



BEHIND THE SCENES

a publication of the Board of Directors
AMHERST BALLET THEATRE COMPANY

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barefoot books BALLET STORIES

Amherst Ballet is preparing for what may be our biggest production to date

We will be premiering *Barefoot Books Ballet Stories* on May 28 and 29 (Memorial Day Weekend) at the University of Massachusetts Fine Arts Center Concert Hall. Following in the tradition we have established with *The Magician's Nephew* and our recent productions at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, we will be bringing a book to life on the stage. *The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories*, which some of you may have seen gracing the front table in our lobby, was published in September 2004.

Written by local author Jane Yolen and her daughter Heidi Stemple, and illustrated by Rebecca Guay of Amherst, this delightful new book retells seven classic stories of the ballet. They are appealingly presented with a fresh new twist that makes them interesting as stories, never mind ballets. Coupled with exquisite art that captures the characters suspended in their worlds in perfect balletic form, this book gives relevance and meaning to stories that have been in danger of losing their spark with today's generations.

I first learned that *Ballet Stories* was due to be published when Rebecca Guay showed me a few pencil sketches from *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*, and I was mesmerized. A short time later, after reading the stories, I became convinced that somehow Amherst Ballet had to become involved.

After talking at length with Rebecca about my ideas, she advised me to submit a proposal to the publishers, Barefoot Books Inc., of Cambridge and London. They immediately contacted me to set up a meeting. They loved the idea! Several key decisions were reached at our meeting, which was followed up by a contract granting Amherst Ballet permission

to create a production that would bring the book to life by adapting two of the stories, *Swan Lake* and *Shim Chung: The Blind Man's Daughter*. Amherst Ballet promised to retell the stories on stage as told in the book, and create sets and costumes based on the artwork. Authors Jane and Heidi responded with an enthusiastic commitment to become involved in the performance and in the book signings that would precede it.

In the best of all possible worlds, it would have been lovely to perform more than two stories in order to capture the diversity of the book. In the real world, however, the challenge was to choose two stories that could both be told during one performance (length not exceeding two hours), and that would some-

how represent the flavor of the book. *Swan Lake*, based upon a European folk tale, was chosen because it is possibly the best known of all classical ballets. It is one of a trio of well-known ballets set to a score by Tchaikovsky, and in the tradition of many ballets of that era tells a story of romantic love thwarted by an evil antagonist. Amherst Ballet's version will tell the entire story in four shortened acts; Jane and Heidi will be on stage narrating portions of the story.

Together with faculty member Rose Flachs, I am creating a story line for the ballet, costume designs, and setting choreography on the Lower and Upper School's eighty-odd dancers who will perform in the ballet. I have

continued on next page

AMHERST Ballet
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

BAREFOOT BOOKS
Ballet Stories

MAY 28, 7:00 PM ♦ MAY 29, 2:00 PM
FINE ARTS CENTER CONCERT HALL
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST

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hired Orlando Ballet Principal Dancers Jessica Sibley (originally from East Longmeadow) and Sergiu Bridusa to dance the roles of Odette/Odille and Siegfried, faculty member Charles Flachs as the evil magician Von Rothbart, and faculty member John Wrzos as Benno, Siegfried's close friend.

The essence of the original classical choreography will be evident in the production, but will be adapted to fit the very non-traditional costumes depicted in the artwork. Rather than stiff tutus, imagine the swans in shimmering gowns flowing just below the knee with translucent wings gracing their beautiful arm movements. This ballet will preserve the best of the beloved classic while exciting audiences with gorgeous costumes, sets and, of course, dancing!

Shim Chung: The Blind Man's Daughter is based on a famous Korean folk tale of filial piety. This heartwarming story grants the opportunity to choreograph in a more contemporary style. Our version will tell the portion of the tale that takes place beneath the sea as the main character, a lovely young maiden named Shim Chung, descends through its depths accompanied by all sorts of sea creatures: schools of fish, dolphins, squid, coral, seaweed, and even a pair of sinuous black eels.

Faculty member Sam Kenney will be choreographing the entire ballet to bring our shared vision to life, with costumes designed and constructed by Therese Brady Donohue in collaboration with Rebecca Guay. Together with high school junior Margaret Woodbridge in the role of Shim Chung (some of you will remember her as the youthful Digory in *The Magician's Nephew* five years ago), thirty-six dancers from the Lower and Upper Schools

will perform along with several guest artists to bring this magical journey under the sea to life.

Drawing her inspiration from the book, Sam has chosen the music of the contemporary Japanese composer Kitaro to create the musical score. The dancers are busy learning the choreography, some of which will take place in the air! Suspended from wires by harnesses supporting their bodies, five dancers will appear to be swimming, by "flying" during portions of the ballet under the supervision of *Fly by Foy*, a company from Las Vegas that specializes in flying actors and dancers for productions across the country (think *Dracula* and *Peter Pan*). Jerry Stockman, lighting designer and stage manager, will create special water effects using lighting techniques to give the feeling of descending deeper and deeper into the ocean's depths. When all of the pieces of this ballet are put together, audiences will be transported into another world and may find themselves wishing they might never have to leave!

This is a fantastic opportunity to collaborate with well-known authors and illustrators, make live dance accessible to a broad audience in the Pioneer Valley and beyond, and bring a memorable performance opportunity to our young dancers. To achieve all of this and remain financially healthy, we need to match our considerable expenses through a variety of income sources. If all the grant applications we are pursuing are successful, our private contributors generous, and our ticket sales outstanding, we will be able to meet the financial challenge. Please use the enclosed envelope to send us your help. It will be very much appreciated.

Catherine Fair

CATHERINE FAIR PHOTOGRAPH



AMHERST BALLET
PRODUCTION BUDGET
BAREFOOT BOOKS
BALLET STORIES

PERSONNEL CONTRACTED

Choreographers	4,000
Lighting Designer/Stage Manager . . .	1,500
Professional Guest Artists	3,000
Travel for Guest Artists	1,000
Set Designer	1,000
Set Construction	1,000
Costume Design and Construction . . .	3,000
Graphic Designer	2,000
TOTAL:	16,500

CONSUMABLE SUPPLIES
AND MATERIALS

Costume Materials	3,000
Set construction materials	1,000
Special effects and lighting	4,000
(includes "flying" dancers)	
Scenery, props, and backdrop	3,000
Makeup	500
Programs	2,000
Promotional materials	1,000
Collaborative Learning Adventure books	750
Office Expenses	1,000
TOTAL:	16,250

PRODUCTION EXPENSES FOR
FINE ARTS CENTER CONCERT HALL

Box Office Set up Fee	1,000
Box Office Ticket Fee	500
Labor Costs	5,200
House Managers	215
Emergency Medical Technicians (required)	215
Maintenance Fee	1,900
Ushers	600
TOTAL	9,630

ADVERTISING

Newspaper Advertising	2,500
Radio/TV spots	2,000
Photography/videographers	500
TOTAL:	5,000
TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES: . . .	47,380

SAM KENNEY auditioned Amherst Ballet dancers in October for the upcoming performance of *Shim Chung: The Blind Man's Daughter*.

a conversation with JANE YOLEN AND HEIDI STEMPEL

PHOTOGRAPH © JASON STEMPEL, 1999



Jane Yolen is a local and national treasure. She's the award-winning author of more than 250 books (more than 120 of them illustrated) for children, young adults, and adults. Jane has written books of poetry, folktales, fantasy, and science fiction, and now a book of ballet stories. *The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories* is her most recent book, written with her daughter Heidi Stemple and illustrated by Rebecca Guay, who has taken ballet as an adult at Amherst Ballet. Jane, Heidi, and Rebecca have all been participating with Amherst Ballet in the adaptation of two of the stories to the stage scheduled to premiere this May at the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts.

Amherst Ballet's Andrea Leibson had a conversation with Jane, the "Hans Christian Andersen" of Hatfield, and daughter Heidi about this collaboration.

AMHERST BALLET: Jane, I know you danced at Balanchine's School of American Ballet when you were a child in New York. What was that experience like and what inspired you to write a book of ballet stories now? Heidi, what is your dance experience?

JANE: I danced from age 6 to age 13 at the

school, and growing up with that kind of precision and passion for the ballet stuck with me for... well, forever. Even though it had become clear my final year (we moved when I was 14) that I didn't have the Balanchine body, I continued to love dance. I took ballet in our new hometown, and then took modern at Smith College, and did folk dancing afterward. The book was inspired by my wandering around a big book festival and seeing the Barefoot Book of Opera Stories. "You need to do a ballet book," I said to the editor, and she agreed.

HEIDI: I had a very different dance experience. I danced briefly as a child, but since I have very crooked legs and cannot

get into first position, it became pretty obvious that ballet was an unrealistic goal. Instead, I started in gymnastics and competed until I was 14 years old. I was strongest, however, in beam and floor—the two areas that showcased the most dance.

AB: You've worked with so many illustrators. How did you come to work with Rebecca?

JANE: I have known Rebecca for about five years. We live just two towns apart and are in the same illustrators' group. (I am the only non-artist in it. But I began the group, so am allowed to stay.) And in all that time I had tried to get some publisher to let us work together — to no avail. I was in Scotland, when the Barefoot editor wrote to tell me they had "discovered" a wonderful illustrator for the book. And it was my neighbor, Rebecca!

HEIDI: There was actually another illustrator attached to the project early on... then they sent us the galleys for Rebecca's first book *Goddesses*... and I was thrilled!

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER, Jane Yolen (above) and Heidi Stemple (right) are the authors of *The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories*.

AB: What was your reaction to AB's proposal to bring two of the stories to life?

JANE: I was absolutely thrilled. I have had one or two other ballets of my stories done before, original stories, but this was the first of the retold stories from this book.

HEIDI: I was so excited. Even though I wasn't a ballerina, it doesn't mean I didn't dream of being one. This is the closest I'll ever get!

AB: How do you feel about the selections AB has chosen? Do you have any favorite moments in these two stories?

JANE: How can you NOT choose *Swan Lake*? It is so romantic and so danceable. I think the moment when the prince is dancing with Odile and outside, fluttering at the window, Odette is trying to get his attention, is so tense and moving. As for *Shim Chung*, the moment when, dressed in her beautiful death dress, she steps off the boat and goes down through the layers of sea is compelling.

HEIDI: *Shim Chung* is my favorite. I am very close with my Dad and it is a story that speaks to me. I also am quite in love with Rebecca's *Shim Chung* art. The moment when she leaps from the boat into the sea takes my breath away. The fact that my daughter will have a small role in this ballet makes it even better.

AB: At least one of the stories, *Swan Lake*, has been much performed and may be well-

continued on next page



PHOTOGRAPH © DAVID STEMPEL, 2003

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known to audiences. How do you feel your telling of the *Swan Lake* story will enhance the experience of those familiar with the story?

JANE: We tried to get more into the feelings of the characters, and the reasons for their actions, things that ballet can only hint at.

HEIDI: Ballet is the telling of a story with no words. We have given words to the dance. Hopefully, the blending of the two back into one will create an even better story.

AB: *Shim Chung: The Blind Man's Daughter* has not been much performed. How do you think reading this story will enhance the audience's experience with this ballet?

JANE: The ballet comes from a very famous story in Korean folklore. We tried to add to the background, setting the story in a particular moment in Korean history, and adding folk motifs from our research.

HEIDI: Reading this lesser known (at least in America) story first will allow the audience to sit back and enjoy all the beauty of Korean culture as well as the amazing job AB is doing to tell that story on stage through dance.

AB: What kind of readers do you hope to reach with this book?

JANE: Ballet lovers of course. But lovers of great stories and folklore, too. And the romantic in each of us.

HEIDI: People who may not be huge fans of ballet will be drawn into this book as well.

AB: AB is mounting a Collaborative Learning Adventure in area schools and libraries to give readers the opportunity to read the book before seeing the ballets.

What do you think of the value of becoming familiar with a story in written form before seeing it on the stage?

JANE: The two art genres—storytelling and dance—complement, deepen, broaden one another.

HEIDI: This, to me, is so exciting. I would love for all students to experience ballet with fresh eyes and I think this may introduce many kids who would not necessarily want to attend a ballet, to this specialized form of storytelling.

AB: Jane, you often work with your family; you have published numerous books with daughter Heidi and sons Adam and Jason. What's it like to write with your daughter/mother?

JANE: I love working with my children! Heidi and I are so attuned to one another's gifts and faults that we now know when to step into the breach.

HEIDI: We have written 13 books together as well as numerous short stories and poems. We write well together because we are so much alike but also different enough to fill in the gaps in each other's work.

AB: The May production at the Fine Arts Center will have you both narrating onstage and 10-year-old daughter/granddaughter Maddison performing in *Shim Chung*. How does it feel to have the three generations of your family performing together?

JANE: Astonishing! I want to contact all the media I know and grin at them. I want everyone to see what a fantastic family I have. Remember all those holiday letters people send out to boast about their children and grandchildren? THIS is better.

HEIDI: The only one more excited than Maddison is me. How many moms get to be on stage with their daughters? Well... I guess my mom is getting to do that too.

AB: Do you have any expectations or hopes for the AB production?

JANE: To enjoy it, and to love the moment.

HEIDI: I hope that all the dancers have as much fun as we do. It is really an honor to be asked to be on stage with the AB dancers. We look forward to it!

AB: Jane, you are so well known in this area and our dancers are so excited to be meeting you and dancing in works connected to you. Do you have any words of inspiration you would like to say to them as they prepare for this production?

JANE: First they should know that I feel honored by their hard work. Second, that I will work just as hard to be worthy of that honor. And third—I wish I could be in the audience watching!



FINE ARTS CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

BALCONY 2
BALCONY 1
MEZZANINE 3
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SECTION 6
SECTION 5
SECTION 4
SECTION 3
SECTION 2
SECTION 1

BALLET STORIES
TICKETS Order now for the best seats! Contributors who send in a \$35 (or more) donation with the enclosed order form will be given seats (limit 10 total per contribution seats for either show) in the center of Sections 2 and 3. Reserved seats will be assigned in order they are received. Ticket orders accompanying a donation can be filled only at the Amherst Ballet desk and not at the FAC box office, and Amherst Ballet cannot accept charge cards. Tickets will be available in all other sections at Amherst Ballet.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ADVENTURE
Amherst Ballet will be reaching out to local schools and libraries in conjunction with our production of *Barefoot Books Ballet Stories*. Based on a similar project carried out in 2000, it is designed to encourage literacy in school aged children and grant them the opportunity to see live dance at the Fine Arts Center. AB will donate copies of the book to local schools and libraries in Amherst and some surrounding communities. (To date, this project has been funded by the Amherst and Pelham Cultural Councils.) Along with the book, our volunteer liaisons will contact teachers and librarians and assist them in implementing a variety of educational projects designed for students in elementary through high school. Once students have completed these projects, they can turn them in and receive a voucher for a free ticket to the production. We are still seeking liaisons to help with this project; if you can help out at your dancer's school or in your local library, *please let us know!*

THE HONEYBEE AND THE ROBBER

THERESE DONOHUE PHOTOGRAPH



Following in the successful footsteps of *The Very Lonely Firefly* at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in the fall of 2003, Amherst Ballet opened a second production this fall. Based on another Carle book, *The Honeybee and the Robber* is the only moving picture book that Carle has written. Parts of the masks and costumes move as depicted in the book. Eyes, wings, and beaks move as the characters come alive and dance through the delightful choreography of Catherine Fair. Once again, Karen Tarlow has written the perfect score for the twenty-minute production, backed up by our well-known narrator Walter Carroll from WFCR.

Special Projects Director Therese Brady Donohue received \$9000 in funding to produce the show, and designed and constructed the fourteen costumes. She also designed, built,

and painted the rotating set showing the tree where the bees live on one side and the hive on the other side. With a double cast using twenty-seven dancers between the ages of six and sixteen, the production opened September 19th. It has its final performances at 1:00 and 2:00 on December 11th at the museum. Key roles of the Honeybee are danced by Teodora Vozdolska and Danielle Fretwell, with Eliza Arsenault and Hannah Goodwin dancing both the Bird and the Bear (the Robber).

The production has been very successful in addressing young children and family audiences. The following comments came via email from Lee Norton Kelly, an audience member attending from Worcester:

What a delightful extra surprise at the Eric Carle Museum yesterday! A group of seven (from age 7 through age 57) were visiting the museum on a long-planned trip and were delighted to learn of your performance... The costuming was superb, the narration wonderful and choreography excellent... Thanks for providing the community with such excellent programming and additional cultural availability.

The museum has decided to preserve this production on film as part of its regular showings, and to make it available to educators for use in the classroom as part of literacy programs. Rawn Fulton of Searchlight Films in Bernardston was hired as videographer. One of his films on Eric Carle won the 1994 Carnegie Medal as outstanding children's program of the year.

Donohue and the museum have collaborated on raising funds for the project. This film will also be used to send to potential sponsors to book touring performances of the production. To date, funding for this project has been received from Eric Carle, Karen Tarlow, Joan and Allen Hanson, and Rawn Fulton.

The water scene from this ballet will be performed at **First Night Northampton** at the Academy of Music at 2:00 and 3:00 on December 31st.

THANK YOU!

The Honeybee and The Robber production was made possible by:

Nan & Maltida Heydt Fund
administered by Fleet National Bank through
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Dean's Organic Beans
Eric Carle Foundation
Dorothy Grannis
Barbara & Michael Kreisler
Sandy Sacco

GET THE BOOK!

AMHERST BALLET is selling copies of *The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories* and prints of the book's artwork in the lobby. Clearly, we like this book and know that you will too! Darcy Bussell, principal dancer of the Royal Ballet, says "What a magical book. My daughters, at their young age, love the beautiful illustrations." Please stop by and look at the book, as well as the beautiful prints on display. A portion of all proceeds go to AB; when you purchase your book or your print, you are helping to fund the *Ballet Stories* production!



THERESE DONOHUE PHOTOGRAPH

DANCERS FROM *ANGELINA AND HER FRIENDS* one of Amherst Ballet's two summer workshops for young dancers held last summer.

ANNA CALDWELL... company dancer

PHOTOGRAPH © CLIVE J. MEALEY, 2004



"Very caring," "Someone you can count on", "Our ballet mom". This is how senior, Anna Caldwell, is described by her classmates at Amherst Ballet. Anna is frequently seen with girls of all ages draped on her,

whether in her level C classes, on the couch in the lobby, or backstage at the Eric Carle Museum with various tiny fireflies or bees. Everyone seems to feel instantly comfortable around Anna. Her smile is genuine and her warmth is infectious!

Anna started at Amherst Ballet in sixth grade with Mrs. Fair, and has loved dance ever since. "I love how structured ballet it is. It's very focusing and freeing at the same time." She talks about the interplay of the mind and the body and how much she enjoys both aspects of dance. "It's a mind thing," says Anna as she explains how much is involved in learning new technique and mastering combinations in class. But then, at a certain point the music comes on

and "our bodies just know what to do, how to move across the room. I love that!"

Being a member of the Amherst Ballet community is another important reason that dance has played such a big part in Anna's life.

"I really like this community. You get to know people you would otherwise not know and it's a group of people that you know you can rely on. There isn't any tension among us. There is a closeness here that you don't get at school. And that's very important to me."

Anna was born in Canada and moved to Amherst when she was six years old. She lived in England in 8th grade. She feels both American "because I grew up here" but also Canadian "because I am from there and all my family is from there." Anna is an artist, specializing in stained glass. Last year at the Ballet Fete she donated a piece of stained glass that she designed and created herself of irises that was gorgeous! She has a studio in her home and is now getting into textile art such as batik, dyeing and sewing. Upon graduation from Amherst High School Anna is hoping to go to art school in Canada. "I want to move back to Toronto or Halifax."

Mrs. Donohue says of Anna, "She is a very responsible young lady, and she is very giving of her time. She volunteers backstage at the Eric Carle Museum because she wants the theater experience. She is very good with the children. I really do depend on her." Anna has made her mark on Amherst Ballet through her commitment, caring and skill. She is respected and loved by all!

Annette Cycon

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SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

We are pleased to announce the renaming of our Scholarship Fund which provides assistance to young dancers in our community. The newly named *Young Dancers Scholarship Fund* provides tuition assistance to families with children seeking to begin their primary dance education at Amherst Ballet without the ability to pay full tuition.

Originally funded with a gift from an Amherst Ballet dancer, the fund is now open for contributions by our entire community. Donations go directly toward enabling aspiring dancers in our community to realize the many benefits of a serious dance education. Please consider a donation to this worthy fund with a check made payable to: *Amherst Ballet* and note specifying the Young Dancers Scholarship Fund.

THANK YOU!

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master classes

Amherst Ballet has been pleased and proud to bring a variety of guest teachers to our students recently. During the summer, Irina Vahkromeeva, former soloist with the Moscow Ballet for 10 years, was in residence for AB's two week Teen Summer Intensive. She taught the Vaganova (Russian) method of classical ballet to twenty-three students between the ages of 11 and 16 years as well as setting original Petipa and Ivanov *Swan Lake* choreography. Vahkromeeva quickly gained the respect of her students. While it was clear that her expectations were very high, so was her enthusiasm and praise for Amherst Ballet. Although she has taught many students while touring the world both with the Moscow Ballet, and with her new company, Cosmopolitan Ballet, she claims that teaching the students here at Amherst Ballet was more pleasure than business. She claims that our school is "one of the best!"

Sarah Ricard, (former student at Amherst Ballet) and Seth Orza, both dancers with The New York City Ballet, taught classes to Amherst Ballet students on July 2nd. They returned on October 29 and taught another series of classes. Sarah taught Levels A, B, and C (with pointe) in the Upper Studio while

Seth taught children from Levels One through Five downstairs. Students were inspired by the opportunity to learn from promising young dancers from one of the greatest companies in the world. Not only did Seth and Sarah give great classes with interesting combinations, they shared information about their lives as professional ballet dancers. Sarah's kind, encouraging manner made students feel comfortable and welcome. Seth (recently listed by *Dance Magazine* as one of the top 25 dancers in America "to watch") thrilled some classes by demonstrating some of his amazing jumps and turns while students watched with open mouthed awe.

Other guest teachers this fall include Mollye Maxner, a local dancer and choreographer who taught Level C ballet several times. Elizabeth Rising, former Director of Walnut Hill School for the Performing Arts, a frequent teacher for Saturday Level C classes, has also taught Levels A and Four. Jessica Sibley, principal dancer of the Orlando Ballet Company, taught Level C Ballet in October and over the summer. She enthusiastically states that Amherst Ballet is one of her favorite places to teach because the dancers pick up the combinations so quickly! It seems the feeling is mutual; our students recently asked at a company meeting when they could have Jessica as a teacher again. Lucky for us that she will be returning several times this year with her partner, Sergiu Brindusa, also of the Orlando Ballet. The two will appear as Odette and Siegfried in AB's production of *Swan Lake* and will have several opportunities while here for rehearsals in late March and at performance time in May to guest teach.

Catherine Fair

NEW YORK CITY BALLETDancer and former Amherst Ballet student Sarah Ricard strikes a pose with Level C dancers (below) and NYCB dancer Seth Orza with Lower School dancers (above).



CATHERINE FAIR PHOTOGRAPHS (2)



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IMPORTANT DATES

UPPER SCHOOL
PRESENTATION
Saturday, December 11
ARMS Auditorium, 7:30 pm
and book signing
by Jane, Heidi, and Rebecca, 6:30-7:30

FINAL HONEYBEE
PERFORMANCE
Saturday, December 11
Eric Carle Museum, 1:00 & 2:00

MOSCOW BALLET
NUTCRACKER
Sunday, December 19
UMass FAC Concert Hall 1:00 & 5:00

VISITOR'S WEEK
December 13-18
Lower School

NO CLASSES
Monday, December 20
Vacation begins

FIRST NIGHT NORTHAMPTON
December 31
Academy of Music, 2:00 & 3:00

Barefoot Books
BALLET STORIES
Saturday, May 28, 7:00 pm
Sunday, May 29, 2:00 pm
UMass FAC Concert Hall

ANNUAL FLOWER SALE
watch for details coming soon!

WE NEED YOUR HELP TOO!

AMHERST BALLET'S GUILD is now in its second year. The Guild consists of the parents of all the Lower and Upper School students. The Guild members bring their expertise and enthusiasm to the assistance of Amherst Ballet and its dancers and allow this nonprofit entity to reach beyond its limited budget. Every task the Guild accomplishes permits AB to dedicate resources to keeping tuitions reasonable, improving our performances and maintaining our building. Thank you Guild members!

Already this year Guild members have helped with the wrapping paper fundraiser, updated our website (www.amherstballet.org), organized backstage activities for the Moscow Ballet's *Great Russian Nutcracker*, provided graphic design for publicity materials, ushered at *The Honeybee and the Robber* performances and helped write and prepare this newsletter for mailing! As our ambitious May production of the *Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories* nears, many more Guild members will be called upon. We will need school and library liaisons for our Collaborative Learning Adventure, and assistance with publicity and promotion, costume construction and transport, boutique and food salespeople, bakers and (as always) fundraising. Notice of future Guild meetings will be sent via email and posted on AB bulletin boards.

Many heartfelt thanks to the Guild for assistance to AB and its dancers.



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