



STAFF PHOTOS | MICHELLE LEPIANKA CARTER

Above and below, Emily Higginbotham, a recent graduate of the University of Alabama with a degree in dance, and Shaun Leary, a senior at UA majoring in dance, rehearse "Twenty-twenty" in Morgan Hall on May 13. The contemporary ballet pas de deux was choreographed by Rita Snyder, a member of the UA dance faculty. Snyder was invited to Civitavecchia, Italy to present her work at the Teatro Traiano on May 25.

'Twenty-twenty' twirls its way to Italy

University of Alabama dancers invited to perform overseas

By: D. Kaylin Bowen
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

University of Alabama dancers are heading to Italy this month to perform a work that debuted earlier this year at UA.

Rita Snyder, an UA associate professor of dance, choreographed a contemporary pas de deux, "Twenty-twenty," which will be performed by two UA senior dance majors at the Teatro Traiano in Civitavecchia, Italy, on May 25.

The dance is roughly 7 ½ minutes. It tells the story of a man and woman in an oppressive futuristic society. "Twenty-twenty" details a woman's decision to trust her companion and escape with him.

"Twenty-twenty" premiered during the University of Alabama's spring Alabama Repertory Dance in February 2015. Shaun Leary performed during the premier. He will be joined by Emily Higginbotham for the performance with the Balletto de Civitavecchia.

Higginbotham said she is excited to take classes with the Balletto di Civitavecchia, which is about a 40-mile drive from Rome. It is her and Leary's first international performance. The UA trio leaves on May 18.

The Italian performance is an invitation-only event for choreographers like Snyder. She said UA contributed to the funding for the ballet.

"It's always good to have events that are public for public relations," Snyder said. "Whenever we can represent the university nationally or internationally, even better. It's good not only for the dance program but also for the university."

Snyder said she gets inspiration for her choreography from all around her. She said she keeps a notebook of ideas.

"I've had this idea for many years," she said. "When it's time for me to choreograph something, I go to my notebook and I look and I say, 'What do we need for ARDT, and what dancers are available to me?' I'll say



it's time to do that. It was time to do this pas de deux."

Higginbotham said her favorite part of the ballet is near the end.

"When Shaun and I have the connection," Higginbotham said. "He reaches out and touches my face and it's like 'OK, I finally trust you' then there's another hesitation, but finally, I melt into him. In that one moment, I get to have emotion."

Leary said he prefers their first interaction.

"At the beginning when he notices her, he's so infatuated with her," said Leary. "It sets up the story."

The ballet is performed to "Book of Radiance", by American composer Jon Scoville.