



Jefferson Dancers 2023 - 2024

A Triumphant Display of Talent and Creativity

Senior Dancers Earns Prestigious Recognition

In a triumphant display of talent and creativity, a senior member of the Jefferson Dancers at North Portland's Jefferson High School has clinched top honors at the Regional High School Dance Festival. Finn Chisholm, a dedicated member of the renowned pre-professional dance company, secured the highest accolade for his outstanding choreography piece titled "Peaks and Valleys" at the event held from February 16 to 18 at the Arts and Communication Magnet Academy.

Chisholm's choreographic creativity shone brightly as his piece unanimously impressed the panel of esteemed judges, comprising dance professors

from prestigious universities and seasoned dance professionals.

Out of 13 submissions from regional high school dance programs, Chisholm's "Peaks and Valleys" was selected as one of the performances for final adjudication in the Outstanding Student Choreography Showcase. This achievement marks the fourth consecutive year a Jefferson Dancer has seized the spotlight in this category, underscoring the company's consistent excellence.

Steve Gonzales, the Artistic Director of Jefferson Dancers for over 25 years, expressed his admiration, stating, "Once again, I'm so pleased with the hard work and dedication the JDs are putting forth. This has been an unusually heavy scheduled year of performances, school work, new choreography, setbacks from weather, unplanned challenges, preparation for this festival, our upcoming tour to France, and the annual spring concerts. Working with such talented young artists over the

years is an honor. Their ability to submerge themselves into their work, reach into themselves, and share their vulnerabilities in their choreography is amazing."

The National High School Dance Festival, renowned as the largest in the United States, is a platform to celebrate the pinnacle of high school dance programming excellence since 1992. Three days of performances, master classes, and auditions for prestigious college and summer-intensive scholarships.

Reflecting on his achievement, Chisholm remarked, "Thank you to this company and cast for allowing me to set this piece embracing both sentimental and tender memories, the peaks and valleys of life, and turn them into such a beautiful piece of work." His award-winning piece, "Peaks and Valleys," is slated to grace the stage of Portland's Newmark Theatre from April 18 to 20 as part of the Jefferson Dancers' highly anticipated annual spring performances.

A Fun Introduction to Classical Music



photo courtesy of PYP facebook page.

Featuring PYP's Portland Youth String Ensemble

The musicians of the Portland Youth String Ensemble (PYSE) and their conductor, Inés Voglar Belgique present the annual Cushion Concert - a 45-minute family-friendly interactive musical program that will have young ones ages 2-8 smiling and clapping along. Bring your cushions and join the fun at Oaks Park Dance Pavilion on Saturday, March 9, 2024, at 3:00 PM.

The performance is preceded by an Instrument Petting Zoo at 2:00 PM, hosted by Kennedy Violins, when young ones can play child-sized instruments of the string family. This event's generous media sponsor is the International Children's Arts Network (ICAN Radio).

"My favorite thing about the Cushion Concert is that the kids can be free to enjoy the concert without having to be still or quiet; I love when they start to dance to the music," said PYSE conductor Inés Voglar Belgique. "Our musicians get to play a wide variety of repertoire by American composers, including some from Portland, Oregon, like principal cellist of the Oregon Symphony Nancy Ives and Portland Youth Conservatory Orchestra oboist, Alejandro Belgique. We have a lot of fun with it!"

The program includes a Q&A with the musicians and conductor, instrument demonstrations, and kid-focused music, including scores from some of our favorite movies, like John Williams' Trilogy (Star Wars, Jurassic Park, and Raiders of the Lost Ark).

Bring your curious little ones early to enjoy the Instrument Petting Zoo from 2:00 - 3:00 PM. Including this hands-on activity with the concert has helped to curate a love and appreciation for the instruments of the string family in young audience members.

"Our partnership with the Portland Youth Philharmonic, especially through the 'instrument petting zoo', has been a meaningful part of Kennedy Violins' community involvement," said Zach Sears, Kennedy Violins Shop Manager. "It's a unique opportunity to introduce young enthusiasts to string instruments, sparking early interest in music. This collaboration with PYP enriches our commitment to music education and the arts."

You'll be amused from start to finish at this relaxed and entertaining concert. Grab your cushion, snuggle in your blanket, and prepare to be inspired by dedicated young musicians.

Tickets \$7 for students, \$12 for seniors, and \$15 for adults. To learn more about the program, ensemble, composers, and to purchase tickets, visit portlandyouthphil.org/family; tickets may also be purchased at the venue door.



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