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OUACHITA
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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita presents “Not a Clue” as part of 2017 Muse Project Feb. 16-20

By Katie Smith

February 9, 2017

For more information, contact OBU’s news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University’s Department of Theatre Arts will present “Not a Clue” as part of the department’s annual Muse Project. This performance is a student-led, interactive, improvised mystery. Performances will be held in Verser Theatre Feb. 16-18 and 20 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 19, at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased through OBU’s Box Office.

The Muse Project allows students majoring in theatre, musical theatre or theatre education to dig deeper in their ideas and passions and have them realized in an original performance. The project involves students submitting theatrical experiences or shows they would like to produce. One proposal is accepted each year and fully produced on a Ouachita stage.

“Not a Clue” is a murder mystery loosely based on the mystery board game “Clue” and is set in the Victorian era. Because the show is improvised, no two performances will be the same. As part of the Muse Project, the show is conceptualized, written and directed by Hannah Fender, a senior musical theatre major from Maumelle, Ark.

“Every single night there will be a different murderer, and different people will be killed,” Fender explained. “Some audiences may want to see the show again, especially since there will never be the same performance twice. The audience and the actors alike have ‘not a clue’ what is going to happen since only the murderer in each show knows they’re the murderer. Everyone is essentially going to be trying to figure it out all together.”

An improvised theatre production’s content is largely made up as the play is being performed. The production typically follows a certain theme, which for this production is a Victorian-era murder mystery. Despite much of the content not following a script, Fender and the rest of the cast and crew have worked hard preparing for the production.

“We practice scenarios with several different outcomes,” Fender explained. “There is a basic framework for the show and the action that will take place, and within that framework, the actors are able to freely choose what they say and do based on what they feel is right at the moment. The rehearsals are a lot of fun, and there’s not a single night that doesn’t contain side-stitching laughter.”

Although the show focuses on murder and the process of solving the mystery, Fender said the production still will be a light experience for audiences.

“Audiences can definitely expect to laugh,” Fender said. “There is a lot of ridiculous fun that takes place in this show. They, too, will be trying to identify the murderer from the clues that the performers discover. It’s a lot of mystery and intrigue, but in the end, all will come together and we will discover ‘whodunit.’”

“What I’m looking forward to in this production is the spontaneity that comes with improvised work,” said Eric Philips, chair of Ouachita’s Department of Theatre Arts. “It adds an extra level of uncertain fun to live

theatre that already has the challenge of telling a story in front of your eyes that feels like it is happening for the first time for you. I'm going to enjoy the mysterious and Victorian locale and feel that sets us in an unfamiliar, spooky atmosphere for some playful scariness."

Fender said she first came up with the idea for an improvised show over two years ago. Her idea was based on the board game "Clue" because the game always has different outcomes where players have to work together to solve the puzzle.

"I knew I wanted to submit a Muse Project proposal and began trying to think about a show I was interested in," Fender noted. "I knew that I loved improv and that many people don't get to see improv acting, especially here at OBU."

Ouachita's Muse Project was named after the Muses in Greek mythology, goddesses of the arts and sciences. The modern term "muse" can either refer to a person or thing that inspires an artist, or it can mean to think deeply.

Tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased at the Jones Performing Arts Center Box Office weekdays from 1-5 p.m. or by calling (870) 245-5555. Tickets also may be purchased online at www.obu.edu/boxoffice. Current students may receive one free ticket from the box office with their student ID.

For more information about Ouachita's Department of Theatre Arts or the Muse Project, contact Eric Phillips at phillipse@obu.edu.

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FULL LIST OF CAST AND CREW AND FENDER'S HEADSHOT ARE AVAILABLE

AT <https://www.obu.edu/news/2017/02/09/ouachitas-department-theatre-arts-presents-not-clue-part-2017-muse-project/>.