

'Dance 2011' takes stage at ECU

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Whether you prefer graceful ballet pieces, electrifying modern numbers, percussive tap or hot jazz, Dance 2011 has something for every dance enthusiast.

The production features the choreography of East Carolina University's School of Theatre and Dance faculty and special guest artist Mark Haim. The show opens at 8 p.m. Thursday in McGinnis Theatre and runs through Feb. 1. All shows are at 8 p.m. except Jan. 30 when the show will be at 2 p.m.

Haim has choreographed more than 100 dances over his career that spans more than 30 years.

Born in New York City, Haim studied as a classical pianist at the Manhattan School of Music before beginning his formal dance studies with an honorary scholarship to The Juilliard School, where he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts. He received his Master of Fine Arts in dance from the ADF/Hollins University.

Haim was artistic director of Mark Haim & Dancers from 1984-1987 and the Companhia de Danca de Lisboa from 1987-1990. From 2002-2008, he was senior artist in residence at the University of Washington and most recently was visiting associate professor of dance at Reed College.

Haim has served on the faculty of the American Dance Festival since 1993 and also has been on the faculties of NYU Tisch School of the Arts and Hollins University.

His work, "This Land is Your Land" will be performed in Dance 2011. The work premiered at the prestigious Northwest New Works Festival in Seattle.

Haim's minimalistic opus has modern dance meeting country music, as it is accompanied by tunes from Hank Williams, Toby Keith and Martina McBride. Audiences will be captivated by the simple movements that reveal subtle changes.

After "This Land is Your Land," the dancer will perform part of the classic ballet "Coppélia." Scenes from Act II have been reconstructed and staged by ECU assistant professor Galena Panova. The sentimental comic ballet premiered in 1870 and has been restaged several times over the years, most notably by Marius Petipa in 1884 and by George Balanchine in 1974.

Tommi Overcash Galaska's "Chasm" is a provocative and intense jazz piece about one woman's encounter with the dark side and the underworld. The music is very rhythmic and features a variety of drumming.

After intermission, John Dixon's "The Search" is a satirical work about the seemingly never-ending search for meaning in life and art. The music for his choreography starts with the theme from "Get Smart" that blends in electronic New Age sounds.

Tap dance is next with Clarine Powell's "Hoofbeats" featuring the old tune "My Bucket's Got a Hole in It." "Hoofbeats" explores the variety of forms that rhythm tap can take. It works off the musical contributions of Willie Nelson, Wynton Marsalis, and the drumming rhythms of the dancers themselves.

Patricia Week's piece, titled "Invention is the Mother of Necessities," explores the role of technology in our society and is inspired by the work of renowned futurist Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan considered electronic media as extensions of the central nervous system so audiences won't be surprised when the dancers bring out their cell phones.

Dance 2011 concludes with Teal Darkenwald's "Inferno," which blends physicality with fluidity and passion in a technically demanding work that is meant to challenge the limits of each dancer's body.