

Men: a delicacy in dance class

Clackamas swing dancing
lacks male student
participation

By John Simmons
The Clackamas Print

With today's busy schedules, students are often unable to find the time for extracurricular activities, let alone exercise. They do not have time for doing much outside of school and work, but fortunately there are classes available on campus that satisfy both the want for recreation and the need for physical activity: dance classes.

Learning to dance is a lifetime accomplishment with long term benefits, stated swing dance instructor Shambre Lund in an e-mail. "People in their 70s and 80s. For some, it's the reason for a longer life."

Despite the health benefits, men are not taking dance classes because of the social stigma. In Robinson's intermediate swing classes, for example, there are very few men. In his intermediate advanced swing class of 21, there are only nine men, and in his beginner swing class of 27, there are only

three men, he stated.

According to Robinson, men are harder to get to dance because they have made dancing out to be something and something to be embarrassed of doing.

Guys don't see dancing as manly. Right next to crying and wearing a mask, said John Howard, who chose to learn swing dance after a friend of his encouraged him to do so. "The real test of manhood is whether or not you're man enough to try something new. I've never much of a dancer, but I really enjoyed it."

Shambre Miller, a fairly experienced dancer and familiar with jazz, hip hop, ballet and tap styles of dance,



Shambre Lund Clackamas Print

Clackamas students learn how to boogie in good old fashioned 20s style at the swing dancing class in Randall Hall.

had a similar opinion.

"I think more guys don't take [dance classes] because they don't want to try something new. They also might feel overwhelmed or embarrassed in front of other guys and even girls. Some guys just think they are too manly and if they joined [these classes] their peers would give them a hard time about it," said Miller.

Although it is not desired, there are a few upsides of having fewer men

than women. With a ratio of two or more girls for every guy, many male dancers get to enjoy an atmosphere where they are in demand.

"The upside of having more girls than guys is that I don't ever have to wait for a dance partner," said Howard. "There are always several girls ready to go, and so I get a lot more experience with a lot more people than I would otherwise."

This same ratio works against female

dancers, who often find themselves without partners.

"Girls don't get to dance with a partner as often and have to wait a long time to rotate to the next dancing partner," said Miller. "Girls wish there were more guys because girls want guys to learn something new and different. Girls like guys who can dance."

The physical education department has tried several methods to try to get more men into dance classes, mostly relying on word of mouth.

"In past terms, we have put up fliers around campus," said Robinson. "I tell the ladies that they need to tell their guy friends. They need to help recruit partners."

Miller had a few ideas of how to recruit more men to the course, and has already recruited two this term.

"Girls usually have more guy friends than girl friends, so the girls just simply have to do the talking and spread the word to the guys. Spreading the word is probably the most effective way to get guys into swing dancing," said Miller.

She also suggested trying to get athletes involved, as dancing helps improve agility, balance and overall fitness.

"The dance instructor is also the baseball coach, so maybe anyone on the baseball team who is interested can join," she said.

For those men who are contemplating taking dance courses but have reservations, Howard suggests people to put aside their inhibitions and go have fun. "People should just realize how much fun [dancing] is," he said.

Dancing is one of the few activities that can be done for years and years, and knowing how to dance well is a skill few people seem to possess these days. For those interested in learning something new, staying active and having a lot of fun, dance classes are the way to go.

ART: No sleep, just paint

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For it's been "wonderful" said Andersen.

Andersen says he wanted to do this exhibit because he wanted to see student activity happen in the gallery and they've been pretty successful at that goal in his opinion.

When asked what it was like to be in the gallery at night, Andersen replied, "Noisy." Apparently the students aren't too considerate of the inhabitants of the gallery. Andersen insists that they fought over the white sheets that adorn one of the small twin beds. Carman says Andersen snores, and Andersen says he talks in his sleep.

Andersen says he spends the days

"painting and being a smartass to people," which he adds with a smile on his face.

Both Andersen and Carman agree that "Korean food on Monday night" has been the highlight, as well as student interaction, of course.

When asked what the future has for the Bill and Dave Show holds, Andersen says he definitely plans to do this again, only "next time it will be crazier... this is just a test-run."

Although the Bill and Dave Show ended Feb. 18, the pieces they worked on during their stint in the gallery will stay up until March 15.

For more information about Carman, go to BillCarman.blogspot.com or simply Google "Bill Carman."



Jessica Foster Clackamas Print

Carman explains the fine artistic details of a mosaic at Alexander Art Gallery.

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