

'Women of the Wild West'

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Guests see their story in one-woman show

Students and community members were treated to a one-woman musical theater show April 7 at the UNM-Gallup Zollinger Library.

The show, called *Amazing Women of the Wild West* starring actress/singer Van Ann Moore, portrays different women in that time period. Moore, who has performed internationally, researches, writes, and stars in her own one-woman shows, which are performed for high school students. She prepares her stage set to make her show visually appealing to make her character stand-out. In the April 7 show she used a Spanish-style decor to fit with the story.

Moore said she tries to connect with the audience so that they can understand the characters' stories.

"I just love doing historical characters," she said. "I'm not myself at that point, I forget about myself. It's really satisfying, and I love going back to history."

Moore portrays three women; Dona Tules (Gertrude Barcelo) who owned gambling houses in Santa Fe, Susan Shelby Magoffin, who was the first Anglo woman to travel down the Santa Fe Trail, and Lydia Spencer Lane, the wife of an army officer who served at Fort Fillmore.

When Moore researches the women she portrays, she said can feel the hard times they went

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through and their tenacity to keep going. She connects with the idea of having to make the right choices, and seeing loved ones choose wrong.

"I often tell my audience, mainly the younger students, to make the right choices and achieve a much better life for them," Moore said.

Along with her portrayal of women of the Wild West, Moore is constantly coming up with different characters to add to her shows. Those include Cleopatra, Jessie Benton Freemont, Molly Brown, Baby Doe Tabor, and Civil War heroines, to name a few.

Moore said she really enjoyed performing at UNM-Gallup and hopes to return in the future.

"I thought it was a beautiful campus, everybody was so inviting, and the library staff made me feel so welcomed," she said.

To learn more about Moore and when her next performances are, visit her website at <https://vanann.com>

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