

Style



Collaborating creativity 'Live Here'

Parker Brown
Reporter

Eight months ago, assistant professor of dance and coordinator of the dance program, Lauren Kearns, approached communications coordinator of video projects, J. McMerty, and technical director for the department of performing arts, Bill Webb, about collaborating on a new version of a piece Kearns had previously choreographed and performed with her professional dance company.

Both professors were excited about the opportunity, and the result has been a multi-departmental partnership that has combined talent and resources to produce a multimedia, live dance piece called "I Live Here."

This multi-sensory experience will serve as the third and final act of the upcoming performing

arts department's show, "Vibe."

"'I Live Here' is a hybrid form of performance that utilizes athletic modern dance, text, voice, live music, set design, visual images and video to engage the audience in a multi-sensory dialogue about the meaning of home and place," Kearns said. "This is the largest multimedia piece I've done in terms of the number of media elements that will be combined with the live dance."

Kearns' vision for this version of "I Live Here" has been made a reality by an Elon Fund for Excellence in the Arts and Sciences grant, which she co-wrote with McMerty and Webb in fall 2008.

The \$5,000 grant enabled the creation of the elaborate set, costume designs and video. With these funds, Kearns, McMerty and Webb were able to realize their joint creative dreams for the piece.

"One of our goals when writing the grant was to forge a new era of interdisciplinary collaboration between our departments and schools that enhances the experiential learning of our students," Kearns said. "(Collaborating with everyone) has been absolutely amazing."

The dance component began in the fall by casting a small ensemble that had to learn the dance quickly so the multimedia components could be developed around it.

"I Live Here" is based largely on the idea of the journey of a woman at different stages in her life, as well as finding the meaning of home and place.

Developing and reflecting on their respective characters has been key for the dancers and this hybrid project has provided

many unique challenges for them.

"I have never been a part of a dance where the movement is the simplest part," said senior Allie Lochary, who performs a solo in the piece. "Besides being consumed with the multimedia component at all times, 'I Live Here' is the most mentally challenging piece I have been involved with, the layers of my character run deep."

The layers of each character are further developed by the addition of poetry, live cellists, the set, costumes and video.

The video elements will have a live component, as well as previously shot footage, which will enhance the audience's understanding of the piece.

McMerty has enlisted the help of his freshmen communication fellows section of digital media convergence, as well as a few upper-class communications students, to bring "I Live Here" to life.

Students were divided into crews that are producing segments, running the live performance, producing a documentary on the making of the piece and also a strategic team to promote the event through various media outlets.

Sophomore ensemble dancer Kara Griffin has a unique perspective on the collaboration.

"I'm a communications major as well as a dance major, so it has been rewarding for me to have these two aspects of my life at Elon combine in such an amazing project," she said.

To learn more about "I Live Here," visit: www.elondance.wordpress.com.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

(right to left) Senior Allie Lochary, senior Zibby McBride, sophomore Kara Griffin and junior Caitlyn Juengel will perform in "I Live Here," a multidepartment collaboration that combines dance and multimedia.

"I Live Here" will be performed at "Vibe" at 7:30 p.m. May 7-9 in McCrary Theatre.

Tickets, on sale now, are free with Elon ID or \$12 for the general public.



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TAPPED OUT!



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Tapped Out was a performance put on by the Elon Tap Ensemble. The show ran both Sunday and Monday nights, capturing the attention of the audience with music from the B-52's and a variety of other artists. The show included both group and solo performances by members and the Ensemble Gene Mueller directed the show.