



DEPARTMENT OF
THEATRE AND FILM
 SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER



2017–2018 | Vol. 2 No. 2

GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR



The spring semester has been filled with exciting activity, including the world premiere of *Family Ties*, an original film written by film production major Brianna Smith, and our mainstage productions of *The Language Archive* by Julia Cho and *The Threepenny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. We have continued our weekly “Tuesdays at the Gish” film screening series and hosted guest artists from film, television, and theatre. Additionally, we were honored to host BGSU Theatre alumna and award-winning actress Eva Marie Saint on campus for Bravo! BGSU in April, when she received the BGSU Lifetime Achievement Award.

In the following pages, you’ll find information about all of our recent events. We are excited to highlight the many accomplishments of our faculty and students, including the publication of Angela Ahlgren’s book, *Drumming Asian America: Taiko, Performance, and Cultural Politics*. We also feature conversations with Brianna Smith, with new faculty member Heidi Nees, and with alumna-turned-international student Heather Hill.

We hope you’ll join us in celebrating and saying a bittersweet goodbye to retiring professor Eileen Cherry-Chandler. Eileen has been an important figure in regional theatre and at BGSU, and we are fortunate to have had her on faculty since 2005. We celebrate Eileen’s work in African-American theatre and theatre for social change, and we look forward to her next chapter.

Be sure to take a look at what’s coming in our 2018–2019 season. If you can make it to campus, we’d love to see you at any of our events!

Sincerely,
 Dr. Lesa Lockford, Chair
 Department of Theatre & Film



Recent Events

1/19–24 & 2/23–28

48-hour Film Festivals

Film students gathered this semester for two 48-hour film festivals. At each, students worked in groups to create films—from initial writing to final screening—in just 48 hours. Screenings were held in the Gish Film Theatre in Hanna Hall, and were enjoyed by students, faculty, and staff alike.

1/20

Great Lakes Symposium for Theatre Scholars

The Department of Theatre and Film and the Graduate Student Theatre Organization (GuSTO) co-hosted the Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium. Traveling from across Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, ten noted regional scholars presented their research to an audience of BGSU students and faculty. The Symposium is a one-day event designed to support new research in theatre history and to strengthen the network of scholars living and working in the region. It was first held at BGSU in 2013 and has subsequently been hosted by other universities across the Great Lakes region.



1/20–21

Broadway Cares BG

Members of the Musical Theatre Students (MuTS) opened their spring cabaret performance series with the theme “Seasons of Love.” Members and non-members gave three performances. A silent auction raised more than \$1700 to benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, bringing the total funds raised to nearly \$3000 for the year. Due to these fundraising efforts, MuTS was named second runner-up in a national Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS holiday fundraising challenge, and won a free workshop with the touring cast of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*.



1/23

Guest Artist: Nicole Lovince

Film Production alumna Nicole Lovince '09 visited the Wolfe Center to discuss “Life After the University: Transitioning from Student to Professional in the Entertainment Industry.” A working actress, vocalist, on-camera host, and spokesperson, she has appeared in *Pitch Perfect*, *CSI: New Orleans*, and *MTV's Worst. Prom. Ever.* Lovince talked with students about strategies for transitioning from the university setting to the Los Angeles market. Following her talk, Lovince engaged students in a lively Q&A.





Recent Events

3/22

Guest Artist: April Sellers

Nationally recognized choreographer April Sellers offered a performative lecture demonstration entitled “Evolving the Feminine/QUEERING Performance.” The workshop explored how gender and sexuality are increasingly critical lenses through which to view the world. Sellers also offered a Master Class which engaged imaginative play to activate sensorial awareness, and used image-based improvisations that explored ecstatic states as tools to access an original movement vocabulary

3/24–25

Guest Artists: Adam Smith and Arletta Anderson

On March 24, Neofuturists member Adam Smith and dance artist Arletta Anderson performed *Theatre Show* in the Eva Marie Saint Theatre. *Theatre Show*, which straddles the line of avant-garde performance and documentary performance, was a critical darling at the San Francisco and Boulder Fringe Festivals. On March 25, Anderson offered a dance workshop entitled *Choreographic Structure*, and Smith led an “Intro to Neofuturism” workshop.



4/9

Bravo! BGSU

Faculty, alumni, and community members enjoyed student art pieces and performances at Bravo! BGSU. Students from the fine and performing arts came together to showcase their talents throughout the Wolfe Center for the Arts. The event raised scholarship funds for students in the arts. BGSU Theatre alumna and Oscar and Emmy award-winning actress Eva Marie Saint attended the event, where she was presented with the BGSU Lifetime Achievement Award. Saint also held a Q&A session in the Eva Marie Saint Theatre.



Recent Events

4/13–15

Film and Media Festival

Film students gathered for three days in April to showcase their original work. External film professionals viewed and evaluated student work produced in the 2017–18 academic year. The annual festival concluded with an awards ceremony. All events were held in the beloved Gish Film Theatre in Hanna Hall.



4/27

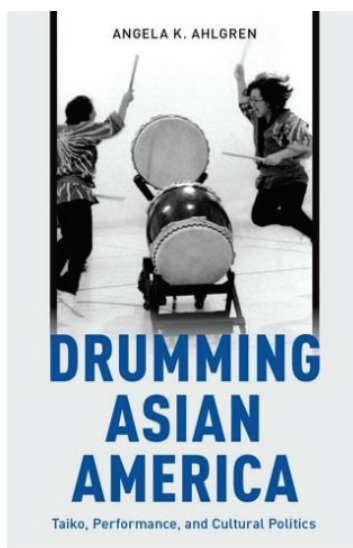
Film Premiere: *Family Ties*

Screenplay by Brianna Smith, BGSU Film Production major
Directed by Thomas Castillo, Assistant Professor,



Department of Theatre and Film
Family Ties tells the story of Amber, an aspiring artist preparing to graduate high school. Amber struggles to decide whether she will pursue her dreams by attending a university in New York, or stay home to take care of her younger sister and fill the void of the mother they've lost. Smith wrote her screenplay in BGSU's screenwriting course (THFM

4420). It was produced by professor Castillo and crewed by BGSU's Studio Experience (THFM 4880) students. The crew of *Family Ties* consisted entirely of BGSU students. The film went into production in November and post-production in January before premiering April 27.



Drumming Asian America

This spring, Oxford University Press published *Drumming Asian America: Taiko, Performance, and Cultural Politics*, by Assistant Professor Angela K. Ahlgren. Based on original and archival interviews, as well as Dr. Ahlgren's extensive experience as a taiko player, *Drumming Asian America* highlights the Midwest as a site for Asian American cultural production and makes embodied experience central to inquiries about identity, including race, gender, and sexuality.

Acknowledging the existence of more than 400 taiko groups across the U.S. and Canada, Dr. Ahlgren's book builds on insights from the fields of dance studies, ethnomusicology, performance studies, queer and feminist theory, and Asian American studies to argue that taiko players from a variety of identity positions perform Asian America on stage, as well as in rehearsals, festivals, schools, and through interactions with audiences.



PRODUCTIONS

SPRING 2018

Film: Tuesdays at the Gish



Creed

Directed by Ryan Coogler (2015)
Introduction by Robert Joseph, doctoral student in American Culture Studies

This sequel to the *Rocky* franchise sees an aging Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) mentoring the estranged son of his longtime friend and rival. February 6.

Moonlight

Directed by Barry Jenkins (2016)
Introduction by Dennis Sloan, doctoral student in Theatre

An Oscar-winning film that follows a young man as he navigates complex relationships through childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. February 13.

The Fits

Directed by Anna Rose Holmer (2015)
Introduction by Eileen Cherry-Chandler, Associate Professor, Department of Theatre and Film

A sometimes-surreal coming-of-age story inspired by accounts of dancing mania in medieval Europe and inspired by videos of the Cincinnati-based Q Kids Dance Team. February 20.



Short Term 12

Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton (2013)
Introduction by Cynthia Baron, Professor, Department of Theatre and Film

A counselor in a short-term county group home finds that her traumatic childhood gives her unique insights into the experiences of the teens in her care. February 27.

Carol

Directed by Todd Haynes (2015)
Introduction by Mark Hain, Instructor, Department of Theatre and Film

Therese, an aspiring photographer, and Carol, a glamorous woman coping with a strained marriage, fall in love in 1950s New York. March 13.

A Thousand Times Good Night

Directed by Erik Poppe (2013)
Introduction by Taylor Johnson, double major in Film and Computer Science

An acclaimed war photographer returns home after being seriously injured in Afghanistan and must face the toll her dangerous assignments take on her family. March 20.

Screen-Play

Moderated by Brianna Smith, Film Production major and author of this year's Studio Experience production, *Family Ties*.

Staged readings of two student screenplays followed by thoughtful discussions involving the author, the audience, and the performers designed to strengthen student work. March 27.

Theatre



Main Stage: The Language Archive

by Julia Cho
Directed by Sara Chambers
February 15–17 and 22–24 (8pm)
February 17, 18, 24 (2pm)
Eva Marie Saint Theatre, Wolfe Center

A brilliant linguist tries to preserve a dying language whose last living speakers are a bickering elderly couple. Meanwhile, he must navigate his own communication issues with his estranged wife and an assistant whose crush renders her hardly able to speak to him.

Main Stage: The Threepenny Opera

by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill
Directed by Jonathan Chambers
April 19–21 (8pm)
April 21–22 (2pm)
Thomas B. and Kathleen M. Donnell Theatre

Beggars, thieves, and whores! In a bitter tale of the Victorian underworld, Mack the Knife fights to survive marriage, prison, and betrayal in one of the landmark musicals of the twentieth century.

THE
THREEPENNY
OPERA

PRODUCTIONS

SPRING 2018

Elsewhere: *The Bird and The Bee*

by Al Smith and Matt Hartley
Directed by doctoral students Seung-A (Liz) Lee and Alesa McGregor
January 26–28 (8pm)
Eva Marie Saint Theatre, Wolfe Center

Star-crossed lovers in search of human connection establish a surprising relationship online across two plays that explore questions regarding identity and truth, mourning and surviving, and death and social media.

Elsewhere: *In Retrospect*

A public reading of an original play by undergraduate theatre major Trey Eikleberry
Directed by undergraduate theatre major Harmon R. Andrews
February 8 (7pm)
Conrad Choral Room, Wolfe Center

During an evaluation for his parole hearing, inmate Jason must come to terms with the decisions in his life and confront the reality that is set before him.

Elsewhere: *Master Harold and the Boys*

by Athol Fugard
Directed by doctoral student Leesi Akubue
March 16–18 (8pm)
Eva Marie Saint Theatre, Wolfe Center
In 1950s South Africa, two black men and a white boy bond to defy the brutalities of Apartheid until a catastrophic phone call reveals the profound personal consequences of oppression.

2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR

Theatre

Main Stage: *You Got Older*

by Clare Barron
October 18–20, 25–27 (8pm)
October 20, 21, 27 (2pm)
Eva Marie Saint Theatre, Wolfe Center

A tender and darkly comic new play about family, illness, and cowboys – and how to remain standing when everything you know comes crashing down around you.

Main Stage: *Little Shop of Horrors*

Book and lyrics by Howard Ashman
Music by Alan Menken
November 15–17 (8pm)
November 17–18 (2pm)
Thomas B. and Kathleen M. Donnell Theatre, Wolfe Center

A deviously delicious musical tale of a meek floral assistant who stumbles across a new breed of plant that may bring him fame, fortune, and love—if it doesn't cost him everything!

Main Stage: *Sweat**

by Lynn Nottage
April 28–March 2, March 7–9 (8pm)
March 2, 3, 9 (2pm)
Eva Marie Saint Theatre, Wolfe Center

The decline of industrial America mixes with issues of race and class in very personal ways for working citizens in this Pulitzer Prize-winning and Tony nominated play.



Main Stage: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

by William Shakespeare
May 2–4 (8pm)
May 4–5 (2pm)
Thomas B. and Kathleen M. Donnell Theatre, Wolfe Center

In Shakespeare's most beloved comedy, four young lovers get mismatched by magic when they encounter feuding fairies and a band of amateur play-makers in the dark woods.

*Rights pending



MAKE A GIFT

Please consider making a donation to the Department of Theatre and Film. Your support helps fund undergraduate and graduate awards and scholarships, it helps bring in speakers and artists who can help develop our students to become theatre and film professionals, and it helps to foster other innovations in our educational programming. To make a gift, visit our website (www.bgsu.edu/theatrefilm) and click on "Give."

GISH THEATRE

GISH FILM THEATRE GOES DARK



The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Film Theater, a beloved presence in Hanna Hall, will go dark after forty years. Home to classes, lectures, workshops, and free film screenings, the current Gish Film Theater will close at the end of the spring 2018 semester. A new Gish Film Theater will open in Fall 2018 in the newly repurposed and renovated Bowen-Thompson Student Union Theatre. The new theater will enjoy a more central location and a higher seating capacity than the original Gish.

The Gish Film Theater was dedicated on June 11, 1976, in honor of prolific film stars Lillian Gish and her late sister Dorothy. Between 1912 and 1987, Lillian Gish made more than 100 films. She received an honorary Academy Award for her contributions to film in 1971, and was a Kennedy Center honoree in 1982. She was also the recipient of lifetime achievement awards from the National Board of Review and the American Film Institute, as well as the Legion of Honor award from the French government. Dorothy Gish also made more than 100 films before her untimely death in 1968.

Dr. Ralph Haven Wolfe, then professor of English at BGSU, first proposed converting the Hanna Hall auditorium into a film theater



honoring Lillian Gish early in 1976. Gish agreed on the condition that theater also be named for her sister. In 1989, Dr. Wolfe joined with film stars Eva Marie Saint (BGSU alumna, 1946) and Roddy McDowell in raising funds for the refurbishment of the Gish, and for the establishment of a permanent endowment for its operation. Contributors to these efforts included such luminaries as Helen Hayes, Jessica Tandy, Phyllis Diller, Sally Field, Esther Williams, Sir John Gielgud, Bob Hope, Paul Newman, James Stewart, Lily Tomlin, and Blanche Ferry Rockerfeller. At the request of Lillian Gish, the resulting endowment was used to make all Gish Film Theater screenings free of charge.

In 1982, Dr. Wolfe obtained a grant from the BGSU Foundation to create a lobby and a gallery adjoining the film theater. There, he hung a collection of photographs and film stills he obtained from the Museum of Modern Art's 1980 Lillian Gish retrospective. In 1995, Dr. Wolfe expanded this space to include an upper gallery. Since then, the space has hosted memorabilia from the lives and careers of both Gish sisters, as well as a variety of items from Lillian Gish's estate. According to Dr. Wolfe, "The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Film Theater has brought much honor to the university nationally and internationally, and our memorabilia collection has been considered the best collection between the coasts."

The Gish Film Theater has been an integral part of BGSU's programs in film production and film studies. "The Gish is a pivotal part of my education as a film student at BGSU," said Keisha Marin, president of BGSU's University Film Organization. "It provides me with a safe

and inclusive space to showcase my own art." David Bratnick, president of BG Reel, agreed, noting the hours he has spent in the Gish taking classes, viewing films, and organizing events.

On September 21, 2017, the BGSU administration announced plans to renovate Hanna Hall to make space for the Robert W. and Patricia A. Maurer Center, a new home for the College of Business. The University will fund a renovation of the Student Union's existing theater, which will be renamed the Gish Film Theater. Gish memorabilia currently on display in Hanna Hall will be exhibited outside the new Gish Film Theater on a rotating basis. Items not on display will be accessible through the University Library Archives. The Ralph Haven Wolfe Viewing Center, which offers space for students to view a large collection of films on VHS, laser disc, and DVD, will be closed, and a newly refurbished film screening classroom in Olscamp Hall will be named for Dr. Wolfe.

Both Martin and Bratnick have high hopes for the planned new spaces. While Bratnick says that "no space will ever be able to truly replace the Gish and the emotions felt in it," both students look forward to the technological updates the new spaces will offer. Martin hopes the new space will also "provide an inclusive art house cinema environment" and says she "would love for it to be integrated into the film student community much like the Gish once was." Bratnick hopes the new space will be able to create a magic similar to that of the Gish. "What ultimately made it so special," he said, has been "the BGSU students, past and present. We all have a shared experience of watching films in the theater and creating great memories with friends. As long as that fun, creative spirit is kept alive, I think everything will be alright."

Dr. Ralph Haven Wolfe



Special thanks to Dr. Ralph Haven Wolfe for providing information on the Gish Film Theater's history for use in this article.



EILEEN CHERRY-CHANDLER
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Q: You are originally from Toledo, Ohio but you left your hometown to study at Northwestern University. How did the change of venue impact your worldview and your research?

A: I was considered an “at-risk” black youth. I had \$2.50 and a change of clothes when I left Toledo. My situation was like a lot of our students here: low to no income, few community resources, first in my family to ever think about college, facing institutional racism and sexism. I grew up in the 1950s and ‘60s, civil rights, the urban riots, the wars on poverty, and Vietnam. If it weren’t for the Upward Bound Program – they call it TRIO now – I think I would have had a different destiny. I was in their third group of “at-risk” black youth and those activities really changed my life. I was exposed to the world of the university and real scholars. We traveled. We discussed social issues and social justice. It was an exciting time to come of age. I discussed what I later learned was political theory and I did street theatre with the Black Panthers. I wrote an epic poem about black childhood that was published in the Toledo Blade in 1966. People raved about it and invited me to different community functions to read what they called “that poem.” You can look it up. It was considered really radical at the time because of its last line. So from that I learned the power of words and performance.

Q: You hold a bachelor’s degree in speech/communication, a master’s degree in education, a certificate in counseling and psychotherapy, and a doctorate in performance studies. You have also taught writing, taught communication, and served in leadership capacities in student life in addition to your work as a professor at BGSU. How have these diverse experiences shaped your work as an artist, as a scholar, and as a professor?

A: Each is an extension of my identity and work. There was no “performance studies” when I “bumped” into the field as an undergraduate. It was the oral interpretation of literature in all its genres and I later learned that I was studying with the key scholars in the field. It was intimidating but I loved literature and performing it. I didn’t major in theatre because I didn’t want to do crew (shame on me!). But outside of class I started a theatre workshop on my own because casting opportunities for blacks were limited—so my philosophy was “do for self.” And I got a lot of respect for that. Now the workshop is 40 years old.

I became interested in the arts for social change movement, particularly its role in addressing

community problems through the creative process. So my profile as a community artist was/is grounded in this concept. I used this idea to work with so-called “at-risk” persons. I trained as a psychotherapist to improve my listening and interpersonal skills as I facilitated my students through their artmaking/problem-solving projects: arts boot camp! This has shaped my approach to helping artists develop their work.

The counselling opened opportunities to do student personnel work and academic advising—particularly for developing artists and for students in general. I got the opportunity to direct student life for the round-the-world voyage of Semester at Sea. I call it one black woman’s journey with 500 privileged white kids to the Third World during the Gulf War – one of the toughest but most valuable experiences I had in my life. I was ready to say something when I returned. That’s how I ended up in a doctoral program with Dwight Conquergood as my advisor, learning about black feminist theory and writing about black women’s travel experiences.

Q: What brought you to BGSU which is so close to your hometown of Toledo? How did your time elsewhere impact your homecoming experience?

A: It was a serendipitous meeting with one of BGSU’s faculty at a conference that led me to this university. My sister is an alum and I hadn’t considered coming back “home.” But it worked out and I’m happy I returned. The course “Exploring Cultural Diversity Through Performance” gave me the opportunity to integrate all my major interests. Also, working with my colleagues in the department has been gratifying. The department has given me opportunities to do things I never had the opportunity to do before—like direct two mainstage productions.

Q: What do you anticipate the next chapter of your life might hold?

A: My younger colleagues have made me aware of how much of a pioneer I am. You get too busy living life, doing your work during social change, that you don’t notice what your role has been in it. I was there when minorities and women were not taken seriously. I was there before Title IX, before open casting, computers, and cell phones—before all of the wonderful programs we are struggling to maintain today that support students. I’ve had to learn so much so fast. I want to think about all that I have learned. Retirement to me is just a new frontier I am eager to explore.

DIALOGUE WITH...



HEIDI NEES
NEW FACULTY MEMBER

Q: You've returned to teach at BGSU after completing your doctoral studies. Tell us about your career path between those two points.

A: After graduating from BGSU in 2012, I spent one year at Miami University as a visiting assistant professor teaching theatre history to undergraduate and graduate students. I then accepted an assistant professor position at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. While there I taught theatre studies courses and directed departmental productions. After three years there, the opportunity to come back home presented itself.

Q: What drew you back to BGSU?

A: There were several reasons. First, BGSU still feels like home. I feel fortunate that I worked on my doctorate within a strong, supportive departmental community. To come back and serve the community that has impacted me in such significant ways was important to me. Second, I wanted to work with graduate students again. Third, I strongly believe in the liberal arts approach to studying theatre at the undergraduate level. I appreciate the ways in which the BG undergraduate theatre majors are simultaneously dedicated to their craft and curious about multiple aspects of theatrical practice. And fourth, changing dynamics within my personal life drew me back. I grew up in Ohio and still have family here, so moving back is a homecoming.

Q: What are you currently teaching at BGSU? Do you have an idea what you might like to teach in the future?

A: I teach the undergraduate theatre history sequence, as well as script analysis, both of which I really enjoy. In terms of future classes, I am eager to teach graduate courses, especially the "Cultural Contexts" class. I would love to teach the graduate "Theatre in the Americas" course, potentially focusing on Native American drama or contemporary women playwrights. I developed subtopic classes in both of these areas for undergraduate students at Cal Poly, but would love to delve deeper into the topics at the graduate level. I would also like to teach a subtopics course on 19th-century popular entertainments, such as Wild West shows, melodrama, circuses, museums, world's fairs, etc. That's my immediate list, but there are many more classes I would love to develop.

Q: How has your research changed or grown since graduation?

A: My dissertation examined representations of Native Americans in outdoor historical dramas. I have continued that research, looking at changes to several dramas in recent years. My research has exposed me to many Native artists who are trying to change the inaccurate and problematic depictions perpetuated by many of these dramas. This led me to contemporary Native artists and their works. Thus, what began as a focus on representations in outdoor historical dramas grew into contemporary Native theatre practitioners and their work. My interest in performances of frontier mythology, combined with Native-produced performances, directed me to look at performances of the American West in the ghost town section of Knott's Berry Farm in California. This project is still in fairly early stages of development but one that I am excited to pursue.

Q: What did you learn in your time away from BGSU that you're able to bring to the program's undergraduate and graduate students?

A: At past institutions, I actively participated in professional development opportunities presented by the centers for teaching and learning. From book circles and learning communities to curriculum and technology workshops, I learned a great deal from these offerings.

I value my increased experience as a teacher, director, researcher, and scholar. In each of these capacities, I have interacted with myriad groups of people and have been exposed to new ideas, methodologies, perspectives, etc. My continued involvement in conferences has helped me further develop as a scholar and member of our disciplinary community. Though I did my doctorate at BG, I am able to share new perspectives and approaches from the other institutions with which I have been affiliated.

DIALOGUE WITH...



BRIANNA SMITH

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT,
FILM PRODUCTION
AUTHOR OF *FAMILY TIES*

Q: Your screenplay, *Family Ties*, is being produced by the BGSU Department of Theatre and Film. How did that happen?

A: I was in a screenwriting class in spring 2017 with Cynthia Baron. The students were required to develop and write a screenplay for the course. Cynthia later informed us of a new opportunity the film department was putting together, which entailed one of our screenplays being used in a "Studio Experience" class the following semester. I decided to send my screenplay in. I was chosen for the Fall 2017 Studio Experience class. I was very excited because this was the first time the film department had ever used a student's screenplay for the course.

Q: What inspired you to write the screenplay?

A: I get most of my inspiration from life experiences and conversations I've had with the people about experiences that have changed them in some way. I think connecting with people through struggles, through pain, through love, and through laughter is something everyone can relate to in some shape or form. I lost my mother in high school and she is one of the biggest motivations I've had in following my dreams and finding my passion in life, which is writing.

Q: What was your role in the production process? What did the process teach you about yourself as a writer, and about screenwriting?

A: In pre-production I was apprenticing with Thomas Castillo, who is the director of *Family Ties*. I observed how to lead a crew, how to direct actors, and how to expand my vision even further than I originally

expected. During production I showed up to all the shooting dates and was an on-set consultant and a directing intern. Thomas was very open to me being on set and being a part of production. He even let me direct a few shots, which was awesome. In post-production I worked on the marketing and promotion for the film. I learned that I don't want to just be a writer, I want to direct and create my own content.

Q: What drew you to the film program at BGSU?

A: I always knew I wanted to be a filmmaker. Since elementary school, acting, film, and television had been a huge interest of mine. Once I took theatre in high school and was faced with my stage fright, I knew acting was no longer my passion but I still wanted to be a part of it in some way. So the next best thing was making movies. I came to college knowing exactly what I wanted to study. I enjoyed the courses the film department offered and enjoyed the knowledge I was attaining about filmmaking.

Q: What are your career goals after graduation?

A: I want to keep creating. I don't want to lose my passion for screenwriting because of the 9-to-5 job I have to get to pay the bills. I know artists have a hard time "making it" and finally getting that "big break," but I truly want to be able to continue to touch people through my writing and storytelling. I want someone to watch an episode of a television show or a scene from a movie, or to read a page from a book I've written, and be moved by it. I want a little girl at home to be able to watch something I've created and believe that she can do it too.



SHARE

We want to hear from our alumni! We love to keep in touch, and we love to celebrate you! We want to know where you're living, what you're doing, and where you're working. Please email your news and updates to theatrefilm@bgsu.edu

DIALOGUE WITH...



HEATHER HILL
ALUMNA, MUSICAL
THEATRE (2017)

Q: Since you finished your degree at BGSU, you've become an international student in the UK. Tell us what degree you're working on now, and where.

A: Right now, I am pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in musical theatre at the Guildford School of Acting (GSA) in Guildford, England. It's a conservatory drama school that is a part of the Federation of Drama Schools and accredited through the University of Surrey.

Q: How is your program structured, and when do you anticipate completing it?

A: My program is a two-year post-graduate course. The structure is actually still being figured out. The school has a one-year MA course, and this year just added the MFA two-year course. It is actually the first MFA musical theatre course in the country! So, my class of nine will be the first to graduate with an MFA in musical theatre in the UK.

During the first year we take classes in dance techniques (ballet, tap, jazz, core/cardio), voice and acting, and singing and audition technique. We also do a research and rehearsal module that includes musical theatre history, structure, and a Golden Age musical project. In the spring we create a devised musical, and also rehearse and perform a full-length musical. Then next year, the second year MFAs will work on a new musical that has been developed for them by GSA and be placed with a professional theatre company over Christmas. At the end of the course in June 2019, we will have a showcase in London.

Q: How did you hear about your current program, and what was the admissions process like?

A: I heard of GSA through Drama UK, which is now the Federation of Drama Schools. It's an organization that accredits drama schools in the United Kingdom. The admissions process was similar to the process at BGSU. I had to apply and be invited to audition, then I had a full-day audition with singing, acting, and dance. At the end of the day, they told us whether we were in or not. There were about twenty in my audition. They cut sixteen, waitlisted two, and gave spots to me and my friend Rosie.

Q: What have you found to be the biggest challenge in international study so far?

A: The biggest challenge definitely has been the adjustment to a new country and being away from home. You have to relearn how to live and balance everything. I don't have a car so I have to navigate the bus. A lot of the food is different so I had to relearn what things are called. The healthcare is different so I had to navigate that. And although they speak English, so many words and terms are different. They teach tap and ballet using almost completely different terms! And then there are all the accents! It really wasn't until November that I felt settled in.

Q: How did your time at BGSU prepare you for your current experience?

A: What BGSU taught me the most was how to be an artist and an academic at the same time. That's something that people who have just done conservatories have seemed to struggle with. Although we all hated the general education classes, the knowledge I gained in them has helped me to have a deeper understanding of time periods, characters, and the general world.

Q: What advice do you have for BGSU students who would like to study internationally?

A: DO IT. It's scary and it's stressful, but there's nothing like learning and experiencing the arts in a different country and culture. Your skills and knowledge will expand exponentially. Don't be afraid of big, seemingly unreachable goals. Getting into a UK drama school is statistically harder than getting into Oxford or Cambridge, and yet here I am. If they only take eight out of one hundred, there is absolutely no reason you can't be one of the eight.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIVITIES

FACULTY

Angela Ahlgren, PhD

Publication: *Drumming Asian America: Taiko, Performance, and Cultural Politics*. Oxford University Press, April 2018.

Presentation: "Dancing Japanese: *Bugaku*, Balanchine, and the Dance Theatre of Harlem." Theatre History Symposium, Mid-America Theatre Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Service: Symposium Chair, Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium. Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Jonathan Chambers, PhD

Award (with Lesa Lockford): Kurt Weill Foundation Grant for BGSU's April 2018 production of *The Threepenny Opera*.

Heidi Nees, PhD

Presentation: "Spinning One's Wheels: *Unto These Hills*' 'Return of a Classic.' Theatre History Symposium, Mid-America Theatre Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Presentation: "What's Old is Old Again: Returning to *Unto These Hills* Problematic Past." Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Lesa Lockford, PhD

Presentation (co-authored with Ron Pelias): "Collaboration as Love." International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana, IL, May 2018.

Presentation: "Raising Our Voices in Troubled Times." International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana, IL, May 2018.

Award (with Jonathan Chambers): Kurt Weill Foundation Grant for BGSU's April 2018 production of *The Threepenny Opera*.

Kelly Mangan, MFA

Award: Peggy Ezekiel Award in Design and Technology – Scene Design for *Twelfth Night*. Ohio Valley Section of USITT.

Presenter: Ohio State Thespian Festival. Dayton, OH, March 2018.

Workshop Facilitator: "Scene Painting Techniques." North Area Thespian Conference, Avon, OH, January 2018.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Leesi Akubue

Presentation: "The Evolution of Musical Theatre in Nigeria." Theatre History Symposium, Mid-America Theatre Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Presentation: "Growth of Musical Theatre in Nigeria and the Way Forward." Popular Culture Association National Conference, Indianapolis, IN, March 2018.

Service/Panel Moderator: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium. Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Mohamadreza Babaei

Presentation: "Zar: Exorcising the Demon of Black Slavery in 19th Century Iran." Theatre History Symposium, Mid-America Theatre Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Presentation: "Tehran to Miami: The (Queer) Performance of Migration." American Comparative Literature Association, Los Angeles, CA, March 2018.

Service/Panel Moderator: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Robert Barnett

Service/Breakfast Committee: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Trey DeIpo

Service/Lunch Committee: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Rebecca K. Hammonds

Service/Panel Moderator: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Justin Hopper

Service/Lunch Committee: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Jordan Hurst

Service/Breakfast Committee: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Phoenix Jacob

Service/Staff: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Seung-A Liz Lee

Service/Reception Committee: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Alesa McGregor

Service/Graduate Co-chair: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIVITIES

Cody Page

Presentation: "Representation on the Small Screen: Subverting the Burying Your Gays Trope." Popular Culture Association National Conference, Indianapolis, IN, March 2018.

Service/Publicity Coordinator/Designer and Technical Assistant: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Minwoo Park

Dramaturg: *Helen, Pretext for War*. Mid-America Theatre Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Presentation: "A Call for Contemporary World Theatre Studies: Examined through *Changgeuk*, A Korean Musical Theatre." Popular Culture Association National Conference, Indianapolis, IN, March 2018.

Service/Breakfast Committee: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Daniel Ricken

Presentation: "Tamburlaine the Great Jew? Jewish Representation in Christopher Marlowe." Theatre History Symposium, Mid-America Theatre Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Presentation: "'You Just Have to be Open to It': Analyzing the Directing Process of *Next Fall*." Mid-America Theatre Conference, Practice/Production Symposium, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Presentation: "'Just a Little Fun Between Friends': Negotiating the Movie System to Find Success." Popular Culture Association National Conference, Indianapolis, IN, March 2018.

Service/Panel Moderator: "Movements and Impulses, Theatrical and Otherwise." Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Service/Vice President, Graduate Student Senate, BGSU.

Service/Chair, Shanklin Research Colloquium and Awards, BGSU.

Service/Chair, Board of Trustees Graduate Representative Search Committee, BGSU.

Dennis Sloan

Publication/Book Review: "Stanislavsky and Yoga by Sergei Tcherkasski, and How to Read a Play: Script Analysis for Directors," by Damon Kiely. *Society for Directors and Choreographers Journal*, April 2018.

Presentation: "Buenos Vecinos: Staging Latinidad in the Federal Theatre Project's Latin Unit." Theatre History Symposium, Mid-America Theatre Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2018.

Service/Graduate Co-Chair: Great Lakes Theatre Scholars Symposium, Bowling Green, OH, January 2018.

Service/Co-Chair: Inclusion Committee, Graduate Student Caucus, American Society for Theatre Research.

Service/Co-Chair: Web Resources Committee, American Society for Theatre Research.

Undergraduate theatre major Harmon Andrews was awarded an Alpha Psi Omega Scholarship for outstanding achievement in theatre work and for academic performance. His accomplishment was celebrated at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Theatre Conference in March, and will be announced in the June 15, 2018 issue of *Playbill* magazine.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Alpha Psi Omega (APO)

The purpose of Alpha Psi Omega is to promote the development of professional skills during and after the undergraduate experience. APO hopes to provide students with skills that will help them through undergraduate auditions, and to make the most of what the BGSU Department of Theatre and Film has to offer. Throughout the year, APO holds workshops, readings, and discussions. The organization brings in outside artists and hosts lectures and workshops with faculty members.

BGReel/UFO

BGReel and the University Film Organization (UFO) are the university's two student film organizations. They hold weekly meetings, attend presentations on film production and film studies, and host the 48-Hour Film Festivals and the annual Film and Media Festival. The organizations' goals are to provide film-related knowledge, experiences, and connections to help members become successful filmmakers.

Graduate Student Theatre Organization (GuSTO)

The mission of the Graduate Student Theatre Organization is to foster professional and collegial community and development among graduate students in the BGSU Department of Theatre and Film. GuSTO hosts research events, production talkbacks, and potluck lunches for all main stage productions.

Musical Theatre Students (MuTS)

MuTS exists in order to create strong bonds between individuals who are interested in musical theatre, to bring musical theatre to the forefront of events on campus, to entertain the public, and to prepare for our futures in the business of theatre. MuTS holds free, themed cabarets twice per semester with open participation, and hosts the annual Broadway Cares BG charity benefit in January, which benefits Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Members try to take at least one group trip to a professional touring show per year.



CONTACT

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