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Acalanes dancer vies for Beach Blanket Babylon scholarship

By John T. Miller



Conrad Rocha Photo Rick Markovich, Beach Blanket Babylon

Conrad Rocha, a senior at Acalanes High School, is one of three finalists for the \$15,000 Beach Blanket Babylon scholarship in Dance.

Each of the finalists will perform live in front of family, friends and a panel of celebrity judges on Monday, June 4. One winner in each category - singing, dancing, and acting - will be presented with a \$15,000 check toward their college education.

Rocha has been playing piano since he was 6 years old and dancing since he was 9. He began at the Dance Connection Performing Arts in Concord then moved to the Oakland School for the Arts and currently trains at Triple Threat in Livermore.

He will be attending the University of Southern California on a partial scholarship majoring in business of cinematic arts with a minor in dance.

Although Acalanes doesn't have a dance program, Rocha leant his talents to the yearly musicals during his four years there, appearing in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," and as Conrad Birdie in "Bye Bye Birdie." He also appeared in the Stars 2000 production of "Smokey Joe's Cafe," and partnered with Lauren Matson for a Latin dance in their festival this spring. He also was featured as a solo dancer in the Contra Costa Musical Theater production of "Grease."

Rocha was encouraged to submit a video to the Beach Blanket Babylon contest by Tamara Sparkles, his ballet teacher at Triple Threat.

His influences go back to his grandparents, who met in a ballroom dance class. Rocha says he dances about 12 hours a week. "My family is quite musical and my parents have been tremendously encouraging in supporting all that I do."

Rocha's ultimate dream is to be a performer and choreographer. The talented teen also loves to act and sing.

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