

Los Alamos Monitor - Kaleidoscope – Thursday, 2-14-08

Los Alamos Dancer Performs in ‘American in Paris’

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Los Alamos High School student Tess Montoya plays the girl of Eli Barnes’ dreams in the National Dance Institute of New Mexico’s ballet, “An American in Paris.”

Montoya plays a flower girl who falls in love with Eli Barnes’ character, who is an American living in Paris. However, a poster girl and a boxer present a few obstacles to the couple before they finally reunite at the end of the ballet.

For both dancers, this is just one of many productions they have involved in at the institute.

Montoya has participated in the institute since fourth grade and Barnes, a Santa Fe High School student who performed in New Mexico Dance Theater’s “Dracula” last year, has attended the program since third grade.

Montoya said she has enjoyed being a long-time member fo the dance institute. She said it is “a really good environment to be in every day. I feel like I get really good training there.”

She also enjoys the opportunity to indulge in her love of dance. “I like how there are many different styles,” Montoya said. “I really like to perform... it’s just really fun for me.”

It’s an art form Montoya said she would like to pursue as a career. She has auditioned for colleges with hopes of entering a musical theater or dance program. Her goal is to earn a Bachelors of Fine Arts.

Being a member of the institute, Montoya said, will benefit her in reaching these goals. “I believe it definitely benefits my dancing, my technique, my performance,” she said. “I also met really good friends there.”

Barnes said they have worked hard getting this performance down right. Rehearsals started in December and practices have been held every day.

“It’s just a blast,” he said.

“Dance is my escape,” Barnes said. “When you get to the studio, (you’re) able to get rid of stress... you get to come in and be free.”

“American in Paris” will be held at 7 p.m. Feb. 22-23 and at 2 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Dance Barns, located at 1140 Alto St. in Santa Fe. Tickets cost \$15/\$10. call 983-7661 for more information.