STAGES

Spring 2022



A Note from the Chair: Sarah Barry



From numerous achievements by our amazing faculty, staff, students, and alumni to a recordbreaking financial gift of support, there are a lot of things to celebrate as the end of this semester approaches. We continue our push to include fresh voices and perspectives and were pleased to welcome new directors, designers, and choreographers to our stages this season. Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre, founded 30 years ago, has sustained its mission to offer a pre-professional company experience to dance majors, connecting students with professionals in the field and offering training

in a variety of movement styles. Offstage, we embraced more opportunities to go into the community to offer workshops and masterclasses on a variety of theatre and dance topics, as well as continued our newer digital program offerings.

We are thrilled to be the recipients of a major gift naming our forthcoming new facility, The Smith Family Center for the Performing Arts. The state-of-the-art performance venues, classrooms, workshops, and rehearsal spaces will be built specifically to meet our needs, enhancing our programs and enabling us to use new resources and modern technologies. This will be a facility that matches the excellence of our people. We are so grateful to the Smiths, a family with a history of passion for the arts, who saw the value in our program and stepped forward to partner with us.

Looking to the future, we are excited to announce our amazing 2022-23 season. With seven theatre productions and five dance concerts, we'll have something for everyone. Thank you for your patronage and we'll see you next year!

Sarah M. Barry,

SauhMBa

Department Chair

Smith Family Gift Pushes The Rising Tide Over \$1 Billion

The University of Alabama's Rising Tide Capital Campaign has surpassed \$1 billion in charitable commitments toward its \$1.5 billion goal thanks to a recent gift commitment of \$20 million made in memory of Mark Smith, co-founder of the global telecommunications company ADTRAN. The Performing Arts Academic Center will be named the Smith Family Center for the Performing Arts, pending approval by the UA System Board of Trustees.

"We are grateful to the Smiths for what is not only an incredible legacy for their family but a lasting inheritance for our students, community and generations to come," said UA President Stuart R. Bell. "This stunning new facility will further transform our campus, allow us to showcase our students' exceptional talents and make UA a beacon for the performing arts."

Fueled by four generations of love for the arts, the Smith family's gift is primarily to honor Mark, an Alabama native who passed away in 2007. Smith grew up in a house full of musicians, and he always emphasized the importance and power of music with his family.

"Our family's passion for the arts goes back many generations," said Mark's



son, Clay, who made the gift alongside his wife, Cameron, and his mother, Linda, a longtime resident of Huntsville. "Music and the arts have impacted our family tremendously. They defined my father, and they helped define me. To give back to the community in this way while honoring my dad's memory is incredibly rewarding."



The Smith Family Center for the Performing Arts, which will connect to the restored Bryce Main housing UA's new welcome center, will house UA's Department of Theatre and Dance and include four performance theatres — a black box theatre with flexible seating for 175-275, 350-seat proscenium style theatre, 450-seat venue specifically designed for dance, and a dance studio theatre with flexible space for rehearsals, recitals, and smaller performances.

The state-of-the-art rehearsal and production space will allow UA Theatre and Dance faculty to train students in facilities equivalent to the ones in which they will be working as professionals.

"We are humbled and grateful for the generosity of the Smiths," said Dr. Joseph Messina, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "This gift will enable us to continue to offer a high-caliber performing arts education and showcase our talented students and faculty through a world-class facility."

The Smiths' gift to name the center isn't the first they've made in Mark's memory. Clay, a graduate of the Culverhouse College of Business, created an endowed scholarship at UA in his father's name in 2007. More recently, Linda and Clay also gave \$1 million to name the Mark C. Smith Boardroom in UA's newly constructed Hewson Hall.

After visiting campus and seeing the scope of the center, the family knew this was a performing arts project like no other, and they wanted to be a part of it.

"We knew, just looking at the Bryce property and The University's plans for it, that we had to be involved collectively as a family," Clay said. "It's a venue that will foster artistic expression for students and facilitate the skills they need to launch careers in the performing arts."

"And, if you look at the historical relevance of Bryce Main, it is one of the most historically significant institutions in the state. To have a performing arts center adjacent to it is going to be spectacular. It's a diamond in the rough — when the diamond gets cut and cultivated and cleaned, it's going to sparkle and be really special not only for The University but also for the surrounding community. As a family, we're excited and pleased that we can help be a part of this magnificent project."

The Smith family's gift was integral in pushing UA's Rising Tide Capital Campaign over \$1 billion. As of late February, more than 133,000 donors have contributed almost \$1,020,000,000 to the campaign. Already, The Rising Tide has created more than 650 new scholarships and nearly 40 new faculty support funds, and it has impacted more than 500,000 square feet of space across the UA campus.

With goals of raising \$1.5 billion and creating 1,000 new scholarships and 75 new faculty endowments, The Rising Tide is more than 67% to its goal a little more than five years into the 10-year fundraising effort.

Pending final approval from the UA Board of Trustees, the Smith Family Center for the Performing Arts is scheduled to be complete in 2026.









Production Highlight: *The Colored Museum*

Fastening shackles, quelling rebellion, and traveling through time, a flight attendant guides her passengers across the Atlantic. A soon-to-be mother cradles the egg she laid and listens to the pounding heartbeats of her one-of-a-kind babies. Staring into the future, a fallen soldier steals the lives of his friends to save them from the inevitable suffering that is to come. Through the stories of 22 different characters, UA Theatre and Dance took audiences on a journey through *The Colored Museum*'s 11 unique exhibits. Kicking off the second half of the 2021-2022 season, George C. Wolfe's satiric vignettes brought hundreds of patrons face-to-face with old and new stereotypes, exploring what it means to be Black in contemporary America.

The Colored Museum was directed by alumnus and first-year Acting Instructor, Christian Tripp, who felt deeply connected to the text. "Never before had a script crossed my path that dared to explore the Black ethos with such wit and fervor," Tripp said. "The play asks the question: what is it to be African American and what is it to be African American through the eyes of a predominately white society?" The script grips the audience with its dark comedy while investigating deeper themes, like love, self-hate, isolation, identity, sexuality, and more within the Black community.









Producing this piece is one step on a larger journey. "It's important to me because it's important to my actors," Tripp said. "[*The Colored Museum*] is an opportunity for actors of color to explore their own identities and ask questions of themselves that these characters are asking first. We don't often get to do that in terms of our work, identity, and how we move and feel as artists of color."

Tripp's excitement for the production rippled throughout the entire cast. "This show is so important to me because it showcases different sides of my artistry without the dictatorial lens of whiteness," Trinity Ross, senior actor, said. "I honor the sacredness of being a part of a space where I am surrounded by artists of all types that look like me and how unfortunately rare such experiences are." These sentiments were echoed by Cody Floyd, another senior actor. "This is a family," Floyd said, referring to the cast. "Our characters are eternal. The reason the [vignettes] are not called scenes and are purposefully called exhibits is because every time they just come to life. Scenes go away, but exhibits go on forever."

Although the production has come to a close, Tripp and the cast hope that their performances will leave a lasting impact on the UA Theatre and Dance community. "Our production, by integrating towering white walls, allowed these Black bodies to weave through this space in search of something to ground themselves," Tripp said. "I hope that audiences take home questions, I hope they're questioning their own perspectives, and I hope that Black audiences take home a sense of empowerment and a sense that their stories are important and worthwhile."

Concert Highlight: ARDT's 30th Season

This spring, Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre (ARDT) celebrated its 30th anniversary with a dance concert that presented original contemporary pieces and restaged classical works from many different dance genres and styles, illustrating the technical brilliance and artistic strength of the UA dance program. UA Theatre and Dance designed ARDT to provide enriching performance opportunities for dance majors and promote excellence in the art form. Now, in its 30th year, ARDT continues to provide an opportunity for students to gain invaluable experience on stage and become better equipped for their future professional careers.



Additionally, this semester's performance makes history as the first live, unmasked ARDT concert since the start of the pandemic in early 2020. In the wake of all of the challenges presented by COVID-19, the concert highlighted the endurance of dance through choreographic voices, weaving ingenuity into developing new ways to exhibit their art on stage. Through the grace and athleticism of the dancers, audiences were once again moved through the intimacy of live performance.

As ARDT moves into its next three decades, the dance program would specifically like to thank Eliza P. Culverhouse for her generous contribution. Culverhouse's incredible passion for the dance program continues to empower the department, providing the resources needed to bring nationally recognized choreographers and designers to Tuscaloosa. This season, UA's dancers had the opportunity to perform the choreographic works of Elijah Gibson, Natosha Washington, and Alex Mannings, and bask in the lighting of designer Morgan Embry. Through Culverhouse's support, the dance program's mission of achieving artistic excellence has soared to new heights.

ARDT will return next season with graceful performances choreographed by our nationally acclaimed dance faculty and emerging guest choreographers. Continue to join us for transformative visual experiences and lively journeys through motion.

ARDT Guest Artists



Elijah Gibson *Choreographer*

From San Diego, CA, Elijah Gibson founded Social Movement Contemporary Dance after a career as an international professional dancer. He joined the world-renowned Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago where he toured nationally and internationally for eight years. Gibson has been fortunate to have worked in every aspect of the arts including dance, theatre, and film.



Natosha Washington

Choreographer

Natosha Washington is a professional choreographer, director, and educator. She received her BFA in Modern Dance from The University of Utah and AFA from Ricks College. She is a resident of Salt Lake City, UT, currently serving as the Performing Arts Chair/Dance Company Director at West High School and the Artistic Director of the Penguin Lady Dance Collective.



Alexandra Mannings

Choreographer

From Atlanta, GA, now living in the Bay Area, Alexandra Mannings received her undergraduate degrees in Dance and Physics from UA. She enjoys exploring the use of text and multimedia in her works as a means of illustrating the depth and textures of our shared human experiences. Mannings was very excited to return to UA to choreograph for ARDT.



Morgan Embry

Lighting Designer

Morgan Embry is a lighting designer, video designer, choreographer, and performer based in Los Angeles, CA. Her clients include: Vance Joy, Charli XCX, SHAED, Tessa Violet, Allie X, Bryce Vine, Oliver Tree, and Charming Liars. She is the resident LD for Willing Kompany and Festival Ballet Theatre, and Video Designer for The Next Festival of Emerging Artists.

Education & Outreach: *Hale County Workshops*



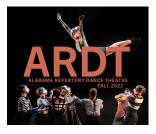
This semester, UA Theatre and Dance teamed up with Hale County College and Career Academy to provide a unique workshop series for 10th-12th graders enrolled in fine arts classes. On select Fridays, UA students and faculty travel to their campus in Greensboro, AL to help enhance the educational experience for local secondary students. Classes range from "Introduction to Musical Theatre Dance" with graduate student Leah Mae Aldridge to "The Alexander Technique" with Associate Professor Kelley Schoger.

Stage Talks: New Podcast Episodes

UA Theatre and Dance's official podcast, *Stage Talks*, has been releasing new episodes over the past few months. Streaming on both YouTube and Spotify, *Stage Talks* celebrates all things theatre and dance at the Capstone. The first episode of the semester features Cody Floyd, senior acting student, and discusses his experiences working on our recent production of *The Colored Museum*. For a behind-the-scenes look at the production processes of UA Theatre and Dance's Spring 2022 shows, check out the new episodes online!



2022-23 Season:Dance Concerts



ARDT—Fall 2022

October 19-21, 2022

Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre returns to the stage with graceful performances choreographed by our nationally acclaimed dance faculty. Join us for a transformative visual experience and lively journey through motion.



Dance Alabama!—Fall 2022

November 9-11, 2022

Dance Alabama! is a collection of performances choreographed and designed by students and includes many genres of dance. This concert is designed to showcase student choreography that is conceptually original and visually stimulating.



MFA Dance Concert

February 1-4, 2023

The MFA Dance Concert is a series of expressive and eclectic choreographic works created and choreographed by the UA Master of Fine Arts in Dance candidates.



ARDT—Spring 2023

March 1-4, 2023

Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre's spring production will feature exciting premieres by emerging guest choreographers. This dance concert will encompass ballet, contemporary, and jazz dance pieces.



Dance Alabama!—Spring 2023

April 19-22, 2023

The spring production of Dance Alabama! combines passion, dynamics, and rhythm in order to create beautiful, student choreographed works of art that all audiences will appreciate and enjoy.

2022-23 Season: *Theatre Productions*

** Marian Gallaway Theatre

* Allen Bales Theatre



The Imaginary Invalid **

October 12-14 & October 20-23, 2022

Argan is a hypochondriac whose medical bills are the largest expense in his pocketbook. To save money, he decides to marry his oldest daughter, Angelique, to an up-and-coming doctor, Thomas. What better way to get free check-ups? Angelique refuses the marriage because she loves another. This forces

Argan to give her an ultimatum: marry Thomas or join a convent. In a story filled with mistaken identities, tumultuous relationships, and one clever servant, will Angelique marry or does a convent await her?

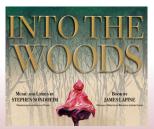


Camino Real **

February 15-17 & February 23-26, 2023

Kilroy visits a mysterious dead-end town inhabited by a cast of reprehensible misfits whose company is deserving of one another. Among this eccentric group is Don Quixote, Hugo's Esmeralda, Casanova himself, and the great English poet, Lord Byron. With virtually no redeeming qualities

surrounding these eccentric characters, this play by Tennessee Williams, one of America's most prolific playwrights, personifies his greatest fears while giving audiences an intimate look into his deeply troubled mind.



Into The Woods **

April 12-14 & April 20-23, 2023

Some of literature's most iconic fairytale characters are amalgamated into one story that sees them, alongside a baker and his wife, conveying their greatest wishes to the audience. Adventure ensues as each of these characters, including one deeply misunderstood witch, begin to understand that their

actions have consequences and wishes come with a price that must be paid. Journey through the woods in one of Sondheim's greatest musicals as you decide what's right, and you decide what's good.



Gloria *

September 26 - October 2, 2022

This dark comedy follows several young, ambitious editors living in New York City and working for one of the city's most esteemed publications. As the monotony of office life begins to set in, they wonder if any of them will ever get that mythical big break. After an office party, their lives are changed forever

when co-worker Gloria goes on a shooting rampage inside the office. Scarred for life, the survivors process their trauma while vying to decide who gets to tell this story and finally score their own book deal.



Small Mouth Sounds *

November 7-13, 2022

Six characters are desperate to escape the constant bombardment of stress and unhappiness that plagues their bustling urban lives. They find themselves on a silent retreat together and, without speaking, they must learn to communicate while simultaneously dealing with the skeletons

in their own closets. As the retreat continues, each of these characters begins to understand the clarity that permeates the silence. With few words spoken, this play offers audiences a unique experience.



Murder Ballad *

January 30 - February 5, 2023

This musical follows two young lovers who seem to have it all. They are a vibrant couple trying to establish themselves in New York City—Sara as a musician and Tom as an actor. The demands of life grow, and they begin to drift apart, eventually finding new love and moving on. As their lives progress

independently, the feelings they once had for one another begin to resurface. Will they be able to ignore the past to maintain the present? Or will they risk their futures to be together once again?



Frontier Sans Frontieres *

March 27 - April 2, 2023

Win is a dexterous young waif trying to survive in a war-torn country and struggling to provide for her two younger siblings. Living in a crude, makeshift shelter and adapting themselves to a harsh life on the streets, the appearance of tourists and other outsiders begins to open doors to an unfamiliar world.

Will the prospects of education and other temptations of the civilized world be enough to entice these siblings away from living on the streets? Or will they remain true to the only life they've ever known?

Scholarship Spotlight: Marcus Johnson



Marcus Johnson is a junior BFA Theatre major with a concentration in Musical Theatre from Atlanta, GA. Marcus' work has been featured many times in UA Theatre and Dance productions, including: Legally Blonde, The Colored Museum, Pippin, Pirates of Penzance, The Void, and Shooting Star. He is a proud member of Alpha Psi Omega, where he serves as a student liaison between AY Ω and Five Horizons (their partner organization). In addition to this, Marcus is passionate about his work as a musical theatre ambassador, where he connects with prospective students. Marcus is also deeply involved

with Crimson Stage, a UA student organization that encourages individual artistic pursuits by producing new and published works. He currently serves as the Vice

President and has previously written, directed, and choreographed for the organization. Last year, Crimson Stage produced Marcus' *Cotton Candy*, an original work that embodies the black, gay experience. He is involved with the Student Fashion Association and performs in fashion shows across campus. Marcus is extremely appreciative of the support he receives from the Theatre and Dance Scholarship Fund, stating: "If it wasn't for the scholarship given by the donors, I would not be able to further my education in improving my artistry." Marcus' career here, while not



over, has been nothing short of defying normalities and proving that he is a true, determined, willing, and amazing artist. He cannot wait to explore more of what he can do at UA Theatre and Dance.

Over the years, our donors have generously contributed to our Annual Scholarship Campaign providing scholarships for deserving Theatre and Dance students, like Marcus. If you would like to donate, please visit our website at theatre.ua.edu.

Alumni Spotlight: *Brianna Milner*

After graduating in December of 2016 from The University of Alabama with a BS in Chemical Engineering and a BA in Dance, Brianna Milner began dancing in Norwegian Cruise Line's production of the Broadway musical *After Midnight* by Warren Carlyle. While she was dancing in the musical, she was also singing and dancing back up for singer Tezz Yancy as a part of his show, *Tezz! Vinyl Memories*. In September 2017, she moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in performing full-time. Her most recent dance credits include dancing for H.E.R. at the BET Awards in 2021, Beyoncé's



Black is King film, the "Mood 4 Eva" music video, lead dancer in Kezar's "(Tell Me) It's Not Love" music video, and in Danny Ezralow's "Pearl Eternity." She has



performed in music videos including "Fancy Like" by Walker Hayes ft. Ke\$ha and "Big" by Kendra Jae. She continues to act in many commercials and TV shows for brands like Amazon Alexa, Chipotle, World Market, Clinique, Snowfall on FX, and Fox Sports. Brianna has also modeled for the fitness companies Beachbody and Zamst. She has been featured as a dancer with Red Bull's Femme Fetale Group. While continuing to dance, model, and act, Brianna has joined the girl group "MOXXY," where she sings and dances as a recording artist and plans to

tour the world in the near future. "UA helped me because before I went to school there, I had only had a couple of years of formal training," Milner said. "Cornelius Carter's support and encouragement helped me to find my stylistic voice and gave me the confidence I needed to succeed. If it weren't for Stacy Alley bringing Norwegian auditions to UA the semester after I graduated, I never would've danced on the ship. Most of all, I met my husband, who is also a dancer, while dancing on that contract and we would've never met the way we did without the opportunities UA blessed me with!"

New Instructor Spotlight: *Bryant Henderson-Shae*



Bryant Henderson-Shae joined the Department of Theatre and Dance at the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year. As an Instructor of Dance, Henderson-Shae teaches contemporary modern, jazz technique, and professional issues in dance. In addition to the classes he teaches at UA, he is also a Certified Physically Integrated Dance Teaching Artist, guest performer, and choreographer with The Dancing Wheels Company & School in Cleveland, OH. Henderson-Shae has a BA in Dance and Public Relations from UA and an MFA in Dance and Women's & Gender Studies from the University of Oregon.

As an educator, Henderson-Shae has held professorships and instructor positions across the US. Recently, he completed a 2-year Visiting Assistant Professorship at Cleveland State University where he served as the Artistic Director of the CSU Dance Company. He previously served as Visiting Assistant Professor and Artistic Director of Dance at Willamette University in Salem, OR and as an Instructor of Dance at Lane Community College. Henderson-Shae has been a guest artist/choreographer for several academic institutions, including: Wayne State University, Alma College, Shelton State Community College, the University of Oregon, and UA. He is also a highly regarded and recruited dance adjudicator and regularly serves on panels for StageOne National Dance Competitions, Encore DCS, and Dance Troupe, Inc.

Henderson-Shae has served as the Assistant Director and Jazz Faculty for the American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive at UA. He has also held faculty positions with The Eugene Ballet Company and Boulder Jazz Dance Workshop. Henderson-Shae's choreography has appeared at American College Dance Festivals and in New York City. He has premiered original concert dance works, including commissions for The Dancing Wheels Company, the University of Oregon, and UA. Bryant has performed with SYREN Modern Dance, BEings Dance, DEMA Dance, J. Chen Project, and Broadway Dance Center in venues including NY's City Center, The Joyce SoHo, NYC Times Square and The Baryshnikov Performing Arts Center. Bryant has also toured the world as a dancer and aerialist for Celebrity Cruises and performed with the aerial-ballet company, AROVA Contemporary Ballet, in Birmingham, AL.

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