



Center Stage

Newsletter of the UW Dept. of Theatre & Dance

Winter 2020

VIRTUALLY YOURS...

Greetings from the UW Department of Theatre and Dance!

On behalf of all our faculty, staff, and students, and in especially in this time, we wish you a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season.

2020 has been anything but ordinary for us all, from the reality of the burgeoning COVID19 pandemic and its impact on the University of Wyoming and the performing arts and society in general, to changes in our faculty and leadership, to transitioning our academic and professional lives and creative work to remote settings.

Our early spring semester 2020 now seems remarkable in its normalcy. We enjoyed in-person classes, competing and learning at KCACTF, ACDF, and USITT, and presenting EURYDICE and SPRING TO DANCE to live audiences. But the University went online in March at spring break, just as our dance show closed and students were returning from festivals.


We were forced to cancel the last show of the season, THE REALISTIC JONESES, which had already been cast, and was in the beginning stages of production. This was an especially keen loss, as the show was the last to be costumed by **Lee Hodgson**, who retired in May (see page 3) and also was to be directed by **Leigh Selting**, who stepped down as department chair in January to take on the role of associate dean in the Honors College (see page 5). Serving now

as department chair is Margaret Wilson, who has been a steady hand at the wheel during this exceptional year.

The pandemic necessitated a reboot of how we teach and present theatre and dance. In some ways, the immediacy and intimacy of these disciplines cannot be captured ideally in a virtual environment. But as necessity has provided us with the time and opportunity to investigate the possibilities inherent in remote programming, we have learned a great deal, and have made some discoveries that have enhanced our production capabilities and stretched our imaginations.

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 (307) 766 - 5100

 jchapman@uwyo.edu

 uwyo.edu/thd



College of Arts and Sciences
Department of
Theatre and Dance

Classes remained online through the summer, and so we had to adapt our summer theatre and dance season, first addressing even the most basic question of streaming rights versus in person production rights and then technical issues and capacity.

Scott Tedmon-Jones, artistic director for summer, consulted early with others in the industry struggling to produce live theatre in a virtual space. With everyone from kindergartners to corporate executives meeting on Zoom, this approach seemed feasible for company members to communicate, but less than ideal in providing real-time interactions between performers. Tedmon-Jones solicited advice from Pixel Playhouse in particular, which had livestreamed a production of Oscar Wilde's *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST* early on in the pandemic.

The season was reduced to one show, Yasmina's Reza's comedy *GOD OF CARNAGE* for which streaming rights could be readily secured. The technical company, headed by faculty member **Jason Banks**, settled on using OBS Studio (Open Broadcaster Software), a media switcher program that combines live video and audio elements to create a program composition. OBS allowed Banks and his team to create various scenes that they used to move through the narrative of the play.

This approach was fine-tuned for the scaled-down and virtual Snowy Range Rummer Dance Festival, which presented several, free virtual classes a day over three days to dancers and teachers in mid-July.

In anticipation of the fall semester, the faculty changed the production season, dropping a large-cast musical, while **William Missouri Downs** wrote a comedy for Zoom addressing the current moment, *ASKING STRANGERS THE MEANING OF LIFE*. The production ran in late September and early October nearly seamlessly, thanks to the technological groundwork laid by Tedmon-Jones and Banks. The season will continue with "29," a virtually

produced musical song cycle about the vagaries of young adulthood, with book, lyrics, and music by Gaby Alter and Tommy Newman, and directed by **Seán Warren Stone** and choreographed by **Cat Kamrath**. The production screens in January 2021, so watch for details on how to access the show!

Much is still uncertain about our three remaining spring 2021 productions, as UW is still in the process of finalizing and approving the spring semester schedule. Thus far, in February 2021 we are committed to presenting *SHE KILLS MONSTERS: VIRTUAL REALMS*, Qui Nguyen's comedic romp into the world of fantasy role-playing games, newly adapted for online screening and directed by **Landee Lockhart**. A dance rendition of *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* (see page 6), hopefully performed live but likely screened to audiences, will follow in March thanks to the perseverance and diligence of choreographer **Marsha Knight** and our design and technical faculty. UW is projected to be online after the first week of April, but as this decision is pending, our last production of the season, *AS YOU LIKE IT*, directed by **Patrick Konesko**, is still in the development stage. It may perhaps be presented as a Foley-style radio show.

We are grateful in this uncertain time to have the dedicated support of our patrons and alumni. We were thrilled during the recent UW Giving Day campaign to not only receive several thousand dollars in support of our programs, but also a direct donation of a new washer and dryer from a group of alumni (see page 4).

We are hopeful for the upcoming year and the opportunities it will bring to serve our students and connect with our audiences. While campus is still not open to the general public, we invite you to connect with any or all of us using the means available, by phone, text, email, or social media.

We would love to hear from you!



Hazel Homer Wambeam with her camera setup



The dance ensemble rehearsing for "29."

LEE HODGSON RETIRES

After a more than 30-year career at the University of Wyoming, costume designer extraordinaire and full professor Lee Hodgson retired in spring 2020.

Originally an undergraduate at UW studying commercial art and elementary education, by the end of his UW education, Hodgson had found his niche in theater, which was only natural, given his family background.

“My dad was an English teacher who also directed plays,” said Hodgson. “My mom did costumes and makeup for them, so we were always there and the high school kids were great to us. It was very romantic and very fun.”

After student teaching in Casper, Hodgson took a teaching job in Ogallala, NE.

“I loved my kids—I really did,” said Hodgson. “I loved being with them and teaching them, but I did not like the way my colleagues treated the music and theatre kids.”

Hodgson had taught for just one year when E.C. Reynolds, former Theatre and Dance department chair, asked him to fill in for faculty member Charlie Parker, who was taking a sabbatical. Reynolds encouraged him to enroll in the master’s program while he ran the costume shop and then subsequently the box office.

But an MA did not open up the professional opportunities Hodgson imagined, and he found himself relegated to student teaching and giving art lessons.

Not to be deterred, Hodgson enrolled in graduate studies with the California Institute of the Arts in an accelerated one-year MFA program. Upon graduation, he taught at Lansing Community College in Michigan for a year, working for an hourly wage.

All the while, Hodgson had been working as a costumer at Colorado Shakespeare in the summers, where he continued to hone his skills and where he met David Bussey, who was the costume designer at The University of Colorado. Bussey offered Hodgson a job as the costume director at CU, and he served in that position for three years, eventually being offered the opportunity to design for main stage shows.

In 1987, a temporary appointment as costume designer unexpectedly opened up at UW, and Hodgson was tapped on the shoulder by then chair Dr. Sonny Bahs to apply for the position.

“I took the job, never thinking that I would stay here for my entire career,” said Hodgson. But a tenure-track position soon opened up, and Hodgson was hired as the permanent faculty costume designer.

In 1990, Hodgson applied for membership in the United Scenic Artists Local 829 based on his portfolio and was accepted. The competition for membership is extremely intense and only a handful of artists are allowed into the union each year from across the country; few professors from universities are ever chosen.



Lee at a fitting for "LOVE'S LABOURS' LOST."



Lee in the director's chair.



Our new costume storage, designed by Lee.



A rendering by Lee for THE NUTCRACKER.





Hodgson credits his time at UW for much of his success.

“The education that I received at Wyoming was monumentally superior to anything that I was seeing from students across the country,” said Hodgson.

“In terms of general knowledge of theatre, other programs were lacking, and I was from a liberal arts background, so my knowledge of theatre was

superior. That’s why I am still staunchly supportive of a good solid background in theatre from this program.”

Hodgson first show at UW was AMADEUS, directed by department chair Bahs. Since that time, he has designed for dozens of stage plays, musicals, operas, and dance concerts. Favorites from over the years include both productions of Shakespeare’s TWELFTH NIGHT; the operas GIANNI SCHICCHI and THE MEDIUM; the 2010 production of HAMLET featuring Pete Simpson, Jr., in the titular role and

Pete K. Simpson, Sr., as the Ghost of Hamlet’s father; and Jennifer Deckert’s full-length original ballet, DRACULA.

Hodgson also directed for the department, most recently 2019’s comedy of manners “Present Laughter,” as well as the student-written piece “Local Celebrities,” which was selected to be performed at the Region VII Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in 2001.

Hodson’s legacy at UW will continue in the many beautifully-constructed pieces he has designed and created, including numerous pieces for UW’s production of “The Nutcracker,” as well as in the meticulously organized and extensive costume collection he calls his “pride and joy.”

But he considers his greatest professional accomplishment to be students.

“The other part of my legacy is the students I’ve encountered, all of the students, but especially those stand-outs who have gone on to represent the department and the University beautifully,” said Hodgson.

“All of these kids who now have these incredible careers and had their start here...I was able to be part of that.”

ALUMNI GIFTS & UW GIVING DAY

By Margaret Wilson

UW Theatre & Dance has a new washing machine!

We are overwhelmed with gratitude, not only to our alumni, Jason and Jennefer Pasqua and Brandon and Callie Taylor, for their generosity, but also to Home Depot for the matching funds that provided us with this much needed appliance for our Costume Shop.

Our original request to alumni was to participate in UW Giving Day from noon to noon, November 12-13. We provided a list of things that donor support can provide for the department, including a new washing machine, as our current one was only washing the floor.

We had many faithful alumni and patrons participate, including giving early to claim matching funds from specific incentives.

When Jason contacted us to let us know he and Jennefer had pooled money with the Taylors and had it matched, it was the best story from our campaign by far!

I think I have shared the story of how “the Taylor family and the Pasqua family pooled their resources and Home Depot matched their amount to provide the department with a new washing machine!” to everyone from the College of Arts and Sciences dean’s office to the Foundation to our alumni.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Department of Theatre and Dance and made UW Giving Day such a success! We are truly thankful.



Jason Pasqua unloads the new washing machine.



SELTING MOVES TO HONORS COLLEGE

UW Theatre & Dance had the bittersweet task of wishing Department Head Leigh Selting a fond farewell this past January when he took a position with the UW Honors College as Associate Dean.

Those of us who know Leigh know him as an actor's actor, accomplished director, and upbeat professional. And he is an Equity actor, free-lance Director, SDC (Stage Directors & Choreographers, Associate Member), and Equity stage manager, and has worked both on and off Broadway and in various theatres around the country. But he has contributed so much more over his 31-year tenure with the department.

Leigh joined the UW Theatre & Dance faculty in 1989, and moved up through the academic ranks quickly, achieving full professor in 1999. He served as Acting Department Head in 2000, taking on the role permanently in 2007, a role in which he would serve for the next 13 years. He was an assistant director of the Honors program in 2015-16.

During his time at UW Theatre & Dance, Leigh oversaw tremendous growth in the academic and artistic components of the program, drove the vision for the BCPA building expansion, a multi-year project that was completed in 2015, and established UW as an outstanding undergraduate program in academic theatre.

Leigh helped to expand course offerings to establish the BFA degree in performance, including Acting for the Camera, Auditioning/Professional Issues, Stage Combat, and Acting Shakespeare. He has prepared generations of actors for the professional world and graduate school, investing in their growth and careers both during their studies and long after. He continues to find opportunities to hone his craft as an actor, which in turn informs his directing.

Leigh has directed over 40 productions at UW, from dramas to comedies to new works, and has a knack for directing Shakespeare and musicals. He has established a strong reputation for UW Theatre & Dance productions, not only during the academic year, but also for the summer season, for which he served as artistic director for many years.

Leigh has been awarded Meritorious Achievement in Directing from the Region VII Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) nearly every year. His productions of *MARVIN'S ROOM*, *DEAD WHITE MALES*, and *FREQUENCY 98.6* were selected as Region VII finalists.

Leigh has a long record of directing and working professionally throughout the region and nation and is especially interested in supporting the development of new plays. He has stage-managed six works at the Public Theatre in this capacity, as well as receiving six invitations as an actor for the Kennedy Center's National New Play Network. He has twice served in similar roles for the New Harmony Project.

Leigh is dedicated educator, and his work has been recognized for Extraordinary Merit in Research, Teaching and Advising. He has received the Ellbogen award for Meritorious Classroom teaching, a Seibold professorship, and two Flittie Sabbatical awards. Leigh, along with Marsha Knight, has led the London Semester twice, and regularly teaches for the Shakespeare in England and Italy program.

He has served as a long-time member of KCACTF, and as Region VII Chair and on the National KCACTF Executive Committee as Member-at-Large. He was selected as a participant in the 25th Anniversary KCACTF Symposium at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and was a proud student of Uta Hagen. A former member of the board of directors for the Rocky Mountain Theatre Association (RMTA), Leigh received their Presidents Award for outstanding and dedicated service.

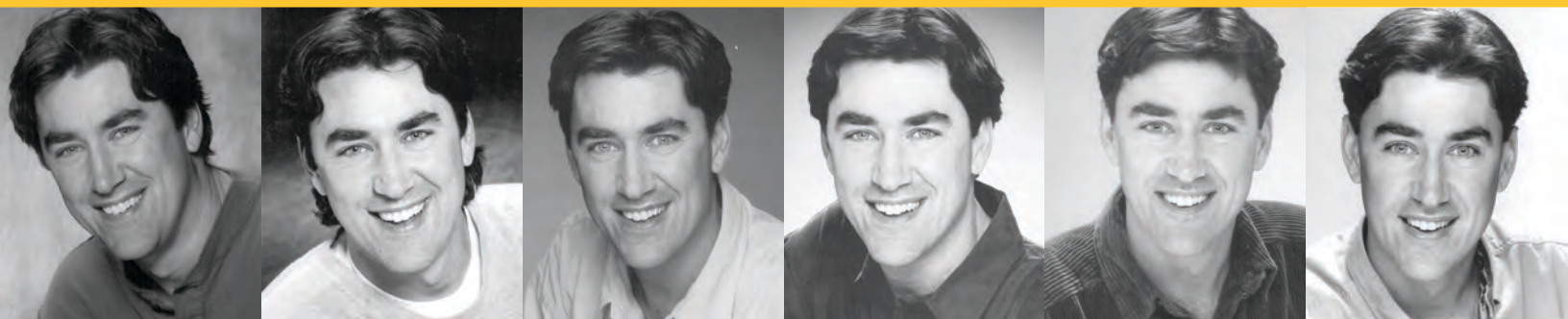
And Leigh has twice received the Medallion of Excellence from the Kennedy Center, a distinction that very few in the nation share.

Leigh has been a tireless advocate for UW Theatre & Dance, developing lasting relationships with donors, patrons, and alumni. A former Dean of Arts and Sciences described him as the "model department head" for his vision of where he wanted the Department to go, and the energy and drive he invested to make that happen. Leigh helps students and colleagues make professional connections and launch and grow their careers. And, in some cases, this has had a reciprocal effect, as Leigh is able to bring in alumni with successful careers to perform and interact with our students.

Leigh will be greatly missed, but we hope not too much!

Even in his new capacity as Associate Dean, we hope that he will join us again from time to time to direct and to share his good humor and excitement for creative work.

All the best to you, Leigh, in your new endeavors!



DANCE TRAINING DURING A PANDEMIC, MIDSUMMER DREAMS (SOCIALLY DISTANCED), AND MAINTAINING PROTOCOLS

By Marsha Knight

All four UW Theatre & Dance dance faculty have worked very hard to preserve a sense of forward gain and optimism since stages and studios vacated, audiences were no more, and dance training took a very new direction in delivery beginning in March 2020.

As we headed home from our annual ACDA Northwest Conference, we learned that the shift to online was before us, and that it would be some time before we were in the studio together. We all unloaded our things from the University bus, got in our cars, and drove away for spring break. We would not reconvene in the studio until late September.

I learned to teach ballet technique via Zoom and tried several strategies to best advantage delivery of material. I viewed dancers taking classes in garages, basements, kitchens, bedrooms, on decks, in hotel rooms, in a neighborhood firehouse and, later, in their dorm rooms. Substitute barres were fashioned from kitchen countertops, bedposts, bunkbeds, banisters, sofa and chair backs, and doorknobs. I got to know their home pets well, as they walked over laptop keyboards, were startled by *petit allegro* jumps, or just hung out during class.

With the phased start of the Fall semester, I did not see our dance majors until fully five weeks had passed. When we were finally back in the studio, the first thing shared was happiness and deep appreciation to be back together in our taken-too-for-granted studios. But I also noticed that, during the months of at-home training this fall, the dancers had focused on owning and committing to their training experience. Their mindset was more focused and pragmatic than it had been during spring. They came back in week six in good form and were ready.

We accomplished a great deal over the next seven weeks of face-to-face training, late September through mid-November—blink and it was done. During those seven weeks, the protocols of 10' between dancers, strict masking, and rigorous studio cleaning were maintained.

Original plans for a traditional Spring '21 production of Mendelssohn's *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* were looking impossible, and it became apparent that if we were to approach taking this work on, it needed a more elastic treatment. I am quite serious about how impressive invention is around here when it comes to production. Colleagues have reinvented live-streamed delivery and design in clever and graceful ways—rather wonderful to witness during the summer months and through fall (and celebrated appropriately in other sections of this newsletter).



A scene from the 2008 UW production of *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*.

While the premise of *MIDSUMMER* is built on woodland fairies and young lovers, how to manage distancing while storytelling and masking while expressing came to me as a creative challenge and an artistic opportunity. For this spring's production, the creative team endeavors to present *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (SOCIALLY DISTANCED)*, integrating responsible social distancing and mask-wearing as prime tenants for choreographic and theatrical design invention. Examples include masks that will serve as the "design center" for the dancer's costume ornamentation, and props such as garlands, vines, and netting designed to support the 10' requisite distance between cast members.

A \$4,000 research grant from the College of Arts and Sciences was awarded to support and bolster realization of these design elements. Scenic designer Scott Tedmon-Jones states that

"While the pandemic is challenging us as artists, we look forward to continuing to push forward, to create unique worlds, and to further develop our crafts while supporting and training the next generation of artists."

Auditions and casting have taken place, as well as five nights of rehearsals prior to our return several weeks ago to online instruction. Again, elastic expectations involve realizing that how this piece will eventually be realized is "but a Dream," but the process remains gratifying and the pursuit ever-important.

Best wishes to all for your health and happiness.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW THEATRE & DANCE FACULTY!

JENNY FOLDENAUER joins us this fall as Assistant Professor, Costume Design & Costume Shop Director. She is excited to be a part of the UW Theatre and Dance Faculty, after living in Los Angeles for the last 13 years working in film, tv, and theatre. She received her Bachelors of Science degree in Design with a Chicano Studies Minor at the University of California, Davis, and her MFA in Theatre Production with a focus on Costume Design from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). She is a member of the IATSE Motion Picture Costumers union, Local 705 in Los Angeles.



Jenny has worked in various professional capacities in New York, Colorado, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Mexico. She designs costumes for theater, film, music videos, puppetry and dance. She has assisted and Costume/Wardrobe supervised numerous LA based productions, and was previously a NTT Assistant Professor and Costume Shop Manager at Occidental College and a visiting lecturer at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and Earlham College.

JULIANA FREUDE joins us this fall as Assistant Lecturer, Dance. In spring 2020, she officially retired after celebrating eleven seasons with NEOS Dance Theatre, during which time she also earned her Master of Fine Arts in Dance, Design and Production: Creative Practice from Saint Mary's College of California. She is a native of Akron, Ohio, where she trained for 12 years at The University of Akron Dance Institute. She has appeared with The University of Akron Repertory Dance Company in many roles including as a soloist, and was a principle dancer with Cleveland San Jose Ballet. At the age of 17, she understudied with the Ohio Ballet in RITE OF SPRING and performed with the company in DRACULA. She performed with Nashville Ballet as a trainee in THE NUTCRACKER and other ballets, and was also an apprentice with the Charleston



Ballet Theatre, where she performed original works, as well as a variety of works from Broadway and Bob Fosse. She has served as an educator in pre-professional dance performing arts schools. She has also worked with the Stuart Pimsler Dance and Theatre Company and the Connecticut Ballet, where she performed for over 10 years in principle roles. While dancing with Ohio Dance Theatre, she was also a company member with NEOS Dance Theatre.

CAT KAMRATH joined the Theatre + Dance faculty in Fall 2019 after spending six years teaching and creating in Salt Lake City. Since arriving, her teaching has focused primarily on jazz and modern dance technique, dance composition, musical theatre dance, and pedagogy. Outside of the university, Cat is the artistic director of project-based company, Cat + Fish Dances, in Salt Lake City. After a busy 2019 of producing their own show and touring to festivals throughout Utah and Nevada, they took a break from creating in 2020. Cat is hopeful to produce a new work with the company in August 2021! When not teaching, creating, or planning, Cat enjoys knitting (rectangular or square items only), baking, and watching cooking competition shows. She's known for her mismatched socks and always expanding earring collection. Her favorite role is being Auntie Cat to her niece, Pippa, and soon-to-be born nephew.



ANDREW LIA is the new production manager for UW Theatre & Dance. Before coming to UW in fall 2020, Andrew was active in the Los Angeles theatre community as a Production Manager, Stage Manager, and Lighting Designer, working since 2011 working with companies such as Center Theatre Group, The Speakeasy Society, East West Players, Circle

X Theatre Company, Ghost Road Company, and as well as at educational institutions including Oxy Arts, The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute, American Musical & Dramatic Academy, and Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre. Andrew also has worked as a Project Manager for Tait Towers, where he oversaw the installation of Tait's automation elements for Shanghai Disneyland, Fantasmic 2.0!!, and Facebook's MPK21 Event Space. A Chicago native, Andrew holds a BA from Augustana College and an MFA from CalArts.

ALUMNI NEWS

SUTTON ANKER, BFA, '13, Dance Science, is moving into her second year as the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science's (IADMS) Programming and Marketing Specialist. Her role is to assist teams and volunteers across the organization to plan, coordinate, and implement successful conference programming and marketing campaigns. In 2020, Sutton helped produce the iConference, IADMS's first ever virtual conference and is looking forward to the Denver conference in fall of 2021.



Along with her role at IADMS, Sutton teaches Pilates and is a Safe in Dance International Registered Provider sharing resources and knowledge to the local dance community. Sutton's experiences during her time in the Theatre and Dance department has proven to be invaluable in her current roles. From performances to technique class to participating in various research studies Sutton owes much of her success to participate and navigate in the world of dance medicine and science to the incredible professors and experiences provided by the department.

BRAD BOND, BTD, BA Spanish, '88, MA Spanish, '91, currently lives in Scottsdale, AZ. Brad says: "I am loving my life in the desert, 9 years removed from the hustle and bustle of Manhattan. Of course I will have to return when my musical *CELESTINA* moves to Broadway--God willing! After decades of honing and polishing, my life's work is ready to go! This past year I have been enjoying interacting with academics all over the world who dedicate their lives to the study of *La Celestina*--the 1499 version, originally called "The Tragicomedy of Calisto and Melibea." (100 years later Shakespeare based *Romeo and Juliet* on it.) My musical adaptation has been included in an online anthology of all things *Celestina* dating back to the middle ages--paintings, sculptures, plays, ballets, operas. My posts can be found at <http://www.celestinavisual.org/items/show/3041>. [Find more about *CELESTINA* at celestinamusical.com] In June, I was the keynote speaker at a global *Celestina* conference--which was supposed to be in New York City, but ended up on-line due to covid. The Spanish literary world is excited to have a modern English vehicle for one of the 3 most important works ever written in Spanish. And it features by far the most important female character in all of Spanish literature. *Celestina* is the evil old lady matchmaker that brings the lovers together. She is known as the "puta vieja." Or old slut!



It is going to be a spectacular star vehicle for an actress of a certain age. I have a couple of dream divas in mind." You can reach Brad at: 917-915-6083 or mrbab007@aol.com.

EMMETT BUHMANN, BFA, '02, Technical Director/Lighting '02, faculty member with the Bridgewater State University Department of Theatre in Bridgewater, MA, a small but very active department. Emmett teaches Lighting for Dance, Lighting Design for Theatre, Stagecraft, Play Analysis for Production, Theatre Appreciation, and a range of hands-on practicum offerings. He builds and installs sets for five Theatre department shows annually, as well as designs lights/mentors student designers for seven Theatre and Dance department productions. During summer, he works with an "Arts for Teens" program where a small group of teachers and about 25-30 students stage a full musical in just over 2 weeks. Emmett has begun long-term plans to enhance the university's design/technology offerings, such as the addition of a theatrical design studio to function as a light, sound, projection, and costume technologies lab, and general design/technology classroom. Emmett will be on sabbatical in Spring 2021 semester, during which time he hopes to work on remote/virtual lighting design education techniques and develop enhanced workflows within the department to improve efficiency and student engagement. Emmett also serves as the co-chair of the Region I KCACTF Design, Technology, & Management board. Emmett says: "One of my points of light is remembering when my UW mentor Professor Larry Hazlett wore the TD and Lighting hats in the late 1990's, and knowing that he was able to handle that enormous job gives me strength. On a personal level, my wife (UW Alum Heather Welch '05) and our daughter (13 year old Hannah) have truly found a home here. Heather is continuing her Ph.D. studies while teaching theatre at Bridgewater State University, and Hannah has grown into a musical theatre performer, historian, and math whiz. Kids."



BECKY CAGNEY, BFA, '10, was let go from her job in summer 2020 due to the impact of COVID19 on the performing arts industry. Becky says: "They tried to keep us, but ultimately it was a no go. So I decided to go back to school to become an ASL Interpreter. I just finished the first semester. Not sure where I want to go with it, but I may still want to do things in theatre."

As of winter 2019, **JAMES CHESTNUT**, BFA, '13, was living in his hometown of Denver, CO, with his partner Alex, with whom he often hikes and travels. James says: "I'm happy to report that I've been performing consistently in a variety of ways over these years. Soon after I moved back to Denver, I was in production of *LES MISÉRABLES* in Concert (ensemble) and *Into the Woods* (as Jack) with the theatre company The Curtain Playhouse. I was also in the ensemble of *MACK AND MABLE* with Vintage Theatre Productions, and performed the role of *CHRISTINA* in *K*, an original play about the club kids of New York, with Pandemic Collective. For a couple years I was a member of an acapella group called The High Altitudes...By far, the majority of my time on stage has been as my drag alter ego Madison Absaroka! Drag has captured my imagination for a long time...Soon after I moved back to Denver I met my dear friend Ammon Swofford, who

is also my drag sister Alice Glamoure. Ammon went to school for theatre and dance in Durango, CO, and he really helped bring Madison to life. Together, Alice and I created our drag troupe, the Haus of FishCandy. With the Haus, we have produced, hosted, and performed in shows all over CO at many venues, bars, universities, and pride festivals.

Two of my favorite shows we have done together are Boulder Pride Festival, where our troupe was the headline entertainer group from 2015-2017, and a show I produced at The Clocktower Cabaret called ROCK FOR OUR RIGHTS, a sold-out fundraiser that benefited the ACLU and the Sierra Club...I love drag and what we do! I think as a performer

it is really good to find your tribe and your artistic home, and for me that truly is drag. As a performance art is all about freedom of expression, pushing gender boundaries, providing great entertainment, telling a story that makes people think, and giving the audience something unexpected. Drag also utilizes all of my theatre skills, including dance, makeup, costuming, singing, and acting. Yay for putting my degree to work!"



The cast of ROCK FOR OUR RIGHTS!

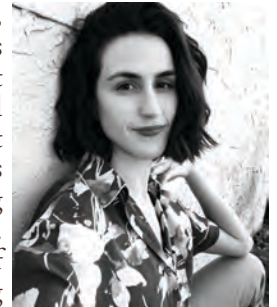
JONAS DICKSON, BFA, '03, is living and working in Los Angeles with his wife, Danielle. He still acts and has an agent, periodically auditions for commercials, and creates internet sensations with friends. He began working full time in post-production about five years ago. In 2018, he quit his full-time job with a digital design company and began freelancing as an assistant editor, and then landed a job at Will Smith's production company, Westbrook, just as it was starting out with ~10 employees. Since then it's grown to about 60-75 employees, and Jonas is now the Media Operations Manager, and has had a hand in every single item on Will Smith's YouTube and Instagram channels, as well as the Fresh Prince Reunion on HBO (look for his name in the credits along with his entire team, with whom he works daily). Last year, Jonas was featured briefly as Will's editor in a skit with him and Liza Koshy. Check it out [here](#).



Jonas on set with Will Smith.

Jonas moonlights as a magician bartender, helping his friend start a business, "Magic and Cocktails." He served on a search and rescue team for five years until last year, and now has an EMT certification and can rappel out of helicopters and rescue people in the mountains. That taught him some incredible life lessons and fulfilled all the adventures he wanted to accomplish as an actor. He has also recently taken up flying airplanes, and expects to have his private pilot certificate by summer of 2021. Since moving to L.A. in 2006, Jonas watches for Wyoming license plates just to see if he recognizes anyone. He met up with UW Theatre & Dance alumni Bryce Gill, BFA, "??, this way and discovered that they had been living directly across the street from one another for two years. Bryce has since moved to Oregon.

BRIANNA FIGUEROA, BFA, '08, Dance, is in her second year as an Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of New Mexico and is currently working as an assistant editor for *Choreographic Practices* (journal). Her research is evolving in step with the changing times. She is looking at dance as a site of exploration for trauma while creating a digital community of practice around this topic. The community of practice is working to build dynamic conversations around the embodiment and artistic sharing of trauma, while considering what a trauma informed practice/pedagogy looks like in the dance studio.



OdDancity, Marbles. Photo by Alex Floyd.

ALEX FLOYD, BA, '11, has been living and working in Los Angeles, California, since graduating from UW. She has been spearheading the new nonprofit, Young Choreographers Project for the last five years on the administrative and programming team. The project seeks to bring professional choreographers in to mentor teens in underserved areas to facilitate the creation of their very own dance piece. In the spring YCP is going virtual for the first time for an 8 week program! Alex also started a horror modern dance performance company called OdDancity in which she produces and choreographs full length immersive works in intimate spaces around Los Angeles. For more information on YCP, check out ycpla.org. For updates on OdDancity, follow [@oddancity](https://www.instagram.com/oddancity) on instagram!

JASON GRANDPRE, BFA, '93, is construction manager at Francis Krahe & Associates, Inc., an innovative architectural lighting/engineering design firm in LA. He has been very pleased to be part of the firm's lighting design team for the Christ Cathedral project for 6+ years. A postmodern masterpiece, the Crystal Cathedral, designed by world-renowned architect Philip Johnson and his partner John Burgee, first opened its doors in 1981. Renamed the Christ Cathedral, it reopened its doors on July 17, 2019, after a mass renovation which included a daylighting and electric lighting system that blankets the more than 10,000 panes of glass. The beautiful array covers the inside glass surfaces and is fastened to the existing truss system. Arranged in various states of openness, the quatrefoils modulate the



The completed Christ Cathedral.

light, reduce glare, and create geometric patterns on the cathedral interior. A key feature of the renovation is an array of specially designed quatrefoil shades which control the sunlight and house the electric light. You can reach Jason at: 304 S Broadway, Suite 300, Los Angeles, CA 90013; Office: +1 213 617 0477 Ext. 104; Cell: +1 213 327 6709 Fax: +1 213 617 0482; jgrandpre@fkaild.com

TAMARA (KOCHER) HOWE, BFA, 03', 05' Kinesiology and Health Promotion, currently resides with her family in Salina, KS, where she has owned and operated the Tamara Howe School of Dance for the last 14 years. The school serves 200 families annually in the surrounding area, from ages 2 – adult, and is also home to Ballet Salina. The school is fortunate to partner with the Salina Symphony and has produced two full-length ballets in the past three years, SLEEPING BEAUTY and THE NUTCRACKER, as well as several fall/spring shows when not performing with the symphony. The school focuses on developing the gifts and talents of children so that they can continue to use them after they graduate to make a positive impact on their communities, whether that be through dance or using the tools they learned at



the studio. Tamara is married to Steven Howe, who is a state representative for the State of Kansas, and has four boys: Isak (13), William (11), Eli (8) and Theodore (1.5).

DREW JAUSSAUD, BFA, '17, has been promoted to Development Director for Salt Lake City's Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. In addition to grant-writing and fundraising for the Company, he's currently working on a touring project which will serve people with Parkinson's in communities throughout the United States.



KRISTIN KISELL, BFA, '09, earned an MA in Theology in spring 2020, emphasizing in comparative, feminist theology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. While a graduate student, Kristin served as managing editor of the student journal, as the graduate assistant to a faculty member who teaches a class on art and theology, and as a substitute for absent faculty members. She also worked part time as an administrative coordinator in the Academic Community of Excellence under the Office of the Provost of Intercultural Affairs, and continued to run her own business. Kristin is a theologian, professional coach, facilitator, and writer specializing in body and somatic education, the mind-body-spirit connection blending unique aspects of Ignatian Spirituality, Divine Feminine, intuition, along with the process of how to live a thriving life. She creates a safe, sacred space for spiritual discovery, embodied wisdom, and intuitive guidance for the crossroads of life.



CHELSEY BYRD LEWALLEN, BA, '09, is a full time faculty member at the University of Idaho in the Apparel, Textiles and Design Program teaching students how to sew, construct garments, make patterns, and learn sustainable textile practices. Chelsey says: "The costuming and performance skills I learned as an un-



dergraduate student at UW prepared me for an unexpected dream job- an instructor in higher education!" Check out Chelsey's recent projects:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8rJLm3dcM8>

<http://129.101.119.232/cals/news-and-events/features/2020/face-masks-fcs>

[Chelsey's Profile](#); cbyrd@uidaho.edu

BRIANNA LEONARD, BFA, '19, has been working at Siam Table Thai Cuisine as a regular manager (not at all like a stage manager) since graduating in December 2019. She says: "Quarantine was basically non-existent for me, as our restaurant has remained open for take out and delivery since the pandemic was declared in March 2020. Like everyone else, I've just been taking it one day at a time to try to keep my sanity! I've been working on a way to destroy the COVID-19 virus with the sheer energy that radiates from me whenever I wear my hotdog costume, but so far the results have been pretty disappointing. So until I manage to harness the raw Coronavirus-killing hotdog energy, I continue to encourage everyone to wear their masks and maintain social distancing.



ANNE MASON, BFA, Theatre & Dance Performance, '11, is the Founder and Producing Artistic Director of Relative Theatrics in Laramie, WY. The company entered its eighth year in 2020 and continues to grow and thrive under Anne's leadership. She guided the organization through innovative solutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, including hybrid theatre/film productions and virtual readings of Greek tragedies, Shakespeare, and contemporary plays. Anne was awarded the 2020 Wyoming Arts Council Performing Arts Fellowship and was a nominee for the 2020 Women of Influence Award.

NINA MURPHY, BFA, '20, has been teaching jazz, ballet, and modern at two local studios in Helena, MT. She has also been able to work over Zoom with some outreach. She has had the opportunity to create for some site specific projects as well as develop her own ideas for new work. In the new year, she will start working as a hired dancer for a dance film installation.



Despite 2020's many setbacks, **HARLAN POST** has had several projects in the works, including publishing his first book. Here is the synopsis:

"Harlan Post, an experienced Hollywood actor, shares an honest, complete, three-dimensional perspective on the challenges and struggles aspiring actors face in this guide to succeeding as an actor. Recalling how naïve he was when he moved to Hollywood in July 2012, he examines how tough it is to succeed as an actor. About two million people in Los Angeles call themselves actors, but only several hundred make a living at it. But he overcame the odds, appearing in major TV shows, mainstream feature films, independent films, countless pilots, national and regional commercials, short films, and other projects. Along the way, he has met some top-notch people - as well as some of the sleaziest scum. In this book, Post shares missteps made and moves that paid off. He also celebrates some of his lucky breaks and explains why it's so important to listen to everyone's advice, think about what you can use, and discard the rest. Whether you are a struggling actor or an aspiring actor, this book will help you be more successful in a highly competitive business."



Rolling the Dice: Everything You Want to Know About Becoming a Hollywood Actor: Post, Harlan: 9781480888159: Amazon.com: Books



KATHRYN ROCHELLE, BA, '11, Theatre & Dance, BA, Anthropology, holds an MA of Dance Anthropology and works as a cultural dance researcher, archivist, ballroom dance teacher and wedding dance specialist. She has created content for a subscription service of online dance lessons for a global audience, and is currently building a website with resources for the field of Dance Studies. After living all over the world, she now happily resides in Sheridan, WY with her husband and new daughter Emerson.

DEVIN SANCHEZ, BFA '04, has acquired nearly 50 credits as a stunt performer in major film and television productions, including a prominent role in Adam Sandler's **HUBIE HALLOWEEN**. Besides being blown up, thrown around, and pushed out of moving vehicles, Devin has also produced and starred in two feature films, **TWENTY MILLION PEOPLE** and **LAURA GETS A CAT**. Both films screened at some of the best independent film festivals around the world and took home numerous awards including multiple Best Features.



NICOLE SYKES, BFA, '08 recently took at a full-time job as an essential worker working veterinary reception at a clinic due being furloughed during COVID19. She still works for the Town of Parker Cultural Department. Despite these

challenges, she has managed to stay safe and healthy. After Nicole graduated in 2008, she did an internship in the Literary Department at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and then the Denver Center Theatre Company. She was Assistant Dramaturg for a production of *HOMEBOY/KABUL* by Tony Kushner at Curious Theatre Company in Denver. In 2016, she was Assistant Director/Dramaturg for *THE WILD HUNT*, a New Play Development Workshop/Work-In-Progress Showing written and directed by Bill Pullman. She has done some acting as well, appearing in two projects directed by Jennifer McCray Rincon: *A SHAKESPEARE VALENTINE* (as Desdemona) and *AN EVENING WITH TENNESSEE WILLIAMS* (as Laura Wingfield). Nicole recently moved to an apartment in Denver, CO, and loves it.

ADRIANNA TRUE, BA, '17, started her own theatre in 2018 in Cheyenne, WY. Adrianna says: "Never did I think that a little non-profit theatre company in Wyoming would be facing the challenges we have in 2020. And never did I think that we would have built up such an amazing and resilient community to meet those challenges head on. At the beginning of the year, we were all looking forward to our many projects in the works. We opened a 7-day play festival, auditioned *ADULTS* by Maizy Broderick Scarpa, and we were in the midst of finalizing our 20's Cabaret cast, when life itself seemed to come to a screeching halt. Suddenly, we were thrown into uncertain territory. What happens to theatre in times like these? Well, as I found out, we band together and make things happen. Temperature checks, daily check-ins, 14 day quarantines, and masks became our new normal. Outdoor shows were our favorite during the summer, and as the weather shifted, our production team, casts, directors, crew, and audiences all shifted to a virtual format, figuring out the answers to problems we didn't know we would need to. As we head into our 2021 season, we have begun to ponder these questions and figure out what our future as a production company looks like, stronger than ever. Grateful and lucky are not two words I thought of when starting this journey. I was disappointed and discouraged that LA and New York companies and schools did not want me in their programs, or wanted more than I could afford. I thought starting a Midwestern theatre would be my way of getting experience so I could pursue those other dreams. 2020 has taught me much different. And I am so grateful for that. As a community, small theatres have all worked together since the beginning of the pandemic to try and keep each other afloat, to keep the arts relevant in our small communities. We have all fought this battle for a



True Troupe members, *TWELFTH NIGHT*, summer 2020.

long time, fighting against cuts to funding, smaller grants each year, and fewer and fewer sponsors available. And we have all done an amazing job of keeping our craft alive. I have seen countless numbers of artists in small towns donating to each other's work when they have very little themselves, all for the good of each other. I can't think of a better community to be surrounded by in such a slim time. And for that, I am one of the luckiest humans in my graduating class."

KEVIN VERNON, BTD, '86, recently coordinated and put up a four high school intercity theatre festival along with a colleague. Kevin says: "We didn't want to leave our kids hanging without their theatre home, so we did online auditions, rehearsals, and performances. The four largest high schools - Normal Community High School (mine), Normal Community West High School, University High School, and Bloomington High School coordinated with eight students from the Illinois State University Theatre Ed program to create 12 shows streamed over five nights, involving over 70 students. It wasn't a regular season, but we feel we took on a pandemic and won - at least a little bit." You can reach Kevin at Normal Community High School, vernonk@unit5.org.



KILLIAN (RAMEY) VONHOLDT, BFA, '18, is enjoying married life with her husband in Denver, CO! She is currently dancing with Hannah Kahn Dance Company, a Denver modern dance company that is now halfway through their 46th Season. She has thoroughly enjoyed the educational outreach, community performances, and main-stage performances she has been a part of since July 2019. Killian says: "This past year has been a great growing experience for our company— as it has been for all performance artists! We worked on creating online/virtual educational outreach material for the public schools that we currently cannot visit as well as outdoor and virtual performances in order to continually bring art to the Denver community and beyond throughout the pandemic. I also teach dance and Pilates at Joyful Soles Dance and Performing Arts. My students are such an inspiration to me every single day! Finally, I am nearing the completion of my 200 Hour RYT certification with Yoga & Ayurveda Center, and I am highly looking forward to incorporating yoga into my teachings and personal training. I am ever more grateful for the education and support I received from UW Theatre and Dance. The program equipped me to pursue all my passions within the world of dance and taught me the joys of being a life-long learner!"

CHRIS WILL, BFA, '04, moved from WY three years ago to sunny Tucson, AZ, where he is head of the theatre department at Pima Community College. Chris is working hard both with professional theater companies in the community and at his job at the College. Every day he uses the skills that were taught to him from the theater department! A few years ago Chris published a musical theater book in entitled: "How to succeed in musical theater without really trying, a practical handbook for the singing actor," [available on Amazon](#).



FACULTY NEWS

WILLIAM MISSOURI DOWNS was honored at the Royal Court Theatre in London for being a finalist in the Nick Darke Playwriting Award. He also worked with BIG BANG star Jim Parsons, pitching TV pilot ideas to Warner Brothers and optioned a TV pilot to Hollywood producer Meryl Poster. In the last two years he's had over 40 productions of his plays, including productions in South Korea, Russia, Australia, South Africa and India. His play HOW TO STEAL A PICASSO was published by TRW (Theatrical Rights Worldwide) and his play SEAGULLS IN A CHERRY TREE was published by Heuer Publishing.

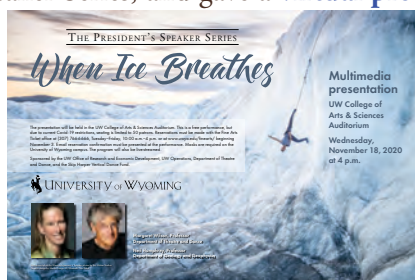
CAT KAMRATH had her choreography featured in the 2020 iteration of SPRING TO DANCE. Most recently, Cat choreographed for '29: A MUSICAL,' the department's first film-based production. She is a co-director of the Snowy Range Summer Dance Festival, helping facilitate the 2020 virtual festival and hoping to experience the chaos of an in-person festival in 2021.



MARGARET WILSON did her best to accumulate frequent flyer miles in 2019, from travelling for dance science lectures and consulting at universities in the UK, with colleagues in Kinesiology to Shanghai to meet with students coming for a six-month scholar program, to Greenland to work with **Neil Humphrey** on his research and a former student to embark on an art/science project, to Montreal for a Dance Medicine and Science meetings and seeing students, both current and former, and back to Greenland in December for a performance and choreography – as well as screening a film made of an art/science project. But the highlight of the year was working with **Neil Humphrey**, **Scott Tedmon-Jones**, **Seán Stone**, **Patrick Koneško**, and **Jason Banks** on WONDERLAND: ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN 3-DIMENSIONAL SPACE. It was an amazing collaborative experience that showcased all of the talents of the department – faculty and students alike. Check out the [promotional video](#) created by UWTV's **Ali Grossman**. In fall 2020, Margaret and Neil were selected for the UW President's Speaker Series, and gave a [virtual presentation](#) of "When Ice Breathes," a multimedia lecture-demonstration of their collaborative work that includes alumna **Malina Jensen's** short film "Re-forming Glaciers."



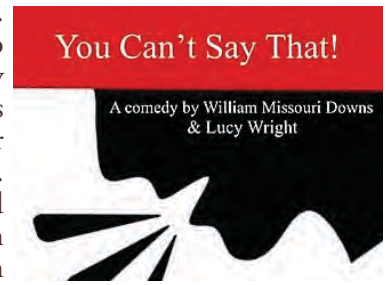
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LOU ANNE WRIGHT had her play YOU CAN'T SAY THAT selected for inclusion in the Phoenix Theatre's Festival of New American Theatre in March 2020. Along with co-writer **William Missouri Downs**, she was awarded a week-long residency in Phoenix to work with the actors on a series of staged readings.

Lou Anne was invited to perform a monologue by playwright Evan Edwards at the Valdez Last Frontier Theatre Conference. Founded by Edward Albee, the VLFTC is an annual event in July which showcases readings and performances of new plays by national and international writers.

In August, her monologue Triple Ma'am was chosen by the Brave New World theatre company in Brooklyn, NY, to be included in OVER AND ABOVE. The production included women playwrights from across the globe and featured actors Blair Brown and Laura San Giacomo. In November, Lou Anne co-directed and performed in a reading of Lisa Konoplisky's AMERICAN BOWL, a new play exploring issues of race and identity in the U.S. This reading was presented in conjunction with co-director Dr. Cecelia Aragon's 20th Century Diversity class at UW.



COMING SOON!!

29

Streaming Late January 2021

29 is a dramatic song-cycle that asks, "What does it mean to become an adult?" The show is a tapestry of characters who face defining moments of growing up in their twenties,

SHE KILLS MONSTERS

Streaming February 2021

When Agnes finds her deceased sister Tilly's Dungeons & Dragons notebook, she stumbles into a journey of discovery and action-packed adventure in the imaginary world that was Tilly's refuge.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

TBA March 18-21, 2021

This dance adaptation of Shakespeare's fantastical comedy depicts the adventures and misadventures of mortal lovers and king and queen of the fairies, as they span the worlds between dream and reality.

AS YOU LIKE IT

TBA April 29 - May 1, 2021

When Rosalind falls in love with a young man named Orlando, she is forced into exile. She seeks refuge in the forest of Arden disguised as a boy, Ganymede, wherein begins a beguiling game of love and identity.