



Courtesy of Stephanie Chase

Stephanie Chase (right) kicks with fellow Rockette Prudy Grey in costume for their Christmas performance this past year.



Michelle Paulman/DN

A Rockette at New York's Radio City Music Hall and a UNL dance instructor, Stephanie Chase balances her dancing and caring for her 1 1/2-year-old daughter, Sydney (pictured), and son, Tate, 16.

Rockette shares experience as a teacher

By Sarah Dujey
Staff Reporter

Stephanie Chase knew when she danced as a young girl that the movement just felt right.

Chase, a dance instructor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, left her hometown of Bellevue and danced her way to the top in New York City where she has performed as a Rockette for eight years.

Not only does Chase perform at Radio City Music Hall and teach dance, she also has two children.

Since she was 6 years old, Chase has lived in the dance studio. She studied with Laura Estelle Entenman from Bellevue before going to Loretto Heights in Denver and getting her bachelor's degree in dance. Chase then studied with Gus Giordano, a world-renowned jazz instructor, for several summers before opening her own studio in Kearney in 1980.

In 1983, Chase left Kearney and

went to New York City to study jazz, tap and ballet for a year. She soon fell in love with the creative energy of the city and stayed there for eight years.

"My dream was to be a Bob Fosse dancer, so I auditioned."

Chase said Fosse was one of the mainstream jazz dancers, teachers and choreographers.

"I saw I had something that the choreographer liked and I made it to the final cuts."

Chase said she was one of 40 women who made the cut from the original 500 women who tried out.

"Bob came up to me both auditions, thanked me personally and said he liked me as a dancer."

But Fosse said he couldn't use Chase in any of his groups. He said that, among other things, she wasn't sexy enough for his production of "Sweet Charity."

Her biggest disappointment in life, she said, was not becoming a Bob Fosse dancer.

But Chase didn't give up. She said her husband encouraged her to try out for the Rockettes. Because she was a little more relaxed at the Rockette audition after gaining experience at past auditions, Chase landed a job.

"I didn't think I was good enough to make a show," she said, "I was completely wrong."

"It was a pleasant surprise."

The Rockettes perform two major shows at Radio City at Easter and Christmas and several shorter shows in between. Chase said during the Christmas show, the line performed five shows a day.

"Each show lasts 90 minutes long. During the hour break in between each show, we just crash. It's really exhausting."

The line meets two or three weeks before each show and practices about about six hours a day.

"Performing at Radio City is the ultimate. Radio City's stage is probably the biggest and most beautiful

stage in the world.

"I've performed as a soloist and as a group, but there's nothing like being a precision dancer with 35 other women."

The 35 other women who perform as Rockettes are known for their eye-high kicks, Chase said, but she thinks of them as friends.

"The friendships I have made with the gals in the line will be for life," she said. "The camaraderie between us is a special thing."

Radio City Music Hall seats 6,000 people, and Chase said the hall was almost always packed.

But she said the Rockettes were trying to "stretch their horizons" by adding singing and acting along with the dancing.

While she loves performing, Chase said she loves teaching even more. She said she always wanted to teach.

"Teaching was what I loved to do because I didn't trust myself (as a

performer)."

When Chase wasn't performing at Radio City, she taught dance in the drama department at Julliard. At UNL, Chase teaches one beginning jazz class and one beginning tap class.

In September, Chase and her husband will open a dance and fitness studio in the Haymarket. Her husband, Bob, who also is from Nebraska, is now one of the top fitness instructors in New York City.

"Both Bob and I love Lincoln because the university brings more creativity. But we mostly missed the people in Nebraska."

"We're real excited that enough people are interested in what we have to offer."

Although she said her biggest accomplishments were her children, she said she was proud of her career as a Rockette. Her mom was a dancer, and Chase said she knew she was doing things her mother would have loved to have done.



Michelle Paulman/DN

Andrew Vogt, a junior music major and saxophone player, and Steve Doering, a graduate student in trombone performance, play in Hornithology, a jazz septet.

Musicians say 'gigs' add jazz to education



By George K. Stephan
Staff Reporter

Steve Doering and Andrew Vogt complement each other nicely.

Doering, a more reserved person, thinks things through before he speaks, and Vogt, energetic, talks readily, cracking jokes in a steady stream. The two might not be found together were they not both musicians.

While sitting in a practice room on the third floor of Westbrook Music Building, both Vogt, a junior majoring in music education and a saxophone player, and Doering, a graduate student seeking a degree in trombone performance, talked about their own experiences with getting "gigs." They also spoke of the group Hornithology, which they both will play in this Thursday night at Julio's Restaurant and Bar, 132 S. 13th St.

Doering and Vogt are the only students in the seven-member jazz group, which includes two saxophone players, a trombone player, a trumpet player, a pianist, a bass player and a drummer.

Both Doering and Vogt said they focused on jazz performing and that playing professionally was a big part of their jazz education. Jazz can't be learned by reading about it, Doering said.

"You've got to go out and do it," he said.

Although the pair said playing as members of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln jazz band always helped their jazz education, both said that a professional jazz setting allowed them to learn things they wouldn't learn in a classroom.

"You learn more," said Vogt. "Instead of having Dave Sharp (school of music instructor and director of the jazz band) direct, I'd rather play with him, as a saxophonist."

Doering said playing with local professionals in big bands allowed for more work "on some things that

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