Dear UNCG Theatre Angels,

The School of Theatre’s 22–23 Season is upon us. Our first show of the season, *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* by Nathan Alan Davis, directed by yours truly opens on September 15th. We’re continuing our Centennial celebration in 2022 with a new take on an old classic – Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* directed by Mya Brown. The Centennial celebration this fall is happening at Homecoming. We’ll welcome alumni back to campus and celebrate with families and friends, which of course means YOU! Please see below for the School of Theatre’s Centennial homecoming weekend activities.

Every generation who has graduated from the School of Theatre has traversed the challenges of their times and witnessed changes in themselves, the industry, and the art form while here. We are hoping to provide this same opportunity for this generation of college students – the opportunity to learn, grow, and not only witness change, but be change-makers. We’re learning more and more about our current students’ needs and how to best support them. Many of them are first generation – the first in their family to attend a four-year institution of higher education. Many of our students are working – not just work-study jobs on campus, but 20–30 hours off campus to support themselves through college. UNCG’s status as a minority serving institution means our student body looks different than it did even 20 years ago when I attended as a graduate student. It considerably reflects the diversity of North Carolina and beyond. From differently abled students to students for whom English is their second language; nontraditional students returning to the classroom and transfer students seeking the depth and breadth of the exceptional theatre education and training we offer – our school is changing.

The landscape of academia has also changed. The impact of the pandemic on institutions of higher education was dramatic, just as it was for the entertainment industry. Due to the decrease in enrollment at UNCG, we are now fully reliant on box office and student fees to cover our production budget each year. Of course, this means we’ve had to make significant adjustments while continuing to center our students and meet them where they are. It would be a positive gesture to not only provide them with the tools needed to succeed as theatre professionals, but also offer financial support to make it through college.
Scholarships are one way we do this. They provide students opportunities to attend conferences and presentations and offer the access to guest artists and lecturers who share their experiences and expertise. Scholarships can offset the cost of theatre necessities, for example, sheet music for musical theatre students, praxis fees for theatre education students, professional headshots for acting students, materials for design/tech students, scripts for everyone, etc. Scholarships can also help students who are working on shows take time off from work to participate in the hands-on components of theatre – on stage, backstage, front of house, in schools, etc.

As is hopefully obvious, your Angel contributions make a huge difference, which is why your support means so much to us. This year we are focused on using Theatre Angel donations to strengthen our scholarship funds as well as provide support for Title I primary schools who would like a NCTYP tour performance of *Winnie the Pooh* by AA Milne, adapted by Professor Janet Allard.

On behalf of all of us in the School of Theatre – faculty, staff, and students – thank you in advance for believing in us and in the future of theatre. We hope you’ll join us celebrating our 100th anniversary this Homecoming weekend – October 14-16, and we look forward to seeing you at shows in Taylor and Sprinkle Theatres this year. For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.uncgtheatre.com](http://www.uncgtheatre.com). As a special thank-you for your support, please use the code **DREAMALUMNI** to receive $5 tickets to the *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* performance on Oct. 15. We also hope you will join us for the Theatre Hall of Fame Induction and Brunch on Sunday, Oct. 16. Please watch for additional information via email and through the mail.

With appreciation,

Natalie Sowell

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