immediately drawn to the challenge of bringing to the position a new profile as working artist recently in from New York City. If there was something called star power (i.e. an impressive résumé and creative persona) that might translate or convert itself into the particular currency or wattage of academia, and if that profile could impress upon the greater university the presence of a world-class degree program in dance, was I the guy to assume the task?

Evidently, Paul Boylan thought so and was willing to take a risk on me. Never known to refuse a leading role, I swallowed the bait and began a seven-year mission to up the presence of the Department of Dance on campus, to legitimize that presence in the eyes of fellow faculty, administrators, and granting sources, and to bring to our department the professional expectations that had been ingrained into me by such seminal dance pioneers and educators as Martha Graham, Martha Hill, and José Limón. Elizabeth Bergmann had shaped the program with a similar set of inspirations, and I was stepping into an already thriving dance degree program — thanks to Liz and Paul.

Looking back, the seven years is a blur of constant activity. My administrative tasks were added to my continued teaching load of three courses per semester, and I remember commenting on our faculty’s unusually heavy teaching loads annually when defending our faculty for merit evaluation to the School of Music executive committee. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges for me was to demand quality and productivity from my faculty of working artists in the three required areas of professional activity, teaching, and service, while we all were also sustaining the heaviest teaching loads in the university, an increasingly obvious inequity that the dean justified.
by the laws of the marketplace. (Unless I could prove we were paid less than the national average, then it was apples and oranges to compare dance to other areas of the School of Music or the greater university when it came to salaries.) Calling for salary equity and more reasonable teaching loads became constant battle cries. These issues motivated me to seek opportunities to prove the validity, value, and interconnectivity of the knowledge of the thinking, dancing body to other disciplines — an effort that was gaining momentum in various schools of art and cultural theory and interdisciplinary studies. I am pleased to say that a few decades later I am seeing progress on all fronts.

My challenge was also to preserve, hire, and support the best faculty. I was thrilled to hire the dynamic Judy Rice as chief instructor for our ballet classes when the wonderful Wendy (Alger) Dubois stepped down to raise her family and start her own school in Chelsea. Guest faculty James Sutton filled in for a brief interim and impressed us with his smarts and excellent teaching. Biza Sompa began his ever-popular traditional Congolese classes, filling our studios with majors and non-majors alike. (I often would feel the rafters shake in my office below Studio A.) Karen Walwyn assumed the position of music director and accompanist, and Robin Wilson was hired during the last semester of my chairmanship. Beth Genné came on board to lighten Jessica Fogel’s load and bolster our dance history offerings.

It demanded great sensitivity to navigate the often-rocky waters of the Target of Opportunity faculty lines, taking full advantage of some extraordinary talent. As a gay faculty member, I felt compelled to voice my concerns for equity of another sort. The first UM gay/lesbian faculty alliance was formed in Studio C of the Dance Building, and we quickly broadened our membership and mission to insist upon inclusion in the University’s anti-discriminatory by-laws and to press for benefits for same-sex partners — both of which were achieved during my tenure as chair.

I am proud of the department’s role in forging a tradition of collaboration and interdisciplinarity — before the “I” word was all the rage on campus. We’d already begun frequent forays across borders with art & design, architecture, music, and theatre. I’d served as a fellow with the Institute for the Humanities and created Seven Enigmas with colleagues during the year of humanities and the arts in 1997-1998. I also was a member of the first Rackham summer interdisciplinary institute. Jessica Fogel started teaching the videodance class in 1988, first with Mike Knight and then with Terri Sarris. Our Dance and the Related Arts course continued to attract students from diverse disciplines. Faculty reaped an increasing number of grants from the Office of the Vice President for Research. Several of us received individual artist grants from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. Bill DeYoung received an auspicious Kellogg Fellowship that introduced him to opportunities all over the globe. I was recognized with the 1998 Governor’s Michigan Artist Award.

Works spilled out onto landscapes, such as the Maya Lin Wave Field. Our productions for the University Dance Company — often designed by the multi-talented John Schak — featured video backdrops, commissioned scores, live music, Frank Zappa’s music, chaos theory, deconstructions of American westerns, and a Dance to the World Beat that surveyed global dance and music. A long list of reconstructions and guest works bridged traditions with innovations: Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham, Murray Louis, Ann Carlson, Alan Good, and and MFA students Gina Buntz and Janet Lilly.

As a member of the University Musical Society (UMS) board and dance programming committee, I assisted in building a foundation for steady dance offerings and accompanying residencies. Our relationship with UMS and their commitment to dance grew enormously in this period, affording us extraordinary residencies and initiatives with major dance artists and truly enhancing curricular offerings. I served as artistic director of the 1994 UMS Graham Centenary Festival; we hosted the entire Graham company in performances with Ann Arbor Symphony, staged a reconstruction of Graham’s Panorama on 33 UM dancers, held master classes, exhibited Barbara Morgan photos and Noguchi set pieces in the UM Museum of Art and Power Center lobby, held symposia with guest dance scholars and colleagues from women’s studies, classics, and music, and took The Lamentation Roadshow to local schools. UMS also sponsored a high-risk contemporary dance festival, inviting high-profile, maverick soloists such as Bebe Miller and Dana Reitz to share two evenings of recent work.

In 1994, ground was broken for the Duderstadt Center on North Campus and Jessica performed a solo in sand with an overhead projection of a Persian magic carpet by Jamie Sheridan for the groundbreaking ceremony. Jessica Fogel and Gay Delanghe did performances at UM Museum of Art in
Christopher Flynn and so many more. Betty Pease, Liz Bergmann, Vera Embree, Gay Delanghe, inheritors of the work so lovingly and devotedly begun by the university community and prove themselves as worthy leaders for a full decade as a department, extend themselves into the future, shoulder the burdens and growing pains of its second decade, share the leadership responsibilities with my colleagues. I pass the baton in order to focus on my new endeavors and chairmanship indefinitely. I knew it was time for me to retire and let someone else take the lead.

In 1995, Dean Boylan extended the offer to renew my chairmanship for another five years, but I was ready to move on to new challenges. I headed to New York City with fellow MFA graduate, Betsy Glenn, with a list in hand from Peter Sparling of places to consider. One of the places was the Peridance Ensemble in New York for eight years, and also spent several years in Europe performing with diverse choreographers.

After completing my undergraduate degree in Virginia — and not quite ready to commit to the life of a starving artist — I headed for a teaching assistantship in the MFA program in dance at the University of Michigan. Two years later, I headed to New York City with fellow MFA graduate, Betsy Glenn, with a list in hand from Peter Sparling of places to consider. Today I look back with awe and great respect for the marvelous dance program and faculty at UM. I thank them for the incredible training ground they provided and for giving me the confidence to take creative risks and follow the dream of becoming a professional dancer. That list — and the artistic knowledge and experience I gained at UM — led me to my first job in New York as an apprentice with the Peridance Ensemble.

From the composer/choreographer collaboration course to dancing in operas choreographed by Christopher, to stage managing Ann Arbor Dance Works on tour, to performing the role of the young girl in Day on Earth, the experiences were many and varied. Fond memories abound: of lecture demonstrations with Bill DeYoung, Vermeer Variations rehearsals with Jessica Fogel, and of more snow and ice than I had ever seen before! It was difficult to leave that dance haven, a constant interaction with the outdoors through the well-windowed studios. Nature never far, indeed a part of her name, arbor. Each season takes hostage of our senses: aching winters, breathtaking springs, delirious summers, heartbreaking falls. Leaving the department, at dusk, the string of globe-headed lampposts glowing ahead, curving the path from the pedestrian bridge — Palmer Field to the right, where Gay had us creating our first studies in comp, to postcards of art — that crossing, linking the joy of the day's accomplishments with the infectious pulse of hip, cool Ann Arbor. To the right, the Power Center, an apt name, for all it generates; to the left, an arched view into the Diag, an unfailing attraction. Past Hill and Rackham, memories of performers and speakers past mingle with the robust ambitions of the present. The globes run on to State Street, where we trudged as snails with Jessica, the famous slow-motion walk. This store was that and that one is now this, or gone, but most are as were. All around the campus are the spirits of her artists, athletes, and scholars, yet Ann Arbor is never museum alone, continually regenerating anew. The cyclical seasons of nature, of school and studying, of the rituals of dance, of intellectual curiosity, of striving for the best, of life-lasting camaraderie, of a common purpose, all in pursuit of making art … dance at the University of Michigan is a storied tradition we have all upheld and continue to pass on …

Towards the end of my fifth year as chair, I accepted an offer to assume artistic directorship of a local, not-for-profit dance company and studio, Dance Gallery Foundation, and in September 1993, I auditioned for seven dancers (among them, three UM dance alumni and two then-current students) and began rehearsals for our premiere season as Peter Sparling Dance Company at Ann Arbor Summer Festival in July 1994. My company and studio continued to hire students and alumni for 15 years until Dance Gallery's closing in August, 2008.

In 1995, Dean Boylan extended the offer to renew my chairmanship indefinitely. I knew it was time for me to pass the baton in order to focus on my new endeavors and share the leadership responsibilities with my colleagues. During my seven years, I'd seen a core group of faculty shoulder the burdens and growing pains of its second full decade as a department, extend themselves into the university community and prove themselves as worthy inheritors of the work so lovingly and devotedly begun by Betty Pease, Liz Bergmann, Vera Embree, Gay Delanghe, Christopher Flynn and so many more.

Daniel Gwirtzman, BFA 1992
Gwirtzman performed with Garth Fagan Dance and the Mark Morris Group, before creating his own Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company in New York City. He has been at the helm there for the past decade and is a frequent guest artist and teacher nationally and internationally.

Denise Damon Wade MFA, 1986
Currently an Associate Professor of Dance at the College of William and Mary, Wade performed with the Peridance Ensemble in New York for eight years, and also spent several years in Europe performing with diverse choreographers.
F for 35 years, we had the pleasure of working with an extraordinary dancer in the Department of Dance at UM. After retiring from the University in May 2006, Gay died in early August after a courageous battle with cancer. A leading artist, Gay Delanghe was central to the development of modern dance at UM. She was a charismatic and brilliant dancer who performed with seminal and avant-garde modern dance companies; a masterful choreographer whose work was produced nationally and internationally; and a deeply inspiring teacher for generations of dancers. A loving and challenging mentor, Gay played a central role in shaping the lives of her many students, colleagues, and friends, who sustain a profound respect for her wisdom, humor, enormous energy, and spectacular dancing. A truly beloved teacher, dancer, choreographer, mentor, and friend, Gay was affectionately known by her colleagues as “Legs Delanghe.”

A full professor at UM, Delanghe had the longest tenure as a faculty member, helping to build the department into a nationally renowned and distinguished dance program. A native of Detroit, MI, Delanghe attended Cass Technical High School and received her early dance training in ballet with Sandra Severo. She received her BS and MA from UM studying with Elizabeth Bergmann, Jeanne Parsons Bostian, and Dr. Esther (Betty) Pease. Upon graduation, Gay moved to New York City where she worked as a principal dancer with Lucas Hoving, touring nationally and internationally. She continued Hoving’s legacy, setting some of his signature works on companies and in college dance departments for twenty years. During her decade in New York, she performed in the works of Yvonne Rainer, Janet Soares, Sandra Genter, and other New York choreographers; taught dance full-time at Barnard College; and presented her works on the Dance Uptown Series, at Dance Theater Workshop, and on the Choreoconcert Series at the New School. In the summers, she taught at the American Dance Festival in New London, CT.

In 1972, she returned to UM as a faculty member. The dance program was at a turning point in its history, under the leadership of Elizabeth Bergmann, who ran the program for the next ten years. From the 1970s into the early 1980s, Gay and Liz, Vera Embree, Willi Feuer, Susan Matheke, Christopher Flynn, and other faculty members built a leading dance program, training the likes of Christine Dakin, Alan Good, Carol Teitelbaum, Dana Reitz, Henry Van Kuiken, Alan Lomasson, Lynn Slaughter, Barbara and Sabatino Verlezza, John Cwiakala, Michael McStraw, Barbara Neri, Lynn Swanson, Judith Mikita, Linda Ferrato, Whitley Setrakian Hill, not to mention Madonna and many other dancers who joined the field as dancers in leading companies, professors in college dance programs, and choreographers in the field. For twenty years, beginning in 1979, Gay headed the modern dance program at the Interlochen Arts Center, teaching talented young dancers for eight weeks every summer and bringing her UM colleagues and dance alums in as faculty members. Many of us have very fond memories of the intimate times working and living together in the summers up in the Interlochen woods.

During the 1980s there was a changing of the guard at UM, with Gay the sustaining member. Liz left UM in 1982 for a job on the West Coast, Willi and Susan moved on to jobs in the East, Vera retired in 1986. In 1984, Gay was responsible for hiring Peter Sparling, Bill DeYoung, and myself. Gay went on to chair the department for seven years from 1995-2002. She retired in 2006 at the historic moment when the School of Music officially embraced dance in its name, becoming the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

During her sabbatical leaves, Gay taught at the Centre Formation Professional de Danse in Poitiers, France, and the University of Quebec. She received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Michigan Council for the Arts, the Arts Foundation of Michigan, and many sources within the UM. She was a founding member of Ann Arbor Dance Works (AADW), and presented her choreography with them nationally and internationally. She also choreographed regularly for the University of Michigan Dance Company. In 1973, she staged Lucas Hoving’s Aubade with UM dancers in the Power Center. The following year, she reconstructed his Uppercase and, in 1990, she staged the acclaimed
Icarus with AADW. AADW took the performance on tour in 1992 with a performance at the Cunningham Studio in New York City.

She received numerous awards and honors, including a Michigan Artist Award from the Arts Foundation of Michigan, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Michigan Dance Council, and an Arts Achievement Award from Wayne State University. Posthumously, she received the 21st annual ArtServe Michigan Governor’s Award for Arts and Culture. A master of her craft, her dances were filled with invention, wit, and vitality and were at turns sardonic, ironic, and thought provoking. She always brought a keen sense of design and musicality to her dances.

My own history with Gay pre-dates my job here at the UM, going back to the summer of 1971, when I was a 16-year-old student of hers at the American Dance Festival. Marica Rand, my dance teacher in my hometown of Ithaca, NY, was a member of Hoving’s company at that time, and she said I must go to ADF for the summer, and I must study with Gay Delanghe. The Lucas Hoving Dance Company was in residence at ADF that summer, and the very unique members of that company included Rand, Pina Bausch, and Margie Beals. And then there was also the very hip, red-headed Gay Delanghe. I was in awe of her — she was definitely a goddess. It was thrilling to watch her demonstrate as she sang out the exercises in her soprano voice; she always managed to make everyone in the class feel special and to inspire us to new heights; it was a special reward to be asked to lead across the floor. I have an image of her leaping across the stage of Palmer Auditorium that summer in Hoving’s dance company, with a singular charisma and buoyancy. Fourteen years later, when I became a faculty member here, I felt truly privileged to join her as a colleague, where she became a close friend and mentor, and ever a master teacher — I continued to grow in her classes, always appreciative of the purity and clarity of the exercises, the brisk pacing, her glorious modeling of the materials, and throughout it all her wonderful humor.

In our AADW productions, it was always bracing to be in her dances and her intricate movement was beautifully detailed and sequenced, driven with speed and motoric energy. From rehearsing with her I learned a great deal about how to groom a dancer’s line, and to coach a cast to imbue each moment with sensation, presence, and nuance. I also felt truly honored to be able to cast her in my own dances, and to share the stage with her.

As Chair here at the UM, Gay was always looking out for our best interests. She understood that her job as Chair was to support her faculty. She was generous in bringing us to Interlochen to teach and perform, in promoting our artistry, and in nurturing our growth and development. She must have spent endless hours reading through all the publications and brochures that crossed her desk daily, and taking her yellow or pink highlighter, to bring to our attention some item of interest. My colleagues and I would find these individualized, in our mailboxes, on a daily basis. Her door was always open, she was accessible day and night, and she lived in that building. She kept in close contact with alumni, a friend and guide to them throughout their careers.

A passionate advocate for the arts, Gay was active in local, regional, and national organizations. In addition to her teaching of modern dance and ballet technique, repertory, teaching methods, and dance composition courses, Gay supervised the dance certification students, coaching them in their field placements and developing liaisons with many area public schools. She also acted as graduate coordinator, overseeing the studies of our MFA candidates.

Gay’s vitality was always inspiring — she was ever ready to don her sneakers as if they were a pair of toe shoes and run off to a step aerobics class after putting in a long day at school, unfailing in her pursuit of getting her heart rate up on a daily basis. Then she would return to the Dance Building, working into the evening, coaching late night student rehearsals, organizing for the next day, and generally keeping the ship afloat.

When I think of Gay I think of her humor, her beauty, her quick intelligence, her steadfastness and enormous energy, and her wide-awake mind. She was not one to space out — as she liked to put it, she “didn’t miss a trick” — and, above all, I think of her great generosity of spirit. She has an enormous following, because she is truly someone who reaped what she sowed. Gay made an indelible mark upon the careers of generations of dancers. She had a great deal to be proud of in all that she set in motion in her decades of work here at UM.
In 1984, Bill DeYoung was working in Los Angeles as a guest artist at UCLA and choreographing in the entertainment industry. It was the Reagan era, and funds for the arts were drying up; for the first time, Bill was considering the notion of taking on a full-time position on a dance faculty. UM had three openings at the time; he submitted his resumé and went on with his life.

But then a call came in. “I was in New York,” Bill says, “auditioning dancers for [a commission he had received from] The Yard at Martha’s Vineyard. Gay Delanghe tracked me down by phone and said, ‘Listen, just come through Ann Arbor on your way back to Los Angeles. We’ll put you up, we’ll pay for your flight.’”

DeYoung, a Fulbright scholar and internationally renowned choreographer, accepted the invitation. After a tour of the new Power Center and a tête-à-tête at the hotel bar with then music dean Paul Boylan, Bill’s interest was piqued. It was then that Delanghe played her trump card. Two other dancers, she told him, were considering positions at Michigan as well.

The rest, as they say, is history. Those two other dancers were Jessica Fogel and Peter Sparling. In 1985, all three joined the dance faculty at UM. Along with Delanghe they formed Ann Arbor Dance Works in 1984, the faculty performance and choreography collective, which endures to this day. “Ann Arbor Dance Works was a force,” says DeYoung. “We toured regularly, four or five times a year, in New York and elsewhere. We all performed in each other’s dances.”

DeYoung chaired the Department from 2002-2006. Much was accomplished under his tenure:
a memorable line-up of visiting guest artists; an enhanced Web presence; increasing interdisciplinary ventures; and, most significantly, accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Dance.

The annual Power Center concerts under Bill’s leadership began with 2002’s Ancient Steps, Forward Glances. David Dorfman, one of the world’s most successful post-modern choreographers, came to campus to set the newly commissioned Depth Charge on the students here. UM music student Chris Peck created an original electronic score for the work. Dorfman later said, “The [UM] students were amazing from start to finish. They were the most focused group we’ve ever worked with and I will sing the performers’ praises worldwide!” The concert also included a performance by distinguished artists-in-residence Bambang Irawan and Noor Rahmalina, who combined ancient royal Javanese court dance with exciting contemporary Indonesian dance accompanied by the UM Gamelan Ensemble.

Resonant Rhythms featured Lar Lubovitch’s landmark North Star, set to a score by Philip Glass. The Department was the first educational institution granted license to stage and perform the work. Through arrangements with Glass, the department got permission for music faculty members Stephen Rush and Christian Matjias to reconstruct the score for the work from the composer’s existing sketches. Not only did the two direct the first live performance of the work, but created a performance edition for future presentations.

In the fall of 2003, the University launched a theme year, Celebrating St. Petersburg: 300 Years of Cultural Brilliance. Dance joined forces with the Center for Russian and East European Studies to present a symposium, From the Mariinsky to Manhattan: George Balanchine and the Transformation of American Dance, two days of presentations by distinguished Balanchine scholars, held at Rackham Auditorium. Led by Beth Genné, the symposium brought both together scholars and renowned Balanchine-trained dancers, including Suzanne Farrell and Edward Villella. One of those scholars was Angela Kane, future department chair, who presented Episodes: Balanchine, Martha Graham, and Paul Taylor.

In keeping with the theme year, the 2004 concert was titled Dances for Petersburg. The department brought choreographer Alonzo King to campus to stage a work called Shostakovich String Quartet, set to the composer’s “String Quartet #15 in B flat minor,” performed by UM’s Rosseels String Quartet. DeYoung and University Productions Director Jeffrey Kuras obtained a prestigious Dance/USA grant to produce the work. The Department of Dance was subsequently invited as one of eight out of the thirty-five colleges that had received a National College Choreography Initiative Award from Dance America and the National Endowment for the Arts to perform King’s Shostakovich at the Kennedy Center in June 2004.

Jessica Fogel and her impeccable vision, offered me a chance on dance with a vision. I took a deep breath and accepted what I could, and audibly exhaled like a modern dancer should. I was already a designer for Joe Boxer still discovering, until full-time modern dance had me falling and recovering. Dance is innate in my physical duality, although, not considered a professional reality.

Studio D, or B, sometimes C, and always A, would become my existence for two years in a way. With Christian at the piano improvising our classes, while the sounds of breathing inspired the masses. Sore muscles, split skin, sweaty clothes and bare feet, described our lives for years on repeat. Sandra and Bill, Peter, Jessica, and Gay, offered their histories, their knowledge, their say.

U of M gave my life undeniable expression, in art, dance, and video, no digression. The students, the faculty, and culture inspired, my profession in dance that I originally retired. I am now a professor implementing skills I have learned, to students with eyes, once mine, full of yearn. Now fulfilled is the life I ignored, the dance is my breath with life’s cycle explored.

Shawn T Bible, MFA 2005
Currently Assistant Professor of Dance at Grand Valley State University

My experience in UM’s MFA program was life changing. I was a young dancer who was very thirsty and dedicated to growing both artistically and technically. The faculty was very encouraging and they stimulated me creatively. I fed off their every word and to this day still I notice how much they influenced me.

Since I decided to live in the Michigan area after graduating, I kept a close relationship with the faculty. They were always available whenever I needed them, which made me feel as if my training continued even after graduation. I will be forever grateful to their input and support; I am extremely proud to have been a part of this dance program.

Gregory Patterson, MFA 1987
Currently Associate Professor and Dance Program Director, Oakland University. He is also the Artistic Director of Patterson Rhythm Pace Dance Company.
I remember my days and experiences at UM a lot. I feel my strong foundation in modern dance, choreography, and collaboration techniques were made there! Each time I have a successful moment in my life as a dancer, teacher, or choreographer I remember UM and the professors who were there to teach me.

I went to UM as a graduate student with Japanese dance background, just a little bit of modern dance as a performer and choreographer, and as a mother with a six-month-old baby, breast feeding. It was difficult in the beginning because I felt that I was different from the other dancers who were trained mostly as modern dancers. In technique class, I could not show my best works, but in our chance to create works or expose our own background technique, I received many opportunities to slowly express who I really was as a dance artist. Jessica Fogel at that time said to me after one of my slow, space- and time-filled choreographies, ‘You captured my eyes. You have energy.’ I truly appreciate that moment because from that day on I have tried to find my dance.

Now I teach both traditional Japanese dance and contemporary dance. I continue to create my own fusion between the two disciplines, to travel to many countries around the world to teach how the traditional base can be the roots to create a new dance, how old and new, east and west, tradition and contemporary can go hand in hand. I owe many of my abilities now to share my creativity with others to a wonderful education and inspirations I acquired from my dance professors at the University of Michigan Department of Dance. I hope to dance 100 years!

Heidi Durning, MFA 1987
A dancer/choreographer based in Kyoto, Durning fuses traditional Japanese dance and contemporary dance. She is a frequent teacher and guest artist internationally, most recently in Brazil.

I have many fond memories of my years in the University of Michigan Department of Dance. My four years at Michigan provided me some of my most important learning experiences. I was surrounded by intelligent and creative dancers with independent voices and voracious appetites to learn. We were encouraged by our professors to be individual and true to ourselves. I never felt stifled creatively, but rather welcomed to explore all possibilities. My classmates and I were so hungry to make a life in dance and we were given the tools by our patient and thoughtful professors, whom I still admire very much. I only hope that I may be able to give to my students what my professors gave me, the courage to be true to myself in my art form.

Julie Tice, BFA 1997
Currently a member of Paul Taylor Dance Company, photo by Lois Greenfield from Dandelion Wine, courtesy PTDC

During my time as a student, I was not seeking a means to a specific professional end, but rather a way to remain involved in and enrich my understanding of an art form that I loved. Time in the post-graduation world at large, however, continues to underscore the practical value of my Michigan education. The wholeness and diversity of the curriculum, including the composition classes (with Jessica Fogel and Robin Wilson), working in collaborations through Dance and Related Arts (with Steve Rush and Bill DeYoung), production (with Mary Cole), dance history (with Beth Genné), pedagogy (also with Robin), and music for dance (with Christian Matjias) gave me the foundations to be an informed and thoughtful member of the field.

I have nostalgic memories of showing comp solos in the snow near the Union (one of many snow anecdotes), being covered in plaster for casts made as part of a dance and related arts show decor, watching lecture demonstrations with Tsitaya Tharp, Bill T. Jones, Maureen Fleming, and Christine Dakin, interviewing playwright Beatrice Buck at her home in downtown Detroit, adrenaling through the Power Center tech weeks, clocking countless hours and rolls of foot tape in the Betty Pease, and on. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the institution and individuals who helped nurture my creative and artistic development during those formative undergraduate years.

Abigail Sebaly, BFA 2003; photo by Boris Blinov
After graduating UM, Sebaly presented her choreography throughout New York City and served as Director of Special Projects with the Merce Cunningham Dance Co. Last year she was awarded a Fulbright Postgraduate Scholarship, and under its auspices is developing her choreography at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, Australia.
Jazzin', 2005, featured a premiere by Alexandra Beller (BFA 1994), with music by alumnus Daniel Bernard Roumain, violinist and composer. All of the works on the program were set to jazz standards and new compositions performed live by the UM Jazz Ensemble under the musical direction of Ellen Rowe. The concert also included Gay Delanghe's Dancin' Fats; Four Women by Vera Embree in memory of the former dance colleague and choreographer who had passed away the previous year; and a performance of Bob Fosse's under the direction of the Department of Musical Theatre's Linda Goodrich who studied the Fosse style under Ann Reinking and Chet Walker.

The School of Music celebrated its 125th anniversary in academic year 2005-2006, which inspired Dance to the Music: A Celebration of UM Composers. Guest Doug Varone came to town to set a work on the students. Alum Matthew Rose returned to campus to set a dance, Grateful Ghost, to a rag by faculty composer William Bolcom. Gay Delanghe, Peter Sparling, Jessica Fogel, and Melissa Beck-Matijas set works to music by UM composers, past and present: George Wilson, William Albright, Michael Daugherty, and Evan Chambers.

In 2007, DeYoung and Kuras received a second Dance/USA grant to present Martha Graham's Primitive Mysteries as part of Rituals and Reveries. Peter Sparling, Robin Wilson, Sandra Torijano, Leyya Tawil (BDA 1997), and new faculty member Amy Chavasse also contributed works to the concert.

Scholarly research took on a heightened aspect during DeYoung’s chairmanship. In addition to the department's involvement during the 2003 Celebrating St. Petersburg symposia, the department hosted the Great Lakes Region American College Dance Festival in 2002, with over 700 dance students and faculty from colleges and universities throughout the region attending an exciting schedule of four full days of concerts, master classes, adjudication concerts, round tables, workshops, and a gala finale performance. A seminar entitled This is Your Brain on Dance, was hosted by the department in 2004, where experts from many fields came together to explore the relationship among kinesiology, psychology, dance, and neurology. A mini-course entitled Celebration of African-American Choreographers in 2005 centered on five internationally recognized African-American dance companies, exploring the genius of African Americans' impact on the concert stage.

But the crowning glory in DeYoung's lively and rich tenure as chair was be the massive effort he led in getting the department accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD). In 2003, the NASD made the case that the time had come for UM to join the impressive list of nationally accredited dance department's programs. What ensued was three years of intensive self-study by the faculty in which they scrutinized their own teaching methods and curriculum and measured whether the current facilities met students' needs. Evaluators from NASD visited the department in April 2006 and examined every aspect of the program.

Described as “the most significant development since the University of Michigan Department of Dance was established within the School of Music in 1974,” accreditation was conferred in October, 2006. “The NASD rating is a watershed in our history,” DeYoung said at the time, “an important step in recognizing dance as a legitimate place in the academy. [It is] more than a formality or simply an inclusion in a national organization, it recognizes UM’s Department of Dance for having a comprehensive and proven program, and for performing at the highest level of dance education.”

When I walked into the Betty Pease Studio for my dance department audition in late 1999, I had no idea how many hours I would spend sweating, rehearsing, and growing in that very space. In my leotard and tights and with my hair slicked tightly back, I desperately hoped to impress the faculty with my clean and technical dancing. At the time, I was oblivious that one of the greatest skills I would acquire during my tenure at Michigan would be the ability to dance with abandonment. I will never forget Sandra Torijano teaching her classes with her hair long and loose so it added flair to the phrases she choreographed. She encouraged us all, even in the classroom, to literally let our hair down so as to execute each combination with the full passion and fire of a performer. Each of my professors gave so much of themselves as they helped us build our careers. To this day I credit certain qualities of my dancing to them and the unique ways they pushed me to reach my full potential.

Since graduating, I have had the pleasure of working with Parsons Dance, a renowned modern dance company in New York City. I have toured the world as a performer now, and I often find myself recalling my days at Michigan, noticing how many lessons from there continue to guide me and enrich my career. I still use many of the warm-up exercises I learned in the Betty Pease Studio on a daily basis, and as I do I hear my professors’ voices in my head calling out their corrections to tweak this or that. I am forever a better dancer because of their constant encouragement.

Julie Blume, BFA 2004
Photo by Lois Greenfield, courtesy Parsons Dance
Dance has a long history at the University of Michigan and this year, 2009, marks the centenary of our subject being recognized formally as an academic discipline. It’s a time to celebrate the achievements of former faculty and students, and also to take stock of our present-day position and contemplate future possibilities. From its origins within Women’s Physical Education, the Department of Dance has secured an autonomous, equitable identity within the School of Music, Theatre & Dance, with National Association of Schools of Dance accreditation for our BFA and MFA programs. UM’s rich physical, human, and technological resources attract the very best students and entry to both of our programs is highly competitive. Increasingly, BFA students are opting for a double major — with 100% of our current freshman class pursuing a dual degree.

As Chair of Dance since September, 2007, the department’s recent past is my own history. It’s been a busy, giddy two years. I arrived just a few days before our incoming freshmen and, like them, spent my first weeks meeting lots of new people, putting names to new faces, learning new systems and customs — including local semantics for ‘maize and blue,’ ‘Michigan time,’ and important acronyms such as CWPS (Center for World Performance Studies), DSA (Dance Student Assembly), OVPR (Office of the Vice President for Research), and UMS (University Musical Society). Juggling frequent trips to School-level meetings on North Campus with learning the inner workings of the department mirrored the densely-packed schedules of our BFA and MFA students who dash back and forth daily between the Dance Building and their other studies or work commitments.

As a department, we’ve achieved a great deal during these past two years. We’ve presented two high-profile concerts at the Power Center — Stravinsky Revisited in January 2008, comprising works by faculty members Amy Chavasse, Jessica Fogel, fall 2007 guest artists Danny Gwirtzman (class of 1992) and Ginger Thatcher, and a Rennie Harris commission, Heaven; and in January 2009, Arcs in Time featured works by faculty members Melissa Beck Matjias, Bill
DeYoung, Peter Sparling, and Robin Wilson alongside a restaging of Laura Dean’s *Impact* (1985) by former Dean soloist, Chavasse, with Steve Reich’s original *Sextet* score performed live by UM Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of Joseph Gramley — all lit superbly by our production manager, Mary Cole. We’re launching a revised MFA program in September 2009, with a parallel MA program to follow in 2011 and a Ph.D. in dance beyond that. We’ve secured two highly competitive NEA grants to support the restaging of *Impact* and Paul Taylor’s 1980 work, *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rehearsal)*, which is in preparation for our 2010 Power Center concert (*Re*)visionary Dances. For the first time, students could register in the spring 2008 term for dance technique and/or repertory credit, either through Ann Arbor Dance Works — which included choreography by guest artist alumni Alan Good, Gwirtzman, and Lindsey and Jason Deitz Marchant — or the inaugural UM-Paul Taylor Dance Company intensive, directed by Andy LeBeau, to be followed this year by 1997 alum, Julie Tice. The dance faculty and students participating in this year’s spring term, alongside alums Dana Reitz, Leyya Tawil, and Carol Teitelbaum, will become the next phase of this living history, as will all involved in our *Dancing at 100* celebrations.

Two other performance-choreography highlights over the past two years were made possible through wider UM relationships: dance faculty have led interdisciplinary groups under the auspices of the University’s Arts on Earth initiative: Chavasse within the 2007 theme of Arts and Minds, and Fogel’s *Mapping the River* project as part of Arts and the Environment this past year. The second such highlight was the re-opening of the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA) in March 2009, which included several dance events. Sparling curated a concert which brought together faculty; students, and alums from across the generations. Former Martha Graham dancer and artistic director, Christine Dakin, returned to perform *Lamentations* (1930); MFA graduate Matthew Farmer recreated *Totem Ancestor* (1942), coached in New York by Merce Cunningham himself; Lisa Johnson danced a solo from Sparling’s *Seven Enigmas* (1997), accompanied by violinist-composer Daniel Bernard Roumain; Chavasse and Sparling danced together for the first time in *The System* (2002); the concert then segued to two of Sparling’s screen dance works, *Babel* (2006) and *Studies for UMMA Dialog Table* (2008); and concluded with a repeat performance of *Door to the River* (2009), created by Sparling on four of our MFA students for *Arcs in Time*.

From its earliest days, dance at UM has been committed to excellence and innovation, nurturing leaders in the fields of performance, choreography and pedagogy. Our alumni feature in a majority of America’s leading modern dance companies; several have successfully formed their own groups or work as independent choreographers; others have secured tenure-track appointments across the country and overseas. In essence, it’s been a century of talented students and faculty seeking out the very best dance education here in Ann Arbor and in passing that legacy on to the next generations. On the same day as I began formulating this essay, a message arrived in my inbox from Alex Springer, a member of Doug Varone and Dancers since graduating from UM in December 2007. He was performing at the same festival in Siberia as late-1990s alums Lindsey and Jason Deitz Marchant. A decade apart in their studies at UM, all three are now firmly established within the professional dance scene in New York City and, by coincidence rather than design, all three have been guest artists with us this past year — Lindsey and Jason setting a work...
on our Freshman Touring Company in February and Alex accompanied by class of 2007 alum Alexandra (Xan) Burley in April. His “Hello from Russia!” e-mail resonated with multiple associations at this moment in time: “Amazing how small the dance world is … Just thought you’d love to hear how UM is traversing the world!”

It’s a small world for our dance faculty, too. The international scope of our activities and expertise significantly informs both our teaching and research. Summer 2008 saw Chavasse in Italy and Steve Rush in India, both accompanied by some of our dance majors; Bill DeYoung teaching in Mexico; Sandra Torjiano choreographing for the national dance company in Costa Rica; Beth Genné presenting a paper at Oxford University; while closer to home, Judy Rice directed ballet workshops across the U.S.; Sparling worked with the Martha Graham company helping to revive Clytemnestra (1958); Wilson led a group of Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates on a post-Katrina project in New Orleans; and Christian Matjias began to prepare for his month-long sojourn as musical director and pianist of The Cradle Will Rock in Las Vegas.

The cross-cultural and interdisciplinary experiences of individual students are too numerous to mention here but the global adventures of our four graduating MFAs — all in search of their final thesis and generously supported by the Center for World Performance Studies — provide some insight: Amy Cova focused on local history, namely, the 1960s Detroit riots; Thayer Jonutz traveled to Buenos Aires to study Argentine tango and, after witnessing the weekly protest ritual of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, created My Disappeared on his return to Ann Arbor; Rosario (Zari) Lionudakis pursued her African American-Greek genealogy and performance research on the island of Crete; while Yu-ju Wei combined a return to her home country Taiwan with exploring what was to her an ‘other’ dance culture in San Francisco.

As I look back on the last two years, I’m amazed at how much activity has been squeezed into the calendar, both in terms of time frame and space. Faculty and students have been extremely creative, not just in their artistic and scholarly endeavors but also in negotiating major shortcomings with our current facility. The Dance Building is desperately out-dated and although we’ve been able to maintain relatively small class sizes, we’re constantly constrained, both programmatically and in planning ahead. Some courses are scheduled during the evenings and weekends, including Biza Sompa’s very popular Congolese class, that is, at prime rehearsal or “recovery” time for both dance faculty and students. Several faculty offices are scattered across both Central and North Campus, thus making the already full schedules of our students even more complex. But … this is a moment for celebration, not causes. Whenever our cramped facility gets too claustrophobic or the chlorine from the CCRB pool becomes too cloying, it is inspiring to recall our predecessors — those indomitable dancers who developed the discipline by leaps and bounds, both literally and metaphorically, in the old Barbour Gymnasium and, subsequently, those who took up the mantle when the move to 1310 N. University Court seemed like state-of-the-art progress. Today, we celebrate their successes and our collective sense of community and here, I include our ever-supportive Friends of Dance. As we move forward to new and exciting challenges, faculty, students, alumni, and donors can all feel at home in the living history and on-going legacy of Dance at UM.
1870: First class of women admitted to UM. UM Senate recommends a Department of Hygiene and Physical Culture, but no actions are taken on this recommendation until 1894.

1872: Ruth St. Denis's mother Ruth Emma Hull graduates UM with medical degree.

1873: Social dances, prominent social occasions, take place for first time in UM buildings. By 1877, social dances banned in UM buildings. Ban is lifted in 1882.

1896: Barbour Gymnasium for Women is completed.

1896: Dr. Eliza Maria Mosher appointed Dean of Women, Professor of Hygiene and Home Economics. Oversees physical training for women until she resigns to return to her medical practice in 1902.

1898: Physical education made mandatory for all first year students. In 1969, the requirement is discontinued.

1905: Women's Athletic Association (WAA) established to promote gymnastics, athletic, and recreational activities for women on campus. It is under the auspices of the WAA that much of the dance activity on campus is sponsored, including the Lantern Nights, beginning in 1910, and the dance clubs, established in 1915.

1909-1914: Catherine Leighton Bigelow, Director of Barbour Gym for Women. Under Bigelow, the traditional emphasis on calisthenics is decreased, while courses such as Aesthetic Dancing are offered, beginning in 1909.

1909: Palmer Field, an athletic field for women, is purchased. Lantern Nights held here.

1910: First Lantern Night ceremony takes place, sponsored by the Women's Athletic Association and the Department of Physical Training for Women. Women students in caps and gowns line up on Palmer Field in a giant block M formation holding Japanese lanterns. Dance performances are associated with this ceremony.

1914-1919: Alice Evans (Smith College 1905), Director of the Barbour Gymnasium.

1915: The Myth of Persephone, featuring 35 dancers, is presented on the evening of May 26, 1915, under the direction of Miss Alice Evans, Director of Physical Training for Women, and Miss Marion Wood, assistant.

1919-1923: Miss Marion Wood, later Mrs. Edward M. Bragg, who had been on the staff under Miss Evans, is Director of Barbour Gymnasium. The staff is increased from two instructors in 1914 to four in 1920.

1921: School of Education established as one of the professional schools at UM. Applicants wanting to specialize in physical education are admitted to School of Education. It is within this setting that dance resides for the next five decades.

1922-1923: Elizabeth L. Sehon is faculty member in charge of dance classes at UM. Trained with Margaret H'Doubler at University of Wisconsin.

1923: Performances given at UM by Ruth St Denis, Ted Shawn and the Denishawn Dancers, and by Irene Castle. Martha Graham, Charles Weidman and Louise Brooks are among the nine dancers who are performing with Denishawn on this 1923 national tour.
1923-1924: Gertrude Noetzel is a faculty member in charge of dance classes at UM. Trained with H’Doubler at University of Wisconsin.

1923-1956: Dr. Margaret Bell is Director of Women’s Physical Education and Associate Professor of Physical Education in the Division of Hygiene, as well as a physician in the University Health Service. She is promoted to Professor in 1924.

1924-1927: Janet Cummings is a faculty member in charge of dance classes at UM. Trained with H’Doubler at University of Wisconsin. Strong advocate for dance at UM. Dance courses now called “natural dancing,” modeled after H’Doubler’s methods.

May 1924: First Freshman Pageant, which includes many dances, is given as part of Lantern Night; prior to this, women from any class year performed at the Lantern Nights.

December, 1924: Portia Mansfield and Charlotte Perry visit campus to teach and observe natural dance classes. They praise Cummings’ teaching methods. Anna Pavlova performs in Ann Arbor and meets with women dance students on stage after her performance.

1924-1930: Courses in dance include natural dancing, clogging, and folk dance. Clogging and folk dance are taught by Pauline Hodson in the 1920s. Annis Hall also teaches clogging in this period. Ethel McCormick teaches summer sessions in dance.

1925: First course in ballet added to curriculum as elective work in women’s physical education. Ballet clubs under the auspices of the Women’s Athletic Association meet regularly beginning in the 1920s. Janet Cummings organizes a new society for dance on campus, Orchesis. Elizabeth Burchenal, nationally renowned folk dance specialist, visits and gives a five-day workshop in folk dance on campus.

1926: Charles Rabold from the Institute of English Folk Dancing visits UM and conducts classes April 21-25

1927-1930: Ione Johnson is a faculty member in charge of dance classes at UM. Trained with H’Doubler at University of Wisconsin. Teaches natural dancing and clogging.

1928: Marian Van Tuyl graduates from UM, where she is active in dance clubs and performances. Goes on to teach at University of Chicago, and later establishes and chairs the Department of Dance at Mills College.

1929: Rose Strasser graduates from UM where she is the student “dancing manager” of dance club. Later establishes the Department of Dance at SUNY Brockport after several of years of teaching in public high schools in upstate NY.

1930-1935: Emily Vidal White is a faculty member in charge of dance classes at UM. Like Ruth “Rusty” Bloomer who follows her at UM (1938-1943), White is a strong advocate for dance on campus. Both White and Bloomer are immediately involved with the Bennington School of Dance summer sessions, and also study with the modern dance pioneers in Christmas courses. Both bring major guest artists to UM. Both are leaders in the National Dance Section of the America Physical Educational Association. Both advocate for aligning dance activities with drama and music on campus, in coursework and performances.

January 1930: Harald Kreutzberg and Yvonne Georgi perform at Lydia Mendelssohn Theater.

1931: Master’s degree in Physical Education established.


March 1931: Conference of the Middle West Association of Directors of Physical Education for Women in Colleges and Universities held at UM. White presents a program of “rhythm work” at the Barbour Gym.

May 1931: Martha Graham performs in two programs at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre.

April 1932: Dance symposium held at UM, the second dance symposium to be held in the U.S. Dr. Bell officiates. UM meets with four other colleges — Michigan State Normal at Ypsilanti (later to become EMU), Western State Teachers College at Kalamazoo, the Battle Creek Physical Education School, and the Detroit Teachers College, the latter school represented by Ruth Murray.

June 1932: Graham performs program of solos at Lydia Mendelssohn, featuring three world premieres.

1933: Women dance students are combined with the male students enrolled in Play Production, in a course co-taught by Professors Emily White and Valentine Windt.
1934 Dr. Margaret Bell is Dance Section Advisor for the AAHPER. Doris Humphrey's *Water Study* performed by UM dancers at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre.

**January 1935:** Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman give a demonstration of technique and dance composition in a matinee at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater.

**1935 to 1943:** Ruth (“Rusty”) Hadley Bloomer is faculty member in charge of dance classes at UM.

**1938:** The doctoral program in physical education is established. First UM doctorate in field of dance is awarded to Esther Elizabeth Pease in 1953.

**1943-1946** Josephine Yantis, B.S. University of Colorado ’35, M.S. University of Oregon ’44, is faculty member in charge of dance classes at UM. Other instructors in modern dance in this period include graduate student assistants.

**1947-1950:** Dr. Juana de Laban, oldest daughter of Rudolf von Laban, is faculty member in charge of dance at UM.

**April 1949:** At a faculty meeting, Dr. Bell states: “Effort is being made concerning the broadening of the dance program as a minor, and making courses available to the School of Music and the Literary College.”

**1950:** Esther Elizabeth Pease (Betty Pease) hired by UM. Coordinator of UM’s dance program 1950-1971. Doctorate in Physical Education, UM 1953. Develops comprehensive dance curriculum including dance and the related arts, dance history, teaching methods, dance composition, dance production, and dance technique, even while dance remains within the Department of Women’s Physical Education.

**1950s:** Jeanne Parsons Bostian is on UM dance faculty off and on throughout the 1950s. Resigns in 1957, and returns to teach 1959-1960. Mentor for Gay Delanghe.

**May 1954:** Pease proposes an activity sequence for a dance major, to include modern dance, social dance, folk dance, square dance, dance composition, dance workshop and children’s rhythm, as well as courses in the history of dance, kinesiology, and costume history.

**1961:** Elizabeth Bergmann joins faculty and continues teaching, with a couple of departures and returns, through 1982. In 1961, Gay Delanghe is completing her senior year; faculty includes Bergmann, Quin Adamson as music director, and Betty Pease as coordinator of program, along with several part-time teachers.

**1970-1972:** Selma Landen Odom is on dance faculty.

**1971:** Dr. Betty Pease retires. Elizabeth Bergmann coordinates program in dance 1971-1974.

**1972:** Gay Delanghe (BS 1962, MA 1965) returns from several years of performing and choreographing in NYC and joins faculty as Assistant Professor. UM dancers perform at Power Center, which opened in 1971. Dance concerts held there biannually for the next several years, and subsequently annually.

**1973:** June Finch and Viola Farber teach summer session.

**1974:** Phyllis Lamhut teaches summer session. Limón’s *Chaconne* restaged as a group work by Susannah Payton-Newman.
1974: The May meeting of Board of Regents approves the transfer of administrative responsibility for the Program in Dance from the Department of Physical Education to the School of Music, effective July 1, 1974. This momentous move is made possible by the efforts of Elizabeth Bergmann and Paul Boylan. Bergmann becomes first Chair of Dance and continues until 1982.

1975: New degree program, BFA in dance, approved by Regents at their March meeting. 32 courses in dance offered as of Winter 1975. Elizabeth Bergmann and Vera Embree promoted to Associate Professors with tenure. Carmina Burana performed at Power Center with Thomas Hilbish, music faculty member, conducting; performed again in 1980 with Hilbish.

1976: March meeting of Regents: Regents move to construct an addition to CCRB for the Department of Dance and to demolish the Barbour and Waterman Gymnasiums.

1977: Gay Delanghe promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. The Department moves into the new Dance Building, an addition to the new Central Campus Recreation Building. Architect: Alden Dow.

1978: Christopher Flynn, mentor for Madonna, appointed Lecturer in Dance teaching ballet.

1979: The Unicorn, the Gorgon and the Manticore, music by Gian Carlo Menotti, choreography by Bergmann, performed at Power Center.

1979-1980: Gus Solomons, Jr., visiting guest artist.

1979-1983: Willi Feuer and Susan Matheke on faculty as Assistant Professors of Dance.

1982: UM dance majors perform in a Power Center production of the Igor Stravinsky opera The Rake’s Progress, directed by filmmaker Robert Altman and choreographed by Gay Delanghe. Elizabeth Bergmann leaves UM.


1984: David Gregory appointed Chair of Dance and Music Director. He continues until 1988. Bill DeYoung, Jessica Fogel and Peter Sparling join faculty.

1985: Ann Arbor Dance Works forms as a collective of faculty choreographers; tours to NYC.

July 1985: Quin Adamson, Assistant Professor of Dance, retires after twenty-eight years of service. Received BM in music from UM in 1957. Joined UM faculty in 1956 as instructor in dance in the Department of Physical Education. Responsibilities were to provide music for dance classes, much of it his own composition. Several of his compositions published. Named Asst. Prof. Emeritus in 1985. University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music, is established and oversees Department of Dance Power Center productions.


1987: Vera Embree retires. Stephen Rush joins faculty as Music Director. Linda Spriggs joins dance faculty as Assistant Professor after completing her MFA in dance at UM, and remains until 1995. Ann Arbor Dance Works tours Michigan and performs in Toronto and NYC.

1988: Ann Arbor Dance Works performs in eleven-city tour of Mexico organized by Bill DeYoung. Video dance class inaugurated by Jessica Fogel and Mike Knight and is awarded first prize in National Video Dance Competition for their class project.


1990: Judy Rice joins faculty as ballet teacher at UM.
1994: Graham Centenary Festival sponsored by University Musical Society and the Department of Dance. Graham Company performs with Ann Arbor Symphony, stages a reconstruction of Panorama on thirty-three UM dancers, and offers master classes. Barbara Morgan photos and Noguchi set pieces exhibited in UM Museum of Art and Power Center lobby. Symposium with prominent guest dance scholars and colleagues from women's studies, classics, and music. Beth Genné, dance historian, and Sandra Torijano, join dance faculty. Karen Walwyn joins faculty as Assistant Professor teaching courses in Music for Dance. Department gains international recognition with the restaging of Vaslav Nijinsky's Afternoon of a Faun by guest Labanotator, Ann Hutchinson Guest.


1995-1996: Javanese dancer F. X. Widaryanto, visiting artist-in-residence, teaches Javanese dance and stages dance drama. Department collaborates with the International Institute, Residential College and Center for Southeast Asian Studies to host these artists. Other Javanese dance artists follow through 2007, including Bambang Irawan and Noor Farida Rahmalina; Wasi and Olivia Bentolo; Sigit and Yulisa Soegito; and Pamardi.


1996: Bill DeYoung and Sandra Torijano premiere a new production of Carmina Burana, performed with the University Choral Union.

1998: Christian Matijas, composer and pianist, joins dance faculty as a second Music Director. Sandra Torijano's choreography, Canto America, represents UM at the American College Dance Festival Association's (ACDFA) National Festival at Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

2000: Center For World Performance Studies established by members of Dance, Theatre, and Music faculty as a center within the International Institute. Through this continuing partnership, CWPS hosts international dance and performance artists and provides graduate student residencies for MFA dance candidates conducting international research.


2002-2006: Bill DeYoung, Chair of Dance.

2003: UM Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies, in partnership with the Department of Dance, hosts the symposium “From the Mariinsky to Manhattan: George Balanchine and the Transformation of American Dance,” celebrating the 300th anniversary of St. Petersburg and Balanchine’s centenary. Maria Tallchief, Suzanne Farrell, Violet Verdy and Edward Villella speak at symposium along with an international roster of dance historians and performances of Balanchine repertory by Suzanne Farrell Ballet and Miami City Ballet.

2004: Guest Artist Alonzo King’s Shostakovitch String Quartet performed by UM dance majors at Kennedy Center, funded by Dance/USA award.

2005: Stephen Rush begins taking groups of dance majors and other UM students to India to study music and dance in summers.

2006: The former School of Music officially changes its name to the School of Music, Theatre, & Dance. Department achieves NASD accreditation. Gay Delanghe retires and many alumni gather for a retirement tribute. Delanghe passes away in August. Amy Chavasse joins dance faculty.

2007: Robin Wilson begins taking dance majors to New Orleans in summers to study dance and rebuild city. Angela Kane joins faculty as Chair of Dance in September.

June, 2009: Department of Dance celebrates 100 years of dance at UM with a series of events collectively entitled Dancing at 100. Performances, master classes, video screenings, and lectures presented by current and former faculty alumni and current students.

Note: Timeline constructed by Jessica Fogel. Dates are presented as accurately as possible. Research is still in progress as of May 2009.
Looking Back, Dancing Forward:
The First One Hundred Years at the University of Michigan
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Front top to bottom - Suite Latin Jazz, 2005, choreography by Sandra Torijano; modern dance quintet, circa 1930s
Inside back cover - Passageways, 1999, choreography by Gay Delanghe
Back - Thinking Twice, 2009, choreography by Bill DeYoung

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