



Just as creativity takes courage, so does the process of change. We are diving into the academic year with all the bravery we can muster as we stretch our limits and push our boundaries within our Department and our art forms. From new governance structures and leadership, to new faculty and students, to both developing new programs and refining existing programs, we are pursuing change with the goal of growth on many fronts. In the words of Margaret Mead:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Though some things will change, we remain stridently committed to quality education, production and outreach as we continue to share our expertise and love for the Arts,

both on-campus and off.

Thank you for joining us in our journey.

.SauhME

Sarah M. Barry, Department Chair



Meet the New UA Theatre and Dance Faculty!

Matt Davis



Matt Davis is the owner and co-founder of Open Motion Studio in Michigan, where he introduces the Chekhov Methodology to both acting and business professionals. His focus is in form, lyric and script analysis, and the development of concentration and imagination. Matt holds an MFA in Theatre with a concentration in Directing from The University of Alabama and has performed in film, television, and theatre throughout the US. His directing and teaching experiences include the Michigan Shakespeare Festival, Theatre 68 in NYC, as well as

his own black box theatre, The Bon Ton Room, where he acted as co-owner and artistic director for 8 years. Matt's original play *Noise* was recently workshopped with the Bailiwick/Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago. He is a certified teacher of the Michael Chekhov Technique through the Great Lakes Michael Chekhov Consortium. He serves as an instructor of Directing, Stage Management and Theatre History in the Department of Theatre and Dance.

Jamorris Rivers



Jamorris Rivers is an instructor of choreography and dance history and also teaches modern, ballet and jazz at The University of Alabama. He is the Resident Choreographer and Artistic Director of AROVA Contemporary Ballet in Birmingham, Alabama. He has danced with Montgomery Ballet, Southern Danceworks, Alabama Ballet, AROVA, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet appearing in the US, Europe, Brazil, and Australia. Jamorris has performed works by Roger Van Fleteren, Lindsay

Nelko, Jorden Morris, Twyla Tharp, Septime Weber, Brandon Ragland, Robert Battle, Teri Weksler, George Balanchine, and Dwight Rhoden. He is working to complete his MFA in Dance at Hollins University. Jamorris Rivers is an ABT[®] Certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT[®] Teacher Training Intensive in Pre-Primary through Level 3 of the ABT[®] National Training Curriculum.

Henry Lewers



Henry Lewers is the Music Director for the Musical Theatre program at UA. Originally from Peterborough, NH, Henry holds a BM degree from St. Olaf College, and an MM degree from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Lewers has worked on national tours like *Memphis* and *Bullets Over Broadway*. He also served as a faculty member at the Kentucky Center's Governor's School for the Arts.

Aidan Nettles



Aidan Nettles, MFA, is a Full-Time Teaching Instructor of Dance at the University of Alabama. Nettles received a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Dance at the University of Alabama and a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) with Distinction from the University of Roehampton in London, UK. During her tenure at UA, Aidan presided over the Nu Delta Alpha National Dance Honor Society and served as UA Parent Ambassador, member of Phi Eta Sigma National Collegiate Scholars and Golden Key before graduating with honors as a Blount Undergraduate

Initiative Scholar. Throughout her matriculation at Roehampton, she taught dance at the Roehampton Dance Society and Amplified Arts Academy; served as program representative for postgraduate dance studies; presented a paper at the Young Conference at Ghent University in Belgium; and later served as the Young Conference Chair. Nettles received the International Excellence and Roehampton Vice Chancellor's Award for scholarly achievement. Since 2015, Nettles served as counselor and recently Assistant Director of the American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive. Nettles danced with Alabama Repertory Dance Theater, Dance Alabama! and Dance Collection. Pre-collegiate dance study includes training from Tina Trinkler, the Nutmeg Conservatory in Torrington, CT; and studies with Mira Popovich, Eleanor D'Antuono, Kirk Peterson, Moses Pendleton, and many more. Nettles enjoys teaching ballet, modern and jazz to children and youth; and has choreographed and scored competitive programs and television performances.

Andrew O'Neal



Andrew is a proud alumnus of The University of Alabama Department of Theatre and Dance. He graduated with an MFA in Theatre with a concentration in Design and Technical Production in 2014. Most recently Andrew has been working at the Aurora Theatre in Lawrenceville, GA as their Technical Director. Prior to the Aurora Theatre he was a Faculty member at Radford University in Southwest Virginia as the Assistant Technical Director. Andrew is very excited to be back at The University of Alabama as a faculty member and you may remember some of the shows he worked on as a student in productions like *Showboat*,

Chicago and *Book Of Days*. The most recent production he worked on at The Aurora Theatre was *Children of Eden*. Andrew is originally from Fairfax, Virginia.

Alvon Reed



Alvon Reed is an Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre at the University of Alabama. Mr. Reed holds a degree in Spanish from Coe College and an MFA in Dance with an emphasis in Choreography from the University of Iowa. As a professional artist, Alvon's performance credits include Nike, PUMA, Levi's Jeans, Microsoft, Norwegian Cruise Lines, Inland Pacific Ballet, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Opus Dance Theatre, and Jennifer Muller/The Works. Alvon performed in Arena Stages' first multi-ethnic production of *Oklahoma* under the direction of Molly Smith. Additional performance credits include, *Iphegenia* with Marion Schoevaert and

Othello with Eloy Barragán. As an instructor, Mr. Reed has taught at prestigious dance institutions both nationally and internationally. Institutions include The Milwaukee Ballet School, The Ailey School, Butler Ballet, Tanzprokjekt München, and Theatreakademie Prinzregenten in Munich to name a few. He has choreographed musicals for Theatre Cedar Rapids, the Department of Theatre Arts at Coe College, Revival Theatre Company, Department of Theatre at the University of Iowa, and the Department of Theatre and Dance at Cornell College. Musicals include Shrek The Musical, The Little Mermaid (Awarded Best Choreography in 2016), Sister Act The Musical, Peter Pan, Newsies, American Idiot, Big Love, Hattie Mae's Juke Joint (an original musical about juke joint life in postwar America), EVITA, Ragtime, 9 to 5, Rent and Rocky Horror Picture Show. Alvon is a proud member of the Actor's Equity Association (AEA).

Dr. Fenella Kennedy



Dr. Fenella Kennedy (they/them) is delighted to join the faculty at The University of Alabama as an Assistant Professor of Dance in the Department of Theatre and Dance. Their research – creative and theoretical – examines how different articulations of our dance practices can shape our values and who we are as a society. Before joining the faculty at UA Dr.

Kennedy danced with Aegis Live Arts and Nutshell Contemporary Dance Company in Europe, where they also restaged Martha Graham repertory with undergraduate students. Dr. Kennedy's pedagogical background draws from a decade of work as a play worker and educator for children with various disabilities. A passionate advocate for inclusivity in higher education, they work to integrate active learning and multiple ways of demonstrating excellence into every subject and syllabus. Their classes are playful, critical, and curious. Current projects include organizing and teaching in the Blues and Fusion partner dance communities, choreographing for a queer performance series in Finland, and a collaboration with NASA scientists to explore how dance training can reduce space sickness.

Tiffany Yeager



Tiffany Yeager, originally a freelance costume designer from Texas, is excited to serve The University of Alabama Department of Theatre and Dance in the new role as Faculty Costume Designer for Dance. She is a proud graduate of The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa (MFA) and Texas State University, San Marcos (BFA), with both degrees in Costume Design and Production. Having returned to Tuscaloosa in 2014, her freelance focus over the last several years has been mainly competition costumes for local Dance

Studios, as well as a variety of costumes and clothing for solo dancers, majorettes, cheerleaders, Mardi Gras participants and formal/bridal gowns. Costume design show credits include: *Separate and Equal, Dialogues of the Carmelites, Into the Woods, The Spanish Tragedy, Cymbeline, Othello, Misalliance, Hell: Paradise Found* and *Animal Crackers.*

Engaging Community Through Performing Arts

With all its rich knowledge in mind, the Department of Theatre and Dance is taking a serious look at how we can facilitate more performing arts experiences for students within our local communities. The University of Alabama boasts a large population of out-of-state students and the Theatre and Dance programs are



no different. While the university is proud of its national reputation for excellence, the department has spent the last several years growing and creating support channels that will provide opportunities for more than just the college population, so we can be the choice of local students.

Dance students and faculty members have powered into the community with programs like the Dance Alabama Film Festival, offered annually at Alberta School of Performing Arts which gives Alberta School students a chance to perform in short films assisted by UA students. Let's All Dance is another program UA partners with that provides dance classes once a week for children with special needs through a partnership with the Dance Center in Tuscaloosa. But these are just two of the many outreach programs UA has participated in over the last few years. Some of the other programs include the DA tour, Capstone Christmas, and partnerships with Al's Pals.

The department additionally hosts two festivals – the Theatre Festival in the Fall and the Dance Festival in the Spring in an effort to create opportunity for students to learn from our award-winning faculty and talented students. Shakespeare for Schools is a program allowing school students to come see Shakespeare production every other spring, and our Understudy Program allows students to visit our campus and spend the day attending classes, meeting faculty and seeing our performance spaces. The Musical Theatre faculty also organize masterclasses for high school students considering a career in Musical Theatre. Additionally, the theatre faculty and graduate students have been working on creating new programing for elementary school students bringing theatre off-stage and into the community.

Though the department has spent more time in recent years developing sustainable educational programming, we are not finished yet. We want everyone in our community to be excited about the performing arts, about the university, and about their personal growth and holistic education. For more information about all of our education and outreach programs and how you can get involved, visit theatre.ua.edu/about-us or email us at *theatredanceua@gmail.com*

Theatre Festival 2019. Photo by Christy Baumeister

A New Beginning

UA Theatre and Dance welcomes a new Chair, Sarah M. Barry, marking a new start in the legacy of the department. Sarah reflects on her start at The University of Alabama and talks about her plans for the future as the department shakes things up on our 40th Anniversary.

Sarah M. Barry began working with the Department of Theatre and Dance in 2006 when the department was much smaller. She was hired as an Assistant Professor to teach choreography, modern, dance pedagogy, and dance history classes and to choreograph for ARDT. "I grew up in a military family and I



was used to moving. I learned a long time ago to make home wherever you were." But there was something about The University of Alabama that captured her attention; "One thing that I really loved about UA was how the Dance program placed importance on many styles of movement and not just ballet or modern, and also on the academic side of the artform. I really appreciated the hunger the students had for the broader field of dance. The classes I taught were very different from what the students had experienced before, but they were so enthusiastic and eager to try new things." Cornelius Carter, Director of the Dance program at the time, was always encouraging the talents and passions of those around him, and Sarah was no different. "I was given the freedom to alter existing courses and add new ones based on my interests and expertise. And I was allowed so many opportunities



to create and collaborate with students and other faculty. The combination of passionate and talented students with the opportunities for teaching, creating, and leadership made it very easy to stay."

The department has undergone a lot of growth since 2006. Sarah,

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who was actively involved in shaping the Dance program over the last thirteen

years, says she feels like her leadership experiences in dance naturally led her to consider being more active in the growth of the department as a whole. This past spring, the department began taking steps to restructure. The goal was to create a network that translated into a more collaborative decision-making environment. The department added two Associate Chair positions (one from theatre,



one from dance) to provide better representation for the growing faculty and program offerings. "With the growth of our Department, we want to make sure we are being reflective practitioners most concerned about what the department needs as it continues to develop." Sarah was encouraged to pursue the position and was excited to take on the role in light of the new structure "not as the top of a pyramid," but as part of the nucleus of a living cell.

So, what are the department's plans for the future? "I hesitate to say what 'my vision' is for the next five years. I view my role as Chair as that of a facilitator and one who can encourage collaboration, communication, and collegiality. Certainly, we will continue to keep innovative research, quality productions, and exceptional educational opportunities at the forefront of anything we do, but the ultimate vision for the Department must be a collective decision."



Sarah did say that this next year was sure to establish a more defined outlook for the future of the department. "We are currently reworking our mission and value statements and are bringing in some outside consultants to help collaborate on the process. We are also gathering ideas and opinions from our current students. At the

core, we are examining the most basic yet important question: What do we want our students to get from this experience?"



College of Arts & Sciences Theatre and Dance 2019-2020 Season

Marian Gallaway Theatre

The Servant of Two Masters February 18-23 An adaptation of the historic play Il Servitore di due Padroni, The Servant of Two Masters harkens to Italian commedia dell'arte. Among plots of mistaken identities and disguises, a hungry young man named Truffaldino sees the opportunity to serve two households as the opportunity for two dinners and seizes his chance. What comes next is a farce that is not to be forgotten!

Allen Bales Theatre

- Mr. Universe
- February 10-16

Drag queens, a bloodied-up stranger and a wild night in New Orleans is where the audience meets the cast in this show that is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat. This play forces the audience to ask the difficult questions about truth and lies, perspective and perception, and the character's mysterious motivations.

Legally Blonde April 14-19

In 2001 Elle Woods burst onto the screen captivating our hearts with her story of finding oneself in the face of heartbreak and doubt. After Elle's boyfriend, Warner, breaks up with her to go to Law School at Harvard, Elle becomes determined to get into the same school and on the way finds friendship and a newly ignited passion for justice. This musical adaptation of the blockbuster movie was nominated for seven Tony Awards including Best Book in a Musical and Best Score.

Hand to God April 6-12

In this dark comedy, a young man makes a puppet in Sunday School that quickly becomes possessed by the devil... or is it? In a play about what drives humans to do the things we do, playwright Robert Askins forces us to confront uncomfortable truths about what we collectively believe and who we blame for our choices.

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Morgan Auditorium

Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre (ARDT) February 25-29

Featuring new contemporary work by multifaceted artist, Jennifer Archibald and a restaging of Todd Bolender's "Voyager" by famed Ballet Danseur and Choreographer, James Jordan. *ARDT* also includes choreography from members of the UA Dance faculty. We look forward to seeing you for an evening of dance filled with raw power, thoughtfulness and beauty.

Dance Alabama! April 7-11

An eclectic and energetic collection of choreographic works. Always an audience favorite, we invite you to come and enjoy these original, vibrant and spirited works in a variety of styles.

Dance Collection April 17

Our annual one-night only concert featuring performances filled with a wide range of conceptural approaches to choreography within a variety of dance genres.



Alumni Spotlight

Victoria Niblett Bachelor of Arts Dance '17



Victoria Niblett recently graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Alabama with a degree in dance and public relations and an honors college distinction that allowed her to take classes through the UA Law School while an undergraduate. After graduating top of her class, she was able to travel to New York to study floor work, partnering, and contemporary movement under Shannon Gillen and her visionary dance theatre company, VIM VIGOR.

Victoria was honored to be accepted as a full-time professional student at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance in New York. She recently

performed with the school in "Ritual to the Sun" from Martha Graham's 1981 ballet, Acts of Light.

Victoria is currently working with the state of Alabama for its bicentennial celebration on a Storytelling Dance Series and has been thrilled to receive numerous choreography commissions and artist residency opportunities for this project. Her choreography for the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum and her performance as Zelda gained international attention. Her work "Three Ballerinas: A Moving Sketch" was received with a standing ovation at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Conference in Toulouse, France this summer.

Victoria launched Jellybean Dance Collective in December of 2018, and is the current director of a budding interdisciplinary moving arts company focused on storytelling and arts integration. She is also a current company dancer for

Formations, directed by Whitney Renfroe, and will debut with the company in September.

She can also be found at national and international dance conventions, festivals, workshops, and performances. Most recently, she traveled to Hermosillo, Mexico for the Danzética convention where she teaches modern and contemporary movement and Montrouis, Haiti to teach tap and creative movement classes. Her work in dance education is highly sought after because of her genuine investment into her students and their dance journeys.





STANDING OVATIONS START HERE

We invite you to play a role in the performance of a lifetime by naming a seat in either the Drama Theatre or Dance Theatre in the new Performing Arts Academic Center. Your donation in support of the Campaign for the Performing Arts will help create a venue worthy of our students' legendary talent.



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