St. Louis to Arizona: What Tom Wingfield Taught Me About Playing Myself

Christopher Scott Tennison

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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St. Louis to Arizona:
What Tom Wingfield Taught Me About Playing Myself

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre

by

Christopher Scott Tennison
University of St. Thomas
Bachelor of Arts in Drama, 2002

May 2018
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

Amy Herzberg, MFA
Thesis Director

Michael Landman, MFA
Steven Marzolf, MFA
Committee Member
Committee Member
Abstract

This thesis consists of my statement of artistry/teaching philosophy, and documentation of artistic materials and thesis related performances.
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to:

Amy Herzberg, for taking a chance on one so jaded and cynical.

Michael Landman, for teaching me that not knowing is OK.

Steven Marzolf, for keeping me grounded these three years.

Michael Rhia, for always reminding me that to grow you have to stretch.

Joe Millett, for always lending an ear.

Mischa Hutchings, for believing in me before I did.

Lastly, Courtney, Cody, Grant, and Charlie. Thank you for your friendship, for supporting me, keeping me in check, and allowing the occasional boa to come out. I couldn't have done it without you.
Dedication

To Ben Warner. Thanks for teaching me to dream bigger.
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I. Statement of Artistry / Teaching Philosophy

As a theater educator, it is my job to prepare students physically, mentally and emotionally to inhabit each character to the best of their ability, and ensure they have the tools to live truthfully under the imaginary circumstances of the text. I believe the actor must allow the character to borrow their mind, their body and their heart. Without the sharing of those things, the character remains lifeless and flat. I strongly subscribe to the belief that the only thing that sets one actor apart from another is that they are themselves, unique in their opinions and life experiences. As a result, I do not adhere to one overarching theory or method. I believe every artist has to find the method, or combination of methods that allow them to open their heart, and live as the character.

To that end, I have familiarized myself with several techniques and approaches, and make every effort to nurture each performer’s individuality, while encouraging them to explore new tools to put in their toolbox. Every well-trained actor possesses a “toolbox” of techniques and strategies that allow them to create honest, compelling work on stage. The difficulty as a teacher lies in providing each student with methods that work for their individual process. I feel this can be achieved by educating students in a variety of techniques and allowing them to discover what gives them the best results.

In the performing of a piece, I believe all compelling acting comes from a place of action. Your partner is always the most important thing in the room and every choice you
make should be used to affect them, working toward achieving your objective. This Meisner-
based approach, placing the importance on partner, helps the actor to get out of their head and
spring into action. This coupled with an event based approach to text analysis allows the actor to
be supported by their “invisible” work, and live from moment to moment on stage in a way that
makes audiences lean in and fully engage with the work of the artist. My acting classes focus on
creating the discipline and work ethic to give the artist a process that they can rely on while
freeing themselves of the self criticism so common in our field. In addition to the text work, and
the learning of “playing of action”, I use Viewpoints training to allow artists the freedom to
explore the space, and world around them in a new way. This serves to force artists out of
comfortable habits and bring them into a fully realized world of strong vibrant choices.

One of my areas of specialization is Vocal Production, and IPA/Dialect work. Vocal
health is of the utmost importance to me, and at the core of any good actor's training. I hope to
teach students to be strong, yet safe, speakers. A healthy, resonant voice tells the story much
more effectively. Using Rodenburg, Meir and Fitzmaurice Voicework, I help young actors to
uncover their vocal power, and find their true and natural voice. My approach to vocal training is
exercise based, and works to free the actor from poor usage. By learning to enhance self
awareness, and diagnose improper usage, the actor gains life long skills that allow them to be
safe, effective speakers, regardless of their career paths.

In addition to Vocal Production, I have several years experience in Theater for Youth.
As artists, we must not only focus on the audience of the current moment, but it behooves
us to be in a constant state of audience development. Coupled with the overwhelming science showing the positive impact that arts education and exposure has on students, I am a strong supporter of reaching out to young populations to bring them or teach them our craft. As a result of that belief, and my 15 years experience in the field, I have a passion for teaching future artists about the merits of Theater for Youth, as well as giving them the practical tools that will allow them to excel in this market.

In addition to these interests, I have extensive professional experience that can serve your department in various ways. In addition to being a current, working, AEA Eligible actor, I have worked as a professional director, scenic and lighting designer, and for 7 years ran my own non-profit theater company. This background allows me to advise students on career options in a germane and informed way. I have also spent almost a decade in University administration, working in various capacities from Technical Director to Department Coordinator.

In closing, what we ask of students in the arts requires immense courage and vulnerability. I strive to create a safe, positive learning environment where artists are supported in their failures and celebrated in their victories. Acting is a journey, not a destination. I encourage my students to ask questions and enjoy exploring the countless creative answers. Training young actors to have confidence in their strengths and humility regarding their weaknesses will ultimately create sensitive, generous artists that are open to creative collaboration. I hope to instill in my students a desire to create powerful,
passionate theater that will change hearts and lessen the distance between human beings. These are the sort of actors I want to work with and the sort of actors I strive to train.
II. Thesis Role Program and Photograph

Program for The Glass Menagerie, courtesy of University of Arkansas Department of Theatre. Pages 18 and 1.
Program for The Glass Menagerie, courtesy of University of Arkansas Department of Theatre.

Department of Theatre Patrons 2017 - 2018

Producers......................................................... Joe Brown,
                                      Jay Phillip Greene & Aleza Greene,
                                      Les Wade & Robin Roberts

Directors .................................................................

Actors .......................................................... Timothy Hollis & Glenda Kay Clark Hollis
                                               Bob & Melinda Nickle

Stage Managers .................................................. Brandt Leeds,
                                                     Alex Lasareff-Mironoff & Hana Mironoff,
                                                     Joel & Irene Spalter

Stagehands ..............................................................

* Donations to the Patron Program help support productions and student work here
  at the University of Arkansas Department of Theatre.

Department of Theatre Scholarship Donors 2017-2018

Carol Burnett
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Lisa Mabrey

* Donations to the Scholarship Program help us reward and support the education of
  exceptional theatre undergraduates here at the University of Arkansas.

All Patrons and Scholarship Donors receive recognition in our production
programs, as well as invitations to special events throughout the year and
our annual Season Preview Party in the spring. Contributions are 100% tax
deductible. Please consider supporting the Department of Theatre. Email
theatre@uark.edu or call (479) 575-6067 for details.
Dear Theatre Friends,

Welcome to another exciting season of live theatre presented by the Department of Theatre. I want to personally thank all of you who are returning University Theatre Patrons – without your support, we simply couldn’t grow and develop into the artists that live within each and every student you see in these playbills. I would also like to welcome all of you who are joining us for the first time. I hope you leave this performance fulfilled and excited to return to watch our students continue to develop into the next generation of theatre artists. We are very lucky to have such talented and committed students here at the University of Arkansas, and we are thrilled to share their talents with all of you.

I think you will find that the 2017-2018 season has something for everyone! From 20th Century Tennessee Williams to 17th Century Calderon to a musical that features singing and dancing puppets. It also will feature brand new works written by award winning playwrights, Department of Theatre Faculty, and graduate AND undergraduate theatre students as well. We couldn’t be more excited for the varied and explosive line-up of classical works and some that we hope will one day become classics in their own right.

This is also a very exciting time for the University of Arkansas’ arts programs in general. With the recent 120 million dollar gift to establish the Fulbright College School of Art, arts philanthropy is certainly at an all-time high. Not only will this provide the School of Art the resources to compete on a whole new level for students, faculty, and staff, it will also pay great dividend to all three of the arts programs within the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. Part of the gift has been dedicated to support a total restoration of the sixty-seven-year-old, Edward Durrell Stone Fine Arts Center – home to the University Theatre, the Stella Boyle Concert Hall, and the School of Art. In addition to modernizing all of the building’s infrastructure, it will also address the concerns for additional space that is desperately needed for all three programs. Details are yet to be developed and there is a long way to go in securing the funding needed, but we are all very optimistic that this is more than just a dream – it is a reality on the horizon.

That isn’t the only noteworthy news when it comes to progress for the arts. At this moment, the Global Campus Auditorium (located at 2 E. Center St. on the Fayetteville Square) is well underway to becoming our second, official performance and rehearsal venue – The Global Campus Black Box Theatre. It will be a state-of-the-art flexible theatre space that will allow students, faculty, staff and patrons an opportunity to participate in intimate, exciting, smaller scaled live theatre where the audience will be no further than twenty-two feet from the performers and as close as three feet! We will be christening this new facility in April 2018 when we present ArkType – A Festival of New Works. We hope you will join us for what is certain to be an electrifying celebration of live theatre and an ushering in of a new home for the Department of Theatre.

Michael Rha
Chair of Theatre

Getting to Know...

Mallory Heins

Who is Mallory Heins? (where’d you grow up, family, etc.)
Your friendly neighborhood stage manager. I’m just a clumsy ginger from the south, here to make some puns and pet some dogs.

What made you decide to pursue a Design Tech degree in Theatre?
I have a genuine love and passion for the field. The artistry required to produce theatre is unlike any other. I found it to be the ultimate challenge. Pursuing anything else would be ignoring who I am and who I am meant to be.

If you could tell the audience one thing about stage management, what would it be?
I promise that we do more than take attendance and call cues.

What is your favorite part about stage managing?
Collaborating with the cast and production staff. I enjoy the feeling of teamwork and seeing how the production pieces together with everyone’s individual contributions.

Do you have any advice for students wanting to pursue a degree in Theatre?
Take naps when you can. Don’t do it, unless you can’t live without it.
Check out what’s going on in Studio 404...

THE CHRISTIANS
By Lucas Heath
October 26-29, 2017

Pastor Paul has spent the last two decades building his modest church into a congregation of thousands. But when he shares a newfound belief about the nature of salvation, he is met with a reaction that may just undo all his hard work. What happens to the flock when the shepherd changes direction? Come be a part of the congregation for this intimate examination of faith and its ability to both divide and unite us in equal measure.

Thursday, October 26, at 7:30pm
Friday, October 27 at 7:30pm
Saturday, October 28 at 7:30pm
Sunday, October 29 at 2:00pm and 7:30pm

Tickets are available now at theatre.uark.edu!

Director’s Notes

In the political climate of today, it may seem unusual to view Tennessee William’s poignant classic The Glass Menagerie as relevant fodder for reflection. When many theater seasons are programming more direct subject matter to confront national questions in a new light, we had a hunch that it was even more important to revisit a story about the poetry and politics of family.

In their desperate plight to escape the insecurities of the Great Depression, the Wingfields provide us not only an escape of perspective from our stressful news cycles and 24/7 information updates, but also -and more importantly- permit their audience to experience an acute insight into the inner lives of their characters. In this way, we may have a glimpse into a mirror unto ourselves: an opportunity to examine our own relationships to memory, desire, and ultimately, each other.

How might we transcend the fragile illusions we hold so dear at the cost of those we love? How can we make more empathetic choices when the obligations to our own hearts come into direct conflict with our obligations to those we cherish? These are just two of the many questions that The Glass Menagerie asks as it makes us look deep within ourselves. And, like all great stories in art, its elusive reflection lingers with a profound resonance - and reveals no easy answers.

- Cole Wimpee
Staff for the Production

Stage Manager .................................................. Mallory Heins
Assistant Stage Managers .......................... Katie O’Rear, Hailey Scott
Assistant Scenic Designers ....................... Brandon Roy, Marian Wood
Makeup Designer ................................. Montana McCoy
Vocal Coach .................................................. Mavoumine Dwyer
Assistant Vocal Coach ................................. Chris Tennison
Master Electrician ............................... Eric Armstrong
Sound Engineer ........................................... Tyler Micheal
Lighting Board Operator ...................... Emmie Karschner
Sound Board Operator .......................... Aubrey Pohlman
Projections Operator .............................. Mary Larkin Furlow
Charge Artist/Properties Master ............... Susan Crabtree
Deck Crew ............................................. Jenée Childers & Ashton Poage
Microphone Technician ......................... Alexa Gilmore
Wardrobe Crew Head ............................. Gabrielle Devero
Wardrobe Crew .................................. Anna Grace Estes, Alexa Peterson
Hair/Makeup Crew ............................ Hannah Mansfield
Cutter/Draper/First Hands .................. MJ Hall, Melissa Rooney,
Kelsey Looney, Val Lane
Stitchers ................................................. Stephanie Collins, Josh Craig,
Sara Yeager, Emma Harris,
Hannah Hopson, Bethany Kasper,
Alexa Peterson, Kelsey Ryder
Scenic/Lighting Staff ......................... Eric Armstrong, Austin Aschenbrenner,
Catie Blencowe, Joelle Gordon,
Missy Hartsfield, Keghan Kavanaugh,
Brandon Roy, Kathleen Schmidt, Sam Watson
Carpenters/Painters/Electricians ................. Alliance Akins, Madi Bell,
Hannah Berry, Jenee Childers, Cali Clifton,
Hannah Estes, Mary Larkin Furlow, Addison Griffin,
Alexa Gillmore, Savannah Haynes, Katie Heath,
Annika Howard, Emmie Karschner, Jacob McFall,
Miri Onose, Ashton Poage, Aubrey Pohlman,
Rashel Quintanilla, Landon Stocker, Tristan Sutterfield,
Emily Tomato, Lauryn Waller, McClain Wood

Getting to Know...

Meghan McEnery

Who is Meghan McEnery? (where'd you grow up, family, etc.)
I'm a third year MFA playwriting student from St. Louis, MO.

What made you decide to pursue a degree in Playwriting?
I wanted to have a community to work in and a place to explore the
aspects of theatre that I didn't have a chance to dig into outside of a
school setting. I also want to eventually become a teacher and I hope
getting an MFA will help me head in that direction.

If you could tell the audience one thing about playwriting, what
would it be?
Playwriting is so collaborative. A new play is shaped by everyone who
works on it, which makes new play development really exciting.

Do you have any advice for undergraduate students wanting to
pursue an MFA in playwriting?
Write a lot. Write everyday and learn to be disciplined about your
work. Also, writers have to deal with a lot of rejection and that can be
discouraging when you are just starting out. But that's normal so
don't let it psych you out. Every time you write, you learn something
about the world, so just keep working and know that what you're
doing is worthwhile.
Don't miss our next show at the University Theatre...

Avenue Q

BOOK by JEFF WHITTY
MUSIC AND LYRICS by ROBERT LOPEZ and JEFF MARX
BASED ON AN ORIGINAL CONCEPT by ROBERT LOPEZ and JEFF MARX

November 10 - 19, 2017

Humans and puppets share the stage in this hilarious tale of young adults learning to live and love in New York City. This Tony Award-winning Broadway musical has often been compared to a grown-up version of Sesame Street, featuring plenty of adult humor and hit songs such as “Everyone’s A Little Bit Racist” and “It Sucks To Be Me”. Don’t miss the first production of this gut-busting comedy to be done by a Northwest Arkansas theatre company!

Warning: This show contains strong language, adult themes, and puppet nudity. It is not recommended for children.

Friday, November 10 at 7:30pm
Saturday, November 11 at 7:30pm
Sunday, November 12 at 2:00pm and 7:30pm
Wednesday, November 15 at 7:30pm
Thursday, November 16 at 7:30pm
Friday, November 17 at 7:30pm
Sunday, November 20 at 2:00pm

Tickets are available now at theatre.uark.edu

Cast

Tom Wingfield ........................................... Chris Tennison
Amanda Wingfield................................. Mischa Hutchings
Laura Wingfield ..................................... Meghan McEnery
Jim O’Connor ......................................... Cody Shelton

Setting: St. Louis and Memory

Time: Now and the Past.

Part I: Preparation for a Gentlemen Caller.

Part II: The Gentlemen Calls.

Glass Menagerie will be performed in two acts,
with one 10-minute intermission.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

The video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited by law. As a courtesy to other patrons, PLEASE TURN OFF CELLPHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES during the performance.
Who's Who in the Production

Catie Blencowe (Lighting Designer) is from McKinney, TX. She has a BFA in Theatre from Sam Houston State University. Her previous lighting credits include Angels in America Part One, The Rocky Horror Show, The Lonesome West, The Arabian Nights, and Leading Ladies. She has also been the Festival Master Electrician for the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival. After graduation, she plans to work in the industry and become a professor.

Susan Crabtree (Props Designer) is co-author of three editions of Scenic Art for the Theatre. She received an M.A. in Theatre with a scenic design emphasis at the University of Northern Colorado. She studied painting and history at the Italian Fine Arts Conservatory La Pogerina. She is currently engaged in research of 18th and 19th century backdrop technique and practice. To this end she has viewed and studied collections at the Lee Lash Institute in Columbus Ohio, The Museum of the City of New York, the library archives at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities, Theatre of the Fraternity), the Lyric Opera Collection, the Theatre Museum in Covent Gardens, the Victoria Albert Museum, the Uffizi in Florence Italy, The Museum Archives of the Teatro Olympico and the Pinacoteca in Vecenza Italy. Crabtree has charged and worked as Scenic Artist for over 35 years including the Denver Center Theatre, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Indiana Repertory, Tobin Lakeshore, Wichita Music Theatre, Indiana Starlight Theatre, and Boulder Ballet Company in Boulder, Colorado. She has taught at the University of Michigan, University of Colorado, Colorado State University, and Brandeis University. Crabtree is the proprietor of Crabtree Scenic and Speciality Painting a theatrical backdorp and mural studio.

Ryan Dorin (Sound Designer) is a pianist, composer, sound designer, animator, and music producer. Currently based in his home town of Santa Monica, California, Ryan spent twelve years in New York City completing his Ph.D. in Music Composition at NYU, teaching, performing, producing, music directing, and doing sound design for numerous theater productions. Ryan has created music and sound design for nine Aztec Economy productions, including Kill Devil Hills (Collaboration in Chicago). Other theatrical collaborations: Angels in America: Part One (University of Arkansas), My Aim is True (New Orleans Fringe and Crown Point Festival in New York City), and the Working Man's Clothes production She Like Girls, which was awarded the 2011 GLAAD award for an off-off-Broadway play. As a pianist, Ryan has performed extensively with the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, as well as other venues and festivals around New York City and up and down the East coast, and has twice been a featured performer at NYU in Florence, Italy. Most recently, Ryan filled in at the last minute performing Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with the Chamber Orchestra of St. Matthews in the Pacific Palisades, California. Ryan's animated alter ego, the Ratboy Genius has a loyal internet following, as does his animated rock opera, The Adventures of Happyman on the Red Planet, which has also been heard on the radio.

Staff for the Department of Theatre

Chair of Theatre .................................................. Michael J. Riba
Vice-Chair of Theatre .............................................. Patricia J. Martin
Theatre Office Manager ........................................... Barbara J. Springer
Production Manager .............................................. Joseph Millett
Technical Director ............................................. Weston Wilkerson
Scene Shop Manager ........................................... Matt Meers
Costume Shop Manager ......................................... Valerie Lane
Lighting and Sound Supervisor ................................ Tyler Micheal
Properties and Paints Supervisor .............................. Susan Crabtree
Business Manager/Marketing Director ....................... Ashley Cohea
Publicity Manager/Graphic Designer .......................... Ash Micheal
Ticket Office Managers ................................. Meghan McEnery, Paul McInnis
Front of House Managers ............................... Jeremiah Albers, Cole Wimpee
Theatre Faculty .................................................. Jason Burrow, Mavourseen Dwyer, Kate Frank, Amy Herzberg, Morgan Hicks, Shawn D. Irish, Elizabeth Jikka, Michael Landman, Valerie Lane, Gail Leftwich, Patricia J. Martin, Steven Marzolf, Joseph Millett, Michael J. Riba, Les Wade, Weston Wilkerson
Who's Who In the Production

Mallory Hens (Stage Manager) is grateful to be a part of The Glass Menagerie. Her previous professional credits include Mary Poppins (SM), Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (SM), & in the University of Arkansas Department of Theatre The Head Chorine (SM), & Songs for a New World (SM, & Lighting Design). Her University credits include The Man Who Married Himself (SM, & Lighting Design), Light Up the Moon (SM, & Lighting Design), & The Match. She is a graduate of Bowling Green State University. Mallory would like to dedicate her work on this production to her supportive parents, Brent & Joanne Hens and her fiancé Hammer Nelson.

Mitchie Hutchings (Amanda Wingfield) is from Houston, TX. She is a member of the Professional Actors Equity Association and has worked in Dallas, TX, Chicago, IL, and Los Angeles, CA.![Photo of Mitchie Hutchings]

Daniel Miner (Tom Wingfield) is a graduate of Arkansas State University.![Photo of Daniel Miner]

Jeremy B. Hulse (The Gentleman Caller) is a graduate of North Carolina State University.![Photo of Jeremy B. Hulse]

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Mitchie Hutchings (Amanda Wingfield) is from Houston, TX. She is a member of the Professional Actors Equity Association and has worked in Dallas, TX, Chicago, IL, and Los Angeles, CA.![Photo of Mitchie Hutchings]

Daniel Miner (Tom Wingfield) is a graduate of Arkansas State University.![Photo of Daniel Miner]

Jeremy B. Hulse (The Gentleman Caller) is a graduate of North Carolina State University.![Photo of Jeremy B. Hulse]

Special Thanks To...

Kelsee Clark, Thomas Kelly, Teddie Clarrerry, McClain Wood, Jordan McWhorter, Patrick Maloney, and Maggie Wood.

Want your business or organization featured in our playbook? Email theatre@ark.edu for more information.

Program for The Glass Menagerie, courtesy of University of Arkansas Department of Theatre.

Pages 11 and 8.
Who's Who in the Production

Meghan McEnery (Laura Wingfield) is a third-year MFA Candidate in playwriting. Her plays Canoeeral and Moon Blind received staged readings at the University of Arkansas, and she co-wrote the play Professor, which was produced at BackSpace. As a dramaturg, she has worked on Angels in America (University of Arkansas), Great Expectations (TheatreSquared), and the 2016 and 2017 Arkansas New Play Festivals (TheatreSquared). She is originally from St. Louis, Missouri and is a graduate of Webster University.

Tanner McAlpin (Costume Designer) is a second-year MFA candidate in Costume Design at the University of Arkansas. Tanner has worked as a makeup artist for Joshua Productions out of Beaumont, Texas, along with many studio and mainstage productions during his time as an undergraduate at Texas A&M University in College Station including Blithe Spirit, and Macbeth. Lysistrata was Tanner's first design work at the University of Arkansas.

Katie O'Rear (Assistant Stage Manager) is from Mena, AR. Katie O'Rear has been involved in several University productions, such as Lysistrata, and professional productions such as Grounded with Arkansas Staged and Grounded with Pioneer Playhouse. After graduating with a degree in Theatre and a minor in Stage Management she hopes to work with Theatre Squared in their educational tour and hopes to one day work in London.

Michael J. Riha (Scenic Designer) is the chair of the Department of Theatre at the University of Arkansas and has designed scenery, lighting, sound, and costumes for well over one hundred productions. Michael's most recent projects include set designs at the Berkshire Theatre Group, MA; TheatreSquared, AR; the Southcoast Repertory Theatre, CA; and The Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, CA. He also worked as an assistant on the Broadway revival of On a Clear Day You Can See Forever, starring Harry Connick Jr. as well as the 2013 Metropolitan Opera production of Rigoletto. He recently authored the book, "Starting Your Career as a Theatrical Designer: Insights and Advice from Leading Broadway Designers," published by Allworth Press. He is a proud member of USITT and the United Scenic Artists — 829.

Brandon Roye (Assistant Scenic Designer) is from Tulsa, OK. He has a BA in Theatre from OBU. His previous credits include Assistant Props Master for Pentecost, Dirty Blonde, Rough Crossing at Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, Props Master at Pasadena Playhouse for Talley's Folly, 110 in the Shade, Enchanted April, Hallmark Movie Channel Art Department Leadman for the McBride Mystery Series, Technical Director for Desert Ants and Boy Gets Girl at Tulsa PAC. He plans to become a resident Technical Director and Scenic Designer for a regional theatre.

Who's Who in the Production

Hailey Scott (Assistant Stage Manager) is from Tahlequah, OK. Her previous credits include deck crew for The Children, wardrobe crew for Assassins and box office for River City Players. After earning her degree, Hailey plans to pursue a career in a technical element of theatre, hopefully in New York City.

Cody Shelton (Jim O'Connor) is from Tulsa, OK. He has a B.S. in Drama, TV, Film from Oral Roberts University and is a third-year MFA Acting candidate. His previous credits include Magistrate in Lysistrata, Mr. Van Daan in The Diary of Anne Frank, Lucinio in Taming of the Shrew, Jorgen Teumani in Hedda Gabler and Alan in God of Carnage. He plans to move to L.A. in the future.

Chris Tennison (Tom Wingfield) is a third-year MFA Acting candidate. He hails from Houston, Texas where he has been working in theatre and arts education for the last 21 years. His work has been seen in such theaters as The Ensemble Theatre, Main Street Theatre, Stages Theater, and The Alley Theatre. His previous credits at the University of Arkansas include Samuel Byck in Assassins, Roy M. Cohn/ Prior II in Angels in America: Part One and Part Two and Nancy Interesting Man/Lord of the Underworld in Eurydice.

Cole Wimpee (Director) is a third-year MFA Directing candidate. UARK credit: Angels in America: Part One. NYC directing and producing credits include P.S. 122, The Ohio Theatre, 3 Legged Dog, LRT, The Tank, The Brick, American Place Theatre, Bushwick Starr, Player's Theatre, Silent Barn, and Abrons Arts Center. Regional Credits: The Fridge in Washington D.C.; Collaboration in Chicago, WaterTower Theatre in Dallas, DiverseWorks in Houston, the Mudlark in New Orleans, Refract Arts Project and Physical Plant Theatre in Austin, University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, the Columbia Festival of the Arts in Maryland, Know Theatre in Cincinnati, Glasbox El Paso, and at EMP in Baltimore. Local credits include work with Artist's Lab Theatre at Crystal Bridges, Classical Edge, Arkansas Staged and 21C Museum, and dramaturgy work with TheatreSquared. An associate member of the Society of Directors and Choreographers, Cole is also a proud member of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab, Chicago: Director's Lab: Director's Lab West (L.A.), Kennedy Center for Performing Arts: Directing Intensive, and since 2008 has served as the artistic director of Brooklyn-based theatre co. Aztec Economy. He earned his BFA in Acting from Texas State University where he was a Kennedy Center Irene Ryan Acting Finalist in 2003. Cole is also the recipient of numerous acting honors including 2 for Best Supporting Actor from Austin Critics' Table and the Molly Rizzo Classical Acting Award.

Marian Wood (Assistant Scenic Designer) is from Allen, TX. She has an Undergrad in Interior Design and training in Set Design. This is her first show at University of Arkansas! She hopes to pursue a career in theatre, film design, or any other design related field. She is not sure where she is headed, but is happy to be learning so much this year working with the best people in the Theatre Department.
Chris Tennison as Tom in The University of Arkansas' production of *The Glass Menagerie*. October 2017.

Photo courtesy of The University of Arkansas Department of Theater
III. Thesis Performance Program

Program for The A Hamlet: West of Why, courtesy of University of Arkansas Department of Theatre. Pages 18 and 1.
Department of Theatre Patrons 2017 - 2018

Producers ................................. Andrew Gibbs and Mary Gibbs,
Jay Phillip Greene & Aleza Green, Les Wade & Robin Roberts

Directors ................................. Timothy Hollis & Glenda Kay Clark Hollis

Actors ........................................... JP & Aleza Green Trust,
John King & Sally Kelley King, Tom & Jill King, Brandt Leeds,
Bob & Melinda Nickle, Martha Sutherland, Joyce Stafford

Stage Managers ............................. Don Dewees, Alex Lasareff-Mironoff & Hana Mironoff,
Vernon & Shirley Lott, David Malone & Deborah Thomas,
Lule & Janet Parsch, Don Pederson, Barbara Shadden,
Joel & Irene Spalter, Brent Winborne, Paige J. Zaloudek

Stagehands ......................... Stephanie Faatz Murry David Gay & Gary Thornton,
Robert Hurt, Elizabeth Anne Reha

* Donations to the Patron Program help support productions and student work here at the University of Arkansas Department of Theatre.

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Don King
Michael & Janie Landman
Lisa Mabrey
Francis Elizabeth Mayo
Warren Rosenaur
Peter & Mary Savin
Debbie Tibey

* Donations to the Scholarship Program help us reward and support the education of exceptional theatre undergraduates here at the University of Arkansas.

The ArkType Festival of New Works show details!

A HAMLET: WEST OF WHY
by John Walsh
A dark comedy set in the not-too-distant future, a group of young actors tour a 59-minute version of Hamlet across a dystopian American Southwest.

THE POODLE TRAINER
by Meghan McEnery
Welcome to the circus - where the improbable meets the serendipitous and where two lost souls bond over their fascination with the poodle act.

RISE
by Paul McInnis
In the vein of Blaxploitation crime films of the seventies, the play journeys the life of Nefertiti Green and the collective community of St. Marie

THEATRE FOR ONE
Conceived by Artistic Director Christine Jones, Theatre for One is a mobile state-of-the-art performance space for one actor and one audience member. Featuring eight new works by a mixture of University of Arkansas Creative Writing and Theatre faculty and acclaimed American playwrights, these 'micro-plays' will last 3 to 5 minutes each with multiple works showcased during each performance time.

LATINX THEATRE PROJECT
Incorporating rap, music, comedy, and drama, this exciting group of Northwest Arkansas theatre artists, now in their second season, reveals insights about what it means to be Latino in America today.

ISLAND (RAP)
by Austin Dean Ashford
A one person Hip Hop Dramaed Mash up about Black Ulysses on an Odyssey of self discovery told through an interwoven narrative of music, poetry and animals.

TEN MINUTE PLAYS
Original short works written and performed by University of Arkansas undergraduate students.
Dear Theatre Friends,

As we bring our 2017/18 season to a close we do so by welcoming you into our new “home.” The ArkType Festival of New Works marks the culmination of an almost 4-year dream I had the first day I walked into this room (when it was an auditorium). That dream was then set in motion when I had a conversation with the Vice Provost for Distance Education, Donald P. Judges, back in October of 2016. The building in which this new theatre is located, also happens to be the home of the University of Arkansas Distance Education team known as, Global Campus. The former auditorium (the room that is now this beautiful black box theatre) has been used as an acting classroom and occasional performance venue for the Department of Theatre since 2014. However, it was an antiquated and poorly equipped space that was underutilized due primarily to its configuration and lack of functional space. When I learned that a renovation was scheduled to begin on the 4th and 5th floors of this building during the Summer of 2017, I casually said, “Well Don, as long as you are renovating the 4th and 5th floor, we might as well see if we can renovate the auditorium and make it a state-of-the-art studio theatre.” Not knowing what I was actually getting myself (and the entire Department of Theatre) into, his response was, “That’s a great idea! If it is going to serve more students and patrons, let’s talk to your Dean. But know this, we are going to have to move quickly!”

To make a long story short, here we are, only 18 months after the initial idea. The theater is equipped with a cutting edge digital sound and projection system, an LED, energy efficient lighting rig, and flexible seating that will allow us to reconfigure the room to accommodate multiple seating/performer arrangements. It will also be a huge asset as we work to become a nationally accredited theatre department. This state-of-the-art flexible black box will allow the students, faculty, staff and patrons an opportunity to participate in intimate, exciting, smaller scaled live theatre where the audience will be no further than twenty-two feet from the performers and as close as three feet!

This is also a very exciting time for the University of Arkansas’ arts programs in general. With the recent 120-million-dollar gift to establish the Fulbright College School of Art, the arts philanthropy is certainly at an all-time high. Not only will this provide the School of Art the resources to compete on a whole new level for top notch students, faculty and staff, it will also pay great dividends to all three of the arts programs within the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. Part of the gift has been dedicated to support a total restoration of the sixty-seven-year-old, Edward Durrell Stone Fine Arts Center – home to the University Theatre, the Stella Boyle Concert Hall, and the School of Art. In addition to modernizing all of the building’s infrastructure, it will also address the concerns for additional space that is desperately needed for all three programs. Details are yet to be developed and there is a long way to go in securing the necessary funding, but we are all very optimistic that this is more than just a dream – it is a reality on the horizon.

Again, welcome to our new home and thank you for attending the ArkType Festival of New Works. We hope you enjoy the performance!

Michael Riha
Chair of Theatre

Staff for the Department of Theatre

Chair of Theatre............................................. Michael J. Riha
Vice-Chair of Theatre......................................... Patricia J. Martin
Theatre Office Manager................................. Barbara J. Springer
Production Manager...................................... Joseph Millet
Technical Director......................................... Weston Wilkerson
Scene Shop Manager................................. Matt Meers
Costume Shop Manager................................. Valerie Lane
Lighting and Sound Supervisor......................... Tyler Micheel
Properties and Paints Supervisor..................... Susan Crabtree
Business Manager/Marketing Director............... Ashley Cohea
Publicity Manager/Graphic Designer................. Ash Micheel
Ticket Office Managers......................... Meghan McEnery, Paul McInnis
Front of House Managers............................. Jeremiah Albers, Cole Wimpee

Theatre Faculty............................................ Jason Burrow, Susan Crabtree
Mavournneen Dwyer, Kate Frank, Amy Herzberg,
Morgan Hicks, Shawn D. Irish, Elizabeth Jilka,
Michael Landman, Valerie Lane, Gail Leftwich,
Patricia J. Martin, Steven Marzolf, Matt Meers,
Tyler Micheel, Joseph Millett, Michael J. Riha,
Les Wade, John Walch, Westor Wilkerson
Rise
PLAYWRIGHT NOTES

In the beginning, I wanted to pay homage to the Blaxploitation films of the seventies. As a child, I was in love with the images of Pam Grier as the title character in Foxy Brown. I carried this passion into adulthood which led me to become invested in the feminist classic, Coffy, which also stars Pam Grier. These films helped shape the character, Nefertiti Green. My love and admiration of Dorothy Dandridge takes form in the showgirl herself—Miss Soleil Dandridge. I fell in love with Dorothy Dandridge after watching her portrayal of Carmen in Carmen Jones. Rise is a love letter to my days as a young man at Jackson State University. At Jackson State University, I learned the importance of legacy and tradition. As a member of the prestigious “Sonic Boom of the South” Marching Band, I learned lessons of hard-work, dedication, and sacrifice. The Department of Speech and Theatre—mentors like Nadia Bodie-Smith and Yolanda Williams—built the foundation of my career as a playwright. Their kind words and undying support will never go unnoticed.

I am thankful for my mother, Mary Floyd. She has been my biggest support system throughout this entire process. She’s always instilled the importance of education into my life. When I lost sight of the end goal, I had her in my corner steering me back into gear. I would also like to thank my aunt, Cindy Hall, for allowing me to blunder through her Jacksonian yearbooks. Those books inspired me to choose Jackson State as my “Dear Old College Home”. This play is dedicated to all the Jacksonians—deceased and living. 1400 J.R. Lynch Street is more than an address. It’s a way of life that only a true Jacksonian will understand. It’s the place where the Prancing J-Settes started a trend, the place where Phillip Gibbs and James Green lives were laid down, and the place that brings us—Alumni—joy. I’m excited to share this story with an audience. Cole Wimpee, the director of Rise, has done a beautiful job with aiding the stage life of this story. I am thoroughly pleased with the progress of the play. Hope everyone enjoys the colorful and vibrant tale. Peace and Blessings to all.

Be Blessed,
Paul McInnis

10 Minute Plays
Waiting

Playwright ................................................................. Jenn Nesbitt
Director ................................................................. Nancy Rosales
Ezra ................................................................. Jacob McFall
Joy ................................................................. Jenee Childers
Philip ................................................................. AJ Hayes
Chloe ................................................................. Aubrey Pohlman

Scars

Playwright ................................................................. Sam Murphey
Director ................................................................. Raven Ray
Cameron Andrews ................................................................. AJ Hayes
Lucy Jones ................................................................. Bethany Kasper

A Thing That Wasn't There Before

Playwright ................................................................. Phillip Ruff
Director ................................................................. Autumn Pearcy
Man ................................................................. Jack Kenney
Woman ................................................................. Kelsey Ryder

Demonic Worship for Dummies

Playwright ................................................................. Emily Tomanio
Director ................................................................. Grant Hockenbrough
Sunny ................................................................. Samantha Schreyer
Lowell ................................................................. Thomas Rosenbrough
Trell ................................................................. Cali Clifton

The Question Game

Playwright ................................................................. Alicia Workman
Director ................................................................. Sara Spillars
Sophia ................................................................. Samantha Soard
Erin ................................................................. Heidi Kirk
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<td>WINKY</td>
<td>Justin Macleay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the WOMAN</td>
<td>Christine Griffiths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the MAN</td>
<td>Edmond C. Nambo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Megan McEnery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playwright</td>
<td>Marla L. Carter</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Katherine O'Rear</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sierra Chavez</td>
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<td>Melissa Armstrong</td>
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<td>Eric Crabtree</td>
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<td>Brandon Roye</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Austin Archbrenner</td>
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<td>Scenic Projection Designer</td>
<td>Brandon Roye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fight Choreographer</td>
<td>Scott Russell</td>
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<td>Saman Ditha Saad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe Crew</td>
<td>Mary Larkin Furlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deck Crew</td>
<td>Peter Krolek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deck Crew</td>
<td>Seth Johnson</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jake Dunken</td>
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<td>Light Board Op.</td>
<td>Annika Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties</td>
<td>Autumn Peary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Setting:**

- Part One: The Beginning, 1935, Nebraska and then Minnesota.
- Part Two: The Middle, 1976, Lebanon, Kansas.

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**Thank You**

*Special Thanks to...*

- Walmart Museum
- Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
- Walton Art Center, Fulbright Development, Inc.
- and Sisco Funeral Chapel, Inc.
A Hamlet: West of Why

About the Players

This play was written for the 2018 MFA acting class at the University of Arkansas. Charlie Rodriguez, Grant Hockenbrough, Courtney Jensen, Cody Shelley, and Chris Tennon.

While not a devised work, the play was developed with the actors contributing pieces of themselves, issues that were on their minds at the time, and random bits like linen dreams. While everything here is fiction, their collective contributions are an essential part of the marimade that made the sauce of this play. My abundant thanks to them for contributing and engaging in this process.

The Merry Players play their parts outside Yuma, AZ.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td><strong>A Bench of Thoughts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jenee Childers, Cali Collins, Caroline Dean, Maharanhi Dubasi, Jan Hammett, Aliza Kats, Brian Kass, Lael Kekai, Khegaon Kavanagh, Peter Gold, Savannah Haynes, Grant Hockenbrough, John Mace, Autumn Percy, Rachel Quintana, Raven Ray, Nancy Ronella, Scott Russell, Treg Smith, Landan Stocker</td>
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Program for The A Hamlet: West of Why, courtesy of University of Arkansas Department of Theatre. Pages 12 and 7.
(I)sland T(rap)

(I)SLAND T(RAP): the epic remixology of the Odyssey

Cast
All roles including: Austin Dean Ashford,
Old Woman, Begwende, Gorilla, Calypsso,
Theresa, Ruth, Sarah, Assata, Dad, Cyclops............. Austin Dean Ashford

Production Team
Director .............................................. Cole Wimpee
Playwright .......................................... Austin Ashford
Stage Manager, Sound Designer ....................... Katie O'Rear
Lighting Designer ................................... Eric Armstrong
Scenic Designer ...................................... Kathleen Schmidt
Dramaturg, Faculty, and Playwright Advisor ........... John Walch

Setting:
Place: The Dock of a Major American City/An Exotic Island of the
Imagination
Time: Now

(I)SLAND T(RAP) will be performed without an intermission.

WARNING: Strobe Light, Intense Language, & Disturbing Imagery.

(I)SLAND T(RAP) is an original adaptation by Austin Dean Ashford and has
received developmental presentations in tandem with the University of
Arkansas Department of Theatre, TheatreSquared, and the Kennedy
Center American College Theatre Festival.

This story is inspired by a variety of sources, chiefly The Odyssey by
Homer, the art of Romoare Bearden and Aaron Douglas, the films of
Walt Disney, the comparative mythology of Joseph Campbell, and the
autobiographical experiences of Austin Dean Ashford.

LatinX Theatre Project

Presents
Scratch That - an original new play

Cast

Arionna ........................................... Betty Brutus
Antonio/SpringDizzle ............................. Damian Dena
Bruno ............................................. Martin Garay
Brendan .......................................... Samuel Lopez
Sylvia ............................................. Coco Vasquez
Julius ............................................. Fernando Valdez
Nick ............................................... Ever Villalobos
Lucy .............................................. Audrey Romero
Isabelle .......................................... Savannah Vaughan
Patricia .......................................... Sativa Vela
Luis ................................................ Alex Nilsson
Marisol ........................................... Samm Canales

Production Team
Playwright, Sound Designer ......................... Ashley Edwards
Director ........................................... Michael Landman
Production Manager, Lighting Designer ............ Shannon Miller
Scenic & Properties Designer ........................ Ashleigh Burns
Stage Manager, Assistant Sound Designer ........ Felicia Deatherage
Assistant Stage Manager ........................... Laiken Montgomery
Producer .......................................... David Jolliffe
Associate Producer, Arts Center of the Ozarks ...... Kathleen Trotter
Photographer, Web Designer ........................ Alicia Pitts
Social Media Manager ................................ Anna Vilner
Composer of Original Beats ........................ Joaquin Vela
Writing Mentor ................................... Vicente Yepez

Sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation, in partnership with the
University of Arkansas Brown Chair for Literacy, Northwest Arkansas
Community College, and Arts Center of the Ozarks
Program for The A Hamlet: West of Why, courtesy of University of Arkansas Department of Theatre. Pages 10 and 9.

(I)sland T(rap)

(I)SLAND T(RAP): the epic remixology of the Odyssey

Cast
All roles including: Austin Dean Ashford, Old Woman, Begwende, Gorilla, Calypso, Theresa, Ruth, Sarah, Assata, Dad, Cyclops .............. Austin Dean Ashford

Production Team
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Sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation, in partnership with the University of Arkansas Brown Chair for Literacy, Northwest Arkansas Community College, and Arts Center of the Ozarks
IV. Appendix A – Permissions

To: Graduate School and International Studies, University of Arkansas

From: Ashley Cohea, Business Manager for Department of Theatre

Date: April 14, 2018

Re: Use of Department of Theatre production programs, photos, and publicity materials in thesis publications

The University of Arkansas Department of Theatre grants permission for students seeking a BA or MFA in our department to use programs, photos, and publicity materials for productions in which they participated for the purpose of advancing their academic or professional careers. This permission includes both electronic and print format used for thesis publications, professional portfolios, websites, etc.

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If there are any questions on this matter, or any dispute over whether production material is being used in an inappropriate manner, please contact the Department of Theatre Business Manager, listed below.

Ashley Cohea
228 Fine Arts Center
University of Arkansas
(479) 575-6067
acohea@uark.edu
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Helen Chase and/or Melinda Chase
Sterling Photography
Fayetteville, AR
thesterlingcreative@gmail.com
V. Appendix B - Website Link

https://christennison.weebly.com
VI. Appendix C - Headshot

Photo courtesy of Sterling Photography
Chris Tennison

**Height:** 5'7''

**Eyes:** Brown

**Voice:** Tenor/Baritone

**Hair:** Brown

### Experience

**As You Like It**
- Touchstone
- Justin Schener
- Classical Edge

**It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play**
- Various
- Jeff Church
- TheaterSquared

**Comet Town (Staged Reading)**
- Don
- Jacob Sexton
- TheaterSquared

**All The Way (us)**
- Various
- Benny Sato Ambush
- TheaterSquared

**Peter and the Starcatcher (us)**
- Various
- Mark Shanahan
- TheaterSquared

**Last Gas**
- Guy
- Brendan Burke
- Shadowland Stages

**Pine**
- Man
- Khoudour Sawa
- Theater For One

**West of Why (World Premiere)**
- Paul
- Shawna Gold
- University of Arkansas

**Night and Her Stars**
- Dan Enright
- Illich Guardiola
- Town Center Theatre

**Taming of the Shrew**
- Gremio
- Steven Marzolf
- Classical Edge

**Hamlet**
- Claudius
- Illich Guardiola
- Phoenix Theatre Inc.

**Romeo and Juliet**
- Friar Laurence
- Illich Guardiola
- Phoenix Theatre Inc.

**Angels In America Part II**
- Roy Cohn
- Cole Winnie
- University of Arkansas

**Angels in America Part I**
- Roy Cohn
- Jeremiah Albers
- University of Arkansas

**The Glass Menagerie**
- Tom
- Cole Winnie
- University of Arkansas

**Bell, Book, and Candle**
- Sidney Redditch
- Joey Milillo
- Country Playhouse

**Diary of Anne Frank**
- Mr. Van Daan
- Rebecca Udden
- Main Street Theatre

**Beyond the Fringe**
- Various
- Mark Adams
- Main Street Theatre

**On the Razzle**
- Coachman
- Rob De los Reyes
- Main Street Theatre

**Somebody's Sons (World Premiere)**
- Morris
- Illich Guardiola
- Main Street Theatre

**Comic Potential**
- Various
- Mark Adams
- Main Street Theatre

**The Garden of Live Flowers (World Premiere)**
- Various
- Illich Guardiola
- Main Street Theatre

**Oleanna**
- John
- A.C. Gardner
- Fan Factory

**Assassins**
- Sam Byck
- Amy Herzberg
- University of Arkansas

**Butter (Reading)**
- Heinze
- Kholoud Sawa
- Block St. Theater

**God of Carnage**
- Michael
- Jeremiah Albers
- University of Arkansas

**Life is a Dream**
- Basilio
- Jeremiah Albers
- University of Arkansas

**Twelfth Night (Guest Artist)**
- Sir Toby
- Austin Dorn
- University of St. Thomas

**Much Ado About Nothing (Guest Artist)**
- Leonato
- Joey Milillo
- University of St. Thomas

**Julius Caesar**
- Mark Antony
- Illich Guardiola
- Main Street Theatre

**The Outsiders**
- Two Bit
- Illich Guardiola
- Main Street Theatre

**Charlotte's Web**
- Various
- Ted Giles
- Main Street Theatre

**Alice in Wonderland**
- Various
- Ted Giles
- Main Street Theatre

**The Shoemaker and The Christmas Elves**
- Shoemaker
- Chesley Krohn
- Theater Under the Stars

### Training

MFA in Acting from the University of Arkansas - May 2018

BA in Theatre from The University of St Thomas - 2002

Acting: Amy Herzberg, Michael Landman, Sam Havens, Claire MacDonald, Ed Muth, Chesley Krohn

Voice: Mavournen Dwyer, Jason Burrows, Michael Mertz

Movement/Dance: Kate Frank, Barry Dean, Gail Leftwich

### Special Skills

Dialects: British, Southern, New England, Texan, Midwestern, Standard British, Cockney, Scottish; Smoking; Cooking. In addition I have extensive design, directing, and producing experience.