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Jam celebrates history of tap

It's all about a legacy.

For Bill Evans, now artist-in-residence at the State University of New York in Brockport, N.Y., said that for him the 8th Annual New Mexico Tap Jam, it's about bringing back pieces he's created and making them come alive again.

"I feel like a proud grandfather of rhythm tap in New Mexico," Evans said.

His former students from his days at the University of New Mexico are coordinating and dancing in this year's revivalist Tap Jam.

Jackie Oliver, Evans's student from the time she was 10 years old, is coordinating the event. She teaches at National Dance Institute of New Mexico and her students are some of the tappers in the concert.

Marc Yonally, another former student at UNM, is returning from the Chicago Tap Theatre to perform in the Jam, as is Sara Hutchinson, now coordinator of dance for Albuquerque Public Schools.

NDI-NM and the University Dance Program are co-sponsoring the Tap Jam this year and Oliver brought in studios from New Mexico, Arizona and Texas to participate.

With those studios come dancers like Wendy Barker, who will join Evans in a duet version of "Tenderly," originally an Evans solo.

So where is this revival of tap dance going? Like so much in contemporary music and dance, artists are experimenting with cross-overs between styles.

There is dance/theatre, performance art, abstract dance movement fused with indigenous dance motifs, and flamenco rhythms influenced by African, jazz and classical styles. Evans has been investigating fusing tap and modern styles, mixing casts of rhythm tap and modern dancers.