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### Assaf Benchetrit, Assistant Professor of Theater and Dance, COLA travel to Israel

Assaf Benchetrit  
*University of New Hampshire, Durham*

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UNH Global

# Assaf Benchetrit

Assistant Professor of Theater and Dance (COLA) ~ Israel

## RESIDENCY AT THE JERUSALEM BALLET

In May 2018, I was invited to perform as a guest artist and to choreograph an original work for the Jerusalem Ballet Company, the largest professional ballet company in the capital of Israel, and due to the award, *Global Education Center Faculty International Development Grant*, that I received, I was able to accept and complete this residency.

My residency in the company was divided into two parts. The first part entailed choreographing an original piece for the Jerusalem Ballet Company. I created a contemporary piece for two of the company's members. My piece explores and discusses the challenges that relationships could face. Through movement, I tried to portray struggle, loneliness and disconnection, which result from a broken relationship where the necessity for the fundamental human connection never realized. I called the piece "*Hope*", which this relationship will never have.

The second part of my residency included performing in two separate pieces with two of the company's ballerinas: the title role of Romeo in the classical and renowned pas de-deux from the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, and the role of the prince Albrecht in the classical and renowned pas de-deux from the ballet *Giselle*. Both pieces were extremely challenging in terms of technique and characterization, which required lots of rehearsals and preparations.

My daily work included dancing, preparing for the performance, creating the choreography, and rehearsing with the dancers. The performance took place at Jerusalem Theater on Wednesday July 4th, 2018. As a dance educator at UNH, I feel that continuing to dance and perform myself,

experiencing both the challenges and artistic growth stage performance offers, allows me, through personal experience, to better accommodate my students when teaching and preparing them for stage appearances.

From my experience of working with the company director and dancers, I feel that I have learned tremendously about international exchange in dance with professional dance artists as well as highly acclaimed dance educators. Also, I developed professionally by learning new material and concepts that improved my choreographic, dancing, and teaching skills. This effort significantly impacted the development of my current courses THDA 597 - Dance Theatre Performance and THDA 662 - Ballet III, by allowing me to introduce my students with up-to-date concepts in choreography and dance.



Prof. Assaf Benchetrit in the title role of Romeo in the classical and renowned pas de-deux from the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* at Jerusalem Theater in Israel

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