Dance has weaved through our history, characterizing rituals, celebrations and entertainment. On campus, students and professors are continuing the legacy through the Ballroom Dance Club, creating an artistic outlet for anyone with two left feet.

November marks the 15th anniversary of the club’s formation. In those years it has grown, becoming known on campus and in the community, with a reputation for quality instruction. Bethany Shifflett, SJSU professor of kinesiology and group adviser, has been with the club from the beginning, helping students to improve their skills.

“Ballroom dancing is a sport students can continue to do all their lives,” she said. “A great many dancers have passed through the club sharing their energy and love of dance.”

The motivation for the club came in the fall of 1994 when a group of students started a dance group and obtained official status to be recognized as a club. Adviser Kim Granada Clark, who has been with the group for 13 years, said the club’s mission is socializing and providing a comfortable environment for people to learn to dance.

“I love to see students come and learn to dance and the smile on their face when they get their step,” she said. “I love to ballroom dance and I love to teach. I keep coming back every year and supporting the club.”

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the club’s official status to be recognized as a club.

The club also hosts weekly lessons, costing $3 for one dance and $5 for two, on Friday night from 7:30 until 9:30, teaching everything from swing to merengue to tango.

“They are a nice way to get out of your comfort zone and try something new,” said current club president Jaspreet Kaur. “You can drop in and enjoy yourself. It is an escape to the rhythm.”

What inspires you to be creative?

The way we see it, creativity and inspiration go hand in hand. For this issue, several editors had the opportunity to practice both, bridging the gap between being a writer and an editor.

From our viewpoint, we were able to observe the complicated and highly organized system of the arts and entertainment world, revealing the long list of details that have to work in tandem for each creation to come to fruition.

The experience left us contemplating how people take entertainment for granted, not realizing how much creativity, passion and devotion is used while organizing an artistic endeavor.

Whether it be the ballet, a music festival or young girls striving for stardom, the framework of each effort is unique, with a universal mission of captivating the minds and imaginations of onlookers.

As we expand on our second issue, Access continues to delve into the culture surrounding our university, seeking the background of the arts and entertainment that, through the years, have become entwined in our lives.
The song “Teenage in Love,” by Dion & the Belmonts, is blaring from a radio as giggles resound from inside the passion pit, also known as a teenage make-out spot. The savoy smell of hot dogs done to a turn and a passing aroma of buttery popcorn wafts from the carnival-like concession stand. Gravel chomps between the tire tracks as the cars roll up an incline to their parking spots in front of the 100-foot drive-in movie screens.

Even at night when all six screens are playing, it’s a desolate place. “We have a problem letting people know that we are still here,” said Tony Maniscalco, vice president of Syufy Enterprises.

The privately owned business based in San Rafael is the parent company to West Wind Drive-Ins and Public Markets, which is hosted in the drive-in lot.

“Up until two weeks ago, we had eight drive-ins,” he said, “but we lost the lease on one in Scottsdale, Ariz., so now we are down to seven.”

This makes Syufy Enterprises the largest owner-operator of drive-in movies in the United States but still “seven is not a lot of anything,” Maniscalco said.

West Wind Capitol 6 Drive-In Movie Theater opened its doors on May 25, 1971, and has since expanded. According to its website, it now has four locations in California, two in Nevada and one remaining in Arizona. “We used to own Century Movie Theaters and sold the theater chain to Cinemark five years ago, but we kept the property and the drive-ins,” Maniscalco said. “There are people who want to go on a date and sit in a walk-in theater and pay $10 a ticket and then there are those families who want to have the drive-in experience.”

The first drive-in movie theater in Pennsauken, N.J., had families in mind for their drive-in and advertised the catchphrase, “The whole family is welcome, regardless of how noisy the children are.” Play structures and open space allowed kids the freedom they wouldn’t normally have at a walk-in theater.

Bay Area residents don’t have to drive far to capture the drive-in experience. In San José, on Hilltop Avenue off of Capitol Expressway and kiddle-corner to the Union Pacific Rails, resides the Capitol Drive-In Theatres.

The theater has also installed Technalight, which can make the image look up to seven times brighter. “Every day the projectionist has to slice the film together by pulling from the middle and rolling back on the edges like an eight-track tape,” Maniscalco said.

Color broadcasting and VCRs supplemented the decline, as well as land values and landowners that pushed drive-ins aside to make room for the big-ticket corporations. Amid decline, though, a pastime now fights to be remembered.

Price is a factor for Fremont resident Martha Silva, who frequents drive-ins. Silva enjoys the treat of a new movie but needs to keep on a budget — she and her daughter bring their own food to save even more money.

“Whenever we drive up and the attendant tells me how much it was, I was in shock that it was so cheap,” Silva said.

Two movies at West Wind Drive-In’s run $6.95 a ticket, and children five and up are only $1. Tuesday is Family Fun Night and tickets are $2 cheaper than normal.

For some, the social aspect of hanging out at the drive-in is most appealing. “I almost can’t imagine going back to the movie theater,” Sunnyvale resident Lindy Anderson said. “It’s nice to have your own space where you can talk to each other during the movie and not feel like you’re interrupting other people.”

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The Tabard Theatre Company and Cassetta seem to be synonymous and together she said they push the limits of what most theater companies do — they strive to be different.

“Tabard is an altruistic theater company,” she said, “one that exists to make a difference. Most theater companies don’t take the risks in programming that she does,” Milo said. “They do ‘Guys and Dolls’ and ‘Oklahoma’ and ‘South Pacific’ for the hundredth time.”

Tim Reynolds did his first show with the Tabard Theatre Company during its very first season. Reynolds, who works full time with a nonprofit, and a portion of the money made by concessions sales is donated to community organizations.

“The theater is unique for many reasons, Milo said, but those reasons are directly tied to Cassetta — she strives to provide family-friendly programming, nothing that you wouldn’t bring your children to come and see if you were interested.”

Milo said Cassetta also makes a point to engage the community through its interactions with nonprofits and many other community organizations. Since the Tabard Theatre Company’s founding, every production has partnered with a nonprofit, and a portion of the money made by concessions sales is donated to that group, Milo and Cassetta said.

Cassetta said the Tabard Theatre Company has built its success on doing “new” shows, shows that people have not heard of, whether they are in-house original or previously produced works.

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The Tabard Theatre Company is all about the audience, often bringing the actors into the audience area during productions. During "Bandstand Beat," the first production of the 2019-20 season, the actors were not only singing and dancing to the music of the 1950s, the actors were not only dancing in the aisles, but also pulling audience members on stage and turning them into human props.

"We’re here to provide a experience for the audience," Cassetta said. "We believe theater is more than a show."

She continued, insisting that theater is a creative medium.

"Why not create?" she asked. "Why not provide opportunity for audiences to experience something new and for theater artists to be part of a new work?"

For Milo, being a part of the Tabard Theatre Company means forging connections with the audience, connecting on a deeper level at least for an hour or two.

"That’s what we strive for, to create a real story that people forget that there’s art up there," she said. "They’re just watching a play and saying, ‘What about that audience behind the scenes?’"

Then I thought, we don’t need another theater company, we need a different theater company...

— CATHY CASSETTA

Above, by JESSE JONES: The stage of the theater changes for every performance, using basic elements to convey the mood and setting of each production.
Festivals are an opportunity for fans to expand their musical horizons. At festivals like Sasquatch!, Outside Lands, and Coachella, fans can see a wide variety of bands, from local up-and-comers to international superstars. With capacity increases having been modest, despite many events selling out months in advance, the experience is kept manageable, safe, and intimate, with an eye on maintaining good relations with the community.

"When we started, there wasn't really anything of its kind," said Stacey Horne, producer for Treasure Island Music Festival, an annual Bay Area event that debuted in 2006. "We try to improve the experience from one year to the next and challenge ourselves to do different things." Horne said they also have a huge effect on shaping the surrounding culture. "Festivals can serve as a filter, championing the best music from a very wide field," Zacks stated. "With niche meal vendors and food trucks, retail and art, and each aspect of the event has to run smoothly to ensure a controlled yet exciting atmosphere for all involved."

"Festivals are an opportunity for fans to see a wide variety of bands," Zacks stated. "There is good music and a lot of opportunity for them to play to a wider audience, which is a good thing in terms of their careers and their lists of fans. There is also a lot of good food and a lot of opportunity for them to get known." Festivals also rack up monetary support for other businesses and provide a unique venue for advertising.
Meet Jesse Soares and Michael Moules, the entrepreneurs putting your neighborhood ice cream man out of business with their tricked-out, self-serve frozen yogurt food truck parked in various locations throughout the Bay Area.

After reading an article about an artisan truck in New York that started an ice cream empire, the proverbial light bulb went off above the head of Soares (left). "The best part about all of this is when we hear, 'This is such an amazing idea and the truck looks so cool,'" Soares stated in an email.

Soares said the idea of a frozen yogurt food truck was born when he was in a food truck festival and took notice of one of his competitors. "We have a loyal following who love getting 'twisted' on a regular basis and we do everything possible to make every visit more enjoyable than the last." Soares said.

With the frozen yogurt frenzy hitting every other street corner, the duo wanted to give a new spin to an old crowd favorite, and thus Twisted Chill was created.

Another equally important piece is costumes. Flattering the dancer’s body and paying to the choreography, costumes have the ability to catch the audience’s eye at every angle. Each dancer is fitted according to the image the original designer had in mind and materials are hunted down with the understanding that they have to adapt to the dancers’ bodies.

"The costumes tell it all," Kopp said. "Just look at the way they flow off of the dancers and tell the story with the stretch of the fabric."

According to Kopp, it is common for inside seams to be made out of stretch material or elastic, giving full consideration to how a dancer moves. Comfort is also a factor and using silk allows the costume to breathe. The slightest mistake, such as using gold lamé (fabric with metallic yarns) can alter the appearance of the costume over time.

"Waltz of Flowers," according to Kopp. Rebuilding costumes is a major part of keeping up with appearance. "Once you open something, you could totally destroy it if it is not handled properly," Kopp said. "These costumes have to live with the body and move and stretch."

"If you have to last a minimum of 20-25 years," Nahat quickly added.

Ballet San José’s costumes have lasted longer than any company because they are built to last a lifetime. "The Nutcracker" costumes, for example, are more than 30 years old and most of them have lasted, with the exception of the excessively used large ballroom costume in the "Waltz of Flowers," according to Kopp. Rebuilding costumes is a major part of keeping up with appearance.

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"It had a costume and after 30 years of wearing it, it turned gray," Nahat jovially reminisced. "But it looks spectacular on the stage when you make an entrance."
After a year packed away, the wrist cuffs for a Nutcracker costume are delicately reviewed.

Though so much is put into creating the perfect costume for each show, even more is dedicated to ensuring the costumes are stored correctly.

Two-and-a-half hours south of Sacramento, in a city called Dixon, stands a warehouse where the costumes of Ballet San José are kept. Two stories high and stretching the length of a football field, the warehouse holds costumes that are kept in storage to allow space for the ballet’s annual production.

According to Kopp, costumes are stored very specifically. Each piece is labeled and packed away after each production. The costumes are then put away until the next time they are needed, whether it be for the same show or a different one.

Though the costumes are not always used for the same show, they are kept in excellent condition so that when they are needed, they can be brought back to life.

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Above: Silva and Lee strum away on their guitars during a live performance.

Although the group members are barely of bar-hopping age, the girls’ musical tastes are quite mature. Trusting the likes of Lisa Hannigan as a major influence, Lee’s face lights up when she talks about musical artists she adores — like the avant-garde work of Sufjan Stevens. “I think it’s a goal of mine never to be famous, but to just be able to talk on the same level as some of the musicians who look up to us,” she said. “That would be amazing.”

The group has deep roots in playing music. Silva said she always thought she could sing and picked up a guitar in high school, but it was Lee who brought it out of her. “I was writing songs in my closet,” she laughed. “No one knew about them.”

The dynamic changed in late 2009. “Lee had a show and Silva and I backed her up,” Nicoles said over the phone. “It was just a warm up.”

The venue was CK’s Café in Claremont, a sketchy joint with a tiny stage and a disintegrating ceiling, at one of its Thursday night open mics. It was just a warm up for the benefit Christmas show the group was slated to play in December at the Granada Theatre, but the place was packed for them. The crowd ran the gamut, Lee explained — fans of any genre you could imagine, “just a bunch of freaks and geeks and weirdos.” Silva said it was the most incredible feeling to look around and see the reaction of the crowd, all eyes on them.

“Our venue was packed and they were sitting on the floor watching us,” she remembered. “We got such positive feedback from all different kinds of people.”

After the Christmas benefit, the group jumped in feet first, with the gentle push of a friend named Presley Perez. “I was pretty much like, ‘Oh my God, if you guys get together and start making music, I’ll record your music for free,’” said Perez, who would become their sound engineer and unofficial manager.

Perez has recorded both of the band’s albums, “Songs For Morning, Afternoon and Evening” and “When The Strong Wind Blows.” He said something about the energy the Wild Reeds emit is captivating. “They can walk into a coffee shop and halfway through the first song have the people speechless,” he said.

All three group members noted some of the challenges they have faced breaking in to the seemingly male-dominant world of music. They’re careful not to tout themselves as three attractive young women, which was a factor in naming the group. “The name kind of formed us after we picked it,” Silva said. “We’ve experienced a lot of hardship just being female musicians. (People) seriously doubt us and it sucks.”

Thus, the band settled on the Wild Reeds. The Wild Reeds is an ancient parable about the relationship between an oak tree in a field of reeds. The story goes that the oak makes a comment that it feels sorry for the small, seemingly insignificant reeds who sway in the wind. The Wild Reeds respond insisting that they’re stronger than the oak thinks. When a big storm comes, the oak tree is blown down — while the reeds bend but don’t break.

Much like the unbreakable reeds, the support of the group member’s families has not wavered. “My mom is our biggest fan,” Lee said, smiling. “She wears our T-shirt all the time.”

Local artist Ben Henderson played with the group in June at Naglee Park Garage and said after hearing them play he wanted to support them.

Above and right: Wielding a variety of instruments, the wild reeds play before an audience at the naglee park garage in downtown san jose.

“People seriously doubt us and it sucks,” she said. “It’s quite different than most things in San José and I thought it was refreshing,” he said. “We had a good time and they’re really nice.”

Natalie said the Wild Reeds are going to spend a little more time on this next album. “We rushed the last one, not on purpose, but because we’re so far apart,” she said. “Some of the songs we wish they would have been more developed, but we’re still really proud of it.”

Regardless of the direction that the Wild Reeds choose to take, their roots are firmly planted. “We’re folk music, there’s no getting away from that,” Lee said earnestly. “But I always try to push if we have a song. ‘Let’s try to make something new. I don’t think we’ll ever have a listed genre but we’re always going to try to progress, so we’re not going to really settle for anything.’”

We all have different tastes. We’ll influence each other subconsciously.

- KINSEY LEE
Now - 20: Taking the stage of the Golden Gate Theatre in San Francisco, the critically acclaimed Broadway musical *Hair* transports audiences to the hippie, peace and love era of the ’60s. Read an exclusive review of the production on our website!

12 - 20: Telling a tragic tale of a traveling clown and his heartbreak, Ruggero Leoncavallo’s opera *Pagliacci* is being produced by Opera San José this month. Performing at the California Theatre, the opera has tickets available at a discounted price for students. Check our website later this month for reviews!

15: Hosted by the Kaleid Gallery on 4th Street, Two Buck Tuesdays happen on the third Tuesday of every month, providing a range of pieces by local artists that are up for grabs for just $2 each. Along with the art, this event also boasts in-house artists, performers and food, followed by an art discussion.

17: Following in the footsteps of museums like the Tech Museum and California Academy of Sciences, San José Museum of Art has created an after hours boozing and schmoozing event. *ArtRage*, which takes place on the third Thursday night of every month, is an evening of art, live entertainment, networking and cocktails. Last month’s theme was zombies; this month, show up to find out.

23 - 25: On Wednesday, classes after 5 p.m. won’t meet and campus is closed on Thursday and Friday in honor of Thanksgiving. Try not to throw turkey in your grandma’s face for asking “What’re you doing after college?” a million times.

See sjsuaccessmag.com for more!