



2025-2026 Season Preview

UCLA School of Theater, Film & Television
Theater



Production photography by Makela Yopez



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ON THE COVER: Bella Noor Aboulhosen ('27) delivers a passionate performance as Claude in *Claude, Claudette and Nicole*, written by MFA student Brandon Adam and directed by Hannah Wolf in Winter 2025.

A message from Dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu



TO MY DEAR UCLA TFT THEATER COMMUNITY,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 season of the UCLA Department of Theater!

As the Dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, I am both a theater and film scholar and maker. I love cinema and need theater. Performance and worldmaking on stage, ephemeral in time, lasts and lasts as a perpetual companion to me. I live with scenes from so many plays. They are an intrinsic part of my self-image, my most intimate self-understanding and all of my relations to people and space.

What's more? I fell in love with theater and cinema here in the very halls of Melnitz and Macgowan as a student who wanted more than anything in the world to create plays and movies. And what I learned here is that the actualization of plays—are nothing short of a miracle.

What a season awaits us in 2025-26! The theater is the best classroom on Earth—a place where students take all they've studied—text and technique, design and direction, history and innovation, to represent life itself. On these stages, our community realizes their voices. Practice theory. Move their bodies to make us all feel anew. Awaken emotions we did not previously possess. We cannot unfeel, unsee and unexperience what will transpire here now.

When I came to UCLA TFT as a student, I came to test the bounds of artistic freedom and expression. Thus, what we offer our students in every production is the support they need to find courage to reveal themselves and achieve the voices of their generation.

I invite you, the audience, to support the pursuits of our students, the passions of our faculty, and the work of our staff to make the show happen. Enjoy!

Let's surrender to the power of this performance together.

Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Ph.D.

Dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film & Television

Distinguished Professor, Department of Film, Television & Digital Media

A message from Jeff Burke, Department Chair

DEAR FRIENDS OF UCLA THEATER,

Welcome to our 2025-2026 season!

The Department's productions play a vital role in our students' development of their artistic voices and creative skills. You, as audience members, alumni, and supporters, are vital to this amazing effort that involves hundreds of students, staff, faculty, and distinguished guests every year.

Inside, you'll find a preview of the year, with shows that range from fully produced mainstage performances to the very first opportunities to see new works by our MFA playwrights. We also highlight the exciting work of faculty and alumni, along with other opportunities to interact with our community.

Whatever brought you here first, I encourage you to try something new this year - come to the opera, join the audience of a new play, stay for a talkback, attend a show in the newly renovated Macgowan 1330, or visit a one-of-a-kind event like Sketch to Screen or Design Showcase West.

This year, we welcome Sarah Taylor Ellis, composer of *Emma: No One But Herself*, back as a Regents Lecturer. Dr. Ellis, a graduate of our doctoral program in Theater and Performance Studies, will be working with students in the Ray Bolger Musical Theater program as they rehearse and perform the musical this season.

The season is just one part of what's happening. Check the back cover for where to follow us on social media. There, you'll hear about events that engage with faculty research, be informed of collaborations with our Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media, and keep up with the latest news about UCLA Theater.

Thank you for being a part of our community.



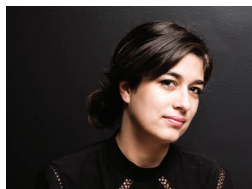
A handwritten signature of Jeff Burke in black ink.

Jeff Burke
Chair, UCLA Department of Theater
Associate Dean, Research and Creative Technology

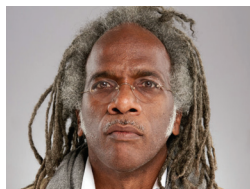
Department of Theater Leadership



Jeff Burke
Chair
Associate Dean, Research
and Creative Technology



Marike Splint
Vice Chair,
Undergraduate Studies
Area Head, Directing



Dominic Taylor
Vice Chair,
Graduate Studies

Area Heads



Dan Belzer,
Adjunct Professor,
Musical Theater



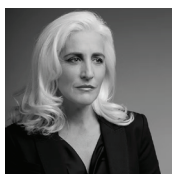
Jonathan Burke,
Academic
Administrator,
Sound Design



Jennifer Chang
Associate Professor,
Acting



Lap Chi Chu
Professor, Lighting
Design



**Chrsi Karvonides-
Dushenko**
Professor, Costume
Design



Suk-Young Kim
Professor, Theater
& Performance
Studies



Sylvan Oswald
Professor,
Playwriting



Adam Rigg
Associate Professor,
Scenic Design

Center Directors



Felipe Cervera
Assistant Professor & Director,
Center for Performance Studies



Deborah Nadoolman Landis
Distinguished Professor & Director,
David C. Copley Center for Costume Design



2025-2026
Season Preview

2025-2026

Season At-A-Glance

FALL QUARTER SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER

Bruin Fringe Festival

November 6-8, 13-15 & 20-22, 2025

Turn of the Screw

in collaboration with the
UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music
November 20, 21 & 23, 2025

WINTER QUARTER JANUARY-MARCH

MFA Directing Project I - To Be Announced

February 12-14, 2026

A Turner Prize by carl(os) Roa and ChatGPT

New Play Festival #1
February 19-21, 2026

***Bad Breath: The Stink Inside Me* by Natalie Lambert**

New Play Festival #2
February 26-28, 2026

Emma: No One But Herself

March 6-7 & 10-14, 2026

SPRING QUARTER APRIL-JUNE

Girl on an Altar

MFA Directing Project II
May 14-16, 2026

Mad Forest: A Play from Romania

MFA Directing Thesis
May 29-30 & June 2-6, 2026

Trojan Women

MFA Directing Project II
June 4-6, 2026

MFA Ones

June 6, 2026



Note: Performance schedules and locations are subject to change. Find the most up-to-date performance information at tft.ucla.edu

2025-2026 Project Breakdown

WHAT ARE THE MFA DIRECTING PROJECTS?

PROJECT I

In the MFA Directing Project I, students explore the process from rigorous play analysis to developing a directing concept, to giving their ideas life on the stage. The focus of the project is on working in depth with the text and the actors, while keeping design elements limited. Expect an evening that celebrates the power of theater in its essence: a thoughtful text brought to life by compelling performances.

PROJECT II

In the MFA Directing Project II, students begin by developing a design concept based on rigorous play analysis. The focus of the project is on collaboration with the MFA design candidates, and bringing these design ideas to life in a black box thrust configuration. These are projects that involve dynamic staging, multifaceted design choices and working with the department's shops.

THESIS

For the MFA Directing thesis, students stage a mainstage production that is a culmination of their time at TFT. Directors collaborate with MFA designers and undergraduate actors. It's an opportunity to work on a larger scale, with a larger cast, and on material that showcases the director's strengths and themes that are urgent to them.



WHAT IS THE NEW PLAY FESTIVAL?

The New Play Festival (NPF) is one of the cumulative events of the MFA in Playwriting degree. Third-year playwriting students have the opportunity to see their plays fully realized in a series of workshops, culminating in a professional production. Professional directors stage the plays and the designers are from their fellow cohort from our MFA design program. The public is encouraged to come to these events to see the future of theater.

2025-2026 Theater Season



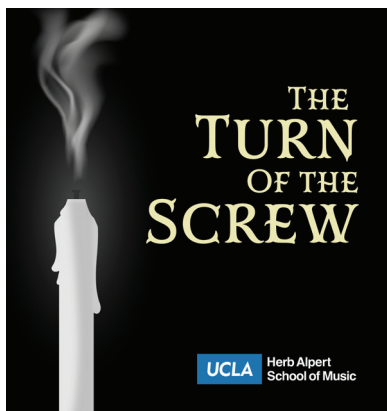
BRUIN FRINGE FESTIVAL

November 6-8, 13-15 & 20-22, 2025
Macgowan 1340

Faculty Advisor: Professor J. Ed Araiza

About the festival: Bruin Fringe Festival (BFF) is a festival of short student-generated pieces directed by and featuring department undergraduate students. This workshop setting is modeled after fringe festivals around the world that celebrate new and innovative performance.

Prior BFFs have included original short plays, improv sets, musicals and more! Full bill to be announced in Fall 2026 at tft.ucla.edu/events-workshops/theater-season/



THE TURN OF THE SCREW

in collaboration with the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music

November 20, 21 & 23, 2025
Freud Playhouse

Directed by Professor James Darrah
Composed by Benjamin Britten
Libretto by Myfanwy Piper

About the show: Based on the Henry James novella of the same name, *The Turn of the Screw* follows a young, inexperienced governess sent to a

country house to care for two children, who she is gradually convinced have been corrupted by the ghosts of a previous manservant and governess.

Did you know? Director James Darrah is an alum of the department (MFA '10) and the Head of Opera for the UCLA School of Music.

2025-2026 Theater Season

MFA Directing Project I

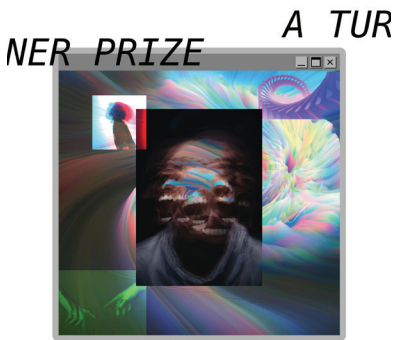
MFA DIRECTING PROJECT I*

February 12-14, 2026
Macgowan 1330

Directed by MFA student Zenaïda Smith
**Title To Be Announced*

About the project: In one of the first uses of the newly renovated Macgowan Hall 1330 (see p.22), MFA directing candidate Zenaïda Smith will direct her MFA Project I. The focus of the project is to work in depth with the text and the actors, while keeping production design intentionally minimal. This year's title will

be announced at tft.ucla.edu. The 2025 MFA Directing Project I was *The Effect* by Lucy Prebble.



BY CARL(OS) ROA AND CHAT GPT

A TURNER PRIZE

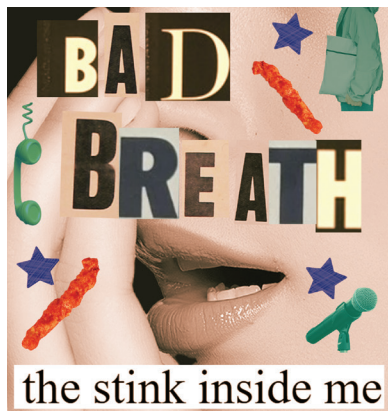
New Play Festival #1
February 19-21, 2026
Macgowan 1340

Written by MFA student Carl(os) Roa
Directed by Velani Dibba

About the show: Co-written by Carl(os) Roa and ChatGPT, *a Turner Prize* is an exploration of what it means to be an artist under late-stage capitalism. The world is dying, but starving artist &rade only cares about one thing: winning the Turner Prize.

Too bad they're not even eligible. Meanwhile, the more successful Randie faces the scrutiny of dealing with white gallery owners, white art critics, and an artistic landscape that seeks to flatten her work. Jealous, desperate, and spiraling, &rade starts feeding Randie's art into Zephyr: an AI service that distorts and reshapes art into something unrecognizable. a Turner Prize wrestles with the question: what is the impact of art under the backdrop of our mass extinction?

2025-2026 Theater Season



BAD BREATH: THE STINK INSIDE ME

New Play Festival #2
February 26-28, 2026
Little Theater

Written by MFA student Natalie
Grace Lambert
Directed by Diana Wyenn

About the show: Maya, a college freshman studying vocal performance at UT Austin, is desperate to get rid of the stink inside her mouth. When her breath suddenly turns profoundly rank,

no one wants to be around her. Not her friends, not her professors, and certainly not her super cute musician boyfriend. Though she routinely brushes, flosses, and uses mouthwash (and never rinses with water after!), the stink persists, leaving even medical professionals perplexed. Oh, also, her dad just died. And he left Maya's mom pregnant and contemplating an abortion.



EMMA: NO ONE BUT HERSELF

March 6-7 & 10-14, 2026
Freud Playhouse

Written by Meghan Brown
Music by Regents Lecturer Sarah
Taylor Ellis
Directed by Danielle Kay

About the show: This energetic and contemporary classical adaptation of Jane Austen's novel explores the necessary risk of feeling your feelings. Emma Woodhouse, handsome and clever and rich, amuses herself by matchmaking for

her friends - until she meets her own match. Is opening herself up to the possibility of romance worth the sacrifice of her independence and control? With a fresh book and soaring score, the effervescently-paced *EMMA: No One But Herself* will charm you with its wit and heart. Welcome to Highbury, people.

Q&A with Regents Lecturer Dr. Sarah Taylor Ellis



SARAH TAYLOR ELLIS (Ph.D., '13) is a Berlin-based composer, music director, lecturer and TFT alumna whose work aims to embrace the hybridity and multiplicity of music theater as an art form. She is also the composer and orchestrator for *EMMA: No One But Herself*, the energetic and contemporary musical adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*. Dr. Ellis sat down with UCLA Theater to share her story and give a peek into what audiences can expect from the show.

Q: WHAT LED TO YOU EXPLORING AND ULTIMATELY PURSUING A CAREER IN THE ARTS?

A: I grew up taking piano and dance lessons, reading tons of books, and making up plays with my sister in Albemarle, NC. I was definitely the artsy outsider in my small town, but the arts always felt like home. By the time I was in high school, I was an assistant teacher at my local dance studio, and I haven't stopped working in the arts since.

Q: WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR UPCOMING ARTISTS?

A: Find your community and stick by them. There's a tendency in our industry to seek the fancy and famous, but in my experience, the best and most joyous work comes not from grasping "higher," but from finding your people, building deep, lasting collaborations, and "rising through the ranks" side-by-side, supporting each other. (*EMMA* librettist Meghan Brown and I met while studying abroad in London in 2006!)

Q: WHAT INFLUENCES INSPIRED *EMMA*?

A: Believe it or not, *EMMA* was written before *Bridgerton*, but the vibe of that show certainly aligns with our musical: a fresh, contemporary take on something "classical." Musically, I was inspired by the sweeping, romantic melodies of composers like Richard Rodgers and Adam Guettel, and the orchestration draws inspiration from Clara Schumann's piano trio.

Q: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE *EMMA* IN FIVE WORDS?

A: Regencycore, exuberant, vulnerable, charming, soaring.

Q: WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO TELL THE STORY OF *EMMA* NOW?

A: It's a joyous musical about learning to check your privilege, feel your feelings, and grow into a more open-hearted, empathetic human being. The world could use more joy and empathy right now!

2025-2026 Theater Season



GIRL ON AN ALTAR

May 14-16, 2026

Macgowan 1340

Written by Marina Carr

Directed by MFA student Anna Rajala

About the show: There are no winners of war, only survivors. When Agamemnon sacrifices his young daughter to win the Trojan War, he condemns his relationship with his wife and his kingdom. This new adaptation of the ancient Greek myth focuses on the irreversible damage

Agamemnon's sacrifice brings upon his relationship with Clytemnestra and follows her grief, rage, and search for vengeance after such betrayal. This play reminds audiences that even the wealthiest cannot escape the effects of war, and everything and everyone is impacted by war and cycles of violence.



MAD FOREST: A PLAY FROM ROMANIA

May 29-30 & June 2-6, 2026

Little Theater

Written by Caryl Churchill

Directed by MFA student Eric Swartz

About the show: *Mad Forest* depicts a society before, during, and after a violent regime change. Developed with drama students in the immediate aftermath of the Romanian Revolution, Caryl Churchill's episodic and surreal

ensemble drama follows two families of different social classes, interrogating what happens to a people - and a nation - when trust and truth have been eroded beyond recognition.

2025-2026 Theater Season



TROJAN WOMEN

June 4-6, 2026

Macgowan 1340

Written by Ellen McLaughlin

Directed by MFA student Jit Yang Tung

About the show: Troy has fallen, her women reach out to each other, outward to us. Queen Hecuba and the Chorus attempt to comprehend and remember - reflecting the tragic consequences of war - asking what comes after the dust settles. "Perhaps the greatest antiwar play ever written" -

Ellen McLaughlin's choral, ever-contemporary version of Euripides' *Trojan Women* draws together a diverse ensemble "of the most extraordinary roles for women in theatrical literature" as they undertake and endeavor to "transcend even the most terrible pain caused by human divisiveness and rancor."



MFA ONES

June 6, 2026

Macgowan 1330

About the show: This production will showcase an exciting collection of short, one-act plays, each one written, developed, and directed by current MFA students in the department. Audiences can expect a variety of fresh voices and perspectives, highlighting the creativity and craft of emerging theater makers as they experiment with form, story, and staging. A full lineup of plays and creative

teams will be announced in 2026, with the final bill reflecting the diverse range of interests, styles, and themes that our MFA cohort brings to the stage.

Faculty Spotlight: **Malika Oyetimein**

MALIKA OYETIMEIN is an Assistant Professor of Directing in the UCLA Department of Theater, where she began teaching in 2023. Before joining UCLA, she taught at Boston University and was drawn to UCLA Theater by the strong spirit of collaboration among its faculty. She finds it continually exciting to work alongside colleagues with such deep and diverse experience in the field.



Professor Oyetimein was inspired to pursue a career in directing and theater education because she discovered that the stories she wanted to tell could be richer and more impactful with her behind the stage. Over the years, she has found that a common challenge for new directors is the urge to include everything in a single production.



“Young directors want to do everything in one play,” she said, “and my job as their mentor is to continuously probe their vision to help streamline and illuminate what they are trying to say.”

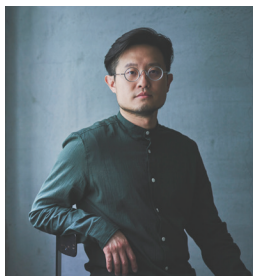
For the 2025–26 season, Professor Oyetimein is advising the third-year MFA director, Eric Swartz. Malika sees her mentoring role as one of helping Eric refine and challenge his own artistry.

“For me, mentoring is about bringing out the inner artist in my students, their unique voice and vision,” she said.

In addition to her teaching and mentorship at UCLA, Malika is the director and co-author of a new musical titled *The Homefront*, which she just completed a development workshop for this summer at Theater Latté Da in Minneapolis.

Spotlighting our Alumni

HOGAN LEE, PRODUCTION DESIGN ('18)



At UCLA, I learned that being authentic to myself aesthetically meant embracing challenges head-on. In doing so, I discovered strength, confidence, and the belief that I am capable of much more than I thought.

After graduation, I joined the Art Directors Guild with dual cards in art direction and set design. Since then, my work has focused on set design for television and feature films, with credits including *Joker 2* and *Perry Mason* (Season 2), as well as upcoming features *Crime 101* and *Whalefall*. A highlight of my career was serving as assistant art director on *Mank*, which won the Academy Award for Best Production Design at the 93rd Oscars in 2021.

NOELLE SAMMOUR, SOUND DESIGN ('15)

I learned so much from UCLA, but the biggest thing I learned was the power of collaboration. Theater, more than anything else, is a team sport, and the network you build at UCLA will be a lifelong one. Recently, I have gotten off the road after touring with *Hamilton* as their A2 for the last 3 years. I just moved to NYC and will be working as a sound mixer on an off-Broadway show with Jonathan Burke.



MICHAELA DUARTE, INTEGRATED STUDIES ('25)

I just started a Creative Producing internship with Walt Disney Imagineering, supporting the cruise line portfolio as they develop their fleet over the next few years. Being in a producing role gives me the opportunity to collaborate with creatives from all disciplines, including a ton of fellow Bruins (even some from my graduating class!). It's so exciting to be working for my dream company in a dream role, and I wouldn't be here without the training and support UCLA gave me.



Photo: Michaela (left) with Disney intern mate and UCLA Spring 2025 Xanadu production collaborator, Alyssa Adriana (BS, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, '25) (right).

Ticketing & Box Office Information

TICKETS

Tickets are typically available about three weeks before a show's opening and can be purchased in advance through the UCLA Central Ticket Office (CTO).

PURCHASING OPTIONS

Online: tickets.ucla.edu

In Person: Visit the CTO windows at 325 Westwood Plaza (ground level, across from Pauley Pavilion), open Monday–Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



At the Venue: Limited tickets may be available at the UCLA TFT box office 30 minutes before each performance. The box office is located in the Macgowan Hall courtyard between the Little Theater and Freud Playhouse (see map on p.19).



PRICING

General admission for performances range from free to \$25.00 and are subject to tax and fees. UCLA students may purchase tickets for \$10.00 online via the CTO website, CTO windows or the TFT box office.

STUDENT RUSH

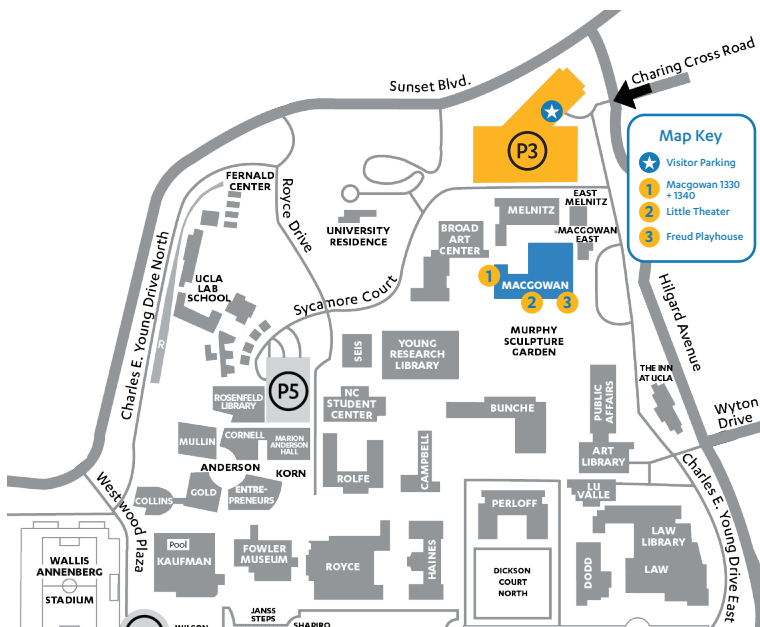
Current UCLA students can participate in Student Rush to see select performances for free. Approximately one hour prior to curtain, students may line up next to the box office in the Macgowan courtyard. At

curtain, any remaining tickets are released to the Student Rush line on a first-come, first-served basis. If the show is sold out, production staff will inform students that there will be no Student Rush for that night.

Campus Map & Parking Information

THE UCLA SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND TELEVISION is located on the northeast corner of the University of California, Los Angeles. Performance venues include Macgowan 1330 and 1340, the Little Theater, and the Freud Playhouse.

All venues are housed within Macgowan Hall, located at 245 Charles E Young Dr E. Los Angeles, CA, 90095.



PARKING

North Parking Structure 3 is the closest visitor parking structure to all UCLA Theater performance venues. A valid UCLA parking permit is always required to park on campus. Visitor parking is available on levels 1, 2, and 3. Please do not park on higher levels or in South Structure 3. Only park in spaces marked with a green circle and a white "P".

Parking rates begin at \$3.00/hour. Find more information on rates and permits at transportation.ucla.edu/campus-parking

Upcoming Department Events



SKETCH TO SCREEN **MARCH 14, 2026**

Join costume designer and Distinguished Professor Deborah Nadoolman Landis, Ph.D., Chair and Founding Director of the Copley Center, as she welcomes a stellar group of international costume designers to discuss their craft. On the eve of the Academy Awards, these Oscar-nominated panelists will engage in a thought-provoking discussion about the central role

costume designers play in cinematic storytelling. Audience members are given an invaluable look into some of the most successful creative minds in Hollywood.

tft.ucla.edu/events-workshops/sketch-to-screen

DESIGN SHOWCASE WEST **JUNE 6, 2026**

Design Showcase West features the work of graduate students in costume, lighting, production, sound, scenic, and projection/media design from the nation's top university design programs. Studio executives, film and television producers, theater directors and professional designers visit DSW each year to meet the industry's fresh rising stars.



tft.ucla.edu/events-workshops/design-showcase-west/

Upcoming Summer Programming

THEATER SUMMER INSTITUTES SUMMER 2026

The Department of Theater's Summer Institutes offer high schoolers, college students, and professionals a unique opportunity to enhance their acting, singing and dancing abilities, as well as build their professional network, during two and three-week intensives.

Choose from a variety of programs, including:

Acting & Performance

Camera Acting

Content Creation & Scriptwriting

Costume Design

Lighting & Sound Design

Scenic Design

Intermediate Acting

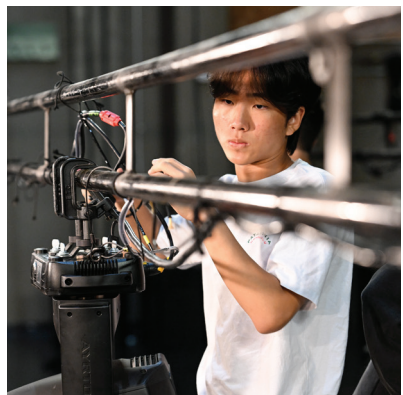
Musical Theater

Pit Orchestra

Stage Management

Voice-Over Camera Acting

tft.ucla.edu/academics/summer-programs/



Support Spotlight: The Macgowan 1330 Project



MACGOWAN 1330 IS A CORNERSTONE SPACE for the UCLA Department of Theater, and it's undergoing major renovations thanks to Liz and Ken Whitney and their extraordinary \$7.5 million gift to support the total transformation of the space.

Macgowan 1330 functions as a classroom, rehearsal space, and black box performance venue, central to the daily life of students, faculty, and staff at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television (TFT). The renovation will address pressing structural needs, including installation of a new HVAC unit, electrical and mechanical upgrades, and improved plumbing. The project will also include important cosmetic enhancements, ensuring the space is both comfortable and conducive to learning, rehearsing, and performing.

For Liz Whitney, the gift carries special meaning. A UCLA Theater alumna from the Class of 1980, she shares a strong Bruin legacy with her daughter, Ali Fumiko Whitney, who graduated from the department in 2017. The Whitney family has consistently supported the Department of Theater with significant financial contributions over the past several years.

"As a UCLA Theater alum, I understand how important it is to have dedicated space to create," Liz Whitney said. "Our family is proud to support the up-and-coming artists at TFT by providing them with the tools they need to craft the theater of tomorrow."

Faculty and students alike view Macgowan 1330 as a hub of artistic exploration and collaboration. With the Whitneys' generosity, the space will be revitalized to better serve generations of theater-makers to come.

"This gift ensures that one of our most important spaces will remain vibrant, safe, and inspiring," said Aaron Cervantes, Executive Director of Development at TFT. "We are fortunate to have alumni like the Whitneys who believe so strongly in giving back to the community that shaped their own artistic journeys."

Renovations are scheduled to be complete in October 2025, with an official grand opening of the space in early 2026. Learn more about ways to support the Department of Theater at tft.ucla.edu/give.

Support the 2025-2026 Theater Season

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT TIME to support the arts.

Your contribution of any size directly supports undergraduate and graduate students and their creative work in UCLA Theater productions.

Your support helps fund essential elements of physical productions, including sets, costumes, lighting, sound, and technology that enhance learning and create hands-on educational experiences. It also provides additional resources such as guest artists, specialized workshops, and professional coaching.

Financial support allows our faculty and staff to build upon the world-class education and hands-on training our students already receive, helping them thrive as the next generation of theater professionals.



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Your support is vital and felt across the entire UCLA Department of Theater! For more details on sponsorship packages, visit giving.ucla.edu/TheaterSeason

Spotlight Sponsor

\$1,000

Center Stage Sponsor

\$2,500

Standing Ovation Sponsor

\$5,000

Curtain Call Sponsor

\$10,000

Encore Circle Sponsor

\$25,000



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or contact the TFT Development
Team at devo@tft.ucla.edu

UCLA School of Theater, Film & Television **Theater**

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by visiting tft.ucla.edu

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