



Letter to the Editor

Dear Dance Teacher,
Your article ["How I Teach a Contraction," February 2010] made the contraction/release look and feel like a simple extension of its natural origin in breath . . . just what I have been trying to teach for all these 50 some odd years (!), and you included the important fact that the contraction is an "action" not a "position." Thank you, as well, for clarifying that all of us teach differently. It helps other teachers validate their own approach as a part of what we all have to offer from Graham's vocabulary.

Gratefully,
Marni Thomas

THIS MONTH ON www.dance-teacher.com

- ➔ Watch footage of Rhapsody teaching an energy-packed street-jazz class at Broadway Dance Center. ("Rhapsody in Rhythm," pg. 28)
- ➔ See a video of Darla Hoover teaching arabesque. (Technique, pg. 40)
- ➔ Hula teacher Hokulani Holt-Padilla describes her remounting of *Kahekili: Maui's Paramount Chief*, a National Endowment for the Arts/American Masterpiece Dance production. (Music, pg. 52)
- ➔ What city inspired Peter Gennaro's love of jazz? Test your students' knowledge of the Broadway choreographer with a history quiz. (History, pg. 58)
- ➔ Enter our online giveaway contest and win two DVDs and a book about teaching K-12 students. (Resources, pg. 26)



Log on to www.dance-media.com and enter to WIN the *Dance Teacher* Video of the Month Contest!

Congratulations to January's winner for *DT* Video of the Month, Finis Jhung. The excerpt from Jhung's 1999 instructional video, "Partnering Techniques: The Nutcracker," features Griff Braun and Johanna Snyder, formerly of American Ballet Theatre. After demonstrating the grand pas de deux from *The Nutcracker*, they break it down, step by step, and explain the specifics of making the movement work, from where Braun places his hand on Snyder's hip during a turn, to how to avoid pinching her skin in a lift. Jhung stands by to offer insight throughout.

After a professional dance career with the San Francisco, Joffrey and Harkness ballet companies, Jhung has devoted himself to teaching throughout New York City and is currently working on Broadway training the boys of *Billy Elliott: The Musical* (see March, Face to Face). He also has his own line of instructional CDs and DVDs, useful to both dancers and teachers, including the one excerpted here.

Jhung compares watching his videos to following a recipe. "If you do everything the recipe says, you end up being a fabulous cook," he explains. "It's the same with partnering. If you do everything in this order with the right ingredients and follow the instructions, you'll have a beautiful pas de deux."

For more info on Finis Jhung go to www.finisjhung.com.

—Rachel Zar



Want to build buzz about your studio, workshop or class? Posting videos to the *Dance Teacher* Video of the Month Contest is quick, easy and free—and it's a great way to get noticed. If your video is selected as Editors' Choice, you'll be featured on this page! Don't miss out on a great opportunity—visit www.dancemedia.com, share your videos and vote for your favorites. Any and all kinds of dance are welcome.



Stay in touch! Visit www.dance-teacher.com or e-mail letters to the editor to rzar@dancemedia.com.

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Chelsea Hightower photographed by Kristie Kahns

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chat room

Ask the Experts

Q: How can I help and advise my students as they prepare for college dance auditions? —via Twitter

A: Students are often out of their comfort zone in college auditions, especially those who are ballet- and jazz-trained. To them, contemporary or modern dance can look like a foreign language. Help them prepare by giving them unfamiliar material in class. Students who have a diverse training experience often fare quite well in auditions.

very structured, and there are tasks. A task might be as simple as to make your way across the floor with no more than three parts of your body ever touching the floor. Students often do too much. They want to show every move that they've ever learned, which is exactly what we're trying to get away from. We're looking at a student's imagination and at how comfortable she is in her body.

Similarly, the function of solos is to see a student's natural movement language, not to see a bunch of steps that she's



Dance majors in class at
The Ohio State University

I think dancers get worried that they're making mistakes, so their bodies get tight and they don't show their musicality. Let them know we realize they aren't going to get every beat of the combination. We're looking for how a dancer inhabits her body, and we're trying to get at something deeper through the combination.

The improvisation section can be the scariest for students, but we don't ask them to just get up and dance around. It's

learned in a studio strung together. Sets of codified vocabulary can hide who she is. Instead of pas de bourrée, kick ball change, prepare, pirouette, encourage students to use original movement in a solo. But, most importantly, they should dance their hearts out.

Susan Hadley is chair of undergraduate studies and professor in the department of dance at The Ohio State University.

Are your students thinking about COLLEGE?

DanceU101.com has everything for the college-bound dancer, her parents and her teachers: career advice, admissions strategies, videos, discussion forums—plus up-to-date information on more than 600 college dance programs. We've compiled all the authoritative articles and resources from *Dance Teacher*, *Dance Magazine*, *Dance Spirit* and *Pointe* into one convenient site. Check it out and share it with your students. **DANCEU101.COM**

Why can't we be friends?

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