



Theatre Arts

The Passion

The Theatre Arts program at Gonzaga University is committed to training and developing artists who confront the important issues of our lives through their engagement with the art forms of live theatre. Gonzaga provides disciplined training in both performance and technical theatre.

Students actively study and critically reflect on a broad range of literature, theatrical forms, and techniques in order to promote an active engagement with the foundations of our culture and to promote the formation of a character that reflects the faith and justice mission of Gonzaga University. The intended outcome of this study and reflection is to provide service to our audience and the broader community, to promote the search for social justice, and to prepare for a profession in the performing arts. Young artists hoping to apply disciplined training and thoughtful work to a search for justice and the greater good within a community are encouraged to pursue a theatre major or minor.

The Program

Theatre Arts students develop an attitude of professionalism and leadership not only through their training in the classroom—in acting, stagecraft, stage and lighting design, costume construction, directing, and dance—but also through interaction with local theatre professionals. Internships are available with local film companies, and the stagehands union, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), allows students the opportunity to work on touring Broadway productions. Film and theatre professionals are also guests in the theatre classroom. Recently, students in the Acting for Camera class were cast in a feature film. (Their teacher is a casting agent!) To promote the combination of service and theatre, main-stage productions have included performances for high school and elementary schools from disadvantaged areas, and students in the program have taught theatre and dance in local schools.

Performances:

The Theatre Arts program stages a wide range of productions from contemporary scripts (*The Curse of the Starving Class*, *Fahrenheit 451*) to classical (*Don Juan*, *The Winter's Tale*) and from children's plays (*The Crane Wife*) to musicals (*Urinetown*, *Seussical*) and puppet shows (*The Little Prince*, *The Crane Wife*). Guest artists have included professional actors,

fight choreographers, directors of training institutes in London and New York City, a Ukrainian Fulbright scholar, a casting director, and Hollywood screen writers.

Supplemented with numerous smaller performances that are usually student-directed, the main-stage season includes three theatrical productions, one dance performance, and a reader's theatre series. In addition, Gonzaga University Theatre Sports (GUTS), a student improvisational comedy club, practices twice a week and performs once a month.

The Place

Gonzaga's Magnuson Theatre, a 250-seat black box theatre, houses technical theatre, the costume shop, and hosts most theatrical productions. Magnuson's stage allows for close interaction between performer and audience. Students also acquire experience in designing and creating scenery, lights, sound, and costumes in Magnuson's shops. Since students fill all crew positions for shows and design many of the productions, majors and non-majors alike have numerous opportunities to apply their skills. The program hosts professional workshops in acting and technical theatre. The new Theatre Dance Studios are the home of acting/directing/literature and the dance program.



The Potential

The Department seeks to produce works that interrelate with and serve audiences from both the Gonzaga and the Spokane communities. The production of *Dead Man Walking*, for example, provided a focal point for twenty classes ranging from criminal justice to communication arts in which the death penalty was being discussed. The 2010 production of *Lysistrata* was a focal point for our campus wide “Greek Week.” For their senior project, theatre majors create an original work intended to serve an underserved population, such as a homeless group, a retirement community, or a facility for handicapped adults.

Our graduates go on to a variety of fields. Katie (2009) is studying lighting design at UC-Irvine. John (2008) is pursuing an MFA in acting at the highly competitive training program at the University of North Carolina. Jeff (2008) was just cast in a seven-episode, co-starring role in the NBC TV series “Friday Night Lights” and is in Los Angeles as a SAG member. Kelly (2006) is working at the Seattle Repertory Theatre. Luke (2006) created a pilot for NBC. Aaron (2005) interned at Actor’s Theater of Louisville and is now performing in Hawaii. Chris (2004) is performing in L.A. Brian (2001) is a lighting designer. Nick’s (2004) employer in the chemical industry likes his theatre background because it enables him to present for both himself and his company. Darrin (2002) has several film credits. Brian (2002) is working on his MFA in lighting design. Stephanie (2001) is incorporating theatre into her approach as a school counselor. Joey (2000) works in costuming for the San Diego Opera.

The Scholarship

Once they have started Gonzaga’s program, Theatre Arts students are invited to compete for the Toni M. Robideaux Scholarship sponsored by the Spokane Advertising Federation. In order to apply, full-time Theatre Arts students with a 3.0 GPA or higher may submit an application, samples of their work, and recommendations to the local foundation.

The People

John Hofland, M.F.A., Trinity University, Fulbright Scholar; design and technical theatre. (hofland@gonzaga.edu)

Brian C. Russo, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati, Fulbright scholar; acting, directing. (russob@gonzaga.edu)

Suzanne Ostersmith, B.S., University of California-San Diego, Director, Dance Program. (ostersmith@gonzaga.edu)

Summer Berry, B.A., Washington State University; costumer [staff]. (berry@gonzaga.edu)

Karla Parbon, B.A., Whitworth University; jazz, tap, hip hop, dance conditioning [adjunct]. (parbon@gonzaga.edu)

Photo Credits: Alan Bisson, Dean Davis, Eric Galey, Craig Hill, Lauren Intinarelli, Jennifer Raudebaugh, Amy Sinisterra, and Allen Hubbard.

For more information, please contact: Professor John Hofland, Director, Theatre Arts Program, hofland@gonzaga.edu, (800) 986-9585 ext. 6657