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San Jose State University, School of Journalism and Mass Communications

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a c c e s s



THE STORY BEHIND THE FREEZE



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8 MUSIC FOR THE MASSES

Fans and artists swarm to music festivals seeking music, art and entertainment.

4 LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES

Faced with competition from the digital age, drive-in theaters from the 1950s and '60s are fighting to stay alive.

6 FOR LOVE OF THE STAGE

This authentic downtown gem focuses on entertaining, bringing a new dimension to the world of theater.

10 CHILL OUT

Serving up the sweets, two food truck enthusiasts bring new meaning to froyo on the go.

11 DELICATE NEEDLEWORK

The costumes of the San José Ballet all have a story, rich with two men's artistic vision.

13 WILD TALENT

Three ladies with rich folk voices are staying grounded in the pursuit of their passion.

cover photography
by Jay Manalo
table of contents photography
by Jaimie Collins

P.S.
What inspires you to be creative?

The way we see it, creativity and inspiration go hand in hand. For this issue, several editors had the opportunity to practice both, bridging the gap between being a writer and an editor.

From our viewpoint, we were able to observe the complicated and highly organized system of the arts and entertainment world, revealing the long list of details that have to work in tandem for each creation to come to fruition.

The experience left us contemplating how people take entertainment for granted, not realizing how much creativity, passion and devotion is used while organizing an artistic endeavor.

Whether it be the ballet, a music festival or young girls striving for stardom, the framework of each effort is unique, with a universal mission of captivating the minds and imaginations of onlookers.

As we expand in our second issue, *Access* continues to delve into the culture surrounding our university, seeking the background of the arts and entertainment that, through the years, have become entwined in our lives.

Jaimie Collins

Steppin' to the rhythm

BY JAIMIE COLLINS

Dance has weaved through our history, characterizing rituals, celebrations and entertainment.

On campus, students and professors are continuing the legacy through the Ballroom Dance Club, creating an artistic outlet for anyone with two left feet.

November marks the 15th anniversary of the club's formation. In those years it has grown, becoming known on campus and in the community, with a reputation for quality instruction.

Bethany Shifflett, SJSU professor of kinesiology and group adviser, has been with the club from the beginning, helping students to improve their skills.

"Ballroom dancing is a sport students can continue to do all their lives," she said. "A great many dancers have passed through the club sharing their energy and love of dance."

The motivation for the club came in the fall of 1994 when a group of students started a dance group and obtained official status to be recognized as a club.

Adviser Kim Granata-Clark, who has been with the group for 13 years, said the club's mission is socializing and providing a comfortable environment for people to learn to dance.

"I love to see students come and learn to dance and the smile on their face when they get their step," she said. "I love to ballroom dance and I love to teach. I keep coming back every year and supporting the club."

The apex of the club's schedule is its annual Ballroom Classic Competition in November, in which other colleges, studios and groups attend and compete.

The club also hosts weekly lessons, costing \$3 for one dance and \$5 for two, on Friday night from 7:30 until 9:15, teaching everything from swing to merengue to tango.

"They are a nice way to get out of your comfort zone and try something new," said current club president Jaspreet Kaur. "You can drop in and enjoy yourself. It is an escape from the educational side of school."

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN DIGEST

This is the whole magazine. Since we know it can be tough to keep on task for too long (after all, we're college students, too) we wanted to give you a quick way to see it all. If anything intrigues you, follow the page number — or whip out your smartphone and scan in the code for the story online.



Clockwise from top right, photos by: Jaimie Collins, Jay Manalo, c/o Joan Marcus, Jesse Jones, Dorian Silva, Jesse Jones, Jesse Jones, c/o Damien Kelley



A visiting instructor teaches a class the basics of bolero during one of the Ballroom Dance club's Friday lessons.

Photography by Jesse Jones
Photo illustration by Daniel Herberholz

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PRESERVING AN AMERICAN TRADITION

BY *AMANDA HOLST*
photography by *DORIAN SILVA*

A baby blue 1951 Chevrolet Coupe revs up as it dawdles closer to the receiving ticket stand. A couple walks by, gliding hand in hand as they sync their steps together.

The song "Teenage in Love," by Dion & the Belmonts, is blaring from a radio as giggles resound from inside the passion pit, also known as a teenage make-out spot. The savory smell of hot dogs done to a turn and a passing aroma of buttery popcorn exudes from the carnival-like concession stand.

Gravel chomps between the tire tracks as the cars roll up an incline to their parking spots in front of the 100-foot drive-in movie screens.

The end of World War II brought a surge of revival and newfound progress that helped spark the emerging popularity of drive-in movie theaters. The '50s and '60s marked the peak of drive-ins, mounting more than 4,000 venues as an industry high in 1958, according to the United Drive-In Theater Owner Association.

Today, far distant from its abundant success, fewer than 500 drive-ins are left in the world to carry on the nostalgic vibe. The demise began with daylight saving time, launched after World War II, which filched time away from moviegoers.

Daylight saving time forced drive-ins to start their movies after the sunset times, which got in the way of bedtimes and night routines, leading to a drastically reduced number of families in attendance.

Color broadcasting and VCRs supplemented the decline, as well as land values and landowners that pushed drive-ins aside to make room for the big-ticket corporations. Amid decline, though, a pastime now fights to be remembered.

Bay Area residents don't have to drive far to capture the drive-in experience. In San José, on Hillcap Avenue off of Capitol Expressway and kiddie-corner to the Union Pacific Rails, resides the Capitol Drive-In Theatres.

Even at night when all six screens are playing, it's a desolate place.

"We have a problem letting people know that we are still here," said Tony Maniscalco, vice president of Syufy Enterprises.

The privately owned business based in San Rafael is the parent company to West Wind Drive-Ins and Public Markets, which is hosted in the drive-in lot.

"Up until two weeks ago, we had eight drive-ins," he said, "but we lost the lease on one in Scottsdale, Ariz., so now we are down to seven."

This makes Syufy Enterprises the largest owner-operator of drive-in movies in the United States but still "seven is not a lot of anything," Maniscalco said.

West Wind Capitol 6 Drive-In Movie Theater opened its doors on May 25, 1971, and has since expanded. According to its website, it now has four locations in California, two in Nevada and one remaining in Arizona.

"We used to own Century Movie Theaters and sold the theater chain to Cinemark five years ago, but we kept the property and the drive-ins," Maniscalco said. "There are people who want to go on a date and sit in a walk-in theater and pay \$10 a ticket and then there are those families who want to have the drive-in experience."

The first drive-in movie theater in Pennsauken, N.J., had families in mind for their drive-in and advertised the catchphrase, "The whole family is welcome, regardless of how noisy the children are." Play structures and open space allowed kids the freedom they wouldn't normally have at a walk-in theater.

Besides that, San José resident Feyd Nguyen said, "It's not easy to get a sitter at a drop of the hat."

Price is a factor for Fremont resident Martha Silva, who frequents drive-ins. Silva enjoys the treat of a new movie but needs to keep on a budget — she and her daughter bring their own food to save even more money.

"When we drove up and the attendant told me how much it was, I was in shock that it was so cheap," Silva said.

Two movies at West Wind Drive-In's run \$6.95 a ticket, and children five and up are only \$1. Tuesday is Family Fun Night and tickets are \$2 cheaper than normal.

For some, the social aspect of hanging out at the drive-in is most appealing.

"I almost can't imagine going back to the movie theater," Sunnyvale resident Lindy Anderson said. "It's nice to have your own space where you can talk to each other during the movie and not feel like you're interrupting other people."

Screens at Capitol Drive-In Theatres are very low-tech, made out of corrugated steel, the most ideal material to show movies on from great distances. The projectors are retro — they are from the '50s and '60s and they run on

Left and Above: Held in a room overlooking the plot, the drive-in's reel room contains a mix of machinery and film used in each night's entertainment. The film reels are fed through a projector and then the images are conveyed on the waiting screen.

rotating tables called platters. Each projector sits on a tire about the size of a very large round table.

"Every day the projectionist has to slice the film together by pulling from the middle and rolling back on the edges like an eight-track tape," Maniscalco said.

The theater has also installed Technalight, which can make the image look up to seven times brighter.

Moviegoers continue to congregate under the stars to watch their movies and the drive-ins continue to be a place where families, couples, singles and friends come together for an American tradition.

"People are rediscovering the drive-ins," Maniscalco said. "We are just making the world understand that we still have drive-ins, that they are still around and that there is room for us."



Above: San José's West Wind Drive-In is open seven days a week, offering double features of the current biggest box office hits.



THE CENTER STAGE

of San Pedro Square



BY BRITTANY PATTERSON

Ivy-covered brick and inky wrought iron gates greet visitors to Theatre on San Pedro Square, an impressive old building tucked away in the heart of Downtown San José.

Climb the wooden stairs, long scuffed by the visitors who have traversed them in anticipation of the artistic delights awaiting them at the top, and you will find yourself in what seems to be another reality.

No longer vagabonds roaming the Silicon Valley, the Tabard Theatre Company, a resident and managing production ensemble, has called Theatre on San Pedro Square its permanent home for three years now.

It's one of those venues that integrates a perfect blend of homeliness and modern flair. The ambient lighting is mounted openly within a latticework of wooden beams on the ceiling.

It's a charming place — rows of faux-leather chairs and glittering tables litter the theater, reminiscent of the trendiest clubs in New York City, but the rich palette of brick and wood is old world, and the space could easily be found in a Prohibition-era speakeasy circa 1920.

Although bursting with flair, the venue has been crafted in no particular style — instead, the room can morph, adapting to the productions growing inside of it, almost like it is a living, breathing organism.

Near the back of the room stands an elegant and modern 35-foot mahogany bar, an unusual addition to a theater where in most cases food and drink is strictly segregated from the performance area.

It is a sacred place, currently molded in equal parts by its unique construction and the unique players.

Cathy Spielberger Cassetta, the founder and executive director of the Tabard Theatre Company, wouldn't have it any other way.

The Tabard Theatre Company and Cassetta seem to be synonymous and together she said they push the limits of what most theater companies do — they strive to be different.

"Tabard is an altruistic theater company," she said, "one that exists to make a difference in people's lives, whether it is through donations or by creating theater that touches the minds, hearts and spirits of our audiences as well as those who work with us."

Cassetta is as unique as her company, one of those people who is nearly a force of nature, bursting with energy, as she chats animatedly about her theater brainchild.

She is holding a conversation and supervising three different activities — an informal rehearsal, setting up for the next show that evening and organizing a pre-show event for the seeing-impaired — hopping between all of the action like it's an everyday thing.

And perhaps it is. Cassetta founded the Tabard Theatre Company in 2001 after being told by three separate people, over the course of one weekend, that she should start a theater.

"I thought I had to listen to that," she said. "Then I thought, we don't need another theater company, we need a different theater company, a company that produced theater that was appropriate for audiences of all ages and works that were either new or not commonly produced."

Performing, she said, has always run in her DNA. Cassetta said she has worked in nearly every capacity in the theater world, from teaching drama to all ages, to working as an actor, dancer, choreographer and director and even working in the television industry.

For Cassetta, theater serves to do more than just entertain — it is a vehicle in which to touch people, to make a difference.

Now, in its 11th season, the Tabard Theatre Company does both musical reviews, mainly greatest-hits productions of popular music from different eras that don't require a plot, as well as more traditional plays, but the productions are always either originals or not well known.

Actors can be invited back specifically for certain roles, and in some cases auditions are opened up to the public.

Diane Milo, who wears multiple hats in the Tabard Theatre Company as a director, actor and associate artistic director, did her first show with the Tabard Theatre Company in 2004, but both she and Cassetta said they've known each other for 15 years.

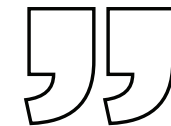
Left, c/o Tabard company: cathy cassetta, the director of the Tabard Theatre company, envisions embellishing the theater experience, investing time and hard work into making the theatre on san pedro square a premier venue for the arts.



Above, by Jesse Jones: The stage of the theater changes for every performance, using basic elements to convey the mood and setting of each production.



Then I thought, we don't need another theater company, we need a different theater company...



- CATHY CASSETTA

Milo insisted that the Tabard Company would not exist without Cassetta and her strong commitment to her vision of the company.

"She is Tabard," Milo said.

The theater is unique for many reasons, Milo said, but those reasons are directly tied to Cassetta — she strives to provide family-friendly programming, nothing that you couldn't bring your children to come and see if you were interested.

Milo said Cassetta also makes a point to engage the community through her interaction with nonprofits and many other community organizations.

Since the Tabard Theatre Company's founding, every production has partnered with a nonprofit, and a portion of the money made by concessions sales is donated to that group, Milo and Cassetta said.

Cassetta said the Tabard Theatre Company has built its success on doing "new" shows, shows that people have not heard

of, whether they are in-house originals or previously produced works.

"Most theater companies don't take the risks in programming that she does," Milo said. "They do 'Guys and Dolls' and 'Oklahoma' and 'South Pacific' for the hundredth time."

Tim Reynolds did his first show with the Tabard Theatre Company during its very first season. Reynolds, who works full time in the floor covering industry, had been doing productions periodically since then.

"Cathy is also here every single performance," he added. "She does the curtain speech before the show. I think she does that because she wants to make the audience feel connected to the theater."

The Tabard Theatre Company is all about the audience, often bringing the actors into the audience area during productions.

During "Bandstand Beat," the first production this season, a musical review of the

music of the 1950s, the actors were not only dancing in the aisles, but also pulling audience members on stage and turning them into human props.

"We're here to provide an experience for the audience," Cassetta said. "We believe theater is more than a show."

She continued, insisting that theater is a creative medium.

"Why not create?" she asked. "Why not provide opportunity for audiences to experience something new and for theater artists to be part of a new work?"

For Milo, being a part of the Tabard Theatre Company family means forging connections with the audience, connecting on a deeper level at least for an hour or two.

"That's what we strive for; to create a real story that people forget that there's actors up there," she said. "They're just watching a story lay out in front of them. If we're doing that work well, and they're engrossed in the story, then we've done our job well."

Theatre on San Pedro Square

29 N. San Pedro St.
San José

tabardtheatre.org

Tickets: \$10-\$35,
varies depending
on performance

On the Stage

Now - Nov. 20

The Story of My Life

The tale of two childhood friends, and the journey of their friendship through the years.

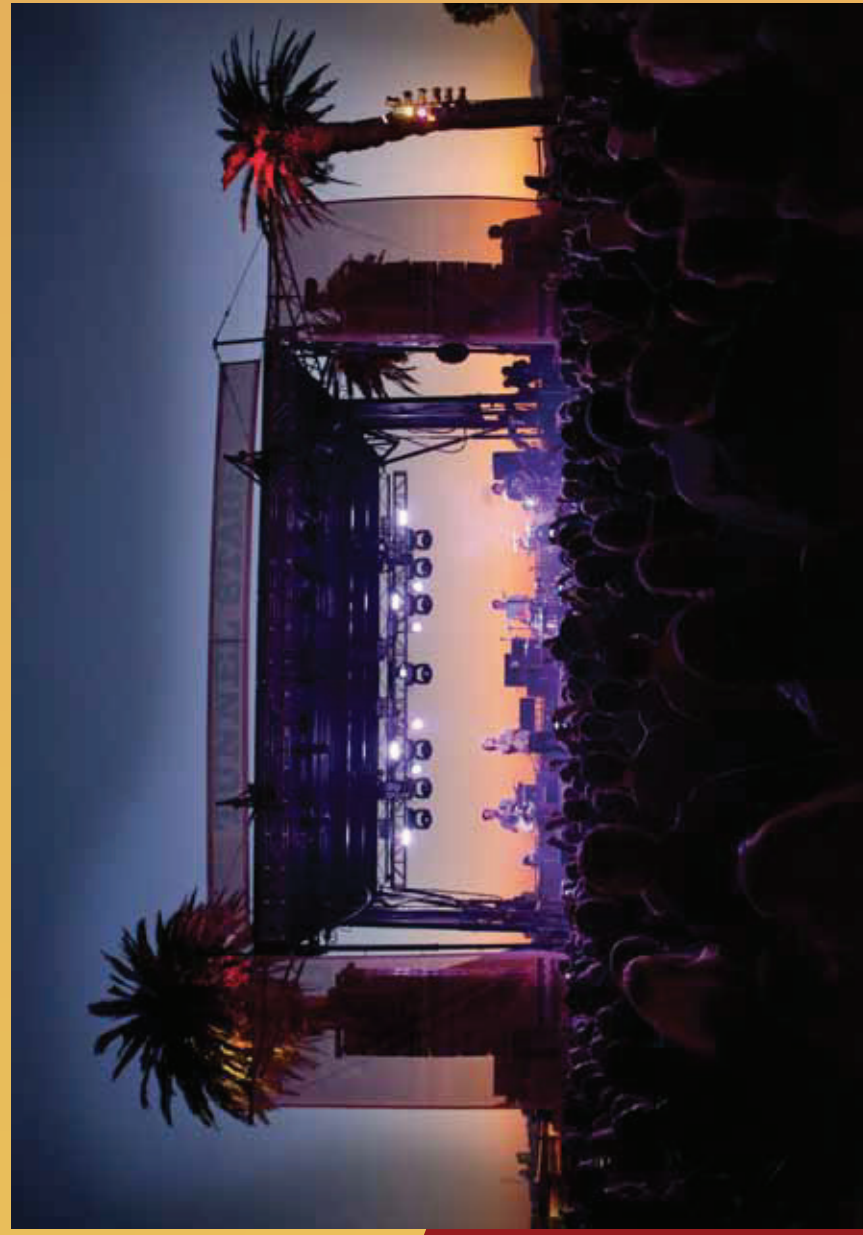
Dec. 2 - 18

It's A Wonderful Life

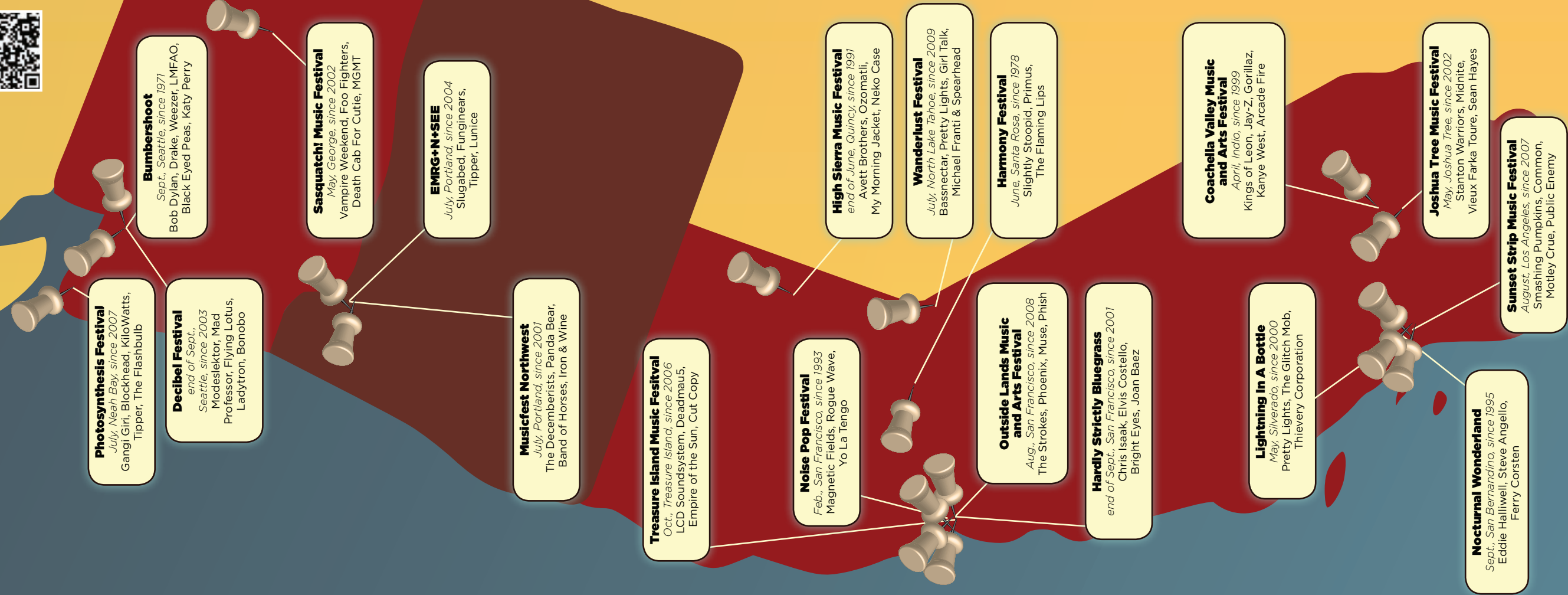
A timeless holiday classic about a man named George Bailey and the effect he has on all those around him, even an angel-in-training.

COME TOGETHER FOR THE MUSIC

BY **JAMIE COLLINS**
 Graphics by Leo Postovait,
 Photography c/o Josh Withers



Above: Friendly Fires plays their set as the sun sets at the 2011 Treasure Island Music Festival.



Under the open sky, thousands of people crowd together, pulsing toward the stage. As bright lights scan the audience, a piano starts to play, echoing out from the speakers. Listeners of all ages stand on the tips of their toes and weave through the many people, hoping to get as close to the stage as possible and make the experience one worth remembering.

Forty-two years after the pivotal moment in music history known as Woodstock took place, a slew of music festivals such as Sasquatch, Outside Lands and Coachella are following in that monumental event's footsteps, bringing music and art to the masses.

In recent years, music festivals have been increasing in popularity, with events popping up all over the West Coast.

"When we started, there wasn't really anything of its kind," said Stacey Horne, producer for Treasure Island Music Festival, an annual Bay Area event that debuted in 2006. "We try to improve the experience from one year to the next and challenge ourselves to do different things."

Adam Zacks, the founder of Sasquatch! Music Festival in George, Wash., stated in an email that it is a constant challenge for festival producers to admit as many fans as possible while still keeping the mayhem under control, which is why management and organization are crucial.

"Capacity increases have been modest, despite selling out months in advance, to keep the experience manageable, safe, and intimate and maintain good relations with the community," Zacks stated.

Festivals are engineered to focus on music and art, and each aspect of the event has to run smoothly to ensure a controlled yet exciting atmosphere for all involved.

"There are a lot of good (festivals) and a lot of bad ones," Zacks stated. "When they're done well, it looks easy, which means imitators will try to copy the 'formula,' but underestimate the care it takes to create something meaningful and sustainable. The audience will smell it a mile away if the intention of an event is solely profit."

Since multiple bands perform in a single day, festivals that span several days host long lists of performers from a variety of genres, creating a venue for popular bands and newble groups alike to showcase their talents to a wide audience.

"For artists, it is a chance for them to play to a large audience," Horne said. "It's really an opportunity for them to get out there and get known."

The wide spectrum of artists also provides a bargain experience for listeners. Whereas concerts often cost a pretty penny and only feature one popular band, access to a music festival delivers several well-known artists for a reasonable price.

Festivals are an opportunity for fans to expand their list of favorite artists since they are able to hear, for the first or the 15th time, a band they love mixed in with bands they may have never heard.

"When you're at a festival, it's a large cultural experience," Horne said. "And you're having that experience with several other people. There is an opportunity for people to experience a band in a different way."

Since many fans are faced with downtime between the bands they are waiting to see, festival founders are providing a range of interactive stations in which festival-goers can dabble, from arts and crafts to dancing.

"It's pretty amazing how many things they provide to keep us entertained," said Treasure Island attendee Lisa Fredrickson. "I would have paid the ticket price just for the bands, so it's awesome that I get to experience all these extra things, too. It enhances an already great weekend."

While festivals are created primarily to deliver and celebrate musical talent, Horne said they also have a huge effect on shaping the surrounding culture.

"When you're up in the Ferris wheel hearing a band for the first time or your favorite band and you're listening to the music 60 feet up and looking at the San Francisco skyline, it's certainly a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Horne said.

Despite the revenue generated from ticket sales, the festivals also rack up monetary support for other businesses and provide a unique venue for advertising.

With niche meal vendors and food trucks, retail shops set up under white tents and entertaining carnival rides, each festival space is jam-packed with enough extras to entertain any fan for the length of the festival.

"Festivals can serve as a filter, championing the best music from a very wide field," Zacks stated. "They can also serve as a beacon for the like-minded to gather and experience art as a community."

Neighboring the waterholes and eateries, art installations and exhibits fill the empty spaces at many events, displaying talent and providing an artistic dimension in addition to the music.

Whether it is represented by a 40-foot sculpture of a dancing woman or a crane turned into a light-up flamingo, the best of the local character is featured, providing additional exposure for artists and innovators as fans wander from one attraction to the next.

"(Festivals) are fun," Zacks stated. "It gets you outdoors for an extended period of time, to experience new music, meet new people and enjoy life. Festivals only last a few days, but the effects can be lasting in terms of the friendships, connections made and the new music discovered."

The West Coast is a prime location for music festivals.

From the beaches to the forests, California, Oregon and Washington boast a long list of popular, up-and-coming musical events. Above, you'll find all the details: the festival's name, month, location and founding year, as well as recent headliners.

Chill out!

BY *LAILA BARAKAT*
Photography by Jay Manalo

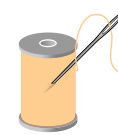


Meet Jesse Soares and Michael Moules, the entrepreneurs putting your neighborhood ice cream man out of business with their tricked-out, self-serve frozen yogurt food truck parked in various locations throughout the Bay Area.

After reading an article about an artisan truck in New York that started an ice cream empire, the proverbial light bulb went off above the head of Soares (left).

With the frozen yogurt frenzy hitting every other street corner, the duo wanted to give a new spin to an old crowd favorite, and thus Twisted Chill was created.

"The best part about all of this is when we hear, 'This is such an amazing idea and the truck looks so cool,'" Soares stated in an email. "We have a loyal following who love getting 'twisted' on a regular basis and we do everything possible to make every visit more enjoyable than the last."



With Every Stitch



BY *AMANDA HOLST*
Photography by Jesse Jones



It's performance night at the San José Center for the Performing Arts, and Ballet San José's corps de ballet is rehearsing with the orchestra before the show. The spacing on stage is different from the five-stamped studios where it practices, but the routine is the same.

By now each dancer has broken in their pointe shoes to their liking. Some start by bending the board of the sole over a stationary handrail, others by flattening the front wedge in a door jam. Checking and re-checking the placement of the ribbon in relation to the rest of the foot ensures that the fit is complete. For a ballet dancer, pointe shoes can be just as important as his or her devotion to a performance, but that's just one piece of the puzzle.

Another equally important piece is costumes. Flattering the dancer's body and paying tribute to the choreography, costumes have the ability to catch the audience's eye at every angle. Each dancer is fitted according to the image the original designer had in mind and materials are hunted down with the understanding that they have to adapt to the dancers' bodies.

Year round, Ballet San José delivers classical performances to captivated audiences. The magic that is set on stage starts with the artistic vision of Dennis Nahat, artistic director for Ballet San José. Nahat oversees the creative process of the productions, training dancers and planning out the productions for the season. From the use of color palettes and lighting to matching the stage to the appropriate time period of the performance, Nahat's job is to relay his ideas to the design team so it can create a mood that represents the overall aesthetic.

"There is a full concept in mind," he said. "It's more than starting out with steps or choreography."

According to Nahat, "art is paramount to everything else." Ballet costumes clearly play into this mantra. The costumes used in memorable masterpieces from Ballet San José such as "The Nutcracker,"

"Swan Lake" and "Romeo and Juliet" are all original designs from Nahat and his colleague, emeritus stage and costume designer David Guthrie (1927-2004). Guthrie and Nahat worked on more than 65 Ballet San José productions together and enjoyed a convivial 35-year work relationship. Even in his last days, Guthrie "had the ability to do it all," Nahat said. "Giselle" was one of the last pieces that Guthrie worked on for Ballet San José.

Although Guthrie is gone, his work is long from forgotten. The legacy continues for Guthrie's work and for other designers whose work is privileged to be among Ballet San José's wardrobe.

For the staff, keeping the costumes in prime condition is essential to keeping the vision of the original artist intact. Costumes are altered for each production and the slightest miscalculation when opening a fold or seam can be detrimental, said Lee Kopp, publicist for Ballet San José.

"Once you open something, you could totally destroy it if it is not handled properly," Kopp said. "These costumes have to live with the body and move and stretch."

"And have to last a minimum of 20-25 years," Nahat quickly added.

Ballet San José's costumes have lasted longer than any company because they are built to last a lifetime. "The Nutcracker" costumes, for example, are more than 30 years old and most of them have lasted, with the exception of the excessively used large ballroom costume in the "Waltz of Flowers," according to Kopp. Rebuilding costumes is a major part of keeping up with appearance.

"The costumes tell it all," Kopp said. "Just look at the way they flow off of the dancers and tell the story with the stretch of the fabric."

According to Kopp, it is common for inside seams to be made out of stretch material or elastic, giving full consideration to how a dancer moves. Comfort is also a factor and using silk allows the costume to breathe. The slightest mistake, such as using gold lamé (fabric with metallic yarns) can alter the appearance of the costume over time.

"I had a costume and after 10 years of wearing it, it turned green," Nahat jovially reminisced. "But it looks spectacular on the stage when you make an entrance."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Above: The infamous hats of the Nutcracker and King Mouse from Tchaikovsky's classic Christmas ballet are taken from their storage in preparation for December's performances. Left: careful not to break any wires, a Ballet San José costume artist removes old, worn jewels from the crown before adding a new set of sparkles.

Altering a costume after 10 years of use is customary for the reconstruction team on staff. For the costume director, shop manager, cutters and stitchers, simple fabric mistakes are water under the bridge. What is taken seriously is the proper maintenance of the costumes while in use. The dancers are not allowed to wear heavy makeup, Nahat said, as doing so can permanently ruin the fabric, and it is customary for dancers who sit in their costume to get fined.

Designers who have total imagination are the ones who are successful at bringing their costumes to life on stage, but "some designers are afraid of color," Nahat said. "The most bold colors look better because everything is diminished by half."

The designers who are afraid of color are the ones who get trapped into using expensive intricacies that simply will not work on stage, he said.

"All these three or four thousand-dollar jackets or dresses are wonderful to look at in a museum or in a lobby to hang on a mannequin, but on stage, they don't work out at all," Nahat said. "They just look flat."

The costumes playing the best roles showcase the boldest colors and larger-than-life buttons and zippers that look more like ornaments than purpose wear. When designing costumes, however, paying attention to how a dancer moves is most important.

"You literally sweat and play football in these costumes," Nahat said. "You have to select the right materials that move for the dancer."

There is also consideration for lighting.

"You build a costume for a stage and light changes the whole look of a costume," Kopp said.

Nahat said that if the costume moves too much, chances of it being ripped increase, which is why stretchy mainstay fabrics such as moleskin, nude color power net and chiffon hold up and leave a lasting impression.

Right: A Ballet San José wardrobe employee prepares the snowflake costumes by carefully steaming the petticoats. **Below Right:** After being removed from their individual storage boxes, all costumes are hung up to await retrofitting.



Though so much is put into creating the perfect costume for each show, even more is dedicated to ensuring the costumes are stored correctly.

Two-and-a-half hours south of Sacramento, in a city called Dixon, stands a warehouse where the costumes of Ballet San José are kept. Two stories high and stretching the length of a football field, the warehouse holds costumes that are kept there permanently, as well as costumes for more frequent productions that are pulled out more often.

"The Nutcracker" costumes, for instance, are only packed away for a month before being pulled out and put together for the ballet's annual production.

According to Kopp, costumes are stored very specifically. Each piece is laundered and packed away after each production.

Dresses are turned inside out, hung upside down to allow air to pass through and are kept at a controlled temperature. Pants are clamped inside out and hung on loops that are sewn just below the waistline.

Appliqués are removed, carefully labeled and laid in drawers accompanying their respective costume. Each piece is covered with canvas and packed into a wood box, much like a good bottle of wine.

"You cannot leave the applications on," Kopp said. "The weight will tear the shoulders."

In between shows, the costumes that are not stowed away will go through the process of being taken apart, piece by piece.

According to Kopp, the jewelry and buttons are taken off and the separate pieces are dry-cleaned at a special place known for having an understanding of the delicate nature of sequins and beading.

Costumes are sewn and resewn all year round, Kopp said, and there have been as many as 50 people working on a production's wardrobe at once.

If the ballet has a story, then that concept will be seen in the design work of the costumes, piece by piece, producing a unique experience each time.

"There's more to designing costumes than adding tutus and tights," Kopp said. "You go to the ballet 10 times and you are likely to see 10 entirely different looks. That's what keeps it fun."



Above: After a year packed away, the wrist cuffs for a nutcracker costume are delicately resewn.



FOLK ROCK

maidens

croonin' away to vintage tunes

BY BRITTANY PATTERSON
Photography c/o Damien Kelley

Sharon Silva and Kinsey Lee are groomed, swathed in layers, and prepped for a bright day at the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival in San Francisco.

Silva, a slip of a young woman, is digging into breakfast with unapologetic gusto — something that smells delicious, with strawberries and cream — while Lee, with flyaway brunette curls framing her face, serves me coffee with brown sugar in a large, homely mug.

Silva is up for the weekend from Azusa where she and Natalie Nicoles live.

Silva, Lee and Nicoles make up the Wild Reeds, a folk rock group.

With two records under their belts, the Wild Reeds have been steadily gaining followers to their brand of three-part harmonies, catchy banjo playing and a myriad of other instruments.

With Lee currently attending SJSU and Nicoles and Silva going to school in Southern California, it seems neither the distance nor the niche folk music community can stifle the Wild Reeds' ability to grow.

The girls insist that modern technology allows them to stay connected and creative via email.

"We all have different tastes," Lee said. "We'll influence each other subconsciously."

Their sound is both delicate and powerful, with rich vocals crooning about love, loss, beauty and even the weather, topped with lighthearted folk, and sometimes cute lyrics. This formula is a testament to the communal nature of the band.

"We all sing," Lee said. "We're all the lead. We're all the backup. We all share the titles."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

The three songbirds of the wild reeds: from left to right, Sharon Silva, Natalie Nicoles and Kinsey Lee.





Above: Silva and Lee strum away on their guitars during a live performance.

Although the group members are barely of bar-hopping age, the girls' musical tastes are quite mature. Touting the likes of Lisa Hannigan as a major influence, Lee's face lights up when she talks about musical artists she adores — like the avant-garde work of Sufjan Stevens.

"I think it's a goal of mine not even to be famous, but to just be able to talk on the same level as some of the musicians we look up to," she said. "That would be amazing."

The group has deep roots in playing music. Silva said she always thought she could sing and picked up a guitar in high school, but it was Lee who brought it out of her.

"I was writing songs in my closet," she laughed. "No one knew about them."

Lee and Nicoles have been singing together in choir since fifth grade, soprano and alto respectively. For Nicoles, piano has always been her musical passion.

She said she met Silva at Azusa Pacific, where they are attending college. Lee, who is an advertising major, would come over to their campus from the community college across the street and the girls would play music together on the lawns.

The dynamic changed in late 2009.

"Lee had a show and Silva and I backed her up," Nicoles said over the phone.

The venue was CK's Café in Claremont, a sketchy joint with a tiny stage and a disintegrating ceiling, at one of its Thursday night open mics. It was just a warm up

for the benefit Christmas show the group was slated to play in December at the Granada Theatre, but the place was packed for them. The crowd ran the gamut, Lee explained — fans of any genre you could imagine, "just a bunch of freaks and geeks and weirdos." Silva said it was the most incredible feeling to look around and see the reaction of the crowd, all eyes on them.

"Everyone came inside and they were sitting on the floor watching us," she remembered. "We got such positive feedback from all different kinds of people."

After the Christmas benefit show the group jumped in feet first, with the gentle push of a friend named Presley Perez.

"I was pretty much like, 'Oh my God, if you guys get together and start making music, I'll record your music for free,'" said Perez, who would become their sound engineer and unofficial manager.

Perez has recorded both of the band's albums, "Songs For Morning, Afternoon and Evening" and "When The Strong Wind Blows." He said something about the energy the Wild Reeds emit is captivating.

"They can walk into a coffee shop and halfway through the first song have the people speechless," he said.

All three group members noted some of the challenges they have faced breaking in to the seemingly male-dominant world of music. They're careful not to tout themselves as three attractive young women, which was a factor in naming the group.

"The name kind of formed us after we picked it," Silva said. "We've experienced a lot of hardship just being female musicians. (People) seriously doubt us and it sucks."

Thus, the band settled on the Wild Reeds.

The Wild Reeds is an ancient parable about the relationship between an oak tree in a field of reeds. The story goes that the oak makes a comment that it feels sorry for the small, seemingly insignificant reeds who sway in the wind.

The Wild Reeds respond insisting that they're stronger than the oak thinks. When a big storm comes, the oak tree is blown down — while the reeds bend but don't break.

Much like the unbreakable reeds, the support of the group member's families has not wavered.

"My mom is our biggest fan," Lee said, smiling. "She wears our T-shirt all the time."

Local artist Ben Henderson played with the group in June at Naglee Park Garage and said after hearing them play he wanted to support them.



Above and right: wielding a variety of instruments, the wild reeds play before an audience at the Naglee Park Garage in Downtown San José.

"It's quite different than most things in San José and I thought it was refreshing," he said. "We had a good time and they're really nice."

Natalie said the Wild Reeds are going to spend a little more time on this next album.

"We rushed the last one, not on purpose, but because we're so far apart," she said. "Some of the songs we wish they would have been more developed, but we're still really proud of it."

Regardless of the direction that the Wild Reeds choose to take, their roots are firmly planted.

"We're folk music, there's no getting away from that," Lee said earnestly. "But I always try to push if we have a song, 'Let's try to make that sound a little different.' We've got to create something new. I don't think we'll ever have a listed genre but we're always going to try to progress, so we're not going to really settle for anything."

LEND AN EAR TO THE SOUND...

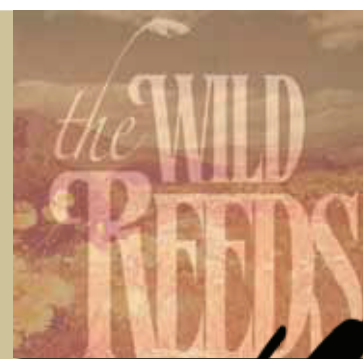
The Wild Reeds' songs are substantial, touching on real, emotional subjects, many of which are garnered through personal experiences.

One example is "Winter Moon," which is about Nicoles' first major relationship.

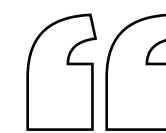
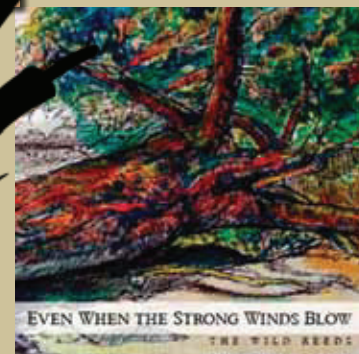
"He was just the sweetest soul that I've ever know," she said. "It was just so hard to see the person you're dating not reach their full potential."

With its striking chords and haunting lyrics, the song is about being "in a tumultuous ocean and you're barely hanging on, walking on egg shells the whole time," Nicoles described. Silva said once she gets to that peak in the song, the offering to an audience is validated.

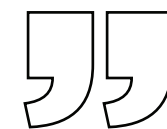
"If one person in this room feels what I feel and they're receptive to it, it's worth it," she said.



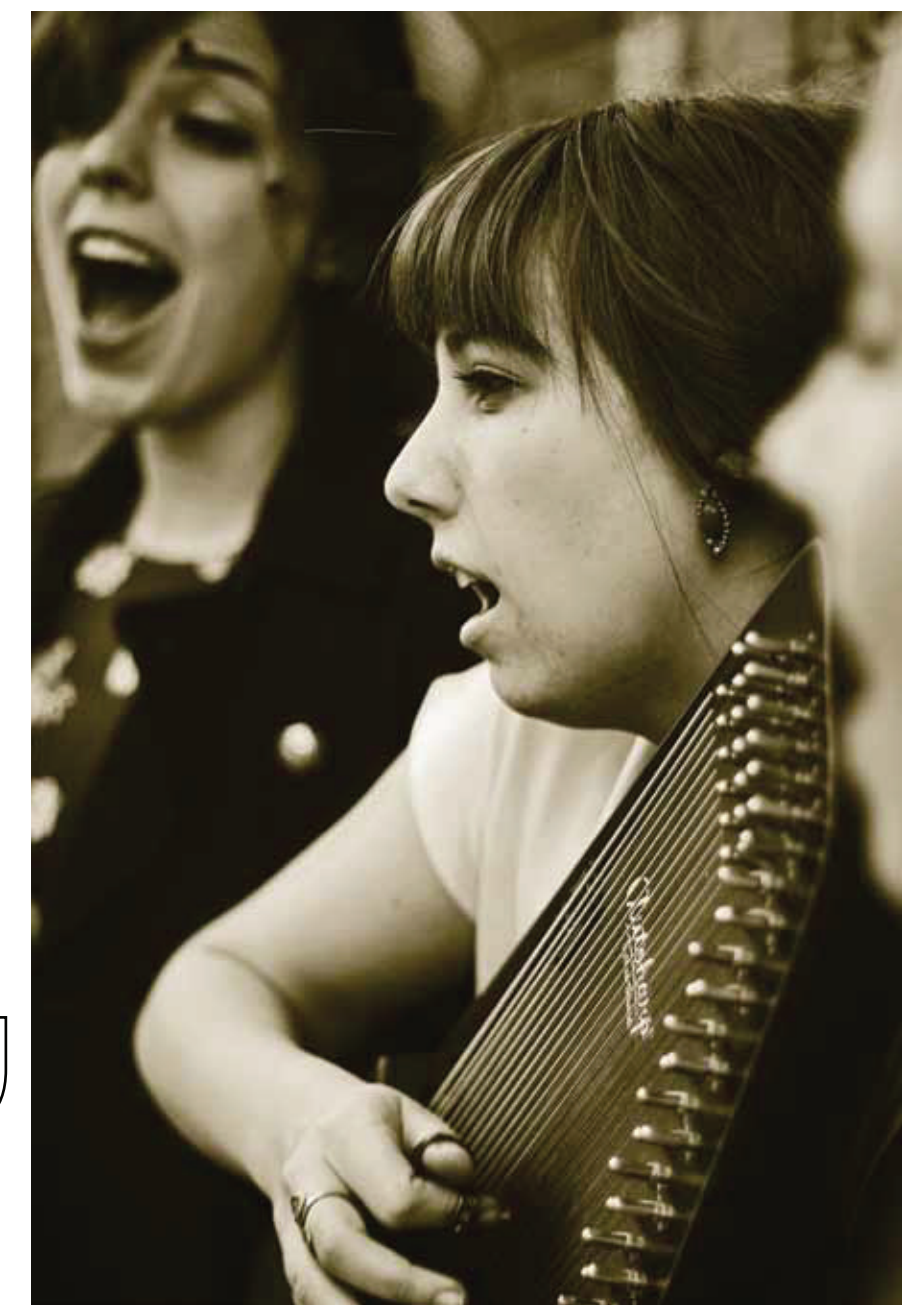
Each of the group's albums are available on iTunes. Visit thewildreeds.bandcamp.com for a free listen.



We all have different tastes. We'll influence each other subconsciously.



- KINSEY LEE



NOVEMBER

Calendar of events



**10: ACCESS FALL 2011
ISSUE 2 LAUNCH!**

10 11 12

Now - 20: Taking the stage of the Golden Gate Theatre in San Francisco, the critically acclaimed Broadway musical **Hair** transports audiences to the hippie, peace and love era of the '60s. Read an exclusive review of the production on our website!

12 - 20: Telling a tragic tale of a traveling clown and his heartbreak, Ruggero Leoncavallo's opera **Pagliacci** is being produced by Opera San José this month. Performing at the California Theatre, the opera has tickets available at a discounted price for students. Check our website later this month for reviews!

13 14 15 16 17 18 19

15: Hosted by the Kaleid Gallery on 4th Street, **Two Buck Tuesdays** happen on the third Tuesday of every month, providing a range of pieces by local artists that are up for grabs for just \$2 each. Along with the art, this event also boasts in-house artists, performers and food, followed by an art discussion.

17: Following in the footsteps of museums like the Tech Museum and California Academy of Sciences, San José Museum of Art has created an after hours boozing and schmoozing event. **ArtRage**, which takes place on the third Thursday night of every month, is an evening of art, live entertainment, networking and cocktails. Last month's theme was zombies; this month, show up to find out.

20 23 24 25



See sjsuaccessmag.com for more!

23 - 25: On Wednesday, classes after 5 p.m. won't meet and campus is closed on Thursday and Friday in honor of **Thanksgiving**. Try not to throw turkey in your grandma's face for asking "What're you doing after college?" a million times.



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