



View photo by Jordan Christopher

DANCERS FROM BALLET ARIZONA PERFORM during last year's Ballet Under the Stars performance in the Estrella community in Goodyear. Ballet Arizona will bring its annual free event back to the West Valley Thursday night.

On your (ballet) toes

Free Ballet Under the Stars returning to Goodyear Thursday

by Kourtney Balsan
special to the View

Combining Arizona's desert landscape with the enchanting art of dance, Ballet Arizona is presenting its 19th annual Ballet Under the Stars at various Valley locations. The free performance returns to the West Valley at 7 p.m. Thursday at Estrella Lakeside Amphitheater, 10300 S. Estrella Parkway in Goodyear. Shows will also take place in Fountain Hills, Phoenix, Tempe and Sun City West.

Ballet Arizona, which is in its 30th season, sees the performances as a gift to the communities, and a way to expose people to live professional ballet, said Samantha Turner, executive director at Ballet Arizona.

"Art enriches and changes lives. We want to give people the opportunity to experience the art of ballet without worrying about cost," Turner said. "We rely on the contributions from individuals, foundations, corporation and government to fund about half of the cost of presenting our season. Ballet Under the Stars is a 'Thank you' to all those supporters."

The dancers come from all around the world, from Argentina, Brazil and Canada to Cuba, Russia and Spain, as well as the United States, including the Phoenix area, Turner said.

"The dancers rehearse Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the season," she said. "They just returned from the summer break on Aug. 22 and have been preparing for this production ever since."

This year's Ballet Under the Stars will include excerpts from *La Bayadère*, which the company will perform in October, as well as George Balanchine's *Symphony in Three Movements*, Turner said.

It is directed by Ib Anderson, who has been with Ballet Arizona for 16 years and is a former principal dancer with the New York City Ballet and the Royal Danish Ballet.

The outdoor performance has been a tradition for almost 20 years, but it's only the fifth time being held in Goodyear, said Guylene Ozlanski, arts and culture coordinator for the city of Goodyear.

"Ballet Under the Stars is a way for Ballet Arizona to bring the beauty and elegance of the ballet to a diverse population under the backdrop of nature," Ozlanski said. "The city of Goodyear partners with [Estrella developer] Newland Communities to create a festival around the ballet performance at North Lake in Estrella communities. The city organizes a fun-filled, family-friendly evening with activities centered on the arts."

Through a collaboration with Ballet Arizona, Newland Communities and local schools, Goodyear youths receive free dance classes with the Class Act program at Estrella Mountain Elementary School, Ozlanski said. The children will also perform during the event Thursday.

Vendors will sell food at the event, which will also include Goodyear's mobile museum, face painting and art exhibitions, Ozlanski said.

Take lawn chairs or blankets to sit on.

For information, visit balletaz.org.

Kourtney Balsan can be reached at Kbalsan@westvalleyview.com.

EMCC celebrates Hispanic heritage

View report

Two Maricopa Community College administrators will share the stories of their journeys during Hispanic Heritage Month events at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale. Events observing the month started Sept. 15 and continue through Oct. 14 at 3000 N. Dysart Road.

For events titled What's Your Story?, Maria Harper-Marinick, chancellor of the Maricopa Community College District, and EMCC President Ernie Lara will discuss their life stories.

Here's the schedule of remaining events:

- **Today:** The LinkedIn/Women Rising Workshop will give assistance in creating a LinkedIn profile provided by Women Rising and the Career Transfer Center from 1 to 2 p.m. at Estrella South Room 115.

- **Thursday:** The film *No Mas Bebés* will be screened, followed by a discussion from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center Room 114.

- **Sept. 27:** Loteria (bingo) will be played and the origin of the game will be discussed from 2 to 3 p.m. at the Estrella Hall South North Community Room 260.

- **Sept. 28:** The annual Cesar Chavez Luncheon will commemorate the life of the Hispanic leader from noon to 1 p.m. at the Estrella Conference Center.

- **Oct. 4:** EMCC Student Storytelling will take place from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center Room 147.

- **Oct. 6:** Salsa y Salsa will include a contest for best salsa and salsa dancing instruction from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Student Union.

- **Oct. 11:** What's Your Story? will feature Harper-Marinick discussing her journey from the Dominican Republic to becoming chancellor of the community college district from 1:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Estrella Conference Center.

- **Oct. 12:** A Shrine Box Workshop will feature EMCC faculty member Annie Buentello demonstrating how to make a shrine box for Dia de los Muertos from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Plaza Gallery.

- **Oct. 13:** A Mask Making Workshop will take place from 10 a.m. to noon at the Plaza Gallery.

- **Oct. 14:** What's Your Story? will feature EMCC President Ernie Lara discussing his journey from Prescott to becoming a leader in education from 11 a.m. to noon at the Plaza Gallery.

All events are free and open to the public. To attend the Cesar Chavez Luncheon, an RSVP must be made to EMCC Student Life by calling 623-935-8807.

For information, email emcc.hhmc@estrellamountain.edu.

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