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EMCC show explores family matters

Submitted by Glenn Gullickson on Wed, 04/26/2017 - 12:00am



left, Adison Dahle and Alexis Peña rehearse "There is a Time," one of several pieces from the production titled "Our Family Tree," April 17 at Estrella Mountain Community College's Performing Arts Center. "Our Family Tree" will be performed Friday and Saturday at the Avondale college, 3000 N. Dysart Road. Admission is free. To see all photos from this shoot, go to www.westvalleyview.com/pictures. View photo by Jordan Christopher

Graduating dance students choreograph performances for 'Our Family Tree'

Family issues will take the stage when dance students at Estrella Mountain Community College perform their spring program titled "Our Family Tree."

Performances will be Friday and Saturday at the Performing Arts Center at the Avondale college.

The show will feature 10 practicum dances, final projects that must be choreographed by students majoring in dance before they graduate.

Eleven other student dancers will also perform their work and the show will include two works choreographed by Janaea Lyn McAlee, EMCC's residential dance faculty member.

McAlee said the show will feature the largest group of students presenting their practicums in the three years she has been teaching full-time at the school.

"It really shows the growth of the program," she said. "We have really grown as a family here."

Students said they worked together to arrive at the theme for the show, which uses mostly modern dance techniques to express concepts symbolically in solo, duet and group dances.

Many of the dances tell emotional stories involving conflicts between parents and children or brothers and sisters.

The tensions of a mother-daughter relationship are explored in a duet titled "Under the Same Roof," choreographed by Jazmin Parker, who also dances the daughter role in the piece.

To develop the dance, Parker said she had to remember things she felt when she grew up in Mexico.

"Moms and daughters are different people," she said. "In the end, we have to realize family is all we have."

Eva Patricia Rincon said she was also inspired by her upbringing for her dance, "Behind Closed Doors," about a single-parent family.

"Loss of Innocence," by Anonette Fleming, focuses on how two sisters cope differently with the loss of a loved one.

Leidy Ruelas said she used the Cinderella story for her inspiration for "The Strength of Me," a dance about an outcast who has to deal with three evil sisters.

Amy Gerlofs' group dance, "The Fire Inside Me," explores the levels of a relationship, while Crystal Craten's "There is Time" is based on the different seasons of a family.

The practicum dances also feature a solo dance choreographed and performed by Alexis Pena, a duet choreographed by Adison Dahle and group dances choreographed by Kevin Davis and Esmeralda Castro.

The show will include a new work by McAlee, with music composed by pianist David Anderson and performed by Anderson and bassist Andy Galore.

Musical Lineup

WHAT: "Our Family Tree" presented by DancEstrella.

WHEN: 3 and 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday

WHERE: Performing Arts Center, Estrella Mountain Community College, 3000 N. Dysart Road, Avondale

COST: Free

Titled "Better Half," McAlee's dance deals with the balance between autonomy and dependence, control and vulnerability.

Dancers will also perform McAlee's reconstruction of "Pedals," a classic repertory work by modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan about the cycle of life.

Graduating students said they plan to continue their dance studies at four-year schools as they prepare to become professional dancers, dance teachers or costume designers.

McAlee said dances last from two to six minutes for the show estimated to run two hours.

Those attending the show are invited to stay for a conversation with the dancers following each performance.

Glenn Gullickson can be reached at ggullickson@westvalleyview.com (<mailto:ggullickson@gmail.com>).

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