

SVCT's Twelve Dancing Princesses

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Lora Schraft/Chief Photographer

The South Valley Civic Theater production of Twelve Dancing Princesses opens Friday Oct. 4 and runs through Saturday Oct. 26 at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse. Nearly 40 children will be performing in this children's musical. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are available online, at BookSmart or at the door.



Rebecca Reynolds, playing the role of Lady Sniffles, performs a song a dance with members of the cast of The Twelve Dancing Princesses during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production



Monica Evans, playing the role of Linda, left, and Sophia Ayala-Root, playing the role of Michael, perform during the dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.



Rachel Kogan, playing the role of Hope Diamond, performs with members of the cast of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production.



The cast of the South Valley Civic Theater production of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* perform during a dress rehearsal Tuesday.



Members of the cast of the South Valley Civic Theater production of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* perform during a dress rehearsal Tuesday.



Melinda Colbert, playing the role of Sterling, the Silver Fairy, performs during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.



Monica Evans, playing the role of Linda, and Sophia Ayala-Root, playing the role of Michael, center, perform with the princesses during the dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of The Twelve Dancing Princesses.



Sophia Ayala-Root, playing the role of Michael, performs during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.



McKenzie Colbert, playing the role of Rose Laurel, left, and Lauren Anderson, playing the role of Cherry Laurel, right, perform with Sophia Ayala-Root, playing the role of Michael, during the dress rehearsal for the South Valley Civic Theater production of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.



Kate Lincoln, playing the role of Lady Steno, performs with Sean O'Connor, playing the role of King Willy, during a dress rehearsal Tuesday for the South Valley Civic Theater production of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.

SVCT's play 'Twelve Dancing Princesses' hits the stage



Photo courtesy SVCT
Two actors perform in the South Valley Civic Theater's musical children's play "The Twelve Dancing Princesses."

'Twelve Dancing Princesses' plays through Oct. 26

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By Marty Cheek

Youngsters in fairytale costumes pace the backstage area of the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse, their excitement mounting as the minutes tick down for the South Valley Civic Theater's Oct. 5 opening night performance of the musical "The Twelve Dancing Princesses." After weeks of rehearsals, the magic moment approaches when the young actors present the enchanting story on a theater stage in front of an audience of friends and family.

SVCT actress Becca Snook plays two roles in the play: Prince Peter and Cowherd Frederick. She tells the basic plot of the musical's story, which is based on a Brothers Grimm tale. "It's about a guy named Michael who wants to get a better job in life, wants to do more in life, so he goes on this journey and works as a gardener for the king and falls in love with the princess," she said.

Snook enjoys acting with her friends and said it's a joy for her to perform in stage productions. "I love theater a lot," she said. "I love the feeling of being on stage because it really gives you something to do with your mind and everything."

Her friend Melinda Colbert also has a passion for theater, performing in a total of four SVCT shows so far and many school plays. In "The Twelve Dancing Princesses," she plays the role of Silver Sterling, the silver fairy. She also helped with the choreography.

Theater helps young people develop their confidence, Colbert said. "I like performing in the play because it allows you to transform yourself and come out of your shell," she said. "If you're too scared to do what you want in front of people, then you should go on stage and you can feel the difference it makes. Plus you get to meet new people and make new friends."

Melinda's father Greg Colbert is the producer of the show and is also a member of the SVCT board of directors. He heard about the play two years ago, acquired a copy of the script and thought the story might be a possible choice for SVCT's show for children performers. The nonprofit group seeks plays that include many parts for kids because performing in plays provides many benefits for young people, he said.

“I have heard numerous stories where a kid tries out for a play, they get a part in the chorus, and they’re really shy and reserved in terms of their general nature before getting into the show,” Colbert said. “But after the show, we really open doors for them. They become a lot more confident, talking in front of people, even going out and meeting new people in school.”

The musical opens up SVCT’s 2013-2014 theater season. The next show will be a holiday favorite “Miracle on 34th Street,” based on the classic movie where a little girl believes a department store Santa Claus is the real St. Nick. It opens Nov. 22. The Broadway hit “Legally Blonde” is the teen show and opens Feb. 21. The comedy musical “City of Angels,” a play performed by adults, will open May 23. The final show of the season is the family-favorite “Oliver!” based on the Charles Dickens novel of an orphan’s adventures in 19th century London. It opens July 18.

“SVCT provides an opportunity for talent of all ages to perform locally here in the South Valley without having to go up to San Jose or to Western Stage over in Salinas,” Colbert said. “With a lot of school districts cutting their budgets and cutting their theater arts programs, there are fewer and fewer opportunities for kids to perform. So we really feel we fill a void in a child’s overall education and overall growth.”

The theater group started more than 40 years as the Gilroy Community Theater. As it evolved and brought in performers from Morgan Hill, San Martin and other communities, it became the South Valley Civic Theater. In 2003, it made the Morgan Hill Playhouse in the Community Center complex its home theater.

Membership is a vital part of SVCT’s ability to put on shows throughout the year, Colbert said. “We’ve had some very strong support,” he said. “Our membership is really the lifeblood of our organization. The membership that we collect actually goes to pay the royalty fees for future shows.”