



Jazz, Hip Hop and Tap Drive the Saint Viator Orchesis Show

March 7, 2011



Orchesis members rehearse the opening number for the upcoming show.

Students in Orchesis at Saint Viator High School come from 10 communities and reflect training from nearly as many dance studios. It's not surprising then that their interest in dance styles runs the gamut from jazz and hip hop, to ballet and tap.

They have packed all of those genres, as well as a tender guy/girl dance, into this weekend's Orchesis Show, which they call simply, "Intensity."

Shows take place at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and at 1 p.m. on Sunday in the Jeuck Auditorium at Saint Viator High School. Tickets are \$8 at the door.

In all, there are 17 pieces featured. Students choreographed all of them except for the opening number, a big ensemble number that Club Moderator Kelly McDonald designed.

"The show is student-driven and has tons of energy," McDonald says.

The co-presidents of the club, Valerie Kieballa of Rolling Meadows and Samantha Ropski of Prospect Heights choreographed the show's guy/girl number. Set to the '80s song "Goody Two Shoes" by Adam Ant.

"It's bright and upbeat with lots of lifts and flips," Ropski says. "It's really challenging, but you can tell everyone is having fun."

Guys for the number --- nearly a dozen --- were recruited from the football and lacrosse teams, as well as from last month's musical, "Fiddler on the Roof."

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

This year's group comes from 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 adds.

As a group, they represent the Bataille Academis 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 third year working with the Orchesis 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.