

Students sacrifice time for their craft

By Andrea Scapini
ASSISTANT EDITOR

While most 3 year olds were at home playing with barbies and watching Barney, senior Nadine Nahra was already in the studio. But not on her own accord.

“My mom put me into it and until I was about seven I was like, ‘I don’t know if I want to do it anymore,’ and she made me stay with it, but I’ve just loved it ever since,” Nahra said. “When I was probably like 11 or 12, I was like, ‘I should probably stick with this.’”

Ever since she was officially bitten by the dance bug, Nahra has committed herself to an average of four hours of dance a day, six days every week.

Managing time is one aspect of dancing that stresses those highly devoted to it.

“It’s helped me stay organized with my timing because I know that I have to be at rehearsal at a certain time and I know I have to have time to get my homework done and time to hang out with my friends,” senior Carly Broman said. “It can be really, really stressful when you don’t finish all of your homework on time because I’m at dance all night.”

Balancing school and dance also proves strenuous for sophomore Paige Abdella who dances up to 34 hours a week.

“Sometimes everything interferes with school and it’s hard for me to fit everything in and manage my time,” Abdella said. “It will help later but right now it’s still kind of stressful. I have to usually do my homework at lunch or in tutorial or before I go to school because I usually get home really late.”

With such late dance rehearsals, their routines are fixed.

“I mostly go to school, go to dance, do homework, go to sleep,” sophomore Katie Lucchese said. “That’s like my day, every day.”

Finding the balance between dance rehearsals, maintaining their grades, sleeping and having a social life is difficult.

“I keep having to remind myself that this is my choice and I still try to keep some kind of balance,” junior Irish dancer Colleen Maher said. “I recognize that when I focus only on dance and I have nothing else going on in my life, that’s when I end up doing the worst in dance because that’s when it stops being fun. I make sure that about once a week and once every two weeks I make time for friends because that way I don’t lose important social relationships and so that I don’t go insane.”

Although it means occasionally missing out on hanging

out with friends, the bonds formed between the die-hard dancers make up for the loss.

“It’s not that bad because lots of the friends that I do have are from dance and it’s good that I get to see them a lot,” Broman said.

By spending so much time with each other, the dancers build a familial bond.

“Everyone knows everyone’s parents and everyone’s grandparents and everyone’s uncles and so it’s just really a big family,” Maher said. “When you’re in that much of a high-stress environment with people, you kind of just naturally bond. And we do squabble sometimes and we have our little petty arguments, but you’re all there to support each other and it’s such an amazing thing.”

These dancers share a sense of accomplishment on stage.

“I like dancing because it gives me another way to express myself. I love music, I love expressing myself through music and I just love it,” senior Kyndall Echols said. “When I’m just practicing in a rehearsal I’m just working on technique, but when we’re getting ready to do a recital or even a half-time show it’s sort of a nervous energy but it’s a good nervous energy.”

The love for the stage won’t end soon for those who have the drive to continue dancing.

“I have considered dance as a career. One of my options is moving to Los Angeles when I graduate from high school so I can audition for many different things to try and get a permanent job,” Abdella said. “If that doesn’t end up happening I will double major in college.”

Similarly, Lucchese plans aren’t set, but she is considering the University of Michigan as a college and dance option.

“I got accepted into a Michigan dance camp over the summer. It was really interesting because I got to see how all of the college classes with dance would work,” Lucchese said. “It’s just something that I’ve done for so long that I can’t imagine giving it up.”

Even though she doesn’t plan on continuing her personal dance career after college, Nahra will always keep dance in her life.

“I plan on taking a few classes in college and having my kids dance,” Nahra said. “My dance teacher says, ‘Once a Casali dancer, always a Casali dancer.’”

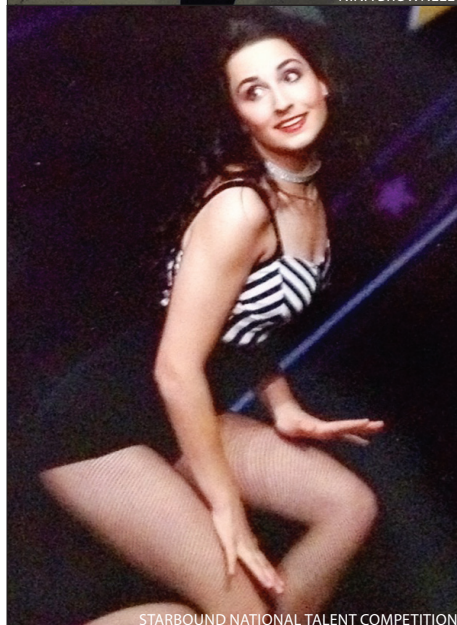
Clockwise from bottom right to top left: Nadine Nahra, Colleen Maher, Carly Broman, Paige Abdella, Kyndall Echols and Katie Lucchese.



DAWN BLOOMFIELD



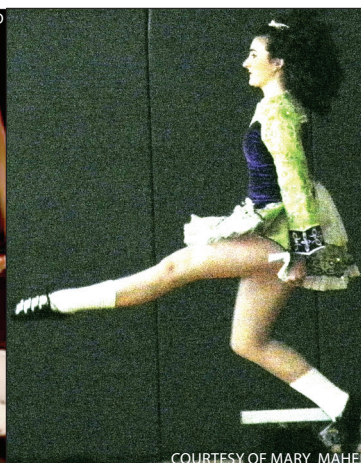
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