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U.Va. Spring Dance Concerts Feature Music and Choreography Collaboration

April 8, 2010 — Students in the University of Virginia's College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences' Drama Department program in dance and in the McIntire Department of Music are collaborating on two dance concerts in mid-April and May 3.

The Spring Dance Concert will be presented in the Helms Theatre April 15-17, 8 p.m. with a matinee April 17 at 2. Tickets, available at the Arts Box Office, are \$10 for adults and \$5 for U.Va. students, faculty, staff and Alumni Association members.

The performance will showcase 13 dancers performing original choreographed pieces with 12 having original music scores. The dancers collaborated with eight graduate music students and three outside musicians to create the individual pieces that will run four to 10 minutes each. The program will run two hours, including an intermission.

Each group met six to eight times during the semester to develop their own styles for the concert. The collaborations represent great diversity, said dance lecturer Rose Pasquarello Beauchamp. Among those working together are a father (composer) and daughter (dancer) team Jeff and Rachel Swartz.

One performance is an exploration of classical Indian music that used recordings to create original music that moved between Indian classical and contemporary music in the electronic medium and featuring contemporary choreography. Another showcases dancers making sounds through contact microphones in the dance space. Students who took a "dance on camera" class will present a composition they filmed with dancers in an outdoor space then edited to an original music score.

"This is one of the more interesting shows. It's been a great learning experience for the undergraduate students," Beauchamp said.

The collaborations between choreographers and composers (in that order) include Meghan Cabot and graduate music student Aurie Hsu; dance faculty member Autumn Proctor and graduate student composer Jonathan Zorn; Rose Amanin with Zorn; Justin Paxton and music graduate student Sarah O'Halloran; fourth-year Thushara Gunda with graduate composer Steven Kemper on the Indian-influenced collaboration; Camille Beckman and graduate student Shaun Cullen working on the dance video; choreographers Anna Banerjea and Steven Ward with graduate student composer Lanier Sammons; Gina Consumano and professional composer Jim Gagnon; and Beauchamp with professional composer Matt Wyatt.

Guest artist-in-residence Cate Caplin, who has worked in musical theater, jazz and ballroom dancing and has directed and choreographed more than 100 productions for television, feature films, music videos, commercials and theatrical venues worldwide, has been working with a number of dance students in the Department of Drama. She will present a work she choreographed, "Stuff Like That There."

The idea for the Spring Dance Concert collaboration came about as Beauchamp and Hsu talked about their work. They each have a studio at the McGuffey Art Center, and Hsu is also a dancer.

"The music and dance programs are parallel programs," Hsu said. "We thought it would be great to merge them."

Hsu collaborated with fourth-year student Cabot to create a dance called "Etragere" based on Hsu's music composition "one, two, three..." They began the collaborative process with a concept, "Smile at a Stranger, See What Happens." The result is an abstract collaboration for both the music and dance portions.

"I always think of music as movement and dance as representing sound through movement. So for me, they are inseparable and when you put them together they create something bigger than the parts," Hsu said.

She praised the collaboration from the perspective of the composer and choreographer: "It's a rare thing as a student to have custom-made music to work with. That's what I am excited about," Hsu said.

During the semester Hsu also introduced undergraduate music students to collaboration in her "Materials of Contemporary Music" class.

A number of the collaborations will be included in an informal concert on May 3. The location of that event is still to be determined.

"The goal of the dance program is to find some form of collaboration each semester," Beauchamp said. "Dance has a history of collaborating with others. It's a universal language."

Tickets for all spring semester productions can be purchased [online \[link to: http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu/\]](http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu/), and also are available by phone at 434-924-3376 and in person at the Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the Culbreth Theatre, weekdays from noon to 5 p.m. A \$3.50 processing fee applies to Internet and phone orders.