

Wattenburg strives to keep the arts alive at college

By Ceili Cornelius
Correspondent

Lauren Wattenburg is helping to keep the performing arts alive during a time when live performances are not possible.

This Thursday, she will participate in virtual performances put on by Utah Ballet and the University of Utah School of Dance.

Wattenburg — 2017 Sisters High School graduate — is a senior at the University of Utah pursuing her bachelor's degree in fine arts in ballet, as well as doing prerequisite courses for physical therapy.

This past year, her livelihood and way of life has shifted due to the COVID-19 pandemic; she is no longer able to perform or have a normal studio life.

"The entire dance world has had to adapt because we have been taken out of our studios and dancing from kitchens and living rooms and we have to get creative to keep moving and training," said Wattenburg.

In March, Wattenburg returned home to Sisters and finished her junior year from home, using her living room and kitchen as her dance studio.

Virtual classes and intensives were made available from all over the world over the summer for dancers. Wattenburg completed a virtual summer intensive with Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, a contemporary ballet company based out of San Francisco.

"We were all sort of out of our element, not being in the studio surrounded by people as usual in the dance world," she said.

For her senior year, she is back at the University of Utah with her academic classes all online. Her dance classes are now in person with modifications and mask wearing and social distancing in class.

"It has been really nice to be able to be back in the studio for classes, even with the modifications," she said.

Wattenburg and her peers in dance are putting

on virtual live performances streaming from the Marriott Center for Dance Theater in Utah. Every year, the School of Dance at University of Utah puts on a set of choreographed performances with a live audience, but this year, they will be doing the same type of performance with a virtual audience watching on a livestream.

The event was made possible by the School of Dance faculty striving to give their dancers the opportunity to perform.

"They decided to go with doing virtual performances and to adapt to the situation as best as they can and get us to still have these performances," said Wattenburg.

The performance will consist of four unique pieces, all with original choreography by faculty. The shows run for three nights, with all four pieces featured each night.

Wattenburg is performing in the third piece, entitled "Maybe Tomorrow," choreographed by professor Melissa Bobick.

"The performance is a reflection on thoughts and feelings during this immense uprooting of reality and a chance to experience that reality," said Wattenburg.

Wattenburg and four of her peers will be performing live on stage, wearing masks and livestreaming the performance out to audience participants.

The livestream event also gives people from Wattenburg's hometown of Sisters the opportunity to see her perform live for her university.

"The people that previously couldn't see these performances can now, and it reaches a broader audience

— hopefully inspiring a deeper interest and appreciation for the arts," she said.

As for Wattenburg's post-graduation plans, she is currently figuring out how to adapt to a changing livelihood.

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"My pre-COVID plans are out the window," she said. "I was originally supposed to be graduated by now and dancing in a professional company. I have become OK with the change and being able to expand my work with the university and the academic course work as well."

Wattenburg is currently trying to adapt to a changing world in performing arts and is excited to see how the future will unfold for the profession as a whole.

"I am learning to accept and appreciate the uncertainty of the future and will hopefully be auditioning in a professional environment in the near future," she said.

The virtual performances put on by Utah Ballet and the School of Dance, will be this Thursday, October 22, at 4:30 p.m., Friday, October 23, at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday, October 24, at 1 p.m. and



PHOTO PROVIDED

Lauren Wattenburg will be featured in livestreamed ballet performances from the University of Utah starting this Thursday.

6:30 p.m. These times are PST, but on the website, they are listed in mountain time. The show consists of four sets within each performance. The livestream for the shows can be found at <https://www.dance.utah.edu/virtualshows>.

These live streams are free of charge and open for anyone to watch. There will

also be a donation button where patrons can donate to supporting the work of the faculty, staff and students at the School of Dance at University of Utah.

"The goal of the event is to bring together as best we can and it gives a chance for people outside of Utah to see the performances from anywhere," said Wattenburg.

City of Sisters Free Residential Bulk Waste Cleanup

Tuesday, November 3 or Wednesday, November 4

Free collection is for the City of Sisters residents only. Collection will be the same day as your regular trash service day.

Bulky waste items include:

- Up to four yards of yard debris and/or miscellaneous household waste (4 yards = a regular pickup truck filled to the cab)
- Please separate yard debris
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