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Dance Fest Goes Southwest, West ; Three Weekends Will See Troupes From N.M., San Francisco

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By DAVID STEINBERG Journal Staff Writer

Wild Dancing West has a goal of showcasing the best of contemporary dance in New Mexico in full-length, fully staged pieces in a theater.

For the festival's second year, there's a New Mexico focus in its first two weekends. The third weekend will be given over to a San Francisco dance company.

Marge Neset, a member of the festival's curatorial committee, explained why the festival is going beyond its stated mission.

Committee members, Neset said, went back and forth about whether to include a regional dance troupe. Among those on the committee are a few members of the NewArt New Mexico board of directors, which produces Global DanceFest, and a few members of the VSA North 4th Arts Center board.

The upshot, she said, is that "Wild Dancing West is a work in progress. We haven't formalized a format yet. One thing we know is that it primarily will be comprised of ... New Mexico dancers and dance companies."

Last year, several choreographers from Albuquerque and two from Santa Fe presented work in the festival's debut, which coincided with the N4th Theater's grand opening.

This is this year's festival lineup:

Co-choreographers Jennifer Predock-Linnell and Meredith Gabriel- Black with composer Panaiotis and digital photographer Joyce Neimanas will present "Crack," which is in two sections.

The first part, called "Nowhere Slowly," is a reconstruction of what Predock-Linnell and Panaiotis did a year ago for the University of New Mexico faculty show and for the Composers' Symposium.

In it, Predock-Linnell said she wanted to create a contrast between abstraction and narration.

Part II, titled "Terminal Velocity," is a new work that gives equal weight to the artistic visions of each of the four collaborators -- the two choreographers, the composer and the photographer.

"My other idea was to have a collaboration between a faculty member (herself) and an undergraduate (Gabriel-Black)," Predock-Linnell said.

Albuquerque's Blythe Eden Dance Company offers "Twine," an evening-length performance containing choreography by Eden and by several company members.

There are six pieces entwined in the performance, Eden said.

Three are hers. Two are by Jacqueline Garcia and a third by Allison Hankins and Jesse Wintermute.

The pieces, Eden said, show "strong differences in choreography - - in movement and tempo preferences. I think each choreographer has their own sensibility in the way they like to move through space."

San Francisco-based dance troupe Double Vision will present "To Futurism and Back Again."

It is a group of nine pieces, three of which are new. One of those three involves an interactive video and sound.

"It's a performance I've been creating over the past year," said Sean Clute, cofounder and co-artistic director of Double Vision with Pauline Jennings.

"Basically, I create a live painting before the audience's eyes using multiple cameras and I create this collage and narrative with characters that I draw. ... The characters are in different rooms and in different periods of time and who meet in the present time."

"Futurism" refers to a period in the first two decades of the 20th century in which artists were fascinated with emerging technologies.

Here is the schedule for the Wild Dancing West festival:

"Crack," 8 p.m. Friday, May 18, and Saturday, May 19, and 2 p.m. May 20

"Twine," 8 p.m. May 25 and 26, and 2 p.m. May 27

"To Futurism and Back Again," 8 p.m. June 1-2 and 2 p.m. June 3

All performances are at the N4th Theater, 4904 Fourth NW.

Tickets are \$12 general public, \$8 students/seniors for each performance. Festival pass are \$21 for any three performances.

For phone reservations call 344-4542.

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