ELIZABETH SHERBON
TRIBUTE TO A KU DANCE LEGEND
APRIL 18-19, 2008
KU alumna and professor of dance Elizabeth Sherbon (1908-2000), a former member of the Martha Graham Dance Company and Graham’s assistant, is honored as part of the Murphy Hall 50th Anniversary celebration. Sherbon collaborated with her colleagues in music and theatre in Murphy Hall throughout her tenure at KU (1961-75); her successors on the dance faculty continue the tradition. Murphy Hall served as the venue for dance concerts beginning in 1985, when the dance program moved to the School of Fine Arts, until the Lied Center opened in 1993.

Sherbon moved to Lawrence in 1917 and took ballet lessons from Helen Topping, a former soloist with the Anna Pavlova Dance Company. Sherbon graduated from KU in 1930 and received her master’s degree from the University of Iowa in 1932. She traveled to New York City in the summer of 1931 to study at the Denishawn School with Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, two founders of American modern dance. Sherbon attended the Bennington Summer School of Dance in 1934 and 1935, where Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm—the “Four Pioneers” of modern dance—were teaching.

From Bennington, Sherbon moved to New York City to take advantage of a scholarship to study at Graham’s studio. She performed with Graham’s dance company from 1937 to 1940, in the New York City performances of Hanya Holm’s masterwork Trend in 1937 and 1938, and in several off-Broadway dance groups. She also worked as Graham’s teaching assistant. From 1942 to 1954 Sherbon danced in the Jean Erdman Dance Company in New York City. Sherbon and Erdman had met while both danced in Graham’s company. Sherbon supplemented her income by typing manuscripts for Erdman’s husband, philosopher and mythologist Joseph Campbell.

Sherbon returned to KU in 1961 to teach dance in the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation until her retirement in 1975. While on the KU faculty she wrote On the Count of One, which became a widely used college text.

With her twin sister, Alice Bauman, Sherbon founded and ran the American Dance Symposia (1968-72) in Wichita, which drew performers, choreographers, scholars and students from around the world. Dance luminaries such as Leonide Massine, Arthur Mitchell, Paul Taylor, Jean Erdman, Bella Lewitzky, and Bill Evans joined experts in world dance forms, dance criticism, dance therapy, and other fields. They congregated in Wichita for master classes, panel discussions, and performances. Dance critic Walter Terry documented the events for the Saturday Review. The National Endowment for the Arts called the Wichita symposia “the most innovative and important summer dance program to surface since Bennington.” The Wichita symposia became the model for the American Dance Festival, today the most comprehensive annual summer dance festival in the United States.

The city of Lawrence awarded Sherbon the Cultural Enhancement Award in 1993 for her contributions to the city’s artistic and cultural life. She remained in Lawrence until her death in 2000 at the age of 92.
Elizabeth Sherbon Centennial Celebration, April 18 - 19, 2008

A celebration in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of Murphy Hall and the Spring 2008 Festival of the Arts

Note: Advance registration is required for Saturday’s events. Call (785) 864-4264.

Friday, April 18
7:30 p.m.
University Dance Company Concert with Guest Artist Bill Evans and Guest Choreographers Karole Armitage and Bill Evans
Lied Center

Saturday, April 19
9:00 -10:00 a.m.
Registration for Centennial Events and Refreshments
Spencer Museum of Art

10:00 a.m.
Centennial Celebration Panel Discussion:
“Dance in a Global Society”
Welcome and introductions:
Janet Hamburg,
KU Professor of Dance, and
Saralyn Reece Hardy,
Director of the Spencer Museum of Art
Panel Moderator: Joan Stone, Dance Historian and Choreographer
Panelists: Bill Evans and KU Professors Muriel Cohan, Michelle Heffner Hayes, and Patrick Suzeau
Spencer Museum Auditorium

11:30 a.m. – Noon
Exhibit: “The Art of Dance”
Kate Meyer, Curator
The Teaching Gallery, Spencer Museum of Art

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
Celebration Luncheon
Adams Alumni Center

Luncheon Program
“The Influence of the Sherbon Award”: Michelle Heffner Hayes, 1989 Elizabeth Sherbon Dance Award recipient and KU faculty member, and Amanda Shriwise, 2007 recipient.

“Elizabeth Sherbon’s Legacy as a Teacher”: Reminiscences by Saralyn Reece Hardy, Arvella Spease, Kristin Benjamin, and Ann Garvey

2:30 p.m.
Rededication Concert
Elizabeth Sherbon Dance Theatre
240 Robinson Center
The theatre’s original dedication in 1985 featured a concert by Bill Evans.

**Blues for Elizabeth**  
Improvography: Bill Evans  
Dancer: Bill Evans  
Pianist: Nick Weiser

**Invocation**  
Choreography: Patrick Suzeau  
Music: Traditional Song  
Costume: Traditional  
Dancer: Patrick Suzeau

**count of one**  
Choreography: Beau Hancock  
Music: J.S. Bach’s *Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor BWV1041*:  
I. Allegro (non tanto) and III. Allegro Assai,  
performed by Yehudi Menuhin  
Dancer: Beau Hancock

**Celestial Player**  
Choreography: Patrick Suzeau  
Music: Mahima  
Costume: Susan Rendell  
Dancer: Patrick Suzeau

**Celebration**  
Choreography: Joan Stone  
Music: *Hallelu Adir Adirim*, sung by Ruth Wieder Magan  
Dancer: Joan Stone

**Farandole**  
Music: English Country Dances, performed by Bare Necessities  
Joan Stone will invite audience members to join in a Farandole.

**Lighting Desinger and Light Board Operator:** Jake Sommerfeld  
**Sound Board Operator:** Travis N. Haugh  
**Stage Manager:** Wyatt Meriwether  
**House Manager:** Sean Hall
Bill Evans was voted one of the three top American tap dance artists (with Savion Glover and Brenda Bufalino) by readers of Dance Magazine in 2004, and he has choreographed more than 200 works for dance companies throughout the world. He was artistic director of the Bill Evans Dance Company, based in Seattle and Albuquerque, the most-booked company in the nation for several years under the National Endowment’s Dance Touring and Artist-in-the-Schools programs. Evans was a dancer, a choreographer and the artistic coordinator of Utah’s Repertory Dance Theatre. Later he was the artistic director of Winnipeg’s Contemporary Dancers and its professional training program, where he now is a permanent guest artist. Evans has been awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, numerous grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and more than 70 other awards from public and private arts agencies in the U.S. and Canada. He received the New Mexico Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts and was named Scholar/Artist of the Year by the National Dance Association in 1997.

Evans received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Dance Education Organization in 2005. An article about the international impact of his teaching was featured in the October 2003 issue of Dance Magazine. His book, Reminiscences of a Dancing Man: A Photographic Journey of a Life in Dance, was published in 2005. He currently is a visiting professor and artist in residence in the Department of Dance at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

Muriel Cohan and Patrick Suzeau and their COHAN/SUZEAU Dance Company have performed nationally and internationally to critical acclaim. Formerly based in New York, COHAN/SUZEAU tours the region with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts Regional and Kansas Arts Commission touring programs. The company is in residence at the University of Kansas. Recent international appearances have been in India, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia. Suzeau spent spring 2007 on a Fulbright Fellowship in Lithuania where performances of Día de los Muertos, choreographed by the pair, was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy and the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. The work featured principals and soloists from the National Opera Ballet Company.

COHAN/SUZEAU, whose choreography has been commissioned here and abroad, has recently returned from a residency at the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria, where both Cohan and Suzeau performed, taught, and choreographed. This coming June they will return as Artists in Residence at the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute.

COHAN/SUZEAU’s New York City teaching credits include the Alvin Ailey School, Dennis Wayne’s Dancerschool, Barry-Klein studio, Mary Anthony studio, Brooklyn Theatre Company, the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and the Cohan/Suzeau studio. They are recipients of several grants and fellowships from public and private arts funds. Both have been guest artists at many U.S. universities.
Cohan began her performing career with the Philadelphia Dance Theatre. Juilliard trained, Suzeau’s performing career includes Les Ballets Modernes du Canada and the Theatre de Danse Contemporaine in Montreal, and with various groups and television work in Mexico. In New York, they performed for Mary Anthony, Pearl Lang, Anna Sokolow, the national Affiliate Artists program and in off-Broadway theatres.

**Beau Hancock** is a freelance dancer, choreographer, and teacher currently based in New York City. He has performed in New York and on tour with Ben Munisteri, Ellen Cornfield, Douglas Dunn, Stephen Pier, and Christopher Caines.

Hancock’s choreography has been presented at the Merce Cunningham Studio, Westbeth Art Gallery, Movement Research at Dance Theatre Workshop (DTW), and the Flea Theater. He has taught at Indiana University, Wayne State University, Café Dance in Austin, Texas, and Movement Research in New York City. A native of Hugoton, Hancock earned his bachelor’s in dance and American studies from the University of Kansas where he was a member of the Honors Program and was selected to be a nominee for the Marshall Scholarship. He graduated summa cum laude with a 4.0 grade point average. Hancock performed in guest artist and faculty works as a member of the University Dance Company and received the 2003 Phillips-Stone Dance Award and the 2004 Elizabeth Sherbon Dance Award for outstanding achievement in dance.

**Joan Stone**, a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and Yale University, has used her background in anthropology, literature, and urban studies to build an unusual repertory of historic, narrative, and environmental dances. She performed as a solo dancer and directed the environmental dance troupe, 4-5-6 Speed-Up, in the United States and Europe before turning to the reconstruction of Renaissance and Baroque dances for concerts, workshops, and educational video.

Stone retired from KU in 2006 after 20 years of teaching choreography and dance history and creating works for the University Dance Company. She continues to reconstruct historic dances, research the history of dance on the prairie, and create and perform characterizations of historic figures through narration and dance.

**Michelle Heffner Hayes** holds a Ph.D. in Dance History and Theory from the University of California at Riverside. A proud graduate of the KU Dance Program, she performed with the postmodern dance companies of Stephanie Gilliland and Susan Rose, and the flamenco company of Armando Neri. An accomplished arts administrator, Heffner Hayes was the Artistic Director of the Colorado Dance Festival and the Executive Director of Cultural Affairs at Miami Dade College. Publications by Heffner Hayes include new views on flamenco dance history and the parallels between improvisation in postmodern dance and flamenco. She teaches dance history, modern dance technique, improvisation and flamenco at KU.

**The Elizabeth Sherbon Centennial Celebration Advisory Board members:**
Recipients of the Elizabeth Sherbon Dance Award:
1980  Laura Barton
1981  Allison Baker Hammond
1982  Mary Cunnick Tinsley
1983  Nancy Landis and Kathleen Rolfe
1984  Elisabeth Major and Roger Syng
1985  Brenda Berg and Douglas McMinimy
1986  Michelle North Brown
1987  Laura Krodinger Lassing
1989  Michelle Heffner Hayes
1991  Carey Wagoner Rainey
1992  Janet Sears Lewis
1993  Maureen Du Bois Hall
1994  Jo Ann Janus Uhalt
1995  Jason Johns and Kent O’Connor
1996  Jennifer Wilson
1997  Chi-Pei Gan
1998  Kooi-Lan Tan
1999  Laura Martin
2000  Michelle Whitely Pugh
2001  Lillian Wu
2002  Brandi Scallorn Green
2003  Rachel Moses and Kathleen O’Connor
2004  Beau Hancock
2005  Meggi Sweeney
2006  Morgan Fogarty
2007  Amanda Shriwise
2008  Nora Burt

Sherbon Centennial Exhibits in April
“The Art of Dance” exhibit in the Teaching Gallery at the Spencer Museum of Art highlights the Martha Graham Dance Company and other images of dance and dancers as seen through photographs, prints, and drawings.
For dates to view the “Art of Dance,” visit www.spencerart.ku.edu.

A book display throughout the month of April in the Thomas L. Gorton Music and Dance Library, 240 Murphy Hall, features Sherbon’s *On the Count of One* and books from her collection signed by Martha Graham and Louis Horst. 2008 is the 40th anniversary of the publication of *On the Count of One*. Display curator: George Gibbs, head of the Music and Dance Library.
Elizabeth Sherbon, second from left, looking up at Martha Graham in her *Primitive Mysteries*