Faculty in the Spotlight presents the inside scoop on the life of guest artist, Julie Tice. As a University of Michigan alum, Julie continued with her dancing career as a member of the Paul Taylor Dance Company for eleven years. During her visit at the University of Michigan in the Fall 2011 term, Julie taught the combined Freshman and Sophomore combined Modern technique, Sophomore composition, and Yoga-based stretching. Julie also set a piece on six dancers from our current Freshman Touring Company. Julie was a true joy to have in the Department of Dance and we will certainly miss her presence!

What is life like for a dance major after they graduate?
It is rare that you go to New York and get into a company. It is a lot of auditioning, taking master classes, networking and introducing yourself to others. After I graduated I also performed my own work so that I wouldn’t lose my performance quality. It is hard, but I wouldn’t have picked any other career path. Don’t go in feeling defeated. Use the support system that you have with your classmates.

What did you do after graduating from the University of Michigan?
I moved to Chicago and danced for a small company and I taught Pilates. I saved up some money and just decided one night to move to New York City. That is really how I make all of my decisions—I just dive in and then think later.

Did you get your Pilates certification while you were at UM?
No, I was in-house trained at a studio in Chicago and got certified once I went to New York. Pilates is a nice way to make money and stay in shape, unlike waitressing all night and then having to take class in the morning.
After you graduated, how long did it take until you became a member of the Paul Taylor Dance Company?

I graduated in 1997 and got into Taylor 2 in July 1999.

How do you keep yourself up physically when trying to pursue a dance career?

We performed a good five shows a week. You did everything you could not to be hurt because Paul didn’t want you to be. I did a lot of cross-training and a lot of maintenance. I would wake up, roll, go to class, then to rehearsal for five hours, go home, and then roll again. You have to become mentally tough.

You were in the company for so long, did you ever feel like you wanted to do something else?

I knew for a long time that I wanted to do Paul’s work, and it is all so different that it was very fulfilling. Eventually, I wanted to find my voice and teach more and have a family. So yes, at that point I wanted a change.

How can you continue choreographing after you graduate?

There is something called a “space grant” and the more you do it the more you will be noticed. You can apply for grants for a space; create a piece, and then use it in a performance. Also, there are studios that offer works-in-progress projects and anyone can participate. There is an audience, and they give you feedback.

Any recommendations for what our current dance students should be doing over the summer?

Summer workshops are very important. Get out and see what else is going on and bring it back here. Don’t shut any doors.

If there were to be a Julie Tice sandwich, what would be in it?

(Laughing) Sprouts...goat cheese...cucumbers..Oh! BEETS! How big can I make it? I would also have to have a dessert of chocolate, chocolate and chocolate.

Stay tuned for our March/April newsletter to learn more about the faculty here in the Dance Department!

Stefania Spadaro-Bliss is an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan. She transferred to the University in 2010 and will be graduating with the class of 2013 with a major in Dance. As a newcomer into the world of newsletter publishing, Stefania is excited to give her readers the inside scoop on the faculty here in the Department of Dance at the University of Michigan. You may reach Stefania at ssbliss@umich.edu