

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH DEPARTMENT OF DANCE TO HOST ANNUAL “VARIANCE: THE BFA DANCE CONCERT”**

CSULB BFA in Dance majors present original choreography in the annual Variance: the BFA Dance Concert from Oct. 10 to 12.

- WHO:** California State University, Long Beach, Department of Dance  
CSULB Student choreographers: Aisha Shauntel Bardge, Jeffery Finnerman, Jasmyn Hamblin, Allie Miks and Nancy Rivera.  
CSULB Faculty choreographer: Rebecca Bryant  
Guest choreographer: Micaela Taylor
- WHAT:** Dance majors and minors perform original works choreographed by BFA in Dance majors. Guest choreographer and dancer Micaela Taylor, who is on the [Dance Magazine’s list of the 25 up-and-coming artists 2019](#), will also premiere her new work. And students will perform faculty member Rebecca Bryant’s piece she created for a dance festival in Quito, Ecuador.
- WHERE:** Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater  
6200 E Atherton St.  
Long Beach, CA 90815
- WHEN:** Thursday, October 10, 2019, 8 p.m.  
Friday, October 11, 2019, 8 p.m.  
Saturday, October 12, 2019, 8 p.m. and matinee, 2 p.m.
- WHY:** CSULB Dance is a rigorous program that provides training in dance with a strong foundation in modern and ballet technique and choreography. This concert is held as a part of the program, for dance majors and minors to develop their skills in performance and choreography. It also provides an opportunity for CSULB students to appreciate and support the arts.
- Tickets:** \$22 General Admission  
\$16 Students, CSULB ID, Seniors, DRC  
Tickets can be purchased [here](#).

For further details on media opportunities, please contact:  
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Ami Tsutani  
May 16, 2019

Allie Miks, a 24-year-old student choreographer, started making her new dance a few months ago in preparation for “Variance: the BFA Dance Concert,” happening this fall at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB).

The spring semester is about to come to an end, and three months of summer vacation quickly approaches. However, for Miks and three other student choreographers whose pieces have been chosen for the fall concert, “Variance,” the summer vacation is not really a vacation; it is time to develop and give forms to their ideas.

These choreographers, Miks and others, Jasmyn Hamblin, Jeff Finnerman and Nancy Rivera, are BFA candidates in Dance at CSULB. They submitted their project proposals in April and were accepted to showcase in “Variance.” Not all students who are interested in choreographing are able to present their works in the concert.

This show is directed by Rebecca Lemme, an associate professor of dance at CSULB.

In the process of choosing pieces, “we were looking at pieces themselves and how the show will fit together,” Lemme said. “We are an educational institution. We are more concerned about choosing pieces that we think have a lot of potential.”

Allie Miks, one of these student choreographers for “Variance,” is a 24-year-old aspiring dancer and choreographer.

Miks talked about her feelings, thoughts and plans for the making process of her piece.

“I was really excited and nervous,” Miks said about the time she found out her proposal was accepted. “It’s a project that I think will be really fun and new for me.”

According to her unofficial in-progress description, her piece “garbed in” is a project that examines “how clothes exaggerate or restrict the body and how the shape of a garment can influence the movement.”

After her proposal got approved, Miks moved on to the next step: the audition to cast student dancers for her piece.

The audition was held in a studio at the Department of Dance building on May 3. The studio looked full with close to 40 students who hoped to be cast in a piece.

All four choreographers auditioned for their pieces together. Some choreographers taught a small phrase to the dancers while other choreographers let them improvise with a set of rules.

The audition lasted for more than two hours. After the audition, the choreographers gathered and decided which dancers they would choose for their pieces.

“I was looking for dancers that are comfortable with working in collaboration and in contributing to the piece overall,” Miks said. She continued, “I often look for mature dancers in how they move and approach a concept.”

She cast two dancers in “garbed in”: Clara Vigil and Jocelyn Garcia.

“I love working with Allie because she is so open and receptive to what’s happening in the moment,” said Clara Vigil, who has worked with Miks before. “I’m just thrilled that I get the opportunity to work with her again.”

Jocelyn Garcia, who has cast for Miks’ piece for the first time, explained how excited she is to collaborate with Miks. “I had no idea that I and Clara would be the ones lucky enough to help create this piece,” Gracia said.

Miks’ working process is collaborative. She likes to work with what her dancers have to offer rather than forcing them into doing movements that do not feel natural to them.

“It’s a very chill back and forth process,” Vigil looked back through her collaborative experience with Miks. “There is so much uncertainty in the initial stages, which could be seen as daunting or stressful, but Allie is so methodical and explicit about what she wants that I never lose faith.”

The first time Miks created a dance for stage was in her junior year of high school. The dance was for seven dancers to a song by Radiohead.

“At the time, I got a lot of great feedback and submitted it to a competition as well that I was recognized for,” Miks said. “I guess it was a bit hit in my district.”

Since then, she has constantly choreographed and also performed as a dancer.

Miks explained how she enjoys both choreographing and performing. “For me, both are a creative outlook on myself as an artist, the choreographing as a way to collaborate with others in creating new works, and the performance as a way to express myself through someone else’s lens.”

The most exciting thing for Miks, regarding her piece, is to work in close collaboration with Kelsey Vidic, the costume designer who has worked for concerts of Department of Dance.

Saying she does not know how her piece will look, Miks is planning to have her two dancers change their costumes on stage a few times. “I don’t think it will be a very ‘dance-y’ piece. [It will be] probably very pedestrian and gestural.”

During the summer, Miks and her dancers will not have an intense rehearsal process. They will start workshopping with movements in June. July will be a time for Miks to work mostly with the costume designer, Vidic, to create some costume pieces. Miks and her dancers will all get back together in August.

Choreographers need to show their progress to the professors on Aug. 23, right before the fall semester starts.

In this showing, the choreographers are required to have “a complete draft of something or at least some really clear sections that they haven’t quite decided on how to put together,” Lemme explained.

“Variance: a BFA Dance Concert” is a dance performance including four pieces choreographed by the BFA candidates and a solo by a BFA candidate, Aisha Shauntel. A piece by an associate professor of Department of Dance, Rebecca Bryant, and a piece by a guest choreographer, Micaela Taylor, are also shown.

The show will be held at Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater and will open Oct. 10, 2019 at 8 P.M.. It will run until Oct. 12, with a Saturday matinee at 2 P.M.