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Work that body!

Aerobics finally hitting its stride in B-CS gyms, fitness centers

By Genevieve Blute
 Reporter

Aerobics is kicking and growing in Bryan-College Station, says Garnett Langston, aerobics coordinator at 24-Hour Gyms of Texas.

Started in 1969 by Jacki Sorensen, aerobics was primarily vigorous dancing, Langston says.

Sorensen, a dancer, was stationed with her husband in the Navy, Langston says, and while undergoing a physical, she was asked by the doctor how she stayed in such great shape. Sorensen replied that she danced.

The doctor realized that dancing as an exercise could improve health, Langston says, and so Sorensen began to teach dance to the other military wives. Their general physical condition improved, and thus aerobics was born.

From there, Sorensen and her husband went on to promote aerobics for everyone.

"Technically," Langston says, "aerobics is exercise promoting the use and supply of oxygen to the body using rhythmic repetitions — usually for 15 to 60 minutes at a time. Aerobics involves continuous movement of the legs and is offered in several categories, depending on a person's physical condition."

At 24-Hour Gyms of Texas, several different types of classes are offered, including a low-impact class where dancers keep one foot in contact with the floor at all times in order to reduce the jarring motion that the continuous movement causes, she says.

Low-impact classes are ideal for people who weigh more than 20 percent of their normal weight on a height-weight chart and also for pregnant women in their third trimester, Langston says.

24-Hour Gyms of Texas also offers a beginners' class — recommended for those with fewer than six to eight weeks of conditioning — as well as an intermediate and an advanced class. Stretching classes, weight training and floor exercise also are available.

Marilyn Stewart, aerobics coordinator at Gold's Gym in College Station, says the gym offers beginning, intermediate and advanced classes for all types of people.

Figure World in Bryan offers several classes but does not differentiate between beginner, intermediate or advanced, says Shari Sheppard, Figure World's aerobics coordinator.

"Many times the names of the classes intimidate new members because they have a set idea of what beginner, or whatever, would be," Sheppard says.

"They can really get discouraged if the beginning workout is hard for them," she said.

Langston says aerobics draws a diverse group — overweight people aren't the only ones dancing to the beat.

"There's what she calls the 'housewife crowd,' which consists of women 25 to 35 years old who are not in college, the 'after-work crowd,' and even a few older people.



Photo by John...

Gold's Gym and 24-Hour Gyms of Texas both have classes which regularly include men.

"Out of our classes, we consistently average 10 percent men daily, mostly in the early evening classes," Langston says. "I think it really adds to the aesthetics of the whole class because people are seeing each other as they really are and learn to be proud of their bodies."

As in any physical exercise, certain safety precautions must be taken when doing aerobics, Langston says.

"Jane Fonda did the profession a great service by mass marketing aerobics and getting people off their couches and into exercising, but she did a disservice to our profession by not knowing a lot about fitness," she says. "Some of the stuff in her videos is unsafe."

"As for 'going for the burn' — as Jane Fonda stresses — you shouldn't go for the burn, but rather go to the burn and not through it. If it starts to hurt, your muscles are reacting to lactic acid and you should relax, allow blood vessels to open up and carry the lactic acid away, and continue your workout."

"But it is very important not to stop just because you're tired. Keep moving, just slow down."

Langston adds that the concept of "no pain, no gain" is absurd.

"You should feel some discomfort," she says, "but not severe pain."

Aerobics instructors aren't required to have a license or pass any special tests before teaching, Langston says, but an instructor can earn many different certifications.

The most reputable is the certification from the International Dance-Exercise Association Foundation, she says.

Sheryl Marks, executive director of IDEA, the certifying organization, says the instructor's edge in a variety of crucial areas including exercise physiology, leadership techniques, and agency training and nutrition concerns.

Langston says she is excited about the future of aerobics as a profession.

"I think that in the future, aerobics will become more specialized, with an increased emphasis on training instructors, special studies for aerobics, and shorter but more intense workouts for increased time efficiency," she says.

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Soprano's expressive art wows A&M crowd

By Karl Pallmeyer
 Staff Writer

About 1,900 people were entertained by the magnificent sounds of the German art song in Rudder Auditorium Friday night, courtesy of Dutch soprano Ely Ameling.

Ameling is critically acclaimed as one of the world's best performers of the German art song, or "lied." She seemed like a maternal figure as she sang — almost as if she were telling stories for children. Her rich soprano voice, combined with her expressive yet restrained gestures, allowed her to perform works from some of the greatest composers with a vitality that would have made them proud.

The Memorial Student Center's Opera and Performing Arts Society, the sponsor of Ameling's performance,

Her rich soprano voice, combined with her expressive yet restrained gestures, allowed her to perform works from some of the greatest composers with a vitality that would have made them proud.

provided a sheet with English translations of the lyrics which were mostly in German.

The first piece Ameling performed was Ludwig van Beethoven's "Mailed" (May Song). Her voice was most expressive as she described the beauty of spring. The next piece, Beethoven's "Wonne der Wehmut" (Bliss of Sadness), was much slower and darker in tone.

The strength of Ameling's voice rests with her range rather than her

volume. Franz Schubert's "Auf dem Wasser zu singen" (To Be Sung on the Water) showed the impressiveness of Ameling's vocal range.

Pianist Rudolf Jansen accompanied Ameling with poise and restraint. The two worked together so well that it is obvious they've spent many years performing together the music they seem to love.

One of the highlights of the evening was their performance of Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrade"

(Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel). The song tells of a woman thinking about her lover while using the piano to create the sound of a spinning motion while singing's voice was a mixture of tenderness and tenderness.

Ameling ended the program with four pieces in Italian — Granados' "El Majo Discreto" (The Majo), Joaquin Turina's "Tares" (Songs), Francesco Pavesi's "La Serenata" (Serenade), and Gioacchino Rossini's "La Danza" (The Dance). The Italian pieces were operatic in flavor and adapted to other vocal styles.

After scattered standing ovations, Ameling returned to the stage to perform Schubert's "Heidenroslein" (The Wild Rose) for an encore.

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