

November/December 2015



Choreographies: 9 by 9

Choreographies BFA Majors Explore Process

UNLV
Dance
Studio
One
HFA 111

Nov 19
at 730pm

Nov 20 at
230pm and
730pm

Nov 21 at
230pm and
730pm

Tickets:
\$18/\$10

Box Office:
702-895-2787

In 2011, Backstage Magazine recognized UNLV Dance for its outstanding choreographic training program, which teaches a solid foundation of choreographic tools. At UNLV, students study dance improvisation and movement generation, compositional forms, choreographic structures and dance for the camera and video design for dance. In the junior and senior years, all BFA dance majors get the opportunity to choreograph a junior and senior project. Key to the study of choreography is an understanding of the choreographic process which allows the dance work to grow, mature, and develop.

During the BFA projects class, students propose a concept for a dance and then workshop it for an

entire semester, bringing in all the elements of choreography and design—choreography, music, scenic design, costumes, lighting—and putting them into play for a fully realized performance.

On November 19-21, nine talented BFA majors will present *Choreographies: 9 by 9* in Alta Ham Fine Arts Dance Studio One (HFA 111) on the UNLV Campus. This program promises to be a diverse, dynamic, and engaging evening of dance.

“BFA Projects class has taught me how challenging choreographing a dance truly is,” stated Paige Toolan, BFA senior. “There are ups and downs to the process, the process teaches you.”

Mandie Evans, BFA junior says, “BFA Projects class has pushed me in new choreographic ways. It has changed the way I look at my choreography and the choreography of others.”

“This semester I challenged myself to tell a story,” reveals Kelsey Eckerson. “My first piece was a pure movement work about flow and lyricism. This semester I’m dealing with the mythic narrative of the Fates. Having to clearly tell a story in movement created a completely different process.”

For further info contact the Performing Arts Center Box Office: 702-895-2787.

The Dance Production Program Creating a World for the Dance

The Department of Dance at UNLV has always been invested in a high caliber of production. In 2005, it became evident that to take this to the next level, a full-time faculty position in dance design and lighting was needed. That fall, Peter Jakubowski joined the faculty as our Dance Production Specialist.

In 2006 the faculty developed the curriculum and began the BA in Production and Stage Management. This degree empowers the dance major with a functional and practical understanding of the production process and inner-workings of the dance theatre event. Students in this degree program go on to be dance company managers, lighting designers, costumers, scenic designers, dance studio owners, and production technicians.

“I have had a love for dance my whole life,” says Maddie McGuire, BA Dance Production and Stage Management 2014. “Ever since I was little I was drawn to it. In college I wanted to major in something that could involve dance. I quickly discovered that I not only loved to perform, but I loved being involved in the entire process of putting on a production. I was incredibly lucky to have the production and management track available to me while studying at UNLV. It gave me



Scenic Design by UNLV Sculptor Dave Rowe and Lighting Design by BA production major Skylar Feist give Louis Kavouras' dance *riverrun* an environment where the motion of a river can be revealed.

insight into every aspect of the dance world. I learned lighting design, costume design, and even stage management. On top of many other things I took away from my college experience, I also was connected to professional dance companies for internships opportunities.

Shortly after I graduated, one of those internships was a major turning point in my life. I was working with Nevada Ballet Theatre as an Assistant Stage Manager for a weekend of performances in collaboration with Pacific Northwest Ballet. During those two weeks, I was lucky enough to work with incredible talent, on and off stage. About a month after those shows had passed, Pacific

Northwest Ballet was calling me! They told me that I was the first person they thought of when considering their choices for their new Assistant Stage Manager, and told me to apply.

After a few rounds of interviews, I was packing up my life and moving. I now live in the city of Seattle. I have an apartment in the city, with a full time position with the ballet, and I love my job. I am reminded every day how lucky I am to be working with such an incredible company, and I get to experience true magic with every performance. Without my BA from UNLV Dance, I wouldn't be where I am today.”

UNLV Dance Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Beth Mehocic

Professor of Dance: Composer-In-Residence and Music Director

MM and PhD in Music Composition from Michigan State University, East Lansing

Mehocic has written more than 100 works for orchestra, concert band, chamber music, dance ensembles, theatre and film, and her works have been performed throughout the United States, Japan, China and Europe.

What year did you join UNLV Dance? : I began working with UNLV Dance in the Fall of 1982 as a dance accompanist, teacher of music theory for dancers, and composer of new music for choreography. By 1985 I was a full-time artist-in residence, then I became a professor.

Why did you focus your career on music for dance?: I have been a dance-music specialist my entire professional music career. I began improvising and composing at the age of 3. When I heard music I saw movement and when I saw movement I heard music in my head. I thought all composers did that until I went to college and found out differently. My Ph.D. focused my research on dance-music.

What artistic achievement are you most proud of? In 2013, I was recognized for my accomplishments in the field of dance-music by having my life and work as the featured subject for a doctoral bibliography class in dance at the University of Arizona, Tucson. That was a great honor.





UNLV AND CLARK COUNTY SCHOOLS DANCE DAY

On October 16, 2015, over four hundred dance students from the Clark County School District visited UNLV Dance for a day of classes and performances. Bravo Cathy Allen for organizing this fantastic annual event.

Space Rental Continue Your Choreographic Work

Need rehearsal space to continue your choreographic work? The Department of Dance offers special alumni rental rates. For information contact Sandra De Borger at 702-895-3827.

Getting the Grant Dance Professor applies for NEA funding

Dance Department Professor Margot Mink Colbert was honored with an invitation to participate in UNLV's first annual Summer Grant Proposal Writing Institute, in June 2015. Five workshop sessions culminated in a grant submission to the National Endowment for the Arts for a project in the Dance Department. "100 Years and Beyond: Contemporary Ballet in the Making," included staging three historic ballets from Labanotation, creation of three new ballets, a forum discussion and documentation for an online portal for future study.

Special Alumni Discount Once a Family Member, Always a Family Member

All UNLV dance alumni now receive a special ticket price of \$10 for all UNLV Dance concert productions. All dance alumni receiving this newsletter via email will be on the list at the box office for discount eligibility. Limit 1 discounted ticket per alumni. Photo ID is required.

UNLV'S DANCE SEMINAR CLASS Words of Wisdom, Paths of Discovery, Nuggets, Nuggets, and More Nuggets



Every Friday afternoon at 130pm in HFA 111, Vikki Baltimore Dale hosts the UNLV Dance Seminar Class. This weekly lecture brings the UNLV dance major face-to-face with professional dancers, in an atmosphere that allows for questions, introspection and discovery.

A hallmark of this class is the search for the "Nugget", a kernel of truth that can be realized, remembered and will help the major as they move toward their professional artistic careers.

Fall 2015 has been an exciting semester of nuggets. Recent lectures have been Effective Auditioning with Eric Bean Jr., How to Pursue your Chosen Path with Marie Joe Tabet, and Staying Focused on the Art with Clarice Geissel-Rathers.

Alumni Spotlight— They Dance, They Choreograph, They Design and They Teach
At UNLV we are proud of our progressive curriculum that is producing a diverse range of dance artists. We ask four alumni about dance, about UNLV, and advice for today's young artist.

Marie Joe Tabat, Principal Dancer and Associate Artistic Director Las Vegas Contemporary Dance Theatre and General Manager of Rao's Caesars Palace. BFA in Performance and Choreography 2008.

Dancing is my passion and fuels my soul. It gives me the ability to communicate and express my feelings. It also gives me the chance to make someone feel something which is indescribable. I love UNLV Dance for its versatile faculty, who welcome you into their artistic family. At UNLV, I had the chance to travel and dance around the world! Young artists interested in dance should make sure they are prepared to work hard always, listen and watch rather than speak and ask, and LOVE what you do!



Heather Harper, Artistic Managing Director, Harper Continuum Dance Theatre, New York, NY. BA Dance Production and Management 2008.

Dance is a universal language that can break barriers and reach people in ways that words cannot. It has always been an important part of my life, and that's why I love it. The UNLV Dance Department engages dance majors in the total world of a dance both the dancing (onstage) and the production (backstage). The students have opportunities to get to know one another and form tight artistic bonds that continue after graduation. Young dancers should utilize their resources, research, and learn as much as they can about their professional track in advance. Always plan ahead and think about the future and how you want to get there.

Kate (Ciaschi) Louer, Owner/Choreographer/Instructor, Definition Dance Academy, Chicago, IL. Danced professionally with RASA Dance Chicago and Thodos Dance Chicago. BFA in Performance and Choreography 2005.

Dance has been the constant in my life and I can't imagine living without it. I love how it completes me and lets me be who I am. It's a way of expressing myself like no other and I love the joy it brings me—I am who I am because of dance. There aren't words to describe my experience at UNLV. It was one of the most rewarding, amazing times in my life. With such a diverse program, UNLV Dance helped prepare me for anything and everything. It offered so many incredible experiences with the incredible faculty, guest teachers/choreographers and traveling around the world to see different arenas of dance. The equal attention in all techniques helped shape me into the dance/teacher I am today. I was truly blessed to be apart of the program. Advice to young dancers: Be you, but don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Take risks and take classes from everyone, everywhere. Work hard and never settle with just being good, always try to be better.



Lainey Wilson, Disneyland Resort Entertainment Events Specialist, Anaheim, CA. Teaches Ballet and Lyrical at Momentum Dance and Performing Arts Center. BA in Dance Production Management 2012.

I love dance because it breaks down barriers - it is a way of communication and expression unlike any other. In a world where most are numb and unfeeling, dance has the power to make people feel—it has molded me into who I am today. I love UNLV Dance because it afforded me the opportunity to grow not only as a technician, performer, and choreographer, but to develop the skills to work in entertainment for the rest of my life. I also love UNLV Dance because I was given the opportunity to travel and experience dance in places I had never been before, and take class from professionals through the guest artist program who were working professionally in the field of dance. I look fondly back on my time in the UNLV dance department. My advice to young dancers is to never limit yourself. Explore all of your options - there is something out there for you to be passionate about...it might just be different than what you thought it would be.