



Miller-Marley



School of Dance & Voice

newsletter

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Coming This Fall

HILARY BROWN TO TEACH PILATES

Photos courtesy of Keiko Gutes



Recently, the studio has had many requests for a Pilates class. Coincidentally, Miller-Marley grad, Hilary Brown, who happens to be a certified Pilates instructor, turned up at just the right time. Hilary, who received her dance training at the studio, was a charter member of the Miller-Marley Youth Ballet Company. After high school, Hilary attended the University of Utah where she was a member of the Mountain West Ballet Company. Then, working her way back east, she spent two seasons in Atlanta with the Atlanta Festival Ballet and then headed to

New York, where her career began to take off. Her New York credits include the American Contemporary Ballet and Ballet Long Island. Most recently, Hilary received Pilates instructor certification from "Core Pilates" in New York.

What is Pilates?

If you ask a Pilates enthusiast to explain what it's all about, their explanation is likely to be peppered with words like "core" and phrases like mind/body awareness and muscular imbalance. In truth, as "new age" as this sounds, Pilates has actually been around for over 80 years! And, the word itself is the surname of the inventor, Joseph Pilates. In 1926, he and his wife opened their first studio next door to the New York City Ballet. The humble Pilates studio became a home away from home to George Balanchine and his corps of dancers from the NYC Ballet, who believed that the Pilates system was of great benefit to dancers. Now, Pilates has emerged as "the exercise of choice" for dancers and top athletes and is said to be effective for anyone regardless of age or physical condition. Its emphasis on training the core, that is, the deep abdominals and muscles closest to the spine and its capacity to train the whole body, rather than isolating certain muscle groups, dramatically transforms the way the body looks, feels and performs. Dancers love it because Pilates builds strength without adding extra bulk and helps to create a sleeker, toned body with slender thighs and a flat abdomen.

Adult Pilates classes will take place at the studio on Mondays at 1:00 p.m. and Tuesdays at 10:00 and 8:30 p.m. A class for students 6th grade and up will be held on Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m.

FREE PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS CLASS

Sponsored by the Community Police Division of
the Overland Park Police Department

Taught by Officer Michael Betten, CPP

Wednesday, August 8th - 10 to 11 a.m.

Students 12 years of age and older (parents welcome)

Note: Another class will be offered in the fall for younger children.

JOELL RAMSDELL TO TEACH VOICE

Miller-Marley is proud to announce that voice teacher, Joell Ramsdell, will be joining the staff this fall. Joell brings with him 16 years experience as a music educator, having taught in the Virgin Islands, the inner-city of Chicago, the Blue Valley School District and presently, at Arbor Creek Elementary in the Olathe School District. In 2005, the Kansas State Board of Education honored Ramsdell with the Kansas Educator of the Year in Arts and Disabilities award for his work with blind and disabled children. In 2006, he received National Board Certification in Elementary Music.

A familiar face at Shawnee Mission Theatre in the Park, Ramsdell has appeared in numerous productions and is best remembered for his portrayal of The Cat in the Hat in *Seussical* and Mr. Smee in *Peter Pan*. Recently, Joell played the role of Cornelius Hackl and served as the Vocal Director for the park's production of *Hello Dolly*.

Joell's vast experience as a dedicated performer and music educator has given him a well-rounded perspective with which to address the needs of his students. His appealing personality and talent for seeing the funny side of life have made him a magnet for both the young and the young-at-heart. For further information, please call the studio at (913) 492-0004 and your call will be forwarded to Mr. Ramsdell.

Important Dates

Sunday, August 12

Last day of Summer Session

Monday, August 13 - Friday, September 7

End of Summer Break

No Classes will be held.

Saturday, September 8

Fall Session Classes Begin

Tuition is Due in Full

PARENT WATCH WEEK #3

Monday, August 6 - Saturday, August 11

Shirley Marley, April Hamner,

Beth Johnston, Ann McCroskey,

Laura Skidmore, Matthew Donnell

Playing Hardball

Miller-Marley students, Jessica Ims and Eric Huffman, who honed their skills as well-known local child actors, have graduated to full-fledged dramatic roles that most adult actors only dream of. Eric, 17, had the unique opportunity to play the leading role in "Jekyll and Hyde" at Shawnee Mission West High School this past year. Jessica, 16, will take on the role of Anne Frank in "The Diary of Anne Frank," which will be presented by the Olathe Community Theatre Association, in October.

Recently, Eric was named Best Actor and awarded Starlight Theatre's Blue Star Award for his performance in "Jekyll and Hyde." In a *Kansas City Star* article about the Blue Star event, held at Starlight Theatre on May 24th, the Blue Star judges were quoted calling Eric's performance "truly perfect and a thrill to watch."

When Eric was cast in "Jekyll and Hyde," a musical adaptation of the Robert Louis Stevenson classic, he knew that he would be playing the dual role of Dr. Henry Jekyll and his evil alter ego, Edward Hyde, who are one in the same person. According to Eric, "I had to make the two characters be polar opposites. I had to remember that they were one man; they shared some traits, but others were completely opposite." Before the rehearsals began, Eric spent months studying the script and researching not only the history of the story but also the history of mental diseases, like schizophrenia. Not to mention the intense vocal workout to play, as Eric put it, "two incredibly dramatic roles sung either extremely high or screamed."

The physicality of limping, crouching and flinging himself onto the floor while dealing with two long, black hair extensions made him a little worse for wear, but when all was said and done, Eric said of his experience, "I knew that I would be learning new things, but I never dreamed how much this role would improve my acting."

Who would have thought that the young man, who spent last summer at Theatre in the Park as Peter Pan, could go from perennial youngster to crazed doctor with a split personality? Eric said, "Surprisingly, it wasn't as hard to get into character for Jekyll and Hyde as it was for Peter Pan. That role required extensive preparation because the minute I entered [the stage] I had to be eight."

Jessica Ims and Eric Huffman at the Top of Their Game



Photo courtesy of Peter Barrett

Eric Huffman in *Jekyll and Hyde*



Photo courtesy of Terri Hopper

Jessica Ims

Jessica Ims has garnered a reputation as a sought-after Children's Theater actress. And, she is backed by professional theater credits that include leading roles at The Coterie, Theater for Young America, Martin City Melodrama and five years as a cast member of Kansas City Repertory's *A Christmas Carol*. Even at 16, Jessica has retained a wholesomeness and naiveté that could lead directors to type cast her as a fairytale character. But, Director, Darren Sexto, (Olathe Community Theater) looked deeper and found a serious actress with the right mix of strength and vulnerability to be his Anne Frank. This will be the Kansas City premier of "The Diary of Anne Frank," an adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize winning drama about a Jewish girl who keeps a diary that reveals an intense personal account of the Holocaust.

In preparation for the role, Jessica read the original script and has actually started keeping her own journal. Up until now, Jessica has played mainly fantasy roles or characters that are highly fictionalized. Jessica said, "This is the first time I have played a 'real person.' With a real person, you have a responsibility to be true to that person. You have to think her thoughts. Getting it right; being absolutely honest, is a big responsibility."

Eric will be a senior at Shawnee Mission West High School. Jessica is home schooled and is a Sophomore.

Both Eric and Jessica are serious acting students who understand the importance of working on their craft. Now that they've made it to the big leagues, they are definitely seeing the rewards of all their hard work.

Kalli Slater Performs in Czech Republic



Photo Courtesy of Kalli Slater

In addition to being a talented dancer, ten year old, Kalli Slater, is an accomplished concert violinist. In May, Kalli competed at the Kocian International Violin competition in the Czech Republic and won fourth place with an Honorable Mention. Her competitors in the 10 to 12 age division hailed from Poland, Serbia, Mongolia and Norway. To Kalli, the best part of the trip was meeting children from other cultures, who Kalli described as "different, but we shared a lot of the same interests like music, dance and video games." Her mother stated, "Kalli was able to experience what one could only see and read about in history books."

Last year, Kalli was selected as the Outstanding Young Violinist at the Mid-America Music Association regional competition. Kalli attends Pembroke Hill school and will be in fifth grade.

She's Just a Girl Who Can't Say No



Photo courtesy of Roberta King

Pictured with Natasha King are Johnny Francoviglia (photo left) and Matthew Donnell (photo right)

Natasha King Makes Acting Debut

Miller Marley student, eight year old, Natasha King, is making her acting debut in *Oklahoma*, currently playing at The New Theatre Dinner Theatre in Overland Park. She is one of the townspeople in the show and enjoying every minute of the eight shows a week she has been performing since the end of June. When approached by the two good-looking cowboys (at left) to pose with them for a picture, like *Oklahoma's* Ado Annie, Natasha just couldn't say no.

Miller-Marley ballet instructor, Matthew Donnell, who plays Sam in the show, also serves as the Dance Captain for the production. Johnny Francoviglia, an alumnus of the studio, plays Joe. Both men are featured members of the *Oklahoma* dance ensemble.

When asked about her "new" New Theatre buddies Natasha said, "Everyone is so kind. I have so many friends, I could just faint over them." *Oklahoma* runs through September 2nd at The New Theatre.

Casting Call for "Clara's Dream"



Photo courtesy of Julie Ireland

Ashley Coffin, as Clara, in the December 2006 production of *Clara's Dream*.

Calling All Miller-Marley Families

Miller-Marley will be holding auditions for its annual holiday presentation of *Clara's Dream*, an adaptation of *The Nutcracker*, on Saturday, September 22. The studio will be casting the "guest performers," who will appear in the show with the Miller-Marley Youth Ballet Company. To be eligible, all auditioners must be at least 7 years old and enrolled in the dancing school as of September 1st.

Clara's Dream will be presented the weekend of December 15 and 16 at a location TBA. Rehearsals will take place on Monday evenings and Saturday mornings at the studio. Audition times are:

Ages 7-11	12:30-1:30
Ages 12 & Up	1:30-2:30
Adults	2:30-3:00



Ryan Worsing

Ryan Worsing to Teach Master Class

Ryan Worsing, a 2004 graduate of Blue Valley North High School, will graduate this December from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts with a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre. The multitasking Worsing, who received his dance training at Miller-Marley, will be teaching a Master Class at the studio for Jazz levels 5 and up on Monday, August 13, from 6-8 p.m. Ryan was the choreographer for the junior/senior finale, "Bye Bye Blackbird," in this year's Showcase.

Troupe Talk

Here is an entry from Sharon Ingebritson's journal, pertaining to the **Tini-Tainers's** outdoor performance at the Deanna Rose Farmstead (Overland Park) in June: *Swept the hay from the front porch stage. Left a shoe in the turtle pond - Mom didn't want to take the stinky thing home.* By "stinky thing," we think she was referring to the shoe..... On a brighter note, the **Tini-Tainers** performed their Patriotic Review for the residents of The Atriums (Overland Park) in July. According to Director, Sharon Ingebritson, the audience was quite moved by the performance and after the show the entire troupe was treated to ice cream, courtesy of the staff at The Atriums. August will find the **Tini-Tainers** at Carondelet senior living center in Kansas City.

The **Minitainers** are getting quite a reputation with the City of Overland Park. Last Spring, Minitainer Director, Joan Walsh, approached The Downtown Overland Park Partnership about

using the **Minitainers**. Due to the success of their first performance at the Clocktower courtyard in June, the troupe is booked solid with the City of Overland Park through the end of September when they will perform at the O.P. Fall Festival on September 29.

The **Show Biz Kids** and the **Youth Ballet Company** were the pre-show entertainment at the Theatre in the Park (TTIP) production of *Music Man* on Sunday, July 1. The **Minitainers** and the **Entertainers** will do the pre-show for TTIP's final show of the summer, *Footloose*, on Sunday, August 5.

The **Show Biz Kids** will be the headliners at the Starlight Theatre community stage, where they will perform two pre-shows for the theater's production of *Westside Story* on Saturday, August 11. The troupe will wind up its summer schedule with a performance at the Overland Park Clocktower on Saturday, August 25.

Alumni News

Marty Thomas in Broadway's Xanadu

Photo courtesy of broadwayworld.com

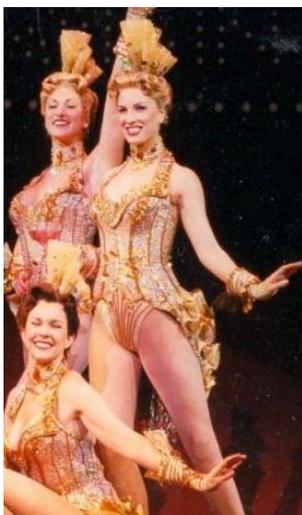


Marty Thomas (far right) joins *Xanadu* cast members who pose with Olivia Newton John, (far left) star of the original 1980 movie version of the show.

Currently, **Marty Thomas** is appearing in the Broadway musical, *Xanadu*, where he had the honor of being selected as the show's Dance Captain. Previous Broadway credits include the Tony award winning musical, *Wicked* and *The Secret Garden*. One of his most notable accomplishments occurred in 1992 when he beat out the then unknown Britney Spears on TV's Junior Star Search and won the title of Junior Vocalist Champion. Still singing, Marty has released several CD's and performs nationally with his band.

Singer/dancer, **Renee Klappmeyer**, was cited by a New York critic as being one of the best things about the off Broadway production, *Evil Dead, The Musical*.

Photo courtesy of broadwayworld.com



Renee Klappmeyer in *The Producers*. (standing, center)

Now that *Evil Dead* has "expired," Renee is alive and moving on to be a featured dancer in the highly touted new Mel Brook's musical, *Young Frankenstein*, that opens on Broadway this November. No stranger to Mel Brooks, Renee appeared in the Broadway National Tour of *The Producers*, which led to her being cast in the movie version of the show.

HAIRSPRAY - It's Here - It's a Hit!

Move over Harry Potter, because *Hairspray*, the movie, is here and according to movie critic, Richard Roeper, "It hits it right out of the park!"

What's more, Miller-Marley alum, **Hayley Podschun**, plays Tammy in the flick that opened in theaters over the country on July 20th. When interviewed by Robert Trussell, arts critic for *The Kansas City Star*, Hayley stated that when the *Hairspray* cast attended a special pre-screening of the movie, she was so overwhelmed when she saw herself up on the big screen that she cried. Robert Butler, movie editor for *The Star*, called the film "more fun than anything we've seen at the multiplex so far this year" and the new *Hairspray* movie is being hailed by critics as "Grease For Today's Generation."



Hayley Podschun (pictured above) in full *Hairspray* regalia, as the cover girl for the July/August issue of *Dance Spirit* magazine.

Where's The Beav?



Shannon Durig with her new *Hairspray* co-star, former child star Jerry Mathers, of the 1950's TV series, *Leave it to Beaver*.

Here's a news flash. Jerry Mathers, of *Leave it to Beaver* fame, just joined the Broadway cast of *Hairspray* and get ready - he's playing daddy to Shannon Durig's character, Tracy. Shannon may be too young to remember *The Beav*, but those who do may have a little trouble picturing the All-American boy of the fifties as paunchy, middle-aged, Wilbur Turnblad. However, web surfers found a broadwayworld.com blog with the photo (at left) along with a caption that read, "Hairspray + The Beav = SRO." Shannon retains her title as the longest running Tracy in *Hairspray* history!

Constance Ramos to Host New Show on HGTV

Since her departure from the design team at ABC's *Extreme Home Makeover: Home Edition*, multitalented designer and artist, **Constance Ramos**, has been reinventing herself. In addition to becoming a highly sought after motivational speaker, Constance hooked up with HGTV and now is hosting her own show on the network. The program, that is titled *Color Corrections*, sends Constance to the homes of people who are "in the midst of a color disaster." With Constance's expertise and the miracle of television, the color challenged homeowner's problems are resolved in only 30 minutes. The show airs on Thursday nights at 8:30. Constance is an alumna, former instructor and long time friend of Miller-Marley. She and her husband, J.J., reside in Carlsbad, California.



Photo courtesy of ConstanceRamos.com