

THE DURHAM NEWS

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ADF co-director has a big to-do list

BY GLENN McDONALD
CORRESPONDENT

In certain circles, the American Dance Festival – kicking off Thursday in Durham – is bigger than the World Series, the Grammys and the Academy Awards combined.

In the world of modern dance, the ADF is a sort of global professional conference, premiere showcase and gathering of the tribes. A six-week festival of modern dance, the ADF celebrates its 77th year with classes and performances at Duke University and the Durham Performing Arts Center.

This year's theme is "What Is Dance Theater?" There are eight world premieres from internationally renowned choreographers and



Jodee Nimerichter worked her way up from an entry-level job.

ADF

dance companies, including Pilobolus, Mark Dendy, Shin Wei and Martha Clarke. Dozens of performances, educational programs and other events will take place at the festival's two main ven-

ues: the Durham Performing Arts Center and Duke University's Reynolds Industries Theater.

In addition to the busy slate of performances, ADF also hosts professional workshops and residential dance

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programs for students 12 and up, with more than 400 students attending from 38 states and 27 countries.

Throughout this year's festival, which runs through July 24, The Durham News will be profiling several artists, students and professionals associated with the festival, both local and visiting. This week: Jodee Ni-

merichter. The co-director is responsible, among other things, for all the practical nuts-and-bolts details of mounting ADF's six-week slate of performances and residential classes.

Q: Now that festival season is ramping up, can you describe a typical day at work? Or is there such a thing?

A: As you can imagine, it's different every day, dealing with marketing, press, classes, performances. I normally walk in with a one-two-three list of things to do, but it usually becomes the four-five-six list, and everything changes in an instant. So you try to just stay in the moment.

In the springtime, we just explode with summer staff.

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In fact, just today we're bringing in 20 interns. Our staffing in the off-season is about 15 year-round positions. During the festival, depending on how you break it down – including summer staff, interns, musicians and faculty – it's over 100.

Q: How did you first get involved with ADF?

A: Well, I grew up dancing – mostly ballet, but also other forms – but after high school decided not to pursue it professionally. So I went to NYU, and though I didn't dance in school, I found I really missed being in that environment.

One summer I went back to Colorado, where I grew up, and back to the dance store I worked at. The owner of the store suggested I look into arts administration. It was like a light bulb going off. So back at NYU, I was able to design my own course work. I took business classes, and there were some grad-level courses on arts administration that you could get into.

Fall of senior year I did an internship in the ADF New York office. That spring I got a call that they were looking for someone for an entry-level position. I feel incredibly fortunate and lucky. And that's what I think about and talk about with the interns here – you know, anything can happen.

Q: What is it about dance, as an art or form of expression, that speaks to you?

A: I suspect part of it is having the experience of it myself – the joy of motion and moving. I love the theater, the energy of live performance, the whole theatrical experience. Also, I'm a visual person. I find it really exhilarating.

Q: You moved to Durham two years ago, from the ADF offices in NYC. How do you like the area now that you've settled in? Anything particular you enjoy?

A: I love it. It's incredible to me, the sense of community here. It's really one of the most refreshing things we were missing in New York, just because there's so much there in terms of dance. Moving down here, being in the neighborhood, getting to know people from all walks of life – it's been amazing.

I moved here because I wanted to be work more closely with ADF, but it's turned out to be a great thing personally for me and my family.