



**OLD DOMINION
UNIVERSITY**

Department of Communication and Theatre Arts

Echoes: Transcending Through Story Creates Poetry From Pain

By Gabriela Mayes



Brittney S. Harris, Visiting Professor in ODU's Department of Communication & Theatre Arts and director of the upcoming work

Echoes: Transcending Through Story, has combined her love for theatre and social responsibility to produce works that spotlight social injustices such as racial inequality and patriarchal tendencies within our society.

"The misconception around theatre study includes the idea that theatre is only for entertainment," Harris said. For her, theatre has played a significant role in her life, providing an outlet for emotions, and a tool for self-discovery and social skill development.

Harris present work in the Theatre Program represents her Old Dominion University experience coming full circle. She received her undergraduate degree in Theatre Performance at ODU before completing a Master of Fine Arts at the University of Georgia.

Her efforts to fuse theatre and activism may not be the norm,

but over the past five years, Harris has successfully combined theatre with community-based activism, including work in Norfolk's Saint Paul's community, advocating for personal development and cultural awareness. "My goal and desire is for my work to unveil blinders that society may have," Harris said.

She also shares her experiences in a new class offering for ODU Theatre students this spring semester entitled "Communication, Performance and Activism." This class covers topics such as methods of performance, community dialogue, application of community, providing and creating documentation, among a plethora of other topics relating to her work around the country, as a performer, playwright, and professor.

Echoes: Transcending Through Story, written and directed by Harris and produced by ODUREP, draws from Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, shines a bright light on female pain, anger, despair, and strength, taking deliberate aim at the generational echoes of caution and criticism aimed at

women. Centering on each young woman's experiences and on the profound power of women sharing their personal stories - power that ultimately affects both the storyteller and her audience, this show amplifies their unheard voices, while taking aim at the centuries-old voices echoing shame and silence that are far too familiar to all women.

Echoes: Transcending Through Story will run from Feb 20-22 & 26-29 at 7:30 pm, and Mar 1 at 2:00 pm, in the Goode Theatre on Monarch Way. Tickets through [ODUArtsTix](#) are \$5-15. Each faculty and staff member may also get two free tickets by using the discount code ECHOES20, or arrange for Will Call tickets at ArtsBoxOffice@odu.edu.

Echoes cast, left to right: Chera Broadnax, Leidy Mondragon, Alexas Benn, Marin Lefevre, Jamia Gordy, Mari Russell, Brandy Clark, Frances Calderon.



Remembering Konrad Winters

Our Department's dear friend and colleague Konrad Winters passed away February 10, 2020 after a long battle with leukemia.

Professor Konrad Winters received a B.S. in Education from Concordia Teachers College, an M.S. in Theatre and an M.F.A in Scenic Design from Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. He joined Old Dominion as an assistant professor of Theatre in 1986, and achieved the rank of associate professor in 1992.

Recognition of his accomplishments in teaching, research and service include election to the National Board of Directors and election as a National Commissioner for Education for the United States Institute of Theatre Technology.

Konrad Winters administrative experience at Old Dominion

includes Chief Departmental Advisor for the Theatre Program (2015-2017), Director of Technical Production for Theatre and Film (2007-2011), Director of Film and Video Studies (2001-2007), and Director of Technical Production for Theatre (1987-2007). He served as a consultant for most arts organization in Hampton Roads including: Attucks Theatre, Governor's School for the Arts, Harrison Opera House, Virginia Waterfront Arts Festival, Virginia Ballet Theatre, Contemporary Ballet Theatre, Push Comedy Theatre, and Virginia Public Schools.

Professor Winters's creative scholarship explored the nature of the environmental space in theatrical production. His research resulted in 63 scenic designs, 30 lighting designs, over 35 short films, and 36 conference presentations. By hand, he built

the scenic studio in the Stables Theatre – with his design, carpentry and construction skills. This space was the home of the theatre program for over 20 years until the building of the Goode Theatre in 2012.

Within the Stables Theatre, Winters carved out a research agenda which included storytelling and new technologies. His interest launched the film program at Old Dominion, which now thrives beyond the original eighteen film courses developed by Winters.

We will be creating a scholarship in Konrad's name. A celebration of Konrad's life will be held on Sunday, February 16 from 5-8pm at the Push Comedy Theatre. Our love goes out to his family, Angela and Sam. If anyone would like to send a message to his family, please use: kawinters2@gmail.com.

KUDOS!

Theatre major **BRANDI SHOOK** has been awarded an Honorable Mention for Stage Management at the Region 4 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Brandi is our Technical Theatre Association (TTA) President and Production Manager.

Theatre major **JEFF SHOOK** has won a week at the Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas for his lighting design work. Jeff is the TTA Vice-President and Technical Director.



VICTORIA FINK, JEN STONE and **MEGAN THOMPSON** performed their work *Incorporeal* in "An Evening of Dance" at the Historic Palace Theatre in Cape Charles, VA on January 25, 2020.

The film **AMERICAN DREAMER** is now available for streaming on Amazon. This film was produced in cooperation with ODU and the Film Program.

ALISON LIETZENMAYER recently published an article with Andrea Lambert-South (Northern Kentucky University), Jessica Elton (Eastern Michigan University) titled "Communicating Death with Humor: Humor Types and Functions in Death over Dinner Conversations" in the journal *Death Studies*.

Please share accomplishments such as publications, awards, conference and festival acceptances, reviews, and other recognitions, and we will publish them in future bulletins:
[Submit content here.](#)

Communication & Theatre Arts Faculty Win 3 out of 5 ODU Faculty Development Grants



Congratulations to our Department faculty members who were awarded 2020 Faculty Development Grants. Made available through the Office of Academic Affairs, these funds provided by the Provost's Office are earmarked for improving the quality of instruction at ODU. Out of five grants awarded this year across the University, our Department won three!

Our Department winners of the Faculty Development grant are **TED GOURNELOS, PHD MFA MBA, DAVID MALLIN**, and **JAMES MORROW**.

Ted Gournelos, Associate Professor and Director of the Strategic Communications Program, plans to provide training in data analytics software for strategic communication. Using these analytics software platforms (Cision, Meltwater, and Hootsuite), Gournelos will provide training videos and guides for faculty and students to turn big data into accessible research.

David Mallin, Associate Professor and Director of the Film Program, will be utilizing the award to participate in a workshop and achieve certification in the industry standard video editing platform AVID.

James Morrow, Assistant Professor in our Dance Program will use funding to participate in a training and certification workshop focused on dance techniques for the disabled. Morrow's ultimate goal is to create an inclusive and diverse dance space as well as physically integrated dance courses at ODU.

As only five awards were made available this year, we would also like to appreciate faculty members **CAROL BRANCH, CAROLINA CONTE**, and **JIM LYDEN** for their efforts and stellar applications.

Strategic Communication for Social Justice & Public Advocacy with Melanie Roussel Newman



On Thursday, February 13 at 12:30pm (BAL 9024), we will host a luncheon for our students with Melanie Roussel Newman to discuss professional strategies for public advocacy, crisis communication, policy and strategic planning,

as well as messaging strategies. This is an excellent opportunity to network with an expert who has a wealth of experience across many strategic communication and PR sectors.

On Thursday evening, February 13 at 6pm (BAL 9024), Ms. Newman will present on her career doing strategic communications for social justice and advocacy organizations as well as discuss the unique communication challenges and tactics undertaken by such organizations. The event will be conversational and will be moderated by Savannah Russo, an ODU College of Arts & Letters alumni with an MA in International Relations and a graduate certificate in Women's Studies who is currently a Senior Consultant for Global Health Visions. The event is free and open to the public.

Prior to her current role as Senior Vice President for Communications and Culture at the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Ms. Newman was Chief Communications Officer at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and held several positions in the Obama Administration, including leading communications at the U.S. Department of Justice, the White House Office of Management and Budget, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ms. Newman's career working for non-profits and in policy and advocacy arenas across a range of political issues and perspectives is exemplary and will offer tremendous insights into the types of communication needs, challenges, and strategies involved in working for these types of organizations.

FEBRUARY

2/13. Guest speaker Melanie Newman. 6-8 PM. BAL 9024. Open to graduate students and interested faculty.

2/19. A Conversation with Jay Harris. 6:30-8:30 PM. Chandler Recital Hall. Diehn Fine & Performing Arts Center. Free and open to faculty, staff, and public.

2/20. Department visit by alumnus Jay Harris of ESPN's *SportsCenter*.

2/20 - 3/1. *Echoes*, written and directed by Brittney S. Harris and produced by ODURep, at the Goode Theatre. Check ODUArtsTix.com for show dates/times and to reserve tickets. Use the discount code ECHOES20

2/21. Department meeting. 2-4 PM in BAL 9024. Followed by happy hour (TBD) from 4:30-6:00 PM. All are welcome at happy hour, including adjuncts and grad students.

2/27. PRSSA Diversity Panel. 5-7 PM in the Strome Entrepreneurial Center.

2/27. Brown Bag Series. 12:30-1:30 PM in the University Theatre (1002). Jim Lyden, MFA and Dr. Fran Hassencahl will be presenting.

Join Us for A Conversation with ESPN's Jay Harris

On Wednesday, February 19th, we will be hosting A Conversation with ESPN's *SportsCenter* Jay Harris from 6:30 - 8:30 PM at Chandler Recital Hall in the Diehn Fine & Performing Arts Center. This talk will be moderated by WACH FOX's Sports Director Mitch Brown (ODU, 2015). All Department faculty, staff and students are encouraged to attend.

Jay is the featured host of weekend and weekday morning editions of *SportsCenter*, ESPN's flagship news and information program. Prior to ESPN, Harris anchored the nightly news at WPGH-TV in Pittsburgh, PA. A native of Norfolk, Harris graduated from ODU with a bachelor's degree in speech communication in 1987. In 2003, he was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University. In 2004, he was the keynote speaker for Old Dominion's 100th commencement ceremony, and sits on the ODU Board of Visitors. Among his other honors, Harris was part of *SportsCenter*'s Sports Emmy-winning efforts in 2004 and 2005, a recipient of a Silver World Medal from the New York Festival Awards, a Robert L. Vann Award from the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation, and an EXCEL Award from the Hampton Roads Black Media Professionals.

BROWN BAG WORKS-IN-PROGRESS Lunch Series Coming Up February 27th

Our Brown Bag series continues, where our faculty present works in progress to their colleagues for the purposes of a) sharing their research, b) generating conversation, and c) building community.

Presenters at the Brown Bag series offer short informal 10-12-minute presentations of ongoing projects and then we open the floor up to questions. This is a great way to learn about what colleagues and professors in other parts of the department are doing.

We always look to pair a person on the COMM side with an artist on the DANCE/FILM/THEATRE side. All are welcome (and we also provide a virtual option), including grad students (and select undergrads if the presenter wants them there).

Our fourth Brown Bag will be in the University Theatre (1002) at 12:30-1:30 PM. **JIM LYDEN, MFA** and **DR. FRAN HASSENCAHL** will be presenting. Topics will be forthcoming.



RICHARD GEORGE recently appeared on FOX's "Gordon Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back" as a guest food blogger. Richard was one of two bloggers chosen to be a part of this episode to experience and critique the night and day transformation of a restaurant in Tappahannock, Virginia.

George majored in Communications at ODU and graduated in May 2019. As a digital entrepreneur, Richard's popular food blog and Instagram channel "InsideVirginia," which covered restaurants across the state, caught the attention of local celebrities, chefs worldwide and Ramsay's team who contacted Richard to be a guest food blogger on the TV show.

Richard said, "The experience to be known by Gordon Ramsay for my expertise being a local food blogger was absolutely unreal. This was the epitome of 'You reap what you sow'." He added, "At ODU, I was taught how to not only work hard, but work intentionally to plant seeds toward my future, while I have the community and tools to help accelerate the process."

QUINTON MEADOWS, one of our accomplished Dance Program alumnus and member of the dance crew iLuminate, recently performed on NBC's *The Voice* with the Black Eyed Peas and J Balvin.



upcoming events

BROWN BAG **WORKS-IN-PROGRESS** **LUNCH SERIES**



09/24: Brittany Harris, MFA and Dr. Annemarie Navar-Gill (University Theatre 1002)

10/31: Priya Vashist, MFA and Dr. Ted Gournelos (BAL 9024)

11/26: Marilyn Marloff, MFA and Dr. Victoria Jennings (Diehn 1202)

01/30: Dr. Brendan O'Hallarn and Dr. Danielle Jackson (BAL 9024)

02/27: Jim Lyden, MFA and Dr. Fran Hassencahl (University Theatre 1002)

03/26: Dr. Carolina Conte and TBA (Diehn 1202)

04/23: Dr. Kyle Nicholas and Carla Harrell (BAL 9024)



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presents

Strategic Communication for Social Justice & Public Advocacy:

A Conversation with Melanie Roussel Newman

Thursday, February 13th, 2020 | 6 PM, Burgess Room, BAL 9024



Conversation Moderator:
Savannah Russo, Senior
Consultant for Global Health
Visions and Department of
Women's Studies alumni

Melanie Roussel Newman is the Senior Vice President for Communications and Culture at the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Fund. Ms. Newman has over 15 years of experience in government, political and non-profit communications. Prior to Planned Parenthood, Ms. Newman was Chief Communications Officer at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and held several positions in the Obama Administration, including leading communications at the U.S. Department of Justice, the White House Office of Management and Budget, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Her experience also includes spokesperson roles at the Democratic National Committee and on Capitol Hill. Ms. Newman is a New Orleans, Louisiana native, but spent part of her childhood in Alabama. She received her Bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida and her Master's degree in Public Communication from American University in Washington. Ms. Newman is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and serves on the National Social Action Commission for the sorority.



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presents

AN EVENING WITH BROADCASTER

JAY HARRIS

OF

ESPN

SPORTSCENTER



ODU Alumni, Class of 1987

FEBRUARY 19th, 2020
6:30 - 8:30 PM

Chandler Recital Hall
Diehn Fine & Performing Arts Center
1339 W 49th St, Norfolk, VA 23529

A conversation moderated by Mitch Brown,
WACH FOX's Sports Director

This event co-sponsored by:

The Department of Communication & Theatre Arts
The Office of Student Engagement & Enrollment Services
The ODU Alumni Association
The Office of Distance Learning

February 20th - March 1st

FROM ODUREP
AN ORIGINAL WORK BY
BRITTNEY S. HARRIS

ECHOS

TRANSCENDING THROUGH STORY

IN THE GOODE THEATRE
FEB 20-MAR 1
ODUARTSTIX.COM

Written and directed by Brittney S. Harris
Produced by ODUREP

Drawing from Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf* and Boal's *Rainbow of Desires* technique, Brittney S. Harris weaves an interactive poetry/rap/movement tapestry into a rainbow of dialogue, between diverse narratives of both the actors and the audience.

Echoes allows audience members to become spect-actors in exploring the ways that race, sexuality, and gender realities create feelings of rejection, oppression, or invisibility for so many. Together, all will share pain, struggles, and celebration in this powerful performance event.

Free parking is available in Garage D, 1070 W. 45th St.



**OLD DOMINION
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**Old Dominion University PRSSA &
PRSA Hampton Roads**

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PANEL

Join local professionals for a conversation on the importance of representation in the Communication - related fields.



FEB 27
5 p.m.- 7 p.m.

STROME ENTREPRENEURIAL CENTER

Visual Arts Bldg, 1006, Norfolk, VA
23529

Event is free and dinner is included



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ODU PRSSA FACULTY ADVISOR
BRENDAN O'HALLARN AT BOHALLAR@ODU.EDU

April 2-12 - Goode Theatre
ODURep



HARVEY

a comedy by Mary Chase
directed by Chris Hanna

ODUArtsTix.com