



# Staten Island Advance

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## Last chance to catch 'Dance Project' at Staten Island's Wagner College

By ERIC PETILLO

The Wagner College Theater Department's final Stage One production of the season, "The Dance Project," opened Tuesday and runs through this weekend.

"The Dance Project," which presents an evening of original choreography, has become a staple in Wagner College Theater's season, and has recruited some prominent regional dancer/choreographers to direct, including Clare Porter and Margo Hammond.

This year's incarnation draws inspiration from the student body, as all of the dances have been choreographed by current students or recent graduates, and were supervised by Wagner College Theater Head of Dance, Rusty Curcio.

Speaking at a recent dress rehearsal, the five choreographers sat down and explained their pieces and the process that went into putting them on the stage.

### **Ashley Burger**

*Dance title:* "Idle Fusion"

*Featured performers:* Lindsay Dunn, Daniella Garofalo, Chelsea Loesel, Lisa Peterson, Victoria Puza and Jason Rath

Ms. Burger, a native of Louisville, Ky., graduated from Wagner's theater program last year. Her piece, "Idle Fusion," is a study on individuals and communities.

"I chose to start it with the individual and then open it up and show the transformation of that individual into a community," she said.

In order to illustrate this point, Ms. Burger traveled to the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan and chose six gems and minerals (one for each dancer) to study.

"Throughout the piece, each of these minerals change and go through ionic and covalent bonds in order to form a rock."

When asked how it felt to be back at her alma mater, choreographing one of its shows, she answered enthusiastically that it was "wonderful," and that it was "great to have a creative team behind me, supporting my vision."

"Idle Fusion" will also serve as Ms. Burger's final project as she pursues a post-graduate degree at the Laban and Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies.

### **Jenny Kelly**

*Dance title:* "Gaea"

*Featured performer:* Daniella Garofalo

"Gaea," a dance created as a movement response to the destruction of Hurricane Sandy, is the brainchild of senior Jenny Kelly of Westerleigh.

"It began as a basic, guttural response to the storm," she stated, "but since then it has morphed into an homage to Mother Earth and how she rises up from the ground and heals all wounds."

The title refers to the Greek goddess, Gaea, who is the mother of Zeus, and whose pagan name translates in English to “Mother Earth.”

“It’s probably my proudest moment at Wagner.” Mrs. Kelly shared. “I’m not what you’d call a dancer, so to be included in the company of these amazing choreographers and dancers has been a challenge and an honor.”

### **Jacquie Jablanski**

*Dance title:* “Realm Love”

*Featured performers:* John Ammatuna and Ryann Lillis

Ms. Jablanski, a senior from Niverville, N.Y., drew from many inspirations for her dance, “Realm Love.”

The piece, which is an exploration of first love through the eyes of the dream world, is heavily influenced by the choreography of Travis Wall and the music of Sara Bareilles.

“I wanted to tell a love story about two people meeting and going through a relationship, but I also wanted to explore dreamscapes,” she said.

“Realm Love” also offers the audience a surprise ending, which Ms. Jablanski would not reveal, except to say that she came up with the dance’s title because the word “realm” is “real” with an “m.”

### **Kara Krichman**

*Dance title:* “Ilium”

*Featured performers:* Brian Falduto and Julia Karis

“It’s basically a synergy of being and another being creating wholeness,” said Ms. Krichman, a senior from Point Pleasant Beach, N.J., as she attempted to explain her work.

“Ilium,” which is named after a bone in the human body, aims to convey unity between the spirit and the mind.

Ms. Krichman goes on to explain that “a lot of my inspiration for this piece came from muscles and body structures. If you had one bone in your body that could be described as your gut, it would be your ilium; I wanted the dance to have that kind of a feeling.”

Speaking about the difficulties of choreographing, she stated, “When you are directing a play, you have a script in front of you that you can follow. Choreographing something is different. You almost have to act as a playwright and create your own script.”

### **Jon Basla**

*Dance title:* “Rove”

*Featured performers:* Serina Figueras, Alexis Marquardt, Kelly McCue, Julia Palladino, Grace Rezendes, Kelly Swint.

With “Rove,” Mr. Basla, a 2011 Wagner graduate from Syracuse, N.Y., wanted to place the beauty that he saw in nature on the stage.

“My first and foremost goal was to create something aesthetically pleasing,” he explains, “I looked at a lot of animals, and decided to use bird movements as an inspiration.”

The title comes from the act of wandering. Mr. Basla chose this title because he “wanted to convey these six gorgeous creatures going on these journey together.”

“The Dance Project” continues Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 and 8 p.m. at Stage One studio theater, located on Wagner’s Grymes Hill campus. For ticket

information or season subscriptions, call the box office at 718-390-3259, or visit <http://wagner.edu/theatre/production/boxoffice>.