

# STAGES

Spring 2024



# A Note From the Chair



As the 2023-24 academic year comes to a close, we are excited to celebrate the end of another incredible season for The University of Alabama Department of Theatre and Dance. This season's three dance concerts and five theatre productions were an ambitious challenge, but our student actors, dancers, and technicians rose to the occasion. Our performances featured creative new takes on Greek and Shakespearean classics, genre-defying dance choreography, and creative interactive audience experiences. Thank you for taking the journey with us this year and for supporting our many undergraduate and graduate students.

We are eager to continue this momentum in the 2024-25 season with eight exciting new shows, including the world debut of *Huntsville*, a compelling examination of the depths of human motivation. Winner of the 2023 New Voices Theatre Festival, we are excited for Tuscaloosa audiences to see this incredible show's first-ever fully-produced production. We are also excited to present plays by two iconic American playwrights—Neil Simon (*The Odd Couple*) and Arthur Miller (*The Crucible*). For musical lovers, the 2024-25 season will be a treat with two fan-favorites: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* and *Cabaret*. In the Dance Theatre, the department will feature two themed Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre concerts. The first, *Verse*, will be an evening of spoken word and dance, produced in collaboration with The University of Alabama Department of English. This will be followed by *Syzygy*, an astrologically-named concert showcasing themes of conjunction and opposition. To round out the eight-show season, we will see a return of the *Emerging Choreographers' Showcase* which will feature the best choreographic work of our talented dance students.

The Smith Family Center for the Performing Arts broke ground last fall, which will provide new state-of-the-art facilities for our students, faculty, and staff. The department is excited to start this transition as soon as next year, with students having classes in the new building as soon as January 2025. This incredible change will pave the way for a full transition upon the completion of our new drama theatre, dance theatre and two new studio theatres in the years to come. All of this is possible thanks to the generous support of our patrons and donors, who provide the resources to create the best opportunities for our hardworking and deserving students.

Lastly, we would like to remember and pay tribute to the founding chair of our department, Ed Williams, who passed away this past March. Thanks to his never-ending commitment to students and arts education, he built the strong foundation that allowed UA Theatre and Dance to become one of the most successful performing arts programs in higher education.

Please know that your support, whether through attendance, applause, or financial contributions, is greatly appreciated and vital to the continued success of our theatre and dance programs. We are immensely grateful for the privilege of having you as a part of our extended artistic family.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dominic M. Yeager". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dominic Yeager, Department Chair  
Lucy and Steve Weinstein Endowed Chair

# New Voices Theatre Festival

This summer UA Theatre and Dance will host the second annual New Voices Theatre Festival, celebrating new works from diverse voices across our nation. During a summer residency at The University of Alabama, the New Voices Theatre Festival provides playwrights the opportunity to collaborate with directors and actors on a new piece that will culminate in a public reading. From the final two readings, department will choose a winner to mount as a full production in the Marian Gallaway Theatre during the upcoming season. This year the festival is taking place from July 29 through September 2. *Huntsville*, the 2023 New Voices Play Festival Winner, will kick off our 2024-25 season this September.

## John Mabey- Playwright of *Desert Oceans*



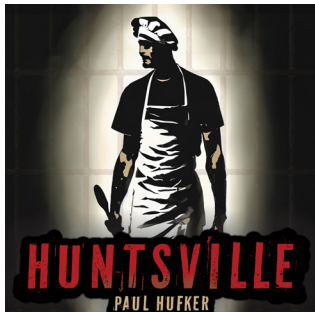
Mabey's plays and scholarly articles explore themes of sexual & gender identity and spirituality across the lifespan. Their work has been produced on stage across the United States and Europe, with their multi award-winning play *A Complicated Hope* published through Dramatic Publishing in 2024. John has been the recipient of the Getchell New Play Award, the Essential Theatre New Play Award, and the Panowski Playwriting Award, with work included in Smith & Kraus Best 10-Minute Plays, Best Women's Monologues, and Best Men's Monologues in each of the past 3 years. Their work as a playwright is connected to a long career in Psychology and Mental Health Counseling, infusing everything they learn about behavior, emotion and relationships into their plays.

## Allston James- Playwright of *I Knew King When He Was Nobody*



James graduated from Florida State University and went on to serve as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. He earned an M.A. from University of Georgia and taught English and Humanities at Monterey Peninsula College before retiring as Professor Emeritus. He and his wife currently live on California's Monterey Peninsula. His plays have been performed in New York, London, Glasgow and at festivals around the U.S. He is also a three-time recipient of the William Broyles Award for Distinguished Playwriting. His play selected for New Voices, *I Knew King When He Was Nobody*, was written as a workshop for Abingdon Theatre Company in New York.

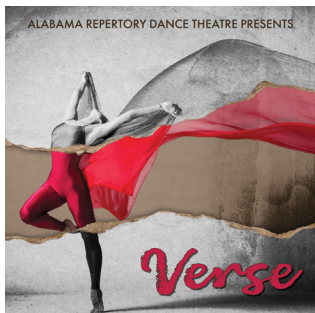
# 2024-2025 Season



## Huntsville

Allen Bales Theatre

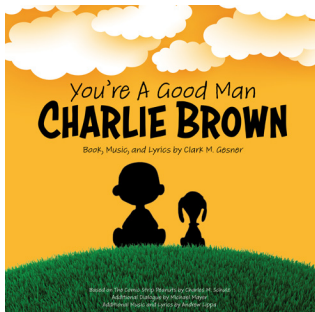
Winner of the New Voices Theatre Festival 2023, Paul Hufker's *Huntsville*, is a compelling examination of the depths of human motivation. When a determined social worker is brought into a prison in Huntsville, Texas to help inmates, she crosses paths with Jes, Mad and Chef. There the stories of these inmates unfold through a series of shocking twists and turns in a poignant look into how we are bound by the systems that surround us.



## ARDT Presents: Verse

The Dance Theatre

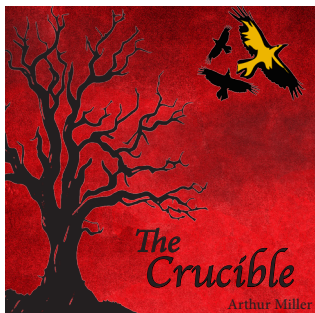
Step into a world where movement and language collide to bring together an eloquent evening of dance at *Verse*, a concert presented by Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre. Experience creativity in diverse forms through a series of works choreographed by accomplished guest artists and nationally acclaimed dance faculty with collaborators from UA's Department of English. Join us for a vibrant celebration of the human experience.



## You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

Allen Bales Theatre

Based on Charles Schulz's beloved comic strip, *Peanuts*, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* follows a day in the life of Charlie Brown and his friends Linus, Lucy and Snoopy as they approach life's big questions with humor and heart. Told through a series of vignettes, the heartwarming musical explores themes of friendship, self-discovery, and joys of childhood with toe-tapping tunes and loveable lyrics in a nostalgic spectacle for all ages!



## The Crucible

Marian Gallaway Theatre

Set against the backdrop of 17th-century Salem, Massachusetts, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is a relentlessly suspenseful and grippingly dramatic inquiry into the threshold between individual guilt and mass hysteria. This hauntingly moving tragedy unfolds as a Puritan town becomes embroiled in a witch trial around a group of young teenagers uncovering the power of words, paranoia, and consequences of false accusations.

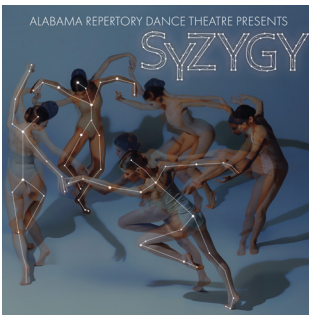




## The Odd Couple

Allen Bales Theatre

What could go wrong when complete opposites become roommates? When recently divorced Felix Ungar, a meticulous news writer moves in with Oscar Madison, a slovenly sportswriter, hilarity ensues as tensions rise. Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple* is a timeless tale about enduring friendship, resilience and human connection told through unforgettable characters and sidesplitting humor.



## ARDT Presents: Syzygy

The Dance Theatre

Immerse yourself in a cosmic cadence at *Syzygy*, an Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre concert featuring stunning performances choreographed by distinguished guest choreographers and our illustrious faculty. With every dip, leap, and sway, experience the captivating synergy between movement and music, igniting a dazzling spark that lights up the stage in a spellbinding spectacle the power of dance with us.



## Emerging Choreographers' Showcase

The Dance Theatre

Experience the vibrancy and dynamism in *Emerging Choreographers' Showcase*, an exhilarating dance concert that celebrates the next generation of dance artists! With a focus on artistic development and experimentation, each piece offers a glimpse into the diverse perspectives and creative voices that shape the future of dance. Prepare to be inspired by the passion, dedication, and originality in a captivating experience.



## Cabaret

Marian Gallaway Theatre

Willkommen! Bienvenue! Welcome! Step in to Kit Kat Club whose irresistible allure radiates decadence and desire. Here, the lives of Cliff Bradshaw and Sally Bowles will weave in a dream-like romance. But beneath the dazzling glamour lies a darker truth as the specter of fascism threatens to extinguish the freedoms enjoyed by its patrons. In a world on the brink of chaos, how will love endure as a beacon of hope?

# Remembering Our First Chair:

“Theatre is an ephemeral art that truly only survives in the memories of those who experience it first-hand.”

- Ed Williams, from his Foreword to *The Gallaway Theatre, A Pictorial History* (2007)

For those who experienced the art of Ed Williams – as his students, colleagues, friends, and audience members – the memories are not ephemeral. They are everlasting. Ed did more than transform the Department of Theatre and Dance at The University of Alabama. He began it. Thereafter he built a formidable reputation for UA Theatre & Dance, one strong enough to launch the department forward into a grand new home when the Smith Family Center For the Performing Arts opens soon. Though Ed will not be physically present for the opening celebration, he will be remembered with gratitude when a new curtain goes up.

In 1979, Dr. Doug Jones, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, appointed Dr. Ed Williams as Chairman of the newly formed Department of Theatre and Dance. Ed was fresh-off his successful direction of Edward Bond’s *Lear* at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., during the National College Theatre Festival of 1977. *Lear* received the Kennedy Center’s esteemed “Award of Excellence.”



Having completed doctoral studies in England in 1971, Ed returned to The University of Alabama, his alma mater, to teach and to direct theatre. When asked about how he became involved in theatre, Ed said, “I have always known the artistic sensibilities inside myself; theatre was the best medium for expressing it. I am too gregarious for the loneliness of other arts.”

Luther Edmond Williams (1943-2024) understood that the arts should not be a lonely experience. The arts must include everyone. When Ed was a student in 1966, UA Theatre produced *The Coop* featuring Andre Joseph, the first African-American to appear on a UA stage. Ed was part of the student team who walked with Andre to his dorm after every performance. Theatre students rallied around the young black actor after he received threats for daring to appear on a university stage.



*Grease, Summer Tide*, 2006

Besides Shakespeare, Ed was a passionate fan and devotee of the works of playwright Tennessee Williams who, coincidentally,

# Ed Williams

studied with Marian Gallaway at The University of Iowa in its writers' program. Ed emerged from retirement again in October 2018 to fulfill a longtime goal of directing Williams's play *Suddenly Last Summer* on the Gallaway stage. The show was Ed's last directorial achievement at The University of Alabama. The department's organization of a Southern Literary Trail traveling exhibit featuring the playwright's typewriter and one of his original paintings was underway during the run of *Suddenly Last Summer*.



*Suddenly Last Summer* Talkback, 2016

Before the exhibit's opening in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center, its organizers needed a temporary refuge for the safe storage of Tennessee Williams's painting. They asked Ed to keep it in his home. He readily obliged with a request only to share it on the stage with his cast and crew. Before the cast rehearsed in the shadow of the painting, carefully displayed onstage with an easel, Ed directed everyone in the Gallaway Theatre to admire the painting "with respect and deepest appreciation." The admiration continued for several days after Ed hung the painting on a den wall in the Sherwood Drive home he shared with his beloved wife Julia and their two daughters Taylor and Louisa.

Home, theatre, and family were the deepest appreciations of Ed Williams over his lifetime of compassion and contribution. Only days before his passing in March 2024, Ed was joined by his entire family including grandchildren Isabella Julia Imperiale and Williams James Imperiale to be inducted into the Southeastern Theatre Conference Hall of Fame during its Mobile, Alabama, convention. It was an appropriate salutation for Ed who once said during an interview,

"I feel a deep sense of commitment to Alabama. It is my home. My roots extend far back and run deep."

A POEM BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS, printed in memory of Ed Williams

## *Heavenly Grass*

My feet took a walk in heavenly grass.  
All day while the sky shone clear as glass.  
My feet took a walk in heavenly grass,  
But they still got an itch for heavenly grass.  
All night while the lonesome stars rolled past.  
Then my feet come down to walk on earth,  
And my mother cried when she give me birth.  
Now my feet walk far and my feet walk fast,  
But they still got an itch for heavenly grass.

# Scholarship Spotlights



**Sadie Johnston** is a junior Dance major with a minor in Entrepreneurship on the STEM/CREATE Path to the MBA from Morristown, TN. While at The University of Alabama, Sadie has performed works choreographed by peers, faculty, and guest artists in productions such as *Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre*, *Emerging Choreographers' Showcase*, *Dance Alabama!*, *Dance Collection*, and *#SICKMOVES!*.

When asked about what this scholarship has meant to her, Sadie says, “My scholarship has allowed me the freedom to worry less about the financial aspects of my education and granted me the opportunity to fully immerse myself in any and all performance opportunities UA Theatre and Dance has to offer. My favorite place to be is performing on stage, so I am incredibly grateful that this scholarship allowed me the flexibility to be involved in as many opportunities as possible.”



**Kylan Powell-Coleman** is a senior BFA Theatre major with a concentration in Design and Technical Production from Birmingham, AL. UA credits include sound design for *Small Mouth Sounds* and *The Rocky Horror Show* and assistant sound design for *The Colored Museum*, *Legally Blonde*, *Murder Ballad*, and *Love and Information*.

While Kylan reminisces on her time at UA, she says, “As my time with the Department of Theatre and Dance draws to a close, I reflect on all the meaningful experiences with a fantastic group of design tech graduate students and the professors who have not only molded me to be a better student, but also provided me with lifelong memories of the time we spent creating beautiful shows every semester.”



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# Alumni Spotlight



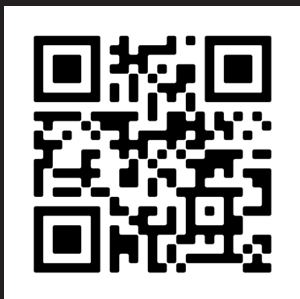
**Annalese Starzec** graduated from the Department of Theatre and Dance with a BFA in Theatre with a concentration in Musical Theatre in May of 2023. Since her departure, Starzec has been performing with Norwegian Creative Studios as a Production Cast, singing, dancing, and traveling the world.

With Norwegian, Starzec has visited over thirty different countries spanning four new continents, as well as both the Arctic and Antarctic Circle. One of her favorite shows with Norwegian Creative Holdings was *I Love Being Here With You*. The show has a big jazz band feel, coupled with the

exquisite music of Peggy Lee. Starzec talks about her experience at The University of Alabama, and how it prepared her for her cruise career. A couple things that have guided Starzec are professionalism, mental and physical health. “I know Stacy, Henry, Dr. Harrison, Dr. Martin and Alvon; all these professors harped on students for being professional in a workspace, — respecting your directors, respecting your classmates, respecting the space, anyone’s time that you’re dealing with. It’s incredibly important.” Being kind to the spaces and being grateful for the opportunities to perform makes the experience more fulfilling. She also talks about her journey and philosophies with mental and physical health. “Be cognizant of where you put your energy. Whether that means taking care of you mentally or physically, do what you need to do in order to show up as the best version of yourself.”

Wishing safe travels, and happiest Roll Tide to Anneliese Starzec!

## Miss a 2023-2024 Playbill? Check out the online Playbill Archive.



UA Broadway Cabaret  
ARDT—Fall 2023  
The Rocky Horror Show  
Julius Caesar

Oedpius  
ARDT—Spring 2024  
Love and Information  
Emerging Choreographers’ Showcase  
She Loves Me

# Scholarship Contributions

## Benefactor (\$20,000+)

Allen Bales Memorial Fund  
Dianne Baker  
Barbara S. Britton  
Ed Williams Endowed Scholarship  
in Theatre Education  
Edith Barnes Endowed  
Scholarship  
Lauren A. Wilson & Andy Fitch  
John Ross Theatrical Design  
Scholarship  
Robert Odus and Mary Pettus  
Wilson Endowed Scholarship  
T. Earle & Francis Johnson Fund

## Silver (\$100+)

Preston Adair  
Madeline Adams  
Helena Bain  
Wendy Bee  
Beverly & Donald J.  
Benson  
Larry J. Bowen  
Ian Brown & Nancy  
Lambert-Brown  
Dr. Steven Bunker  
Michelle Markey  
Butler  
Frank Caprio  
Christine Dietsch  
Barbara Durrence  
Greg Foster  
Anne Game  
William Gantt  
Dr. Sharony Greene  
& Dr. John F. Beeler  
Mr. Dale Hall II  
Charlie & Stacey  
Hall  
Jim Hammond  
Luvada Harrison  
T. Allen Henry  
Nita & Scott  
Hestevold  
Allison Hetzel  
Laura & Thomas E.  
Hunter  
Jennifer Horne &  
Don Noble  
Garlette & T'Challa

## Bronze (\$25)

Amanda Akridge  
Patricia Alfin  
Maximiliano  
Cabrerera Arealvo  
Patrice Arnold  
Paula Berry  
Kelly Bond  
Steve Borrelli  
Mr. Thomas B.  
Breland Jr.  
Berney Bridges  
Heather Briggs  
Derrick Brown  
Emma Brown  
Cindy Calhoun  
Corinne Calhoun  
Jerome Cargill  
Shelly Carr  
Terrie Causey  
Beth Chapman  
Sarah Chappell  
Zachary  
Colantrello  
Harper Coleman  
Sandra B.  
Connor  
Danielle Correro  
Claire Craig  
Ellie Craven  
Christine  
Crowther  
Gabrielle  
Cruz-Uribe  
Stephane Curtis  
Anita Daily  
Emma Dean  
Tammy Dean  
Shaefter Diebolt  
Dr. Rona J.  
Donahoe  
Tammy Dran  
Emma Dykes  
Mary Easley  
Dawson Estes  
Cody Floyd  
Alison George  
Mr. Todd Gray  
Lana Hagan  
Mary Halpin  
Austin Hanover  
Ned Hart  
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## Diamond (\$5,000+)

Linda L. & Robert Shumilas

## Platinum (\$1,000+)

Edith D. Barnes  
Mr and Mrs. James E.  
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Diane & William C. Teague  
Julia & Ed Williams  
Stacy K. Young

## Gold (\$500+)

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Mary & Bill Battle  
Joan Barth & David Boles  
John J. Burke Jr. & Mary K. Burke  
Linda Dobbins Dance  
Erin Dewillis (for student group)  
Lee Freeman  
Carole C. Guy  
Mr. & Mrs. James C. Hailey  
(parents of Eric M. Hailey)  
Lori Hunt & Stephen Hunt  
Fran & Jack Jecen  
Dr. & Mrs. Michael J. Mendle  
Cindy Hood-Siegal

D. Jackson  
Joanna Jacobs  
Renee Johnson  
Karen Julian  
Maureen &  
Lawrence Kohl  
Leslie T. Kleine  
April Landin  
Grace Lee  
Steve & Susan  
Lindamood  
Linda & John  
Lochman  
LeNá P. & Lyndell T.  
McDonald  
Camille Mendle (in  
loving memory  
of Anne Lever)  
James P. Merrill  
Barbara Millwee  
Angie Murdock  
Nichole O'Brien  
Ellen Odom  
Mrs. Linda & Terry  
Olivet  
Lisa Pawloski  
Jill & Michael  
Picone  
Jane Rasco  
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Janet & Norvin  
Richards  
Kristen A. Rowse  
Jeramie L. Simmons

Laura Smith  
Patricia & Richard  
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Marissa Swanner  
Alice Taylor  
Tina & Ernie  
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Erika G. Walker  
Jennifer Weske  
Michelle & Thomas  
H. Williams  
Robert Wright  
Wesley A. Young

Matthew Mclendon  
Mary Meares  
Amanda Medlin  
Ann Meeker  
Camille Mendle  
Jerry Mims  
Nancy R.  
Minkler  
Tammy Mixon  
Charolotte  
Mustard  
Teagan  
Nabity-Grover  
Matthew Nash  
Marie Nearing  
Ana Nettles  
Arie Nettles  
Gary Pacos  
Laura Pacos  
Maria Pacos  
Kim Palm  
Cassandra Pierce  
Morgan Potts  
Dalton Pridmore  
Stephanie Puffer  
George Rable  
John E. Reilly  
Lauren  
Richardson  
Liz Richardson  
Liz Savage  
Heather  
Schambeau  
Kelly Schoger  
James M. Schor  
Mary Sealy  
Craig Shwery  
Barbara Smith  
Harrison Smith  
Doug Starzec  
Dwight Stewart  
Skye Travis  
Margaret Turner  
Julie Vaughn  
Charles  
Wallwork  
Sandra Webb  
Tara Williams  
Ethan Wilson  
Victoria Yeager

If this list is missing names or contains an error, please email [theatre.dance@ua.edu](mailto:theatre.dance@ua.edu)

# Cerebral Palsy Engagement Workshop

In the Spring of 2020, when the world began to shut down due to COVID-19, many dancers were trying to find outlets to continue their art. Dr. Fen Kennedy, Assistant Professor of Dance, sought to work with United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA). Using Zoom as a way to connect, Dr. Kennedy led classes for students in UCPWA and UA dancers would assist them in teaching different forms of dance. Once students returned to back campus that fall Hannah Hall, now third-year MFA/MBA candidate in Theatre with a concentration in arts management, became the student

director and built, not only a curriculum for these classes, but an in-personal relationship with UCPWA.



For the last two years Hall has created a system in which the UCPWA students come to Fresh Foods dance studio and learn a new form of dance each Friday. Each class begins with a teaser into the dance style while the next 45 minutes are dedicated to learning a combination in that style. As the program has grown, UA Theatre and Dance has given the workshop funding to buy props for the students to use while dancing such as scarves and twirlers. When asked about

the best part of this workshop, Hall says, “These classes are a way for people with cerebral palsy to have a creative outlet. Every movement can be adaptable to all; they can move in their wheelchair, on the floor, or standing up.” Along with their regular class each week, at the end of the semester there is a party where the students and volunteers let loose and celebrate!

Starting this fall, Katie Crews, sophomore double major in Communicative Disorders & Dance, will be the next student director. When asked what she was most excited for going into the fall, she said, “Having the opportunity to build these genuine friendships with the dancers brings so much joy to the class and allows our volunteers to understand the bigger purpose in life, pouring into others.”

We cannot wait to see the work that these dancers continue to do!





Theatre and Dance

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Front Cover - *Julius Caesar*, Porfirio Solorzano

Back Cover - *ARDT—Spring 2024*, Porfirio Solorzano