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New dance school at 5 Points

Carol Motsinger

She's pranced like a cat; she's brought a Degas painting to life with her leaps and spins.

For years, Angie Lynn "focused on being a professional dancer," performing in European productions of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Cats" and "Phantom of the Opera," as well as touring the continent with the Vienna Festival Ballet, she said.

These days, she's focusing on what she called an unexpected, "extra bonus" to her career: directing the new Ballet Conservatory of Asheville.

The school will open in its temporary studio Aug. 31 but is scheduled to take up permanent residence in the 5 Points Building on the corner of Broadway Street and Chestnut streets on Oct. 1.

Lynn will host an open house for the school 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday at 193 Charlotte St.

"It feels like I'm giving back," Lynn said about her founding of the conservatory focuses on high-level ballet training for ages 3 to adult.

A family affair

It's been a busy summer for Lynn and her husband, Chris, the new managing director of Asheville's Altamont Theatre. The professional musical theater just started renovations at 18 Church St. and will initially hold its classes in the 5 Points Building. Lynn, a native of England, also just gained her U.S. citizenship this summer.

Lynn and her family, which also includes her daughters and budding dancers — twins Darcy and Jessica, 8, and Audrey, 5 — moved to Asheville from New York in 2005. "Asheville's a progressive town," she said. "It is one of the most beautiful places. I really don't know of another town like this."

She worked as an instructor and dance director at the Asheville Arts Center for several years before "wanting to branch out on my own." Lynn plans on retaining the charm of the building's interior as she transforms the space into a dance studio, she said. The building's tin ceilings, exposed vintage air system and "handsome décor" will remain as workers install all the necessities for a professional studio.

While the professional spring floor, ballet bars, full-length mirrors and Marley dance surface are installed, the temporary studio will host ballet, jazz, tap, modern and hip-hop classes. Although ballet is Lynn's specialty, the school will offer a variety of dance for a variety skill sets, she said.

She plans on producing the holiday ballet classic "The Nutcracker" as well as a spring ballet and recital each year with the students, Lynn said.

Working on a dream

Lynn will focus on teaching the younger students, while Wayne Burritt will be the conservatory's master

ballet teacher. Burritt's students have progressed on to the School of American Ballet, American Ballet Theatre School, San Francisco Ballet School and N.C. School of the Arts.

Although not every student aspires to be a professional dancer, Lynn has designed the school to give those with this dream to have the technique to achieve it, she said.

Lynn said she started her dancing career in "a school that is similar to this." She went on to a boarding school for ballet and trained at The Arts Educational Schools in London, earning a diploma in dance performance. As a certified associate member of the Royal Academy of Dance and the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance, she earned certificates in classical ballet and modern dance education.

"I had fabulous teachers," she said.

"I want to channel those incredible teachers," Lynn added. "I try to not be too strict. I consider myself a nurturing teacher; you just have to find a balance."

Additional Facts

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For more information on the upcoming Ballet Conservatory of Asheville, visit www.BalletConservatoryofAsheville.com.
