

STAGES

Spring 2019



A Note from the Chair



This is my final “Note from the Chair.” After thirty-eight years at The University of Alabama—the last twelve as department chair—it is now time to end this act, take a brief intermission, and move on to the next. Although I’m not quite sure what the script holds for that act, I am eager for the curtain to rise!

I am humbled and grateful to have been a member of our UA and Departmental family, and participate in the unprecedented growth of the department and witness the countless successes of our students. Those successes have been my greatest joy and have paved the way for continued growth and future achievement.

May your life be filled with good lighting!

Deepest thanks to all and Roll Tide!

William Teague,
Department Chair

Faculty and Staff Spotlight

From Classroom to Industry: Musical Theatre Education with Dr. Justin P. Cowan



It's no secret that the faculty and staff of UA Theatre and Dance stay busy. **Dr. Justin P. Cowan**, Music Director and Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre, is no exception. Last fall, Cowan was contacted by the Region 4 Chair of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACFT) to serve as the Coordinator for Musical Theatre, beginning Fall 2019. This Festival works to connect students from across the country to exciting workshops and master classes, as well as networking opportunities. This February, Dr. Cowan was able to attend the conference, shadowing the outgoing Musical Theatre Coordinator, learning the ropes and preparing to take over in the fall.

Next on the agenda for Dr. Cowan is a staged reading of a new work with his Musical Theatre Performance class. The musical, called *Single Rider*, deals with young Amish individuals on their Rumspringa. Dr. Cowan contacted the musical's writers, who were interested to see their piece workshopped in a university setting prior to its professional bow. When asked what led him to choose a staged reading of a new work, Dr. Cowan responded, "It spawned out of a lot of things. I'm very passionate about raising music literacy in music theatre programs. Having students work on and develop new work that forces them to learn the pieces without a cast recording is invaluable."

After *Single Rider*, Dr. Cowan heads to Greensboro, North Carolina, where he will serve as Music Director of *Man of La Mancha* at Triad Stage. A nationally-renowned theatre, this opportunity allows Dr. Cowan to bring information from professional theatre back to the incubator of academia. Additionally, Dr. Cowan stated, "Any connection I make is a connection for my students," emphasizing that when he goes out into the world, he represents the quality of training and students at The University of Alabama.

Dr. Cowan looks forward to future professional development opportunities, as well as the ability to offer new experiences for his students.

Faculty and Staff Spotlight

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Prague, Persephone, and #MeToo

Annie G. Levy, Assistant Professor of Directing and Stage Management, is currently on an ASPIRE semester, a semi-sabbatical in which professors take a break from teaching and dedicate all their time to writing, research, and creative activity. The first professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance to take part in this new initiative, Levy has spent some time exploring a piece in Prague, Czech Republic. Her piece, *SIX SEEDS: The Persephone Project*, is a work devised from the story of Persephone. About a year ago, a former colleague of Levy, who had relocated to Prague, put out a call for scripts. Levy reached out and began cultivating the project's future.

Levy found the story of Persephone especially relevant to the #MeToo movement, in that the story revolves around a young woman who has no agency of her own. Her kidnapping and eternal fate are decided by the male gods around her. Additionally, this story exists in various mythological forms around the world. It proves a connective thread for a movement which affects people everywhere.

In addition to her work in Prague, Levy used her time abroad to travel to Greece and France for further research. Moving forward, Levy will use her findings and creative activities to publish a paper and stage a second reading at the end of April, here in Tuscaloosa.



Announcing Our 2019-2020 Season



Fall 2019

Marian Gallaway Theatre

Intimate Apparel

The Importance of Being Earnest

October 1-6

November 19-22, 24

Allen Bales Theatre

The River

The Pirates of Penzance

September 23-27, 29

November 11-17

Morgan Auditorium

Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre

Dance Alabama!

October 8-11

November 12-15

Spring 2020

Marian Gallaway Theatre

The Servant of Two Masters

Legally Blonde

February 18-23

April 14-19

Allen Bales Theatre

Mr. Universe

Hand to God

February 10-16

April 6-12

Morgan Auditorium

Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre

Dance Alabama!

Dance Collection

February 25-29

April 7-11

April 17



Bill Teague: *A Legacy*

There is no one quite like Bill Teague. Professor, Chair, Designer, Technical Director, Theatre Professional, Teague has made an impact on the lives and careers of countless students, teachers, and families over his nearly four-decade career at The University of Alabama.

BY KYLE VAN FRANK

From his start in August of 1981, everything he has done has been for the greater good of the student, enhancing everything he has encountered. Sharron Skipper, Administrative Secretary and nucleus of UA Theatre and Dance, reflected on Teague's time at UA, saying, "From the beginning, in August 1981, when Bill

Teague joined UA as our Tech Director, and when I first met him, until he became chair 11 years ago, Bill has been totally devoted to the Department of Theatre and Dance and a true Crimson Tide fan.” No matter the job, it is clear Teague has always given his all to that task, brightening the experiences of all involved here at UA Theatre and Dance.

The impact of Teague on students here at UA is long-lasting and career-establishing for many. Paul Crook, a graduate of the MFA in Theatre with a Concentration in Acting, said of Bill, “Gregarious, passionate, knowledgeable, creative, driven, and inspiring are just a few of the adjectives I could use to describe Bill. Bill, along with Ed Williams and John Ross, made up a core of UA theatre faculty who had a huge impact on my life and career. From these mentors, I learned what it meant to value the work of those whose shoulders we stand on as artists, while also looking to the future, reaching for and embracing what will make us even better artists in the future.” Beyond education in skills, techniques, and the rules of theatre, Teague has had an impact on the very nature of students—their passion and desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

Teague’s dedication to building a brighter future for our students has been especially present in his work developing such projects as SummerTide Theatre and the future Performing Arts Academic Center (PAAC). On top of his duties as academic chair of the department, supervisor of a theatre and dance company which produces thirteen large scale productions a year, Teague also serves as an integral piece in the development of the future home of UA Theatre and Dance.

Of course, Bill Teague would not be Bill Teague without his beloved wife Dianne. MFA Theatre with a Concentration in Acting graduate Chelsea Reynolds noted that, “Some of my favorite moments as an actor in the MFA program were looking out and seeing the support of Bill Teague and his darling wife, Dianne, out in the house ready to cheer us on.” Dianne has also appeared in a variety of UA Theatre and Dance productions over the years, most recently *August: Osage County*.

What makes Teague special is not just his ability to create beautiful lighting, nor his talent for sustaining a vibrant and generous patron base, nor his contributions to the growth of academic degree programs and tenured faculty; rather, Bill’s impact is most notably celebrated in his ability to make individuals feel protected and supported. As a young and nervous high school senior, I sat in Bill’s office, among stacks of renderings and posters and accolades of days gone by, and I will never forget the warm and welcoming tone with which he greeted me and my family. Bill made me feel like a human being and like The University of Alabama really wanted to get to know who I was. Sharron Skipper says it best: “He is leaving a big footprint for us to step into, and for that we are grateful.”



Professor Bill Teague at Work. Photo by Jeff Hanson.



A Dance Missionary

For nearly three decades, Professor Cornelius Carter has been a staple on The University of Alabama campus. In that time, he has trained generations of dancers to lead successful careers as artists. His leadership and vision have taken The University's dance program to new heights. At the end of this academic year, Carter will retire. This article celebrates his legacy.

Cornelius Carter began teaching at The University of Alabama in 1992. Prior to that, Carter was Dean of Students at the Harvard Summer Dance Festival. Edie Barnes, who was Director of the dance program at the time, encouraged Carter to come teach at the University. After all, Carter grew up in Mississippi.

"I have strong ties to my roots and, in a way, I wanted to give back to the south as a dance missionary of sorts. Who could be a better role model?" said Carter of his decision to come to The University.

Carter quickly made his mark on campus. Upon arrival, he founded the Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre, a pre-professional dance company for which he serves as Artistic Director.

"Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre allows students and faculty to perform and choreograph at the highest level," said Carter. ARDT has continued under Carter's direction to this day, and tens of thousands have attended the annual fall and spring concerts. Carter likened his journey with ARDT to, "watching your child grow into an independent, intelligent person."

Carter has received a variety of accolades for his teaching. In 2001 he was named a national winner of the U.S. Professors of the Year awards, sponsored by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He was also awarded the 2001-2002 Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award by the Alabama Alumni Association.

Two of Carter's favorite aspects of teaching at the University? First, he has been able to teach a variety of disciplines. Second, the University community and administration have been very supportive.

"I have grown as an artist, an administrator, and an activist for the arts, all while being supported by the University," said Carter. "From the Department of Theatre and Dance to the President of the University, I have had amazing support from my colleagues."

But this is hardly surprising, as Carter has been very supportive himself.

"Some people truly go above and beyond and give of themselves selflessly. Cornelius is one of those people," said Lawrence Jackson, Assistant Professor of Dance. "There are no words that can express how much he has given of himself, not just to the dance program, but also to the University."

Carter offered some final words of wisdom to students, faculty, and staff:

"I always saw a future bigger than me, and I always saw it through uncertain times. See the future—that's where the possibility lies."

Professor Carter, thank you for your work. You will be remembered as a true visionary.

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