TROIKA RANCH
STUDENT LOOP DIVER
Performance Guide

Lied Center for Performing Arts
Main Stage Theater (audiences seated on stage)

Prepared for the student matinee performances on Friday, October 2, 2009

(Troika Ranch’s Loop Diver:
Thursday, October 15 & Friday, October 16, 2009,
The Lied Center’s Johnny Carson Theater)
ABOUT THIS PERFORMANCE GUIDE

The mission of the Lied Center’s education series is to inspire, nurture and sustain a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts. The Lied Center fulfills the mission by presenting outstanding artists that serve Nebraskans (local, University community and state-wide) through performances, education and community programs. The student matinee series cultivates early appreciation for and understanding of the performing arts amongst our youngest audiences, with hour-long, daytime performances by world-class artists performing as part of the main season. Curriculum or performance guides, linked to the Nebraska standards, often accompany a student matinee series.

ABOUT THEATER ETIQUETTE

Be prepared and arrive early. Ideally you should arrive at the theater 15-30 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time and parking, and plan to be in your seats at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

Be aware and remain quiet. The theater is a “live” space – you can easily hear the performance, but they can also hear you, and you can hear other audience members too! Even the smallest sounds, like rustling papers and whispering can be heard throughout the theater, so it is best to stay quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance without distractions. The international sign for “Quiet Please” is to silently raise your index finger to your lips.

Show appreciation by applauding. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. Performers return their appreciation for your attention by bowing to the audience at the end of the performance. It is always appropriate to applaud at the end of a performance, and it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain comes down or the house lights come up.

Concentrate to help the performers. Performers use concentration to focus their energy while on stage. If the audience is focused while watching the performance, the artists feel supported and are able to do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!
ABOUT THE STUDENT LOOP DIVER PERFORMANCE

Artistic Co-Director Dawn Stoppiello from Troika Ranch spent three weeks with a company of UNL student dancers creating a version of Loop Diver. The theme of this work and the Creative Campus project in general is: the resonance of violence and the fortitude it takes to break free of the patterns that set in. The process with the students began with personal improvisations where each dancer examined a traumatic event from their lives. These improvisations were deconstructed into solos and duets, videotaped and processed using special software to generate looped versions of the movement material that the dancers then learned from the computer. The foundation of the piece is a repetitive walking pattern that serves as a metaphor for societal repetition that we all experience. This version of Loop Diver is personalized to the lives of the students, providing them with an individual investment in the expression of the overarching theme.

ABOUT TROIKA RANCH

Troika Ranch is the collaborative vision of artists Mark Coniglio and Dawn Stoppiello. Established in 1994, and based in New York City and Berlin, Germany, Troika Ranch produces live performances, interactive installations, and digital films, all of which combine traditional aspects of these forms with advanced technologies. The artists’ mission in producing this wide range of art experiences is to create artwork that best reflects and engages contemporary society.

The name Troika Ranch refers to Coniglio and Stoppiello’s creative methodology, which involves a hybrid of three artistic disciplines, dance/theater/media (the Troika), in cooperative interaction (the Ranch). This method preceded the organization Troika Ranch, which was formed as a means to support the artists’ engagement in this process. During the 1990’s, Coniglio, Stoppiello and their company Troika Ranch were among the pioneers in the field that came to be known as Dance and Technology. They performed in festivals and venues internationally and were greatly sought after as guest artists, teachers, and lecturers. In response to the desire in the international arts community to understand this emerging genre, Coniglio and Stoppiello began developing educational programs. Among their public outreach activities are workshops, lectures, online and traditional publications, websites, software and hardware. Having conceptualized and invented much of the technology, equipment, and techniques currently in use, their expertise is unprecedented. The educational programs Troika Ranch provides have become a significant part of their contribution to the arts.

As the use of technology in the arts has developed and integrated over the last decade, the need for the separate moniker Dance and Technology has dissolved. Troika Ranch’s present concerns correspondingly reflect this broader scope, expanding across genres and pioneering new frontiers. As innovators and visionaries, Coniglio and Stoppiello produce art that values live interaction – between viewer and viewed, performer and
image, movement and sound, people and technology. It is time-based but typically includes an element of spontaneity, in that the events and images that unfold lie within a certain range but are not exactly replicable. As authors, they establish images, direct performances, determine time frames, and devise technologies. The works may be presented as performances, installations, or in portable formats. In sum, Troika Ranch engages in creative endeavors using all that contemporary invention has to offer.

ABOUT MARK CONIGLIO

A native of Nebraska, Coniglio began his career working as a producer for American Gramophone Records. A highlight during his five-year tenure in professional recording was a performance of his original composition by the London Symphony Orchestra. This first foray into composition led Coniglio to California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Here he developed his craft under the tutelage of electronic music pioneer Morton Subotnick and received a BFA in music composition in 1989. After graduation he joined CalArts as faculty. From 1990-94 he taught courses in interactive music and was an integral part of the Center for Experiments in Art, Information and Technology. Coniglio is the recipient of two consecutive ARM Fellowships from Dance Theater Workshop (2004/05) and acted as facilitator for the program in 2006. He is also the creator of Isadora®, a graphic programming environment that provides interactive control over digital media, with special emphasis on the real-time manipulation of digital video.

ABOUT DAWN STOPPIELLO

Trained as a choreographer and dancer, Stoppiello has focused on choreography for bodies interfaced to computers through sensory systems. She began her career in Portland, Oregon at the Jefferson High School for the Performing Arts. She received a BFA in dance from California Institute of the Arts in 1989. She was honored with a Princess Grace Foundation scholarship in 1987, and in 2004 received the Princess Grace Foundation’s highest honor, the Statue Award, for her continued excellence in dance. Her first professional performance, while still a student at CalArts, was with Jazz Tap Ensemble in 1986. After Graduation she became a member of the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company where she remained until 1992. Stoppiello has taught on the dance faculty of Loyola Marymount University, Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts and the University of Maryland-Baltimore County as well as teaching numerous master classes at institutions in the US, Canada, Australia and Europe.
ABOUT SUSAN LEVINE

Susan Levine, MFA, is Head of Dance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She came to Nebraska from New York City via New England. She was an Assistant Professor at Fitchburg State College, outside of Boston, Massachusetts. She has also taught at Smith College, in Northampton, MA, Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA and Keene State College in Keene, NH. Since 2004, Ms. Levine has been the Director of the annual faculty and guest artist dance concert at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This series of concerts was renamed “Evenings of Dance” in honor of her first modern dance mentor, the late Alta Lu Townes. In addition to directing the event, Ms. Levine has choreographed several new works including the most recent “Prom” a piece, part dance/part theater, that looked at the contemporary American high school social event, as expressed through the myth of Prometheus. She choreographed the UNL production "Most Happy Fella", which won 6 prizes including the First Prize, at the Waterford International Light Opera Festival. In July 2007, Ms. Levine choreographed and danced in a new work to Mark Schultz’s composition for clarinet and piano. This world premiere, entitled “Into the Monster’s Lair”, was performed with Drs. Diane Barger and Mark Clinton, at the International Clarinet Association in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In 2006, Levine and photographer Fred Schneider joined forces to create a multimedia piece using photography. This piece, “Miss”, was invited by the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery to be shown at the opening, and three itinerant installations, of the exhibit entitled, “Painting Music: Rhythm and Movement in Art. Ms. Levine was commissioned by the University of Vermont to recreate this work for their dancers in 2008. In May 2009, Ms Levine co-taught the Choreography class, in which the UNL dancers created their version of “Loop Diver”.

ABOUT UNL DANCE PROGRAM

The Dance Program is part of the UNL School of Music in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts. The Dance Studio and dance faculty offices are located in Mabel Lee Hall. Dance classes are also held in the Johnny Carson Theatre at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

The Dance Program offers the BA Degree in Dance with comprehensive training in modern dance, including technique, improvisation and composition, augmented by ballet through the advanced level. Students study a balanced and integrated course load which combines dance with a strong liberal studies core. This program teaches the cultural, theatrical and performing aspects of dance. It emphasizes the development of working methods which are both safe and correct as it encourages students to explore and develop their personal artistry.

The program of study in dance offers a progression of classes, enabling students to take beginning, intermediate and advanced technique classes in a designated order. This has made for more skilled dancers who are able to participate in dance program concerts.
and department productions as well as community projects. Other courses for the dance major include Introduction to Dance, Dance History: 20th Century and Beyond, Dance Composition, Kinesiology and Injury Prevention, Dance Pedagogy, Music for Dance and Repertory, Improvisation and Performance.

ABOUT ISADORA

Isadora software, created by composer and media-artist Mark Coniglio of Troika Ranch, is used for the multi-media effects in the student “Loop Diver” performance. Isadora is the award-winning, graphic programming environment for Macintosh and Windows that provides interactive control over digital media, with special emphasis on the real-time manipulation of digital video. Because every performance or installation is unique, Isadora was designed not to be a "plug and play" program, but instead to offer building blocks that can be linked together in nearly unlimited ways, allowing people to follow their artistic impulse. Isadora was initially created to realize the performances of Troika Ranch, and reflects over 20 years of practical experience with realtime interaction.

DISCUSSION POINTS

-What is dance? What other dance performances have you seen?
-What did you see in the work?
-How did it make you feel?
-Did you create a story or see it as a movement experience?
-Did you think that is was 'dance'?
-What does composition mean? Have you ever 'composed' anything (music, images, a story)?

CHOREOGRAPHY / DANCE EXERCISES TO TRY

Make a simple, single gesture with your arm in space. Now try to repeat it exactly 10 times. Can you? How did it change? Now take that same movement and break it into 10 parts. Now do part 1, then 1 & 2, then 1, 2 & 3, keep going back to 1 and adding a number until you get to 10. Now do the same thing backwards. Take the same idea but make the movement more complicated - a single, whole body movement.

Now have two or more students do this with each other. Someone keep a beat and do the segments of gesture in time with the beat. Change the relationship of the two
students - close together, back to back, one on the floor and one standing, far away from each other, traveling in space, etc. Have one do it forwards and one do it backwards. Have one be the leader and when they freeze, the other has to freeze. Each time they move, they start from where they stopped.

Try playing music and having a student improvise. When the music stops the student has to freeze. When the music starts they start dancing again. Keep changing the lengths of the pause in the music.

**CONTENT STANDARDS IN DANCE**
The National Standards for Arts Education outline what every K-12 student should know and be able to do in the arts. The standards were developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, and through a grant administered by The National Association for Music Education.

**Grades 5-8 Dance**
Through creating, performing, and responding to dance, middle school students can continue to develop skills and knowledge that enhance the important development of self-image and social relationships. Cooperation and collaboration are emphasized at this age, fostering positive interactions.

Dance education can offer a positive, healthy alternative to the many destructive choices available to adolescents. Students are encouraged to take more responsibility for the care, conditioning, and health of their bodies (both within and outside the dance class), thus learning that self-discipline is a prerequisite for achievement in dance.

Students in grades 5-8 develop a sense of themselves in relation to others and in relation to the world. As a result, they are ready to respond more thoughtfully to dance, to perceive details of style and choreographic structure, and to reflect upon what is communicated. The study of dance provides a unique and valuable insight into the culture or period from which it has come. Informed by social and cultural experiences, movement concepts, and dance-making processes, students integrate dance with other art forms.

**Grades 9-12 Dance**
High school students need to continue to dance and create dances in order to develop more highly their ability to communicate in a way that is different from the written or spoken word, or even from other visual or auditory symbol systems. They also need to respect their bodies and to understand that dance is the product of intentional and intelligent physical actions. Continued development of movement skills and creative and critical thinking skills in dance is important regardless of whether students intend a dance career.
Technical expertise and artistic expression are enhanced through reflective practice, study, and evaluation of their own work and that of others. Because dance involves abstract images, students can develop higher order thinking skills through perceiving, analyzing, and making discriminating judgments about dance. Education in dance, which has been an integral part of human history, is also important if students are to gain a broad cultural and historical perspective. Students examine the role and meaning of dance in diverse social, cultural, and historical contexts through a variety of dance forms. Experience with dance of many cultures helps students to understand the cultural lives of others.

Content Standard 1: Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance

Grades 5-8 Achievement Standard
• Students demonstrate the following movement skills and explain the underlying principles: alignment, balance, initiation of movement, articulation of isolated body parts, weight shift, elevation and landing, fall and recovery

• Students accurately identify and demonstrate basic dance steps, positions, and patterns for dance from two different styles or traditions (e.g., ballet, square, Ghanasian, Middle Eastern, modern)

• Students accurately transfer a spatial pattern from the visual to the kinesthetic

• Students accurately transfer a rhythmic pattern from the aural to the kinesthetic

• Students identify and clearly demonstrate a range of dynamics / movement qualities

• Students demonstrate increasing kinesthetic awareness, concentration, and focus in performing movement skills

• Students demonstrate accurate memorization and reproduction of movement sequences

• Students describe the action and movement elements observed in a dance, using appropriate movement/dance vocabulary

Grade 9-12 Proficient in the Achievement Standard
• Students demonstrate appropriate skeletal alignment, body-part articulation, strength, flexibility, agility, and coordination in locomotor and non-locomotor/axial movements

• Students identify and demonstrate longer and more complex steps and patterns from two different dance styles/traditions
• Students demonstrate rhythmic acuity

• Students create and perform combinations and variations in a broad dynamic range

• Students demonstrate projection while performing dance skills

• Students demonstrate the ability to remember extended movement sequences

**Grades 9-12 Advanced in the Achievement Standard**
• Students demonstrate a high level of consistency and reliability in performing technical skills

• Students perform technical skills with artistic expression, demonstrating clarity, musicality, and stylistic nuance

• Students refine technique through self-evaluation and correction

**Content Standard 3: Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning**

**Grade 5-8 Achievement Standard**
• Students effectively demonstrate the difference between pantomiming and abstracting a gesture

• Students observe and explain how different accompaniment (such as sound, music, spoken text) can affect the meaning of a dance

• Students demonstrate and/or explain how lighting and costuming can contribute to the meaning of a dance

• Students create a dance that successfully communicates a topic of personal significance

**Grades 9-12 Proficient in Achievement Standard**
• Students formulate and answer questions about how movement choices communicate abstract ideas in dance

• Students demonstrate understanding of how personal experience influences the interpretation of a dance

• Students create a dance that effectively communicates a contemporary social theme
Grades 9-12 Advanced in Achievement Standard

• Students examine ways that a dance creates and conveys meaning by considering the dance from a variety of perspective

• Students compare and contrast how meaning is communicated in two of their own choreographic works

Content Standard 4: Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance

Grades 5-8 Achievement Standard

• Students create a movement problem and demonstrate multiple solutions; choose the most interesting solutions and discuss the reasons for their choice

• Students demonstrate appropriate audience behavior in watching dance performances; discuss their opinions about the dances with their peers in a supportive and constructive way

• Students compare and contrast two dance compositions in terms of space (such as shape and pathways), time (such as rhythm and tempo), and force/energy (movement qualities)

• Students identify possible aesthetic criteria for evaluating dance (such as skill of performers, originality, visual and/or emotional impact, variety and contrast)

Grades 9-12 Proficient in the Achievement Standard

• Students create a dance and revise it over time, articulating the reasons for their artistic decisions and what was lost and gained by those decisions

• Students establish a set of aesthetic criteria and apply it in evaluating their own work and that of others

• Students formulate and answer their own aesthetic questions (such as, What is it that makes a particular dance that dance? How much can one change that dance before it becomes a different dance?)

Grades 9-12 Advanced in the Achievement Standard

• Students discuss how skills developed in dance are applicable to a variety of careers

• Students analyze the style of a choreographer or cultural form; then create a dance in that style (choreographers that could be analyzed include George Balanchine, Alvin Ailey, Laura Dean; cultural forms include bharata natyam, classical ballet)
• Students analyze issues of ethnicity, gender, social/economic class, age and/or physical condition in relation to dance

Content Standard 6: Making connections between dance and healthful living

Grades 5-8 Achievement Standard
• Students identify at least three personal goals to improve themselves as dancers and steps they are taking to reach those goals
• Students explain strategies to prevent dance injuries
• Students create their own warm-up and discuss how that warm-up prepares the body and mind for expressive purposes

Grades 9-12 Proficient in the Achievement Standard
• Students reflect upon their own progress and personal growth during their study of dance
• Students effectively communicate how lifestyle choices affect the dancer
• Students analyze historical and cultural images of the body in dance and compare these to images of the body in contemporary media

Grades 9-12 Advanced in the Achievement Standard
• Students discuss challenges facing professional performers in maintaining healthy lifestyles

More information about the National Standards in Arts Education can be found on the ArtsEdge website, administered by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts:

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm