

Meredith Learns the Art of Balance

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News Editor

On September 10, just over 100 Meredith students and faculty gathered in Jones Auditorium to enjoy "Balancing Act: Building Community Through the Arts (even if you think you aren't an artist)". Hosted by the Convocation Committee and the Dance Program, this convocation was designed to help students realize their inner artist by using their daily struggles as inspiration.

As students and staff members approached the site of Jones Auditorium, all could see the large black, wooden boxes covering its lawn. Atop these boxes were various students and staff members dancing, stopping only to balance with intricate poses. In the entrance at the auditorium, a wooden, pastel colored seesaw again reaffirmed the "Balancing Act" theme to all who entered.

Leading the convocation was Peter DiMuro, Artistic Director of Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in Washington, D.C. He began by commenting on his return visit to Meredith

College, "There's a difference in you which I find amazing. You seem wiser, more polite. You are women of the future."

DiMuro told about how he travels and interacts with different groups of people, getting their stories and finding out what their group is all about. He then uses dance to reflect their stories. DiMuro captivated the audience with his testimonies of how using modern dance brings communities closer together.

DiMuro shared with the audience an emotional story of how he was asked to create a dance on the topic of AIDS. Having been affected personally by the debilitating illness, DiMuro disclosed the difficulty he faced in trying to create art involving something about which he was so passionate. He explained that after much time of reflection, the dance he developed consisted of him running for eighteen minutes straight. He demonstrated how he would run, stop, breath hard, and start running again. His interpretation of the illness signified his feelings of loss and hopelessness associated with AIDS.

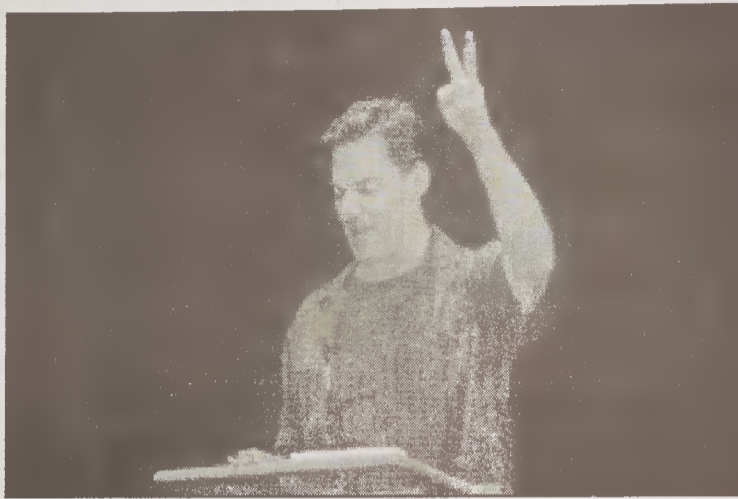


Photo by Jennifer Port

Guest Speaker Peter DiMuro as he reads from his new work, "Gumdrops and Funny Uncles".

Keeping with the theme of "Balancing Act," DiMuro interactively worked with the audience questioning them about what they "balance" in everyday life. DiMuro listened closely and watched even closer as the students gave their answers. Some of the answers presented were work, school, the world around them, and family. From the attendants' detailed responses and hand gestures, DiMuro created flowing movements to symbolize each answer, encouraging the attendees to follow along. After all of the answers were shared, each of the movements were fused together and set to soft music. The entire audience

participated as their very own modern dance creation symbolizing the "balancing act" they face in their daily lives took shape.

The convocation was very well received, allowing Meredith students and staff to become artists, even if they thought they weren't artists to begin with. Abby Eaton, Meredith Art Major, said, "I wasn't going to come until I saw the dancers outside. I thought to myself, 'Wow, that looks cool.' As an Art Major it was great to see a different side of the art spectrum. It was awesome!"

DiMuro concluded the convocation with a passionate reading from his "Gumdrops and Funny Uncles" project, which con-

sists of amusing stories about his life set to music.

The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange is intergenerational with dancers ranging from age 20 to 70. DiMuro spoke fondly of his fellow dancers saying that they are the "family I get to hang out with and make art with." DiMuro has choreographed, taught and performed around the world for the past 25 years. In 1995 he was a recipient of the Mayor of Boston/ProArts Public Service in the Arts Award and in 2000 was named a White House Millennial Artist. He has received grants from the National Performance Network, Artists' Foundation and the Cultural Council of Massachusetts. DiMuro currently leads the national tour of Near/Far/In/Out, a work inspired by the culture and the voices of the LGBT community.

DiMuro is the Dance Program's guest artist this fall. DiMuro's work will be performed by the company and company alumnae at the Meredith Dance Theater's 20th Anniversary Concert in November.

Are You Interested in Working Abroad?

The Meredith College Office of Study Abroad invites you to meet with representatives from BUNAC
Thursday, September 23,
11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Belk Dining Hall

BUNAC, the British Universities North America Club, offers programs for young people wishing to live and work abroad. BUNAC participants can combine the everyday life of a country with exciting travel possibilities to destinations such as London, Dublin, Edinburgh, Vancouver, Australia, New Zealand, or South Africa.

BUNAC representatives Gemma Parker and Karen Spicer can answer your questions about the types of programs, finding a job, program costs, living costs, and how and when to apply.

Thursday, September 23 is the only day BUNAC will be on our campus this semester. Don't pass up this excellent opportunity!

For more information, contact:
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