



LAURA GOSS/Emerald

Members of the Oregon Ballroom Dance Formation Team practice their moves Tuesday night.

Dance: Team to perform at art fair

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her friend Sarah Perez along, and now Adams, Perez and Amaral have become the heart of the formation team.

Amaral said she thinks Eugene needs a competitive team.

"There's really not a competitive scene in Eugene," she said. "They have the Friday night dances for everybody, but sometimes there are people who want to take it to another level."

Like the ballroom club, the formation team does not receive any funding from the University. Furthermore, the team is not even affiliated with the University. It was simply an idea that came out of the club.

The formation team, composed of four couples, meets twice a week for two or more hours each session to work on a choreographed waltz written by Adams.

"It's kind of like a drill team, except with dancing," Adams explained.

The team is currently putting the finishing touches on a routine it will perform at the EMU Amphitheater during the University Art Fair on May 23. When the team does compete, all of the couples will perform together in formation during a three-minute presentation.

Three minutes may sound like a short length of time, but it can be difficult, Amaral said.

"If you're doing it right, you get tired very quickly," she said. "Within the three minutes there is a lot of choreography."

Dance choreography is nothing new to Perez. She has participated in all kinds of dance, including jazz, tap and ballet. Although ballroom is difficult, it should not be intimidating, she said.

"It's not easy," Perez said, "but a beginner could learn it — myself included. We work really hard so we can pick this stuff up quickly. Basically, if you have good timing and good rhythm, you can do the dance."

The team's dance is more advanced than those at Friday dances.

"It shows what you can do with the dances," Perez said. The team will add maneuvers like lifts and turns to the waltz. "That's the type of stuff you don't see at Friday-night dances."

The team members said they hope to perform regularly next year at the ballroom club's Friday dances and other events, but there will be changes. The most apparent difference will be in coaches. Adams will be graduating, and the team will bring in former competitive dancer Laura Taylor

to coach the team. It has also received a verbal agreement from professional Seattle dance instructor Peter Mant to choreograph.

Next year will be important for the team, Adams said. It will need to recruit a few more dancers and remain dedicated and focused.

"It will be more structured," he said, "and it will be using a higher level of choreography."

But team members still dance for fun, and they are looking for others to join them.

"I hope it provides people who enjoy dancing an opportunity to become more technical — like I'm doing," Amaral said.

In the meantime, the team will continue practicing and preparing for its first performance at the art fair. Soon it will begin fund raising to pay for costumes and other team expenses.

Even though he will not be the coach, Adams said he hopes the team does well.

"After we've done a couple competitions, there would be a possibility of the U of O actually sponsoring one," he said.

It is not a current issue with the team, but it may soon become one. "I'd like to see it fly," he said. "It's one of those things — it's hard to say where it can go."

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