

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

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Company

Jeffrey Duval
Luke Gutgsell
Laura Hymers
Tiffany Mills
Petra van Noort
Brandin Steffensen
Whitney Tucker

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Interns 2007-08

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Erin Jelacic
Megan Kennedy
Christopher Shepard
Jenna Simon
Jackie Starner

LATEST NEWS

Tiffany Mills Company just received a Joyce SoHo Artist Residency (2007-08). We are thrilled to announce that Kay Cummings will be our Editing Advisor. This residency assists choreographers in developing new work by offering them free rehearsal space and support services for an extended time period. We are excited to begin creating our newest project, Tomorrow's Legs, under this residency program.



Choreography: Tiffany Mills, Music: Ikue Mori, Video: Ela Troyano, Lighting: Chris Hudacs, Costumes: Naoko Nagata
LandFall Photography: Julie Lemberger © 2007

tiffany mills company

"LandFall holds the eye." -New York Times

WHAT'S INSIDE OUR 2007 NEWSLETTER?

On the heels of our first NPN tour to Contemporary Dance Theater (OH), plus our sold-out Season at Joyce SoHo (NYC), we are energized. Our performances of LandFall proved an important step in the development of this collaborative project. Simultaneous to creating new work, the Company happily conducted our Second Annual Workshop, as well as our ongoing Internship Program.

Looking to the fall, as Artistic Director of the Company, I am excited to travel to Genoa, Italy, on a 1-month fellowship to conduct research granted by the Bogliasco Foundation, with additional support from the Jerome Robbins Foundation. The Company will receive further international exposure, as LandFall will "live" through an art exhibit in Australia, where artist Debra Luccio showcases her work.

Additional news: We received a Joyce SoHo Artist Residency for 2007-08 (see sidebar); I have been hired by Pentacle to mentor high school seniors in their culminating choreographic project at the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts; Founding Company Member Laura Hymers wishes us a farewell after twelve dynamic years; Company Member Petra van Noort offers insight into dancing with us; and we welcome Whitney Tucker into the Company after a summer audition with 195 participants.

Tiffany Mills

EDITOR'S NOTE

When I met Tiffany Mills, I knew immediately that I wanted to learn from her dance style and creativity. Tiffany was the guest artist in residence at Goucher College in the fall of 2006, when I was a junior studying Communications and Media Studies and Dance. I took her modern technique classes and watched enthralled as the Goucher dancers performed Godard, a work she had reset at the Dance Department.

In the summer of 2007, I participated in the 2nd Annual Tiffany Mills Company Workshop, where I was introduced to Company Members and a whole new way of approaching dance through improvisation. I was also lucky enough to see the Company perform the successful "unplugged" version of LandFall at Joyce SoHo.

As the Newsletter Editor, I am excited about communicating with you, the supporters and friends of this Company. I wrote articles on the Workshop, Internship, and Petra's Interview, with additional help from Jackie Starner. A special thanks to Laura and Petra for their contributions. I am happy to join all of you as a part of this dance family.

Jenna Simon



LandFall Photography: Julie Lemberger © 2007

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Tiffany Mills Company has been offering internships since 2005. Over the past 2½ years, 11 dancers have had the opportunity to work for the Company, learning new skills and growing in their areas of interest. From writing grant proposals, to editing the Newsletter, to organizing the Annual Benefit, the interns can custom fit their interests with the needs of this young and busy Company.

Tiffany often is introduced to future interns when she guest teaches at colleges around the country. Jackie Starnier met the Company this way when Tiffany was a guest artist at Muhlenberg College. At Muhlenberg, Jackie was heavily involved in dancing, along with being a writer for The Muhlenberg Weekly. Helping out with the Newsletter was a perfect fit for her internship with the Company. Starnier said, "My role as Newsletter Coordinator gave me the opportunity to combine my interests of dance and writing; I'm considering doing similar work in the future as a dance journalist."

Sara Hogrefe, who also interned with the Company in the summer of 2006, applied her skills as a Theatre and English major to coordinate the Company's Annual Fall Benefit along with fellow intern Chris Shepard. Sara and Chris worked alongside the Board in planning the Benefit. Sara explained, "Our work last summer and fall culminated in a more comprehensive network of Company supporters, and gave individuals and communities all over the country the opportunity to be engaged with us."

The internship program is a great chance for dancers to gain a deeper understanding of how a grass roots organization operates and succeeds. This internship allows individuals the opportunity to network and develop important relationships that lead to arts related jobs.

Want to intern? info@tiffanymillscompany.org.

PETRA VAN NOORT INTERVIEW

You began working with Tiffany in 2004, and subsequently have built two new works. How has dancing in the Company challenged you?

With Tiffany I refocused on release technique. I had taken several classes and workshops in release technique when I first studied in New York in 1994. Also in The Netherlands I worked with choreographers Wies Merckx and Charles Corneille – who worked with release technique – before I moved permanently to New York in 1997. On many levels 'letting go' is a challenge we all continually face. So it can be challenging in release technique too: the process of becoming aware of unwanted tension, on any level, and then un-doing that. However, the most challenging aspect of dancing with a small dance company is to juggle a professional dance career with life in New York! It's an expensive city and modern dancers are not on the same pay level as other artists or even ballet dancers, except in select large modern dance companies. That is quite different in The Netherlands!

Tiffany often talks about how movement can assume emotional significance. During the creative process, how does abstract movement take on meaning for you?

While improvising with partially set material in rehearsal, a string of images and thoughts come to me. Improvising with scored improvisation is the direction the Company is moving toward in performance. The initial abstract movement assignments start shaping themselves into a sequence by trial, error and repetition. Repeating this sequence or score over and over in relationship to your partner's, allows the material to take on a less abstract and more narrative meaning. During this phase, things start making sense and often become emotional. In both cases by 'making sense' I mean that the sections and sequences start resonating a 'vibe'. They echo a flavor, a quality, and a mood that seems to fit with everyone involved in the process. The phrase begins physically, leads to a more emotional level, and sometimes loops back to inform the physical once more.

How do you negotiate creativity with Tiffany and the Company when making work?

I love how Tiffany works to make you feel comfortable in what you are doing. She really respects everyone's creative input. You just keep working away, by trying, talking, discussing, suggesting and listening to other people's suggestions. We try a different take to see how that feels, and another different take until things fall into place, and 'start making sense' as I described above.



LandFall Photography: Julie Lemberger © 2007

You have a significant relationship with Laura's character in the Company's work "LandFall". How would you describe this relationship?

My interpretation is not the same as Laura's or Tiffany's. It is what I feel when I do it and that even tends to change as I re-motivate myself for the part each time. I see myself as going through an internal struggle, and Laura is another aspect of my character. Laura partially personifies the struggle because she's too close to me while I'm trying to break free of something. The persistence of Laura's silent effort forces me to deal with the problem, as if a part of yourself or a thought in your head keeps being there, and won't let up until you face it head-on. Toward the end of the duet I'm starting to come through the tunnel and there's more breath and space. This particular character goes through something really deep and dark. Allowing myself to go there was a growth opportunity and getting there and then going back there with each run is a challenge.

LANDFALL IN AUSTRALIA

The following artwork was created by Debra Luccio, a visiting Australian artist, who sketched the Company during our NYC Season at Joyce SoHo. The two works below will be part of Debra's upcoming exhibition, 'New York Figures' in Melbourne, Australia.



The Dance (2007) Monotype on Velin Arches 76 x 56cm

Made in and inspired by New York City's dance scene, this exhibition captures the muscular, emotive bodies of dancers at practice and performance, with paintings, monotypes, drypoints and drawings that continue Debra Luccio's fascination with the human form and all its possibilities.

Debra Luccio New York Figures:
Dancers and Life Models of New York City
Paintings, Monotypes, Drypoints & Drawings
STEPS GALLERY 4 - 30 September 2007
62 Lygon St Carlton 3053, Melbourne, Australia
Mon-Sun 10am-6pm
www.debraluccio.com



The Dancer (2007) Oil on Canvas 123 x 61cm

LAURA HYMERS FAREWELL

In 1995, I came to NYC with the dream to dance. Even in my best "dance dreams," I never imagined I would dance professionally for twelve years with a company in which I would have an artistic voice in a rich collaborative process. I thank Tiffany for fostering an environment in which I was encouraged to grow as a dancer and artist. I will miss coming into the studio, exploring ideas from scratch, and experiencing the ride of where the movement takes you. I will miss the laughter, the sharing, the freedom and the authenticity. In my new adventures, I will carry with me the passion for dance and creating that Tiffany and all in the Tiffany Mills Company share, along with wonderful memories of tours, performances, benefits, and more. There are so many good stories!

So what lies ahead for me after the Tiffany Mills Company? In the coming year, I complete my training to be a Feldenkrais Practitioner® and will start my own practice, work that merges my love of movement, learning, and helping others. I will also be getting married! And of course, I will continue to dance.

Thank you to all past and present Tiffany Mills Company Dancers (18 in all!), Board Members and supporters of the Company, and especially to Tiffany for all that you've shared with me. It's a wonderful gift.

"The Company employs a committed and intensely focused group of talent. Mills' choreography is boldly physical and emotionally charged. Technically the Company is versatile and strong, moving easily from floor to standing, from aggressive movement to fluid and suspending." -Ballet-Dance Magazine

SECOND ANNUAL WORKSHOP by Jenna Simon

The 2007 Tiffany Mills Company Summer Workshop in Brooklyn was a success. More than doubling in enrollment from the First Annual Workshop last year, twenty-five people came together for a week of dancing with the Company.

I took the subway every morning from lower Manhattan to D.U.M.B.O.'s White Wave Dance Studio. Among the blackberries and sport jackets bound for Wall Street, I sported sweats and a tank top on my way to a day packed with technique, improvisation, and sweat. The day began with a two-hour technique class taught by Tiffany and Petra. The afternoon was filled with partnering, improvisation, and learning repertory from the Company.

Before we started dancing, we sat in a circle to discuss what everyone gleaned from the previous class. This was an excellent addition to the day because many times during workshops you are so overwhelmed with dancing that you never get a chance to process your thoughts or talk about what you have learned, let alone get to know your fellow dancers. This "powwow" before technique created an intimate atmosphere where people felt comfortable to share their thoughts and frustrations about what they were experiencing. This proved to be invaluable because Tiffany's technique requires a great amount of trust and confidence.

During one of these morning chats, I shared my thoughts on improvising. Being very new to this form of movement, (I am trained in classical ballet), I was nervous even about the idea of improvisation. Everyone was very supportive and by the end of the week I had warmed up to the idea of dancing with different partners, dancing with my eyes closed, and even dancing with partners with my eyes closed.

Until I danced in Tiffany Mills' Workshop, I had considered that only clear thought out positions were aesthetically pleasing. By the end of the week, one body overlapping and haphazardly spilling off another body was just as exciting and gorgeous to watch as a classical pas de deux. Jackie Starnier, a participant of the workshop, phrased this idea perfectly. She said, "During the Workshop, I was forced to reassess my ideas about dance. I learned that a fall could be just as beautiful as a perfect triple pirouette."

Different Company Members would come each day to assist Tiffany in teaching and to share their backgrounds with the Workshop participants. Listening to their stories, dancing with them, and watching them dance made the Workshop a valuable experience as well.

This year's Summer Workshop was a blast and I am eagerly anticipating what next year's Workshop will have in store. If you are a dancer and want to grow in creativity and partnering, be sure to contact us about next year's Workshop: info@tiffanymillscompany.org.