



Report of Activities, FY 2008-09
Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company
FY ending June 30, 2009

Background

Founded in 1964, Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is a 15-member organization located in Salt Lake City, UT. The Company includes six full-time dancers and a staff of ten—five full-time and five part-time. Managing Director Joan Woodbury is co-founder of the Company. She and co-founder Shirley Ririe (currently part-time) each have over 48 years of experience as professional dancers, choreographers and directors as well as approximately 48 years as professors of dance at the University of Utah. Both have been awarded the Utah Governor's Award in the Arts for Arts Education and, between them, three honorary doctorates.

Other full-time employees include the following:

- 1) Artistic Director Charlotte Boye-Christensen, whose formal training includes the London Contemporary Dance School, the Laban Centre in London and Tisch School of the Arts (NYU) where she earned her MFA. A former recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship, she was recently invited to teach and choreograph at the International Dance Competition in Seoul, at London Contemporary Dance School, at Kuopio Conservatory in Finland and directed the stage workshop at the famed Bauhaus institute in Germany.
- 2) Associate Managing Director/Touring Manager Jena Woodbury. Ms. Woodbury has over 20 years of experience with the Company in a variety of capacities. In Portland, Oregon she worked as General Manager for Imago Theatre and Do Jump Movement Theatre as well as Company Manager for Marcel Marceau's North American and Asian tours. She has a BA in communication from the University of Utah.
- 3) The Company's part-time Education Director, Gigi Arrington, has a BA and MA in dance from Brigham Young University, is a former, full-time dancer for the Company and a former instructor of dance at the University of Nevada/Reno and /Las Vegas as well as Arizona State University. While in Nevada, she helped establish the Children's Creative Dance Lab in Las Vegas and the Sierra Repertory Dance Theatre in Reno. She also performed with a.ludwigco. in Phoenix. Along with her schedule of conducting residences and touring Utah schools, Ms. Arrington serves on the Board of Directors for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-Utah.

The dancers for 2008/09 included the following:

- 1) Joseph "Jo" Blake, (7th year at Ririe-Woodbury); BFA dance, UofU
- 2) Erin Lehua Brown, (4rd year); BFA, modern dance, UofU
- 3) Andrea Dispenziere, (1st year); BFA, dance NYU's Tisch School of the Arts
- 4) Caine Keenan, (6th year), BFA, dance NYU's Tisch School of the Arts
- 5) Elizabeth Kelley Wilberg, (4th year), BFA, modern dance, UofU
- 6) TJ Spaur, (4th year), BFA, California State University, Long Beach

Whenever the Company performed works by Alwin Nikolais, four other dancers were contracted. (In 2003, the Company became the official repository of works by this *National Treasure*.)

Other staff during the season included Marketing and Public Relations Director Jessica Ballard, BA communications, Westminster College; and Director of Development and Community Affairs, David Pace, MA communication, also from the "U"--both full-time employees. Our part-time accountant was Phil Falkowski, BS accounting, University of Utah, and our Stage Manager/Technical Director (contracted) was Clifford Wallgren an experienced technician with experience in various theaters along the Wasatch Front. A touring intern, Kirsten Darrington (BA Arts Admin., Westminster College), also worked for Ririe-Woodbury during the 2008-09 season.

Move-It Summer Workshop

Our annual three-week Move-It Summer Workshop (July 21-Aug. 16, 2008) was an event that drew 35 professional and collegiate dancers from across the country and abroad. Under the direction of Ririe-Woodbury's Artistic Director Charlotte Boye-Christensen the 2008 Workshop's featured faculty included Jan Ekert (Univ. of Illinois), Eric Handman (Univ. of Utah), Kay Andersen (Southern Utah University), Abby Fiat (Univ. of Utah), the Company's Education Director Gigi Arrington, Aikido instructor and cinematographer Geno Salvatori, and world-renowned Capoeira instructor Jamaika. The classes conducted ranged from improvisation to technique and from choreography to body conditioning with special topic classes as well. The event also included a workshop for school teachers (taught by Ms. Ekert and Ms. Fiat) who are eligible for professional credit by completing the work in each of their designated classes. At the end of the formal Summer Workshop, the Company conducted three, two-day workshops for high school students for a total of more than 150.

Artistic Programming

August 21-23, 2008 the Company sponsored three evening performances of *Momentum*, featuring choreography by Company alumni. This was the second year for this Company-sponsored show.

September 25-27, 2008 we presented *Tower*, an evening of works by Alwin Nikolais in the Jeanné Wagner Theatre (Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center). The evening featured the title work, a reconstruction funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts American Masterpieces grant program. Other dances included "Crucible," "Liturgies" and "Tensile Involvement." At three of our four season shows, including at *Tower*, we presented at least one free matinee to high school students and seniors. We priced our season tickets as well as our individual tickets very affordably (\$80 and \$20-\$30, respectively).

November 16th we performed selections of our repertory put to the music of various Jewish composers at the Jewish Community Center's annual arts festival.

December 11-14, 2008 we presented *Interiors* in the Black Box Theatre (Rose Wagner). This show highlighted the works of our Artistic Director, Charlotte Boye-Christensen, including a new work in collaboration with local visual artist Trent Call. Other works by Ms. Boye-Christensen's were performed, including last year's award-winning "Lost," "The Visit" (2002), "Bridge" (2005) and excerpts from "Chairs, Basically" (2007).

January 28-31, 2009 we presented for the second year in a row *The Crystal and the Sphere*, the delightful, black light show for families and children. The Company performed five free public school matinees of this one-hour work, choreographed Alwin Nikolais, at the Capitol Theater followed by three public performances for families at a minimal cost.

March 28, 2009 was our annual fundraising gala, *Cabaret of Fools*, held at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center. The event included a silent auction, entertainment and gourmet food from local restaurants. The event raised more than \$22,000 (net) for the Company's educational and artistic programming.

April 23-25, 2009 the Company presented *Surfaces*, featuring the works of three distinguished choreographers: Doug Varone's 1994 work "Strict Love"; Charlotte Boye-Christensen's 2005 work "Degrees of Separation" and a new work commissioned by the Company from New York choreographer Susan Marshall, excerpts from her 2006 "Cloudless," a Salt Lake premiere. These performances corresponded with our 45th anniversary celebration in which over 30 alumni returned to Utah to perform a work on opening night.

On June 26th, the Company performed a selection of Ririe-Woodbury repertory at the Utah Arts Festival at Washington Square in Salt Lake City.

We received strong reviews for all of our shows and, for the second year in a row, increased ticket sales. Additionally, we were able to bring in many underprivileged and underserved populations to our free matinees, including families from the Utah National Guard, the Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Girl Scouts and a variety of senior centers, among other groups.

Educational Programming

This year the Company managed to reach 32,360 Utah students and teachers who participated in our educational program throughout the school year. While the annual children's show (this year *The Crystal and the Sphere*) acts as

a culmination of the program by bringing students into a legitimate theater to encounter a professional dance performance, our educational programming is primarily built on residencies, interactive lecture demonstrations, on-site workshops, teacher training, high school initiatives as well as performances in the schools. Coupled with rural touring to outlying regions in the state, the Company offers an extensive and correlated dance education program using professional dancers to the entire state. As a collective with other dance companies who participate in the Utah State Office of Education's Professional Outreach Programs in Schools (POPS), we are able to reach each Utah school district every three years.

The State Office through legislative funding underwrites much of what we do and ensures that all organizations participating in POPS meet the core arts curriculum of the state. The reach of our programs extends from large to small groups in the state. Matching funds are raised through appeals to individuals and applications to foundations and corporations. *Please see the Company's 2008/09 illustrated report (enclosed) to the Utah State Office of Education for more detailed information on the Company's educational program.*

Touring

The Company also toured domestically and internationally with both our own repertory and the repertory of Alwin Nikolais. Our touring activity, we feel, brings prestige and profile to Salt Lake City and Utah and adds to quality of life.

The cities to which we toured include the following: Anchorage, Alaska; Memphis, Tennessee; Logan, Utah; and Chandler, Arizona. Most of the tours that the Company does involve residency work, including master classes.

Conclusion

Ririe-Woodbury increased its audience to our self-produced performances by 8% this past year despite the downturn in the economy. We are fortunate to have the help of government entities—city, county, state and federal—which have been generous with funding because they seem to believe that the arts have an important economic as well as cultural part to play in the community we call home. This, added to our generous corporate, foundation and individual donors, has brought the Company to a level of sustainability that exemplifies a model of diverse benefactors coming together to build community in the best sense of that word.

As Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company enters its 46th season in 2009/10, we look forward to the challenges of bringing exceptional contemporary dance and exemplary dance education to the state of Utah.