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**OUACHITA**  
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



**NEWS**

For immediate release

**Ouachita's Department of Theatre Arts presents student-written "Painting the Roses Red" Feb. 15-19**

*By Sarah Davis*

February 1, 2018

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at [newsbureau@obu.edu](mailto:newsbureau@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University's Department of Theatre Arts will present a student-written prequel to "Alice in Wonderland" titled "Painting the Roses Red" as part of its annual Muse Project Feb. 15-19. The performances will be Thursday-Saturday, Feb. 15-17, and Monday, Feb. 19, at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee performance on Sunday, Feb. 18, at 2:30 p.m. in Verser Theatre. Tickets are \$8 each and can be purchased through OBU's Box Office.

The annual Muse Project gives students majoring in theatre, musical theatre or theatre education the opportunity to write and produce a show. Students submit experiences or shows they would like to produce, and one proposal is accepted each year for production.

The 2018 show was co-written by Jacob Hemsath, a senior musical theatre major (B.M. degree) from Wylie, Texas; Andrew Martin, a senior theatre arts major from Hot Springs Village, Ark.; and Libby Villegas, a senior music industry major from Wylie, Texas. "Painting the Roses Red" provides a delicate twist on the iconic story of Alice. It combines elements of dance, original music and puppetry to tell the history of Wonderland. However, the story is used as a medium to tackle prevalent issues such as abuse and running away from problems.

"We used the story to communicate an even bigger message of hope," Villegas said. "We talk about the struggles of substance, love and actions that symbolize how we glorify earthly things over God and how we use those things to fill voids and emptiness."

Once the storyline was complete, the co-writers used their different talents to split up the rest of the work. Hemsath took the role of directing and choreographed the production.

"It's a dream come true to have an original production at Ouachita. I've always wanted to do a project like this," Hemsath said. "I hope that this story and production will have an impact on people. I want them to laugh and cry and walk away learning something about themselves and others."

Martin helped direct by blocking the scenes with the puppet, and he also worked on the lighting, set design, costumes, makeup and props.

"The experience has been incredible. I love having such a great opportunity to collaborate with individuals and have our project come to fruition," Martin said. "I hope that people enjoy it, and I hope that it inspires them."

Villegas wrote the music and lyrics for the show and noted that this was the "coolest experience" of her life.

"If at least one person connects with this show, I will be content," Villegas said. "If at least one person can gain peace that they aren't alone, then the show has succeeded."

The Muse Project is named after the mythological Greek goddesses who personified the arts and sciences. In modern times, a muse is a person who serves as an inspiration, but the word also can refer to thinking deeply.

"We hope that theatre students will be inspired to dig deeper into areas that intrigue them by turning those ideas to realized performances," said Eric Phillips, chair of Ouachita's Department of Theatre Arts. "This program hopes to empower students to apply concepts and skills that they are learning while also creating performances and technical opportunities for fellow students."

Tickets are \$8 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 during that time. Tickets also may be purchased online at [obu.edu/boxoffice](http://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](mailto:phillipse@obu.edu).

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For a full list of cast and lead crew members, visit <https://obu.edu/news/2018/02/01/ouachitas-department-theatre-arts-presents-student-written-painting-roses-red-feb-15-19/>