HAPPENINGS

WINTER HEAT II

Representing both ends of the spectrum of a performer's dance career, Career Transition For Dancers and Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts joined together for the second time for the special event, Winter Heat II, on March 2. The purpose was to raise funds to ensure futures for both performers beginning in dance as well as performers preparing for transitions from their dance careers. Even though a snow storm loomed over the festivities, The Heat Was On! The 31 piece Harbor Latin Big Band kept the nearly 300 patrons dancing at the Copacabana until almost one in the morning, and once the music stopped, they took the festivities to the streets. The event was a huge success thanks to the Benefit Chairs, and CTFD experience and the vital services CTFD provides. A highlight of the evening was a surprise visit from Phil Smith and Gerald Schoenfeld of The Shubert Organization who came to meet some of the dancers and hear the testimonials of the CTFD clients. Many thanks to Board member Judith Anderson for organizing the event.

ROLEX HOSTS GALA LUNCHEON

Allen Brill, President and CEO of Rolex Watch U.S.A., Inc. hosted a pre-gala luncheon at Sardi’s on June 20, 2006. The luncheon was held to celebrate Chita Rivera, being honored with the Rolex Dance Award and The Rudolf Nureyev Dance Foundation, being honored with CTFD’s Outstanding Contributions to the World of Dance at the Annual Gala on October 13, 2006. 21st Anniversary Chairs Patricia J. Kennedy and Anka K. Palitz gave inspiring speeches about the history of the Gala and our 21st Anniversary Gala goal of $1 million. Patricia also explained that if every patron of last year’s Gala only contributed 10% more in our 21st Anniversary, we would definitely make our goal. In the spirit of the afternoon, Allen Brill said that Rolex would like to lead the way by increasing their 21st Anniversary contribution by 10%! The lunch was underwritten by the Gala’s Executive Producer Alexander J. Dubé. The wine for this event was graciously donated by Cambria, the Official Wine Sponsor of CTFD’s 21st Anniversary Jubilee. Thank you Allen, Alex, and Cambria for your support.

After the Dancing Stops: HELPING PERFORMERS FIND NEW CAREERS

By STEPHEN PIER

“What do dancers do when they hit 40?” asked my father, when he learned I was determined to make a career of dance. “I don’t know,” I shot back, with all the blind passion of the newly possessed. “Ask me when I’m 40.”

After more than 25 years in the profession, and having successfully negotiated many transitions in my career and life, my major concerns were still focused exclusively on the first two phases of a dance career: training and performing. The third phase, post-performance, had still not entered my myopic view of life. I knew it was out there and inevitable for us all, but somehow I had managed to avoid it. Indeed, I looked somewhat skeptically upon all this talk about “career transition,” which one occasionally heard about. How could one be dedicated to dance while at the same time thinking about another career? That felt somehow disloyal and uncommitted—and I knew that, if there was one thing success in this field required, it was commitment.

In April 2001 I was invited to join the Board of Directors of the aWaNCE Project as a representative of Juilliard. Led by Philippe Braunschweig (founder and director of the International Organization for the Transition of Professional Dancers, based in Switzerland) and Harvey Lichtenstein (CTFD Board Member and Director Emeritus of the Brooklyn Academy of Music), the project was to commission an international study of the transitions of professional dancers to post-performance careers. We needed to find out two things: Who cares about this and why, and what can realistically be done to help dancers continue to develop beyond their years as performers?

It seemed to me that, if society cares little about the arts (and in particular, dance), it will care even less about the fate of its practitioners. Dancers, it could be argued, choose to do what they do and should accept the consequences of their choice. It also seemed unrealistic to expect dancers to prepare for a second career while in the midst of such an exceptionally demanding first career. They simply have to dedicate themselves to the moment, move on as best they can—good luck and God bless.

During the next three years I met regularly with the other members of the board, which included the directors of the four existing centers for transition from Canada, the Netherlands, the U.K., and Career Transition For Dancers; Michael Byars, a former New York City Ballet soloist turned lawyer; the director of the Swiss Arts Council; and a principal dancer from the Royal Ballet. We began defining the direction and scope of the research project, which came to include the study of 11 countries (Australia, Canada, England, ...