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## Local dance school earns coveted spot as NCSA Dance Festival

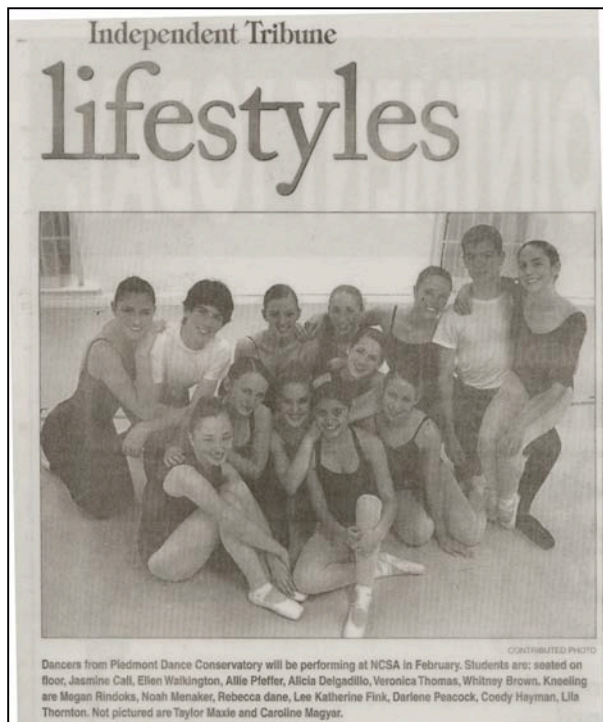
Fifteen students from Kannapolis-based Piedmont Dance Conservatory (PDC) have been selected to perform an original work at the Winter Dance Festival at North Carolina School of the Arts in Winton-Salem on Feb. 26.

The Winter Dance Festival is held at North Carolina School of the Arts over a weekend in February each year.

Approximately 350 students from dance schools and companies across North Carolina participate in dance classes that range from ballet technique and pointe to contemporary technique, jazz, and hip-hop. The weekend concludes with a performance in the Stevens Center of adjudicated works by North Carolina dance schools and companies.

“The students had to learn a new way to move, a way to step outside of the classical ballet box,” says Wiley. “What they do in Free Verse is a completely new way of expressing energy, movement quality, and phrasing. It’s very difficult to teach classically trained dancers to move in unison and not use classically based movements, but they rose to the occasion and put on a terrific performance for Mr. Han.”

On Feb. 26 they’ll get to perform Free Verse for fellow dancers and the public at the Stevens Center in Winston-Salem.



Piedmont Dance Conservatory offers recreational and pre-professional dance instruction to students of all ages. Students may choose from ballet, modern, tap, jazz, and lyrical classes. The school is located in Cannon Village in Kannapolis and draws students locally and from the surrounding counties.

The mission of the school is to use the power of dance to develop discipline, a sense of responsibility, teamwork, and self-confidence as well as to engage the imagination.

The PDC students, who range in age from 13 to 16, will perform Free Verse, a contemporary ballet, in the festival’s concluding program. PDC performed their dance for judge Kee-Juan Han, co-director of American

Ballet Competition and full-time NCSA dance faculty member, earlier this month,

earning the privilege to dance at the festival along with students from the North Carolina School of the Arts, and American Ballet Theatre's Studio Company.

The young PDC dancers receive up to 12 hours of dance instruction weekly, focusing primarily on classical ballet technique. Having completed community performances of The Nutcracker in December, the students had only three weeks to learn the new 10-minute contemporary ballet before adjudication.

Rebecca Wiley, PDC director, choreographed the dance, setting in to and electronic music composition by Antonia Carlos Scott, which he wrote for an original performance by Complexions Contemporary Ballet Company in New York City. Wiley envisioned an exciting work for her students using this music and contacted Scott directly for permission to use his composition. It's a complex piece with syncopation and odd pauses – perfect for a challenging interpretive dance.