



Miller-Marley MiniTainer  
Emma Andersen

# Miller-Marley

School of Dance & Voice

## News

July / August 2010

## Miller-Marley Summer Intensive Faculty



Kristin Sudeikis

Shannon Durig

Constance Ramos

Roy Lightner

Susanne Gorman

### Miller-Marley Summer Intensive

August 23 - August 27 & August 30 - September 3

Back by popular demand, Miller-Marley's Summer Intensive is coming up soon and this is an opportunity you won't want to miss. Where else but at Miller-Marley could you study with a Broadway star, a television celebrity and nationally recognized dancers and choreographers from across the country? And, it is designed to appeal to EVERY STUDENT, from beginner to pre-professional and second grade through high school.

Our all-star alumni faculty: **Shannon Durig, Susanne Gorman, Roy Lightner, Constance Ramos and Kristin Sudeikis**, have joined forces to make this year's event even more spectacular than the last. These people are not only consummate professionals, but also kind and wonderful human beings who genuinely care about our students. All of them were once students at the school and they are deeply committed to passing down the Miller-Marley legacy to our next generation. As Kristin Sudeikis stated, "There is no greater honor than to be asked here to pass down the wisdom we learned from being at Miller-Marley."

Kristin works as a choreographer for television, film and stage productions. She recently choreographed a "flash mob" commercial for Microsoft, in Lincoln Center (NYC) and is looking forward to the second run of her original dance concert, *Even in Silence*, that played to sold-out audiences

last year in NYC.

Bringing master teachers (into the studio) who can share their real-life experiences definitely adds an extra element of excitement and motivation to the learning process. Shannon Durig credits Brian and Shirley for their openness in exposing students to different teachers; especially those who have appeared on Broadway. Little did Shannon know, when she was a child, that someday she would not only dance on Broadway, but would end up being the star of *Hairspray*!

Shannon said, "I remember every master teacher I studied with at Miller-Marley. I hung on their every word and took to heart all the advice they gave." In August, Shannon will become a regular on the Disney Channel's *Jonas L.A.* as the character, Jeannine.

Those people who have seen Susanne (Susie) Gorman in action have witnessed the unbridled passion and intensity she brings to her performance. Susie commented, "I have a strong desire to share both my passion and my respect for my art. I once had a student who came back to me and said that my passion had driven her to become a better dancer."

Susie, who danced in the Broadway National Tour of Twyla Tharp's *Movin' Out*, teaches in NYC and New Jersey and works as a teacher, choreographer and back-up dancer for recording artists.

The entire faculty echoed Shannon's sentiment that "Brian and Shirley's love for their students is unmatched." They agreed that Brian and Shirley would not only go across town - they would go across the country to see one of their students perform. In their eyes, there are no better role models than Brian and Shirley, when it comes to giving back.

Connie Ramos is one such person who definitely takes this to heart. As an original member of ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, Connie had the chance to touch many lives. Currently, Connie is not only doing the fund-raising, but also is helping in the design and construction of a desperately needed new wing for her church in Carlsbad, CA. In the spring, she taught a musical theater program at the church for over 60 children, ages 3 to 16, and donated the proceeds to the new wing project.

With Miller-Marley's emphasis on creating well-rounded performers, it is no surprise that they have turned out so many "triple threats." And, the multi-talented and award-winning choreographer, Roy Lightner, is a perfect example. Roy is currently touring with PLATINUM DANCE EXPERIENCE and DANCERS INC as a master teacher and competition judge and is highly sought after as a performer.

Working as master teachers in other dancing schools has given our alumni faculty an eye-opening perspective.

### Important Dates

Friday, August 13th

Last Day of Summer Quarter

Mon., Aug. 23rd - Fri., Aug. 27th

First Week of Summer Intensive

Mon., Aug. 30th - Fri., Sept. 3rd

Second Week of Summer Intensive

Wednesday, September 8th

Fall Quarter Classes Begin

Tuition is Due

Saturday, September 18th

Clara's Dream Auditions

### Watch Week Schedule

#### WATCH WEEK #1

Mon., July 26th - Sat., July 31st

Christopher Barksdale,  
Laura Branson, Tara Wells

#### WATCH WEEK #2

Mon., Aug. 2nd - Sun., Aug. 8th

Shirley Marley, Ann McCroskey,  
Annie Paglusch

#### WATCH WEEK #3

Mon., Aug. 9th - Sat., Aug. 14th

Hilary Brown, Jill Hochman,  
Beth Johnston, Brian McGinness

Kristin commented, "I have come to the conclusion that the students in a dancing school are a direct reflection of the owner."

In conclusion, our Intensive faculty concurred that Shirley Marley and her wonderful students are one-of-a-kind. And, there's no place like Miller-Marley - their home away from home.

For more information about scheduling and pricing and to read more about our talented Summer Intensive faculty, check out the website at:  
[www.millermarley.com](http://www.millermarley.com)

# THEY WANNABE ROCKETTES

Stepping into the Radio City Music Hall, the domain of the Radio City Rockettes, is like entering the portals of another world, albeit, "Rockette World," where literally, nobody gets out of line.

Recently, Miller-Marley students: 15 year-old Noelle Bradley, 14 year-old Kate Rumsey and 16 year-old Taylor Hunt; got a glimpse into the world of the Rockettes when they spent a week in New York City at the Rockette Summer Intensive and trained under the direction of actual Rockettes.

In January, the girls attended the Intensive audition, held in Chicago, where hundreds of Rockette hopefuls vied for one of the coveted 74 spots. Two months later, all three received word that they had been accepted.

Prior to the audition, none of the girls had entertained thoughts about being a Rockette. According to Kate and Noelle, it was their voice teacher, Kristi Tucker, who first proposed the idea. As Kristi stated, "With their beautiful long legs and height (Noelle is 5' 9 1/2, Kate is 5'9) they should be Rockettes." Subsequently, the girls and their parents found out about the Intensive and as Noelle put it, "I knew it was going to be fun the second I heard about it."

Upon entering the Radio City building on the first day, the girls were awestruck at how "beautiful" and "full of wonder" it seemed. Everyone met in one of the two rehearsal halls where the participants would spend six hours a day studying tap, jazz and ballet and the legendary Rockette technique.

Kate and Noelle were surprised to learn that they were the youngest in attendance.

The other students ranged in age from around 16 to 24. The entire group of 74 was divided into two groups, "yellow" and "green" and within each group into what was referred to as the Tall Line and the Taller Line.

As all-American as mom, baseball and apple pie, the Rockettes hold their wholesome image to be sacred. Each Rockette must be a reflection of the high standards set forth for behavior, appearance and responsibility and the same holds true for all the aspiring dancers in the Intensive.

The Rockette ensemble distinguishes itself from the edgier, modern and contemporary dance companies by stressing uniformity over individuality. But after all, it is solely this uniformity and precision that have made the Rockettes, as expressed in *A Chorus Line*, "one singular sensation" in the American culture. As Kate said, "Although they make it look easy, it most definitely isn't easy." Noelle said, "The dances are long and energetic and it is physically strenuous and mentally taxing work."

Every aspect of the choreography and staging is very meticulous and formulated down to the minutest detail. They even have a unique terminology to define body placement and a complicated numbering system to delineate exact locations for each dancer's constantly changing position onstage.

"The Rockettes focus very much on angles of the body and the pathway of your arms. They practice for hours on end to make sure that even their eyes are looking the same way," Noelle said.

If one dancer misses her mark or



**Noelle Bradley** (center) flanked by Rockettes Christina (R) and Michelle (L), two of the instructors at the Rockette Summer Intensive, held at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. **Kate Rumsey** and **Taylor Hunt** who attended the Intensive with Noelle (not pictured).

is out of step it could spell disaster. Kate said, "They have red and green lines on the stage. The phrases, 'toe the line,' 'heel the line,' and 'arch the line,' explain the placement of the feet in relation to the lines. But, each time you change formations, you change number and red or green lines." So the moral of this story is - Practice makes Perfect.

And, what would this experience be without the chance to learn the piece de resistance from the queens of the high kicks? Though it looks like they could easily knock themselves out, the Rockettes seldom kick over their heads. According to the girls, a lot of what the audience sees is an illusion. First of all, as Kate explained, "During their kick lines they actually don't touch each other. They hold their own arms up so that the girls next to them in line don't have to bear their weight. Also, lifting the chin gives the illusion that the leg is going higher than it

actually is." Noelle added, "To achieve perfect kicks, an exact level is set of where the toe should reach the body. The most famous and frequently used is the 'eye-high' jump kick."

The culmination of the Intensive is the Showcase, when all the participants perform excerpts from the celebrated *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* (for their parents) onstage at the Radio City Music Hall. Kate described the stage as "unbelievable" noting that it's as big as a whole city block. Noelle said, "This was one of the most amazing things I've ever done in my life."

So, now that the girls have completed the arduous training program do they all still want to be a Rockette? Absolutely. Kate thinks it would be a "blast." As Noelle said, "The Rockettes are very much looked up to both as dancers and people. I want to be part of that legacy some day."



## Staff News

# Tara Wells in the Fast Lane



Tara Wells

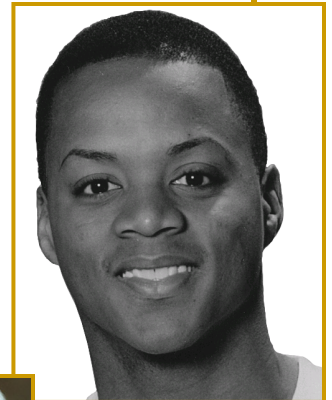
Tara Wells has a lot on her plate. At Miller-Marley she is the instructor for hip-hop, jazz and lyrical jazz; the Assistant Director of the Minitainers, the Administrator of the Miller-Marley Facebook page and a guest choreographer for the Competition Team and the MMYB. As if that wasn't enough, last spring Tara received an unexpected job offer for a dream job that she just couldn't refuse. She was invited to be the new Head Coach for the KU Rock Chalk Dance Team, formerly known as the Crimson Girls.

Tara learned about the job opening about six months ago when she attended a dance competition with the Olathe East Drill Team, for whom she was a coach at the time. She immediately set up an interview and needless to say, the KU athletic department was so impressed with her qualifications that they hired her right away. Coincidentally, Cat Jarzemkoski, Ku Spirit Squad Coordinator, happens to have a connection to Miller-Marley. She is not only a former Miller-Marley student, but was one of the original Kansas City Chiefettes, under the direction of Shirley Marley. Cat and Tara will be working together this year.

Despite commuting to Lawrence twice a week (sometimes more) and trying to keep all the balls in the air, Tara remains in good spirits and will continue to work at Miller-Marley. And, it's a good thing, since the entire Miller-Marley staff agrees that Tara has become indispensable.

# Welcome - Christopher Barksdale

When our beloved Matthew Donnell left the studio for New York, inquiring minds were asking, "Who are you going to get to replace him?" The answer: Christopher Barksdale, that's who! And, just for the record, Matthew and Chris happen to be very close friends, having danced together in the Kansas City Ballet for many years. Though their teaching styles differ, both men share the same affable sense of humor and boyish good looks, factors which, according to many of the students, have helped to pave the way for a seamless transition. Currently, Chris is teaching the advanced ballet classes and working with the MMYB on a very ambitious piece from Stravinsky's *Firebird*, that will be performed in the Company's spring concert.. The multi-talented performer was featured recently in the July/August issue of K.C. Studio Magazine. Brian McGinness said, "Chris is going to be a phenomenal fit for our school."



Christopher Barksdale

# Alumni News



**Kaitlin Mesh** has taken a leave of absence from Broadway's *Westside Story*, where she plays (Jet girl) ZaZa, to spend a month with her family and friends in K.C. She is also the understudy for the role of Anybods and has been lucky enough to have gone on a total of 52 times to date. Kaitlin will be teaching a Master Class in Broadway Jazz at the studio on July 31. Check our website for details.



**Mindy Moeller** recently spent three weeks in Canada studying with the Ballet Jazz Danse Montreal Company. She was privileged to have been selected out of 400 dancers for one of the 70 spots in the company's prestigious Springboard program for advanced and professional dancers. In August, she will head to Chicago for the River North Dance Company Intensive. In between her travels, Mindy stopped by Miller-Marley to teach classes and choreograph a piece for the Competition Team. Mindy will be a senior at the University of Arizona.



Who would have thought that two Kansas natives, **Larissa Klinger** and **Eric Huffman**, would end up together doing *Cabaret* at the Surfflight Theatre in Beach Haven, New Jersey? What's more, they'll both be performing in *42nd Street* at the same time but at different theaters; Eric at the Surfflight and Larissa at Village Theatre, in Washington DC. Eric has been cast in all five shows in Surfflight's summer season. He will be a junior at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Last spring, Larissa had a starring role in Surfflight's *Sisters of Swing* and will appear in their upcoming production of *Mack and Mabel*.



Kaitlyn Davidson

Since graduating from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 2009, Kaitlyn Davidson has been making her mark across the country as a force to be reckoned with. Most recently, Kaitlyn originated six roles in the World premiere of *Johnny Baseball*, at the American Repertory Theatre (Cambridge, MA) under the direction of Diane Paulus, director of the Broadway revival of *Hair*. Other credits include Rapunzel, in the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera production of *Into the Woods*; Val, in the Pioneer Theatre Company (Salt Lake City, UT) production of *A Chorus Line* and Ann, in the Maltz Jupiter Theatre (Jupiter, FLA) production of *La Caux Aux Folles*.

When in town this summer, Kaitlyn said, "I am incredibly fortunate to be following my dreams and extremely grateful for the training and support I received at Miller-Marley."



Be a Part of the Celebration  
*Clara's Dream*

Guest Performers Auditions  
Saturday, Sept. 18

Performances  
December 4 & 5  
2pm and 7pm  
Blue Valley North HS

Please consult our website for further information. The cast will be announced Wednesday, September 22 on the Miller-Marley website [www.millermarley.com](http://www.millermarley.com)

**Audition Schedule - Guest Performers**

Saturday, September 18th Miller-Marley Studio #1

12:30 - 1:15pm  
Angels & Party Scene Children (1st - 5th grades)

1:15 - 2:00pm  
Gingerbread Kids & Party Scene Children / Adults (6th grade & up)

2:00 - 2:30pm  
Party Scene Adults

**Five Reasons to Audition for *Clara's Dream***

1. You'll get to wear beautiful costumes.
2. It's a great way to make new friends.
3. Parents and children can enjoy performing together.
4. We provide a manageable evening rehearsal schedule, convenient for working parents.
5. You'll be performing in a first-class production with a first-class ballet company: The Miller-Marley Youth Ballet!

# On Stage

\* Asterick indicates Miller-Marley alumni

**Rhythm City** Indian Creek Community Church July 8 & 10

Written, produced and directed by \*Jeremy Moritz. Choreography by \*Mindy Moritz  
\*Aubrey Ireland (*Rena*), Lauren Biggs, Lauren Henke, Brett Hildebrand, (*Hawks*)  
Alicia Grieco, Sierra Stahly (*Townspeople*) Rhythmics: Victoria Flickner, Grant Karpin,  
Andrew Moritz, Lauren Sanford, Lily Sha, Lauren Stollman, Megan Wallstrom

**Annie** Gardner Community Theatre July 9 - 18  
Abigail Lane (*Star to Be / Servant*)

**Beauty & The Beast** Lewis and Shirley White Theatre July 10 - 27

Choreographed by Ann McCroskey  
\*Celia (Needleman) Thompson (*Belle*), Keegan Rice (*Lumiere*), Trevor French (*Cogsworth*),  
\*Amy Arnott (*Silly Girl*) Dance Ensemble: Hayley Knudsen, Noelle Bradley, Cora Schimke,  
Stephanie LeBlanc, Nicole McCroskey (*Enchantress*) Ensemble: Krista Spindler,  
Madison Underdown, Jenna Wetzel, \*Nathan Helming, Corrine Baker

**Thoroughly Modern Millie** Camp Center Stage July 13 & 14

Lauren Mylin / Hayley Knudsen (*Millie*), Libby Brennaman / Katie Henderson (*Rita*),  
Morgan Sterett / Erica Christie (*Mrs. Meers*), Claire Eggleston (*Lucille*)  
Ensemble: Amanda Miller, Logan Crasper, Elle McAlister

**Guys & Dolls** Leewood Stage Company July 15 - 24

Directed by \*Chris McCoy  
Newsies: Megan Seacrest, Francesca Mauro, Sophia Mauro  
Ensemble: Debbie Huffman, Marshall Rimann

**Congratulations to the over 40 Miller-Marley students who were represented in all four productions at The Theatre in the Park this summer and kudos to Stephanie Cain who was cast as Cinderella!!!!** ★

## Sarah Bergeson Wins Blue Star Award

Barely a month after winning Starlight Theatre's prestigious Blue Star Award for Best Female Actress, Sarah Bergeson was whisked away to NYC for the National High School Musical Theater Awards. Sarah received the Blue Star Award for her performance as the Narrator in the Blue Valley High School production of *Joseph*. This entitled her to compete in the nationals, held on June 28th, at the Marquis Theatre (in Times Square) home of the Broadway hit, *Come Fly With Me*. Sarah and 23 nominees from across the nation, were the featured entertainment for the event.



About this experience, Sarah commented, "We were exposed to so many industry professionals and each one taught us so much. I was neither a finalist or a winner, but I still feel as though I had won in so many ways."

Next up? Sarah will make her second trip to NYC in July to participate in master classes and a 3-day workshop with the Broadway Artists Alliance. Sarah will be a junior at Blue Valley High School.

## The Millies

Lauren Mylin plus Hayley Knudsen = two "equally" talented and stunning Millies!



This summer, both girls were double cast and starred as Millie in the Camp Center Stage production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Lauren will be a freshman at Blue Valley Southwest and Hayley will be a sophomore at Blue Valley North.