

# Dance the night away: Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre to put on show

By **Sam West** | Published **02/18/16 2:36pm** | Updated **02/25/16 10:26pm** |

*In the Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre's upcoming production, "The Flow of Boats," the audience is encouraged to interact with their phones. Photo courtesy of Alison Shuman*

At a dance recital in a crowded theatre, the use of cell phones is typically strictly forbidden. But at an upcoming show put on by the University's Theatre and Dance department, it will be encouraged.

The Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre is putting on a recital that premieres on Feb. 23. One segment of the show, "The Flow of Boats," choreographed by assistant professor of dance Rebecca Salzer, will play music through the audience's cell phones rather than overhead speakers. The show includes dances created by other faculty members and performed by students.

"This piece is very much about the kind of dual connection and distance that our smart devices give us," Salzer said.

The idea to have the audience play backing music through their phones came from an outdoor performance at the UA arboretum that Salzer once gave. This piece was set to music composed by assistant professor of music Amir Zaheri. "The Flow of Boats" is another collaboration between the two faculty members.

The piece begins after audiences return from intermission. A URL is listed in the recital's program, which viewers are encouraged to activate on their smart devices. This use of technology has an artistic effect: instead of music coming from the stage, it will surround and envelop the audience members.

The show was inspired by the Syrian refugee crisis, and how Americans have a lot of knowledge, but little personal connection to the events. Laura Testino, a senior majoring in dance and journalism and a dancer in the show, said that learning about these events were an important part of the process of rehearsing the number.

"This has been the most intellectually involved that I've ever been in a dance rehearsal process," she said.

The entire recital will kick off with "Paquita," a 25-minute re-staging of a classic ballet from the 19th century choreographed by professor Rita Snyder.

The second piece is choreographed by professor Sarah M. Barry. It's a modern duet danced among six tall, cylindrical metal sculptures built by Craig Wedderspon, the artist who created the sculpture in the center of Woods Quad.

The last piece before intermission is an all-male contemporary dance set to opera, choreographed by the director of the department of dance, Cornelius Carter. All of the men in the dance department are in the show, and they'll be showered with rose petals during their performance.

After "The Flow of Boats," there will be a contemporary ballet piece choreographed by Lawrence Jackson, and a duet by professor Qianping Guo.

The last piece of the show is a musical theatre piece featuring jazz tunes and all female dancers choreographed by professor Stacy Alley.

It's the final week of rehearsals for the dancers, and the show is beginning to look as it will on opening night. Costumes and lights are being brought in for "tech week." Stage manager Camille Stillman, a junior majoring in dance and theatre, said by now the dancers are almost show-ready.

"It's really a growing process, for everyone, the performers and the choreographers," Stillman said.