

Student choreography at center stage

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During dress rehearsal for a 2014 Newcomb Dance Company performance, a dancer waits patiently backstage for her cue. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Students and faculty in the [Tulane University Department of Theatre and Dance](#) are preparing for the annual [Above the Oaks](#) dance concert, an entirely student-choreographed performance that runs Nov. 4-6 at 8 p.m. and Nov. 8 at 2 p.m. in room 300 of McWilliams Hall on the uptown campus.

Above the Oaks will feature four dance pieces, choreographed by undergraduates Megan Wolfkill, Gali Du, Brooke Duarte, Avery Zucker and graduate student Shannon

Stewart.

Each dance in the show is distinctly individual, and for co-choreographers Wolfkill and Du, also distinctly personal.

“Our piece is about the societal pressure to conform, to have the same ideas and interests as other people in your age group or other group, and what it looks like to decide that you don't actually belong with that group,” says Wolfkill, a sophomore majoring in dance and studio art. “It's much more about movement and development.”

Student choreographers like Wolfkill and Du enjoy the freedom to choose everything from the participating dancers to the lighting cues during the performance.

“This is my very first time choreographing,” says Du, also a sophomore studying dance and studio art. “I'm excited to see my own work come to life.”

The free concert is sponsored by the Newcomb Dance Company.

Samah Ahmed is a sophomore studying public health and political science at Tulane University.