

STAGES

Fall 2023



A Note From the Chair



What a wonderful semester at The University of Alabama Department of Theatre and Dance! There are a multitude of reasons to celebrate our theatre and dance community as we approach the end of the academic year. Our season ended to thunderous applause with the final performances of *Dance Alabama!* and *Into The Woods*, after a season packed to the brim with artistry and grace. Our students developed moving works through our student organizations that brought creativity and passion to UA Theatre and Dance stages. Finally, our faculty and staff embarked on a new journey to strategically plan for the department's upcoming move to The Smith Family Center for the Performing Arts.

To efficiently focus on the future, we can not forget about those we are serving in the present. This year's Arty Party event, benefiting the theatre program, raised over \$70,000 for scholarships and departmental opportunities for our students as they continue developing their education. The dedication of the arts community in West Alabama has been majorly impactful to UA Theatre and Dance's successes in providing educational opportunities for our students. If you would like to join this endeavor, please take a moment to donate at ua.universitytickets.com.

UA Theatre and Dance expands far past Tuscaloosa, AL. This summer, we will be celebrating SummerTide Theatre's 20th anniversary! For two decades, SummerTide has been UA's professional theatre company and has brought productions to Gulf Shores, AL that are produced, directed, and performed by our faculty, staff, students, and alumni. I would like to personally invite you to join us for this year's production of *Nunsense* as we commemorate 20 years of thrilling performances.

Looking to the 2023-2024 academic year, we are excited to announce a season filled with audience favorites including *The Rocky Horror Show*, *She Loves Me*, and *Julius Caesar*. *Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre* is returning and we are thrilled to announce the first *Emerging Choreographers' Showcase*. This is a season you won't want to miss. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you at the theatre!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dominic M. Yeager". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dominic Yeager, Department Chair

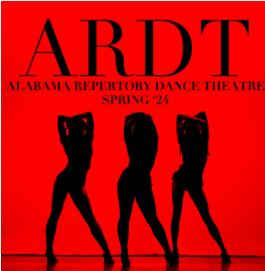
2023-2024 Season



Oedipus

Allen Bales Theatre | Feb. 5-11, 2024

Unravel the mystery of fate and free will in Sophocles' Oedipus, a new take on a centuries-old tale. Fighting to uncover the truth behind a deadly plague, Oedipus inadvertently discovers the shocking reality of his own past. Can he create his own future, or does an unchangeable destiny bind him? This riveting production explores the enduring themes of power, identity, and the human experience.



Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre

The Dance Theatre | Feb. 27 - Mar. 2, 2024

Join us for an celebration of dance at the Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre's spring concert. Witness captivating premieres skillfully brought to life by renowned guest choreographers and our nationally acclaimed dance faculty. Together, they create a mesmerizing canvas of motion that reflects the rich tapestry of the field. Enjoy this extraordinary journey and celebrate the power of dance with us.



Love and Information

Allen Bales Theatre | Apr. 1-7, 2024

This kaleidoscope of vignettes beautifully navigates the relentless stream of information in our modern world, creating a piece that explores the emotional depth of humanity. Filled with humor, heartache, and profound insights into the nature of love and communication, this fast-paced and thought-provoking production contemplates the complexities of our existence.



Emerging Choreographers' Showcase

The Dance Theatre | Apr. 2-6, 2024

Our gifted student choreographers unite to create a breathtaking fusion of diverse forms that transcend boundaries and defy expectations. Under the mentorship of our outstanding faculty, this performance showcases the passion, creativity, and dedication of these talented young artists. We invite you to join us for this unique event and witness the brilliance of the next generation.



She Loves Me

Marian Gallaway Theatre | Apr. 10-12, 18-21, 2024

Set in the 1930s, this Broadway classic takes place in a European perfume shop where two bickering coworkers are unknowingly pen pals in a secret handwritten romance. As their letters of love and longing cross paths with their everyday interactions, the stage is set for a captivating comedy of errors that will leave audiences laughing and swooning over their adorable antics and heartwarming love story.

Movement in Acting

When it comes to acting, the director of *Julius Caesar*, Seth Panitch set out to create a new take on a familiar Shakespearean tragedy. Panitch elaborated on his directorial choices in cutting the original three-hour production into a one-act. He said that he didn't want to "take the foot off the gas" by incorporating an intermission. He aimed to keep the audience engaged and cut out any "fluff" that was not integral to the overarching plot.

Julius Caesar is a timeless masterpiece that transports the audience to days of yore, to ancient Rome. The play recounts the story of Julius Caesar, a tale of power struggles and moral dilemmas where Brutus and Cassius, men of high esteem, muse upon the weighty matter of loyalty.

In terms of this specific adaptation, Panitch expanded on his choice of not setting *Julius Caesar* during modern times by stating "I think sometimes an audience won't look at themselves if you show them the mirror too close to their nose". Panitch wanted to place *Julius Caesar* in a world that was unfamiliar to the audience. Togas and Rome hold such specific expectations from the audience and Panitch aimed to create a refreshing interpretation that kept the viewers engaged until the very end.



Julius Caesar

His decision to set Julius Caesar in 1920s Russia stemmed from finding a period of time that faced a similar competition for power after a leader had passed. The backstabbing and power imbalances between Stalin and Trotsky after Lenin was killed was an ideal period that Panitch found he could show relevant parallels throughout history.

LaBorn Brown spoke about his experience portraying Caesar in this new adaptation. He greatly appreciated having the double casting to have the ability to learn and play off from the other actor playing Caesar, Sam Perry. Brown also spoke on the movement within this work, choreographed by Jamorris Rivers. Brown stated that Rivers helped bring the physicality to the essence of this play. He described his rendition of Caesar as a warrior, Rivers helped bring invigorating movements that showcased the true power and warrior-essence of Julius Caesar.

“We can talk about Caesar being a warrior and a conqueror on the battlefield, but it means nothing if I can’t bring that physicality to the role. Jamorris gave us direction — really putting the whole body and that momentum forward into our strikes. Instead of going through the motions of trying to be a warrior, JaMorris helped us get there and be warriors.” —Laborn Brown, Trotsky



Vectorworks to Vision:



The Rocky Horror Show



The Rocky Horror Show

The Rocky Horror Show is a cult classic that blends elements of horror, science fiction, comedy, and musical theatre to create an outrageous plot, musical numbers, and audience participation. Theatrical production is a demanding process that requires a seamless convergence of artistic elements, and technical direction is no exception.

Matt Stratton, Matt Reynolds and Soledad Sanchez Valdez are the minds behind this year's Technical Direction, Light Design, and Scenic Design for UA Theatre and Dance's Production of The Rocky Horror Show. Stratton, Reynolds and Valdez used a computer-aided drafting program called Vectorworks. Reynolds uses this industry standard to generate technical drawings, 3D Modeling, illustration and lighting renderings. "The program allows me the same control and precision of any lighting system," Reynolds says. "Anyone pursuing professional entertainment must have this in their arsenal".



The work was spread thin this term, Reynolds took it on as a challenge, intending to balance the show just right. "There were several elements I had to cut. With a flashy show like Rocky, the urge is to keep adding and adding." Reynolds explains "sometimes the hardest part of designing is knowing when to stop".

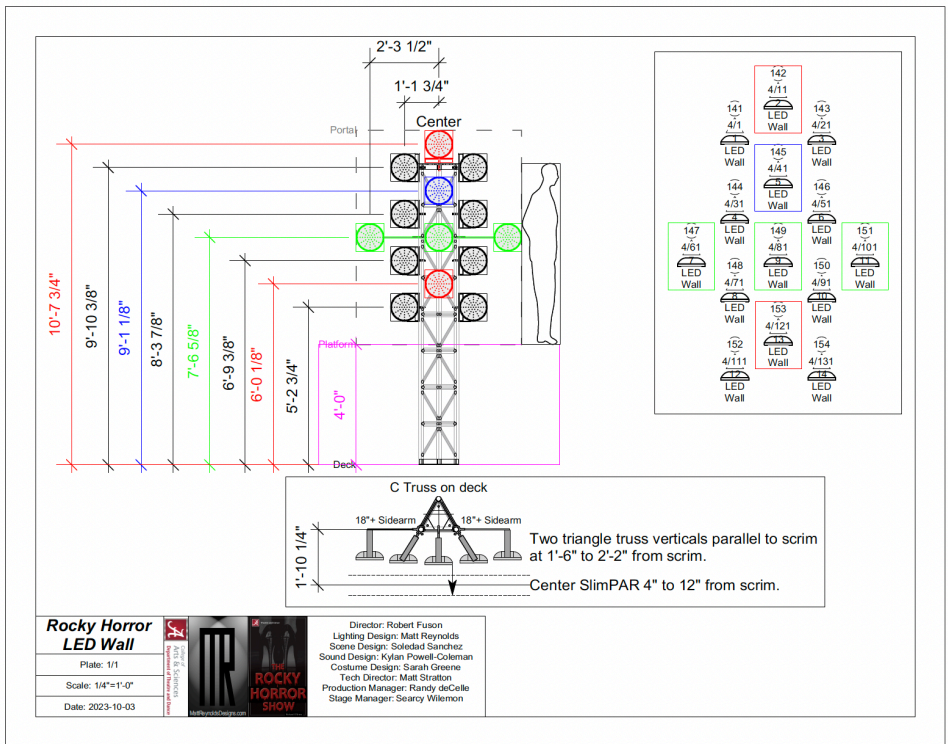
Reynolds talks about how he created the light cues and what parts of the script prompted him. "I mark through the script where the music punctuates, changes tone, or otherwise needs visual energy to match". He recalls Time Warp, which had over 90 light cues, "it felt like the chorus needed visual punctuation on every beat. "

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“Let’s! Do! The! Time! Warp Again!”

That line repeats thirteen times so that’s sixty-five cues right there” Reynolds also talks about his favorite light cues, like Eddie’s introduction. Another highlight of the show was playing with the LED’s in the back of the set.

Vectorworks Educational Version



The Rocky Horror Show

Matt Stratton explains more on the set design and what it takes to create a maximalist Frankfurter Castle on a budget. “Every production has its challenges and “hurdles,” and Rocky was no exception.” Matt Stratton uses Autocad to create the set of The Rocky Horror Show. Autocad, or CAD, is a computer software that is used to draft and design with 2D and 3D solids and surfaces. “(CAD) is how I communicate the scenic construction needs to the shop, enabling them to cut and assemble the materials needed to realize the elements seen on stage fully.” Stratton explains that to compliment the actors and the vision, multiple drafts and revisions are made to accommodate the vision of the Director and the blocking given to the actors. This means countless hours of time put into each design and look.



Will the scenic element be choreographed into the blocking of the performance?

Stratton bases his designs off of what pieces will influence the actions of the actors. This meant that drafting set pieces for the Frankenfurters castle and character entrances was a primary focus.

Matt Stratton and Matt Reynolds were crucial to the wild success of the UA





Theatre and Dance production of *The Rocky Horror Show*. Through organizing endless hours of graduate student shop time, under their instruction, the technical concept, design, and organizing of *The Rocky Horror Show* was a feat to behold.

“We are, first and foremost, storytellers” -Matt Reynolds



Alumni Spotlight



Deidre Graham graduated from The University of Alabama with a Bachelors of Arts in Dance. After graduation, she has worked in the industry on many artistic projects. In 2015, she danced alongside her former professor, Sarah Barry for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland. Deidre also had the chance to dance with Innergy, Inc., an Alabama—based dance company created by a UA dance alumnus, Tyra J. Ike Asogwa.

Deidre danced with Innergy, Inc. in Mobile, Alabama in a show to honor Gordon Parks. In 2018, Graham had the opportunity to perform at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Deidre Graham has performed across many performance mediums. From tours and music videos to music festivals such as Coachella, Bonnaroo, Afropunk. She has performed with various artists, such as Pharrell Williams, JohnnySwim, 2 Chainz, and BJ the Chicago Kid. She has also done television work with Roots (History Channel/A&E) and Jimmy Kimmel Live (ABC). Deidre Graham is also a member of the Black Angels Collective. This company's mission is to “promote positive self-image and to inspire women and girls to find their purpose through the medium of dance”. Graham performed and modeled for Pharrell's collection during Milan Fashion Week. She stated that this experience was “life changing” and “did not take it for granted”. Graham opened up about how UA's dance program has shaped her as an artist. She said that one of her professors stated “Make the familiar strange and the strange familiar”. This quote allowed her to submerge herself into the culture and values of the dance program. Deidre found a new level of creativity within herself with the help of UA's dance program. Deidre Graham touched on her gratitude to UA's dance department. Deidre learned essential prep skills and the importance of dedication. UA Theatre and Dance is incredibly proud of Deidre and her many accolades since graduation.

Roll Tide, Deidre Graham!

Diedre Graham



Scholarship Spotlights

Tyler Findley



Tyler Findley is a BA Theatre major with focuses in design and technology. Tyler has had the opportunity to work on design and scenery for our theatrical productions of Rocky Horror Show and Julius Caesar. His most recent credits are scenic designer, scenic charge, and properties director of UA's production of Julius Caesar. As a result of his scholarship opportunity, Tyler has been able to work with The Lighting Design Group, an award winning broadcast television lighting design firm. He is very thankful for this scholarship and the opportunities it has afforded him, and thanks his friends and family for their continued support in his pursuit of the arts.

Braxton Kent



Braxton Kent is a Junior BA Dance and BS Kinesiology Major on the Pre-Physical Therapy Track from Mobile, Alabama. Braxton is a recipient of the ABT Summer Scholarship and has gratefully been on scholarship since the Fall of 2022 during his sophomore year at UA. Braxton has been afforded the opportunity to perform for many UA Theatre and Dance Productions such as the pre-professional dance company concert Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre and even toured with the Dance Department to Mobile, Alabama to perform faculty-choreographed works! As a recipient of this scholarship, Braxton has been graced with the ability to

pursue other interests such as leadership within the dance community. Currently, Braxton is the Vice President of Dance Alabama! and represents UA Theatre and Dance as a Dance Ambassador. From aiding in the first student-produced concert on campus to enlightening incoming students of the wonderful opportunities UA Theatre and Dance has to offer! Braxton is extremely thankful for this generous scholarship from the Dance Department as well as the opportunities the department has provided him throughout his education.

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

Scholarship Contributions

Benefactor (\$20,000+)

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If this list is missing names or contains an error, please email theatre.dance@ua.edu



Theatre and Dance



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Back Cover - *Julius Caesar—Fall 2023*, Porfirio Solorzano