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DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA'S DANCE PROGRAM TO PRESENT

SPRING DANCE CONCERT

April 12 – 14 at 8:00 p.m.

in the Ruth Caplin Theatre

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA- April 10, 2018 - The Dance Program of the Department of Drama at the University of Virginia presents its Spring Dance Concert on April 12-14 at 8:00 p.m. in the Ruth Caplin Theatre. The spring concert will feature the works of students and two guest choreographers for an evening of dance that explores multiple perspectives and themes through the practice of performance.

The Dance Program is pleased to present the work of two guest choreographers this semester: Katharine Birdsall and André M. Zachery. Birdsall is a local dance artist who holds a BFA from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts, is an AMSAT certified teacher of Alexander Technique, and holds a 200-hour RYT in yoga. She has studied, taught, performed, and presented her work nationally and internationally. André M. Zachery is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist with a BFA from the Ailey School at Fordham University and an MFA in Performance & Interactive Media Arts from Brooklyn College. Zachery is the Artistic Director of Renegade Performance Group.

Upswept is Katharine Birdsall's third piece for the dance program. When asked about her choreography Birdsall explained that, "[it] is inspired by a corporeal sense of shifting sands, changing tides, the wind across water and luffing sails. The movement vocabulary explores the materiality of these elements in the natural world and how they exist in and around us. The overall composition of the dance describes some of the many variations on being swept up and shifted or changed by natural forces. It is at once elemental, almost impersonal, as well as emotional. In this way we are playing with the line between dancing the images as they exist in nature as well as how they may affect us as beings alive in our bodies. The structure of the piece relies on source material from choreographed phrases and improvisations based on elements of earth and air. The dance is a weaving of these choreographies and improvisations." The dancers in this piece will be joined onstage by musician and composer Wes Swing who will be performing an original work for *Upswept* composed with the vocabulary of "luffing sails," "wind," and "down and up" in mind. The music relies and plays on ideas of ground and sky with movement in between. The ground swell theme reminds us that air implies the existence and need for ground, and the use of cello harmonics and loops in open tonalities reflect ideas of space

and possibility. These possibilities lead to reinterpretations and expansion of themes throughout the piece.

Borrowing the title from the beginning of the second stanza of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson, *Stony the Road We Trod*, by guest artist André M. Zachery, is an entry for audiences into the purpose and premise of Afrofuturism. When asked to describe his creative practice in relation to Afrofuturism, Zachery stated that “Black practices in the Western Diaspora have been formed as not only survival mechanisms, but spaces for empowerment and uplift always along a journey forward. The coded language and analogy versed in the soundscapes of Blackness continue to provide the timeless framework to drive and motivate movement. Movement as a key component to Afrofuturism.”

In addition to the above guest artist works, seven students (both undergraduate and graduate) created original pieces for this concert. From Vivien Fergusson’s *Fledge* about transition and pacing to Semora Ward’s *cellar door* which investigates “the dualities that exist within and the relationship between the performed and true self,” each student has found unique ways to investigate, develop, and manifest their artistic voices through the creative process.

Sarah Lescault, a fourth-year English major and Dance minor, developed her piece *Dream of Dance* inspired by “the never ceasing movement of waves.” Composer Bradyn Cole collaborated with Lescault and wrote the music for the piece.

In his work *Theory*, fourth-year Political and Social Thought major and History minor Luke Williams attempts to express in movement that which cannot be expressed in his written PST thesis. “The intersection of dance, politics, and black studies is a rich reminder that embodied knowledge is an important, though often overlooked, perspective that bears critical insight for imagining political possibilities.” In this piece Williams creates a textual collage alongside the dancers onstage integrating excerpts from *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates with poetic prose written and performed by Williams.

Tickets for the Spring Dance Concert can be purchased online at www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu, by calling 434-924-3376 or in person at the UVA Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the UVA Drama Building, open Monday through Friday from noon until 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, UVA Faculty/Staff, and UVA Alumni members, and \$5 for students. Full-time UVA students may receive one free ticket if reserved at least 24 hours in advance of their desired performance date.

Free parking on performance nights is available in the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, located next to the Drama Building.

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