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5 Degreez of Danze

a review of the arts in frisco

by dana gavin frank

THE ARTS ARE VIBRANT IN FRISCO, and 2004 is poised to be a year of progress thanks to the “Arts of Collin County,” a revolutionary cooperative project between Frisco and its neighboring cities, Allen and Plano. Arts patrons have stepped forward to support and develop Collin County art groups, and regional leaders who recognize the economic and social impact of high-quality performance and visual arts are giving the future of artists a boost.

ESTABLISHED GROUPS

“Frisco Community Theater is the oldest arts group in Frisco and we’re celebrating our 20th anniversary this year,” says the organization’s president Aileen Brady, “Our audiences have become more sophisticated throughout the last 20 years, but what most of them like is that they can bring the whole family to a show. They like the fact that it is a small theatre so that everyone has a good seat, and they are all close to the stage.” The Children’s Theater of Frisco, an extension of the company, offers acting classes for kindergarten age and up.

“5 Degreez of Danze is the only all-professional dance company in the area,” says Founder/Artistic Director Debra Montalvo Swaim, who concurrently runs Frisco Dance Force. “The company consists of adult professionals who instruct, perform, and choreograph for a living.” Also serving aspiring dancers are Sheena’s Dance Academy, home of the Frisco Ballet, and Collin County Ballet Theatre, directed by Kirt and Linda Hathaway.

The Frisco Chorale’s winter season featured holiday concerts, including “Positively Christmas,” a benefit concert for the Frisco Police Auxiliary. The Music Conservatory of Texas in Frisco offers private and group instruction for a variety of instruments and serves all ages. And calling all concert and jazz band players: the newly formed Frisco Community Band is ready for musicians and plans to entertain at least four times a year.

Frisco’s visual arts include Vermillion Gallery, which displays the works of local artists and offers ongoing art classes, and the exceptional Texas Sculpture Garden on the grounds of Hall Office Park. The outdoor exhibits at Hall Office Park are open daily, free of charge, from dusk to dawn, and the indoor art is open weekdays from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturdays from 9:00 AM until noon.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Collin County Ballet Theatre, who performed *The Nutcracker* at Frisco’s Centennial High and the Eisemann Center in Richardson, received a special holiday surprise from a generous dance patron. Ms. Jane Earles, president of Angel Fire Arabians equestrian training facility, found herself captivated by the “Sugar Plum Fairy,” danced by Adrienne Stevens. She pledged an annual scholarship on the spot for deserving dancers, and awarded the inaugural prize to Ms. Stevens, who continues training at SMU’s Meadows School of the Arts.

Frisco Association for the Arts, a non-profit community-based organization, aids established and newly formed groups in the area. Last year, the association held an arts scholarship competition, a wine-tasting benefit, and their second annual black tie Arts Gala.

“Frisco Community Theater is the *oldest* arts group in Frisco.”

A NEW HOME FOR THE ARTS?

Frisco's art scene is growing in measured strides these days, and Mayor Pro Tem Maher Maso's enthusiasm for the development is downright contagious. "The arts are not a luxury," he says emphatically, "they are a necessity for a successful city."

Maso is part of the "Arts of Collin County" steering committee overseeing the creation of a multi-form facility, the first phase of which features a 2100 seat theater capable of hosting regional companies and national touring groups.

The historic three-city meeting held in January of this year moved the proposed entertainment venue from the vision stage to the production stage with the formation of a legal, non-profit corporation that has the authority to make proactive decisions regarding the construction and governing of the new complex.

Everyone benefits, says Maso, even simply from the revolutionary union between the three cities. "There is no model for this kind of coming together on the city council level," says Maso. "This alone puts Collin County on the map as a model for cooperation."

Dana Gavin Frank is a Dallas freelance writer.

For more information on the arts in Frisco contact these businesses.

Frisco Community Theater
<http://www.friscocommunitytheatre.com/>
 972-377-3868

Children's Theater of Frisco
<http://www.childrenstheater.info/>
 972-377-2675

5 Degreez of Danze
www.friscodanceforce.com
 972-712-6829

Sheena's Dance Academy
<http://www.sheenasdanceacademy.com/>
 972-712-1100

Collin County Ballet Theatre
<http://www.CCBallet.com>
 972.208.6604.

The Frisco Chorale
<http://www.friscochorale.org/>
 972-335-4660

The Music Conservatory of Texas in Frisco
<http://www.mcot.com/>
 972-377-5977

Frisco Community Band
<http://friscocommunityband.org>
 972-668-5315.

Vermillion Gallery
<http://www.vermilliongallery.com/>
 972.618.5454

Texas Sculpture Garden
<http://www.texasculpturegarden.org/>

Frisco Association for the Arts
<http://friscoarts.com/>
 972-733-9403

"Arts of Collin County"
<http://www.artsofcollincounty.org/>