

BFA in Dance Students Prepare for Senior Showcase

“It’s bitter sweet. Senior Projects have always been my favorite performance here because it’s enjoyable to see the ideas and visions of your fellow students come to life on stage,” says Collier, who came to Dominican from Washington, D.C. “It’s exciting to have been a part of six different processes in the past and now it’s my turn.”

Collier presented dances she choreographed for her fellow [BFA in Dance program](#) students in Senior Projects I on February 28 and March 1 in Angelico Hall. O’Sullivan, who like Collier trained in the LINES summer program under Alonzo King -- director of the international touring company -- prior to Dominican, presented her choreographed performances in Senior Projects March 7-8.

The two BFA in Dance students are now preparing for the BFA Senior Showcase at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater in San Francisco on Saturday, April 19, at 2 p.m. followed by the BFA Spring Showcase on Friday, April 25, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, April 26, at 3 p.m. in Angelico Hall.

“This senior piece is like my child. I’ve been working on it for so long that to present it to my peers and anyone who joins us for the lovely evening is something I’ve been looking forward to for a very long time, says O’Sullivan, who arrived at Dominican from San Diego. “As time went on making the piece it makes you realize how much you really put in about yourself. This piece has been coming forward as parts of my life, and emotions. It will be a great way to show the world what I can say with dance, and how much it means to me to give something so personal and vulnerable to an audience. These pieces are really gifts to the world.”

At Dominican, O’Sullivan – along with BFA in Dance’s Will Couture of St. Paul, Minn. -- received a prestigious \$10,000 Dizzy Feet Foundation Scholarship as a junior. It was founded in 2009 by Nigel Lythgoe, producer of television shows *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing With The Stars*, plus Adam Shankman, Carrie Ann Inaba, and actress Katie Holmes, among others, to support, improve, and increase access to dance education in the United States.

“The award has truly shaped me and how I view my artistry. I feel that I have become the dancer that I want, and I am able to help shape a new generation of dance and art lovers,” says O’Sullivan, who at the age of 16 competed in the Cecchetti International Ballet Competition, winning one of four awards for Musicality and Dynamics in Movement. “Dizzy Feet is a chance for young dancers to be able to reach communities without any means of arts. To be able to be that person that can reach lives of people without dance is an amazing opportunity and title to have.”

O’Sullivan began her training at the Southern California Youth. At age 13, she attended King’s LINES Ballet summer program, which led her to Dominican.

“The company and his philosophy caught me from an early age and by the time I was a senior in high school I wanted to be a part of this program and immerse myself in the dance and philosophy Dominican offered,” O’Sullivan says. “I had great teachers surrounding me and the way they were pushing me to become the best dancer and student I could be. I knew I had made the right choice when I found myself improving in dance and truly finding myself as an artist. I was and still am completely in love with dance.”

O'Sullivan aims to audition for different dance companies in the United States and Europe in the near future.

Collier plans to do the same once she attends a summer program in July in Minneapolis featuring choreographer Uri Sand. The last two summers at Dominican, Collier has traveled to Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Guatemala through JUNTOS Collective, a non-profit community-based organization seeking to educate, heal, liberate and build community through dance.

After she considered attending the Boston Conservatory for Music, Dance and Theater closer to home, Collier chose to come to Dominican because of the philosophy of the LINES ballet program, the incredible faculty and staff in the program, and the beautiful city of San Francisco.

“I would not have gotten this experience anywhere else. I've matured as a person because I have been challenged to develop as an artist and as a human being,” she says. “It's made me grow mentally, emotionally, more than I could have imagined or expected.”

Collier has enjoyed the collaborative experience and appreciates the challenges her teachers have presented her. Upon graduation in May, Collier will perform in the San Francisco Opera's Show Boat beginning in June.

“I wouldn't have gotten this experience anywhere else. I've grown so much as a person and changed and had to rely on myself and trust myself which has made me become more independent,” she says. “It's made me grow mentally, emotionally, more than I could have imagined or expected.”

Senior Projects at Dominican culminated a five-month production. Beginning in September, Collier, O'Sullivan and other BFA in Dance seniors held auditions and then casted their pieces.

“Every student in the BFA in Dance program participates, most working with two seniors. The seniors create original, often very personal works, as they step into the shoes of the creator and decide everything from concept to music to costumes to lighting design,” says Marina Hotchkiss, director of [Dominican's LINES Ballet/BFA in Dance program](#). “Kara Davis, senior project advisor, is a genius at guiding them through this amazing, but frequently terrifying process. The curriculum is designed to be a ladder starting way back in freshman year, building towards the creative responsibility of senior project.”

Photo credit: Rob Kunkle for Mary Kate O'Sullivan homepage image and Weidong Yang for Taylor Collier/Alexandra Price image.

February 26, 2014