

UTC Theatre Co. recognized for diversity of playwrights in season productions

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The International Centre for Women Playwrights (ICWP) recently awarded their 50/50 Applause Award to UTC Theatre Company.

According to ICWP, theater companies honored with the award support and recognize women playwrights equally to their male playwright counterparts. They bring female-written productions to stage just as often as they produce male-written works.

UTC Theatre Co. was one of 60 international theater companies to receive the award, which is not restricted to universities. Any theater company worldwide can be considered.

The award is season specific, but UTC Theatre Co. makes an effort every season to bring a diverse selection of productions to campus, says Gaye Jeffers, associate professor in directing and theater history in the Department of Performing Arts.

"We feel that it is important to support the voice of women playwrights and to promote the stories of women as lead characters," Jeffers says.

Jeffers, along with Steve Ray, chair of the division of theater, direct UTC Theatre Co.'s productions.



Luna Gale, Feb. 2017

Their 2016-17 season included *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl and *Luna Gale* by Rebecca Gilman.

Ruhl's *Eurydice* adds a modern twist to the classic Greek myth of *Orpheus* by retelling the story through his wife's eyes.

Gilman's *Luna Gale* tells the story of Caroline, a social worker from Iowa, as she tries to find the best home for six-month old baby, Luna Gale. Choosing between the baby's drug-addicted parents or her evangelical grandmother should be easy until Caroline unveils truths that turn her decision into a moral dilemma.

UTC Theatre Co.'s upcoming 2017-18 season also is diverse with *Silent Sky* by Lauren Gunderson and *Elemeno Pea* by Molly Smith Metzler.

Gunderson's *Silent Sky* follows early 19th century astronomer Henrietta Leavitt as she struggles for visibility and recognition in the male-dominated science.

Metzler's *Elemeno Pea* is a story of two sisters enjoying the lavish beach estate owned by the youngest sister's boss. The comedy explores themes of ambition, regret and how choices can alter a person beyond recognition.

"The lack of women in theater and film has long been an area that needs to be addressed. The majority of playwrights and directors in theater and film are predominately men," says Jeffers.

"To push for voices to be heard that are more representative of the community as a whole has been a personal goal since I came to UTC in 2007. I consider every effort a step in changing the culture."

Media Relations Contacts: Email UTC Media Relations or call 423-425-2344.



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Tagged With: **50/50 Applause Award, Department of Performing Arts, diversity, Gaye Jeffers, International Centre for Women Playwrights (ICWP), Steve Ray, UTC Theatre Company**

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