

Summer courses bring the hopes and dreams of dance

Posted by Tina Vervoorn

Samantha Schilke, Anna Miller and Makenna Ortiz are all ballerinas in training at Ventura County Ballet Company.

Each knows that a summer intensive course at a top ballet school will further their desire to dance. Each also knows that there will be hundreds of other dancers from other ballet schools trying out on the same day.

This year, more than 15 dancers from the Ventura County Ballet Company will try out for summer intensives at American Ballet Theatre, Rock School of Pennsylvania Ballet, San Francisco Ballet,

Oregon Ballet Theatre, Lines Company, Miami City Ballet, and more.

The classical Russian style, based on a Vaganova curriculum taught by Kathleen Noblin and the instructors of the Ballet Academy of Ventura is exacting. The tilt of a head, the lift of the foot all prescribed by the form of the curriculum.

"We know, from the start, at the auditions that the judges will see well trained dancers," said Kathleen Noblin, Executive Director. "We hope that they will choose our dancers over all the others."

Auditions for the 2009 summer dance intensives

began in early January and continued through mid-February. Ventura County Ballet Company students Samantha Schilke and Chloe Donnelly auditioned for the Oregon Ballet Theatre mid-February in Los Angeles.

This year already 10 dancers from Ventura County Ballet Company have been accepted to summer programs at American Ballet Theatre (ABT), LINES, The Rock School and Washington Ballet in Washington, D.C., and California Arts Summer dance.

"The difference to our emerging professional dancers that these intensives bring

is amazing," said Artistic Director and Curriculum Director Colleen O'Callaghan, "It can mean entry into the right college with the right dance curriculum, or even entry into the world of professional dance right now for those that choose."

O'Callaghan's advice comes from experience, as she herself danced with ABT under the direction of Lucia Chase and Mikhail Baryshnikov and is a teacher for one of ABT's summer intensive programs. From the age of 14 she spent her summers dancing in Pennsylvania and New York at some of the same programs

her students are now auditioning.

Ventura County Ballet Company's young dancers attained great heights in 2008 as they were accepted and trained with ABT, The Joffrey School and the Washington Ballet, among others. Local young star Hailley Goleta will be off to college in the fall.

From the time many of the girls start at age 4 with a small fairy wand and soft shoes, their dreams begin.

"It's a long haul, but our dancers are well prepared by our wonderful teachers here at the Ventura County Ballet Company to dance with the best," Noblin said.