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2020 THEATRE TRAINING NEWS

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UMKC THEATRE has been ranked by U.S. News & World Report among the top graduate theatre training programs in the country. Graduates from UMKC Theatre are invited to the most prestigious New York and Los Angeles professional reviews and auditions to exhibit their work and secure positions with national and international performing companies. We build bridges. We assist the creative student in making the journey to becoming a creative professional. The practice of the department is to vigorously educate students in the many arts, crafts and traditions of theatre, and to provide a basis for future careers in the creative industries. Our program offers intensive hands-on experience while at the same time fostering analytical and contextual skills. The practical experience of theatre-making occurs not only within the performing venues of UMKC, but also in professional theatres in Kansas City. Theatre is a passion. We seek it, we train for it, and we embody it.

UMKC Theatre is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and the University/Resident Theatre Association (U/RTA).

Frederick Rivera in The Tempest, UMKC Theatre, 2019. Photo by Manon Halliburtin.
AS OF THE 2019-20 school term, Dr. Felicia Hardison Londré is now Curators’ Distinguished Professor Emerita, and as she says in her bio, “has scaled back from full-time teaching.” This issue of Theatre Training News is dedicated to Dr. Felicia Hardison Londré’s excellence, enthusiasm and extreme joy she has poured into not only the UMKC Theatre Division, but also the entire Kansas City theatrical community for over 40 years. The 2018 UMKC Today article devoted to Dr. Londré named her “the jewel of UMKC Theatre,” and no other title could be as apt.

Dr. Felicia Hardison Londré is beloved.
Dr. Londré was hired by Dr. Patricia McIlrath in the late 1970’s and not only taught classes, but also served as the resident dramaturg and literary manager for the Missouri Repertory Theatre for 22 years. Her scholarly prowess includes publishing over 60 scholarly articles, 25 journalistic publications, 100 book and theatre reviews, and 14 books. Her book, *The Enchanted Years of the Stage: Kansas City at the Crossroads of American Theatre, 1870-1930*, which won the George Freedley Memorial Book Award presented by the Theatre Library Association in 2008, is a love letter to theatre in Kansas City. And all theatre artisans know that Dr. Londré can be found at almost every opening night, showing her unwavering support for all those making a life in the Kansas City theatrical community.

Announcements of Dr. Londré’s lectures become the hottest ticket in town, whether be it her annual lecture on the Shakespeare authorship question, her Founder’s Day lecture about Dr. Patrica McIlrath forming the Missouri Repertory Theatre and UMKC theatre department (always accompanied by Dr. Mac’s beloved Russell Stover’s chocolate), or nightly lectures in Southmoreland Park during The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival that she helped found in 1991.

Never one to rest in one place for very long, Dr. Londré is Co-convener with Kip Niven, organizing *KC Molière (400 in 2022)*, a city-wide celebration of Molière’s 400th birthday in 2022, bringing together professional and academic participation by all art forms.

In her introduction of Dr. Londré, Kansas City actress Dodie Brown said, “I have seen her in dialogue with her students and she INFUSES them with her energy and support for their achievements. What fortunate students.”

Yes Dr. Londré: students, faculty, and theatre patrons have all been fortunate to be graced by your unwavering support and wisdom.
I cannot overstate the positive influence that Dr. Londré has had on my education, my career as an artist, and my life overall. I feel that the axis of my trajectory shifted the day I met her; it is a day I will always remember. I had applied to the MA in Theater program at UMKC and received an e-mail from this person with a rather impressive name, asking to meet me in her office. I went to my interview, already feeling intimidated by this person, who I assumed was going to be a rather official and stern academic type. The moment I sat in that chair in her office and we began discussing the play which I had submitted to her as part of my application to the program, I knew that this was where I had to be, learning from this person.

Over the past few years, I have watched Dr. Londré with admiration and a desire to emulate her best qualities, of which she has so many. The joy and standard of excellence she brings to her work is something I’ve come to believe we need more of in our world. We cannot overstate the ways in which her work in theater has touched the lives of so many scholars and artists. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have met her, and to have had the opportunity to study under her, one of the most brilliant and inspiring people I’ve ever met.”

– AMANDA DAVISON
FOR DECADES the UMKC Department of Theatre, and the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance have existed as two separate units. The Theatre Department operated as part of the College of Arts & Sciences; and the Conservatory of Music and Dance functioned as its own entity. That separation ended this year, when all of the performing arts disciplines – dance, music, acting, theatre design & technology, opera, musicology, stage management, jazz studies, and all the rest – were brought together as the UMKC Conservatory.

Excitement surrounding the merge begin in March of 2019, when Chancellor Mauli Agrawal announced that “natural partners are aligning,” and officially set the plan in motion. Echoing Agrawal’s sentiments, Ken Martin, the newly appointed Patricia McIlrath Endowed Professor and Chair of the Theatre Division of the UMKC Conservatory, sees the reasons for bringing the programs together as self-evident. “The two divisions were a great match,” he says; “What we do and what they do are simpatico.”

“We couldn’t be happier to be paired with the Conservatory,” Martin says, pointing out that when you look at the big picture you immediately see the two departments’ similarities. “The Theatre Department’s graduate and undergraduate programs were already using a Conservatory model. And, parts of the two programs have been working hand in hand
for years.” Theatre’s lighting and stage management departments have worked closely with the Conservatory’s opera and dance programs for a quarter of a century, and in recent years there has been a growing trend toward more collaboration among various disciplines in the performing arts programs.

Martin touches on the common needs that all of the performing arts have where facilities are concerned. With the merger, he sees great new possibilities for making the most of the way we use the spaces we share. By discovering new ways to use the spaces we have, we’re laying the groundwork for future possibilities as the UMKC Conservatory grows.

“We couldn’t be happier to be paired with the Conservatory.”
– KEN MARTIN
New collaborations began in the spring of 2019 with the Theatre department’s production of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Students from the Conservatory Dance program were cast in the show, and professor David Justin from Dance worked with the show’s director, professor Scott Stackhouse from Theatre, to choreograph their movement and blend it with the work that the acting company was doing. The addition of the dancers added an unexpected dimension to the play and helped make it one of the most exciting events of the year. It was a fantastic collaborative achievement, and as we move forward, we know it was just the first of many more to come.

> HONORING
> DR. LONDRE

*She’s the best, most enthusiastic teacher I’ve ever had. She loves learning and knowledge and loves every minute of everything she teaches. It makes me want to learn more. I remember a lot of things that Felicia taught me and it’s helped push me ahead in my career. She is the most charming teacher I have ever had and I hope that if I ever teach that I can teach like her!*

— ALLISON DILLARD
THE MFA ACTOR TRAINING PROGRAM at UMKC develops and prepares extraordinary, flexible artists who will become the voices for their generation of storytellers. Through a unique combination of academic and professional experiences, the program instills in our students an evolving creative technique based in classical, contemporary and experimental pedagogies. The program is designed to challenge and inspire students to reach their fullest creative potential as actors, while cultivating the highest level of professionalism.
Theatre is often designated as the most collaborative of all the arts. The MFA in Acting at the University of Missouri-Kansas City acknowledges this and asks students to dive head first into Auto-Cours work. Based on the pedagogy of Jaques Lecoq, Auto-Cours forces artists to work together to create devised theatre.

Devised theatre asks the collaborators to bring their own experiences together in order to create a script and, in turn, a show. The 2019 graduating class of MFA actors were able to create a devised piece called The Storytelling Project.

The Storytelling Project was a collaboration between the entire MFA acting class of 2019, director Karen Lisondra, and composer Amado Espinoza. The Storytelling Project explored intimate and imaginative relationships through the Andean Cosmovision’s concept.

Yetunde Felix-Ukwu in The Storytelling Project, Circo El Tapeque, 2019. Photo by Emmanuel Medina
“soul-texts,” out of which characterization and a script were born. Each of the characters was created from these “soul-texts.” The entire acting ensemble was involved: Marianne McKenzie, Chelsea Kinser, Khalif Gillett, Jason Francescon, Freddy Acevedo, Yetunde Felix-Ukwu, and Emilie Karas, each bringing their own “soul-texts” to the piece.

The group worked together for nine months before the project got on its feet for audiences the first time in Kansas City in 2018. They collaborated with artists across all departments of UMKC’s theatre program. UMKC designers were able to bring lighting, set, and sound to the overall piece in 2018. Marianne McKenzie says, “Without UMKC, we never would have been connected with Karen and Amado, nor had the cool design elements from the students there.”

The journey did not stop there for this successful devised piece. Marianne, Chelsea, Freddy, Yetunde, and Emilie took the show on the road. This fall the group took a revised version of The Storytelling Project, now entirely in Spanish, to Bolivia. The group performed in a number of Bolivian cities, including Cochabamba, La Paz, Tarabuco, and Sucre. McKenzie says that Bolivia served as original inspiration for the piece as both Amado Espinoza and Karen Lisondra have ties to the South American country. “Performing the Pachakutec in Bolivia was like a homecoming,” says Yetunde Felix-Ukwe. “There was an overwhelming amount of resonance when we did the story in front of people honoring their culture, their history, their mythology and their language.”

The entire project is a testament to the lasting

Performing the Pachakutec in Bolivia was like a homecoming.

– YETUNDE FELIX-UKWE
impact that courses such as these can have. Undoubtedly this project has truly changed the performers involved as they grew together in their journey making theatre from nothing. They came into the process bringing only their independent experiences and left having created a cohesive piece of theatre. This piece of theatre they created was entirely new and unique to The Storytelling Project. Karen Lisondra believes “That’s devised theatre. Find boundaries, limitations to work with, and at the same time believe that everything is possible.” Lisondra is right; Le- coq’s Auto-Cours is designed to force individuals into creative collisions and for them to figure out amongst themselves how to create theatre. These collisions allow actors to question the ways in which actors perceive themselves inside the confines of an ensemble. For McKenzie, “This project completely changed my perception of myself as an actor. I was very cerebral before, but now I consider myself very physical because of what was demanded of me and because of what I proved to myself during the runs. Also, I unleashed my inner dark clown during the process. I learned I can achieve whatever I want if I just put my mind to it. (...) This project truly changed my life.”
UMKC THEATRE has a long-standing history of co-producing with many theatre companies in Kansas City. This arrangement allows students the opportunity to work with local Kansas City artists and forge professional relationships with possible future employers.

Every year The Coterie Theatre, a professional Equity theatre in Kansas City that serves families and young audiences, co-produces one show with UMKC Theatre. During the 2018-2019 season, the two theatres joined forces to create Secret Soldiers: Heroines in Disguise that featured the entire third-year MFA acting class, and MFA designers, stage managers, and dramaturgs.

and originally only involved MFA. Actors. Carla Noack (M.F.A. Acting 1992), associate professor of theatre in acting at UMKC, was in the first co-production, Red Badge of Courage by Thomas W. Olsen. Now the collaboration has expanded to include actors, stage managers, designers, and dramaturgs. Coterie Theatre producing artistic director, Jeff Church, has taught text analysis courses at UMKC for 14 years, so the relationship between UMKC and the Coterie remains interwoven.

Church remarks, “I always cherish the co-pro every year. I love the students’ positive outlook, their commitment to quality, and that they are always game for trying different things. They really challenge themselves.” This current season he looks forward to working with UMKC graduate students on The White Rose: We Defied Hitler by David Meyers, which will run January 21-February 9, 2020.

Last year’s co-production, Secret Soldiers: Heroines in Disguise by Wendy Lement, is about a hidden history. It tells the true story of four women who disguised themselves as men during the Civil War (for various reasons). It shows a glimpse of the formation of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment and in-
cludes a narrative from Harriet Tubman. The audience follows the lives of composite characters and individuals who risked their lives to fight for what they believed was right, regardless of the law that forbade women from joining in the war. The Coterie describes the end of the show by saying that the “audience is enlisted to be medical officers who will decide the fate of Lyons Wakeman: whether the medical record will reflect this individual’s birth gender (and thus be denied a pension), or keep history hidden and receive all the benefits of military service.” Each member of the audience is asked to raise their hand and cast a vote after an interactive conversation occurs between the audience members and the actors as their characters.

Each show has a different ending because each show has a different audience with different questions and an array of points of view. The actors trained and prepared for every plausible scenario they could think of, while always directing the question or comment back to the story. They rehearsed many hours for this portion of the play because they never knew what they were going to get. The actors were directed to always stay in character and to use their historical context to answer questions.

The co-director of Secret Soldiers: Heroines in Disguise, Bree Elrod, commented, “The UMKC Graduate students brought an incredible amount of heart and dedication to the process of building our production of Secret Soldiers. They used the tools they were learning from their program to investigate and explore the world of the play. It was truly an inspired thing to witness and nurture.”

Collaboration is vital to the success of any theatre. Kansas City theatre companies and UMKC Theatre have been allies in furthering the success of students by producing theatre together consistently. UMKC Theatre has worked with KC Rep, Kansas City Actors Theatre, the Unicorn, The Coterie Theatre, and The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, among others.

UMKC Theatre prides itself on its preparation for the professional careers of its alumni. Every student is given the opportunity to work with one or more of these professional theatre companies during their time as a graduate student at UMKC.

thecoterie.org
GRADUATE STUDENTS
STAY SHARP

MASTER OF ARTS

DAKOTTA HAGAR (MA 2020)

Dakotta began the early stages of his MA thesis research uncovering a forgotten celebrity, Charles T. Dazey, from Dakotta’s hometown.

MARY ALLISON JOSEPH (MA 2020)

Mary Allison traveled on grants to Chile, where she interviewed women directors for her thesis, and to London, where she attended a festival of Latin American theatre in translation.

SARAH JEAN HAYNES-HOONE (MA 2020)

Sarah Jean spent her summer researching her thesis topic, “The History of the Unicorn Theatre.” She also performed in UMKC Theatre’s production of An Italian Straw Hat in Fall 2019.

GABRIEL LIVINGSTON (MA 2020)

This summer Gabriel served as the stage manager for Cowboy Mouth by Sam Shepard and Patti Smith, produced by THUD Production in Kansas City.

GERAN RAMET (MA 2020)

Geran was a box office representative at Starlight Theater in Kansas City.

MFA ACTING

JT Nagle (MFA Acting 2021)

JT Co-founded the immersive theatre company Visceral Theatre with fellow MFA Actor, Chelsea Rolfes. Our inaugural production, Icarus, was produced at a secret location in Prairie Village.
MICHAEL OAKES 
(MFA Acting 2022)

Michael performed a new debut play called *Real Fucking Life* at Lake Superior State University.

MFA STAGE MANAGEMENT
EMILIA COVAULT 
(MFA Stage Management 2020)

This summer Emilia worked on a gender-bent production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Unity Theatre Collective in her hometown of Ventura, CA. Prior to that, she had been working at Opera Santa Barbara on a production of *The Crucible*.

TIAN HAO 
(MFA Stage Management 2020)

Tian was honored to participate in MAITBC, Miss Asia USA Pageant, in 2019. She competed in three rounds, eventually winning triple titles at the end of the pageant. Tian won “Miss Asia USA” First Place, “Miss Asia USA TOP social media” First Place, and “Miss Asia USA” Miss Category First Place. Not only was Tian a contestant, but she also served multiple roles such as lighting designer, choreographer, video editor, and stage manager for the pageant.

Sheridan McKinley
(MFA Stage Management 2020)

This summer Sheridan worked as the production stage manager for a new play, *Chasing Gods*, by Paris Crayton III. This was produced at the Kansas Repertory Theatre in conjunction with New York Repertory Theatre.

JESSICA TIBBOLES 
(MFA Stage Management 2021)

This summer Jessica was the assistant stage manager for *Fun Home* at Farmers Alley Theatre in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

MFA COSTUME DESIGN 
& TECHNOLOGY
TRUSTIN ADAMS 
(MFA Costume Design and Technology 2022)

This summer Trustin worked for The Phoenix Theatre Company’s 99th season as a crew member for two of their shows, *Jersey Boys* (Wardrobe) and *Airness* (Spot Op). He also played “Davey” in Hale Center Theatre’s production of Disney’s *Newsies*. 
Jordan New  
(MFA Costume Design and Technology 2021)

Jordan was the costume designer for Academy Children’s Theatre in Huntsville, Alabama for their 2019-20 season and for *Master Harold and the Boys* at Kansas City Actors Theatre. She was also the stitcher for *Joseph and the Technicolor Dream Coat* at Utah Shakespeare Festival.

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EMILY STOVALL  
(MFA Costume Design and Technology 2020)

Emily was a stitcher at Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theatre for their 2019 summer season.

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**HONORING DR. LONDRÉ**

*Dr. Londré taught me that having a passion for learning is a quality that I should never outgrow. Her ability to infuse joy and enthusiasm into her theatre history classes allows me to enjoy learning in a way that I have never before experienced. Dr. Londré uses song, recitations of poems, and performances of monologues to impress knowledge upon her students. She is the best teacher I have ever had. I love watching her teach and learning from her. I idolize Dr. Londré and hope that someday I can spread a fraction of the joy for learning that she has. Thank you for teaching me and reminding me that my job of learning will never be complete."

- SARAH JEAN HAYNES-HOHNE


*The Marriage of Figaro*, Utah Festival of Music Theatre, 2019. Emily Stovall was a stitcher for the “Susanna” costume. Photo by Waldron Creative.
MFA SCENIC DESIGN

Selena Gonzalez-Lopez
(MFA Scenic Design 2020)

This summer Selena used her John Ezell Travel Grant and spent a month in Europe to learn more about scenic design. She attended the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space in Prague. She also traveled in Iceland, Nuremberg, Munich, Budapest, London, Edinburgh, and drove all around the highlands in Scotland to do research for a production of The Moors.

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Kate Winegarden
(MFA Scenic Design 2022)

Kate was the technical director and co-scenic designer for The Stephen Foster Story and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat at The Stephen Foster Story Drama Association in Bardstown, Kentucky.

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MFA TECHNICAL DIRECTION

MORGAN COLE
(MFA Technical Direction 2022)

This summer, Morgan was the technical director/scenic teaching artist for Theater in the Park’s Summer Academies in Kansas City, doing scenic and lighting design for Madagascar Jr., Once on this Island Jr., and Thoroughly Modern Millie Jr.
WHAT MAKES for a good MFA program in sound design? Learning the skills necessary to get ahead in the professional world? Professional opportunities that build connections and enhance experience? All of these are offered in the UMKC Sound Design Master of Fine Arts program. Students are given the opportunity to learn and grow in a professional environment, as well as given opportunities to work with professionals in fully-realized productions, both inside and outside of the program.

“Our MFA sound designers are trained to work in multiple experiences: theatre sound design, composition for plays, music production and recording studio work,” says Tom Mardikes, professor of sound design. “While in the MFA program, most work at several professional venues as designers or as design assistants with KC Rep, Kansas City Actors Theatre, Unicorn Theatre and The Coterie Theatre.” The ability to connect and work with multiple professional companies around the Kansas City area allows students to grow in their craft and create relationships that will benefit and create future job opportunities that can pave the way for a bright future in the world of sound design. “We craft a comprehensive program targeted to shore up your weaknesses, build on your strengths, and provide the opportunity for building on your dreams,” says Mardikes.

“UMKC’s record of excellence in professional training stands for...”

I had a chance to apply my sound design and compositional skills to a wide range of different projects.”

– RICHARD SPRECKER
itself,” says alumnus Richard Sprecker (MFA Lighting and Sound 2012). “Everything in the lighting and sound tracks has been useful in my career, both professional and academic. In particular, the focus on problem-solving and finding solutions is a big part of my work.” Students learn everything necessary to get ahead in today’s world of sound design, learning new technologies and techniques that allow them to be at the forefront of their field and in the professional world. With classes in programs such as Pro Tools, as well as classes that teach the ins and outs of the recording studio, UMKC’s MFA in sound design gives every student the tools that they need in order to be competitive in today’s market. With instructors who are able to attune their programs to the needs of the students, this program is designed to help each and every individual to be the best sound designer that they are able to be.

“I had a chance to apply my sound design and compositional skills to a wide range of different projects, both on campus and off. I was able to take the things I learned from them and apply them to my professional design work, and they still motivate many class projects I give my own students,” Sprecker says. These opportunities and projects help students realize their full potential and prepare them for the workloads and real-life application of the skills learned in their program.

“I would tell someone interested in a sound design MFA that UMKC will grant them the widest range of professional opportunities. The program will fully immerse a student in the artistic, technical, and professional sides of theatre sound design, allowing the student to find their own expression in a wide variety of ways. The program prepares you for the expectations of the professional world in a way few programs can.”

“We craft a comprehensive program targeted to shore up your weaknesses, build on your strengths, and provide the opportunity for building on your dreams.”

– TOM MARDIKES
EAVESDROP on any conversation with Professor Victor En Yu Tan about the alumni of the UMKC Theatrical Lighting Design program, and you’ll quickly realize how much diversity of opportunity there is in the field. UMKC grads are part of the industry diversity everywhere, doing a little bit of everything. We took a few minutes to catch up with some graduates of the program – both recent, and not so recent – to find out what they’re doing and where their careers in the industry have taken them.

Hector Quintero (MFA Lighting 2019) has begun teaching as an adjunct faculty member at UCLA; Bryce Foster (MFA Lighting 2019) is working steadily for a Chicago based company that does lighting equipment installations and renovations, and recently did a show as a guest designer.
at Eastern Illinois University, where he collaborated with UMKC scenic design graduate Nicolas Shaw (MFA Lighting 2008); Shannon Barondeau (MFA Lighting 2018) has a regular gig running lights for a Latin dance club in Los Angeles; Ashley Kok (MFA Lighting 2018) is working as a freelance lighting technician and ALD in New York; and all are pursuing freelance careers as lighting and projection designers.

Devorah Kengmana (MFA Lighting 2015) is working as the lead video engineer for the New York Times’ TimesCenter; Adam Raine (MFA Lighting 2015) is working at the University of Central Florida as a visiting assistant professor in lighting and video design/tech; Colleen Shea (MFA Lighting 2017) is also teaching, at Fiorello LaGuardia High School for Music, Arts, & Performing Arts in Manhattan; and Kris Kirkwood (MFA Lighting 2016) is working as a freelance lighting and projection designer, based in Kansas City and working regionally and nationally.

Richard Sprecker (MFA Lighting 2012) is in his seventh year on the faculty at the University of Oklahoma, where he’s building a growing sound and lighting program; Sprecker continues to design professionally, spending summers at the Heritage Theatre Festival, Weathervane Playhouse, and Texas Shakespeare Festival, and lighting concerts for The Manhattan Transfer and Take 6.

Steve Dubay (MFA Lighting 1999) is well established in Atlanta, where he’s built a decade-long career as a lighting console programmer for feature films and episodic TV productions. Recent projects include programming work on two Netflix series (Raising Dion, and Thunderforce) being an on-field electrician during the Super Bowl half-time show, programming for the HBO miniseries The Outsider, and working as an installer/programmer on LED art installations with visual artist Grimanesa Amoros in Havana, Cuba, and Mumbai, India, and serving as a trainer for IATSE Local 479.

Jason Rainone (MFA Lighting 2001) has spent the last 13 years as a full time architectural lighting designer for Abernathy Lighting Design in Providence RI, doing projects for museums, science centers, and themed attractions. Current projects include lighting for an antiquities museum in Cairo, Egypt, galleries at the Penn Museum in Philadelphia, half of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington DC, and updated lighting on the Rhode Island state house.

No two careers are alike, but they all share one common thread: All of these individuals trained as theatrical lighting designers, and then put their education to work taking advantage of the diverse opportunities that they found in the professional world. There’s no single path to success; instead, there are myriad diverse possibilities.
A UNIQUE educational model developed at UMKC Theatre is the annual charrette in which all MFA design students participate. Dr. Elizabeth Noble, who fell in love with the idea of the charrette process and graciously felt inclined to be a part of it, generously funded the 2019 charrette. The charrette is a very intensive process, spanning the course of a few days. Students are excused from their classes during this time to work together in one room collaborating on a particular topic decided by the charrette master and work at an intense, yet professional pace.

The charrette provides an educational opportunity for MFA design students unlike any other experience. They are given the chance to work with an international luminary, some-
one who has an abundance of experience to share with eager new designers. Not only do the students receive attention from these artists, but at the end of the charrette period they are left with something unique they have developed for their own portfolio in conjunction with a renowned artist. It is truly a one-of-a-kind learning experience that gives students a feel for the sophistication and eloquence at the speed at which professional designers work.

The 2019 charrette master was Vita Tzykun, a world renowned designer of both opera and stage plays, as well as film. She is an Israeli-American who emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States to finish her studies. Her work in all fields of the creative performing artists made her a prime example of what the charrette master should be. The topic of the 2019 charrette was Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. Originally a novel it has been adapted into a screenplay by Orson Welles, a stage play by Steven Berkoff, and an opera by Phillip Glass. This created the unique opportunity to capitalize on all aspects of Tzykun's expertise.

Students were given the option to design for any of these mediums of creative expression, choosing between the film, stage play, and opera to create a fully-realized production. The students had the same inspirations and research, but were able to create differing views on how a potential production could be done. They were able to collaborate on research, which is a skill that is necessary in order to go into the field of design. At the end of the period, students put up their work for a critique by the charrette master.

The goal of the charrette remains clear in the 20+ year history of UMKC offering it: to discover one’s own authentic contribution to a narrative. Furthermore, this opportunity has, in the past led to employment opportunities and further artistic contributions. For example, after the charrette one year, MFA graduate Alexander LaFrance (MFA Scenic Design, 2015) further developed his idea under charrette master Victoria Morgan into what is now the design concept for the world premiere of *The Silver Shoes: The Ballerina in Oz* at the Cincinnati Ballet. He has since gone on to become the art director at Walt Disney Parks & Resorts.
FOLLOWING your dreams in financially challenging times can be a daunting task. One needs to dream BIG, but also lay a course for oneself that is practical while having a track record of success. As Sam Spade noted in *The Maltese Falcon*, you have to determine exactly what is “the stuff that dreams are made of.”

Young artists entering graduate training seek a program that will assure their future success. Pursuing a career in narrative design training greatly enhances one’s ability to succeed. “Narrative design” is a term that some may know in relation to video game development, but it has a much broader origin and deeper application. Narrative design is the design process that underlies all forms of visual scenic design: theatrical, film, theme rides and entertainments, gaming, graphic novel design, illustration, and even interactive architecture.

Mastery in narrative design enables an artist to develop, control and express:

- The Dramatic Structure of past, present and future.
• The Setting developed to reinforce that narrative structure,
• The Character of the setting capable of expressing itself through an individual and specific voice,
• The Theme that lends coherence to the other narrative elements - expressing its purpose, and finally –
• The Narrative Tone - the atmospheric quality that unifies all elements of the narrative design.

This sounds like a lot to master, and it is. That is why one needs a MFA that has a proven track record of training design students for success. Several years ago, Thomas Walsh, then President of the Art Directors Guild of Hollywood, identified UMKC Theatre program as one of only a small handful of programs that train their students in ALL aspects required for success in any of the various genre of narrative design. The elements of the UMKC Theatre training that he identified as being crucial in the training of designers who hope to succeed in any form of visual narrative design are: comprehensive training in the history of design and period styles, textual analysis, training in design techniques, extensive rendering training, and actual production experience. The UMKC Theatre MFA program supplies all of these to our students of design.

Courses in history supply the foundation for understanding the context, style and tone of a narrative design. Textual analysis trains one to comprehend the interface between dramatic structure, character-arc, and theme. Design training techniques enable the designer to express the theme, style and most importantly tone, which Robert Edmond Jones referred to as the 'emotional envelope' of the design, whether it includes the sets, costumes, lighting for stage, or film, themed entertainment or game. Rendering techniques courses train students to express themselves visually through intensive courses in design drafting and 3-D modeling (both traditional and electronic media), color development in a broad array of medium, scenic painting by a master...
artist, and Florentine life-drawing. UMKC Theatre has long been known as The Art School of the Theatre, and one can see why when looking though the portfolios of our Alumni. Professional production, last but not least, includes training in the art of producing theater through active experiences, encompassing a variety of texts, both classic and contemporary. Experience with professional directors in real theatres, and with budgets that enable creation of realized works for portfolio and resume, establish the trajectory for success.

Although theatre design is the model we use for training in narrative design, these techniques are readily transferable to all forms of narrative design as evidenced by the post-graduate employment of UMKC Conservatory alumni. It has been said that “Design is design is design” and it is true; once one has the skill set to work in narrative design, all of the doors of design are apt to open.

UMKC Theatre enable graduates to move into professional settings which they may never have imagined; theatre, film design, theme park design, art direction, gaming design, architectural, and opera.

“UMKC Theatre teaches you how to be able to design in a fast-paced environment as well as to feel safe to explore and try ideas... the program places you ‘in the room’ with other designers, of all focuses, and furthers the idea that collaboration is needed... actually paramount.”

– TRISTAN JAMES
(MFA Scenic Design, 2018)

UMKC Alumni have flourishing, satisfying, and often lucrative careers designing for television (including Presidential Debate stages!), film, theater productions, opera, ballet, Disney Cruise production and attractions...

You name your dream and we can help you realize it!
LINDSAY W. DAVIS  
(Professor of Costume Design)

Lindsay W. Davis spent the summer in New York City and saw 14 Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. Currently he is preparing for a new production of *Frankenstein* for Origins KC, the New Works Festival at the KC Rep.

GENE EMERSON FRIEDMAN  
(Associate Professor, Head of Scenic Design)

Gene Emerson Friedman celebrates his 25th year as resident scenic designer for The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, where this year, his design for *Shakespeare in Love*, was added to his list of Best Play in Production Awards (*PITCH Magazine*), along with *Hamlet* (2016), *Twelfth Night* (2015), and *A Winter’s Tale* (2014). Friedman’s set at the Unicorn Theatre for Lynn Nottage’s *Sweat* won unanimous critical acclaim for its authenticity of detail and flexibility of design. His design for *A Christmas Carol* at the Great Lakes Theatre, in Cleveland Ohio, celebrated its 31st Anniversary this year! He has also developed new scenic elements for KC REP’s production of *A Christmas Carol*, a production he first worked on 40 years ago!

FELICIA LONDRE  
(Curators Distinguished Professor Emerita)

Felicia Londré is now Curators Distinguished Professor Emerita, as she has scaled back from full-time teaching. She continues supervising seven MA theses in progress as well as teaching the graduate-level theatre history course. She translated Eugène Labiche’s *Un Chapeau de paille d’Italie* (*An Italian Straw Hat*) for UMKC Theatre’s fall production in Spencer Theatre. She is dramaturg for that play and for the Unicorn’s December production of Theresa Rebeck’s *Bernhardt/Hamlet*. Along with that immersion in 19th-century France, she is pulled to the 17th century by the city-wide project to celebrate Molière’s 400th birthday (15 January 1622). With the late Kip Niven, Felicia co-founded *KC Molière: 400 in 2022* to oversee six months of French Baroque arts and theatre in the spirit of Molière. The nonprofit corporation got its 501(c)(3) status in August with Felicia as president of the board.

Scenic design by Gene Emerson Friedman.  
Photo by Gene Emerson Friedman.
GREG MACKENDER
(Assistant Teaching Professor Sound)

Greg Mackender completed his 27th season in the park with The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, as Musical Director for Shakespeare in Love. His sound crew included sound design MFA Stephen Jarvis as A2 (Audio 2nd Engineer), KC Rep’s Jeff Keirsey and Miles Mosher rounded out the team as Sound Designer and A1, respectively.

TOM MARDIKES
(Professor of Theatre Sound)

Tom Mardikes continues his investigation of moving sound in unheard ways in the Sound Mandala. This summer he continued to do experimental exercises with Jon Robertson (MFA Sound 2016) and 3rd year Sound MFA Sean Obrecht. He has worked with recent scene design grad Kelli Harrod (MFA Scenery 2019) and retired faculty technical director Chuck Hayes to design and plan the next two iterations of the Sound Mandala. Sound Mandala 112 will be a $150,000 project running two years that will feature 112 small loudspeakers mounted into a space that will demo for about 15 people. That project will be followed by Sound Mandala 192 that will be approximately $1,500,000 project for an actual theatre space that holds audiences of up to 100 people for ticketed events. Mardikes is also beginning work on his first artistic piece for the Sound Mandala, a sonic showcase of the play within the play of Chekhov’s The Seagull, which will be voiced by Kim Martin-Cotton (MFA Acting 1993).

Mardikes is also serving as chair of the UMKC Faculty Senate for 2019-2020.

“Dr. Londré makes her enthusiasm about theatre infectious. She is generous with praise, yet encourages the highest standards in all things. Think of her as an exquisite bottle of champagne brought to life.”

– JEFF CHURCH

HONORING DR. LONDRÉ

Design for Sound Mandala 112, by Tom Mardikes.
CARLA NOACK  
(Associate Professor of Acting)

Carla Noack relished another year of life in the “Stretch Zone” with her students and colleagues at UMKC. In addition to serving her second year as Department Chair, she taught the MFA and undergraduate acting progression, and played “Soccer Mom” in the Unicorn Theatre’s The Wolves and “Anne Marie” in the Kansas City Actors Theatre’s A Doll’s House. Carla was also invited this summer to participate in a panel discussion of “Assessment in Theatre Education” as part of the National Alliance of Acting Teachers Annual Congress in NYC.

SARAH M. OLIVER  
(Assistant Teaching Professor Costume Technology)

Sarah M. Oliver had the joy of designing and making costumes for “Nora” twice this year in A Doll’s House at Kansas City Actors Theatre and A Doll’s House Part 2 at the Unicorn Theatre. She also had a full summer of designing and making costumes for Morning’s at Seven with Kansas City Actors Theatre, Last Romance and Sherwood at The New Theatre Restaurant and Nomad Motel at the Unicorn Theatre.
**STEPHANIE ROBERTS**  
(Associate Professor of Acting)

Stephanie Roberts had a fulfilling spring and summer of producing, coaching, training, and professional development. Recipient of an ArtsKC Inspiration Grant, Professor Roberts co-produced four performances of *Late Night Squeeze: A Nocturnal Variety Show* at Squeezebox Theatre. She was the co-planner of the Association of Movement Theatre Educator’s (ATME) Colloquium at U-Cal, Pennsylvania exploring the theme, #GenZ: Teaching Today’s Students. Coaching included Movement Consultant for Vanessa Severo’s *Frida...A Self-Portrait* and Intimacy Director for The Omnivore’s *Gulp*. Professor Roberts also returned to Blue Lake, CA, home of Dell’Arte International to participate in “Teaching Embodied Practice” a week-long intensive training for movement educators with DA founding artistic director, Joan Schirle. She was a featured artist for the GUILD’s Artist Forum and began serving on the Charlotte Street Foundation’s Performing Arts Programming Committee. Professor Roberts has also begun the research and development phase of the devised piece, *Divided*, which she is co-creating with her MFA Acting students and directing in spring of 2020.

**SHANE ROWSE**  
(助理教学教授-灯光技术)

Shane Rowse began the summer in late May designing lighting for *Mornings at Seven* with Kansas City Actors Theatre. After a quick trip to New York to support UMKC’s students at the National Design Portfolio Review, he returned to Kansas City to design lighting for *The Revolutionists* at The Unicorn Theatre, and then worked on a remount of his design for *Elephant & Piggie: We Are In A Play*, which opened at The Coterie in mid-June. In August he was back at Kansas City Actors Theatre designing *A Doll’s House*. More recently, with the assistance of first year lighting grad Austin VanWinkle, he lit the new dance work, *Love Songs*, for the Owen-Cox Dance Group.

Lighting design by Shane Rowse.  
Photo by Shane Rowse.

MFA Acting students perform in *Late Night Squeeze: A Nocturnal Variety Show*, produced by Stephanie Roberts.  
Photo by Micah Thompson.
SCOTT STACKHOUSE
(Assistant Professor of Theatre in Voice)

Scott Stackhouse stayed busy last summer, vocal coaching for Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* at Tent Theatre in Springfield, Missouri. He did a presentation on "Antonin Artaud and the Obligation of a Scene" at the VASTA conference in Orlando, Florida and then directed *The Complete Works of Shakespeare (abridged)* at Seaside Repertory Theatre in Seaside, Florida. Scott has continued to vocal coach on professional and academic productions including *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at KC Rep Theatre and *Rise Up* at The Coterie Theatre.

VICTOR EN YU TAN
(Professor of Lighting Design)

Victor En Yu Tan recently designed the lights for Pan Asian Repertory Theatre on the world premiere of *Brothers Paranormal* at the Beckett Theatre on NYC Theatre Row. Previously for the Pan Asian Rep, he had designed the premiere of *A Dream of Red Pavilions* at the Clurman Theatre, *Rangoon, Shogun Macbeth*, and *Joy Luck Club*. He also designed *Nomad Motel, Vietgone*, and *Bad Jew* for the Unicorn Theatre in Kansas City, and *Handel's Alcina* for Florida State Opera. Regionally, he had designed the premiere of *I Sing the Rising Sea* for Virginia Stage Company in Norfolk VA and *Single Black Female* for Crossroads Theatre in New Brunswick NJ.
CONFIDENCE is key for Allison Dillard (MFA costume and design technology 2012) in order to do her job well. When she first moved to Los Angeles in January 2013, her assured opinions and education in theatre history helped her to gain employment. Understanding costume history, being able to create different rendering styles, and being able to talk about theatre history pushed her ahead of other designers and people want to work with her because of it.

Dillard was applying for jobs online and submitting her resume to several theatre companies, when a producer, Rebecca Eisenberg, “plucked her resume out of the abyss,” and they met for coffee. Eisenberg was impressed with Dillard’s resume and although she couldn’t offer her a job directly, she did give Dillard’s information to other directors. This relationship helped Dillard break into the L.A. Theatre world and enabled her to work as a freelance designer. Now, Dillard is contracted by several different theatre companies and designs an average of two shows per month.

Dillard’s success as a designer has recently been recognized with three awards, two from the Ovation Awards and one from the
Robbie Awards. She had been nominated for the peer-reviewed Ovation Award in the past, but in January 2019 she won for her costume design on the musical *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. This award is voted on by peers who work in her field, making the win all the more special. *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* ran at the Celebration Theatre January - May 2018 and because of the intimate space, Dillard had to totally re-think and re-design the show. It was campy and silly, required her to purchase materials from the Dollar Store, and pushed her creativity to new bounds.

Dillard built 100 costumes by herself in six weeks through “the struggle, glue, and magnet burns.” It was a complicated wardrobe that involved 24-second quick changes and drag queens with limited space in the backstage area. Allison felt excited by the opportunity and was given freedom to re-design the iconic looks from the original film version, but she wanted to show the LGBTQ+ community something they recognized, while still making it new. Dillard was thrilled to receive her nomination for the Ovation Award in November 2018. She prepared a list of names of people she would thank in case she won, which she forgot to bring with her when her name was called to the stage the following January.

Dillard also won a 2019 Ovation Award for *Bliss, or Emily Post is Dead*, a charming new play about ancient Greek mythological characters stuck in the 1950s-60s, produced by Moving Arts. She built all the costumes and although it wasn’t a flashy show, she felt honored to have been recognized for her nice and subtle work. Dillard was also granted a Robbie Award for her work on *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

When searching for a graduate program, Dillard met Lindsay W.Davis, professor of costume design, and was immediately impressed with his honesty about her drawing skills. She had been looking for a program that would support her goal to learn how to draw and she knew that she had found a school that would push her to reach her full potential at the University of Missouri-Kan-
sas City. Her support from assistant teaching professor of costume technology, Sarah M. Oliver, in sewing, tailoring, and fabric manipulation helped Dillard become prepared for the professional world.

“People want to work with me because I can do everything. I can make wigs, construct hats, and do makeup. I can build costumes from scratch. I understand costume history and have good tastes with different rendering styles for many types of shows. I can do all of these things because of UMKC”, Dillard remarked.

She is able to talk about theatre history with other theatre professionals because of theatre history courses taught by Felicia Hardison Londré, curators’ professor of theatre. “Being able to talk about theatre history with possible employers pushed me ahead of other designers,” Dillard commented. Although the life drawing classes were her favorite, what she gained most from UMKC was a sense of confidence that her education made her a great designer.

When Dillard graduated from UMKC in 2012, she was hired as a first-hand draper at Glimmerglass Opera in New York for the summer, then she went on to work as a costume designer and makeup teacher, designed a fall dance show and applied to jobs everywhere. She was hired by L.A. Opera as a stitcher in 2013 and has also worked for Centre Theatre Group in Los Angeles. Dillard now works as freelance designer in L.A. and works on a contract basis. You can see her past work and keep up with her next professional steps on her website: allisondillard.com.

“HONORING DR. LONDRÉ"

My life’s primary ambition is to ignite passion for learning the way Dr. Londré has done for me. I cannot recall coming in contact with someone who has changed my own personal outlook the way she has. With so much knowledge and countless accolades it is easy to be in awe of her. However, what is more awe-inspiring is her eagerness to learn more.

“I just ordered this biography.”

“I would love to see this in production.”

“You get to research this, how exciting!”

These are all things that I have heard her say on a number of occasions. She is never complacent with the knowledge she has already attained. The idea that learning is never done is something I’m familiar with, but had never before seen an example of. Dr. Londré is the truest example of a life-long learner. The greatest lesson she has bestowed upon me is that learning is not the stepping stone, but rather the path.”

– DAKOTTA L. HAGAR
IT BECAME the adage of the U.S. paramilitary during the second World War that the best way to get a good start while falling from the sky was to hit the ground running. The thought was that the continuous motion from one act to another allows momentum. With a similar thought in mind, UMKC Theatre’s MFA stage management program indoctrinates its new students. It is the belief of Sadie DeSantis, assistant teaching professor of stage management and production manager for UMKC Theatre that “The only thing that will ever hold you back from taking a risk is yourself.”

From the moment you begin the MFA in stage management, you become a professional stage manager in all senses of the term. Your jobs are assigned to you and the work is ready to start. Take, for instance, first-year Emilia Kahlif Gillett and Chelsea Kinser in The Game of Love and Chance, UMKC Theatre, 2019. Photo by Manon Halliburton.
Covault from California; before even her bed arrived in Kansas City, she was working at KC Rep for a staged reading of a new play. “I figured that the best way to adjust to moving across the country and to my first week of grad school was to jump right in. It was a great decision as it helped me make connections with KC Rep in my first week of school, which led to them asking me to do another staged reading the following month.”

The two year program is jam-packed for any prospective stage manager who wishes to practice his or her craft, not only with the quantity of work but with the variety of shows from staged readings to opera. Second-year Sheridan McKinley (MFA stage management 2020) from Wyoming worked on a co-production of Dracula: a song of love and death, a new play titled Secret Soldiers: Heroines in Disguise at the Coterie Theatre, several staged readings at the KC Rep, and was the PSM on the French comedy The Game of Love and Chance with UMKC Theatre, all in her first year. Last summer she did another new play called Chasing Gods at Kansas Repertory Theatre in Lawrence, Kansas. Not only is the stage management work varied, but so too are the companies for which Sheridan has been able to work.

“UMKC’s co-productions are the reason I chose to attend grad school here. It’s incredibly unique that students are able to work with so many professional theatre companies in KC just in their first year. By the time I graduate, I will have worked with almost all of them, which is great for networking and finding jobs after graduation.” The UMKC Conservatory has close ties with professional companies throughout the Kansas City area, which allows for opportunities that are both highly lucrative and very helpful for post-graduation work.

The stage management program at UMKC Conservatory offers prospective students a variety of opportunities to advance their careers in theatre and to work in reputable professional theatre companies on experimental and exciting pieces. While it may be frightening to drop 10,000 feet with only a parachute, or to embark on a career path in stage management, it’s the thought of UMKC’s stage management program that it’s best to hit the ground running.

“The only thing that will ever hold you back from taking a risk is yourself.”

– SADIE DE SANTIS
WHAT BETTER WAY is there to practice your craft in the theatre than to see your work put on stage? This is what happens every year with the UMKC Theatre Playwright Project, as plays written by UMKC students are produced. This is a crucial step for a young playwright, as hearing and seeing the piece in front of an audience allows them to see what is and what is not working with their script, and where it can be improved.

According to UMKC playwriting professor Frank Higgins, “A play is an energy system, and the playwright will learn things by watching an audience watch and hear the play. How does the story move? Are the things that need to be clear actually clear? Where is the audience leaning in to the play? Where are they leaning out?” Questions such as these are what drive the playwriting process, and are essential to moving the work forward into other venues and avenues in the future. Some of the past plays that were featured in the UMKC Theatre Playwright Project have gone on to be produced at other venues, won awards, and been chosen for festivals around the country.

The scripts that will eventually be chosen for the UMKC Theatre Playwright Project are born in the playwriting class. Students are given writing assignments and prompts, and from those exercises, plays are born. Students are given feedback on their work throughout the course, with readings of the different plays happening either weekly or biweekly. This is an opportunity that is not shared in some other programs, and is a

“I learned how to collaborate with a playwright from a director’s perspective and I definitely gained a new appreciation for the playwright’s work!”

– GABRIEL LIVINGSTON
point of pride for Higgins and his class structure. “We read all of the plays out loud in class with the other playwrights serving as readers/actors. Being able to hear one’s play is by itself an important step. It’s not unusual that many if not most of the people in class have not had a chance to hear something they’re written read out loud. Sometimes the writer will cringe, or maybe they’ll be exhilarated to find that what they’ve written is going over well. Years ago, I was surprised to learn that in many playwriting classes across the country the playwrights never hear their plays read aloud. Script are circulated via email and class members either email their comments and feedback, or it’s discussed in class,” says Higgins.

Promising scripts from the class are chosen to be produced as part of the UMKC Theatre Playwright Project in the spring. Playwrights are encouraged to be a part of the rehearsal process, which proves to be a valuable experience for both the playwright and the directors that are chosen to direct these pieces. “I’ve never been a part of a process where the playwright was directly involved,” says UMKC Masters of Arts student and 2019 Showcase director Gabriel Livingston. “I learned how to collaborate with a playwright from a director’s perspective and I definitely gained a new appreciation for the playwright’s work!”

The UMKC Playwright Project is a unique opportunity for students to work with each other in order to create theatre from the very start. It is a rare opportunity for theatre makers to be able to work on original scripts, and it is a rare opportunity for aspiring playwrights to be able to have their pieces heard onstage. This is what makes the UMKC Theatre Playwright Project memorable and valuable.
LEARNING takes on a number of shapes in the UMKC Theatre department. This is no less true inside the MFA technical director program. Technical directors in this program are learning through class, practice, and internship. However, one interesting feature of this department that continues to set graduates apart is the renewed commitment to cooperation with the KC Rep Theatre. The KC Rep is a League of Regional Theatres (LORT) company that prides itself on being a leader in regional theatre for greater Kansas City and beyond. Technical directors at UMKC have the privilege of calling KC Rep’s scene shop their home. The association between the two partners seeps into nearly every aspect of a graduate technical-director experience.

Tom Gault, assistant technical director in charge of automations at KC Rep, had this to say about how integrated UMKC theatre students can be in the KC Rep scene shop: “The TD students’ home base is right there in the upper level of the scene shop and they can watch and see what and how we do what we do every day.” He goes on to say, “It is different for each student, too. Some prefer to merely observe, some want to jump right in and get hands-on experience. It works both
ways.” This hands-on experience includes working alongside industry technical directors, using cutting-edge technology, and obtaining valuable job experience.

Working with industry professionals can mean that these graduate students understand more clearly how the elements of classroom education apply to professional companies. Students can involve themselves in the safety, building, and load-in processes that a company like the KC Rep undergo. As anyone will tell you, in any field, hands-on experience is essential to success. This hands-on experience also applies to seeing technology in action at KC Rep.

In an industry that is always changing, KC Rep is helping to keep UMKC theatre graduate students on the leading edge of advancement by providing experience in areas such as automation. While students may have classroom experience with automation, KC Rep is applying automation to a number of their shows in any given season. “TD students—especially TD students who are interested in automation—have the ability to question, to work, and to learn all about how we go about integrating automation into Rep shows,” says Tom Gault. With KC Rep staff members like Tom Gault allowing graduate students to work alongside them, these students are getting hands-on experience that internships at smaller companies would often not be able to offer.

Truly, all of this comes down to job experience. UMKC wants students to be as prepared to obtain work after graduate school as possible. UMKC Theatre is renewing a commitment to partner with the KC Rep, so that students receive internship experience that is top notch and that experience puts each student one step closer to his or her career ambitions.
SCENIC DESIGN

CHARLIE CORCORAN  
(MFA Scenic Design 2001)

This year Charlie was the recipient of New York City’s Henry Hewes Design Award for Best Scenic Design for Sean O’Casey’s Dublin Trilogy. Charlie was also nominated for a 2019 Lucille Lortel Award for his design for The Shadow of a Gunman. Charlie remains an anchor in NYC for our immersing designers and alumni!

KELLI HARROD  
(MFA Scenic Design 2018)

Kelli remained for a year in Kansas City to design due to the popularity amongst artistic director and directors. At Kansas City Actors Theatre she designed A Doll’s House, and at the Unicorn Theatre A Doll’s House: Part 2, Bond: A Soldier and His Dog and Informed Consent. At the White Theatre of the Kansas City Jewish Center she designed Peter Pan. Check out some of Kelli’s upcoming scenic designs for American Son (Unicorn Theatre), PUFFS (Coterie Theatre), and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (White Theatre).

kelliharrod.com
TRISTAN JAMES
(MFA Scenic Design 2018)
Tristan, in 2019, has designed sets for DAZN (pronounced “Da Zone”) the over-the-top, London-based sports-streaming, subscription-service, including their Major League Baseball coverage and the Pat McAfee Show. He regularly designs for ESPN, SEC, and at Hudson Yards in NYC (including four (4) of their new studios). He designed both the CNN and NBC Democratic Presidential Debates, as well as a number of news studios in China.

ALEXANDER LE FRANCE
(MFA Scenic Design 2015)
In 2019, Alexander as an Art Director at Disney, will have designed, art directed and opened a land, an attraction, multiple precedent-setting meet and greets, two cruise ship mainstage productions, designed dedication and opening ceremony of the largest park expansion in Disney history, and will dedicate and open the largest attraction in Disney history in December.

JON YOUNG
(MFA Scenic Design 2002)
Jon designed five productions in Houston Texas in 2018-19; three at Stages Repertory Theatre, under Artistic Director Kenn McLaughlin, including A Midnight Clear and Ring Of Fire. As well as Julius Caesar and As You Like It at the Houston Shakespeare Festival. He is under contracted to design four shows in Houston in 2019-2020. Most recently he designed Rocky Horror Picture Show at Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma City. John is now a Full Professor at Oklahoma University. Two of his students received national awards, in 2019 from USITT Conference, Louisville, Kentucky: Elise Christiansen received the Richard Hay Undergraduate Scenic Design Award, and Jenn Bobo received the Bernhard R. Works Master Craft Award.

SANDRA LOPEZ
(MFA Scenic Design 2018)
Upon graduation immediately began working at Flat Rock Playhouse, the State Theater of North Carolina as Associate Scenic Designer and designed Always A Bridesmaid, Miss Nelson is Missing!, Junie B. Jones in Jingle Bells Batman Smells, The Jungle Book, Neil Simon’s Proposals, Separate Beds, and The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe. In 2019, Sandra moved to San Antonio, Texas, her hometown and was hired as the resident scenic designer and scenic artist at The Public Theater of San Antonio, where she will be designing A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder, as well as the remainder of their season. Sandra will also be returning to Kansas City to design Forever Plaid with Music Theatre Heritage in 2020.
CHARLES WITREICK  
(MFA Scenic Design 1997)

Charles designed the sets for the premiered Anna Christie; A New Music Drama in Two Acts, based upon the play by Eugene O’Neill, music by Edward Thomas, libretto by Joseph Masteroff. Encompass, New Opera Theatre/Trinity Church Wall Street, New York City.

LACHLIN LOUD  
(MFA Scenic Design 1997)

Lach developed the projections and atmospheric design for the premiered Anna Christie; A New Music Drama in Two Acts, based upon the play by Eugene O’Neill, music by Edward Thomas, libretto by Joseph Masteroff. Encompass, New Opera Theatre/Trinity Church Wall Street, New York City.

HELEN HWANG  
(Scenic and Costumes 1988)

Helen is Professor of Costume Design, at the University of Maryland and author of Elizabethan Costume Design and Construction (Focal Press).

DAN ROBINSON  
(MFA 1988)

Dan is Associate Director for Academics, Professor of Scenic Design, and Head of Design and Production Programs at Pennsylvania State University.

COSTUME DESIGN

PHOEBE BOYNTON  
(MFA Costume Design and Technology 2008)

Currently a freelance costume designer in the Denver area, adjunct professor of costume design at Chadron State College, costume shop manager for Theatreworks in Colorado Springs.

MAX ARCHIMEDES LEVITT  
(MFA Costume Design and Technology 2016)

Max is working as a Fashion-Costume designer under pseudonym "Pinwheel Pinwheel" with clients such as: Bob the Drag Queen, Nylon Magazine, and AMDA. By day Max is the staff dyer for Parsons-Meares where he works on the Broadway productions of Lion King, Frozen, Phantom of the Opera, and many more.

WHITNEY LOCHER  
(MFA Costume Design and Technology 2005)

This season, Whitney is working with Actors Theatre of Louisville, Weston Playhouse, Partial Comfort Productions, Sofia National Opera and Ballet, On Site Opera, and Curtis Opera Theatre. Whitney was part of the award-winning design team for the New York Musical Festival best production, Leaving Eden.

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Scenic design for Separate Beds  
MARC W. VITAL
(MFA Costume Design and Technology 2016)

Marc W. Vital II is the costume design professor at Mizzou, and is building the costume design and technology track for the theater major. He also is working with KCACTF as a member of the Inclusion and Diversity Committee.

SOUND DESIGN

MATT JANSZEN
(MFA Sound Design 2008)

Matt was a composer with work on both the underscore and on-screen songs for Archibald’s Next Big Thing, streaming now on Netflix. Next up for Matt is a new animated show called Thundercats Roar by Warner Bros. Animation, which comes out in 2020.

ACTING

Chioma Anyanwu
(MFA Acting 2018)

Chioma played the “Lady in Purple” in the 2019 KC Rep production of For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf.
TOCCARRA CASH  
(MFA Acting 2008)

In 2019, Toccarra headed across the pond for the first time to be a part of RoL’n Productions Off West End Play, Half me, Half You!

PATRICK DULANEY  
(MFA Acting 2009)

Joined the new cast of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child on Broadway.

TODD LANKER  
(MFA Acting 2009)

Todd played the role of “Torvald” in Kansas City Actors Theatre’s production of A Doll’s House. This year, he helped found Forge Repertory Theatre in Kansas City and is serving as Co-Artistic Director.

“HONORING DR. LONDRÉ

Dr. Londré has nurtured me as a scholar, as an artist, and as a person, in ways that will continue to bear fruit for the rest of my life. Her genuine enthusiasm for my ideas and interests has allowed me to blossom during my time with UMKC Theatre, and as I move forward in my studies and my career, I will forever strive to emulate her intellectual curiosity and excitement, her sincere warmth, and her generous mentorship.”

– MARY ALLISON JOSEPH

Photo by Scott Rylander from lianegrant.com

Todd Lanker in A Doll’s House,  
Kansas City Actors Theatre, 2019.  
Photo by Brian Paulette.
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

THE HALL FAMILY FOUNDATION FELLOWS
Taylor Adams
Hunter Andrews
Lee Barker
Emilia Covault
Marcus Daniel
Emma Davis
Suzanne DeSpelder
Nathan Dunn
Kierra Fayne
Selena Gonzalez-Lopez
Caroline Jackson
Stephen Jarvis
Bailey Kirk
Samuel Klaas

Baker Thomas Scholarship
Emilia Covault

Jeanette Nichols Scholarship
Selena Gonzalez-Lopez

Gretele Sigmund Scholarship in Theatre
Rosalee O’Gara

Ingram Family Scholarship Fund
Stephen Jarvis

Lee and Nadine Mars Scholarship
Stephen Jarvis

Honorabel Karen McCarthy Scholarship for Theatre
Gabrielle Rehor


The RICHARD J. STERN Foundation for the Arts Scholarship in Theatre
Jordan New
Maria Nieto

LINDA H. AND THOMAS H. TALBOTT Scholarship for Performing Arts
Caroline Jackson
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Lauren Long

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Captions:
- Cast of An Italian Straw Hat, UMKC Theatre, 2019. Photo by Brian Paulette.
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