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Ouachita News Bureau
Ouachita Baptist University

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Ouachita to host One-Act Play Festival May 2-3 honoring Tennessee Williams

By Ashly Stracener

April 29, 2019

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 host its annual student-directed One-Act Play Festival on Thursday, May 2, at 8 p.m. and Friday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m. Both performances, which are free and open to the public, will be held in Verser Theater.

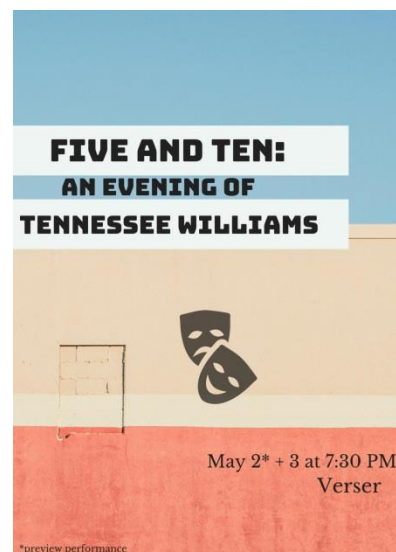
Each performance will be adapted from a Tennessee Williams play and is completely student-led, from the directors to the performers and crew.

"We decided to stick with the same playwright [as last semester] and tackle more Tennessee Williams plays," said Joe Hernandez, assistant professor of theatre arts. "His work is so valuable for student directors to explore, and the opportunity for young actors to get to work on his pieces is extremely beneficial."

Hernandez teaches a directing class, which requires each student to direct a one act play, recruit the actors and crew, design lighting and tech and execute the small but important details they learn in class, such as taking note of historical context. The festival is not only the final for the class but also allows each student to show the campus and local community what they have learned.

"I'm excited to explore all the different layers to Tennessee Williams," said Kenzie Henderson, a senior musical theatre major from Heath, Texas, who is directing "In Our Profession."

Other student directors include Jess Crook, a senior musical theatre major from Maumelle, Ark.; Philip Robinson, a senior musical theatre major from Lewisville, Texas; Zachary Myers, a senior musical theatre major from Fort Smith, Ark.; and Olivia Witcher, a senior theatre arts and Spanish double major from Little Rock, Ark.



Performances will include “The Case of the Crushed Petunias,” “Honor the Living,” “In Our Profession,” “Mooney’s Kids Don’t Cry and “Every Twenty Minutes.”

“The Case of the Crushed Petunias,” directed by Crook, will feature performers Lizzy Griffin, a senior musical theatre major from Pittsburg, Texas; Makenna Schaeffer, a freshman musical theatre major from Fouke, Ark.; and Luke Wagner, a junior elementary education major from Alexander, Ark.

“The show is about Miss Dorothy Simple learning how to leave safety behind and pursue life,” Crook said. “I’m so excited for people to see what I’ve been working on with my incredibly talented cast members, and I hope that my show pushes people to pursue life.”

“Honor the Living,” directed by Myers, will feature Emma Lawyer, a sophomore musical theatre major from Wynne, Ark., and Tyler Mann, a senior kinesiology and leisure studies major from Little Rock, Ark.

“This show stuck out to me because there honestly is not much context in the script; I saw that as a great opportunity to expand on this and use it to touch on the issues of mental illness and how it not only affects the person but the people they are close to, as well,” Myers said.

“This show touches on some very complicated matters from PTSD, marital issues, the loss of a child and how far one is willing to go to maintain the facade that they are okay,” Myers continued. “I’m very excited to be directing this play, and I hope that everyone enjoys this next round of One Acts.”

“In Our Profession,” directed by Henderson, will feature Sammy Campione, a freshman musical theatre major from Waxahachie, Texas; Scotty Scott, a musical theatre major from Russellville, Ark.; and Autumn Romines, a junior musical theatre major from Cabot, Ark. The play will take place within the world of theatre and follow the love life of a traveling actress.

“‘In Our Profession’ is about a desperate actress looking to find security and love in a man,” said Henderson. “I’m really excited to work on this show with such a talented class, and I’m excited about all that I’m going to learn throughout this process.”

“Mooney’s Kids Don’t Cry,” directed by Robinson, will feature actors Ben Adair, a sophomore kinesiology and leisure studies/fitness major from Benton, Ark., and Hannah Adair, a sophomore musical theatre major from Alexander, Ark.

“‘Mooney’s Kids Don’t Cry’ is about the struggle of a family during the Great Depression and their conflicting views on a successful, happy life,” said Robinson “I’m super excited to dive into a Tennessee Williams show.”

“Every Twenty Minutes,” directed by Witcher, will feature Paige Price, a sophomore musical theatre major from Plano, Texas, and Jeffrey Wood, a junior Christian studies/Christian ministries major from Valley Mills, Texas.

“This play places an absurd look at many issues in order to show how wrong suicide is,” Witcher said. “I am so excited to work with two very talented people and to hopefully speak an important message to the audience.”

For more information about the One-Act Play Festival, contact Joe Hernandez at hernandezj@obu.edu or (870) 245-5561.