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It's All About Us

By Lou Fancher



"String You ALong," choreographed by Marissa Pfaff, performed by Samantha Aldana, Dru Glass-Gracia, Leah Hendrix-Smith, Zhe Jerry Lin, Vera Schwegler, Leslie Shields and Hailey Yaffee Photo: Jia Wu

a comedy piece exploring the humorous side of life, steps away from today's world of pain and usurped power. "It's a comment on sports mentality," she says, "and placing it on stage makes them (the audience) look at it in a different way."

Jerry Lin, another choreographer with work traveling to ACDF, has changed the announced title of his premiere from Gynandromorph to Never An interesting coincidence-or a reflection of the duet's content: an oppressor, whose victim fights being pinned down and in trying to escape, gets further crushed.

In all, there are nine premieres going up December 3rd at 8:00 p.m. Nine fresh statements, spoken in the language of the body, telling the stories we all know, of laughter and loss, of group and solo: The story of us.

Saint Mary's College of

California Performing Arts

Department Presents:

Altered States,

Fabulous Shoes

When:

December 3-5, 2009 at 8pm

Where: The LeFevre Theatre on Saint Mary's Campus

Admission:

Free / donations welcome

For Reservations and Information Call: (925) 631-4670

The dance department at Saint Mary's College is gearing up for the all-student, all-the-time fall show. Altered States, Fabulous Shoes, running December 3-5 at the LeFevre Theatre, features nine premieres and the sweat equity of more than 20 dancers. Marissa Pfaff is one of the four seniors charged with putting on the show. As part of a dance major's senior thesis, the annual show is conceived, publicized, programmed, lit, produced and choreographed by students. "We came up with a hundred different ideas for the program order," Pfaff says. Taking into account costume quick changes, set movement, emotional flow from one work to the next, not to mention allowing dancers in more than one work a moment to catch their breath, was a challenge. "There's a lot more work than people know," she says.

Selecting the name of the fall show was relatively easy. "A lot of the pieces were about changing the space," says Pfaff, resulting in Altered States. The second half of the title had deeper origins: the choreographers' focus on social stigmas surrounding disorders, disabilities, or the hard-to-define-but-instantly-recognizable feelings related to being "different than the norm."

Pfaff, who works as a fireworks pyrotechnician at the Hollywood Bowl in the summertime, brings a certain flare to her choreography. She has two pieces on the program: String You Along, an aerial group piece reminiscent of Cirque de Soleil with four dancers and three "dancer bodies" who secure the silks used in the dance; and Web of Lies, a solo exploring the entanglements a body can find-and escape. Vera Schwegler, whose Go Team! has been selected for presentation at the prestigious American College Dance Festival (ACDF) next March, is both a choreographer and a dancer in the show. Her work,

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