

Oregon Daily Emerald *Pulse*

Ballet with a creative twist

The always innovative Ballet Fantastique will perform its season finale at the Hult Center

By Tiffany Reagan

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Media Credit: Jerry Gowins

Ballet Fantastique will perform its finale concert at the Hult Center this Sunday.

The show, "Tour de Suites," will showcase a year's worth of performance, including a few pieces that have never been seen.

Hannah Bontrager, the company's co-director, is a recent graduate who studied dance and English.

Bontrager said Ballet Fantastique's mission is to teach classic ballet by performing it live in the community.

"We try to do so by not only reviving classic works but by trying to keep ballet fun and exciting," she said.

Bontrager said that by re-envisioning ballet, the company can reach people who might not have ever thought of themselves as ballet fans.

One of Ballet Fantastique's goals is to increase student attendance at its performances.

The company has close ties with the University; most of its dancers are either current students or alumni.

Bontrager said the dancers are more well-rounded because they lead normal lives and devote their free time to ballet.

"They're creating art that is grounded in real world experience and it means they are much more dedicated to making things happen," she said.

The dancers also have more input in performance choreography than most ballet companies allow.

Bontrager said Ballet Fantastique's collaborative approach to choreography makes it unique.

When Bontrager danced with the Colorado Ballet company, it was a completely different experience.

"The artistic director comes in, shows you what the choreography is, you do it, you do it perfectly and keep your mouth shut," she said.

"We feel like (our approach) makes our choreographed pieces stronger and makes our dancers stronger artists and

more vested in the process."

Audience members will witness the company's out-of-the-box technique in the show's final number.

Dancers will perform to music from "Breakfast at Tiffany's."
Tour de Suites

WHAT The finale performance of Ballet Fantastique's 2007-08 season

WHE 2 p.m. on Sunday

N:

WHE The Hult Center for the Performing Arts

RE:

COST: Tickets are \$14-25 and \$8 for students.

Ashley Bontrager, a Journalism major, started dancing in the company at 16 years old.

She said she is really excited about this weekend's show.

"We're doing our own choreography - we all got to pitch in our ideas," she said.

"It's a little scary because we are each in almost every dance so it is a lot of energy and steps to remember."

Ashley Bontrager said students should go the show because younger people have a misconception of ballet.

"I think if people give it a chance, they'll find out it's really fun to watch and it's not just something for older people," she said.

Ballet Fantastique is offering specially priced student tickets at less than half of the admission price.

Bontrager said, "We're a young organization and that's reflected in the fact that we're trying to do things that are innovative and out of the box, even though we are grounded in that classic ballet."

treagan@dailyemerald.com

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