

Alton Little Theater announces 'Give Dance A Chance' fundraiser

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ALTON - Area Dance Studios, colleges and professional Dancers will be performing in the Give Dance A Chance Concert at Alton Little Theater on Saturday, February 11th at 7:30 p.m. It is one of many efforts by those involved to promote dance in the Riverbend area. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$10 (\$8 for 12 and under) but are now available through the ALT Website (altonlittletheater.org). Post show reception will include offerings from La Mia Cucina and LuciAnna's pastries.

"Our Community is abundant with artistic opportunities. I'm very grateful to teach dance and choreograph musicals at Alton High but there's nothing for adult dancers who want to perform. It's also important to me as a dance educator to make sure my students are aware of the career paths dance can offer," says concert coordinator, Rachel Brady.

This concert is one of several collaborations for many of the groups involved. Past performances have included dance concerts at the Amphitheater, a concert for peace at

the LCCC Chapel, collaborations with Alton High's Chamber Strings and the Alton Muny Band, and most recently a holiday production title "A Winter's Gift".

Collaborator's bios are extensive and varied including professional work in LA, New York and Internationally. NYU Graduate, Erin Lane, will present a piece inspired by her two year old daughter's drawings and accompanied by her brother, Evan Ghislin's original violin composition which she developed as part of her graduate work. Matthew Lievers and Heather Hill will present a swing number titled "Jive Live!". Both studied dance at SIUE and, after professional careers, now teach Zumba and other fitness classes. Paula Beals, Rachel Brady, Sarah Henschen and Liz Lane will perform a dramatic modern quartet about lost love. Rachel, Sarah and Liz also attended SIUE as dance majors where Paula, former Graham dancer, was a dance instructor.

"It's been fun to reconnect. You build relationships when you dance together that last a lifetime," says Liz Lane who now teaches NIA. And speaking of relationships that last a lifetime, Rachel will also be dancing with her sister, Erin Mallory. The sisters grew up dancing in Alton and both found a special love of modern dance during college. "It's so easy to work with her. I can almost guess her next move without even thinking about it," says Rachel.

The dance department of SIUE will be bringing a piece titled, "The Power of Hope," which is a collaboration with St. Louis musician, Dr. Scott Sheperd. St. Louis based professional company, Leverage Dance Theater will present a quirky quartet titled, "Were They Allies."

Two local dance studios will be bringing choreography for their advanced students: The Creative Dance Studio located in Alton and The Turning Pointe Academy of Dance in Maryville. The Creative Dance Studio has been working on a piece titled "Perspective". The dancers were assigned to "collect" movement they saw in their everyday lives that they found interesting; not necessarily dance steps but every day gestures.

"Beauty is everywhere and inspiration can be found in the most unlikely places," says Rachel Brady.

The Creative Dance Studio will also perform a piece choreographed in 2013 with Absolute Quartet, a string quartet of advanced Alton High musicians. Rachel continues, "It's always exciting to dance with live music. I wasn't offered this opportunity until college but I'm happy to be able to give my students this experience."

The Give Dance a Chance Concert is an attempt to develop an audience for concert dance in the area and to provide area dancers with performance opportunities that do not involve competing against each other. We all know that arts add life and vitality to our community. Give Dance a Chance to do the same!