

PAD

Performing Arts
Department



Lance Thurman photography

2022–2023
Season



Washington University in St. Louis



Performing Arts
Department

2022–2023 Season at a Glance

A.E. Hotchner

Playwriting Festival

The Fern

By Melia Van Hecke

Directed by Jeffery Matthews

Friday, September 23 at 7 p.m.

Democratic Airlines

By Zachary Stern

Directed by Tom Martin

Saturday, September 24 at 7 p.m.

A.E. Hotchner Studio Theatre

Into the Woods

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by James Lapine

Directed by Annamaria Pileggi

October 21, 22, 28 & 29 at 8 p.m.

October 23 & 30 at 2 p.m.

Edison Theatre

The Dust

By Hsu Yen Ling

Translation by Annelise Finegan

Directed by William Whitaker

November 17, 18 & 19 at 8 p.m.

November 19 & 20 at 2 p.m.

A.E. Hotchner Studio Theatre

Washington University Dance

Theatre: This is Temporary

Artistic Direction by David Marchant

December 2 & 3 at 8 p.m.

December 4 at 2 p.m.

Edison Theatre

The Oresteia

By Aeschylus

Translation by Ellen McLaughlin

Directed by Pannill Camp

February 24 & 25 and March 3 & 4 at 8 p.m.

February 26 and March 5 at 2 p.m.

Edison Theatre

2023 MFA Student Dance

Concert: No Boundaries

Artistic Direction by Christine

Knoblauch-O'Neal

March 25 at 8 p.m.

Edison Theatre

WUDance Collective: GENESIS

Artistic Direction by Cecil Slaughter

April 7 & 8 at 8 p.m.

Edison Theatre

Fucking A

By Suzan-Lori Parks

Directed by Jacqueline Thompson

April 20, 21, & 22 at 8 p.m.

April 23 at 2 p.m.

A.E. Hotchner Studio Theatre

Fear and Anger. Two emotions that register deeply and powerfully in the human viscera. Two emotions cynically mined by demagogues and social media platforms aiming to increase ratings, likes, and profits by the number and frequency of dopamine hits elicited as audience response.

Fear and Anger. Two emotions that take center stage in the Performing Arts Department's 2022–2023 season. In selecting these plays, we seek to better understand these emotions, the circumstances that engender them, the reactions they elicit, and the very human consequences of the events they set in motion.

Our fall semester explores the psychological interiority and social landscape of fear. It begins with a tribute to the late Stephen Sondheim (1930–2021), who with James Lapine, gave us *Into the Woods* (1986), a deep dive into the repressed fantasy world of the fairy tale, where even the recognition of a threat to innocence is itself an injury whose bandage is self-knowledge. It continues with *The Dust* (2013), a contemporary play from Taiwan by Hsu Yen Ling in a specially commissioned translation by WashU alumna Annelise Finegan (PhD 2021). Across several short scenes, the play suspends us within an exploded moment in time, showing us how fear and alienation fray the tenuous bonds of relationships that form our social fabric.

The spring semester intensifies our analysis of these fraught emotions with a look at the legacies of familial and racial trauma, when political injustice allows even righteous anger to fester unchecked. We present a new translation of an ancient play with Ellen McLaughlin's 2019 adaptation of *The Oresteia*, Aeschylus's original revenge cycle. In one neatly condensed play, McLaughlin reminds us that war is premised on an act of gender violence that literally and metaphorically destroys the ability of societies to reproduce themselves. In *Fucking A* (2000), Suzan-Lori Parks turns the knife sharper still,



She Kills Monsters (October 2021)

using the formula of the Senecan revenge tragedy to recount the history of a post-Reconstruction United States governed by the carceral logic of the New Jim Crow. In cabaret style, she shows how a perpetual cycle of hatred and injustice leads to a future where the possibility of interracial harmony is aborted and Black self-determination is ironically realized in a mercy killing.

As emotionally moving as they are intellectually challenging, these plays also offer occasional moments of laughter, proving cathartic in that ancient Greek sense of purgation by cleansing the soul and clearing uncertainty from our minds. We hope they may help us meet the current moment by showing why fears should be redirected to their rightful cause, injuries should be allowed to heal, and anger should subside when justice is secured at last. We hope you find them moving and even uplifting such that you leave the theater transformed.

Julia Walker, Chair
Performing Arts Department

“Being involved in the PAD allowed me not only to excel as a performer and scholar but also as a human being. Whether I was making a fool out of myself or wearing my heart on my sleeve onstage, I knew that I had the support of my colleagues and mentors. These relationships are ones that I will always cherish. I learned how to find beauty and meaning in all forms of art thanks to the guidance I was provided with. This is something I will hold onto and appreciate for the rest of my life.”

*Nathaniel Holmes,
Class of 2022*

“My experience as a graduate student in the Performing Arts Department has been transformative. The phenomenal scholars and artists I had the privilege of learning from and working with were invested in my personal and academic growth. The faculty, staff, and fellow students of this department have encouraged and challenged me in ways that have bettered me as a teacher, researcher, and performance artist.”

*Payne Banister,
Class of 2022*



Rent (March 2022)



Rent (March 2022)



A.E. Hotchner Playwriting Festival 2022

For over 20 years the Performing Arts Department has produced the A.E. Hotchner Playwriting Festival as a vehicle to support and develop new plays written by WashU students. The annual festival begins with a universitywide solicitation of new, unproduced plays. Several plays are selected through an anonymized screening process in the spring and workshopped for two weeks in September. During the workshop, each play is developed by a professional dramaturg, a faculty director, and student cast. The festival culminates in a public staged reading of each play.

Guest dramaturg Liza Birkenmeier (AB '08), a recent playwright-in-residence at New York talent hub Ars Nova, will serve as our guest dramaturg this year, mentoring Melia and Zachary on Hotch Fest 2022.

Founded by A. E. Hotchner, a Wash U alum, writer, and businessman, the festival is supported by the Newman's Own Foundation, the company Hotchner co-founded with Paul Newman.

The Fern

by Melia Van Hecke
(Class of '23)

Directed by Jeffery Matthews

Friday, September 23
at 7 p.m.

Democratic Airlines

by Zachary Stern
(Class of '23)

Directed by Tom Martin
Saturday, September 24
at 7 p.m.

All readings take place in the A.E. Hotchner Studio Theatre

Admission is free.



INTO THE WOODS

Into the Woods is a cautionary tale about life, love, and loss as it explores the crisis of coming of age in an uncertain world. Inspired by the fairytales of the Brothers Grimm, composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim and book writer James Lapine upend the “Happily Ever After” trope to unearth the doubts, fears, and longings that undermine prepackaged morals. Winner of three Tony Awards and both the 1988 Drama Critics Circle Award and Drama Desk Award for Best Musical, *Into the Woods* is a story for our time. In our current moment of social unrest and political polarity, this fractured fairytale challenges us to grapple with ambivalence and uncertainty without losing our humanity.

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Book by James Lapine

Directed by Annamaria Pileggi

**October 21, 22, 28 &
29 at 8 p.m.**

**October 23 & 30 at
2 p.m.**

Edison Theatre



The Dust

Love and Mortality. Existence and Destruction. These are the tensions at play in Hsu Yen Ling's *The Dust*. The play presents a series of seemingly unrelated scenes unfolding at what the writer calls the "instant of explosion." Explosion of a building? Of a city? Of individual lives? A mother meets an estranged son. A professional couple debate what they choose to know about how they will die. A surrogate mother imagines starting a new world with the birth father. *The Dust* presents fragments of lives hovering on the brink of annihilation, and yet, all these people are doing their very best to move beyond fear to live lives of authentic happiness. Annelise Finnegan's translation gives Hsu's beautiful work a clear theatrical voice. First produced in November of 2013 in Taiwan, this is the U.S. premiere of *The Dust*.

**By Hsu Yen Ling
Translation by Annelise Finnegan
Directed by William Whitaker
November 17, 18 & 19 at 8 p.m.
November 19 & 20 at 2 p.m.
A.E. Hotchner Studio Theatre**

Washington University Dance Theatre:

This is Temporary



As we continue adapting to an always “new (ab)normal,” we are becoming accustomed to living in a constantly shifting world. Time feels simultaneously slow and brief, and the only constant is that everything is impermanent. *This is Temporary* explores how dance art exists in a similarly fugitive state, with movement as its poetic medium embodying the transitory nature of our human experience.

This annual dance concert features diverse artwork by resident and guest choreographers, performed by student dancers of the Performing Arts Department.

Artistic Direction by

David Marchant

**December 2 & 3
at 8 p.m.**

December 4 at 2 p.m.

Edison Theatre

THE ORESTEIA



Lance Thurman photography

The House of Atreus is burdened by an old curse and trapped in a cycle of retributive violence. How can justice be achieved without piling new crimes on top of old ones? Ellen McLaughlin's gripping adaptation of the trilogy by Aeschylus explores the intimacy of violence and the centrality of actions by women in this ancient Greek story about the foundations of the law.

**Translation by Ellen
McLaughlin**
Directed by Pannill Camp
February 24 & 25 and
March 3 & 4 at 8 p.m.

February 26 and
March 5 at 2 p.m.
Edison Theatre

2023 MFA Student Dance Concert *No Boundaries*



This year's concert, *No Boundaries*, celebrates the sixth year of the MFA in Dance final project with choreography by Kendra Key and Erin Morris. The program brings to our audience an outpouring of choreographic inspirations. Each creation offers a particular perspective on contemporary topics and abstract concepts: both historic and current. These original works look at collaborative articulations that move beyond existing expectations of what dance should be. One is the innovative and collaborative process that comes from sourcing material when the rules are developed as the dance is designed. The other is an exploration of the creative and performative spectrum of social and avant-garde jazz dance.

**Artistic Direction by
Christine Knoblauch-
O'Neal**

March 25 at 8 p.m.

**Edison Theatre
Admission is free**

WUDance Collective: *GENESIS*



"There is an important story needing to come through each of us. We are longing to be seen, to be necessary."

— Toko-pa Turner

Dance is the physical emergence of the untold stories that originate from deep within ourselves. Fueled by emotion and energy, it moves through the body and out into space to create the language from which we tell the stories of our everyday lives. Please join us for an evening of dance derived from deep personal reflections on our most valued experiences in the world.

Washington University Dance Collective serves as the Performing Arts Department's resident dance company. WUDC is a unique blending of talented and expressive movers from very diverse backgrounds who bring with them a wide range of movement styles and performance acumen. The dancers work with faculty,

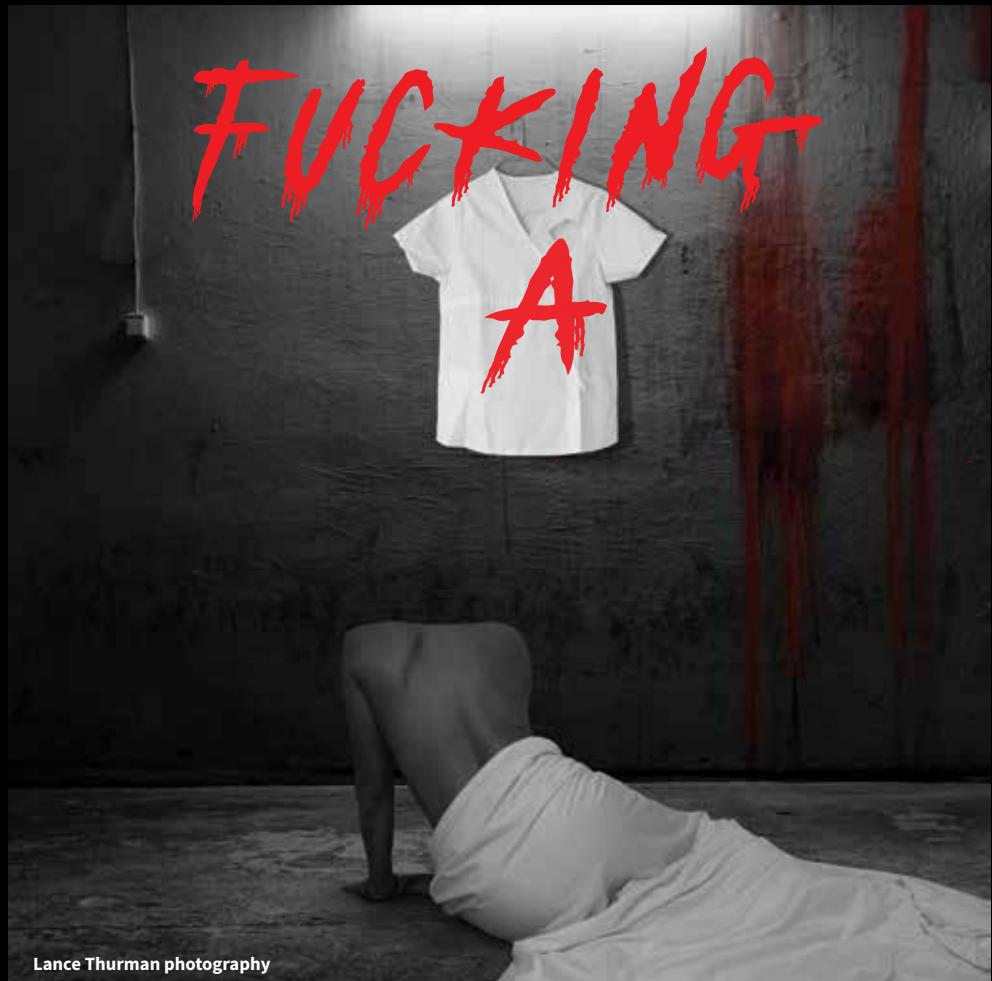
community, graduate, and undergraduate student choreographers, as well as perform throughout the St. Louis community.

Artistic Direction by Cecil Slaughter

April 7 at 8 p.m.

April 8 at 8 p.m.

Edison Theatre



Lance Thurman photography

In *Fucking A*, Hester Smith, the shunned local abortionist, hatches a plan to buy her jailed son's freedom — and nothing will deter Hester from her quest. In this gritty journey of story and song, Hester's branded letter A becomes a provocative emblem of vengeance, violence, and sacrifice. Written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, *Fucking A* was inspired by Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, *The Scarlet Letter*; Parks's brilliant reimagining of the tale feels deeply contemporary as though it has been pulled from our contemporary headlines.

**By Suzan-Lori Parks
Directed by Jacqueline Thompson
April 20, 21, & 22
at 8 p.m.
April 23 at 2 p.m.
A.E. Hotchner
Studio Theatre**



The Science of Leaving Omaha (November 2021)



MFA Student Dance Concert (March 2022)



Bull in a China Shop (April 2022)



WUDance Collective: Redux (April 2022)

2022–2023 Colloquium Series and Special Events

Each year, the Performing Arts Department invites distinguished faculty and arts practitioners from leading institutions to present their work in our colloquium series. In addition to providing a forum for our guests to share cutting-edge scholarly and creative research with our faculty and students, these colloquia foster a sense of intellectual and artistic community on campus and within the St. Louis community at large.

Our commitment to a rich exchange of ideas extends to two more special events scheduled for 2022–2023. In November, the East Asian Languages and Cultures and Performing Arts Departments will co-sponsor a mini-conference in conjunction with our production of Hsu Yen Ling's *The Dust*. Entitled "Translation : Dramaturgy," it is supported by a grant from the Republic of China (Taiwan) and features presentations by translators working in a variety of languages, including a keynote address by actress/playwright Ellen McLaughlin, whose contemporary translation of *The Oresteia* we will produce in the spring.

In April, our biennial Helen Clanton Morrin lecture returns with a much-anticipated visit from award-winning playwright/screenwriter/librettist David Henry Hwang.

FALL SEMESTER

"Dancing Dual Diasporas: Jewishness and Blackness in Dege Feder's Ethiopian Contemporary"

Hannah Kosstrin
Associate Professor, Department of Dance,
The Ohio State University
Friday, September 23, 2022, 4 p.m.

"Performing Black Sovereignty"

Miguel Valerio
Assistant Professor of Spanish, Washington University in St. Louis
Friday, October 28, 2022, 4 p.m.

Translation : Dramaturgy Conference

Ellen McLaughlin, Keynote Speaker
Thursday, November 17, 2022, 4 p.m.

Panelists: Neil Blackadder, Heather Denyer, Aparna Dharwadker, Annelise Finegan, Dasia Posner, Martin Puchner, Adam Versényi, and Julia Walker
Friday & Saturday, November 18-19, 2022

SPRING SEMESTER

"On the Aesthetics of Black Inexpression"

Tina Post
Assistant Professor, Department of English,
The University of Chicago
Friday, March 3, 2023, 4 p.m.

"Looking at the Creative Process Through the Lens of Scenic Design"

Rob Morgan
Teaching Professor of Drama, Washington University in St. Louis
Friday, March 31, 2023, 4 p.m.



**David Henry Hwang
Helen Clanton Morrin Biennial Lecture**

Friday, April 7, 2023,
4 p.m.

2022–2023 Ticket Pricing Guide

Single Ticket Prices

WashU Students.....Free

- Full-time undergraduate and graduate students
- University College students admitted into a degree program

Pick up your FREE ticket at the box office before each show.

Note: WashU student tickets are not available online.

Adult.....\$20

Senior (65+), WU Faculty/Staff,
Student (non-WashU).....\$15

Subscribe and Save 20%

Become a season subscriber by choosing three or more events.

Adult.....\$16

Senior (65+), WU Faculty/Staff,
Student (non-WashU).....\$12

Ordering Tickets

Tickets are available through the Edison Box Office located in Mallinckrodt Center.

6465 Forsyth Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63105

Box Office Hours:

Monday–Friday 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.–2 p.m., and one hour prior to the performance.

Phone: 314-935-6543

Online: edison.wustl.edu

Mail: Ticket order forms are available at edison.wustl.edu/pad-subscription-form/

Become a Friend of the PAD

Gifts of \$50 or more support visiting artists, distinguished professors, lectures, and other events, and grant you many benefits while supporting the continued enhancement of the Performing Arts Department.

As a “Friend of the PAD” you receive:

- Exclusive updates directly from the department
- Invitations to pre- and post-performance receptions
- Special recognition in production programs

To make a donation or learn more about becoming a Friend of the PAD, call **314-935-7025** or email **pad@wustl.edu**.

PAD

Performing Arts
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