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[EDITORIALS \(/ARTICLES/SPORTS-0\)](/ARTICLES/SPORTS-0)

[SOCIETY NOTES \(/ARTICLES/SOCIETY-NOTES\)](/ARTICLES/SOCIETY-NOTES)

[SPORTS \(/ARTICLES/SPORTS\)](/ARTICLES/SPORTS)

[NEWS \(/ARTICLES/NEWS\)](/ARTICLES/NEWS)

[Home \(/\)](#) » [News \(/articles/news\)](/articles/news) » [DancEstrella explores hidden themes](#) »

An advertisement for Estrella Mountain Community College. It features a photo of three students on the left. The text says "ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE A Maricopa Community College". To the right, it says "Explore your future, today! 5, 8, 10 & 16-week classes in Avondale, Buckeye & online". On the far right, a purple box says "CLASSES START JAN. 14".

<http://westvalleyview.com/simpleads/redirect/51072>

DancEstrella explores hidden themes

Submitted by Glenn Gullickson on Wed, 11/30/2016 - 12:00am

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Estrella student, rehearses Nov. 18 for the upcoming show "Hidden in Plain Sight" at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale. View photo by Jordan Christopher

Fall performance will feature 22 dancers performing work they choreographed

Dancers at Estrella Mountain Community College will explore topics that aren't always obvious during performances at their fall dance show.

“Hidden in Plain Sight” is the title of DancEstrella’s performance to be staged at 3 and 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday at the EMCC Performing Arts Center, 3000 N. Dysart Road, Avondale. Admission is free.

Janaea Lynn McAlee, artistic director for the troupe, said the theme is broad enough to be interpreted by students in a variety of ways.

“Dance is an opportunity to express parts of themselves that don’t normally get shared in the same kind of way,” McAlee said. “A quiet student might be outgoing in their movement language.”

Most of the 12 dances to be performed were choreographed by the 22 performers during fall semester classes with McAlee, and deal with hidden elements on topics such as friendship, hardships and creativity.

One dance, titled “RUNaWAY,” to be performed by soloist Kimmy Lopez, deals with the inner turmoil of a former model.

Three advanced choreography students created dances to be performed by trios of dancers.

McAlee said the challenge for students is finding the right movement style for each piece, which can combine different types of dance, but are often what she called “modern-based.”

“They can draw from anything they want,” she said. “Each dance demands its own movement style.”

The inspiration for the dances comes from an image and quote that students bring to class, McAlee said.

Based on similar ideas, McAlee assigns students to work together, and the dances evolve over the semester as students develop skills in choreography and collaboration, she said.

McAlee choreographed the show’s finale, “Catalyst,” which will feature the whole troupe performing to music composed by David Anderson and played by Anderson and three other musicians.

The dance deals with the individual’s relationship to the larger society, with a focus on how students make choices between trying to belong, breaking free and listening to their inner voice, McAlee said.

“One by one, the students come to choosing not to be the same, but individuals,” she said.

The dance was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s quote “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Another dance, “Sacred Ground,” was choreographed by McAlee in 2001 for a professional dance company she directed on the East Coast, which worked as a tribute to the Sept. 11 tragedy.

“I thought what a great piece to bring back to honor that idea of not forgetting,” McAlee said, noting the 15th anniversary of the attacks was recently observed.

At 12 minutes, “Sacred Ground” is the longest dance of the show. Other performances are as short as three and a half minutes.

Dancers will discuss their work with the audience following the performance.

McAlee noted that Latin, ballroom, tap and hip-hop classes are being offered through EMCC’s community education program.

“We really want to be connected to the community,” she said.