

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

UNLV dance department spotlights five rising stars

Dancing has exploded beyond the ballroom, recital hall and theatre.

Dancing in the past 10 years has become an integral part of youthful American culture.

The films "Fame," "Chorus Line," and "Dirty Dancing," as well as MTV, have contributed to the upsurge of interest.

Today's college students, unlike previous generations, feel comfortable studying dance. Students typically grow up playing baseball, basketball, and rollerskating.

Today's UNLV students also grew up dancing and romping in front of TV sets.

The repercussions for UNLV's Dance Department are beginning to be felt today. Even Dr. Carole Rae, dance department chairman, is surprised at the interest here in studying dance.

"In one academic year, we service more than 2,100 students through classes," Rae said. "This certainly was not true 10 years ago."

"The growth in the dance department is reflected in our dance majors. They are just as talented but much more diverse than when I first started to teach," Rae said. "They come from all over the country with varied backgrounds. It is exciting to work with them."

Claudine Hairston, a UNLV freshman dance major from Columbus, OH, started dancing when she was three.

"I was doing ballet and tap. It was very natural. I was tall and thin, so modeling and dancing was what children did."

Hairston eventually plans to have a dual major with political science.

"The most interesting and fun aspect of class so far is learning techniques from the West Coast as opposed to the East. In tap here they are very much lighter on their feet. It's not as much of a Broadway tap which has more emphasis on stomps."

Hairston feels that UNLV is a good place to study.

"The different colleges are not as separated here as they would be at Ohio State University, so I get to meet students from many other disciplines. I feel the size of the campus makes it easier for freshmen from small towns."

"When I came to the UNLV

dance department at the end of 1981 I was the only non-traditional type student. Now students range in age

Professional Championships.

There are five different types of ice skating in the amateur world

wear beautiful costumes and get paid for it," said Shaw, a professional dancer, originally from Minnesota and pursuing her master's degree.

Shaw, who plans to graduate this semester, was with the MGM Grand, now Bally's Hotel, from 1976-1989. For four years she was in Hallelujah Hollywood and

spent nine years in Jubilee. "Students can work professionally in Las Vegas while they attend school here and even better, they can find work here when they finish school."

"My most rewarding experience was my master's thesis

where I wrote the music, choreographed, designed the costumes and wrote the narration. It was called 'Inochi To Ai' a Japanese dance based on Haiku," said Shaw.

"My professional performing experience is helpful...it's more than just technique, it's being able to deal with costumes, sets, props, elevators and realities of live produc-

tion. Also there is an interaction with the audience that does not take place in the classroom studio. I also teach dance and feel it's important to make students aware of this constantly. The dance department at UNLV is growing by leaps

and bounds...the concerts here are more and more professional."



The UNLV dance department has many upcoming events featuring, from left to right: **Claudine Hairston, Jacque Jaeger, Kevin Poit, Ramona Shaw, and Natalie Fredricks.**



from 18- to senior citizens," said **Jacque Jaeger**, a professional dancer, working on her master's.

Jaeger danced for five years with the St. Louis Opera Company and was a June Taylor Dancer. She also danced in the famous Latin Quarter Review.

"I'd lived in Las Vegas for quite some time. I wanted to get an educa-

and Poit passed the highest test in each category.

Professionally, he skated with the ice capades for four years. He also taught ice skating at the Detroit skating club for three years.

"I came to Las Vegas on

vacation and liked the area so much that I decided to move here. I checked out the dance department and was very impressed by the well roundedness of the curriculum.

"UNLV is a young university but very up and coming. It's going to be one of the top universities in the west in the next couple of years. I'll be performing with the university's major performances, and with their guest artists.

"The faculty members enjoy what they are doing and are enthusiastic; and that enthusiasm is contagious. When I moved here I didn't know anybody—didn't know a soul.

"This is my second year and I've made a great many friends among the student body. What's nice here is that everybody helps one another."

Another enthusiastic student is **Ramona Shaw.**

"Dancing on the stage is a perfect profession; a chance to dance,



"The very first class I took was dance. The department in those years was small but very professional, innovative, and growing. They offered both technique, theory, and history.

I'm specializing in dance history. I hope to be able to teach," Jaeger said.

Kevin Poit, from Lapeer, Michigan, started a career in ice skating when he was 12.

"I haven't really changed my career. What I want to do is teach ice skating. The reason I'm getting a degree in dance is to be able to teach ice skaters how to dance."

Poit skated in the 1984 United States National Ice Skating Championships, the World Ice Capades for four years, and in the World



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