

Performance Preview

Alla von Buch

What: Piano Recital

Where: Kimball Recital Hall

When: Tonight @ 7:30

Cost: Free

Pianist to tickle keys at Kimball

■ Alla von Buch once dreamed of being a ballerina but instead she found her destiny at the piano.

BY BRIAN CHRISTOPHERSON

She wanted to be a ballerina, to twist and turn gracefully as the people cheered.

She wanted to be a ballerina the same way young Nebraska boys dream of running out of the football tunnel on fall Saturdays.

Then, Alla von Buch took off her dancing shoes, examined her situation and quit her dream of ballet.

"I always enjoy teaching the students. I try to show them the techniques like where to position the hands on the keys."

Alla von Buch pianist enjoy teaching the students," von Buch said. "I try to show them the techniques like where to position the hands on the keys."

Tonight, von Buch will perform a free concert at Kimball Recital Hall at 7:30.

"We are thrilled to have her here. This concert is for everybody, especially those who aren't in the music program," music professor Paul Barnes said before letting out a slight laugh. "They need music in their life even more."

Von Buch will feature works by Scarlatti, Schubert, Chopin, Beethoven and the American premiere of a piece by German composer Helmut Burkhardt.

Although von Buch does not dispute that there are talented composers still around, she still finds the most gratification when playing the classics of the great composers.

"Beethoven was revolutionary. He created a language," she said. "It is difficult to find high quality in modern compositions. Like Beethoven, the new composers have to create their own language."

Those in attendance will have to cherish von Buch's words, because she will quickly be on her way back to resume her teaching at Gunanajuato University in Mexico.

Von Buch had taught at the Richard Strauss Conservatory in Munich before this and still lives just outside of Munich.

Despite her successes as a piano player, winning major competitions in Germany as young as the age of 15 and her many years of teaching, she said she keeps it simple with her students.

She said she doesn't believe that piano teachers are correct when they make their students play a certain piece continuously, once perfection is there.

"Repetition isn't one time, but playing it right two times without a mistake is sufficient," von Buch said.

"But the quality of practicing and technique must always increase."

Instead, she danced with her hands.

And she can sure make those hands tickle the ivory.

"As a child I wanted to be that ballerina, but I had no talent. But I did play the piano," von Buch said. "I soon knew that piano was my life."

Now, her life's work is teaching other people's hands to dance.

"I always enjoy teaching the students," von Buch said. "I try to show

a balancing act

UNL performer leaps toward dancing dream

At one time or another, every little girl wants to be Cinderella.

For Megan Dant, becoming a princess came naturally, as long as she was on her toes.

Now grown-up, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln senior dance major wows all with her talent, strength and dedication to the expressive, beautiful movements of ballet and modern dance.

"Talking and thinking about (dance) gives me chills," she said. "I can't imagine doing anything else."

Her self-proclaimed dance obsession came at an early age.

"When I was four, I saw the Tulsa Ballet perform Cinderella," she said. "I told my mom I wanted to be a ballerina, and I've never quit wanting it."

Let's just say Dant doesn't quit *period*. Constantly on the go with classes, dance and a waitressing job, Dant makes the Energizer bunny look like a slacker.

Her brother Kern said he admired his sister's dedication.

"She works her butt off," he said. "When I hear people talk about the UNL dance program, I hear about my sister."

Dant said she credited her drive to her family.

"My parents gave me a strong work ethic," she said. "I spend at least six hours a day dancing and rehearsing, but I wouldn't want a 9-to-5 job. I just can't sit still," she said.

Sitting still isn't in her genes. Because of her father's job as a television-station manager, Dant and her family have lived in seven different states.

"I'm from everywhere," she said.

But no matter where she was, Dant continued to fuel her passion of ballet.

While attending the North Carolina School of the Arts, a specialized arts school for high-school and college students, Dant said her potential and desire were great even then as a high school student.

"It was a dream come true," she said. "It was like 'Fame' without all the dancing in the cafeteria."

To be close to her family, Dant moved to Lincoln in 1996 and graduated from Lincoln Southeast High School the following year.

But moving to Lincoln didn't stunt Dant's desire to perfect her dance talent. She has performed with the Central Dance Theatre in Omaha and the Lincoln Midwestern Ballet.

Dant said she decided to stay in Lincoln after high school to finally get a sense of home.

"I was taking some dance classes as a high-school senior at UNL," she said, "and I was tired of moving. At UNL, I was a big fish with lots of opportunities."

Lisa Fusillo, a UNL dance professor, said Dant's talent and maturity had grown during the past four years.

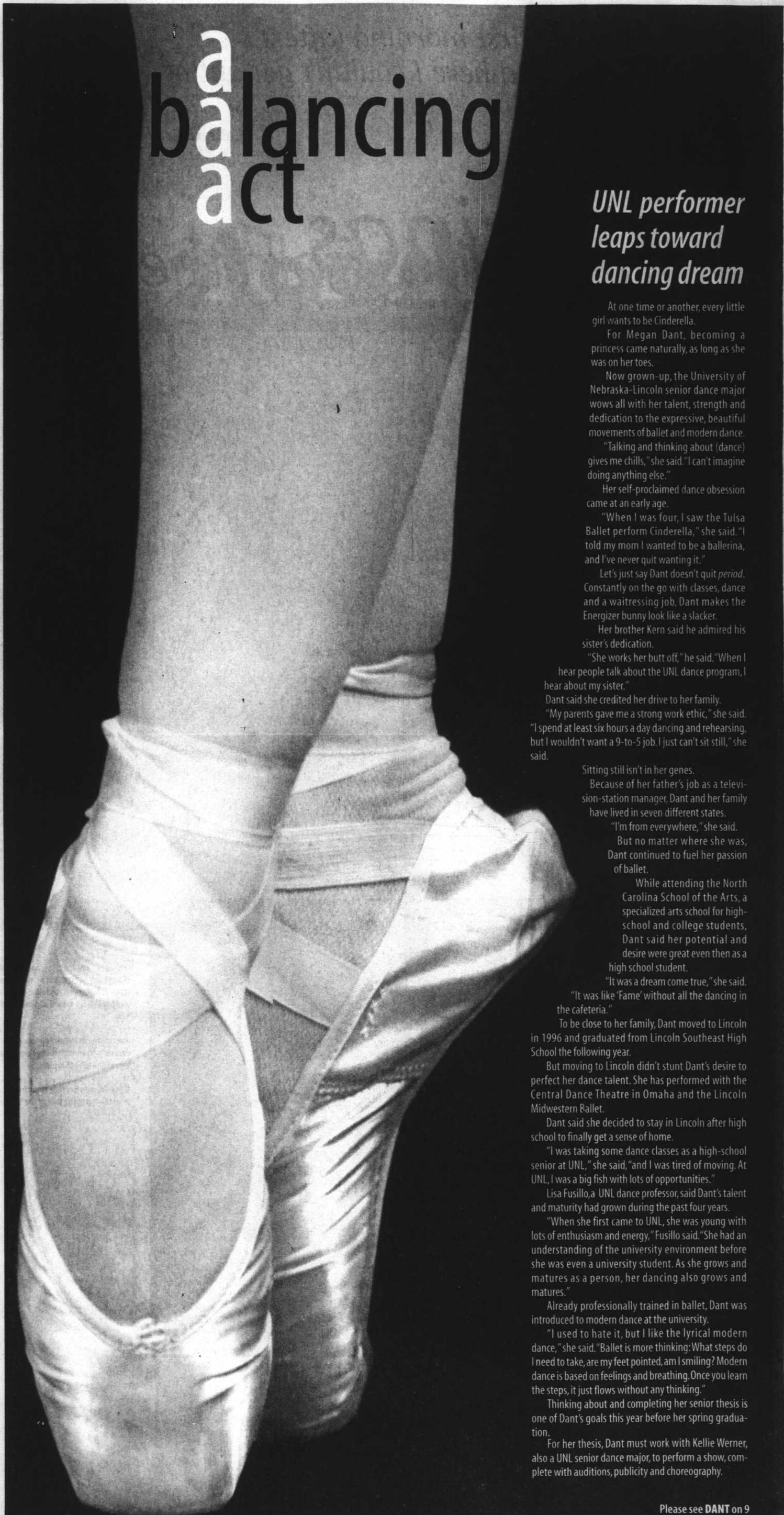
"When she first came to UNL, she was young with lots of enthusiasm and energy," Fusillo said. "She had an understanding of the university environment before she was even a university student. As she grows and matures as a person, her dancing also grows and matures."

Already professionally trained in ballet, Dant was introduced to modern dance at the university.

"I used to hate it, but I like the lyrical modern dance," she said. "Ballet is more thinking: What steps do I need to take, are my feet pointed, am I smiling? Modern dance is based on feelings and breathing. Once you learn the steps, it just flows without any thinking."

Thinking about and completing her senior thesis is one of Dant's goals this year before her spring graduation.

For her thesis, Dant must work with Kellie Werner, also a UNL senior dance major, to perform a show, complete with auditions, publicity and choreography.



story by melanie mensch/photos by heather glenboski

Please see DANT on 9