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Ballet Austin celebrates diversity on International Dance Day

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BY LILIANA HALL (/AUTHOR/LILIANA-HALL)

Dance is a common language, whether you are a skilled salsa dancer or an expert dance mom.

However, even if you prefer to watch from the side, the art of dance unites at Ballet Austin as the group prepares for International Dance Day, a global event celebrated every year on April 29.

International Dance Day was created in 1982 by the Dance Committee of the International Theater Institute with the sole purpose to celebrate dance and the universality of the art form. International Dance Day is celebrated in many different forms across the world— anything from performance to educational training. On April 29, Ballet Austin will be offering

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Vicki Parsons, the director of the Butler Center for the Performing Arts, said she learned to dance after reading an article about its purpose. She said she is glad to be able to dance.



International Dance Day 5 years ago
they embrace the fact that everybody has to

“If you look at all the dance forms across the world, there is a similar thread between all of them,” Parsons said. “International Dance Day is about coming together and celebrating the universality of dance.”

Alexa Caparda, a UT graduate and dance instructor at Ballet Austin, will teach a Philippine folk dance from her country of origin as well as a classical ballet class for beginners. Caparda continued her training in classical ballet after moving to Austin from the Philippines.

“I learned and performed Philippine folk dances when I was young, so I hope people get a small taste of Philippine culture and history by taking my class,” Caparda said. “I appreciate any opportunity to share some of the vibrant culture I grew up with.”

On International Dance Day, Caparda will be teaching the basics of a Philippine folk dance called the tinikling. Caparda said it is a dance which loosely imitates the movement of a rail-species bird as it dodges bamboo traps. During the class, dancers will maneuver and dance through bamboo poles as they are traditionally used in the Philippines.

Parson’s said it’s in the nature of the Butler Center to celebrate diversity year-round, but on International Dance Day they try to highlight their culturally diverse classes for the public.

Megan McKelvey, a Butler Fellow at Ballet Austin who has been dancing since she could walk, agreed that dancing is an artform that is worth celebrating even if it is just once a year.

“International Dance Day is a great way for the public to come out and dance because what is stopping you from moving?” McKelvey said. “It is a form of expression, and culturally everyone has something to say.”

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