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Rachel Moreno Moreno

Ouachita News Bureau

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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita Theatre to present One-Act Play Festival Dec. 5-6

By Rachel Moreno

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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 its annual student-directed One-Act Play Festival on Thursday, Dec. 5, and Friday, Dec. 6, at 7:30 p.m. in Verser Theatre. Both performances are free and open to the public.

The festival includes an array of performances that are produced entirely by theatre students. As an end-of-semester project for Ouachita's play directing class, a capstone course for theatre majors, the One-Act Play Festival allows students to showcase what they have learned and bring often lesser-known plays to the Ouachita and Arkadelphia communities.

"The shows they are directing this year all come from productions that were presented at the Humana Festival, which was started by playwright/artist Jon Jory in 1976," said Joe Hernandez, assistant professor of theatre arts, who teaches the play directing class. "The benefit of the students working on these pieces is that many of the plays have not been produced more than a few times. Working on relatively newer works gives college students the opportunity to find freedom in their discovery of characters, scenes, etc.

"So often, our students are easily able to access anything by typing it into Google," he continued.

"Producing a lesser-known play challenges them as directors and actors to look outside the box and see things from a different viewpoint – and to develop a voice – without having a reference point of how someone else interpreted that play."

"It's been such a fun time directing and playing with my cast, and I'm excited to see how the fun we've had in rehearsals plays out on the stage as it's shared with an audience," said Emily Johnson, a senior musical theatre major from Benton, Ark.

Other student directors include Dylan Blackwood, a senior musical theatre major from Walnut Ridge, Ark.; David Hudson, a senior theatre arts and education double major from Little Rock, Ark.; Raleigh Peterson,

a senior musical theatre major from Branson, Mo.; Emily Siemens, a senior musical theatre major from Bentonville, Ark.; Cedar Valdez, a senior musical theatre major from Rogers, Ark.; and Meagan Woodard, a senior communications & media/multimedia journalism and theatre arts double major from Alvarado, Texas.

Performances will include “Dancing With a Devil;” “Coffee Break;” “Arabian Nights;” “Trudy, Carolyn, Martha and Regina Travel to Outer Space and Have a Pretty Terrible Time There;” “Halfway;” “This Quintessence of Dust;” and “Clarisse and Larmon.”

“**Dancing With a Devil,**” directed by Blackwood, will feature performances by Bonnie Gentry, a senior musical theatre major from Arlington, Texas; Payton Hickman, a sophomore musical theatre major from Siloam Springs, Ark.; and Hailey Smith, a sophomore musical theatre major from Wichita, Kan.

“The play is a poetic retelling of the night that a woman endured trauma that changed her life forever,” Blackwood said. “Victims of sexual assault are often made to feel as though the incident is their fault. This play squashes that theory and turns it on its head.”

“**Coffee Break,**” directed by Hudson, will feature performances by Mallory Cain, a junior musical theatre major from Little Rock, Ark.; Elizabeth Dawson, a junior musical theatre major from Little Rock, Ark.; Amy Jackson, a sophomore musical theatre major from Cypress, Texas; and Kinsey Potts, a sophomore musical theatre major from Wylie, Texas.

“‘Coffee Break’ is about two women who work together and get coffee every day,” said Hudson. “One woman gets a heart in her latte art, and this launches her into an imaginary relationship with her barista. This is a fast-paced comedy that is all about relationships and jumping to conclusions!”

“**Arabian Nights,**” directed by Johnson, will feature performances by Hannah Gothard, a junior musical theatre major from Cleveland, Texas; Danielle Hall, a junior musical theatre major from Prairie Grove, Ark.; and Matthew Mayfield, a freshman musical theatre major from Alexander, Ark.

“It’s a fun, quick-paced comedy about a man named Norman who wants to buy a souvenir to remember his travels,” said Johnson. “With the help of a wacky interpreter, he finds more than just a small memento.”

“**Trudy, Carolyn, Martha and Regina Travel to Outer Space and Have a Pretty Terrible Time There,**” directed by Peterson, will feature performances by O.P. Brown, a senior biology major from North Little Rock, Ark.; Ashlynn Lockhart, a sophomore musical theatre major from Holiday Island, Ark.; Israel Jackson, a music and Christian studies double major from Van Buren, Ark.; and Elizabeth Ring, a junior musical theatre major from Cabot, Ark.

“This is a comedic one-act about four very different women who have been together for 19 weeks straight in outer space,” said Peterson. “Everything is going pretty okay until they realize they haven’t had any contact with NASA the entire time and are not exactly sure what they are even supposed to be looking for in space.”

“**Halfway,**” directed by Siemens, will feature performances by Bawo Asagba, a sophomore musical theatre major from Murphy, Texas; and Tyranni Hubbard, a choral music education major from Little Rock, Ark.

“‘Halfway’ is about a girl named Kat and her sister, Melissa,” said Siemens. “Kat is living in a halfway-house and is optimistic of her recovery while Melissa isn’t convinced. It is a sad, but hopeful, story that I hope will inspire people to reflect on the relationships they have with their friends and family.”

“**This Quintessence of Dust,**” directed by Valdez, will feature performances by Sammy Campione, a sophomore musical theatre major from Waxahachie, Texas; Sara Kate Cole, a freshman musical theatre major from Fort Smith, Ark.; and Ryan Lynch, a junior musical theatre major from Bryant, Ark.

The play is “a dark comedy take on a post-apocalyptic world,” said Valdez. “The world has been overrun with cannibals and this story ends up making the characters ask the question: What am I willing to do to survive? The story has a hidden message of the importance – and beauty – of simplicity in a world that demands attractive and busy living.”

“**Clarisse and Larmon,**” directed by Woodard, will feature performances by Erin Bagley, a freshman musical theatre major from White Oak, Texas; Caleb Byrd, a senior communications & media/integrated communications, political science and Spanish triple major from Little Rock, Ark.; and Nic Hazlett, a sophomore engineering physics major from Greenville, Texas.

“The play is about grief and loss as a couple tragically loses their son in war, and all they have left is a photograph,” Woodard said.

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

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