



# Theatre & Dance

*Theatre & Dance students critically reflect on a broad range of performing arts forms, literature, and techniques in order to foster an active engagement with the foundations of the Department's culture and to promote the formation of a character that reflects the faith and justice mission of Gonzaga University. The intended outcome of this study and reflection is to prepare students for careers in the performing arts and a host of other fields, to promote social justice, and to provide service to audiences and the broader community. Developing artists hoping to apply disciplined training and thoughtful work in pursuit of these goals are encouraged to complete a major or minor in Theatre Arts or Dance; or a minor in Interdisciplinary Arts at Gonzaga.*

## THE PROGRAM

The Theatre & Dance Department at Gonzaga University is committed to training and developing artists who confront the important issues in our lives through their engagement with the art forms of live theatre and dance. Gonzaga provides excellent training for students in theatre performance; design, technology, and management (DTM); dance; performance and pedagogy; and interdisciplinary arts.

Theatre & Dance students develop an attitude of professionalism and leadership through their classroom training, productions, and interaction with performing arts professionals. The Department regularly hosts professional workshops in acting, ensemble practice, dance, and DTM. Internships are encouraged with theatre, dance, and film companies. Guest artists have included professional actors, movement specialists, dance professionals, fight choreographers, directors of training institutes in London and New York City, casting directors, and Hollywood screenwriters. To promote the combination of service and theatre or dance, students perform for school groups from underserved areas and can become involved in our community programs such as ZagDance, a free after school dance class for elementary school students; Dance for Parkinson's which is made possible through a partnership with the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation, and perform with one of GU's touring dance companies.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The **Theatre Arts major** offers concentrations in design, technology, management, or performance. The program offers courses in all aspects of theatre production: acting, directing, voice & movement, playwriting, script analysis, theatre history, design, stagecraft, costume construction, and scenic lighting & costume design. It also gives students the ability to specialize with either a performance or DTM theatre endorsement.

The **Theatre Arts minor** also offers a far-reaching curriculum, but requires fewer courses and has only one required course at the 300-level or higher.

The **Dance major** has concentrations in Pedagogy and Performance and enables students to study a variety of dance genres and movement styles, as well as dance history, choreography, and dance instruction.

The **Dance minor** pairs with all types of majors to create training towards a career in multiple fields.

The **Interdisciplinary Arts minor** expands a student's problem solving, critical reflection, and innovative thinking skills through combining the strengths of theatre, dance, visual arts, and music.

## PERFORMANCES

Presented each year are two Main Stage faculty or guest artist directed theatre productions, two Main Stage dance concerts, and a number of student-directed and Second Stage events.

The Theatre & Dance Department stages a wide range of live theatre including: premieres, devised work, contemporary scripts, classical plays, theatre for young audiences, and musicals. Recent productions include:

### Theater

- *Antigone*
- *The Wolves*
- *Every Brilliant Thing*
- *Romeo & Juliet*
- *Dancing at Lughnasa*
- *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*
- *Tick..Tick..BOOM!*
- *Mother Courage and Her Children*
- *Gruesome Playground Injuries*
- *Much Ado About Nothing*
- *The Last Five Years*
- *Jesus Christ Superstar*

### Dance

- *Kyle Davis, Principal Pacific Northwest Ballet*
- *Noelle Price, PRICEarts; art for change*
- *Cara Hagan, Screendance scholar and choreographer*
- *Khambatta Dance Theatre with Forthun + Rome*
- *Megan Slayter/Jessica Lindberg; Loie Fuller Scholars*



The Department seeks to produce work that connects with and serves audiences from the Gonzaga, Spokane, and regional communities.

GU theatre participates annually with the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and produces work for an annual fundraiser for Our Place Community Ministries, a local non-profit agency that serves the West Central neighborhood of Spokane with much needed food, clothing, and other services.

Dance performances include the annual Spring Dance Concert, Dance Presents!, Student Choreography Concert, 60x60 choreography showcase, American College Dance Association Conferences, musical theatre, Gonzaga Repertory Dance Company tours and Snowflake showcase.

Gonzaga University Theatre Sports (GUTS), a student improv comedy club, practices twice a week and performs once a month. The Dance Club is a student leadership opportunity that hosts Dance Council meetings, Dance Honors, and Boundless (student taught dance classes). Summer dance opportunities include Gonzaga's two week-long Summer Dance Intensives.

## FACILITIES

In April of 2019, Gonzaga opened the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center (MWPAC), a state-of-the-art \$40-million performing arts center for theatre, dance, and music. The MWPAC includes a 759-seat theatre, a 168-seat dance rehearsal/recital hall with mirrors and a sprung floor, and a design studio for classroom instruction. This contemporary performing arts center serves as a hub for musical excellence and interdisciplinary performance among students, faculty, and communities across the Inland Northwest.

The Department also utilizes the Magnuson Theatre. The Magnuson is a 218-seat, modified thrust theatre space that allows for close interaction between performers and the audience. Students also acquire experience in the design and creation of scenery, lights, sound, and costumes in the Magnuson's shops. Since students fill all cast and crew positions for shows and even design some productions, majors and non-majors alike have ample opportunities to apply their skills.



## OUTCOMES

- Andrea (2021) works for Stem to Dance Company in New York City
- Audrey (2020), Cassie (2019), and Sydney (2020) teach at multiple privately owned dance studios
- Lindsey (2018) lives and works in the dance field in Los Angeles as a dancer, teacher, and administrator
- Annika (2018) worked as the Directing/Casting Intern for Seattle Repertory Theater's '19-'20 season
- Nathan (2017) is earning an M.F.A. in Acting from the New School in NYC
- Laura (2016) worked as a public relations intern for Jacob's Pillow (International Dance Festival)
- Veronica (2016) is production staff at Perseverance Theatre
- Caley (2015) owns and runs the Spokane Dance Boutique
- Laura (2015) works as a physical therapist specializing in dance
- Ben (2015) is living and working in New York City, acting in film exercises for New York University
- Anthony (2014) attended the New York Film Academy in Los Angeles to complete an M.F.A. in Film Directing.

## Faculty Contact

**Charles M Pepiton, M.F.A.**  
**Dept. Chair & Theatre Program Director**  
[pepiton@gonzaga.edu](mailto:pepiton@gonzaga.edu)

**Suzanne Ostersmith, M.F.A.**  
**Dance & Interdisciplinary Arts Programs Director**  
[ostersmith@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ostersmith@gonzaga.edu)

**For more information:**  
[gonzaga.edu/theatreanddance](http://gonzaga.edu/theatreanddance)