

# Music & Theater Department Blog

## Legacy

By Professor Michael Gillette

Some of the joys of life in this part of the world are witnessing the change of seasons, and appreciating the essence of each time of year. Enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells of spring, marveling at the novelty and, yet, the familiarity of it all.

Beauty is all around to see; cherry trees, forsythia, hyacinths, lilacs, now azaleas.

I have been thinking about the importance of creating beauty, because this is the aim of all performing artists, and we have just completed an exhausting week of music, theater, and dance performances.

In a recent article in Vanity Fair magazine, Julie Kent, former prima ballerina with American Ballet Theatre, said she found a note in her dressing room one night. The note, a Dostoevsky prophecy, was from Natalia Makarova, a legendary Russian artist who, years before, had defected to the West while dancing for the Kirov Ballet.

"Someone once said that beauty could save the world." it read. "What a great responsibility you have." This poetic notion has stayed with Kent -that beauty lies in all that is good, and that she could be its courier through dance and through her life. There's beauty in humanity. There's beauty in kindness. There's beauty in motherhood, beauty in forgiveness, and beauty in caring. "There's beauty in all sorts of things in life," she said. "And it's such a release and a reward for the soul to see it."



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What a responsibility to create beauty where, and when, we can. What a legacy to leave the world.

As the article continued “Every morning, Kent’s ballet warm up starts off the same way: in first position, doing the exercise she has done since she was eight years old. Often times, we believe we have outgrown certain things we learned as a child; great ballerinas like Julie Kent never lose this sense of wonder. They practice “with the hope, and the possibility, that each day, we will do them more beautifully,” she says. “It’s the fountain of youth.”

Renewal and hopefulness, all so evident at this time of year. Like the Bradford pear trees outside the Woods Theatre, a beautiful riot of pungent white flowers that fade in a few weeks....here today, gone tomorrow.

But.....back next May

Happy Spring.

Michael Gillette  
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