Choreographers blend time, space, and energy into dynamic movement forms. Dynamic is an appropriate word because dance is dynamic much in the same way that a waterfall is dynamic; when the water is falling the waterfall exists, if the water is held in position or no longer is falling, the waterfall ceases to exist. In much the same way, a choreographer creates a series of phrased, timed, and specially placed movement phrases that exist within an idealized performance time. When these function well collectively, they create the special environment that most label as “Art.” The American philosopher Clive Bell called this “Significant Form,” and the French philosopher Paul Vallery called it a “closed world of resonance.”

Each semester at UNLV the talented choreographers in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program exercise their understanding of this choreographic realm by creating choreographic works that explore and present their versions of these worlds of movement resonance. This semester, 13 choreographers will present in the dance concert, In Between.

In Between will also feature choreographed works by UNLV Dance guest artist, Kristine Keppel and UNLV Dance professor Victoria Baltimore Dale. Dale’s work will be showcased in In Between, and will then represent UNLV at the International Association of Blacks in Dance National Conference in Los Angeles, California in January 2018. Dale’s works have been a longstanding favorite at the IABD conference, where they have been lauded for their unique choreographic voice and their representation of high caliber choreography.

For further info contact the Performing Arts Center Box Office: 702-895-2787.
Romeo and Juliet: An Aesthetic Response

When I first heard of the possibility of producing the full-length ballet Romeo and Juliet, I wondered how the hell are we going to do this. Traditionally it is a lot of ballet, a lot of costumes, a lot of sets, a difficult episodic score with 52 sections, and a well-known narrative that needs to be told in an emotionally impactful way without maudlin sentimentality. Mounting this production seemed as impossible as the love of the two characters. But somehow we kept coming back to the idea, and there was a passion and a story here that seemed like it needed to be told at this time, at this place, and with this dance department—the stars seemed to align for this production to happen.

The Department of Dance's collaborative project Romeo and Juliet is a triumph. I can think of no other dance department in this nation or anywhere that would be able to come together to produce a show this big, this grand and this good. There is so much to celebrate. A live orchestra of 75 performers under the brilliant direction of Taras Krysa brings Prokofiev's complex, difficult, and lush score to life with an immediacy and emotional sensitivity that hits to core of the work and produces an emotional resonance that we feel implicitly.

Typically the ballet is done with one traditional choreographic voice, but UNLV Dance is anything but traditional. Contemporary Post-structural theorists feel that to truly understand a story, we have to see it from a diversity of angles and views. In a brilliant post-structuralist twist UNLV Dance attacks Romeo and Juliet with choreography by eight visionary movement makers.

In Shakespeare's work the turmoil of the play is displayed on the street. The street becomes the canvas where we find the conflict, the rage, and the turmoil of the rival clans of the work. Victoria Dale, with a blend of contemporary hip-hop, jazz, and contemporary motion, allows us to feel the turbulent crisis and conflict that is this work. This motion hits Prokofiev's sound in a unique and visually fresh way.

Cathy Allen tackles the monumental Ballroom section of the work. In several dances she is able to reveal the life of a party. The party becomes metaphor for the chemistry of the world around us. Life is a party: there are brief encounters, and there are long encounters. There are those that crash the party. There are moments of "selfies" and fun, and there are moments when we find the world unravels and the guests are dancing and climbing on the walls. Through inventive and interesting choreography the party keeps evolving, devolving, changing and developing from outrageous to poignant.

Dolly Kelepecz-Momot and Richard Havey tackle many of the scenes that have to carry the narrative of this story. They do this with a wonderful kinetic balance of classical ballet steps and pantomimic actions that remind us of the traditional significance of this work. Contemporary dance sits in a far more expressionistic modality.

To be able to carry the narrative of this classic tale through the vehicle of dance is no simple or easy task. And it is handled well, providing charming and tender moments of humor and pathos. Kelepecz-Momot also gives us the beautiful pointe choreography of the Dance of the Lilies which gives the audience a moment of beautiful splendor that allows us to endure the tragic ending that we know is coming.

Margot Mink Colbert livens up the beginning of the second act with the Folk Dance on the Street. This work brings together a charming vocabulary of folk dance steps that remind us that we are in Shakespeare's Fair Verona. It is lively, acrobatic, and joyous.

Jiyeon Kim and James Jeon celebrate UNLV Dance's partnership with Korea National Sport University with the addition of choreography to this work. Kim tackles the classically difficult task of choreographing Juliet's Variation. This is the moment that Juliet arrives at the party. It is moment where Romeo notices her. With a complex stacking of classical ballet pointe choreography, Kim creates the stage for this love-at-first-sight moment.

BFA dance majors Cosette Richardson as Juliet and Malik Gray as Romeo.

BFA dance majors Zack Frongillo as Mercutio and Malik Gray as Romeo.
Traditionally the gem of this ballet is the balcony scene. It is within this scene that Romeo and Juliet fall in love and abandon all for their love. Jeon in an expert and skillful way crafts a choreographic scene that overwhelms and captures all that is within the narrative and within Prokofiev’s brilliantly written score. The balcony scene is like a rose that blooms, it starts simply and then unfolds, becomes full, and reaches a perfect fullness that is like the Romeo and Juliet love metaphor. Jeon allows classical partnering to collide with contemporary movement and they merge like the lovers into a mutual form that seethes with emotional potency. The end of the act ends with Juliet on the balcony and Romeo reaching toward her. As he backs away their fingers tremble with love and connection. And in the audience we all know that this is archetypal LOVE. This is the essence of what holds the world together and makes it move and continue. Jeon also treats us within the ballet to a delightfully irreverent and humorously impactful reinterpretation of Mercutio’s Variation.

There are too many significant dance performances within this ballet to mention all. Some, however, stand out and have to be mentioned. Cosette Richardson and Kalie McLaughlin are technically perfect as Juliet. Both capture the emotional vulnerability and ineffable quality that is Juliet. Malik Gray with an innocence, simplicity, and wide-eyed wonder is a perfect Romeo. He has a lush and bold flow to his motion in this role. Zack Frongillo creates a Mercutio that is a complex mix of charm, cunning, humor, wit, and technical prowess. Alexis Hansbrough’s Lady Capulet is so present and embodied. Denzelle McAfee’s Lord Capulet is strong and domineering, yet he also shows Capulet’s vulnerable transition at the end of the work. Carolyn Lajara-Rodriguez is a noble Paris. AJ Vehec and Jayden McGree are commanding as Benvolio and Tybalt. Dolly Kelepece-Momot creates a quirky and endearing Nurse and Richard Havey are the UNLV Dance Company Directors who organize and manage this company of 40 dancers.

When you sit in the piece for a couple of months, you realize that the lessons within this piece are human and always profound. Chief amongst these are the fact that even when faced with all the adversity of situation, Romeo and Juliet choose and surrender to LOVE. Love is the answer and love always trumps hate. And in today’s world there is always more room and more need for LOVE no matter how difficult, impossible, or unlikely.

UNLV Dance’s production program does not disappoint. In a monstrously large concert hall that is more suited to orchestral performance rather than something this theatrical, they are able to create a magical environment that transports us from Las Vegas to the metaphorical Verona. Elizabeth Kline bathes the dancers and actors in wonderful environments of light. Mallory Ward and Candice Wynants give us an armory of costumes that transform and bring characters to life. Angel Sandoval with the use of a few simple panels, a platform and a railing, creates a world of architecture that slides from place to place giving each scene a unique location. Emma Slaney is the stage manager who expertly executes the show allowing the story to unfold. There are other warriors behind the production, Eric Hauflisch is the assistant lighting designer, and Dolly Kelepece-Momot and Richard Havey are the UNLV Dance Company Directors who organize and manage this company of 40 dancers.

Many wonder, “What can an old story like Romeo and Juliet teach us today?” “Don’t we already know this message?” “Haven’t we already learned it?”

When you sit in the piece for a couple of months, you realize that the lessons within this piece are human and always profound. Chief amongst these are the fact that even when faced with all the adversity of situation, Romeo and Juliet choose and surrender to LOVE. Love is the answer and love always

—Louis Kavouras, Chair, UNLV Dance
A huge congratulations and bravo to Dance Department professor Victoria Baltimore Dale. Her book *Survey of African American Dance* was just recently published by Kendal Hunt Publishing company. Professor Dale developed this course for UNLV in the 1990s and it became one of the first courses in the nation to celebrate and study the unique contributions of African American artists. This new book will hopefully become a standard book for this field. UNLV recently was named by US News and World Report as the most diverse undergraduate campus in the US. It is because of faculty like Victoria Dale that this achievement has been reached. Bravo Victoria.

**Upcoming Shows:**

Join the IN crowd for our 2017-2018 IN Season

Tickets on sale now at the Performing Arts Center Box Office!

**IN Between**
Thu, Nov. 16, 2017 - Sun, Nov. 19, 2017
Dance Studio 1 (HFA 111)

**IN Composition**
Fri, March 2, 2018 - Sat, March 3, 2018
Judy Bayley Theatre

**IN Stride**
Thu, April 26, 2018 - Sun, April 29, 2018
Dance Studio 1 (HFA 111)