

## *Behind the scenes of the Show*

by Ann Marie DeAngelo  
Performance producer & Director

I have always wanted to do a Halloween themed evening and this year there were more pieces available that suit the theme. A few years back, not many pieces existed other than my original one-hour Bell Witch story-ballet. We now have Vampires (Dracula), Ghosts (The Bell Witch), Witches (Hexentanz), The Raven, and Willis (Giselle) - along with evocative songs in "Thriller", "Under My Skin" and "Beautiful Monster" for a successful collage.

The selection process first wants to suit the theme, and then is based on availability and talent willing to volunteer their time. Diversity is key, and synthesis that results in less than 90 min. happens by strategic programming. This is a result also, of having been an artistic director for 15 years, a choreographer, and seeing numerous performances a year. But even though I come to the table with lots of creative and organizational experience, this single-night show takes months of planning - much of it in my head and on 100 drafts of paper. However my formula never changes - that of eclecticism, variety, and choosing the best in each genre. Excerpts from larger works, commissioned works, the innovative or evolutionary are all juxtaposed or pinned against each other. Amalgamation is the choreographic voice of the future - individual voices become stronger when working as part of the collective.

The challenge is always to maintain a high level of professionalism even when at times benefits are not taken seriously by some. Working a year to nail down pieces, staying within a limited budget, and accommodating artistic and production needs in advance makes for a smoother Tech process. Keeping speeches short, transitions moving, and not doing individual bows will also ensure a better show flow. It's also great when personalities perform.....as Bebe did this year, or in Marvin Hamlisch's song I choreographed to last year.

My vision is to keep each show fresh, and I believe it is by presenting a variety and by marrying the old and new. A strong underlying message in my shows is "through our differences we discover our sameness".

Lastly, the one tech day only works because of months of planning and focus. Organization is key to any success, as well as being creative within financial limitations. My production team is phenomenal and ultimately we don't just believe in the cause, but we all really care!

[Photos: Richard Tremine]