UC SANTA BARBARA

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Three Decades of Excellence

The UCSB Dance Company is one of the campus's most exclusive organizations. Its members are all senior dance majors who were invited to join the group after what its director calls "a three-year audition."

"We look at them for three years," said Delila Moseley, a continuing lecturer in UC Santa Barbara's Department of Theater and Dance and the company's director for the past 29 years. "We see them in rehearsal, in class, see what their attitude is, and then we invite them to be in the company. You want to have dancers that can handle the intensive experience of touring without falling apart. And it's been very successful in that way."

The company is celebrating its 30th year with a number of performances and its 10th anniversary European tour in the spring. The company of 10 women and six men will visit Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Italy in April and May for a nearly non-stop series of performances, classes and seminars.

Indeed, the dancers will get just one day off in their three weeks on the road.

"It's a very different experience when the students go as working dancers as opposed to being a tourist," Moseley said, "because they interact with the other dancers, they take classes with them, they perform for them and sometimes with them. Everywhere we go we have round table discussions where the students talk to each other and to the faculty. The experience is more immersive and richer."

The schedule doesn’t ease up much for the dancers on campus. In addition to 10 hours a week of class time, they’ll put in good chunks of time for rehearsals with special projects and visiting choreographers.

This year, for example, the company will perform a reconstruction of a piece by José Limón, whom Moseley called “one of the pillars of modern dance.” Alice Condodina, a professor emerita who was a principal dancer in the Limón Dance Company, will restage the piece with the UCSB Dance Company and then teach sections of the piece to students in Vilnius, Lithuania. If the details can be finalized, Moseley said, the Lithuanian dancers will come to California to perform with UC Santa Barbara students on the Hatlen Theater stage.

“It’s an opportunity to experience a taste of the life of a professional dancer,” said Moseley, who danced professionally in New York, Los Angeles and at UCSB before retiring and directing the company.

The performance season kicks off Nov. 8 and 9 at the Old Vic Theater in downtown Santa Barbara, with a duet by faculty member Christina McCarthy performed in a collaborative concert with Santa Barbara City College. The first full performance — the Repertory Concert— is Feb. 27 and 28 at UCSB’s ballet theater in the Humanities and Social Sciences Building.

In the meantime, the company’s dancers are busy with rehearsals in a department that’s redoubled its efforts to attract top talent to the South Coast. Last year it established two tracks in the major, modern dance and ballet “so dancers can enter and specialize in one or the other of the two,” Moseley said. “That’s kind of a big change. It’s always been a modern department, but the added emphasis been successful in bringing new freshmen into the department.” Freshmen, she added, who are inspired by the company and soon aspire to become members.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the

edge of the Pacific Ocean.