

Spotlight

Student ballerina dances around obstacles to success

By LEIGH PRESSLEY

Staff Writer

Despite blisters and bruises, twisted ankles and tendonitis, sore muscles and sweaty clothes, Tara Penick's love of ballet still dominates her life.

Penick, a sophomore international studies major from Durham, spends her free time teaching ballet to 6- to 14-year-olds, holding rehearsals for a Raleigh dance company, choreographing a production for a local high school show choir, assisting Duke University summer dance workshops and performing in musicals herself.

"Dancing feels good to me. It's a way to forget everything going on outside. It's you, your body and the music. You can do things soft, slow and calm."

Penick began ballet classes in Raleigh when she was 5 years old. Since then, she has learned jazz, tap and modern dance as well. From her experience in productions, Penick progressed to teaching beginning ballet and choreographing programs in Raleigh.

Three years ago she began teaching classes for 6-year-olds in Chapel Hill and conducting a summer dance workshop for high school students from around the country.

Teaching younger children in Chapel Hill and in Raleigh is by far the hardest, Penick said.

"We learn basic movements, not a lot of technique. We learn the basic steps through telling a story and putting images in their heads."

Penick uses images children can understand to explain various steps. For example, polka steps become gallops, butterfly wings create a smooth

walk, and birds with wings are transformed into a waltz step.

Imagination is a necessity, Penick said. A tambourine placed on the floor, for instance, becomes a wide river the children must jump over. This concept helps the dancers to have fun working on big jumps without the dance seeming like work.

"You have to be able to see what it would look like to a 6-year-old. You have to make things simple, so they don't realize they're working on technique."

Once a week in Raleigh, Penick holds rehearsals for the Concert Dancers of Raleigh, who are 12 to 14 years old. Penick choreographs sections of the Christmas and spring programs, as well as the children's ballet that the company performs at area elementary schools.

"The older kids are disciplined, and it's harder to see corrections you need to make. They need to work on specific things of technique, and I should be able to see all the fine points."

Four days a week, Penick teaches an 8 a.m. class for show choir students at Chapel Hill Senior High School.

Many of the students have never danced before and are reluctant to try the choreographed dances set to popular music, she said.

"At first, they look at you like they won't do it. But then we clean it up and it looks good. They get excited. The next day, they want to show you what they learned."

At the Bright Leaf Music Workshop held at Duke University in the summer, Penick gets the opportunity to work

with professionals from Broadway and Disney World, while assisting in their teaching programs.

About 300 students start with a notebook of music and learn all the words, music and dance steps until a week later when it becomes a full-scale production, Penick said.

"It's a lot of fun for me because I get to see what the professionals do and learn from them. The students see kids from other schools, learn new styles and reproduce them at their own schools."

In addition to teaching dance, Penick has performed with the UNC Dance Company and in other productions in the area. Her latest musical, "Carousel," was recently performed at the Abracadabra Dinner Theater in Raleigh.

"I saw it go from nothing to a full product. It was a whole full circle," she said. "I made 25 best friends. Everybody worked together."

Penick said she stuck with ballet over the years because it requires a learning process built layer by layer.

"You start from the beginning and build on it. If you haven't learned fifth position, you can't reproduce new steps. You have to go through all the steps in order to do it. It's interesting and complex."

Penick, who puts in more than 11 hours a week with dance, said teaching often interferes with her school work.

She relieves stress by looking ahead. "I have to remember that I put myself in this position. Sometimes I think if I can just make it through the next couple of days, I'll be OK."

The physical and mental aspects of



Sophomore Tara Penick

DTH/David Surowiecki

dance must come together if a dancer wants to be a professional, Penick said. "You have to have the right kind of body. You have to give up family and marriage. You have to be willing to leave everything behind."

Penick's goals for the future include continuing with the UNC Dance Com-

pany and choreographing as many new programs as possible.

"I'd like to do something with it eventually. It may be musical theater, dance/acting or teaching choreography."

Although she spends most of her

time rehearsing rather than performing, Penick said she still finds dance rewarding.

"You get a sense of accomplishment when you go through a hard class. You feel like you pushed yourself a little bit farther, learned something new and gained something for yourself."

Lab Theatre to stage surprisingly modern tragedy 'Woyzeck'

By ERIC ROSEN

Staff Writer

Murder, manipulation and the forced descent into insanity—these are major themes in the Lab Theatre's upcoming psychological tragedy, Georg Buchner's "Woyzeck."

Carl Mueller, a leading scholar of Buchner's life, said of him, "His life was short, his life was tragic. He always said it would be. He died at the age of 23 years and four months..."

What one might not notice by reading the play, according to director Quince Marcum, a senior dramatic arts major from Winston-Salem, is that Buchner died in 1837.

"The play was so far ahead of itself then, although now the ideas are taken

somewhat for granted," he said.

Updating the deterministic play for modern audiences is Marcum's goal. "I'm taking an old play with its own agenda and I'm superimposing my own agenda," he said.

The play, in its original text, deals with the nature of sociological reality in the context of class distinctions.

Specifically, it follows the story of Woyzeck, a poor soldier who is at the mercy of his superiors. His class, rank and poverty force him to subject himself to paid psychological experimentation, which eventually drives him mad.

"Buchner's point is that virtue is afforded to the rich. Poor people don't

have the time to be virtuous," Marcum said.

His own agenda expands on the form of the play, delving into the memory process. "The whole play is an exposition leading to a single event; the bulk is background. I am juxtapositioning the action of the present with what goes on in people's minds remembering."

"Buchner died before the play was complete. The order is open to interpretation. It hops around the way memory hops around. People's thoughts change. It isn't linear."

But reinterpreting a classic is neither a smooth nor easy process, Marcum said.

Scott Bowman, a senior drama and

political science major from Atlanta, agreed. "The play is interesting because Quince is trying to direct it in a different style than the ordinary. The characters in the play are symbols... they don't have names. Quince is aiming to depersonalize the character," said Bowman, who plays the drum major in

the production.

The play is about victimizing by classes, according to Marla Morton, a senior drama major from Charlotte who plays Marie in the show.

Woyzeck is "struggling to survive in the midst of oppressive society. In a sense, Marie is too. She is victimized

by men and poverty, the need for basic necessities... but she's also a victimizer of Woyzeck," Morton said.

Marcum agreed that society can force an individual to commit sin and do evil. "People are not merely good or evil, but are driven by society," he said. "It's not black and white."

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McKinley

activities, the court had undermined his "necessity defense," which argued that the nature of CIA operations abroad had made the protest necessary.

McKinley will also argue that the sentence is excessively severe, he said. "My appeal is based on the fact that denying me the right to teach is taking away 70 percent of my income." Because he is only working on his dissertation and not taking any classes, he added, "to me, that is tantamount to expulsion from the University."

McKinley said he would have to get a full-time job to support himself if he were prevented from teaching.

McKinley said if his University appeals were exhausted, his civil lawsuit would focus on the issue of due

process. He said the U.S. Constitution prohibited taking what is considered property—in this case his job and income—without judicial due process.

"I would argue that I have not been given due process. I think it's been a jury-rigged thing forced through the system."

McKinley said he was especially concerned about the effect that changing instructors or canceling his course in mid-semester would have on the 50 students he teaches.

"I've been charged with disruption of legitimate University activities, and I wonder which is more disruptive—my actions or breaking up a class in the middle of the semester."

Richard Richardson, chairman of the political science department, said he would await the outcome of McKinley's appeal before deciding how to continue the class without him.

"We're not going to cross that bridge until we come to it, and I hope we never have to cross it," Richardson said. "I understand that he had appealed, and I hope he will be able to continue teaching."

Cannon said he didn't want to comment on the case because of concerns over confidentiality. "That's something we can't talk about because the case is still an active one."

He said he had not encountered a previous situation at the University where a graduate student was prohibited from teaching as the result of an honor court verdict.

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Minors

John Florin, chairman of the geography department, said its faculty favored an academic minor. "We anticipate that it will not have any major affect on us."

"People have been taking courses because they wanted to, and it's unlikely that it will result in any significant change, either up or down, in our overall registration."

One of Weinberg's concerns is the availability of classes. "What happens if we block out majors from the courses they need to take because of people trying to fulfill their minors?"

"In my opinion, I wouldn't be surprised myself if we tried it out for a year and see what happens."

Weinberg said a very large proportion of people he has talked to were generally sympathetic to the idea of a minor, but they're worried.

Many departments are worried because of the lack of resources and the present size of the department classes.

Richard Richardson, chairman of the political science department, said the department would not offer a minor. "We haven't got an assessment on how it would increase our enrollments, and we have no insurance that we would get any additional resources if our student enrollment increases."

The Party's Over

If you're thinking of traveling to Greenville for Halloween this year, think again. You won't find any downtown celebration. You won't find the bars or restaurants open. And you won't find any students, either.

This year, Greenville police plan to watch the downtown area closely. No crowds will be allowed to gather. No one will be permitted to drink alcoholic beverages on city sidewalks, streets or in parking lots.

East Carolina University students and administrators, as well as city business and government leaders, agree that Halloween poses too many potential dangers for any celebration to continue.

Have a safe and happy Halloween. But this year, have it at home.



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