

Will dance for minor

Dance Minor Concert to allow students to hit the dance floor, work toward degree

By Christina Teichman
THE BATTALION

Stephanie Ford said her mother introduced her to what would become an old friend before she was in kindergarten.

"My mother put me into my first dance class at the age of 4," Ford said. "I have continued dancing because I think it is a wonderful way to express myself and learn."

For many students, dancing means hanging out with friends, celebrating a wedding or simply succumbing to their favorite Madonna song. For others, such as Ford, it is an art carefully learned in a surprising location – the classrooms of Texas A&M.

Dancing is not a new concept to College Station, seeing as how the clubs and bars are full of students channeling their energy into their favorite songs every weekend.

What is relatively new to Aggieland is the chance for students to minor in or get a secondary teaching certification in what many consider a hobby. The Dance Minor program, which allows students to bring such academics on the dance floor, was put into action in correlation with the EmSu Dance Company, during the 2002 fall semester. Both programs were founded in connection with A&M's Vision 2020, which supports the continuous involvement of the arts at the University.

Ford, a senior theatre major, chose to minor in dance because of her love of the art.

"I love everything about the art of dancing; classes, performance, rehearsal, production, choreography," Ford said. "The more I study and learn about dance, the more I love it."

Lecturer Carisa Armstrong said though offering dance as a minor is a new and unconventional step, the hopes for the program are high.

"The program has grown in numbers and strength in a short amount of time and we have large aspirations for the future," said Armstrong, the newest Dance Program faculty member.

The A&M Dance Minor Program will present its second annual Dance Minor Concert this Saturday. The faculty and students will collaborate to perform many works for the concert. In conjunction with the Dance Minor Program, this concert is being supported by the Department of Health and Kinesiology.

Armstrong said the program receives partial support with the help of grants made available by the Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts. The Academy has been given the duty of improving visual and performing arts at A & M.

"The Dance Minor Program houses and supports a pre-professional company comprised of Dance Minor students who audition and are selected to represent the University throughout the country," Armstrong said. "Dance faculty creates their choreographic works

Musicals

what:
Texas A&M dance minor students and the EmSu Dance Co.

where:
Rudder Auditorium

how much:
Admission is free

doors open:
May 1 at 7 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY HAMRICK.COM

The EmSu Dance Co. (above) will join the Dance Minor Program participants for its May 1 performance. The company will collaborate with students throughout the program.

on these students, allowing them an opportunity to perform in numerous venues."

The Dance Minor Program will also host guest artist Kathy Dunn Hamrick during the performance. Hamrick, who formed her own dance company in Austin and traveled to College Station to perform in the faculty showcase last month, is currently working on a piece with the Dance Minor students for the event.

"Kathy (Hamrick) taught master classes and gave lectures to the students while in residence," Armstrong said.

There are two ways dance students are able to participate in this particular concert, Armstrong said. Dance minor students are permitted to present their own choreographed work in auditions with their preferred chosen dancers. The dancers did not need to be Dance Minor students. If the students did not submit an original piece, or if their submitted work was not chosen, they could audition to dance in a faculty's presentation.

Melissa Alvarez, a senior kinesiology major, has been contributing her talent toward this concert and will be performing during Saturday's event.

"I am dancing in two pieces, a student-directed and one faculty-directed piece," Alvarez said. "I want everyone to come out because

the dancing is nothing like you've ever seen before."

Armstrong said the works that will be shown at the upcoming concert include the piece "Sleepless," choreographed by Hamrick, which touches on the ideas and tribulations of insomnia. Also being performed is "Baroque Ballet," a ballet full of leaps and jumps. All of these presentations will of course be accompanied with the powerful music that was used as inspiration such as Pachelbel's "Canon in D" and David Lang's "My Very Empty Mouth," she said.

Ford said she is excited to see what the Aggie dancers have in store for the concert.

"I have not been involved with the concert this year and I am very interested to see every piece, especially the guest artist piece by Hamrick," Ford said.

The Dance Minor students with the EmSu Company will introduce the Dance Minor Concert May 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the Rudder Auditorium. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted.

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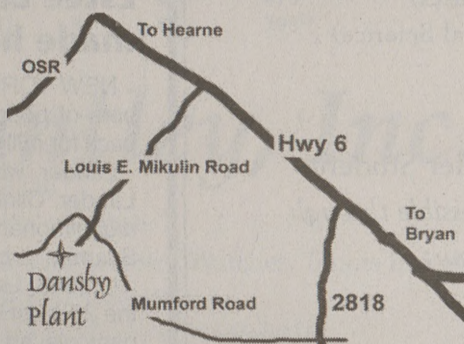
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