

HARID's Outstanding Ballet Faculty

The Harid Conservatory is considered one of America's foremost professional-training schools for young dancers. Each year, more and more applications are received from outside the United States which suggests the school's reputation continues to grow internationally as well. At the core of the school's success are HARID's ballet faculty members, Victoria Schneider, Svetlana Osiyeva, and Olivier Pardina. Each day, these outstanding teachers guide and develop the students' technical abilities and artistic qualities.

As HARID approaches its twentieth anniversary year (2007), the time seems appropriate to recognize and celebrate the ballet faculty. In this and upcoming issues of the newsletter, each teacher will be featured in a profile written by freelance writer and dance critic, *Kate Mattingly*.

Svetlana Osiyeva

After twenty years of performing with the Kirov Ballet, touring throughout Europe and Asia, Svetlana Osiyeva thought about taking a break. "I was thinking I was finished with dancing and would start a new life of reading books, going to the theater, and traveling," she says with a smile. "But reality was absolutely different. After two weeks with books, I was thinking I need to DO something!!"

Such vitality is Svetlana's signature. Her wide-set, blue eyes and delicate features speak to her Russian ancestry. Her youthful beauty makes it hard to believe she spent decades training, performing, and teaching in classical ballet's capital city, St. Petersburg.



Svetlana Osiyeva

Since the age of seven, dancing has been her life. The excellent training students receive in her classes at HARID can be traced to Svetlana's own schooling at the Vaganova Academy, ballet's most prestigious school. "I remember that thirteen or fourteen girls began in my class and eight years later there were only two of us." Such attrition attests to the stringent life: competition was fierce and the demands were high. Their daily uniforms—leotards and cotton skirts which are easily purchased today—had to be hand-sewn.

The Vaganova Academy's selection process took three months, during which time each child was seen three times. They were led into a studio in a line, ten at a time, for ten minutes. Dressed in un-

derpants, the children were checked for flexibility, coordination, and the necessary physical proportions for a ballet career. Svetlana remembers the selection committee asking her “‘Would you like to dance?’ and I said, ‘I don’t know... yes?’ Next thing I found out, I was accepted. That was probably the last time I had fun when I danced. School was work.”

When she turned eighteen, Svetlana was invited to join the company, the Kirov Ballet. You have to push yourself all the time when you are dancing. Everyday you have to be in shape, practicing the exercises. Doing that for twenty years is hard.” She says her favorite choreographers were Leonid Jacobson, Pierre Lacotte, and Marius Petipa, the father of classical ballet.

She now describes her professional life as “absolutely beautiful.” Once she decided to “do something,” she enrolled in the Vaganova Academy’s teacher-training program, another rigorous system. After four years, she received a pedagogy degree, graduating with honors.

Svetlana says she’s “very satisfied” at HARID, even though the school’s training differs from that offered at the Vaganova Academy. (Students enter HARID at fourteen as opposed to nine years of age.) “I can see such good results,” she says, adding that she is “so happy” to see the school’s graduates dancing professionally with companies. “Every day I teach at HARID, I am interested in the students’ progress. It’s like washing a dish that you wipe maybe a hundred times and then, one day, it sparkles!”

– by *Kate Mattingly*

HARID Endowment Fund Continues to Grow

The Harid Conservatory recently received an extremely generous contribution—in the amount of **five million dollars**—to its endowment fund. Director Gordon Wright commented, “A gift of such sig-

nificance is tremendously encouraging. It speaks volumes about the continuing commitment to the school’s long-term financial well being. Everyone at HARID is thrilled and extremely appreciative of the gift.”

The balance of HARID’s endowment fund is now approximately twenty million dollars. Over time, the school seeks to increase this amount until the earnings are sufficient to fund the school’s operation in perpetuity. HARID welcomes endowment gifts from individuals, private foundations, and corporations. Naming opportunities are available. Please contact director Gordon Wright for more information.

2006 Summer School Auditions Completed

HARID’s director and ballet faculty recently conducted Summer School auditions in seventeen cities across the country. Of the hundreds of applicants, only sixty will be invited to attend the four-week program in June and July. During the Summer School, students seeking admission to HARID for the 2006–07 academic year will be further evaluated by the faculty and staff.

This year, auditions were held in Boston, MA, Baltimore, MD, Tampa, FL, New York, NY, Boise, ID, San Francisco, CA, Anaheim, CA, Kansas City, MO, Chicago, IL, Atlanta, GA, Pittsburgh, PA, Charlotte, NC, Cincinnati, OH, Dallas, TX, Denver, CO, Phoenix, AZ, and Boca Raton, FL.

While conducting the audition in Boston, HARID director Gordon Wright visited with alumni Megan Gray (2004) and Kathleen Breen Combes (1999). Both are dancing for Boston Ballet and doing very well.

Wright also met with Alan Alberto (2005), who was visiting Boston during a break from his studies at the Vaganova Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia. Alan was very enthusiastic about his classes at the historic and renowned school.

Congratulations!

HARID's students are recognized for their talent and abilities in the dance studio. Equally impressive, however, is their academic success! In the second academic quarter (that ended in December), twenty-eight students—or seventy percent of the student body—qualified for the Conservatory's honor roll. When one considers that the majority of students are enrolled in one or more honors or advanced placement courses, this accomplishment becomes even more noteworthy. Watch out world... these students are a force to be reckoned with!

New Members Inducted into HARID Chapter of the National Honor Society

Eleven students were recently selected for membership in The Harid Conservatory Chapter of the National Honor Society. Congratulations to Chelsea Adomaitis, Jill Beam, Sarah Bryner, Bethany Buller, Mary Laurel Ratliff, Kelly Girskis, Marisa McKenna-Donnelly, Elizabeth Quinn, Alexandra Szatkowski, Myles Thatcher, and Rachael Vrbancic.

The criteria for National Honor Society membership are outstanding scholarship, character, leadership, and service.

Year-End Performances, May 18–20 at Olympic Heights Performing Arts Theater

HARID will return to Olympic Heights Performing Arts Theater in west Boca Raton on May 18, 19, and 20 to present its Year-End Performances. The program will include a collection of modern, classical, and contemporary dances.

HARID's modern dance instructor and resident choreographer, Tara Mitton Catao, has created a new, yet-untitled, work for the program. It features ten female and six male dancers and is set to excerpts from "Mishima" by composer Philip Glass.

Svetlana Osiyeva is preparing a delightful dance from the ballet *Esmeralda*, while Olivier Pardina is staging the pas de deux from August Bournonville's *Flower Festival in Genzano*. Victoria Schneider is busy working on dances from Act I of *Raymonda*.

In April, HARID's principal guest choreographer, Mark Godden, will return to create another original work for the students. This will be Godden's fourteenth annual visit to the school.

Tickets for the Year-End Performances are now on sale at the HARID ticket office, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. (561 998-8038)

Volunteers make HARID's World Go Around

Since the school was founded in 1987, volunteers have played a vital role in HARID's operations. They have been involved in administrative duties, marketing, ticket sales, event planning and hosting,



Celebrating HARID's Volunteers!

theater ushering, and fundraising. Their time, talents, labor, support, and encouragement have been immeasurably important to the school's success. Each year, HARID hosts a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon to recognize and thank those who give so generously of their time, energy, and expertise. This year's luncheon will be held on April 7.

HARID will soon say goodbye to two of its long-time volunteers and supporters. Bonnie Furst has been involved with the Conservatory for the past five years. She is moving to Arizona to be closer to her son. Lenore Brindis has been a supporter since 1995. She is moving to California to reunite with her family as well. Everyone at HARID will miss Bonnie and Lenore's friendship and support. Best wishes!

Annual-Fund Campaign

With just three months left in the fiscal year, HARID seeks additional contributions to its annual-fund campaign. To date, \$50,000 has been raised from individuals, companies, and private foundations. This year's goal, however, is \$75,000. Please consider making a generous contribution to HARID at this time. The annual fund provides much-needed financial assistance for students whose families cannot afford the fees associated with room and board at the school.

Alumni Updates

- Marcelo Gomes (1996) will partner Sara Webb-Bardo (1996) in the principal roles in Houston Ballet's new production of *Swan Lake*. Sara and Marcelo first danced the White Swan pas de deux together at HARID in 1995. Other HARID alumni who will alternate in the principal female role (Odette/Odile) are Bridgette Zehr (2002) and Amy Fote (1990).



© Dan Smith

Sara Webb (Bardo) and Marcelo Gomes in their first White Swan pas de deux together (HARID, 1995)

- Houston Ballet dancer, Bridgette Zehr (2002), has been promoted to Soloist for the 2006-07 season!
- Daniel Wiley (1999) was recently married! Daniel graduated from the Juilliard School before joining North Carolina Dance Theatre. He and his wife, Rebecca Massey-Wiley live in Charlotte, NC.

We hope you have enjoyed reading HARID's Winter/Spring Newsletter. The next issue will be published in November, 2006.