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Ventura County Ballet's DAnce ART to feature professionals and special guest musician, Rachel Flowers



(VENTURA COUNTY) — On Sunday April 19, Ventura County Ballet's (VCB) premier pre professional dance company, DAnce ART, will feature its elite young, local dancers and invited professionals to perform alongside instrumentalist and composer Rachel Flowers.

As a twist, this spring ballet event will be at the beautiful and historic Masonic Center in Ventura. Those lucky enough to perform at the rarely opened second

floor performance venue will include Leila Drake, a professional dancer from the critically acclaimed State Street Ballet. Drake's career began at age 3, and her career has included notable performances including the lead role in "Carmen," and Yolanda Veloz in "An American Tango" in Santa Monica.

Drake has also appeared as a guest artist with The Ithaca Ballet, dancing dual roles of Odette/Odile in their full length of "Swan Lake." She will be performing with VCB during Flowers' original composition of "At the End of the Day" and Ellington's "BAND".

"I'm really excited to do performances like this one for DAnce ART," says Drake. "Anytime we professionals can dance to live music, I consider it such a gift. Rachel's story and experiences are very inspiring, and it will be an honor to dance to her beautiful music. It's great opportunity to work with different dancers, different choreography, new spaces and places. The students of VCB are always wonderful to share the stage with."

Also dancing during the event will be local pre-professional Roxey Newman from Oak View, who was recently accepted into Department of Ballet, University of Utah which offers one of the best dance programs in the country. University of Utah works closely with Ballet West, a renowned professional ballet company. In addition, pre-professional Alexandra Roth from Oxnard, who just received a 75 percent scholarship to Joffrey Ballet School at the elite level, which lands her an audition to be a part of Joffrey Ballet's Concert Tour. Roth also competed in this year's LA Music Center Spotlight Competition. Both Newman and Roth will dance to "Malambo" a fast paced and highly syncopated Latin number, and Newman will also perform in "BAND."

The event will feature music from popular pianist and Ventura County resident, Rachel Flowers, performing an original composition, "At The End Of The Day," and "Malambo" by Alberto Ginestera, from an arrangement by Keith Emerson. Flowers, 21, started playing piano at the age of two, when her mother Jeanie, also a musician, taught her to play "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." When she was four years old she became a student at the Southern California Conservatory of Music. At 13, she performed at a Thelonious Monk Institute tribute for Herbie Hancock and was featured in two segments of "60 Minutes" about students at the Academy of Music for the Blind in Los Angeles. She is active in several jazz lineups in California including the Ottsen Flowers Clark Trio, and is, as always, composing original material.

A feature documentary, "Hearing is Believing", by Ventura filmmaker Lorenzo DeStefano, is in production. It is following Rachel and her family for a year-and-half, chronicling Rachel from her birth in 1993 and exploring the limitless musical horizons she is exploring today. This DAnce Art event will be filmed for the documentary.

Leading the talented group of young, pre-professional dancers is Marina Fliagina, VCB's choreographer and associate artistic director who's danced for world-renowned ballet schools: Moscow State Theatre Kremlin Ballet, Russian Imperial Ballet, Moscow Classical Ballet and Moscow Festival Ballet.

Event Information:

Who: Ventura County Ballet's DAnce ART with special guest, Rachel Flowers

When: Sunday, April 19. Reception at 2 p.m., performance at 2:30 p.m.

Where: Historic Masonic Center, 482 E. Santa Clara St. Ventura, Calif. 93001

To learn more visit:

<http://www.venturacountyballet.com/Performances.html>.

About the Ventura County Ballet Company and Ballet Academy Ventura:

Celebrating its 17th year, the Ventura County Ballet Company features professional dancers as well as VCB pre-professionals and students from Ballet Academy Ventura, the official school of the VCB.

Kathleen Noblin, a recipient of the City of Ventura 2008 Mayor's Arts Award, founded Ballet Academy Ventura in 1992 as the official school of the Ventura County Ballet where the company is in residence. She has served as executive director of the company since its inception.

For more information, or to sponsor an upcoming ballet or educational program, call (805) 648-2080 or visit www.venturacountyballet.com.

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