

The Grand Island
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Duane

group hopes
to 'disappear'

on College

Park stage

By Mike Bockoven

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There's a moment during a play, a concert, a dance recital, a piece of art, where performers cease to be people on a stage and become conduits of the art they are performing.

Armando Duarte wants his 13 dancers of Duarte Dance Works, to be that conduit when they perform Saturday night as part of College Park's "Live From the Park" performing arts series. The performance will take place at 7p.m. Saturday.

Duarte, a Brazilian and professor of dance at the University of Iowa, put together Duarte Dance Works several years ago as an experiment in bringing contemporary dance to dancers in the Midwest. Since then, Duarte said he's in the beginning stages of forming a group that he hopes will do great things.

"A long-term goal is to make Duarte Dance Works a touring group," he said. "Right now we go out twice a year. We are establishing ourselves in the Midwest and we're always trying to move forward."

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Duarte: Group's identity built on blending styles

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What that means for those who attend the group's performance on Saturday is they will experience a variety of pieces that represent the many facets of what the group does. Duarte said a big part of his direction stems from his influences, from his Brazilian background to the modern forms of dance and movement expression he has picked up.

While some of the music and movement will be familiar, the blending of cultures, ideas and styles is what makes up the group's identity, Duarte said. It's also what they want to share with an audience each and every time they perform.

"My personal belief as an educator, artist and director is it's always about sharing," he said. "I don't want to be pretentious enough to say when I'm performing, I'm educating, but it's that interplay between art and education that really sustains us and what we do."

With 13 dancers, there's also a decent amount of variety in terms of what they can represent on stage. There are several large, group numbers, Duarte said, and other duets and trios that make up the show.

The group will also be working with students in Grand Island on Friday during a presentation.

While Duarte Dance Works only gets outside of Iowa City twice a year or so, Duarte said that makes it more special when they are able to perform in front of a fresh audience. The way they approach the audience in another state is no different from how they approach a hometown audience, Duarte said. They're just happy to be able to perform.



Duarte Dance Works

When 7 p.m. Saturday

Where College Park in Grand Island

Cost: Tickets are \$12.50 for adults and 10 or students

Information: Call 69R-7275

"One thing that dancers look for is the ability to perform wherever they can," Duarte said. "In this case it's a very positive feeling. Any time you're out on the road, there's excitement and we're very honored to be able to put on this performance."

Duarte also said he recognizes and respects the challenge in front of any dance group bringing something unique to the

stage getting people to come and engaging them once they do. Given the group's influences and enthusiasm, if they get to the theater, Duarte said he's thrilled at the chance to perform.

"It's hard for someone to put down the remote control and get into their care and drive to a theater," he said. "But we need that in life. It's a constant challenge for us and it's one we embrace."