



Miller-Marley MiniTainer
Tristan Rios

Miller-Marley

School of Dance & Voice

News

November 2010

Christmas Is In the Air at Miller-Marley



Miller-Marley to Shine At Plaza Lighting Ceremony

The Plaza Lighting Ceremony is a long held Kansas City tradition and serves as the official kick-off of the holiday season. Hold onto your Santa hats, folks. Miller-Marley has been selected as the featured entertainment for this year's popular event that typically draws over 500,000 people to the Country Club Plaza on Thanksgiving night. The program will be televised live on KCTV Channel 5.

Harvest Productions, a major Kansas City audio/video production company, will be producing the event. Harvest owner, Ron Davis, has a long history with both Brian McGinness and Tammy Ruder (Cultural Arts Director, Jewish Community Center). Ron also works as the sound designer for Shawnee Mission Theatre in the Park, where Brian and Tammy have worked together on numerous production teams. In addition, Chris Halford, a familiar face on the Theatre in the Park stage for many years and a long time friend of the studio, will be a special guest performer with Miller-Marley.

Now, all four will reunite for the Plaza gig with Ron Davis at the helm; Tammy Ruder, Director of Entertainment; Brian McGinness, Director of the Miller-Marley Performance Ensemble; and Chris Halford, Vocal Director. Ann McCroskey will act as the co-choreographer with Brian McGinness. Ann's husband, Richard McCroskey, composed the musical backgrounds for several numbers.

The event will be held at Wyandotte and Nichols Road, just south of 47th Street and entertainment will take place on the main stage.

The Miller-Marley cast, that includes 52 kids, ages 9 through 17, will perform five production numbers during the evening's festivities which will culminate in the "turning on" of the Plaza lights. And, after they flip the switch, the Miller-Marley kids along with the KC Superstars, will lift their voices in song with "Christmas in Kansas City," the perfect prelude to the holiday season.

The Miller-Marley Performance Ensemble: (Boys) Alec and Justin Armer, Nelson Costello, J.D. Deneff, Sam DeVeney, Ryan Dervin, Joseph Flickner, Dakota Hoar, Jack Jones, Grant Karpin, Brandon Luthi, Grayson McGuire, Jack Muccino, Nick Pelaccio, Alex Peterson, Nathan Rommel, Stephan Sink (Girls) Stephanie Ainsworth, Ann Arends, Emily Arnold, Genevieve Austin, Olivia Avery, Sarah Bergeson, Lauren Biggs, Noelle Bradley, Elizabeth Brooks, Amanda Burns, Elizabeth Cox, Abby Cramer, Amanda Dulny, Krisa Farrington, Emma Ferrin, Gabbie Fried, Anna Hastings, Taylor Hunt, Lily Kaufmann, Haley Knudsen, Michelle Maddock, Mayme Marshall, Mallorie McBride, Nicole McCroskey, Lauren Mylin, Hannah Odgers, Mikaela O'Neill, Tristan Rios, Cora Schimke, Haley Stewart, Madison Stottle, Katherine Viviano, Gabby Wadley, Madeline Wadley, Emily Walton.



Competition Team to Open for Radio City Rockettes

On September 15, the Miller-Marley Competition Team was named top winner in the "Day of the Diva" dance contest held at Town Center Plaza in Leawood. The prize - the chance to open for the Rockettes in the legendary Radio City Christmas Spectacular National Tour, set for November 19th at the Kansas City Sprint Center. The contest judges were greatly impressed with Miller-Marley's technique and this was the deal breaker that led to the team's ranking as number one.

Twenty-two members of the team have been selected to

perform "Happy Holidays" as the opening number for the 7:30pm show.

In order to learn the original Rockette choreography, the group studied a DVD tutorial. Prior to the event, their performance will be video taped and submitted to the Rockettes for critique.

Competition Team Director, Beth Johnston stated, "This is a huge privilege to open for the Rockettes and perform on the Sprint Center stage. The girls are honored and very grateful for the opportunity."

Girls who will appear at the event on November 19th include: Alyssa Barbour, Shelby Bottoms, Noelle Bradley, Kelsey Cooper, Ashley Coffin, Hannah Flaig, Rachel Full, Krisa Farrington, Taylor Hunt, Mayme Marshall, Megan McConnell, Lindsey Mehlin, Hannah Odgers, Mikaela O'Neill, Brittany Rouse, Macie Rouse, Kate Rumsey, Jessica Siplon, Krista Spindler, Haley Stewart, Krista Valdez, Morgan Weiler, Mikaela Morgan (Alternate).

Meggie Cansler Featured In Plaza Lights Show

Miller-Marley alumnus, Meggie Cansler, former ensemble member of the Broadway National Tour of *Wicked*, where she understudied the role of Glinda, will be flying home to be a featured performer in the Plaza Lighting event. She will delight KC audiences with her rendition of "Defying Gravity" which she will sing with the KC Superstars just before the "turning on" of the Plaza Lights.





Sarah McMullen sings her new original single, "Surround Me," at the L.A. Music Awards where she was named "Pop Artist of the Year."

Miller-Marley student, 15 year-old Sarah McMullen, has taken the phrase "normal teenager" to a whole new level. She isn't even old enough to vote and already the multi-talented singer/songwriter has enough on her plate to cause most grown-ups to throw up their hands and cry "uncle." There are recording sessions, interviews, charity events, photo opps, red carpets and lest we forget, Sarah is an honor student at Blue Valley North and the Treasurer of her sophomore class. Amidst all the media attention swirling around her, the up-and-coming starlet remains cool, calm and collected, claiming that she's just a normal teenager.

Sarah recently released her first CD that contains 8 songs, 7 of which she co-wrote with L.A. music producer, Jonathan George. Last year, when her break-out singles, "Twisted" and "How Do I Break Free," topped the charts on Tween Pop Radio, people in the music industry began to sit up and take notice.

The crowning glory came on October 7th, when Sarah won "Pop Artist of the Year" at the 20th Annual L.A. Music Awards, held at the Whiskey a Go-Go. She will receive her award at the red carpet event held at the Paramount Theatre on November 19th.

Locally, Sarah just finished shooting the National Webisode Campaign for Sprint, and has been featured in the magazines: *435 South*, *Her Life* and *Blue Valley Today*. In September she was selected as the Fox 4-WDAF "Young Achiever of the Week" and appeared in the Reaching for Excellence segment.

In September, Sarah was featured on WDAF Fox 4's Reaching for Excellence news segment. On her nomination for "Pop Artist of the Year" anchor, Phil Whitt said, "Sarah's star has been on a nice, steady rise and now it could get a galactic boost."



Sarah McMullen pictured with Fox 4 TV Anchor, Phil Whitt.



Sarah McMullen pictured with award winning L.A. music producer, Jonathan George (left) and Al Bowman (right), President of the L.A. Music

When Sarah was nominated for "Pop Artist of the Year," Al Bowman, President of the L.A. Music Awards stated, "Sarah's nomination is completely justified. What a voice!"

Bigger is Better at Miller-Marley

Miller-Marley is ranked as one of the largest dance studios in the Kansas City metro area. The numbers have been tabulated and the school has a current enrollment of 738 students, up 50 from last fall. Though there are many smaller dance schools that offer excellent training, at Miller-Marley we like to think that "Bigger is Better." This being said, the questions arises: Is the size of the dance school related to how effective it is in educating its students?

Obviously, a large school offers more diversity. Students can choose from a variety of classes and have the opportunity to socialize with many kids from different groups. Smaller schools often suffer from limited classes, insufficient studio space and the same group of students attends most every class together.

The majority of our new students cited these as

the most compelling reasons for having transferred to Miller-Marley. Miller-Marley offers over one hundred class offerings and (after the "combo" classes") eight graded levels in each core subject. This system not only allows for freedom of choice but also ensures proper class placement for every student. With over 700 students, the opportunities for social interaction are endless.

Miller-Marley groups students according to ability and grade. Therefore, children are placed with others who are relatively the same age. Smaller studios often have 7 to 14 year-olds in the same class together. This creates an uneven playing field and challenges a teacher's ability to meet the individual needs of his/her students.

It is imperative that instructors must be educated or have experience in the particular form of dance that they teach. Miller-Marley has a staff

comprised of 15 instructors, each of whom is a specialist in his/her chosen field. In a small dance studio, one or two teachers could be responsible for instructing all the classes and may lack the training and qualifications to do so in an effective manner.

Many parents have the mistaken notion that a large dance school environment weakens the student/teacher bond and that their child will get lost in the crowd. The idea that "smaller is safer" doesn't always hold weight. Miller-Marley teachers take the time to know every child and strive to make ours a school that is genuinely inclusive.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new families to Miller-Marley and thank you for entrusting us with the dance education of your children.

Miller-Marley is a BIG school with a BIG heart to match.

Troupe Talk

On October 23rd, The TiniTainers and Show Biz Kids, followed by the Entertainers on October 24th, kicked off their fall schedules with a trip to the Kansas City Zoo to perform at the "Hoots and Howls" event. The next weekend, on October 30th, the three troupes traveled to Worlds of Fun to entertain audiences at the theme park's "Halloween Haunt."

Coinciding with the opening of the new American Girl Store at Oak Park Mall, the MiniTainers performed as the opening for the American Girl Fashion Show at the Overland Park Marriot on October 2nd. The charity event was sponsored by the Junior League of Johnson and Wyandotte County. Next up, was a performance at the Oak Park-Carpenter Elementary School Fall Festival on October 15th. On December 9th, the group will delight the kids at Beth Shalom Preschool with their "mega" Hanukah dance.

Look for all the Miller-Marley troupes in the Holiday Musical Revue on Saturday and Sunday, December 4th and 5th. The performance companies will be featured during Act One. *Clara's Dream* will be presented in Act Two, following intermission.



These students appeared in *The Music of Billy Joel*, presented by the Jewish Community Center at the Lewis and Shirley White Theatre. (L to R) Cora Schimke, Nathan Rommel, *Dana Arnott, Grayson McGuire and Nicole McCroskey. The production was choreographed by Ann McCroskey.

On Stage

* Asterick denotes Miller-Marley Alumni - Leading Roles are in red.

The Music of Billy Joel	Lewis and Shirley White Theatre	Sept. 15-25
Choreographed by Ann McCroskey Dance Ensemble: *Dana Arnott, Grayson McGuire, Nicole McCroskey, Nathan Rommel, Cora Schimke		
Carmen	Lyric Opera of Kansas City	Sept. 25-Oct. 4
Children's Chorus: Kylie Brown, Francesca and Sophia Mauro, Grace Vedock		
Hello Dolly	Mill Valley High School	Oct. 9-13
Directed by *Jon Copeland Kayla and Kyra Clair (<i>Dancing Waiters</i>)		
Guys and Dolls	Pleasant Ridge Middle School	Oct. 21-23
Dance Ensemble: Sydney Poteet, Courtney Schmitt, Eliana Stein		
Harriet Jacobs	Kansas City Repertory Theatre	Oct. 22-Nov. 21
Caitlin Gardner, Jordan Nevels (<i>Louisa</i>)		
Aladdin	Christian Youth Theatre Bell Cultural Arts Center	Oct. 28-31
Lily Giovagnoli (<i>Arabian Dancer/Featured Tapper</i>), Josie Jones (<i>Agrabite</i>), Elizabeth Phillips (<i>Agrabite</i>), Evan Phillips (Guard), Rachel Phillips (<i>Narrator/Featured Tapper</i>), Madison Robert (<i>Arabian Dancer/Agrabite</i>), Caroline Shaw (<i>Agrabite</i>), Edanne Summers (<i>Agrabite</i>), Gabby Wadley (<i>Featured Tapper/Agrabite</i>)		
Annie Get Your Gun	Leawood Middle School	Nov. 4 & 5
Anna Arends (<i>Annie Oakley</i>), Lauren Stollman (<i>Dolly</i>), Madeline Wadley (<i>Jessie</i>), Claire Eggleston (<i>Winnie</i>), Patricia Lu (<i>Soloist / Dancer</i>), Lucy Masters (<i>Dancer</i>)		
Once Upon a Mattress	Shawnee Mission Northwest High School	Nov. 4-6
Choreographed by *Mindy Moritz Elizabeth Brooks (<i>Ballet Princess</i>)		
Westside Story	St. Thomas Aquinas High School	Nov. 4-7
Dominique Vestal (<i>Maria</i>), Noelle McDonald (<i>Margarita</i>)		
Thoroughly Modern Millie	Desoto High School	Nov. 11-13
Cora Schimke (<i>Millie</i>), Katherine Glover (<i>Stenographer</i>)		
Annie	Trilogy Cultural Arts Center	Nov. 18-20
Megan Walstrom / Sierra Stahly (<i>Tessie</i>), Lauren Sanford (<i>Orphan</i>)		
South Pacific	Olathe North High School	Nov. 18-20
Kamryn Ramsdell (<i>Dance Ensemble</i>)		
A Christmas Carol	Kansas City Repertory Theatre	Nov. 19-Dec. 26
Nick Grant (<i>Peter Cratchit</i>), Katie Hall (<i>Belinda Cratchit</i>), Children's Ensemble: Mattie Bell, Regan Grant, Megan Secrest		



Important Dates

Mon. Nov. 1 - Weds. Dec. 15
Dance Showcase Costume Fees Due
 Mon. Nov. 22 - Sun. Nov. 29
Thanksgiving Break - No Classes
 Tues. Nov. 30
Last Day of Fall Quarter
 Weds. Dec. 1
Winter Quarter Classes Begin
Tuition is Due
 Sat. Dec. 4 & Sun. Dec. 5
Clara's Dream
 2pm & 7pm - Blue Valley North HS
 Weds. Dec. 22 - Mon. Jan. 3
Winter Break - No Classes

Watch Week Schedule

Mon. Oct. 18 - Thurs. Oct. 21
 Tara Wells
 Mon. Oct. 25 - Sat. Oct. 30
 Ann McCroskey, Annie Paglusch
 Mon. Nov. 1 - Sun. Nov. 7
 Christopher Barksdale, Missy Belt,
 Laura Branson, Jill Hochman,
 Shirley Marley
 Mon. Nov. 8 - Sat. Nov. 13
 Hilary Brown, Beth Johnston,
 Brian McGinness

Alumni News

Hayley Podschun Stars in Off-Broadway Musical

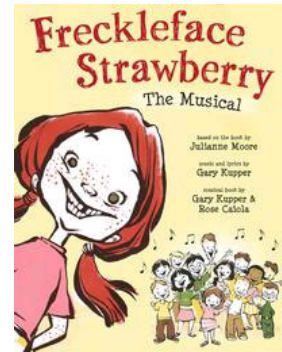
Hayley Podschun is getting the chance to be a kid again. She is playing the role of Strawberry, a 7 year-old girl with freckles and bright red hair, in the new off-Broadway musical, *Freckleface Strawberry*, based on the children's book by actress Julianne Moore. The story follows Strawberry as she struggles with major self-image issues, albeit, her aversion to the freckles and red hair that she was born with and can't seem to get rid of.

In the end, Strawberry learns to love herself, "freckles and all." But Hayley received a dose of Strawberry's own medicine when she agreed to have her blonde hair dyed red for the show. According to Hayley's mother, Denise Podschun, Hayley's Extreme Hair Makeover left her daughter "seeing red" when she looked in the mirror. Hayley was so despondent that she called her mother, who actually found the whole thing quite amusing. Now, Hayley has learned to like (not love) the red locks and is having a blast in the show.

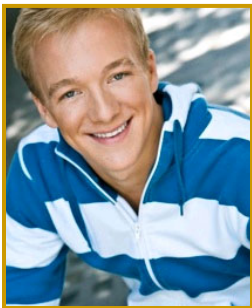
Previous Broadway credits include: *Pal Joey* (The Kid, Ensemble, u/s Linda English and Val), *Sunday in the Park with George* (standby Celeste/Frieda and Dance Captain), *Hairspray* – Broadway (Tammy), National Touring Company (Penny/Tammy), *Film* (Tammy).



Hayley Podschun with actress Julianne Moore. Moore is the author of the children's book, *Freckleface Strawberry*, the inspiration for the new musical that stars Podschun.



Hayley Podschun onstage in *Freckleface Strawberry*. The show had its off-Broadway premiere at New World Stages in New York City on October 3rd.



Ryan Worsing Lands 3rd Broadway Musical

Ryan Worsing has just landed his third Broadway show and will be an ensemble member in the cast of *Chicago*. His previous Broadway credits include *Shrek the Musical* and the Broadway National Touring Company of Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*.

Worsing is a frequent guest choreographer at the studio where he most recently choreographed the production number *Forget About the Boy* (from *Thoroughly Modern Millie*) for the Miller-Marley Entertainers.

Staff News

Ballet Company Awaits Bundle of Joy

In about 6 1/2 months, Laura Branson (MMYB Director and ballet instructor) and her husband, Kyle, will be hearing the pitter patter of little feet. Laura made the announcement in October and Laura's students, the Ballet Company and the Miller-Marley staff are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the next Rudolf Nureyev or Anna Pavlova.

The due date is Memorial Day weekend, the weekend of the Miller-Marley *Dance Showcase*! Is there a doctor in the house?

Annie Paglusch to Wed

Miller-Marley jazz instructor, Annie Paglusch, lovingly referred to by her students as "Miss Annie," is going to become "Mrs. Annie." She and her fiancé, Chris Holbrook, are planning a June 11th wedding. The wedding date obviously was planned around the Miller-Marley *Dance Showcase* on May 28th and 29th.

Playwright Makes Emergency Casting Call

Shirley Marley has often said that she is not only proud of her former students who have become professional dancers but also those who have pursued different career paths. One such person, Arika Larson, is an emerging playwright whose original play, *Spumoni*, was featured at the Kansas City Fringe Festival this summer.

During the final weeks of rehearsal one of the actors unexpectedly dropped out of the play and Arika was faced with having to make an emergency casting call. She was looking for a young male comedic actor who was a quick study.

Who should show up but Miller-Marley alum, Ethan Miller, who turned out to be a perfect fit for the role. As Arika told Shirley Marley, "I should have known that only a Miller-Marley kid could come in at the last minute and handle a role like this."

Ethan is a graduate of the University of Northern Colorado with a degree in Musical Theatre. Most recently, he appeared locally in *Evil Dead the Musical* at the Egads Theatre.

Clara's Dream

Presented by the Miller-Marley Youth Ballet Company

And a Holiday Musical Revue

Featuring
The Miller-Marley
Performance
Companies

Be a Part of the Celebration

December 4th & 5th
2pm & 7pm
Blue Valley North High School
General Admission \$8
Tickets Available Nov. 4th
Call: 913-492-0004