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DRAMA & DANCE NEWS

Official Newsletter of UVA Department of Drama

Greetings from the Chair...

It is with excitement that we kickstart the new Drama Newsletter this holiday season! Please bear with us as we find our rhythm and style. We want to hear from you, so let us know what types of information you are most interested in and be sure to tell us what you're up to so we can share it in future editions.

August 2024 marked my 30th year on the faculty at UVA and the beginning of my first term as Chair of Drama. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to channel my curiosity and creative energies into serving and supporting the incredible people in our Drama and Dance programs, as well as our extended communities across Grounds, in central Virginia, and throughout the profession.

I'd like to share special thanks to our outgoing Chair, Richard Will, who led the Department through six of the most challenging years in my tenure here. Richard's kind and steady leadership not only helped us navigate tumultuous times but also brought our community closer together and set the Department on a renewed course toward excellence.

As classes come to a close before the winter break here in central Virginia, the Department of Drama and Dance programs are celebrating a fruitful fall semester. This fall, our stages and classrooms have been filled with powerful performances, insightful lectures, a range of guest artists, and an ongoing commitment to producing live performance. Whether you are here with us in Charlottesville or supporting us from afar, your support is invaluable.

The 2024-25 season is composed of captivating productions exploring themes of love, resilience, connection, discovery, and community engagement. Our students and faculty work tirelessly to bring these works to life. From innovative adaptations to original pieces, our productions invite audiences to experience the transformative power of theater and dance. We hope you'll join us in the audience, support us online, or enjoy show highlights shared through this newsletter.

Our department also celebrates academic achievements and professional developments across our community. Faculty members have been invited to present at conferences, students have earned accolades for their creative projects, and alumni continue to make their mark in the industry. We're thrilled to share some of these milestones in the pages that follow, and we hope they inspire and encourage everyone in our community.

Here at UVA Drama, we are especially grateful for the generosity and support of our alumni and friends. Your contributions directly support new opportunities, scholarship support, and cutting-edge facilities that we are able to provide for our students.

To all who have contributed, thank you. Without you, we could not do what we do and we are deeply appreciative of your commitment to the future of our department.

Thank you for being part of our vibrant community. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event, hearing from you, and continuing to build upon the remarkable legacy of UVA Drama.

Here's to a season filled with creativity, collaboration, and the joy of performance!



With warm regards,

R. Lee Kennedy
Chair,
UVA Department of Drama

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New Faculty Q&A:

Yunina Barbour-Payne, Rising Scholar Fellow & Lecturer

Yunina Barbour-Payne joins the Drama Department as a research fellow and will teach Dramaturgy in the spring semester. For her full bio, visit [her page on the UVA Drama website](#).

Q: What led you to become an educator?

A: When I began to understand myself as a teacher it was through a role. In undergrad I was responsible for performing forgotten histories at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The work of conveying truths of the past through embodiment, which in my case was as a historical interpreter of narratives of formerly enslaved people, required performance pedagogy. One of the first stories I told was of Ella Sheppard, a composer, music teacher and leader of the Fisk Jubilee Singers. I was guided through the process of researching, scripting, and performing under the mentorship of my theatre professor, Dr. Daryl Harris, and the education staff at the museum. That meant that my character preparation required a personal education that ultimately planted a seed of responsibility to “get it right.”

My audiences would often engage with my performance as if it were an actual account of history. Performing, I would teach hypothetical music lessons and tell stories, both of which were inherently educational. Ultimately, I became an educator by playing an educator and seeing the ways that teaching transferred new or different knowledges and changed public perceptions.



“I am excited to be here; if you see my door open, please say hello!”

Q: Which subject is your favorite to teach or which is your favorite to learn?

A: I love teaching and learning about health, especially health classes that include a focus on the ways that engagement in the arts improves wellbeing. As a K-12 educator, I had the most fun teaching health classes through the lens of the arts. At the root of all of my teaching is a deep belief that visual and performance arts can lead to healing. When I started teaching at the college level, I found that the idea of connecting art and health was not one that I would leave behind. I thought about creativity and community in new ways, developing an institute called “Art and Flow.” This intergenerational space offered classes and workshop time to both create and respond to art. “Art and Flow” is about being in community with other artists and art in ways that inspire personal and community well-being.

Q: If you had to teach something outside of your current department, what would it be?

A: It would be something like “Power of Story,” and would aim to examine storytelling through a lens that interrogates how stories are used in our everyday lives and the ways in which the value and validity of how stories are perceived can impact the tellers and those listening to those stories. For example, I would be interested in a course where we observe stories in different contexts ie. Stories told during elections, stories told by survivors, stories told in childhood and stories for and on the stage. I am most interested in critically considering the ways that stories linger even after they are told.

Q: Is there anything you are excited for or nervous about in your first year at UVA?

A: I am really excited about getting to know the community! Even in my short time here I've witnessed some incredible community gatherings like Descendants Day celebrations.

I'm nervous about winter in the mountains. I've been in Texas for the last 12 years; I'm pretty sure that it is a little bit different here. I need to get a winter jacket that will actually keep me warm!

Q: Anything else that you would like to share?

A: I have always been committed to female-driven theater. Before I began my doctoral work, I performed with Boiling Point players, a company that is committed to all female interpretations of Shakespeare. While working on my doctorate I stayed in my body and maintained a commitment to honing my craft. I started taking roles that required me to play multiple characters. Whether they were world premieres, interpretations of Shakespeare or other classics like Sherlock Holmes, I love taking on these roles because 1) the people I worked with were so much fun and it was always a good time and 2) because I was actively expanding my range as an actor. I have played as many as 7-10 roles in one show!

New Faculty Q&A:

Karim Chebli, Lecturer, Drama

Karim Chebli joins the Drama Department as a lecturer in Speaking in Public, Acting I, and Improvisation. For Karim's full bio, visit [his page on the UVA Drama website](#)



"When I started my studies in drama, I never imagined that I would transition from acting to teaching, writing, directing, and producing!"

Q: What led you to become an educator?

A: Initially I was a business graduate. You cannot know if you are meant for a 9 to 5 career until you try it. So, after graduation, I worked in an office and realized this was not what I wanted to do, so I switched to education. Maybe both of my parents being educators had an influence, I cannot say for sure.

What I do remember is that I had a grade four student who raised his hand and asked "What did you want to be when you were younger?" I didn't want to lie and say "I wanted to be a teacher," because I had dreamed of going into theater. So, when that contract ended, that experience stayed with me and led me to shift into balancing between my artistry and academia. I enrolled in a theater program as an undergrad at the same time that I was doing my masters work in education.

Q: What subject is your favorite to teach or to learn?

A: Mostly, I enjoy teaching devising, because it gives us a lot of freedom, and I enjoy the creative process with the students. Recently, I am more and more interested in playwriting, so if I were to focus on learning something right now it would be writing and playwriting specifically.

Q: If you had to teach something outside of your current department, what would it be?

A: Given my experience in education, I'm always interested in supporting educators and their curriculum design integrating theater and play in academia. So, most likely in the education department.

Q: Is there anything you are excited for or nervous about in your first year at UVA?

A: With new students stepping into our classes every semester, I am excited about what I will learn from them and this is really what makes our profession so interesting.

One thing I'm definitely worried about is the war happening back at home, so while I am here and trying to devote all of my time and energy to UVA, there is this sound in my head that is always tickling. It's not that easy to balance between being in one place and having your thoughts and your heart in another place.

Q: When you're having a rough day, what cheers you up?

A: Music! I usually sing - I'm constantly singing in Arabic! It's not that easy when I'm in a professional setting, but I find listening to music really helps to cheer me up.

Q: What's your favorite thing to do in the Charlottesville area (so far)?

A: Well, I've only been here a little while, but I really enjoy getting out into nature and the sunshine. I went on a great hike at Mt. Ida and hopefully will get to check out more of the different hiking and nature trails in the area!

Q: What's something that not many people know about you?

A: I've started this new habit now, with every play that I write and/or produce, I tattoo it on my body. So, let's hope those keep on coming! Hopefully I will have a sleeve by the end.

New Faculty Q&A:

Maria Villanueva Asst. Prof. & Gen. Faculty

Maria Villanueva joins the Drama Department as a professor of Video Design I as well as Art courses Intro to Studio Art and Intro to New Media I in Art. For her full bio, visit [her page on the UVA Drama website](#)

Q: What led you to become an educator?

A: I've always been interested in education, and not just being an educator but actually being a student and having access to education. I am originally from Mexico and I grew up in a rural area where schools were very few and far between. Unfortunately, I couldn't continue school beyond 6th grade. One of the reasons I came to the U.S. was to pursue an education and learn all the things I had missed back in Mexico. I always relate back to that young child who wanted to go to school and could not. My own journey as a student has shaped my approach to education and pedagogy. This fuels me to be a dedicated and passionate instructor.



Q: Which subject is your favorite to teach or to learn?

A: I love learning new things and engaging in research of new topics and subjects related to art and technology. I love teaching interdisciplinary classes where we can engage in various topics and use a range of media. I love seeing students exploring and experimenting. For me, learning is about what can be gained through actively engaging in the process and the surprising “aha” moments along the way. Even in the unavoidable failures, there is something to be learned and appreciated. I am a strong believer in the process of things.

Q: What are you excited or nervous about for the upcoming year?

A: I am excited about exploring UVA, Charlottesville, and Virginia as a whole. I love learning about the “local” whenever I move somewhere. I've lived in five different states since moving to the United States and I've learned so much from each one. Whether it is the weather, the culture, the people, the environment, or just exploring, I am excited about seeing it all.

I am not particularly nervous about anything so far. Everyone has been so welcoming, and I feel that I already have friends here. It is nice to find people that I can go to if I feel nervous about something.

Q: When you're having a rough day, what cheers you up?

A: I love the outdoors, and I love the mountains. Hiking up a mountain definitely cheers me up and lifts my spirits. The exhaustion of the hike helps me shed the stress of things and getting to the top of a mountain makes me feel new and refreshed, like I accomplished something. I wish I could do it more often.

Q: What is your favorite thing to do in the Charlottesville area?

A: I love that Charlottesville is so close to Shenandoah National Park. The first thing that I did was to purchase a national park pass and went hiking up a mountain. I love all the nearby parks and I am fascinated by the ivy wrapped around the trees creating an otherworldly landscape. I'm already thinking how to include that in my art practice and researching more about this phenomenon.

Q: Anything else that you would like to share?

A: I am excited to learn more about people at UVA and all the amazing things that happen here. There's so much going on—from groundbreaking research to innovative teaching methods and inspiring student projects. I can't wait to collaborate with colleagues across different departments, attend thought-provoking lectures and seminars, and hopefully contribute to some of the cutting-edge work being done here. UVA has such a rich history and culture, and I'm eager to immerse myself in it, whether that's through campus events, interdisciplinary initiatives, or just casual conversations with students and faculty. I think there's a real opportunity here to grow as an educator and researcher, and to be part of something great.

“My own journey as a student has shaped my approach to education and pedagogy. This fuels me to be a dedicated and passionate instructor.”

Faculty & Staff Updates

Rising Scholar Fellow and Lecturer Yunina Barbour-Payne was awarded an esteemed Affrilachia Scholar for the [October 2024 Affrilachia Summit](#) in Mt. Sterling Kentucky. The award recognizes her expertise in Black performance, arts and storytelling in Appalachia. "The Affrilachia Summit is a groundbreaking national convening that seeks to celebrate, codify, and uplift the under-represented voices of rural Black artists from Central Appalachia. By bringing together a diverse cross-section of the public, as well as artists, musicians, scholars, academics, and researchers, the summit aims to create a space for critical dialogue and inquiry that will help to shape the future of the Affrilachian experience as it pertains to racial justice through creative means."



Yunina will also offer a new dramaturgy course this Spring. This course is an immersive exploration of the art of dramaturgy through the lens of Black playmaking

Costume Designer and Technologist Caroline Cook and **Technical Director Michael Waldron** continue to foster community and engage students through department-hosted social events. This semester included a "Friendsgiving" event with turkey, biscuits, pies, as well as potluck snacks and side dishes for all to enjoy. The event was a lovely opportunity to spend time with friends interested and engaged in drama and dance.



The annual Jingle Ball, co-hosted with the department-affiliated student group, Virginia Players, provided an additional opportunity to gather and find joy in our department community before the winter break.



Drama Lecturer Cady Garey directed *What the Constitution Means to Me*, by Heidi Schreck, which played at Live Arts, September 28th through October 28th. The play takes audiences back to the teenage years of the playwright's life, when she traveled the country giving speeches about the Constitution at American Legion halls for prize money that would help her pay for college.

Drama Lecturer Tovah Close played the lead character of Heidi (the playwright), sharing Heidi's very personal journey, along with the stories of her mother and grandmothers, to dissect the document penned by our "founding fathers" over 200 years ago. Act two shifts gears into a live debate as Heidi takes on a young debater to ask: Should we abolish the United States' Constitution?

Cast 2 of the production also featured members of the department: **Assistant Business Manager Mandy Shuker** as Heidi and **Business Manager James Scales** as Mike.

[Read a review from Cville Weekly](#)

Associate Professor Mona Kasra, on sabbatical for the year, is writing a new experimental play with collaborator Adam M. Kassim, *Dreaming in the Space Between*, which is an exploration of the complexities of MENA (Middle Eastern and North African) identities, experiences, and diasporic existence. She is also designing media for [Andy Warhol In Iran](#), a play by Brent Askari at [Mosaic Theater](#) Washington DC.



Faculty & Staff Updates (*continued*)



Associate Professor Marianne Kubik spent her August at Scotland's 2024 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, facilitating both the International Collegiate Theatre Festival and the American High School Theatre Festival for WorldStrides and Live Arts. Kubik worked with play directors to streamline their productions for touring inside the Fringe's historic Venue 45, and she mentored students onsite in installing their productions safely and creatively within the venue. This was Kubik's fifth Fringe festival with WorldStrides.

In September, Kubik travelled to Martinique to collaborate with Martinican theater company Association Majorine on *Following Mary*, a new play about historical pirate Mary Read. Spoken entirely in English (rather than French or Creole), "Following Mary" will tour Caribbean schools with a focus on using the Arts to help students learning English practice the language. Kubik served as the Maitresse d'armes (Master of Arms) for the production, designing the pirate sword fights and teaching the actors her fight choreography.

<https://www.instagram.com/korzemo/reel/DADo-3gMBej/>

Associate Professor Marcy Linton's research and cataloging into the digital library, Jstor, of the University of Virginia's Historic Clothing Collection was featured in the **August 2024 issue of VA Living**. Her work with the collection is supported by a Faculty Research Grant for the Arts. Linton was recently invited to apply for a grant from the Jefferson Trust to migrate the collection into a museum gallery system that would be available online.

[See additional coverage in UVA Today!](#)

[A webpage featuring the Historic Clothing Collection](#) has been added to the Drama Department website, as well, and it includes an overview and photos of a few featured items!

Linton loaned her expertise to the University's Fall Faculty Lecture Series, offering a session titled **FAST FASHION: Be Fashionable & Live Sustainably**, exploring the questions, as consumers in a highly unregulated industry:

- How often do we consider our garments' impact on the environment, human beings, or society when we score that "good deal"?
- How do our clothing choices impact the world around us?
- How can we make a difference by considering sustainable alternatives?



In a similar mindset, the **Costume Shop** and its **Manager Sarah Bryan** have instituted a textile recycling process! Since its start in spring 2023, 45-90 pounds of material have been recycled each semester, including fabric scraps from student projects in the Costume Technology class and from costume builds for each semester's productions.

The process is facilitated by For Days, a company with a simple mission: "To keep stuff out of the landfill." Not only does textile recycling reduce the volume of textiles added to landfills, it also reduces carbon dioxide emissions and water usage.

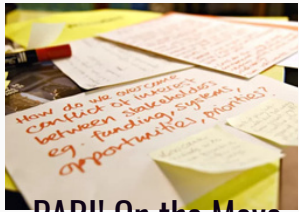
Scenic Designer and **Assistant Professor Ant Ma** recently attended **The Pipeline Project in New York City**. Supported by the Theater Advocacy Collective and Disney Theatrical Group the project seeks to highlight women, femme-identifying, and non-binary mid-career designers to increase their representation in Regional theatre. Ant's upcoming scenic design work includes Kentucky at Fordham's theater at Lincoln Center and Cymbeline for National Asian American Theatre Company at Classical Stage Company in New York City.

Professor Ma joined the Drama Department faculty last year and will be teaching two new scenic design courses this spring. Designing Spaces (DRAM 1559) offers students the opportunity to explore how ordinary rooms, streets, parks, vehicles, and other spaces of daily life can be transformed by storytelling and creative performance. In Theatre Design, Technology, (DRAM 2010) participants will examine the art of theatre and performance through the process of design and implementation of the design. Guests will join the Theatre Design, Technology class to talk about scenic, light, projections, sound, costumes, and more.



Faculty & Staff Updates (*continued*)

Associate Professor Caitlin McLeod travelled to Paris this summer for *PARI! On the Move*'s flagship international mentoring program that supports artists working internationally as part of her ongoing work as producer for *Raphael's Islands*, Directed by UVA Alumna Alexandra Déglise.

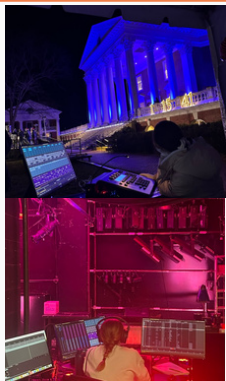
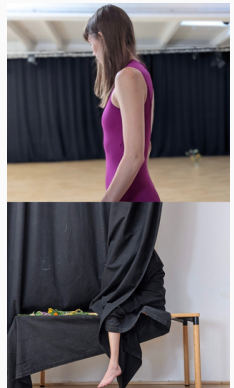


PARI! On the Move

PARI! International Support and Reflection Course, aims to enable the initiation or redeployment of an international strategy for supported structures/organizations (companies, groups, collectives, ensembles, etc. in fields of performing arts and music) around five main axes: artistic mobility, networking, cultural cooperation, transmission and dissemination. Selection is competitive; of 96 applicants from across France, 17 were selected for the year-long course of development. Each of the 17 teams comprise two to three partners. Supported by the Ministry of Culture of France and the French Institute, coordinated by On the Move.

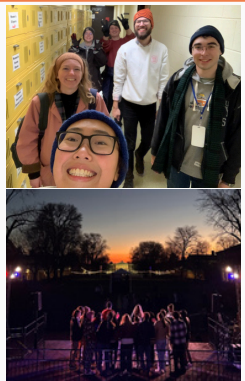
This summer, **Assistant Professor Katie Schetlick** was selected to attend **ImpulsTanz**, an international dance festival in Vienna, Austria, as part of the festival's ATLAS Program. The program "offers artists a dynamic environment for their artistic development and to meet two of their central needs: first, to have access to studio space to do research and work on pieces, and second, to receive new input by participating in weekly workshops, by watching international productions and by exchanging ideas with artists from more than 100 countries." Katie worked closely with mentor **Angelique Willkie**. During her 5 weeks in Vienna, receiving dramaturgical advice for a new work tentatively titled, *pressing matters*. A first solo iteration of *pressing matters* was performed at an informal showing at the end of the festival. Katie plans to expand this work by inviting other performers into the process this January during a residency period.

*Image Credit: **pressing matters**, Renweg Studios (2024); photo by Irini Kalaitzidi*



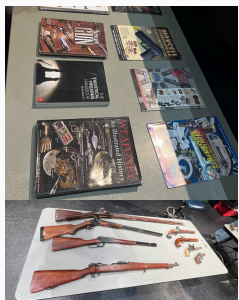
Lighting Designer and Technologist Steven Spera supported our students in the lighting shop as they designed, programmed, and executed the theatrical lighting elements of UVA's 2024 **Lighting of the Lawn** (LotL) on Friday, December 6th.

In addition to welcoming and celebrating the holiday season, LotL celebrates the spirit of community and the joy and strength of togetherness. Several of the students who work in the lighting shop (seen in the upper right photo) are also part of a larger committee that plans and executes the event in its entirety each year, which includes performances by student groups, various types of lighting effects and installations, and a livestream for those who cannot attend in-person.



Academy Award-winning director and **Drama Lecturer Paul Wagner's** latest documentary **Georgia O'Keeffe: the Brightness of Light** was featured (and sold out!) in this year's Virginia Film Festival.

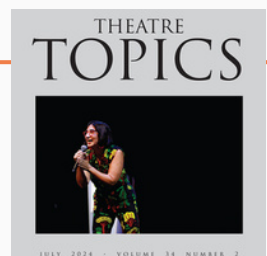
The biographical film explores the life and art of America's iconic modern artist and features Claire Danes as the voice of Georgia O'Keeffe, narration by Hugh Dancy, original music by Emilie Levienaise-Farrouch, and commentary from the leading O'Keeffe art historians and biographers.



Technical Director Michael Waldron attended a Firearm Safety training provided by Jim Guy, a member of the Society of Props Managers who has over 30 years' experience working in film, stage, and television. The workshop was given in three parts:

- a practical history of firearms from the invention of gunpowder through the development of automatic weapons;
- a firearms use on stage, starting with pre-production planning – with an emphasis on weapon and ammunition choice – and moving through the rehearsal and blocking process to backstage procedure and onstage use and safety; and
- a practical demonstration of safety tests for the various weapon types and ammunitions with a question and answer period.

Associate Professor Katelyn Hale Wood co-edited the July issue of *Theatre Topics* with colleagues Matthew McMahon (Emerson College), Grace Kessler Overbeke (Columbia College), and Maria de Simone (MIT). The special issue, titled "Comedy and Embodiment," features excellent scholarly essays on stand-up comedy, humor in theatre history, comedy and pedagogy, as well as an interview Wood conducted with stand-up comedian Negin Farsad. [Check it out here!](#)



Alumnae Updates



Kay Barrett, a Jefferson Scholar who graduated from UVA in May 2020 as a distinguished major in English with a drama minor, was recently awarded the [Knight-Hennessy Scholarship](#) at Stanford University where she is now a PhD Candidate in English.

Speaking with Matt Kelly of UVA Today, Barrett said: “The Knight-Hennessy will empower me to chase my ambitions both inside and outside of academia. As a Ph.D. candidate in English literature, I will investigate Black science fiction in novels and contemporary film. My work advocates for a tradition of speculative thought that connects the Reconstruction Era to our current times. Alongside this research, I will also dive into the publishing industry, carving out a space for Black authors of science, horror, fantasy and mystery.” [Read the full article here.](#)

As a Marshall Scholar, Barrett graduated from the University of Oxford with a Master of Studies in 19th-century English, and from the University of Edinburgh with an Master of Science degree in Intermediality: Literature, Film and the Arts in Dialogue.

Erica Choe, who graduated with an Interdisciplinary degree from the College in spring 2015 with focus on Dance, Psychology, and Arts Administration, was thrilled to be a part of [Kunstraum’s Show this October](#), exhibiting 2 pieces that she has been working with this year. “In the making of these works, I’ve learned a lot about what fascinates me as an artist and a researcher, and where my obsessions gravitate. Physicalizing, reproducing, ritualizing and ghosting are all actions that I’ve applied throughout my process, contemplating what it means to be human through various forms and mediums.”

no one has to die for me to grieve (2024) is a multi-part installation on the ritualization, physicalization and reproduction of grief. “In this work, I chose to isolate the experience of grief as the epitome of our humanness, something untouchable by technology, and something that bonds us to one another in our collective experience.”



Ghost of my shell (2024) considers the porosity of the skin that ostensibly separates where I end and you begin. Curator Katelynn Dunn writes: “The tender work taps into the desire of the artist to defy the impoverished barrier of the human body and real delineated borders to permeate into other beings.”

www.erikachoe.com

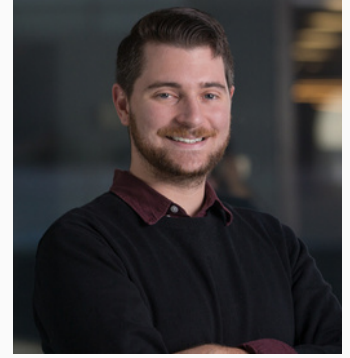


Lear deBessonet, James J. Bailey III Scholar and Class of 2002, has been named the new Artistic Director of [Lincoln Center Theater](#). Her appointment continues a notable New York theater career, including most recently her brief tenure as artistic director of New York City Center’s Encores! While with the company, she directed two shows, *Into the Woods* and *Once Upon a Mattress*, both of which have transferred to Broadway. *Into the Woods* earned six Tony Award nominations, including best revival of a musical and best direction of a musical. deBessonet will succeed André Bishop who previously announced that he would end his 33-year tenure with Lincoln Center Theater in June 2025. [Read more in American Theatre...](#)

Alumnae Updates (*continued*)

Stéphane Glynn, who graduated in 2013 with a BA in Media Studies & Technology, Dance minor, was appointed as a member of the Award Jury for the [2024 San Francisco Dance Film Festival](#), which featured 90+ dynamic dance films representing 25+ countries. Jury members are selected for their formidable dance, film, and cultural expertise.

Stéphane is the Head of Production at [Vavani Productions](#), an Emmy-winning prosocial film production company. It was during his time as a dance minor at UVA that he fell in love with screendance, and after earning his BA, his passion for filmmaking led him to Utah, where he completed an MFA in Film & Media Arts and a Screendance Certificate at the University of Utah. Stéphane was also one of the co-founders of the Screendance Collective (2013-2019), a group dedicated to curating and discussing screendance.

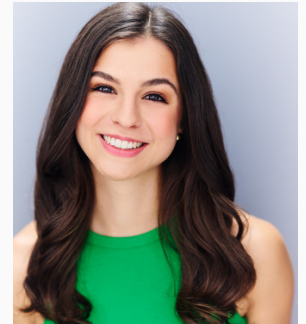


Brendan Gray (B.A. Drama, '97) recently celebrated 25 years of living and working in New York City. An initial focus on theatrical lighting design evolved into lighting and production design for a mix of special events, concerts, corporate presentations, and more with his firm [Gray Matter Visual](#), as well as [Compose](#), a pre-production and pre-visualization studio.

Recent work features events for the US Open, the Gates Foundation, the News and Documentary Emmys, and CNN.

Payton Moledor graduated in 2020 with a B.A. in Drama and has since performed in over 10 professional productions. Payton moved to NYC after starting as Stephanie Mangano in *Saturday Night Fever* at Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre ([review link](#)). Shortly after moving to NYC, Payton performed in *Evita* at The Reve Theatre Co., alongside multiple Broadway actors ([review link](#)).

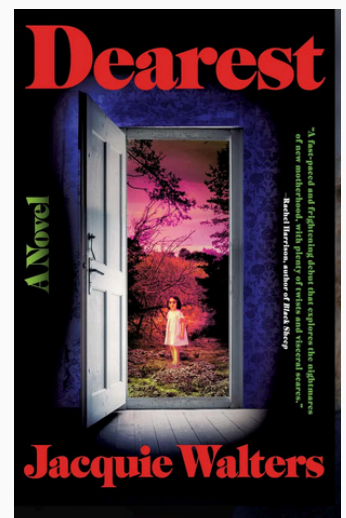
Payton also recently completed a 9-month contract portraying classic Disney characters as a mainstage vocalist on the "Disney Dream" cruise ship. Onstage, she had the chance to portray the singing wardrobe "Madame de Garderobe" in *Beauty and the Beast*, Princess Aurora, and many more classic characters.



Echols Scholar **Jacquie Walters** graduated with a B.A. in Film and Theater in 2011 and would not have guessed then that she would soon become an Emmy-nominated screenwriter and novelist. Jacquie's first novel, "Dearest," a horror novel about life as a new mother, was released in September and has received impressive reviews and was a B&N Best Horror Book of 2024.

Walters reflects on her journey from graduation to writing in [this UVA Today article by Alice Berry](#), citing her own experience as a new mother during the COVID pandemic as inspiration to bring to light the harder aspects of the postpartum journey.

Jacquie also has a new series in the works -- an adaptation of Melissa de la Cruz's bestselling vampire book series, ["Blue Bloods."](#)



(Mullholland)

Fall Productions 2024

Congratulations to the performers and creative teams for our fall productions!

Our 2024-2025 Season kicked off with *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, (Nov 8-16, Ruth Caplin Theatre,) by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, directed by Guest Director Anna Rebek. This retelling of the tale of Theseus (Teseo) and the Minotaur in the Spanish style of *comedia*, written by a philosopher, scholar, feminist and nun, provided audiences an exciting journey through adventure, romance, love triangles, swordfights, and mistaken identities!

[View the digital playbill](#)



Guest Director
Anna Rebek

Production Photos by Kori Price

The Fall Dance Concert (Nov 21-23, Culbreth Theatre), celebrated seven new pieces choreographed by faculty members and students, featuring dancers from the student body and the Charlottesville community. Choreographers for this concert addressed themes of collaboration and support across a diverse set of experiences and cultures. The works invited audiences consider the complexities of “being in relationship with”, and explored a variety of ways to navigate, process, and acknowledge events from our individual and collective journeys.

[View the digital playbill](#)



Production Photos by Tom Daly

Upcoming Productions Spring 2025

New Works

featuring UVA student playwrights and directors

February 27 – March 1, 2025

Helms Theatre

New
Works

As You Like It

Adapted by Shaina Taub and Laurie Woolery
Music and Lyrics by Shaina Taub

March 27 – 29 & April 3 – 6
Culbreth Theatre

As You
Like It
A Community
Engaged Musical

Spring Dance Concert

Kim Brooks Mata
Producer and Artistic Director

April 10 – 12, 2025
Ruth Caplin Theatre

spring
dance
concert

Rosanie Soleil

by Ina Césaire
Performed by Guest Artist in Residence ETC Caraïbe
Caitlin McLeod, Producer

April 11, 2025
Helms Theatre

Overcranked

Student Film Festival

April 28 – 29, 2025
Ruth Caplin Theatre

Over
cranked

- Interested in supporting the Department of Drama and Dance Program?
- Want to receive newsletters and updates directly via email?
- Want to volunteer or get involved in another capacity?

[Email drama@virginia.edu](mailto:drama@virginia.edu)