



*Educating, Elevating, and Enriching
St. Louis through the Magic of Dance!*

Alexandra Ballet presents Shakespeare for Children

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Why Shakespeare for children? Shakespeare, the greatest storyteller of all time, has lasted over 400 years because of his lyrical poetry and exciting narrative. He has the talent to encourage children to expose the hero within them. Students may not understand all the subtleties of Shakespeare, but they can comprehend the main ideas and understand the motivations at their own level of intelligence. Elementary students can absorb the magic and beauty of his stories and can identify with his ideas to stretch their minds. Alexandra Ballet will bring one of Shakespeare's stories to life through the magic of dance.

Despite government cutbacks for arts funding, over 1400 students will still enjoy Alexandra Ballet's Young People's Performance on Friday, March 8th at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center. The company will present one of Shakespeare's most popular and enduring comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where fairies mix with mortals, a feuding king and queen unleash magical pranks on one another, spells yield improbable love affairs, and a band of wandering tradesmen are transformed in the most unlikely ways.



AB Stage Manager Tim Hubbard presents
"What's Going on Back There?"

Alexandra Ballet's annual Young People's Performance is the finest example of this non-profit organization's commitment to educate, elevate and enrich school children each year with the thrill of attending a live ballet performance at the beautiful Touhill Performing Arts Center. This live production is complete with scenic backdrops and sets, beautiful music, brilliantly hand-made costumes, professional lighting and special effects, and of course, dynamic and graceful dancers. By offering this truly authentic ballet experience, Alexandra Ballet hopes to spark the imagination and ignite a flame of appreciation for the arts in every youngster in attendance. This performance has become one of the largest fine arts initiatives in St. Louis and the *only* one to offer its program completely **free of charge**, due in large part to the support of the Missouri Arts Council, Regional Arts Commission, and Arts & Education Council.

As a critical component of this effort, the teacher of every class receives an educational booklet containing interesting age-appropriate information regarding the story, Shakespeare, characters, composer, ballet history, choreography, and proper audience etiquette. The booklet serves a dual purpose; first to educate and prepare the students and secondly, to motivate them to learn more about this fascinating, creative, and challenging art form.

As a special addition to the live performance, the students are also treated to a fun and informative presentation, "What's Going on Back There?" by Tim Hubbard, Alexandra Ballet production stage manager. Hubbard, a former dancer who has helped to develop educational standards for the state of Indiana, will explain the job of the stage manager, and share with the young audience a few of the secrets going on backstage during a live performance, including information on lighting, sound, scenery, and props. When these are combined with the dancers, the results are *magical!*

Each component of this educational outreach initiative has been carefully planned, with the intent to reach those who otherwise might not have the opportunity to experience the beauty of ballet or attend a live fine arts performance. Alexandra Ballet's goal is for the area school children to have an enjoyable educational experience with memories which will last a lifetime.

For More Information About Alexandra Ballet: alexandraballet.com or 314-469-6222

Contact:

Lisa Howe
alexandraballet@msn.com
314.469.6222

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