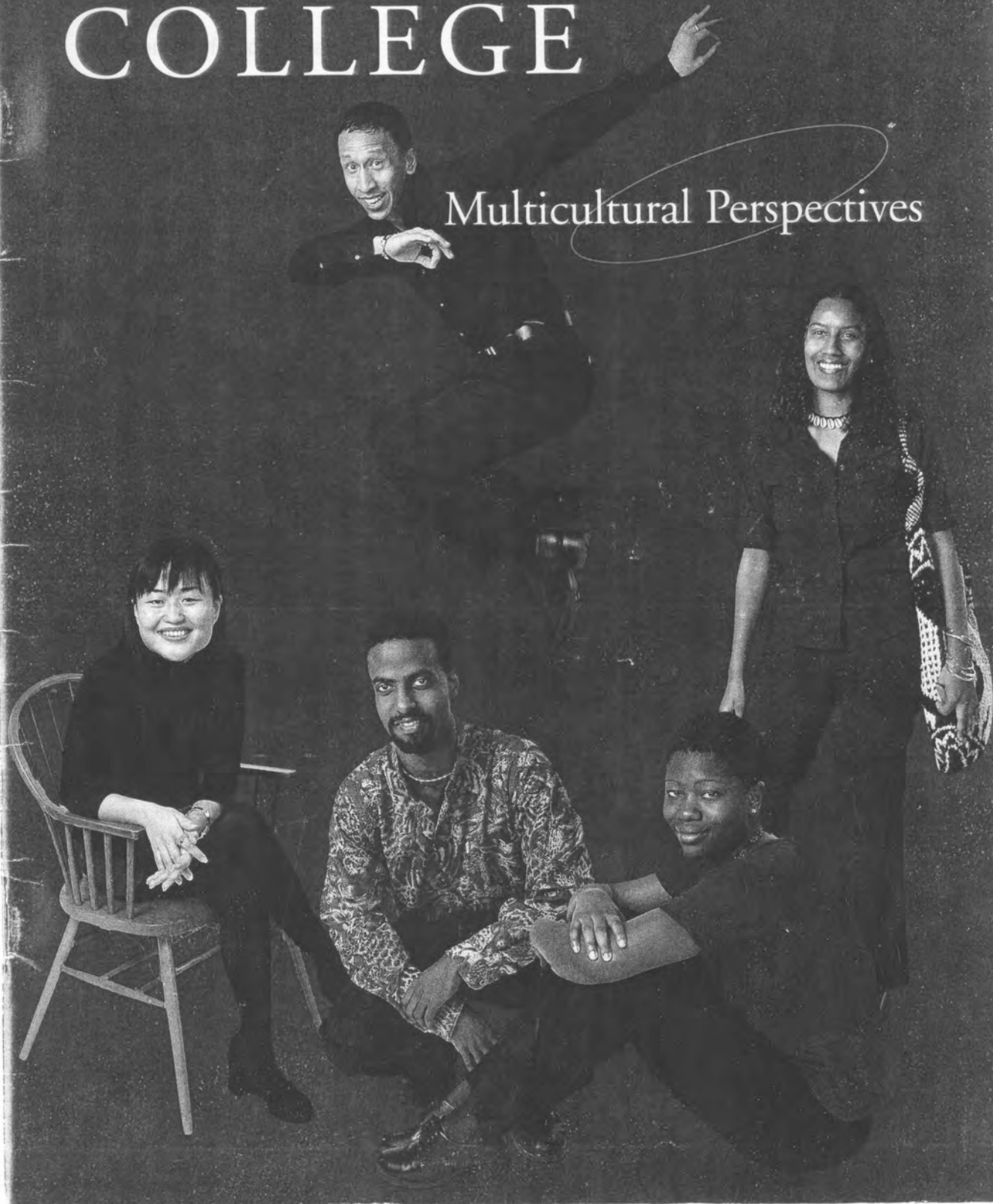


CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Multicultural Perspectives



Jeffrey Rebudal
Dance Artist
Assistant Professor of Dance

Even if some of his students are aiming for the stock market and not the stage, Jeffrey Rebudal knows they can acquire skills through dance that will be useful for years to come.

Professor Rebudal teaches jazz, modern dance and ballet. He also teaches a course called Experimental Workshop that's designed for students without previous dance experience. "Though they might not become dancers, the focus is the artistic process that they can apply in their everyday life once they get out of college," he explains.

"I am thoroughly an advocate of the process. Whether they're going on in dance or to Wall Street, they need to be vested in what's going on at the moment to make it work for the next step. I want to make sure that they go from step A to step B and make the most of their processes, to strengthen them so that they can go on further and further."

On the first day of Experimental Workshop, students tend to be inhibited when Professor Rebudal directs them to begin moving and dancing. By semester's end, these students have lost their self-consciousness and are developing innovative approaches to dance—even performing in such venues as the ice hockey rink and the swimming pool.

"You can see the students grow physically and intellectually," he says. "When you're developing artists and dancers, you want to relate to them and find specific things to bring out in them as individuals. I know—and they know—when it's important for me to be a disciplinarian, when it's time to be a role model, and when it's time to be a friend and hang out and talk about dance."

The Connecticut College dance department pays a lot of attention to multiculturalism. It recently launched the International Dance Festival, attracting artists from the United States, Asia, South America, Africa, the Philippines and elsewhere.

In addition to his academic life, Professor Rebudal also has his own dance company and performs with the Sean Curran Company in New York City. "It's the best of both worlds for me on many different levels. It keeps me balanced. It keeps me very grounded," he says. Students also benefit from having a professor who performs professionally in one of the world's dance meccas.

"Hopefully, I'm creating a positive understanding of what dance is so in the future they'll have a positive experience. They'll want to see dance and to be supportive of the arts."

Professor Rebudal, who is of Filipino descent, was born and raised in Honolulu in a cultural melting pot of diverse ethnic groups that included Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese and Puerto Rican. "Multiculturalism—I've lived it. It's been instilled in me, the different languages, foods, customs, clothing and dances," he says. He graduated from the University of Hawaii with a B.A. in dance but it wasn't until graduate school at The American University that he rediscovered his ethnic heritage and began incorporating it into his work.

