UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

November 29, 2022
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Existing in Movement

To craft an audience experience that elicits questions, to cultivate a focus on the humanistic elements of live performance and to foster empathy that inspires viewers to manifest change in their communities. Such are the aims of the choreographers behind “Within Existence | Existence Within,” a fall concert by UC Santa Barbara’s Department of Theater and Dance.

Curating original and imaginative pieces into one holistic contemporary production, the show will debut Dec. 1–3 at Hatlen Theater. It features choreography by five senior dancers — each culminating three years of dance curriculum — and a faculty work by former Alvin Ailey dancer Christina Sanchez. Directed by Christina McCarthy, it is also the first performance of the season for the UCSB Dance Company.

Among the student choreographers, who have been experimenting with cutting edge and modern rehearsal practices, is Bailey Dodgion. Her contemporary ballet work, “Experience,” uses fast-paced virtuosic and athletic movement juxtaposed against a mysterious duet that emerges and disappears throughout the piece.

“I like to be really in tune with how my dancers are receiving the movement,” Dodgion said. “Oftentimes I ask them for a certain step and they add their own individuality to it which sparks my imagination further.”

The same dancer-centric model is also exhibited by choreographer Jazz Hayes, who created the minimalistic and highly detailed movement piece “Threshold, excerpt

2," which traps the dancers in a liminal space of transition between states of being. The dancers on stage at times evoke humans waiting and affecting one another and other times evoke synaptic electricity bouncing around in the cells of the brain.

"My rehearsals are dancer-led and focus on what my dancers need from me for support or clarification on movement," Hayes explained. "This allows my dancers to feel more comfortable with the movement and the piece in general as well as give them more time to get familiar with the intricacies of the music."

Additional student pieces in the concert feature the choreography of:

• Jaliana Apawan Semien, who starts from a place of exploration in movement vocabulary generated from the seven virtues and seven sins. Using a visceral and expansive movement palette, Semien's work is ethereally connected to these sins and virtues. The dancers shift through snapshots of interactions and energetic snippets of these states of being in a push and pull of grace and conflict.

• Leia Zorba, who connects with the seven archetypes of femininity to explore the ways in which feminine power has been undercut by the confining stereotypical ideas and old-fashioned notions about women. Zorba sees elements of control and limitation in these ways of understanding femininity and looks to break open our understanding of feminine self-definition for each person.

• Dalya Modlin, whose work "Tethered" creates an atmosphere of memory, loneliness and reflection, pairing individual dancers floating in a state of reverie on one side of the stage, with a group of dancers flowing through a visceral interpretation of emotion and recollection on the other side of the stage. The piece unfolds as a collage of images that mix in a stream of consciousness that relates to how memory comes and goes in our conscious and subconscious mind.

"Within Existence | Existence Within" runs Dec. 1–2 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 3 at 2 p.m., in Hatlen Theater. Tickets and information are available via theaterdance.ucsb.edu, or by calling (805) 893-2064.

About UC Santa Barbara

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collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.