

Chapter 2:

Southern University of Illinois at Edwardsville (SIU-E)

Alcine's second job in higher education was at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. 1968-1983 (15 years). His undergraduate degree in Choreographic Design influenced how Alcine designed the SIU-E major. The BA dance curriculum included costuming, rhythmic training, lighting and acting classes. The many art courses prepped him to give advice in Interdisciplinary Studies courses later in his career.

“At SIU-E, the dance program did have competition with dance major programs at Washington University and Webster College in St Louis, MO. Their programs were established. I perceived that these programs were structured quite differently from my program.”

While at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIU-E) from 1968-1983, Alcine established a curriculum sequenced for dancers to dance five days a week followed by composition classes and rehearsals. This tri-fold immersion allowed the dancers to consistently fine tune their instruments. His simple philosophy of practical applications and intense immersion in the material allowed the students to take “it” beyond repetition of class.

In the late 1960's, modern concert dance work in colleges and universities emerged with a range of quality. Bella Lewikzy reported in Dance Magazine, August 1970, that Al Wiltz shone with high quality:

“University dance is beginning to reflect the current concern with excellence in the craft. The Saturday Evening concert by University groups contained examples of this...Al Wiltz, an instructor at Southern Illinois University, choreographed and performed in a group work titled, ‘Lithographs.’ The dancers were well trained, and there was a particularly effective solo performance by Mr. Wiltz.”

George Michael Hulse

“My introduction to Al Wiltz happened on a visit to SIUE to participate in a Dance Concert titled “Modes of Modern Dance”, Friday, March 13, 1970. I was not a dance major, but I took classes and I was accepted into the Southern Repertory Dance Company at Carbondale. It was a very turbulent experience due to the emotional actions of Dr. William Grant Gray, director and choreographer at SIUC. I might add that before the year ended the University was shut down due to the Viet Nam riots on campus. At this event SIUC was presenting a piece entitled “Barbary Allen” based on the play “Dark of the Moon”. With skimpy costumes, for shock value, and a baby doll set ablaze on stage our dance piece almost didn’t happen. I watched as I saw a very calm, but in charge person, Al Wiltz, explain to a hysterical Grant Gray that a burning baby on stage won’t happen. A compromise was made and the piece was presented. As I said before the Viet Nam issues closed the campus early in the school year. I then transferred to SIUE for the 1970/1971 school years. As an Elementary Education major I was still determined to take dance classes. I thought back to that night of Friday, March 13, 1970 and how I saw Al Wiltz and his dancers perform without drama. In fact it was exciting to see disciplined dancers performing very professionally under Al’s guidance. I had to be part of it. I auditioned and was accepted to perform with the dance company. I took as many classes as I could from Al while still working to complete my elementary education degree. Through the discipline of the dance classes and the

many performances that were presented to the public, my whole life was influenced to present myself as a professional and disciplined young adult. My memories of the years with Al have not been forgotten. One of my last experiences with Al as a dancer, before becoming an elementary school teacher, was to perform in Leonard Bernstein's "Mass " presented at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows on August 16 and 17 of 1973. At the time I didn't realize what an important experience that this would be in my life and how grateful that I am that I was allowed to be part of those two evenings. Over the years I have been able to meet with Al for special events and reunions. Many of the dancers from 1970-1973 have attended those events which proves that those years were very special and only occurred through having Al Wiltz as a dance instructor and he being a very special person."

Kevin Paul Hofeditz

"In early 1972, Alcine Wiltz choreographed the "Sword Dance" for our high school musical theatre group's production of *Brigadoon*. I was playing the role of Tommy Albright. Al came to watch a dress rehearsal, and afterwards, he told our director that he would be directing a production of Schmidt and Jones' "*Celebration*" S for SIUE's upcoming summer theatre season. He said that he needed a young actor to play the role of The Orphan and that he thought the kid playing Tommy might be good for the role.

I auditioned and was cast, and in the summer of 1972, the summer before my senior year in high school, I found myself working with Al, college students, and adult performers in a college/semi-professional production.

I felt like I was in way over my head, but Al never made me feel that way. We just got down to work. Here's what needs to be done, here's what you have to do, and we're all

in this together. No drama (of the backstage variety), no angst—just craft. Do your job, and everything will fall into place. And it did.

My memory is that it was a very good production, and that I held my own with a talented cast.

Prior to the summer of '72, I had planned to complete some kind of pre-law major in college and then go on to law school. Instead, during that summer, I decided to go to SIUE and major in Theatre. Did I wonder, at the time, if it was the best decision? Sure. But I knew from my work on "*Celebration*" that I would receive an education and training from Al and the other members of the Theatre and Dance faculty at SIUE that would prepare me well for work in the profession. And, I was right about that.

During the work on "*Celebration*", Al suggested that some dance training—which prior to then I had had absolutely none of—would be needed if I were to be as successful as a musical theatre performer as I would hope to be. With that in mind, I was able to arrange early dismissal from my high school a few days a week throughout my senior year so that I could take dance classes from Al at SIUE. It did help.

While at SIUE, I was in four musicals that Al directed—"*West Side Story*", "*Little Mary Sunshine*", "*Anything Goes*", and "*Carnival*". I continued to take modern dance and was a member of the university dance company.

Because I took classes during two of the summers that I was at SIUE, I had completed enough credits to graduate "early," at the end of the second quarter of my senior year (December 1976). But, instead of graduating, I planned to stay enrolled through the spring quarter in order to complete a minor in Mass Communications.

That same December, I married Patricia Hazen—exactly one week after our production of *“Carnival”* closed. Pat designed the lights for the production, and I played the role of Paul Berthelet.

Truth be told, I think Al thought, at the time that Pat and I were too young to get married. Maybe we were and maybe we weren’t, but our next anniversary will be our 39th. And, Al and Nancy were an example to me that a successful marriage and a successful career as an artist are not mutually exclusive. So . . .

Our plan for those first few months of marriage was for Pat and me to finish school. Pat would be student teaching, I would complete my minor and continue in my student work job in the SIUE Enrollment Office, and we would live off of some savings that we had. One day, a few days before *“Carnival”* opened (I believe), Al saw me in the Communications Building hallway and said, “I have a job for you, young man.”

Metro Theatre Circus, a touring children’s theatre company based in St. Louis, needed a replacement cast member for the remainder of their season, and they had asked Al for a recommendation. He recommended me, I auditioned, and I was hired. It meant five months of work with a guaranteed weekly salary that I would receive regardless of how many performances were scheduled each week.

Because of my job with Metro Theatre Circus, I didn’t return to school for the Spring Quarter, and I graduated without a minor. But, that was OK. And, we had to delay our honeymoon—to Chicago in the wintertime—by about a week. It was all worth it. The job with Metro Theatre Circus certainly helped our finances, and it was awfully nice to have a relatively lengthy professional acting gig right out of college.

As I continued on in the profession, the experience of having worked with Al at SIUE always served me well. I knew what to do and how to do it. I did my job—it was as simple and, yet, as profound as that. That’s what Al taught me.

I continued to act professionally, and later, I expanded my career to include university theatre teaching and administration. As a teacher and academic leader, I have continued to follow what I learned by Al’s example—focusing on craft, hard work, integrity, and common sense.

Among my various assignments as theatre department chair and arts school associate dean at two major universities was a two-year term as Chair of our Division of Dance in the Meadows School of the Arts at SMU. It was an assignment made by the dean based on the need for solid academic leadership as opposed to a need for artistic experience and expertise in dance. However, my experiences studying dance at SIUE—and observing Al’s leadership—added considerably to my comfort level in taking on the assignment.

Finally, as I write this, it strikes me that the mentoring that I received from Al happened very—for lack of a better word—“quietly.” Over the years, I’ve observed many people who mentor “loudly,” that is, with much fanfare and attention grabbing that make the mentorship more about the mentor than the mentee. ‘Just look at how generous I’m being with my time, experience, and influence!’ It goes to motive. For whose benefit is one providing mentorship? For one’s self or for others?

Al did not do it for himself. “

May 24, 1974 'Dance in Concert' at SIU-E at Southern Illinois University Theater showcased Alcine as coming into the public eye as a professional in their mists:

“Under direction of the university’s chief choreographer Al Wiltz III, such programs, billed as ‘Dance – in Concert’, have become regular features of the university’s theatre season, which is a good thing, since dancing at the university has come a long way and can draw on a good-size pool of very talented young people...While all of the participants did themselves proud, it was the males – Mr. Wiltz and Tom Mueller – who dominated the stage throughout...The second half of the program, title ‘Venuvian Diversions’, brought a company of 16 on stage in Al Wiltz’ dance suite to music from Carl Orff’s famous ‘Carmina Burana’....Costumed by Al Wiltz, with sets by Karen Connolly, and again aided by the esthetic delights of colored wall projections, this interpretation of the Orff score became, to use the term once more, the ‘total piece of art’ par excellence.”

When asked: “What happens to you when you step into the light?”. Alcine responds:

“It’s magical. You know that film on Martha Graham when she says it takes 10 years to make a dancer and when you step onto the stage....it is magical. It must be my Catholic upbringing with the incense, religious vestments, and chants. All of these things are escapism and that is what happens when I go into the dance studio. All things are escaped when I go into the studio. When I created ‘Continuum’ with you in 1985, there was this giving and receiving going on all the time. We were working all the time in a

creating or teaching process. There was this drive to get through it, find it, that 'ah-ha' magical moment. So much later, you ask if it has a title or where is the theme."

Rob Scoogins

"I've had many fine teachers through my career, and I'm grateful to all of them, but I must say that Al Wiltz is the stand out among them. I would say that Al is a gifted teacher who was unusual in his ability to push students forward in their understanding of dance. In the classroom he was dynamic and students followed him without hesitation. His love for dance was contagious. He helped me fall in love with dance. To Al we were a class of individuals with our own unique challenges. Al took the public act of teaching and made it an up-close experience for the students. All of us were important to him. Al has an uncanny ability to diagnose movement problems that students may be experiencing and he always came up with solutions. He has an incredible eye for corrections. He motivated students through positive feedback and was very specific in what he wanted us to achieve. Al was creative in how he communicated with us; he was very poetic with the imagery he used in class. For example, he once told the class to imagine they were wearing snowshoes on their feet to stabilize the ankle and foot. That afternoon, I walked around the campus pretending that I had snowshoes on. He had that kind of effect on students. I felt so motivated from his class."

Rebecca Carli-Mills (Mosele)

“I first met Alcine through his choreography in the late 1970's. The company (MADCO) that he founded with Ross Winter had a concert at Washington University while I was a student there. When I saw their work, I knew that I wanted to dance like that! It was creative, mysterious and beautiful. I don't remember every piece in that concert, but I think that I first saw “Nocturne” there. I was so impressed with the richness of the movement, rhythm, and mystique of that piece. After that experience, I followed Alcine to continue my undergraduate education at Southern Illinois University, where he was the Dance Division Director. I danced in many of the pieces that he choreographed for the university and was a student in his dance classes...In dance rehearsals, Alcine frequently showed up with many ideas in mind. He was always prepared and the rehearsals were, as a result, very productive. He would often draw creative ideas from the happy accidents that would happen with his dancers. With an encouraging presence, he went for excellence. If a piece of choreography was, at first, too difficult, he gave the dancers time to mature - without growing impatient. Being a master of complex rhythmic structures, he had to be especially patient with a few of us, who had a difficult time keeping up with him. He opened a whole new world of rhythm for me; one that I still cultivate and enjoy! I don't think that I could ever find my way through an African dance class without first starting with Alcine.”

Early in his career, Alcine presented a solo within “Three Informal Bits” as part of the end of the spring 1969 semester for his new SIUE students. In the solo, Alcine wears basic black tights and

leotard with a top hat. His movement reflects Cunningham vocabulary with hints of “Afternoon of a Faun” and “Petruska” imagery, while adding the humor found in musical theatre. His undergraduate degree was in Choreographic Design and for three semesters his curriculum included many art design courses. The music is Stravinsky. The vocabulary has strong Anna Nassif influence that Alcine developed reflecting complexity of Cubism.

His focus on shaping enhanced the SIUE students’ attention to where they are in space and with each other. One SIUE professor, a native of New York, commented that compared to Nancy and Alcine’s performance, the student’s appeared “robotic”. Alcine believes that the attention to shaping and rhythm caused this observed quality in the novice dancers.

“Anna’s influence on my choreography was clearly the shaping of limbs, the molding of body, while offering a clear reference point under which was added rhythmic feet. This focus was an easier way for new dancers to sense the composition quickly. In time, as I had them in daily classes, they could develop the nuance of the choreography and the ‘robotic’ quality would disappear. By 1973, the students studied with me from freshman to senior year and their quality of performance shifted in distinction from linear shaping lines to shaping and molding with volume that expands, contracts, grows, shrinks, gathers, advances and retreats. They were able to perform these qualities”

The Metro Waterloo Nebraska reported in December 18, 1974 that Omahans cheer SIU-E dancers. Alcine’s university career started off with touring and applause:

“Omahans reacted enthusiastically to an appearance this week by the Concert Dance Co. of Southern Illinois University from Edwardsville. About 220 attended the performance Sunday evening at the Jewish Community Center. A buffet party followed. Dr. Birdman said that one of the intentions of the program was to show Omahans an ‘example of a modern dance company of an urban-based university approximately the same size as UNO.’‘I think this has helped to pull all interested individuals and institutions together to help create outstanding ballet and dance in Omaha,’ Dr. Birdman told Metro.”

Alcine studied intensively during a 1975 sabbatical (February to June) in Erick Hawkin’s studio in New York City: two classes per day, one with Cathy Ward, Nada Diachenko, and the second with Erick Hawkins.

“Cathy was unbelievably clear as she demonstrated and talked. She is exceptional as a teacher with good anatomical awareness. She would bring in a little book with anatomical illustrations to show the students many pictures of how the body functions and the relationship of body parts.”

“Parable: An Inward Sun”, was choreographed by Cathy Ward. On his 1982 sabbatical, MADCO commissioned her to make a solo for Alcine. Stepping, carving, under, over, round, spiral: all vocabulary felt very familiar and reflective of Hawkin’s vocabulary. The difficulty is the delivery of dynamics and phrasing. Alcine remembers, “I received a critique from Cathy to dance ‘more expansive’ within the quick direct movements. Cathy’s aesthetic is quick while Erick was often

about taking time.” Alcine offers an exploration of negative space while the trumpet version demonstrated music visualization in a modern approach to music.

“Her movement language was foreign to Alcine. She is long and tall. I had difficulty with the speed and quick dynamics. It is startling to see when she performs. It is so much a demonstration of her aesthetics. From stillness to extreme quickness, her explosions contain the energy after it explodes. All of these actions are going in different planes. She is very cat-like.”

Collinsville Journal reported on May 11, 1977:

“Since coming to SIUE in 1968, Wiltz has developed what is generally regarded one of the most outstanding dance programs in the Metro-East area. He established the University Dance Theatre and the Concert Dance Company and has worked as guest teacher, performer, and choreographer at a number of universities and dance companies. Wiltz has also participated in several video projects, which have presented internationally as well as directing and choreographing over 43 musical productions.”

The article, Scene: Mind and Body, informed on Friday April 22, 1977 that there was an

“Interrelationship between mind and body sought by SIUE student dancers.” Diana Barr notes:

“The performance and kinetics of dance can’t be separated, according to Al Wiltz, associate professor and director of dance at SIUE.

‘The kinetic sense is the sixth sense – we have sensory organs in the muscles and joints of the body. These receivers tell us we’ve bent or sat down. It’s the sense of moving.’

Wiltz said. He said that the true performer has to really know the facts about anatomy and physiology.

'It they don't, they are leaving a lot to chance. Great abuse is given to the body by dance and the extremes it demands. Dancers who don't pay attention to this will have a short career because they do injury to themselves.'

Wiltz wears a dancer's leotard and leggings. His feet tap and dance while he talks. He teaches the beginners and more advanced students. 'I love the basic classes. I try to introduce them to body awareness so they understand what they can do safely.'

While only about one tenth of any beginning class goes on to advanced classes, Wiltz said he emphasizes body awareness and economy of motion. 'We do so much movement automatically, I try to teach them so they can analyze movement.'

Wiltz didn't get into training for dance until he entered high school, when he obtained a scholarship. At age 15, he studied at a neighborhood dance school, and at 19, he studied at Southeastern Louisiana College. He received his Master of Fine Arts from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. While a student, Wiltz worked for two summer seasons as a performer in the East Carolina Summer Theatre in Greenville, North Carolina and one season as a choreographer-performer at the Wagon Wheel Playhouse in Warsaw, Indiana. He also performed with Charles Weidman and Hanya Holm, 'Two of the early pioneers of modern dance.'

'I always knew I wanted to teach from the beginning. I enjoy it. Teaching and choreography are the thing I do most.' Wiltz said. He came to SIU in 1968 when he was given the chance to develop a dance program.

‘One of the things that have kept me here is the freedom I do have to develop the students and the program as I see the needs.’ Wiltz still acts as guest choreographer in off-campus productions, and he directs/choreographs many musical theater shows on campus. ‘I enjoy directing/choreographing musicals as well as concert dance forms. I feel that training in both is very important to a student, to have that variety.’ Wiltz said. The SIUE student dancers are getting better, according to Wiltz.

‘We’re getting a better quality of dancer enrolling. We have enough reputation that they’re seeking us out for the quality of the training we’re giving. The students seem to be opening to involving the mind, as well as the physical, and are beginning to appreciate the artistic as well as entertainment value.’

Wiltz said that there are a few really dedicated and committed dancers on campus.

‘Dance demands an outrageous amount of commitment. It’s basically communal – there’s no solo existence in dance. You have to be able to work with others and be able to adjust your schedules more than in other art forms.’

Wiltz stresses the demand that dancing puts on the dancer. ‘It’s much too demanding for anyone human.’

Wiltz gets six to eight hours of workout with his classes every day. He uses the mirror and scale daily. “I keep on a rather strict diet. I eat a bowl of cereal, yogurt for lunch and meat and a salad for dinner.”

‘Of course, this is basic, and there are certainly times when I adjust that diet. Then I must adjust the following day.’ He said there was a time when he had no diet at all to be concerned with, and he sees this in varying degrees with his students.

The physical advantages of dance carry over into the mental. 'With the freedom of movement and being in tune with yourself, you are constantly analyzing movement, so you analyze your instrument and yourself. There's disciplines and order in one's life. Maybe it's because I'm doing something I like, so most of the time, it is a pleasure.'"

Alcine worked with live musicians several times in Illinois.

"It was wonderful working with musicians as accompanists in real time. It was such a rich experience to have that resonance in the performing space. You can feel it in your bones. You ride the phrasing in a very different way. Communication through tempos, phrasing, and dynamics is part of the sheer physicality. The vibrating, live, physical preference of performing with live music is wonderful. My favorite live instruments to dance with are the violin, piano, and cello. The strings offer an inherent tension. Elasticity at the moment begs that stretch to be released. There is a 'let go' and 'deepening to release'. I enjoy the polarity of opposition in reaching which demands the question: 'what are we going to do with that?' It trembles and squeaks before the release. The cello adds the warmth and depth that wraps around your moving base, very primordial. When I became sick recently, I discovered that I could chant and moan with deep conscious breathing. The resonance calmed me down. It really worked and my body could let go of the shaking spasms and I was able to go to sleep."

Alcine comments on performing with live verses taped music:

“Anna and Erick both spoke about live music as the ‘NOW’. Watching this choreography on video, there is flatness and lack of depth. That is the same with canned music. The sound has been treated and it comes out of one source, the speaker. The absurdity today is that live music is being played in theaters and performance spaces coming from speakers’ overhead. It is so disorienting. There is no relationship to live performance that is able to feed the performers when the sound is pushed directly to the audience.”

In all of Alcine’s teaching, there is a live accompaniment. When developing curriculum for the dance major requirement at SIUE, Alcine created a two-quarter course sequence as preparation to approach dance composition courses. The emphasis was to present awareness and understanding of rhythmic structure in musical terms, and then create movement phrases related to the musical structural patterns. This was followed with exercises to create movement patterns and then find the inherent rhythmic structures within. The courses were based on his experiences studying Eurhythmics with John Coleman and course work at the University of Wisconsin.

“Weight shifts are the keys for finding rhythmic structures. Triplets are my Hanya Holm tools for finding over and under again and again.....123 123 123. She always wore a Long plat braid while wearing colorful long skirts that will never be forgotten.”

Formal study did occur. In 1982 while on a sabbatical, he took several Laban classes in New York City as his first introduction. “I found it interesting yet had no way to access this information locally (at SIU-E)”, Alcine states. He wanted the depth of this particular study. He arrived as

chairperson at the University of Maryland, College Park in 1983, ten years later he arranged for the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Study's Certified Movement Analysis program to be offered on the UMCP campus which began during 1993-1994. In his CMA training he connected to his intuitive proprioception with new awareness: it was the analytical attention to movement. CMA work gave him the language. This focused work allowed his attention to go to specific movement and body areas and taught him more implications for movement choices. He noticed the complexity of space, time, weight, force and their inter-relationships. Afterwards he shared how good it is to be brought into a specific attention for the possibilities of refining a specific movement phrase. His awareness allowed him to glean more material out of a phrase for instruction and choreography. Adding newly found material allowed him to direct it from the conceptual; i.e., different focuses to movement patterns appeared from the same principles in order to reach the learning styles of diverse student needs.

With his new heightened awareness, Laban Movement Analysis allowed Alcine, the teacher, to go "deeper into releasing". Release for Alcine is finally finding the weight of any given phrase. Accessing weight had not been learned for him until the CMA training. He was introduced to readings from leading experts: Irene Dowd and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. Alcine found ways to re-center and release his body. Kinesiologically, this release of weight gave him the buoy in the water metaphor. The "bone falls in the socket" and articulates naturally which is the ease behind "deepening to release." His ultimate revelation is that this "deepening into release" finally allows the dancer to let go of the concept of "turnout". It just happens. Turnout is an action, not a position.

Alcine believes in the power of metaphors. One metaphor for teaching he often uses is to dwell on only one or two concepts: the “planting of seeds.” Several he sights are 1) Action at hip joint and directional changes, 2) Action at ankle and follow through of weight over foot, 3) Action at shoulder and weight of humerus.

“Teaching is simply coaching. Using imagery and giving clear demonstration, is how I teach everyone in the studio. I can work with anyone dancer with a specific phrase, but I can take a class and coach them to some level of connection. I see them as many and I see them as one. I never say, ‘Now I am going to teach’ or ‘now I am going to choreograph.’ I am going to the studio to do what I do----share.”

“SIUE early students came with ballet training. They told me they needed more form me, that I needed to push them. I would say, ‘You need to do the work. It is not for me to push you. I am here to present material for you to work with and you are here to do the work.”

“Students have to work through it, pay attention, and take all the cues. I told them I am certainly willing to talk with you, but I am not willing to brow beat you. Ask me a question and I will answer it.”

‘I am a good teacher. I love teaching – seeing that subtlety develop in dancers. I teach with a very intellectual approach.’ Wiltz grinned puckishly. ‘One of the criticisms we used to get was that our MAD/CO’s dancers had no company style. I had to help them develop one. Ross is an architect, a designer who uses line and placement in constructing his choreography. Organic flow is what I try to impart to the dancers, so that everything has a sense of phrase and end. In conducting rehearsals of Ross’s work I

had to help the dancers find the transitions, and sometimes it was very hard because he would give us very difficult designs and leave it to us to learn how to get from here to there.'

Wiltz, who has some of the animal alertness that makes Cunningham so distinctive a dancer, has occasionally used the same odd-man-out device. "David Gordon did the same thing at the Art Museum last month,' Wiltz said. 'He stayed offstage most of the time, and then put himself into short manageable segments.'"

Wiltz works out his choreography in a studio, without music. He prefers music without strong rhythmic patterns, so that the dance phrases, which in his works are usually counted, can establish their own rhythms. One example of this practice:

"Musings," a MAD/Co piece with music by St. Louis composer Robert Sallier, looks like an exception, a dance set to the music, but in fact it happened the other way around. 'I had a week set aside to get a lot of that dance done,' Wiltz recalled. 'Robert and I just couldn't get together that week, so I just kept working and made 12 minutes of the dance. At the end of the week Robert sent me a tape of about three minutes of music. None of it was right for what I had done. When I talked to him, he said send me a count-score of your dance. Sallier, who earns his living accompanying dance classes, composed the music to fit Wiltz's rhythm notations.'"

Kathy Muenz

"Working with Alcine was such a unique, challenging, eye-opening experience.

Everything Alcine taught me, showed me, was new to my still developing artistic

sensibility. Having mostly a ballet aesthetic prior to meeting him, all the Hawkins philosophies, filtered through Alcine's own kinesthetic sensibility, was really thought-provoking. His choreography was always fun, interesting, and challenging because he asked for so much more than the steps. He always respected where we were as dancers, but challenged us to move to new places, literally and figuratively. I loved every minute of working with Alcine and I believe it informed all of my subsequent professional work as a dancer, choreographer, educator and director.”

“Alcine is a man of generous spirit; a renaissance man before the word existed. He has paddled his own canoe, as it were, for his entire life, truly one of the braver things to do in life. He is creative, loving, ready to laugh, embracing of life and learning and I love him dearly!!”

Alcine remembers: “For University students, I would repeat at least one work from the previous year so that those dancers would work on the piece over a lifespan of a year. It can mature with dancers given the responsibility to rehearse over the next year, to keep it in your body memory. That is part of being a member of the concert dance company. They were to keep the art themselves. The work would change. I would be playing with it and make adjustments. The dancers’ relationships changed. A few times a student would drop out and we would have to make additional adjustments. The work was always living. I programmed an evening so that the audience would be happy to sit with the piece again. These were pieces that they enjoyed to see again. I placed some filler works to fill out the program.”

“As an undergraduate, I would rehearse and rehearse and we would perform the works once or twice and then they were dropped to go on to the next thing. When I directed/choreographed, I wanted my work to mature. As a MFA candidate, I enjoyed working with Anna Nassif. There was a real value to living with the work and collaborating in choreographic process with her. In this exploration, you realize how to strengthen technique weaknesses, find personal phrasing, and clarify dynamics. When a work has been publicly performed a few times, you can really get to work on it, building on each performance.

Alcine worried about what would happen to his dances when he’s no longer in St. Louis to keep an eye on them, but he professes confidence about MAD/CO’s dancers. “They don’t need me now,” he says, “I’ve taught them. It takes two or three years for dancers to give up the technique they come with. It takes that long to take out all the mannerisms. They know all that now – they’ll just have to do it themselves.”

Alcine remembers a turning point, a big decision. In 1983 his family was growing and he missed time with them. He served two masters....Mid America Dance Company and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. He produced so much and had to choose. He chose by moving to University of Maryland College Park.