

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Vaca Ballet brings 'Mutiny!' back

Why Vacaville Ballet Company's artistic director Cassie Kamakeeaina brought "Mutiny!" back after presenting it last year is pretty simple.

"Everyone liked it," Kamakeeaina said.

From the dancers' point of view, "you want to do it again," Kamakeeaina said. "From a financial point of view, it makes sense. You've already invested in the costumes. And people like pirates and want to see it again."

So the swashbuckling sword fights, the treasure hunts and the mermaids return to the Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre May 15-17.

Kamakeeaina wrote the ballet play that debuted May 6 a year ago, which makes it easy — legally and otherwise — to add scenes and tweak the production this time around.

"I definitely added a lot," she said. "There's a whole new chorus scene and bunch of new parts. It keeps me going and interested. I built it up from last year."

The cast of about 70 ranges in age from 4 to 22, the director said, acknowledging "the older girls are easier to work with. They remember much easier. It's just a challenge getting the little ones to remember what they did last weekend."

There is a young boy in the cast for his first show and he "was a little nervous," Kamakeeaina said.

"So you get him a little buddy and make sure he's comfortable," she said. "The (older) girls work with the younger students."

There is something for everyone in the show, the director said.

"Even if you don't like pirates, there are mermaids, a jewel, jelly fish and some other roles," Kamakeeaina said.

The best moments, she noted, are "seeing the faces light up" from the young actors on stage. "And the costumes and music. It definitely reminds me of what I felt like when I was that age. It keeps it fresh for me."

"Mutiny!" includes music from the soundtrack of Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean" motion pictures, which most of the actors and audience recognize, Kamakeeaina said.

Because the cast members attend Kamakeeaina's ballet school, their parents understand the process.

“It definitely helps. If I wasn’t their teacher, it might be difficult,” she said.

Though performing “Nutcracker” during the holidays is always a crowd-pleaser, attracting the public beyond family and friends of the performers is challenging, Kamakeeaina said.

“It can be difficult especially, as a nonprofit, we depend on volunteers,” she said.

Though the ballet company typically does a summer production, it was canceled for a bit more pressing assignment — performing at Disneyland in June when the students will be “dancing dolls that come to life,” Kamakeeaina said.

The Vacaville Ballet Company presents “Mutiny!” May 15-17. Performances Friday and Saturday 7 p.m., Sunday at 1 p.m. Tickets \$15-\$20. For information, visit vacavilleballetcompany.org or vpat.net.

Freedman, Richard. “Vaca Ballet brings ‘Mutiny!’ back” *The Vacaville Reporter*. 17 May 2015. WEB.