

2026-2027
Season Preview

UCLA School of Theater, Film & Television
Theater



Production photography by Makela Yopez

ON THE COVER: Matthew Smith ('26) and Hadley Connor ('26) star in *Emma: No One But Herself*, an original musical with book and lyrics by TAPS alum Sarah Taylor Ellis ('13) and directed by Danielle Kay in Winter 2026.

INSIDE COVER: Kosi Eguchi ('27) and Katya Madrigal ('27) engage in an emotional struggle during *Girl on an Altar*, a modern adaptation of the Greek myth of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon by Irish playwright Marina Carr, directed by MFA student Anna Rajala in Spring 2026.

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A message from **Dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu**



TO MY DEAR UCLA TFT THEATER COMMUNITY,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 season of the UCLA Department of Theater!

As Dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, I am both a theater and film scholar and maker. I love cinema and I need theater.

Theater marks a before and an after. We gather in a performance space where a gesture, a word, a silence can change our perspective of self, others, and the world entirely. We do not leave as we came.

Distinguished Professor Peter Sellars, our affiliated faculty, reminds us that theater in early Greece is the site of democracy, where the marginalized sought voice and representation.

This matters. Always. Now, then, and in the future. And it matters here, where voices are trained. I fell in love with theater and cinema in the very halls of Melnitz and Macgowan, as a student who wanted more than anything to make plays and movies, to test the bounds of artistic freedom and expression. Bringing an imagined world into being is nothing short of a miracle.

What a season awaits us in 2026–2027! The theater is the best classroom on Earth. It asks our students for all they have studied here and what they bring from home: story and tradition, text and technique, design and direction, history and innovation. And for curiosity, courage, trust. Then they invite us in. What an honor to bear witness.

Let us go big. Dreams and aspirations belong here, and here is where they happen. I invite you to support the pursuits of our students, the passions of our faculty and the work of our staff who make these encounters possible. Come with awe and reverence for creation itself. This is the future of democracy, as is higher education.

Let us surrender to the power of 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 2026-2027 season!

Each production the Department mounts is an essential part of how our students discover their artistic voices and sharpen their craft. As audience members, alumni, and supporters, you make that work possible – an effort that brings together hundreds of students, staff, faculty, and distinguished guests every year.

In the pages ahead, you'll find a look at the year to come, from fully realized mainstage productions to the earliest public readings of new plays by our MFA playwrights. We also spotlight recent work by faculty and alumni, along with more ways to connect with our community.

Whatever first drew you to UCLA Theater, I hope you'll venture somewhere new this year – join us at Bruin Fringe Fest in the Fall, come to a class workshop at the UCLA Nimoy Theater in Westwood, attend a show in the newly renovated Whitney Family Studio Theater, or visit a one-of-a-kind event like Sketch to Screen or Design Showcase West.

You can keep up on all of these events as well as our season through our social media. Turn to the back cover to find out more. There you'll also learn about events tied to faculty research, follow our collaborations with the Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media, and stay current on the latest from UCLA Theater.

Stay tuned for exciting announcements coming during the year, including new faculty in emerging technologies and our incoming Whitney Family Gary Gardner Chair in Musical Theater. Thank you for being a part of our community.

Sincerely,



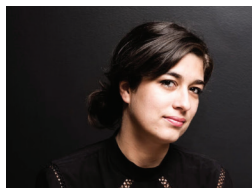
Jeff Burke
Chair, UCLA Department of Theater
Associate Dean, Research and Creative Technology



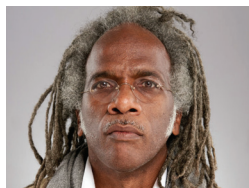
Department of Theater Leadership



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



Jeff Behm
Lecturer, Lighting
Design (Interim)



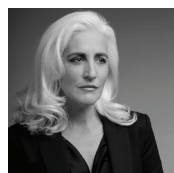
Dan Belzer,
Adjunct Professor,
Musical Theater



Jonathan Burke,
Academic
Administrator,
Sound Design



Jennifer Chang
Associate Professor,
Acting



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



Sean Metzger
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



2026-2027
Season Preview

2026-2027 Season At-A-Glance



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

FALL

Bruin Fringe Festival

November 5-21, 2026

House of Peace

November 12-21, 2026

A Workshop of Measure Still for Measure

December 4-5, 2026

WINTER

MFA Directing Project I - To Be Announced

February 11-13, 2027

Laws of Maturity

New Play Festival

February 18-20, 2027

The Wonderful World of Dissocia

MFA Directing Thesis

February 26-March 6, 2027

Rent

March 5-13, 2027

SPRING

The House of Bernarda Alba

April 30-May 8, 2027

How to Defend Yourself

May 14-22, 2027

MFA Ones

May 22, 2027

Lunch Bunch

MFA Directing Project II

May 27-29

Undergraduate One Acts

June 3-5, 2027

Musical Theater + Acting Showcases

TBD

2026-2027 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.

2026-2027 Theater Season



BRUIN FRINGE FESTIVAL

November 5-7, 12-14 & 19-21, 2026
Whitney Family Studio Theater

Faculty Advisor: J. Ed Araiza, Professor,
Department of Theater

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 2027 at tft.ucla.edu/events-workshops/theater-season/



HOUSE OF PEACE

November 12-14 & 19-21, 2026
Freud Playhouse

Directed by Natsuo Tomita, Lecturer,
Department of Theater and Department
of World Arts and Cultures/Dance

About the show: *House of Peace* follows a photographer and a dancer, each in love with their art. He is brilliant but subdued, capturing beauty within a frame. She is fiercely dedicated, striving to be the best in her company. When life throws them

off balance, each must confront what true love actually is. Two people in the same place at the same time, never meeting, until life brings them to the right moment. *House of Peace* is a TFT original that brings together performers from World Arts and Cultures/Dance and set, costume, lighting, and sound designers from Theater. Original choreography and photography shape its visual language, giving students across disciplines a shared creative stage.

2026-2027 Theater Season



A WORKSHOP OF MEASURE STILL FOR MEASURE

December 4-5, 2026

In and around 1340 and 1350 Macgowan Hall

Written by Jessica Kubzansky
Directed by Judith Moreland, Professor,
Department of Theater

About the project: A site-specific, immersive journey to experience the complexities of creating theatre. In this play-within-a-play, a director rehearses a

production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, "the original #metoo story." But backstage, bigger drama plays out as the power dynamics of the play and rehearsal explode.



MFA DIRECTING PROJECT I*

February 11-13, 2027

Whitney Family Studio Theater

Directed by MFA student Hannah Sandler
*Title To Be Announced

About the project: In one of the first uses of the newly renovated Macgowan Hall 1330 (see p.22), Sandler 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/events-workshops/theater-season/. The 2026 MFA Directing Project I was *Far Away* by Caryl Churchill.

2026-2027 Theater Season



LAWS OF MATURITY

New Play Festival

February 18-20, 2027

Macgowan 1340

Written by MFA student Genevieve Swanson

Directed by Nikki DiLoreto

About the show: All Storm wants for her 25th birthday is to get a real job. So, when her internship sends her to Napa Valley for the weekend to close a major deal, she can nearly taste the health

insurance. That is, until her three best friends crash the trip, bringing all of their love and messiness with them. It's a queer romp that will have you questioning what it means to reach maturity and how many innuendos one play can possibly make about wine.



THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISSOCIA

February 26-March 6, 2027

Little Theater

Written by Anthony Neilson

Directed by MFA student Anna Rajala

About the show: Lisa has lost an hour of her life in daylight savings and journeys to the land of Dissocia to get it back. While there, she encounters many bizarre, fantastical, and disturbing creatures and is launched into an epic battle to save

the inhabitants of Dissocia from their oppressors. Right before she claims victory, Lisa wakes up in a hospital where she is being treated for a dissociative disorder, her colorful adventures fading to gray. This play explores dissociative disorders through childhood fantasies twisted over time, and questions how one copes when reality is too much to handle.

2026-2027 Theater Season



RENT

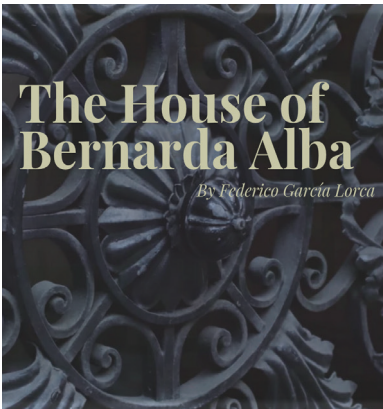
March 5-13, 2027
Freud Playhouse

Music, lyrics, and book by Jonathan Larson

Directed by the incoming Whitney Family Gary Gardner Chair in Musical Theater

About the show: A groundbreaking, Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning rock musical loosely based on the 1896 opera *La bohème* by Giacomo Puccini, Luigi Illica, and Giuseppe Giacosa, *RENT* tells

the story of a group of impoverished young artists struggling to survive and create a life in Lower Manhattan's East Village, in the thriving days of the bohemian culture of Alphabet City, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS.



THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA

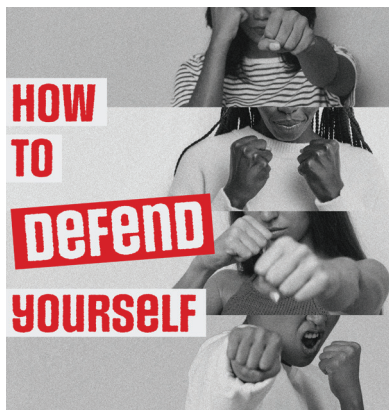
April 30-May 8, 2027
Little Theater

Written by Federico García Lorca
Directed by Abigail Deser

About the show: After her second husband dies, a tyrannical Spanish matriarch forces her five adult daughters into an oppressive eight-year period of traditional mourning, sparking intense jealousy, secret desires, and tragic

rebellion when a single local suitor begins courting the eldest daughter.

2026-2027 Theater Season



and the violator and violated in us all.

HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF

May 14-22, 2027

Freud Theater

Written by Liliana Padilla

Directed by Malika Oyetimein, Assistant Professor, Department of Theater

About the show: Seven college students at a DIY self-defense workshop face the insidious ways rape culture steals one's body and sense of belonging. With sharp humor and brutal honesty, the work explores what we want, how to ask for it,



MFA ONES

May 22, 2027

Whitney Family Studio Theater

About the show: This production will showcase an exciting new one-act play by incoming MFA playwriting student Soroya Rowley. Audiences can expect a fresh voice and new perspective, highlighting the creativity and craft of this emerging theater makers as they experiment with form, story, and staging. More details to be announced in 2027.

ANGELA ROBINSON

Assistant Professor of Theater and Performance Studies

An anti-colonial Chuukese scholar, Robinson specializes in Indigenous feminisms, sciences, and ontologies, Pasifika performance and cultural production, interrelations of the human and more-than-human, and global social movements for climate justice.



Q: WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON RIGHT NOW?

My first book project, *Colonial Climates*, has taken up most of my time recently. It's a love/hate affair, but I am very excited to bring it into the world soon — especially to highlight the incredible work so many Pacific Islanders are doing to deal with climate change. It is ultimately a story of resistance and perseverance, waged at a planetary level by some of our most vulnerable communities. As I write this, I'm sitting on the balcony of my childhood home in Oahu, where Hurricane Lowell passed last night and we're preparing for another hurricane right on its tail. I am here to watch a new play from Hawai'i Theatre Center on endangered animals for one of my book chapters. So, my excitement about this work comes from two very distinct places: the joy of seeing, writing about, and sharing innovative performances, and the urgency of adding to a growing chorus calling for lasting climate transformation.

Q: AS A UCLA PHD ALUM, HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE BACK AS A PROFESSOR?

Oh, it's lovely! It feels really full circle in many ways. When I graduated with my PhD from UCLA in 2019, I received the commencement award, which basically meant I led the line of PhD students and gave a speech at commencement. In my speech, I called on UCLA to do more for Native students. Seven years later, I was hired in part through an initiative from the Chancellor's office to better serve Indigenous students across UCLA. So, it's an honor and a responsibility I happily embrace. Another anecdote: as a student, I often parked in Lot 3 and walked through Macgowan when it rained. I loved peeking into the rooms to see what the students were working on, thinking they seemed to be having so much fun. How wild that a few years later my office is in that very building and I get to teach these students!

Read the full Q&A at tft.ucla.edu/robinson-spotlight/

2026-2027 Theater Season



LUNCH BUNCH

May 27-29, 2027

Macgowan 1340

Written by Adrian Einspanier

Directed by MFA student Zenaida Smith

About the show: There's satisfaction in uniting families and uniting ingredients into the perfect sandwich... but the latter is sooooo much more attainable. Seven public defenders seek meaning, belonging, and order to their daily chaos via their gourmet lunch club.



UNDERGRADUATE ONE ACTS

June 3-5, 2027

Whitney Family Studio Theater

Written and directed by Department of Theater undergraduate students

About the show: The Undergraduate One Acts showcase new plays by UCLA's next generation of playwrights and directors. One evening with several original works developed through close collaboration between the students.

LUCAS GUAZELLI ('25)



IMAGINEER

"While at UCLA [Theater], I said yes to everything. From student shows to department productions, with every experience I developed not only technical skills that I use professionally, but learned how to collaborate with other designers, artists, and engineers to tell cohesive and engaging stories. After graduating, I joined Walt Disney Imagineering, first as an intern and then full-time as an associate imaging

designer. I'm now part of the team designing the projections and digital displays used to tell stories in attractions both close to home and around the world."

KAY SIBAL ('22)



ACTOR

"I loved my time at [TFT] because there were so many ways to not only study, but *practice* – as an actor, musician, director, producer, writer, and more. There was never a moment I wasn't inspired by my staff and peers, because everyone was constantly creating new opportunities to get involved. Since graduating, I've worked at various LA regional theaters including Pasadena Playhouse and East West Players, competed on Season 26 of NBC's *The Voice*, and played Katherine Howard in *Six the Musical* on Broadway. I'm now

bopping around New York working on various gigs from new musical workshops, to professional singing, to TV/Film!"

DJ HILLS ('24)



PLAYWRIGHT

"The faculty and playwrights at [TFT] were instrumental in helping me understand the kind of theater I want to make. They gave me the tools and confidence to advocate for a more just and equitable future of theatermaking for myself and the artists who will come after me. This fall, I start my seven-year residency with New Dramatists and my play *Horsegirl & Cowdaddy* will premiere at the Wilma in Philadelphia before transferring off-Broadway to Soho Rep."

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

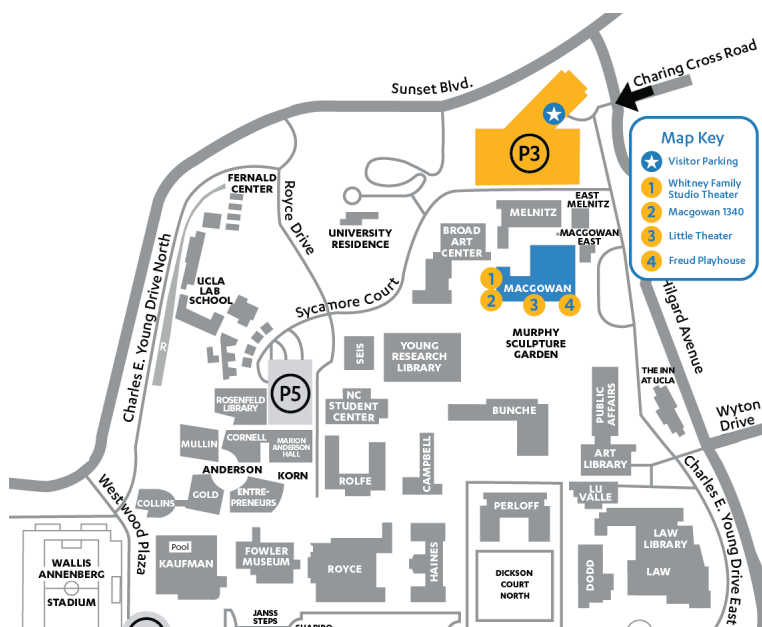
Current UCLA students can participate in Student Rush to see select performances for free. Approximately one hour prior to curtain, students may line up next to the

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 the Whitney Family Studio Theater, Macgowan 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 13, 2027

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 5, 2027

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 + LABORATORY INTENSIVES SUMMER 2027

The Department of Theater's Summer Institutes and Laboratory Intensives 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 single or multi-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

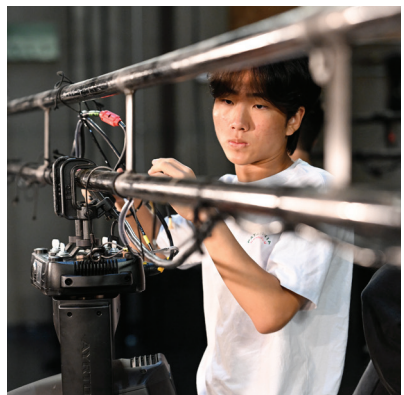
Musical Theater

Pit Orchestra

Stage Management

Voice-Over Camera Acting

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



Support Spotlight



(Image l-r) TFT dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Elizabeth Reiko Kubota Whitney (BA '80).

WHITNEY FAMILY STUDIO THEATER OPENS

In January 2026, TFT cut the ribbon on the Whitney Family Studio Theater, formerly Macgowan 1330, transformed through a generous gift from Theater alumna and TFT executive board member Elizabeth Reiko Kubota Whitney ('80) and Kenneth C. Whitney. With new seating, an accessible entrance, a tech booth, an expanded stage, a backstage area, and updated lighting and air conditioning, the Whitney has quickly become a hub for Theater Department productions, student projects, lectures and special guests.

CAROL BURNETT ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP LAUNCHES

Last October, entertainment legend Carol Burnett endowed a scholarship at TFT, extending the same opportunity that launched her career to today's musical theater students. Administered through the Ray Bolger Musical Theater Program, the award offsets tuition annually — beginning with inaugural recipient Alexa Cruz. She's also donated over 140 career awards to TFT, on view in the Freud Playhouse lobby.



(Image l-r) TFT dean Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Carol Burnett, TFT student and inaugural scholarship recipient Alexa Cruz. Photo by Sebastian Hernandez

Support the 2026-2027 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.



Scan to visit
giving.ucla.edu/TheaterSeason
or contact the TFT Development
Team at devo@tft.ucla.edu

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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Learn more about the UCLA Department of Theater
by visiting tft.ucla.edu

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