



SPECIAL EVENTS

BALLET: Four leading men of 'The Nutcracker'

The Air Force Band of the Pacific will entertain the community Friday with its Holiday Lights Concert...

The Alaska Chamber Chorale (formerly UAF Chamber Singers) will perform "Carols of the Ages" at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10...

The Alaska Chamber Chorale, formerly known as the UAF Chamber Singers, will present its annual "Carols of the Ages" Thursday, Dec. 10...

The next music at One recital includes Marcello: Concerto in C minor, Kate Billington on oboe, Paul Krejci on piano...

"Fish in a Tree" is a fun look at the various relationships of an ensemble cast composed of Angela Brownfield, Tracy Campbell, Njideka Chukwu, Dain A. Geist, Brett Good, Christopher G. Jones, Mike Karoly, Jill Simmons, B.S. Thompson, David A. Valdez and Diana Williams...

Theater takes on futurists

The UAF theater department's final offering for the fall semester is a collection of Dadaist and futurist skits this weekend only in the Lee H. Salsburg Lab Theatre.

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"Fish in a Tree" plays Friday and Saturday at 8:15 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are available (\$6 for adults, \$5 for...

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Saturday's second annual "Trees From the Heart" at the Carlson Center will offer 18 trimmed trees donated and decorated by local businesses and organizations...

Dolce Vita (a gallery project) is collecting coats and jackets to be given to local shelters for the needy. Donations can be brought to the gallery at 509 Eighth Ave. or to club "g" on Old Farmers Loop, noon-5 p.m.

The Explore Alaska Series at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center presents "Jeff King: From Dedication to Victory" Saturday at 3 p.m. Iditarod and Yukon Quest Champion Jeff King will share stories of the trail, his love for dogs and the challenges and rewards of seeing Alaska on a dog sled. Admission is free. Information: 456-0527 or TDD 456-0532.

Dolce Vita (a gallery project) opens its new show, "Metamorphosis," featuring the works of Kat, Tina Shih, Steve Whipple, Chantal and Don Kauss, with a special tribute to Claire Fejes. The exhibit will run through Dec. 19. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, noon-5 p.m. The gallery is located at 509 Eighth Ave. Information: 456-5078.

"The Beat Christmas Pageant Ever" by Barbara Robinson will be the book discussed in Monday's parent-child book discussion group session. The Fairbanks North Star Borough Library youth services series is for fourth- through sixth-graders. Sessions are free and are held at 7:30 p.m. in the Berry Room on the Noel Wien Library. Information: 459-1052.

Continued from Page C-1 perform the story of a young girl, Clara, who receives an unusual Christmas present—a nutcracker doll. Here in Fairbanks, dancers have been rehearsing since September under the keen eye of Norman Shelburne, artistic director, and Sue Perry, ballet mistress of North Star Ballet. "The Nutcracker" opens Dec. 11.

Every year since 1987, Shelburne has produced the full-length ballet as a performance opportunity for his dancers and as holiday entertainment for the rest of us. This year is unusual in that Shelburne has four local dancers in the company to fill the principal male roles.

Among Chandler Braley, 15, Ian Hardy, 19, Tim Lacatena, 17, and Von Seils, 18, they've danced every male role from the cherub with his bow and arrows to the Sugar Plum Fairy's Cavalier. Lathrop High School sophomore Braley and recent West Valley graduate Hardy danced together as Party Boys seven years ago. They will again be raising a ruckus on stage as the Nutcracker and Mouse King. Lacatena, a junior at West Valley, will reprise his role as the Soldier Doll, as well as serving as Cavalier to the Snow and Sugar Plum Fairies. Seils, who has studied and danced in Fairbanks for the past few years and now lives in Juneau, will alternate with Lacatena as the Snow Cavalier and Claire Fejes. The exhibit will run through Dec. 19. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, noon-5 p.m. The gallery is located at 509 Eighth Ave. Information: 456-5078.

These young performers all credit "The Nutcracker" with clinching their interest in dance. While it is not unusual for girls to take an early interest in ballet and pursue it into their teens and beyond, boys follow a different pattern. According to Shelburne, there's no inborn gender preference for dance.

"Lots of boys come to creative movement classes when they're 4 or 5 years old and adore it," he said.

Later social and peer pressure come into play and boys often turn to other activities. In Braley and Hardy's case, both started young, then pursued sports, music, or theater, before returning to dance in their teens. Other male dancers follow the pattern of Seils and Lacatena, not becoming interested in dance until their teens, then throwing themselves into it.

"To people who question putting boys in ballet, I tell them to come see a ballet class and look at the literature," Shelburne said. "The kinetic awareness that...

comes from dance has a great value to athletes wanting to improve their basketball game or time on the ice, for example."

Having also pursued athletics, Lacatena and Seils agreed. Lacatena holds the West Valley freshman track and field record for hurdles, crediting ballet for teaching him to jump. Seils notes the number of swimmers who become dancers.

"In both, you use your total body to develop strength and flexibility," Seils said. "In dance, we use the small muscles, not just the big muscles, and we use them in isolation. Understanding your physical ability through dance makes you a better, more aware athlete."

Men's movements in dance are different than women's, Shelburne said, taking advantage of men's typically tighter-knit hip structure.

"The men jump higher, so they can do multiple turns in the air."

"I love to get out there and jump as high as I can," Lacatena said. "It's great to see a good male dancer pouring out all that energy. Baryshnikov is only 5 feet, 4 inches, but he can jump 4 feet."

The concentration required in dance helps in other areas, too. "It's given me confidence, focus, and self discipline," Lacatena said. "I'm more willing to try new things. Plus I've learned to get my homework done whenever I can."

Braley credits dance with improving his reading speed. "When I hear the steps to a dance combination, I have to think about what it looks like. When I read, I think in the same way about images and ideas."

"When I started dancing," Seils said, "it was the same feeling as doing a math problem. I used the same part of my brain. Now my memory is so much better."

"After a while, things get to seem logical," Hardy added. "We're working toward perfection like a mathematician, but in a creative way. It's artistic logic."

Though they acknowledged that they are bucking cultural stereotypes, none of the four dancers is bothered by seemingly going against the grain.

"As I've grown older, I realize

that if you think and act like it's an awesome thing to dance, other people will be impressed," Seils said.

"People have a stereotype about dance and they don't go see dance because they're afraid they won't understand it," Hardy said.

But "The Nutcracker" seems to be one ballet that can convert skeptics to dance fans.

Last year, Lacatena's English class, after watching him in a school performance of "Nutcracker," gave him a standing ovation when he came to class.

"It's hard to imagine 'Nutcracker' without a male presence," Shelburne says. "It's impossible to imagine the fairies without their cavaliers. And for kids, the battle between the Mouse King and the Nutcracker is the most important part."

For these four male dancers, this "Nutcracker" may be the last ballet they dance in together. Since graduating from high school, Seils and Hardy are taking the year off to prepare for the next stage in their dance careers.

According to Shelburne, the four young men, all of whom want to be professional dancers, have the qualities to make that happen.

"They have to have a certain mind," he said, "one that enjoys the discipline of learning dance technique, one that needs an expressive outlet and one that responds to music, the basis of dance."

According to Shelburne, "The Nutcracker" is about Clara making the transition from one stage of life to another through her encounters with the strange Drosselmeyer, the Nutcracker, the Mouse King, and the wonders of the Sugar Plum Fairy's court. In the end, she takes her place in a still-magical adult world, full of promise.

The North Star Ballet will perform "The Nutcracker" at Hering Auditorium Dec. 11, 8 p.m.; Dec. 12, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Dec. 13, 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tickets are available at Carrs Foodland, Hoyt's Music, or by calling 1-800-478-7328.

Only Hardy is a local free-lance writer.

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THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE and EIELSON AFB present "Holiday Lights!" The Air Force Band of the Pacific Major Steven Grimo Commander & Conductor Mike Shultz KTVF-Channel 11 Narrator & M.C. Friday, December 4, 1998 7:00 pm Doors open at 6:30 Lathrop High School Hering Auditorium Fairbanks, Alaska

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