



Saint Viator High School Orchesis Show: from Elvis to Prince



2009-2010 Orchesis Dance Club

They're not in Kansas anymore.

After dancing down the yellow brick road in last month's musical, "The Wizard of Oz," Saint Viator High School dancers now mount their Orchesis Show, complete with 17 pieces all choreographed by students.

"It features a wide variety of styles --- from jazz and modern, to classical ballet and even swing," says Kelly McDonald, club moderator. "It's student-driven and has tons of energy."

The show takes place at 7 p.m. March 12 and 13, and at 4 p.m. March 14, at the Jeuck Auditorium at Saint Viator High School, 1213 E. Oakton St. in Arlington Heights. Tickets are \$8 at the door.

Company members open the show with a strong jazz number, danced to the 2009 release, "Ghosts N Stuff."

"It's a sharper piece, filled with strong movement and jazz, hip hop elements," says club president Stephanie Niro of Barrington who choreographed the dance.

Another showstopper promises to be the tap number, set to a remix of 1950s hits, including Elvis classics, and choreographed by sisters Samantha and Lexi Ropski of Prospect Heights and Katie Anderson of Arlington Heights.

One of the show's highly anticipated numbers is its guy/girl dance, this year set to the classic Prince song "Let's Go Crazy," and featuring Orchesis members with their partners from the musical.

Saint Viator's Orchesis is an audition-based, performance group that is open to all students at the school.

"Each year, hundreds of students participate in some form of fine arts at the school, and Orchesis is one of the many core programs in our fine arts department," says JoAnne Francis, student activities director. "I am impressed not only by the talent of our dancers, but at their tremendous ability to choreograph the dances as well. Each year the girls produce an absolutely beautiful show."

This year's group comes from a wide range of communities, including Arlington Heights, Barrington, Elk Grove, Inverness, Itasca, Long Grove, Mount Prospect, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows and Wauconda.

"They all are studio-trained dancers who bring their high-level technique to each performance," McDonald says.

As a group, they represent the Bataille Academy of Danse in Barrington, Denise Sabala Dance Studio in Lake Zurich, Bonnie Lindholm School in Palatine, and McDonald Dance Academy and DanceXpress, both in Arlington Heights.

McDonald is in her second year working with the Orchestras members. She earned a bachelor of fine arts with a focus in dance from the University of Iowa, and she currently dances with Project 606, when she's not choreographing professionally.

However, working with student dancers come naturally for the Arlington Heights resident. She grew up surrounded by dance, training under her mother, Linda, who launched the McDonald Dance Academy in Arlington Heights.