A Note from the Chair

Our department evolves each year with new programs, students and faculty committed to excellence. They join forces to create innovative and creative solutions to fulfill our educational mission. As we continue to excel, we are dedicated to providing engaging opportunities for both students and community members.

In this Stages, we celebrate growth. Our alumni and student connections expand throughout the country every year. As we enter a new chapter in our development, we thank you for your continued support of our current and future artists and look forward to new adventures that await.

—William Teague, Department Chair
Student Organizations Make Dance More Accessible

This semester, UA Theatre & Dance is collaborating with Arts ’n Autism to present a sensory friendly dance performance. Arts ’n Autism is a program that focuses on providing opportunities for children and young adults with autism to express themselves and participate in performing and visual arts.

Dance is a popular creative outlet for autism as many behaviors affected by the disorder are related to motor skills and social interactions. However, many autistic children and adults are unable to attend standard dance performances because of the external stimuli involved. Thus, our sensory performance will be tailored specifically to their needs. Lighting and sound levels will be lowered for the performance. Additionally, there will be activities in the lobby and the audience will be free to enter and leave the auditorium as they wish.

Throughout March, Nu Delta Alpha will teach interactive workshops on site with Arts & Autism, leading up to the performance. On March 24, we will welcome students to Morgan Auditorium for a selection of pieces from our fall Dance Alabama! concert.

The idea for this project came about last semester when three of our student organizations, Nu Delta Alpha, Dance Alabama and the newly formed Crimson Stage, were eager to bring more dance education to Tuscaloosa. With the help of a collaborative grant to cover transportation costs, we are able to offer this program at no cost for the participants.

Crimson Stage President Morgan Ozenbaugh is excited to be a part of this program. “Partnering with Dance Alabama! and Nu Delta Alpha has made this project a joy. We are able to leverage our different strengths toward the common goal of dance education. This program is central to our mission and dear to our hearts. We couldn’t be more proud to host the Arts ’n Autism students in our space to share our passion!”
Many of our alumni make New York City their home following graduation. We’ve had much success on Broadway stages in the past few years, but our alumni have also seen tremendous success in the professional industry across the country.

Thaddeus Fitzpatrick, a Theatre and Communications graduate of 2013, had his sights set on LA after graduation. That was until he received several offers from agents following his performance in the New York Showcase. Since then, he has been busy working throughout New York and across the country. His first professional job was the world premiere of *I And You* by Lauren Gunderson, who is now among the most produced living playwrights. Since that initial interaction, Thaddeus has continued to work with Lauren and other playwrights as they generate new works. His current production, *Book of Will*, also by Lauren Gunderson, represents the next step of his career as he has never performed in the Shakespearean style.

Thaddeus’s start in theatre began at UA when he auditioned for the spring productions in his Freshman year. Though he didn’t get cast and considered it among the worst auditions of the year, the support of faculty and staff convinced him to pursue his passion professionally. He switched his major from Pre-Med the next year.

Kaylee MacKnight graduated in May 2015 with a BA in Musical Theatre and moved to New York where she has been consistently performing and producing. Last year, Kaylee created Drunk Musicals, a company that takes an interesting spin on the musical parody industry. The lead actors try to get through the musical while consuming alcohol throughout the show. Meanwhile, the ensemble actors remain sober to help push the story along. The company has generated a large interest in a very short timespan. Their next show, *Wasted*, is a spin on the popular musical *Wicked* and the first time Kaylee will be featured as a lead.

One of the driving forces behind the company was Kaylee’s hunger to create and perform. So she created the work herself, which is advice she gives to anyone getting ready to make the leap to the professional world. “You have to make your own opportunities and constantly do things to work on your craft. Only going to auditions everyday isn’t going to cut it.”
Similarly, Tara Lynn Steele has been working almost non-stop even before she officially graduated in 2015 with a Dance and Musical Theatre degree. A week before graduation, Tara Lynn left for her contract with Norwegian cruise lines, where she was cast in *Legally Blonde: The Musical*. Since her Caribbean cruise adventure, Tara Lynn has lived in New York, working with Kaleidoscope Dance Theatre and continuously auditioning for new roles. Last summer she choreographed and starred in Seth Panitch’s production *Here I Sit Brokenhearted: A Bathroom Odyssey*.

Much of the work Tara Lynn has been a part of has taken place outside of New York, including *Spamalot* at Arkansas Repertory Theatre and her current role in *The Little Mermaid* with Cape Fear Regional Theatre in Fayetteville, North Carolina where she is a double for Ariel but also the aerialist for all the stunts in the show. Tara Lynn did not have aerial silk experience prior to booking the role, but she is always open to learning new skills that will be beneficial to her success. Despite her love of travel and continued work, Tara Lynn loves the fast pace of New York and plans to stay there for the foreseeable future.

Desmond Nunn, a Dance graduate of 2013, did not follow the same path as many of our graduates. Instead of immediately moving to New York, he spent a few years in Huntsville working with a ballet company. But New York wasn’t far away in his future and on his first day in the city he was introduced to Jeremy McQueen, a young choreographer who focuses on new classical work. After that, he began auditioning for dance and theatre productions throughout the city. He auditioned for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, despite not having any experience. With the help from his acting classes and UA and a fellow alumni, his five lines from Julius Caesar were enough to get him a contract.

Currently, he is in rehearsals for the national tour of *Hamilton*, as a male ensemble swing. This requires him to learn six different character tracks, and with the complexity of the music and details of the choreography, it’s almost like learning six different shows. Things have worked out well in the past year for Desmond, but he notes the importance of remembering what you have to offer as an artist. Ultimately, the audition process is about finding the right person for the role. Most importantly, he emphasizes understanding that not every role is right for you and that everything will work out the way it is supposed to in the end.
Freshman Music Theatre major Melaina Rairamo recently won a Midwest Emmy for her role in an episode of the children’s television series *Into the Outdoors*.

Rairamo says that her fellow castmates joked during filming that they were going to win an Emmy, but they never believed it could actually happen. She also noted that originally the producers felt she looked too old for the role. In order to make her look younger, she was not allowed to wear makeup and had to follow specific guidelines for the show.

Rairamo is no stranger to the stage, as she has been involved with chorus, dance and music theatre since a young age in Minnesota. Her decision to attend The University of Alabama for musical theatre, however, was not a part of her initial plan. Originally, she had planned to attend college as a business major. Halfway through her senior year, though, Melaina decided she wanted to pursue her theatre dream instead.

The University of Alabama attracted Melaina because of the family atmosphere. She says “everyone here is so supportive and it feels like home”. Growing up primarily as a dancer, it was important to her that the program prepare her to be a triple threat and promote excellence in all aspects of musical theatre.

You can catch Melaina in her first role this semester as Cassie in our production of *A Chorus Line*. Melaina is excited for this role because she connects so well to it. Cassie is a dancer from Minnesota who has always been a star in the industry. She is headstrong and passionate about her work, just like Melaina. Be sure to check out *A Chorus Line* April 18-23 at the Marian Gallaway Theatre.
June 2 - 30, 2017  Tuesday-Sunday 8PM
George C Meyer Performing Arts Center
visit www.summertide.org for tickets
A New Home for UA Theatre & Dance

Last semester, The University of Alabama unveiled its plan for construction of the new Performing Arts Academic Center. The Bryce Main historical campus will serve as the home for this new center, which will house the Theatre and Dance Department as well as the new welcome center for the University.

The Theatre & Dance Department has been housed in Rowand-Johnson hall since 1956, but the building itself has never seen any substantial renovation. With the recent growth in the department, the department is quickly outgrowing the current facilities and Chair William Teague is excited about the new building. “The stage opening in Morgan Auditorium is about 28 feet, which can only accommodate 20 dancers,” he said. “In the new theatre, the opening of the stage will be 42-45 feet. Now we’ll be able to comfortably accommodate up to 40 dancers on stage.”

The new facility will feature two large theatres for main stage theatre and dance productions as well as a smaller black box theatre to be used for more intimate productions and student produced work. New, larger scenic and costume studios will improve the technical quality of the productions and allow our designers to work with the most up to date technology.

In addition to the performance spaces, the Performing Arts Academic Center will house the administrative offices and classrooms for the department. With everything in the same location, UA Theatre & Dance will continue to excel in training the next generation of performing artists.

Professor Cornelius Carter emphasizes the need to continue to evolve and expand with the industry. “Having a new state-of-the-art Performing Arts Academic Center dedicated to this mission both encourages our current students and provides an attractive and inspiring educational initiative for the University community at large,” Carter said. “It allows us to dream more. It will be very transformative.”

As construction begins, we need your help to complete our $60 million new home that will continue to enforce the standards of excellence at the Capstone. For more information about the progress and how you can support the new Performing Arts Academic Center, visit www.ua.edu/performingarts.
OUR NEXT ACT IS ABOUT TO BEGIN
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®
2017-2018 Season

Marian Gallaway Theatre

*Caucasian Chalk Circle*
October 3 - 8

Inspired by a classical Chinese play, this parable examines the battle between two women over the possession of a child. Molded in the politically-charged form of epic theatre, this is one of the most celebrated works by legendary playwright Bertolt Brecht.

*August: Osage County*
November 14 - 19

When the family patriarch disappears one night, the Westons gather at their Oklahoma homestead. But as secrets begin to flow, the gathering quickly turns to chaos. Winner of five Tony Awards and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, this rambunctious play takes dysfunction to a whole new level.

*Vinegar Tom*
February 13 - 18

Set in the seventeenth century, this play surrounds accusations of witchcraft against several women. Inspired by theatrical rebels such as Bertolt Brecht, Caryl Churchill’s bewitching drama draws a powerful connection between these witch-hunts and the oppression of women.

*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*
April 17 - 22

Attend the tale! After fifteen years in exile, Benjamin Barker returns to London to seek revenge on the corrupt judge who ruined his life. With the help of his old friend Mrs. Lovett, Barker reopens his barbershop and assumes a new name: Sweeney Todd. Considered by many to be Stephen Sondheim’s masterpiece, you don’t want to miss this deliciously wicked musical.
Allen Bales Theatre

We Are Proud to Present
September 25 - October 1

As six actors plan and rehearse a presentation about an African genocide, tensions flare over just how to tell the story. This important new play examines issues of race and agency in storytelling, while offering audiences an intimate glimpse of what it means to create art.

A Bright Room Called Day
February 26 - March 4

In 1932 Germany, Agnes and her friends find themselves in a pivotal and disenchanting moment in history: the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi regime. From the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright of Angels in America comes a story of political disillusionment across time and space.

Morgan Auditorium

Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre
October 10 - 13, February 20 - 24

Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre (ARDT) returns with a new collection of classic and contemporary dance pieces, choreographed by UA’s award-winning dance faculty.

Dance Alabama!
November 7 - 10, March 27 - 31

Dance Alabama! returns to the stage for concerts featuring all new, student choreographed dance pieces that range from ballet to hip hop.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
November 6 - 12

Six spellers, one championship. The stakes are high as these quirky adolescents spell their way to the top, revealing wacky and moving stories about their lives along the way. This Tony Award-winning musical comedy will have you spelling hilarious all the way home.

I, Gelosi
April 9 - 15

From its humble beginnings as a group of street performers, the Italian acting troupe I, Gelosi, or “The Jealous Ones,” rose to fame across Europe. Join us as we explore the love, greed and jealousy “behind the masks” of Italy’s legendary commedia dell’arte troupe.

Dance Collection
April 20
Cornelius Carter

When Director of Dance Cornelius Carter is not in the studio teaching, he’s travelling the world. His summer plans are still being finalized as more opportunities continue to roll into his office, but some of the work he will be doing includes teaching at the Gus Giordano Dance School in Chicago and the Regional Dance America Festival in Phoenix. There are also international opportunities in Argentina and at the University of Roehampton in London.

In November, he received the 2016-2019 Marilyn Williams Elmore & John Durr Elmore Endowed Professorship, which provides $5000 for research activities over the next three years. He also just finished an artistic residency at the Victoria School of the Arts in Edmonton, Alberta where he taught master classes and served as a keynote speaker. Currently, he is in talks with the Radio City Rockettes to start a Summer Intensive at the university. The Rockettes visited the campus in January for a workshop with students.

Carter has been with the department for 24 years, but is still just as curious and always open to exploring new phases for the dance program. His most recent choreography was featured in the spring concert of ARDT and was based on the Freedom? exhibit at Paul R. Jones gallery. Carter’s choreography questions the definition of freedom amid a full spectrum of thoughts and emotions.

His competitive drive is prevalent in the commitment to students and alumni, as he demands focus and discipline in the short time that dancers are at UA. The rigorous program and unified vision of faculty cultivate an environment of trust from the students. As the dance program continues to grow, Cornelius stresses the importance of the professional partnerships like Broadway Dance Center because they “continue to provide students with opportunities that set them up for endless possibilities.”
Randy DeCelle

Director of Technical Production Randy DeCelle is always busy around the department, coordinating the many needs of our theatre productions each semester. Though the technical elements of a production may not always seem complicated from an outside perspective, creating the overall look can conflict with functionality.

When he isn’t coordinating logistics for productions and solving challenges, Randy leads the graduate Technical Direction program and teaches various technical classes, including structural analysis and AutoCAD. Though these classes are rooted in developing a technical skill set, Randy tries to individualize the classes for each student based on their interests. One of the best things about the technical nature of his work is that the skills translate across disciplines and translate in careers even outside of the arts industry.

UA’s B.A. in Theatre program is unique in that students can focus on multiple disciplines simultaneously. Many of the technical theatre undergraduate students also specialize in engineering and Randy is committed to providing students across multiple disciplines the ability to incorporate their passion on the stage. He is currently working on a project with senior Theatre and Electrical Engineering major Luke Haynes to develop a scenic automation system.

Often Randy’s office is filled with boxes and other items that to those who don’t know him would seem like clutter or junk, but in reality, Randy is always involved in projects that help UA continue to change and update our technological capabilities on the stage. Last season’s world premiere of The Countess of Storyville was the first time projection design has been used on a large scale in the department. Since then, we have continued to incorporate projections into the design process, giving our students experience that will help them in their careers upon graduation.

As our season begins to wrap up, Randy is managing the details of the A Chorus Line tour to Mobile on April 13, which will require a set that is transportable and adaptable to both the Gallaway stage and the Sanger Theatre stage. Once our season closes, Randy will begin planning for the challenges that next season will bring.
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