

# Performing Dance Company explores complex emotions

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by: [Louisa Austin](#) on March 5, 2013

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The Performing Dance Company is exploring the human experience in its latest concert series. The pieces focus on relationships, the human journey and the sake of dancing for the love of movement.

One of the PDC's faculty choreographers, assistant professor Shaun Boyle, has created the work "Tenderly We Bite" in collaboration with the two featured dancers, Michael Garber and Shelby Terrell.

The piece is about the two-sided life of F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda. Fitzgerald is well known for his novels "The Great Gatsby" and "The Beautiful and Damned." The couple lived during the Jazz Age of the 1920s and '30s and was very popular, but also exploited by the media.

The glamorous life that the media portrayed the couple to have intrigued Boyle. Hidden beneath the surface, though, the couple was plagued with alcoholism, financial problems and psychiatric hospitalization. Boyle saw the contrast between the Fitzgeralds' "beautiful" public life and their "damned" private life and wanted to explore it.

In an interview, Boyle said she likes to present humanity in her choreography, and this couple's story provided a broad range of emotions to draw upon for the piece. Envisioning the two dancers conveying a scope of emotion on stage, Boyle hopes to disguise the dancing and instead highlight the humanity in the piece.

Boyle's goal is for the audience to be able to relate to the universal themes of love and struggle within the Fitzgeralds' relationship. She chose the title "Tenderly We Bite" after F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, "Tender Is the Night." The piece plays with the tenderness of the couple's relationship as well as the turmoil within their marriage.

Along with Boyle's piece, the company features works from faculty choreographers Eric Handman, assistant professor, and Steve Koester, department chair. Handman's piece "Good Morning Midnight" features five dancers that explore a number of mysterious, emotionally and physically intense events where partnerships form, collapse and come together again.

"Dances take on a different level of significance when I see characters altered by their journey — even if these relationships are somewhat open to interpretation," Handman said. "A little mystery is a good thing."

Koester's piece "Reconstruction of a New Work (a.k.a., Because I'm Old and It Makes Me Happy)" is set to Bach's second Brandenburg Concerto. Koester takes the dancers back to a time when dance was simply about movement and the joy of moving through space. The work asks the question of why humans dance in the first place — whether it be for just experiencing the physicality of dance or the chance to dance with others and experience a sense of connection.



The Performing Dance Company will be performing on Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in the Hayes Christensen Theatre at the Marriott Center for Dance.  
Chronicle File Photo

Also featured is a piece from guest artist Yannis Adoniou titled "naivete in minor." Adoniou has spent six weeks teaching master classes to dance majors and creating this work. The piece is about longing and being vulnerable and features a cast of 11 students.

Although each choreographed piece is different, they each illustrate the beauty and struggles behind what it means to be human.

The final two shows of this concert are Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in the Hayes Christensen Theatre at the Marriott Center for Dance. Tickets are \$12 general admission and \$8 for faculty, staff and non U students and free for U students.

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