

STAGES

Fall 2015



A Note from the Chair



We take pride in the growth and impact of our programs at the University. Students have the opportunity to continue their rigorous studies and practical experiences on campus and throughout the world. As we train and develop the next generation of artists, technicians, directors and managers, we continue to emphasize the importance of our large network of former students.

In this *Stages*, we celebrate our family of students, alumni, faculty and staff at UA Theatre & Dance. No matter where they may be, a network of support is present. We thank you for being a part of our family and hope you enjoy the journey as much as we do.



—William Teague, *Department Chair*

UA Theatre & Dance Welcomes New Staff



Kelley Schoger

Assistant Professor of Acting and Stage Movement

Kelley Schoger joins UA Theatre & Dance as an actor, puppeteer, movement specialist, and certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. She worked professionally for ten years in New York City with several organizations including Theatre for the New City, Aisling Arts, The Roundabout Theatre Company and Inside Broadway. After that, she moved to Tortola, British Virgin Islands, where she co-founded Limelight Productions to facilitate

dialogue and promote theatre on the island.

Kelley returned to Virginia to teach while also working professionally. She has taught classes in acting, puppetry and the Alexander Technique at Virginia Tech, Mary Baldwin College and Virginia Commonwealth University. Her workshops have been featured at SETC and VTA conferences. She worked as a director and movement specialist with Arena Stage in Washington, DC and the Richmond Symphony.

As an Assistant Professor, Kelley will work with both undergraduate and graduate students to improve stage movement and acting techniques. Kelley seeks to help performers find greater freedom, vulnerability and range through the lens of the Alexander Technique.



Bama Abroad: *Dancing Through The Summer*



The dance program at The University of Alabama was recently ranked 15th in the nation among public and private universities. This summer, several of the dance faculty travelled internationally to present programs, participate in workshops, and establish new programs for students in the dance program.

Cornelius Carter, Director of Dance, and Sarah Barry, Associate Professor of Dance, were in Scotland for Dance-Forms' 70th International Choreographers' Showcase as part of Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Their two pieces featured current students and alumni and provided a unique opportunity to choreograph for non-traditional spaces. Barry's piece *Squared* went through a long rehearsal process, as the dancers met earlier in the summer to put it together with a focus on the relationship of the dancers. Once in the space, described as similar to an altar of an old church, Barry explored the dynamics of the dancers along with the different levels of the stage. This project was possible thanks to grants and funding from the Alabama State Council on the Arts, University of Alabama College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Board and the National Alumni Association of the University of Alabama. The faculty are very excited to get more students interested and engaged in participating in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe next year.

Sarah Barry also choreographed a piece for three students as part of the Staibdance Summer Intensive in Sorrento, Italy. During this intensive, the students take classes and workshops, all leading to a culminating performance. Barry worked with three students throughout the spring on a piece inspired by the idea of hopscotch and other children's playground games. According to George Staib, director of the summer intensive, the piece drew record attendance. Dancers Ella Sharpe, Amber

Baldwin, and Victoria Beale created a path through the choreography that led the audience through the plaza into the performance space.

This summer, Sarah Barry also directed a film version of her piece *there, again*, seen previously at ARDT in Fall 2014. The film was sent to the 21st Kalamata International Dance Festival in Greece. One of the interesting things about the film, according to Barry, is that it allows the piece to travel to more audiences, because it is less expensive than sending dancers to all of the locations.

Rita Snyder, Associate Professor of Dance, choreographed a contemporary ballet in Civitavecchia, Italy that featured two students. The University of Alabama and Western Kentucky University partnered with Balletto di Civitavecchia to present the Overseas 2015 program. Dancers Emily Higginbotham and Shaun Leary performed *twenty-twenty*, a piece previously featured in ARDT Spring 2015.

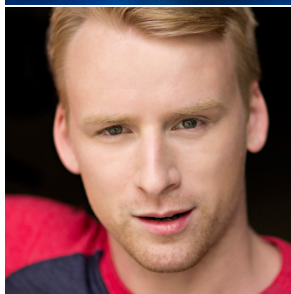
Associate Professor of Dance, Qianping Guo, travelled to Russia this summer for training at Ballet Heritage. He received a certificate for teaching Grades 1-4 of the Vaganova Method. This method combines traditional French romantic styles of ballet with the more athletic and dazzling style of the Italian technique. The approach is meant to create a larger expressive range by increasing awareness of the whole body. He is proud to receive the certificate and the opportunity provided many networking opportunities with prominent ballet artists and teachers throughout the world. Qianping Guo also travelled to Tokyo at the end of May to teach two ballet classes for guest artists.

Assistant Professor of Dance, Rebecca Salzer was in London over the summer helping to create and finalize the study abroad program for dance majors. In conjunction with the University of Roehampton, the study abroad program will begin in Spring 2016 and provide an opportunity for UA students to take classes in dance scholarship as well as participate in studio work in the center of London. An exchange program with Roehampton is also in the works to bring their students to study for a semester in Tuscaloosa.



ARDT, Fall 2014. Photo by Porfirio Solórzano

Alumni Focus



Bobby Becher

UA Theatre & Dance, 2011

Bachelor of Arts (Musical Theatre)

What have you been up to since you

graduated? Directly after graduating, I rejoined UA's professional theatre company, SummerTide, for the (record-setting) fourth consecutive year. After SummerTide, Stacy Alley pointed me in the direction of the

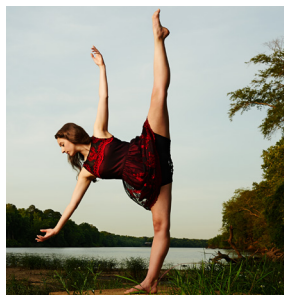
"Edutainer" department at Gyeonggi English Village Paju Camp, in South Korea. The Edutainers create completely original ESL musicals as a part of a government subsidized, English immersion theme park. I was hired as an actor/composer thanks to an arrangement of "I Drove All Night" by Céline Dion I conceived for Guerrilla Theatre. Upon leaving GEV, my girlfriend/business partner and I obtained the rights to some of the shows we created with the hopes of adapting them for the families of America.

Where are you now? I moved to NYC in August 2014. WhatFun! Theatre Company was born, and eventually one of the shows I co-wrote - *Rapunzel in the Wild West* - was accepted into the FringeJR division of the New York International Fringe Festival.

What advice would you offer for current students about to enter the field?

Get your degree and get out of there. Don't let yourself get trapped trying to save up or make a plan. Just get on the plane. Be flexible. Maybe you're Nick Burroughs and you'll walk off the Gallaway stage and onto the Broadway stage, but if you're not, it'll be there for a long time. Long enough for you to hop on a cruise, go out on tour, work at a theme park, etc.

Do you have a favorite story from your time at UA? The huge tornado that came through T-Town in Spring 2011 had a particularly large effect on our graduating class. Showcases were cancelled, APO events were postponed, and graduation was put on hold. Despite all of this, a group of APO members got together in some members' back yard, and held the "Alphies". Raphe showed up and made little paper towel diplomas for each of the graduating seniors and handed them out to us after the ceremony. It was such an amazing scene, and special for all of us who were there. We truly are one.



Savannah Reach

UA Theatre & Dance, 2014
Bachelor of Arts (Dance)

What have you been up to since you graduated?

After graduating in May 2014 with my dance degree, I continued working on my Masters Degree in Organic Chemistry. I was able to finish my Masters at an accelerated rate due to the University Scholars Program, which allowed me

to work on my Bachelors and Masters Degrees simultaneously. For the first part of the fall semester, I was torn between pursuing a PhD in Organic Chemistry or an MFA in Dance. I researched graduate school opportunities in both areas. I finally decided to pursue an MFA Degree in Dance, with the University of California Irvine being my top choice. Their graduate program offers a unique Dance Medicine and Science track, which would be a perfect collaboration for my background. After a very intensive audition process, I was honored to not only be accepted in the the MFA Graduate Program at UC Irvine, but to also receive full funding through a fellowship and a teaching assistantship.

How do you think UA prepared you for what you are doing now? The University of Alabama developed my skills in leadership, research, service, and performance. I was blessed to have a strong support group of professors and mentors, who challenged me to pursue tasks that seemed impossible. I feel confident in my abilities to pursue an MFA Degree in Dance Medicine and Science. I do not know what the future will bring, but I know I am prepared.

What advice would you offer for current students about to enter the field?

Be your best and believe in your abilities. Do not compare yourself to anyone else. Find your passion and then work hard to REACH your goals. "A goal without a plan is just a wish." -Antoine de Saint-Exupery

What do you hope to accomplish in your career? I decided to apply to graduate school at the University of California Irvine because of their collection of research topics. My science background equips me to use my research skills to study human kinesiology and movement analysis. I plan to conduct research on the scientific execution behind mechanical motion in dance and the correlation between organic processes with dance choreography. I am pursuing an MFA Degree in Dance with the goal of one day becoming the Dance Department Director at a University.



Vivian Lee Reach

UA Theatre & Dance, 2014
Bachelor of Arts (Dance)

What have you been up to since you graduated?

Since graduating in May, 2014 I have been preparing for graduate school. This February, I was awarded a fellowship and teaching assistantship at the University of California Irvine. My college experience at the University of Alabama enhanced my love for both classic

literature and dance. In May, I was introduced to *Inferno* by one of my past English professors as a “fun summer read.” I then decided to focus my research for graduate school on Dante’s *Inferno*. This summer, I was invited by Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta to visit Yale University to collaborate and combine our ideas on Dante’s *Inferno*.

What does a typical day look like for you? Surprisingly when I first wake up, coffee is not on my agenda. My mom has the best homemade lemonade recipe, so three tall glasses in the morning are essential. I have ballet class every MWF from 8-9:50 with the brilliant Shaun Boyle. After ballet I go back to my apartment and either study, work on choreography, or read *Lord of the Rings*. Throughout the week, I have classes in Dance Science, Bibliography and Research, Movement Analysis, and Graduate Choreography. Every day is different, but for me three things are a requirement: drinking lemonade, studying, and writing letters to my family.

Do you have a favorite story from your time at UA? My favorite story from my time at The University of Alabama was practicing and performing the Rumba with Dean Olin for the Arty Party Fundraiser. Being ballroom champions, I was honored to have Professor Rita Snyder and her husband, Dr. Richard Richards, choreograph and rehearse our dance. This experience proves, without a shadow of doubt, that The University of Alabama has unbelievable administrators, such as Dean Olin, who take the time and effort to support every student. This type of dedication brings together the students and the faculty in “Sweet Home Alabama.”

What do you hope to accomplish in your career? In the future I would love to teach choreography at the University of Alabama, publish my novel, start a food blog, be in a Star Wars movie, and last but not least be a backup dancer for Justin Timberlake.



Stephen Tyler Davis

UA Theatre & Dance, 2006

Bachelor of Arts (Acting/Directing)

What have you been up to since you graduated?

I moved to New York to be an actor, but I have much more to give. I rallied a group of colleagues and formed a company of theatre artists with a mission to create and produce new work. I wrote a musical, *Huckleberry Haywood*, that premiered at the New York Musical Theatre Festival in 2012.

After that, I started working on number of other projects including an original children's musical called *Monkey Boogers*, which premiered in NYC in 2014 and is set (fingers crossed) for an Off-Broadway run in the Spring 2016. I now serve as Artistic Director for CitySalt Theatricals.

Where are you now? I started my second year of graduate school at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. I'm studying to receive my MFA in Theatremaking. I love this program because there are no set tracks for actors or directors or playwrights. It is truly "choose your own adventure." I'm writing 3 new shows, directing a show for the fall season, taking 12 classes, while also serving as the Graduate Student Senate President.

How do you think UA prepared you for what you are doing now? I had the great honor of serving as President of the Alpha Psi Omega Theatre Honors Fraternity my junior year at UA. Theatre is about collaboration, teamwork, and a mutual respect within an artistic community. The relationships I made with the incredible company of APO is something I truly treasure. We were a family and many of those people are still very close to me today. Looking back, that was the greatest preparation, and most magical learning experience I could have ever asked for.

Do you have a favorite production from your time at UA? I never thought I'd say this, but I think it was *Two Gentleman of Verona*. What a wild and wacky show. We were so angry that the faculty chose it for the season, but it turned in to one of the most fun theatrical experiences of my life. I miss that cast!

What advice would you offer for current students about to enter the field? Don't wait for someone to give you your big break- make your own work! You have a voice that the world has never heard. Hone in on that voice. Be kind to yourself. Be present. Set goals. Save your money.

Alumni Spotlight: Drew Baker



Drew Baker thinks of the world as her stage. A triple alumnus of The University of Alabama, Ms. Baker holds a BA in Music and MFA in Acting and graduated from the Law School in 1990. Since then, she has been active in the Tuscaloosa arts community, serving as the Artistic Coordinator at Tuscaloosa Children's Theater and Volunteer Coordinator at Theatre Tuscaloosa in addition to her many years as an attorney.

Rowand-Johnson has been an artistic home to Ms. Baker since her time here as a graduate student. She has appeared in several of the department's productions during her time as a student and professional including *Hay Fever*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Rivals* and this fall's production of *Young Frankenstein*. She has performed in both the Marian Gallaway and the Allen Bales Theatre, but claims the second as her favorite because of the intimate nature of the space. Each production provides new opportunities for Ms. Baker to work with students and the growing family at UA Theatre & Dance.

Her children have been very involved as well. Clifton and Amanda appeared in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and she costarred with her son, Will, in *The Winter's Tale*. The portraits used in *Hay Fever* are still hanging in her mother's house. Despite her illustrious career with the department, Ms. Baker finds it important to only take roles that will not take away from a student's opportunity to learn and hone their craft.





In addition to success in her appearances in departmental productions, Ms. Baker is highly involved with Theatre Tuscaloosa working in several departments including the box office and outreach in addition to appearing on stage in many of their productions. At Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre, she directs at least one show a season and serves as the

coordinator for the summer camp each year. This season she is directing *The Wizard of Oz*, working with about 120 kids. She considers herself an "actor that directs" and says that the two skills complement each other. As a director, the acting helps to explain what you want on stage.

Ms. Baker says that her training at UA prepared her for life in general, not just a life in theatre. The skills she learned here, such as projecting and teambuilding paved the way for a successful career outside of the theatre industry. Her advice to current students is to not let frustrations bring them down. The students who come to UA are all very talented and they are presented with opportunities to become triple threats in the industry, which puts a lot of stress and frustration on them. She tells students not to take the criticism personally and remember to keep working toward the dream. In pursuing their dreams, they may find something else they are qualified for or passionate about. The beauty about theatre is that you can always pursue it as a hobby rather than a career and still have a full and rewarding life.

You can see Ms. Baker as Frau Blücher in *Young Frankenstein*, November 17-20 at 7:30pm and November 22 at 2:00pm in the Marian Gallaway Theatre. For tickets, please visit www.theatre.ua.edu or call the box office at 205.348.3400.



Top Photo: *The Winner's Tale*, Spring 2010.
Bottom Photo: *The Rivals*, Spring 2004.

Faculty and Staff Highlights

William Teague

For the past two years, Professor William Teague has been working on the development and plans for the new performing arts center at the University. This process has included weekly meetings with the engineers and architects and travelling to multiple centers around the country for models, including the River Center in Columbus, GA and facilities at James Madison University and the University of Notre Dame.



Every summer, Bill also serves as the sound and lighting designer for SummerTide in Gulf Shores, AL. Bill has also been working on the planning and logistics for the world premiere of Countess of Storyville in the spring. The process has proved to be a lot of work, but the production provides an excellent opportunity for the students and faculty of the department.



Jeanette Lackey

Scene Shop Supervisor Jeanette Lackey is celebrating her twentieth year with UA Theatre & Dance. During the year, she is responsible for building all the shows. She manages supplies and materials as well as the graduate and practicum crews each semester.

For the past 15 years, Jeanette has spent her summers working with the summer intensive for American Ballet Theatre. Dancers from all across the country travel to Tuscaloosa in June for a three week camp to work on technique and present a showcase of their work. During this time, Jeanette serves as the Administrative Liaison, ensuring that the dancers have everything they need while in Tuscaloosa, including coordinating all meals for the dancers. In her spare time, Jeanette enjoys tending her vegetable garden by engaging in hand-to-hand combat with bugs.

Jacki Armit

Since 2007, Jacki has spent most of her summers working at Utah Shakespeare Festival as a stitcher or draper. This summer she worked on *Amadeus*. While in Utah, Jacki enjoys hiking and enjoying time with her family. She returns to Utah Shakespeare every summer because they focus on good quality and the people who work there are like family.



Throughout the year, Jacki also teaches and participates in stage combat workshops across the country. These workshops cross over into how she builds costumes for various shows. Knowing how the actor will be moving allows her to construct a more fitting costume for the characters. While working in the shop, she focuses on building pieces to demonstrate techniques for students to enhance their education.



Seth Panitch

This past summer, Professor Seth Panitch co-directed his film “Service to Man” with Aaron Greer, a former professor in the Telecommunications and Film Department. The film is loosely based on his father’s experiences in medical school in the 1960s. Filmed in Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, and Moundville, the film featured several UA students and alumni as well as professional actors cast through Orpheus Casting in New York City. Several UA Theatre & Dance

faculty also worked on the project including Andy Fitch, Dominic Yeager, and Sharron Skipper. Tuscaloosa’s Tom Wolfe is providing the music for the film and after the editing process is complete, Seth hopes to take the film to various festivals.

Next summer, his play, “Here I Sit Brokenhearted: Wit, Witticisms, and Wisecracks from the WC,” will be produced Off-Broadway at the Beckett Theater.

In Memoriam: Peyton Trueblood



This summer, rising senior Peyton Trueblood was tragically killed while working as a production assistant at TEXAS Outdoor Musical. Peyton came into the program knowing that she wanted to pursue stage management. During her time with the department, she worked on several productions including *Fools*, *Show Boat*, *Seven Guitars*, *Blood Wedding*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *ARDT*, and *Dance Alabama*.

Peyton was also a member of Alpha Psi Omega, where she is remembered by her “littles” and fellow members as being positive and caring. Students and faculty held a memorial for her during the first week of school, sharing stories and memories of how Peyton loved and laughed with her family at UA. Her mother spoke to returning students at the service and told them to “remember to let the wind blow” when they remember her.

Her passion for stage management and helping others was present in her relationships with fellow students and faculty. Stacy Alley said “she was a ray of sunshine. Both as a person and a theatre practitioner, she was the kind of person you wanted to have around.” Fellow stage manager, Abby Gandy, said “Peyton was always willing to lend a hand if you needed one, and she knew what she was doing when it came to stage management.”

As the department continues to mourn her loss, we stand united as one. The 2015-2016 season is dedicated to Peyton’s memory.



SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

Guardian Angels (\$5,000+)

Ed Williams Endowed Scholarship in Theatre Education,
Society for the Fine Arts Gift Fund- Theatre, Pikes Peak Community Foundation,
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Angels (\$1,000 - \$4,999)

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H. Scott & Nita Hestevold, Jack & Fran Jecen, Kenneth Lichstein,
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Don Noble, Michael & Jill Picone, Mark Reynolds, Charles Starling, Alice Taylor,
Louise Videau

Bronze Star (\$50 - \$99)

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Michael Wayne Rhiney, Hunter Thomas, Mary Kay Webb, Asia Webber

Rising Star (\$20 - \$49)

Dr. Lynne Adrian, William Flanagan, James Helga, Janis Helton, Jennifer McMurray,
Christie Les, Micahel Steward, Shirley Tucker, Ronald Witte

Your participation doesn't have to end when the show is over! Give to the Annual Scholarship Campaign and invest in these future artists!

Over the years, our donors have generously contributed to our Annual Scholarship Campaign providing scholarships for deserving Theatre & Dance students. We ask you to consider joining our family of donors who ensure UA Theatre & Dance continues to attract the brightest and best students.

If you would like to donate, please visit our website at *theatre.ua.edu*.

Eurydice, Spring 2015. Photo by Porfirio Solorzano
Cover photo: ARDT, Fall 2014. Photo by Porfirio Solorzano

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

UA Theatre
& Dance