

# A Better World: Hayward Dance and Music Experts Build Talent and Character

By Linda Thorlakson  
Staff Writer

How far would most be willing to journey in search of a better world? One thousand miles? Two? Thanks to Kathy Saffas and Elyse Lam, East Bay residents need venture no further than "Better World of Music and Dance" on Russell Way in Hayward. To Saffas and Lam, founders of the combined music and dance studio, creating a better world means continually molding their program to maximize the musical and body movement potential of each and every student, whether that student be a three-year-old, or the great grandma of a three-year-old. Co-owner Saffas, is a CSUEB graduate who teaches voice, directs the children and adult choruses, and oversees the piano, guitar, flute, bass, and bass guitar lessons. Saffas said she refuses to allow a

lack of performance opportunities hold her students back. "If students work hard," she said, "we create opportunities." Last year's opportunities included live accompaniment for the children's chorus in the form of a combo driven by the rhythm of a congo drum and featuring a 17-year old at the keyboards and a 13-year old novice electric bass player. Instead of awarding pre-selected solos to the few best voices in the chorus, Saffas creates ample opportunities, even if they consist of only a line or two, to bring out the best in every student interested in soloing. Saffas' business partner directs the dance programs for children, teens, and adults. Lam shares Saffas' philosophy about showcasing the unique potential of each individual. "We always make adjustments in the shows from one year to the next," said Lam, "depending upon the stu-

dents for the year." In order to maintain maximum student enthusiasm, Lam improvises movements to widely divergent styles of music in her quest for that magical combination most likely to inspire the unique blend of individuals composing any given dance class. Twenty-four-year-old Abbie Ackerman, a new teacher at Better World, has the background in both music and dance to enable her to fully appreciate the advantages conferred upon any student or performer who cross-trains. Although she earned her Bachelors of Fine Arts degree in Modern Dance and Choreography, Ackerman, also a flute and piccolo player, almost majored in music instead. She says that music classes assist the dance students with their rhythm by helping them "hear the beat and pulse of the music." Ackerman also observed that dancers with a knowledge of music "know how to phrase musically which helps them link

movements together so that they flow easier." Cross-training is equally advantageous, said Ackerman, for music students who take ballet or jazz dance classes. Ballet requires them to move to different meters and jazz exposes them to a syncopated beat.

Both Saffas and Lam agree that a key ingredient to their better world is the family-oriented environment as evidenced by one chorus member who brings her sons, ages 2 and 4, to rehearsals. "Sometimes the boys play with their trucks and sometimes they sing," said Saffas. Another member brings

her 8-month-old baby. "Even the baby, who can't talk yet tries to sing with the chorus." Will the next generation be more effective at making this world a better place than the current one? Who knows? But thanks to Saffas and Lam, babies who sing before uttering their first word is a start.

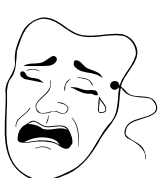

## Burton's 'Nightmare' Classic Goes 3-D

By Anne Cunningham  
Staff Writer

Everyone's favorite nightmare has returned - in another dimension. Producer Tim Burton's 'The Nightmare Before Christmas' celebrated the 13th anniversary of the original theatrical release with an exciting comeback to the big screen - seamlessly transformed into Digital 3-D. Part ghostly love story, part dysfunctional holiday celebration and part offbeat musical, the original 'Nightmare' was always multi-dimensional, but the new 3-D version transforms the movie for a new generation of fans to enjoy. Donning state-of-the-art polarized 3-D glasses, audiences now have the chance to get truly up close and personal with the film's ghoulish cast. They'll be transported directly into the three-dimensional center of the haunted house, enhancing the fright factor.

The concept of 3-D films first emerged in Hollywood in the 1920s, but did not take off until the 1950s with such hits as, "The Creature from The Black Lagoon," and others, in which audiences were provided with special glasses made to enhance the viewing. Audiences loved the idea of having a film's action pop right out at them, but not the reality, which was plagued by "ghosting" - in which two images blur on the screen - which caused annoying and uncomfortable eyestrain, according to people who used to attend these early 3-D films. Today's audience is quite savvy in the areas of technology and is not as easily impressed. To combat this, 'The Nightmare Before Christmas' is even sharper than previous 3-D movies because the digital technology offers true, clear visuals, making scary even more frightening. The process of transforming the

original analog movie is interesting. The challenge was to take the two-dimensional flat world of the original film and give it the depth and dimension of digital 3-D. The transformation is the work of Industrial Light and Magic (ILM). The company started with a team of 20 graphic artists, eventually utilizing 80 graphic artists at the peak of production. The film took 19 weeks of frantically-paced work to transform it to 3-D. Ultimately, audiences will unwittingly be seeing the original 'Nightmare' with their left eyes while seeing the digital re-creation with their right eyes, allowing for the three-dimensional effect. Leave it to Burton to make a classic even better. He began drawing at an early age, attended California Institute of the Arts on a Disney fellowship and soon after joined the Disney Studios as an animator. The rest is history.



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Directed by Marc Jacobs  
Sunday, Nov. 12 at 2 p.m.  
Studio Theatre  
\$10 - General,  
\$7 - Youth-Seniors,  
\$5 - CSUEB

**Winter Wonderland - A Dance Concert**  
Produced by Nina Haft & Eric Kupers  
With the **CSUEB Dance Faculty**  
Friday-Saturday, Dec. 1, 2 at 8 p.m.  
Dance Studio (PE 140)  
\$5 - General/\$3 - CSUEB Students/  
\$15 - Family

**A Christmas Carol**  
Based on the story by Charles Dickens  
Directed by A. Fajilan  
Friday-Saturday,  
Dec. 15, 16 at 8 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 16 at 2 p.m.  
University Theatre  
\$7 - General/\$6 - Youth and Seniors/  
\$5 - CSUEB/\$3 - Children/\$16- Family

**Music**

**Symphonic Band, Chamber Winds, and Wind Ensemble Concert**  
Timothy Smith, conductor  
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University Theatre  
\$7 & \$5  
Free to CSUEB students

**Art Gallery**

**Global Vision: A Survey of World Art "Art Gallery Opening"**  
Monday-Thursday,  
Oct. 17, 2006-Jan. 17, 2007  
12:30-3:30 p.m.  
University Art Gallery, Art and Education Building  
Free  
Closed Dec. 15-Jan. 7

**The Cal State East Bay Choirs' Fall Concert**  
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