



DANGLE THEATRE PRESENTS
“IN THE CONTINUUM” AT UWG
TOWNSEND CENTER
JAMIE COCHRAN
Contributing Writer

“In the Continuum” explores the power and strength of two African-American women who have been affected by AIDS while facing prejudice and envisioning a life beyond stigma, materialism and resentment. This performance, hosted by the UWG theater program, will be held at the Townsend Center Dangle Theatre at the University of West Georgia on Feb. 22-25 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 26, at 2:30 p.m.

Abigail, performed by Daija Jones, is a Zimbabwean mother and wife pregnant with her second child. She contracts AIDS from her husband Stamford, who cheated on her. As a married television journalist in her late 20s, she aspires to live a conventional middle-class lifestyle.

Nia is played by Nateria Bivens. Nia is a 19-year-old African American teenager who is pregnant and infected by her boyfriend Darnell. He is a basketball player who just won a full-ride scholarship. Nia wants to secure his attention and romantic interest by sculpting her life around his potential success. She hopes one day he will become an NBA basketball star.

“Daija and Nateria will be on a parallel personal journey as they encounter various forms of cultural biases and prejudice,” said Jonathan Kitt, Assistant Professor of Theatre. “Each woman will experience life-changing revelations and self-discoveries.”

Abigail and Nia find the power within themselves and become aware of the prejudice, stigma and humiliation they will be subjected to when they find out they could possibly transmit AIDS to their unborn babies. The play will explore the phases of denial, anger and desperation. Both women will face the men they thought would bring them joy and happiness but have instead compromised and threatened their entire lives. These character’s voices bring a controver-

sial and powerful story to the UWG theater.

“In the Continuum” first debuted at New York University, Tisch School of the Arts as a graduate acting school project. It was written and performed by Danai Gurira and Nikkole Salter. Gurira played the role of Abigail, and her story is set in Zimbabwe where she grew up. Salter played the role of Nia, an unmarried teenager who has no hope of marrying the father of her unborn child. The play is centered around two women who experience a bizarre weekend living worlds apart.

“They were in graduate school when it first developed in 2005 where a professor recommended they put the two shows together,” said Kitt. “Both Gurira and Salter developed a play that works politics and literature.”

If prospective attendees wish to see a teaser for the play there will be an opportunity.

“We have a community preview night right before opening on Feb. 21 at 7:30 p.m. before the play runs on the 22-26,” said Kitt.

Tickets are available at the Townsend Center Box Office. They are \$10 for adults, \$7 for senior citizens and \$5 for UWG students with a student ID. UWG faculty and staff can receive two tickets for \$10.



Photo Courtesy of UWG Theater

UWG EDUCATION
STUDENT SENDS
PRAISE TO
PROGRAM
ALANNA KING
Editor-in-Chief

Stevie Jackson has been in school her entire life. Jackson bounced to graduate school just days after completing her bachelor’s program and is now completing her specialist’s degree (EdS) in instructional technology from UWG all while teaching full time in the classroom.

The fifth grade Oak Hill Elementary School teacher is able to blend her hands-on experiences in the classroom with her assignments in her specialist’s program thanks to her principal and professor’s collaboration.

“Oak Hill has been very flexible with me and anything I need for college and West Georgia has made a lot of their work job embedded,” says Jackson.

The materials that Jackson is learning in her online college courses can be translated right into her current teaching methods, allowing her to better herself as a teacher while completing her own college assignments. Her collaboration with her peers, who are mostly all certified working teachers, has offered her a chance to talk about what works best in a real classroom setting.

“I’m able to get feedback from the things that I’m learning at West Georgia and I can ask my

professors, ‘what’s the fastest way to do this?’” says Jackson. “It’s just a bunch of sharing ideas, taking it back to my workplace, seeing it work, and especially for students with disabilities or challenges, finding things that help them.”

Using the techniques learned in her college courses, Jackson has found practical ways to enhance the classroom experience for her students by using new programs such as Padlet, DocsTeach and Google classroom.

“I let technology do the work when it comes to getting feedback from my students rather than going paper by paper, reading feedback,” says Jackson. “I’m able to turn around and spend more time teaching. By using technology, I’m spending less time on things that are not going to directly affect my students.”

Jackson thanks the staff at Oak Hill for their support while she continues her college and teaching career simultaneously. Principal Dr. Brenda Gammans pushed Jackson towards success since the time she started at Oak Hill as a paraprofessional.

“She’s not somebody that wants you to devote all your time to work,” says Jackson. “She wants you to further your education. She wants me to be a good mom to my family. By her being such a relatable person and an understanding boss, it makes me want to achieve so much more and be the best version of myself. She’s always saying, ‘yeah you can do it. You’re smart.’”

Jackson has also had oppor-

tunities to attend conferences and professional training, frequently encouraged by her boss. “[Gammans] said, ‘yeah, go, do whatever you want to do. And when you come back, let us know. We want to be a part of that,’” says Jackson.

Jackson hopes that by showing her students her current experience in college, she will encourage them to do the same. She frequently shows her students her own assignments and papers, hoping that she’ll push them to better themselves in that same way.

The new mom plans to take the summer off from teaching and studenthood before graduating with her EdS in the Spring of 2024.

“After that, I don’t know, but I feel like I’m always going to be that teacher who pushes her kids above the level that they’re at.”



Photo Courtesy of Stevie Jackson

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LIVING WEST

DR. SALVADOR PERALTA AND DR. GREGORY FRASER REFLECT ON THEIR INTERDISCIPLINE PRESENTATION “WHY POETRY (SORT OF) MATTERS”
JANNETTE EMMERICK
Feature Editor

In November, Dr. Salvador Peralta and Dr. Gregory Fraser blended poetry and politics in their presentation “Why Poetry (Sort of) Matters” for the Other Night School event series. While the day has passed, their topic remains vital to the rhetoric and curriculum of not just their current classes but for general posterity. “I am by training, not a poet, so I was relying significantly on [Fraser’s] expertise,” said Peralta. “But we did collaborate in translation of poetry, especially of Latin American poets. “So the process of coming up with a presentation about the value of poetry— What it means and why there’s some differences between why poets are highly regarded in some places but not others,” continued Peralta. “Particularly throughout the world, poets, generally speaking, are highly regarded or are riled and thrown in prison.” Conversely, in the U.S., while poets are appreciated, there’s a lack of interest in poetry from the general public, thus Peralta and Fraser explored the contrast between the reverence of poetry in the States versus outside. “In a country like ours where we have very well-oiled institutional machines, poetry really doesn’t have a place anymore because it fights to intervene and is largely ignored,” said Fraser. “In huge measure because there are so many other forms

of free speech in the U.S. where there aren’t in a lot of other countries.” For instance, Peralta grew up in Nicaragua under the Somoza dictatorship and experienced first hand free speech restrictions and brutal regimes. “Poets in those places often have enormous impact and influence because they take it upon themselves to speak truth to power and they often pay the ultimate price for that,” said Fraser. “That’s what [Peralta is] especially astute about as a political scientist and as someone who survived the Nicaraguan Revolution.” Nicaraguan poets were quite literally writing in a time where their voices would be suppressed and their lives endangered. “In the United States, there’s a tremendous amount of free speech,” said Peralta. “I always find it really interesting when some of the loudest voices are saying ‘there’s no free speech in the United States, oh my god, free speech is dying!’ Yet, they are on the news saying that free speech is dying. “If free speech is dying they would not be on the news saying ‘free speech is dying.’ They’d be dead,” continued Peralta. “Because that’s what happens in places like Nicaragua. You go to jail not on the news.” Moreover, poetry holds an incredible power to shape societal opinions and also reveal hard truths for public scrutiny, naturally entangling within politics, but even then is sometimes glossed over. “Looking into the United States, it seems to me that there is a competition for attention and interest in the producing of cultural artifacts,” said Peralta. “From novels to all kinds of creative nonfiction to news. “And then more recently, because of the internet, because of social media, because of all these new technologies,

those new technologies have made it even more competitive of a field,” continued Peralta. “In a way, they have created a cacophony of voices where before, the very best of the poets would rise to the top. And still they do today, but there’s also a lot of other voices.” A surplus of creative content may be competitively healthy but comes at the cost of overlooking many unique voices. “Poets are always finding new and better ways of saying things with clarity and with power, and so that also doesn’t help,” said Peralta. “How they speak to people challenges people to think in a different way.” For many, poetry touches the soul whether through exploring themes of beauty, frailty, or humanity. Yet, poetry also faces imposing stiflers like educational institutions and out-competed by other creative mediums. “We’re not really reading the poems along the way, we’re waiting for news of some kind of suicide or some kind of tussle with a politician,” said Fraser. “[Schools] have abandoned [Poetry] because its compression is difficult to teach, its figurative language is difficult to teach, its metaphorical leaps are strange even to teachers.” Poetry and politics prove to be intertwined and in general shows how many subjects and disciplines are intermingled even if the subjects seem polar opposite on the surface. Every semester, the Other Night School, which includes many diverse lectures and speaking events, holds an interdisciplinary talk involving two professors from opposite ends of campus or contrasting subjects. This semester, the Other Night School’s interdisciplinary event will interweave psychology and film with Dr. Alison Umminger, Professor of English, and Dr. Nisha Gupta, Associate Professor of Psychology on April 11.

HARRY AND MEGHAN’S DOCUSERIES AND ITS MISCONCEPTIONS
MARIA JESUS MARTINEZ
Contributing Writer

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle starred in Netflix’s Documentary Series Harry & Meghan, their first project after signing a contract with the streaming platform to produce several content in the following years. The documentary follows Harry and Meghan’s experience in the Royal Family from the moment they meet and fall in love to when they leave the monarchy and move to California. The themes portrayed in the six episodes, which premiered on Dec. 8, are true love, cultural racism, the strict Royal Family and the ruthless tabloids. The music synced with the stories told throughout the documentary. When Meghan described her European trip with her gals, the seventies hit “Don’t Worry About It” by Lonette McKee gave feminine and joyful vibes. When Meghan and Harry went on their first date, “Anything Goes” by Helen Merrill played with its piano solo representing the fluttering excitement and the joys of falling in love. The image quality was satisfactory. They combined studio camera recordings with simple videos and photos from cell phones on the documentary without being disruptive to the eye. I appreciated the variety of personal archives exhibited, such as simple

and silly pictures of the Sussex Royals, videos of their day-to-day, instagram posts, excerpts from articles, letters and text messages, along with graphic animations and historical registers. I loved the historical context because it explained the background behind Harry and Meghan’s struggles. They described the media and the Royal Family’s relationship in how the monarch’s lives are stripped of privacy. As royals they are obligated to report their spendings and personal endeavors to the taxpayers who maintain them. The documentary failed on its central theme in telling the whole truth because it was naturally biased. The most accurate version of the truth would have included talking to everybody involved, searching for documents, data, books, recordings, previous article extracts and the information found must form a credible story. However, for Harry and Meghan, the whole truth turned out to be their truth as the only outside sources who spoke in the documentary held the same point of view. The few family members and friends who do appear share only loving words about them, not any criticism. Meanwhile, the series did not include conversation with other members of the Royal family. Even Meghan’s father and half-sister were not given the opportunity to respond to the allegations made against them. Furthermore, I agree with some of the conclusions the Sussex Royals made in the docuseries. For example,

they were right about how merciless the press is in the UK, like when the Daily Mail released a private letter she sent to her father, or when Meghan suffered racism and fake news from some articles. However, the couple also made senseless comments, like when Harry promised Meghan that he was going to protect her from the media. Yet they are still active public figures with many admirers which also means there are always journalists observing and informing the public, whether they like it or not. Part of me empathized with the experiences the couple went through, but I also felt skeptical about seeing the documentary as the “whole truth.” Still, I enjoyed watching it, and I would recommend anybody interested in learning about Harry and Meghan’s departure from the Crown.

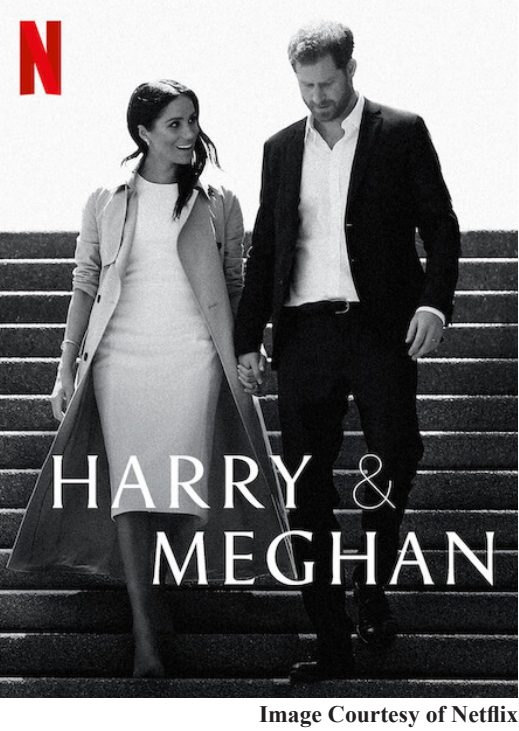


Image Courtesy of Netflix

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ENTERTAINMENT

PUSS IN BOOTS 2: THE LAST WISH

RACHAEL BROWN
Contributing Writer

Puss in Boots 2: The Last Wish is an unexpectedly great addition to the *Shrek* franchise. The movie centers around Puss in Boots, played by Antonio Banderas, and the journey to claim the last wish to get his nine lives back after he finds that he is on his last life.

However, even though the movie centers around Puss and his struggle, the amazing villains steal the show. The three main antagonistic forces are Goldilocks and the three bears, with Goldilocks played by Florence Pugh, and the three bears Papa Bear, Mama Bear and Baby Bear voiced by Ray Winstone, Olivia Colman and Samson Kayo respectively, Big Jack Horner voiced by John Mulaney, and a character referred to as Wolf voiced by Wagner Moura.

With all of these characters to juggle, it can be easy for audiences to lose interest in the story or wish that more focus

had been placed on one group of characters over another, but the film performs a balancing act similar to *Infinity War* where all of the characters receive the perfect amount of screentime.

Goldilocks and the three bears have a very sweet family dynamic. As Goldilocks leads her family through the treacherous journey of obtaining the wish, the bears consider Goldilocks one of their own and will stop at nothing to help her. It is really interesting that many of the heartfelt moments come from the relationship between the members of this family, even though they oppose our heroes.

Big Jack Horner is a refreshing response to all of the sympathetic villains in recent years by being exceedingly evil in a way that is not often showcased in present cinema. His character is hilarious, and is certainly more comedic than threatening, but he embraces his villainy with open arms. The only criticism I have is that when he speaks, I can only hear John Mulaney, and that can be a bit distracting.

Wolf is easily the best villain in the film. Rather than being completely sympathetic or evil, it is implied that Wolf

is only doing his job, even if he enjoys it a bit too much. He spends the movie hunting Puss with the intention to kill him, and this raises the stakes and adds urgency to Puss’ quest for more lives. Adding to this aspect of the movie is the fact that Wolf is absolutely terrifying in every scene he is in. Every time he is on screen, you are reminded that Puss is close to death, which is extremely bold for a kid’s movie. Wolf’s voice actor only adds to the character, delivering his lines in the most menacing way possible.

Each of these villains weave into the lesson that Puss ultimately learns about life and death, which happens to be a surprisingly mature message about the topic for a children’s film.

In addition to the unexpected maturity and subversion of today’s villain tropes, the movie is extremely funny, has excellent animation and happens to be nearly completely unrelated to the first *Puss in Boots*, so there is no need to catch up on the franchise before watching.

All in all, *Puss in Boots 2: The Last Wish* is a surprisingly amazing film that is well worth the watch.

KENYA BARRIS TIES COMEDY AND COMMENTARY TOGETHER IN YOU PEOPLE

SAMIRA BARNETT
News Editor

You People, a new romantic comedy, made its debut on Netflix Jan. 20, just in time for Black History Month. Several well-known actors appear in this film, including Eddie Murphy, Lauren London, Nia Long and others.

Kenya Barris directed yet another film centered around African Americans, following in the footsteps of previous projects such as the recent film *Entergalactic*, the *Black-ish* series and *BlackAF*.

This film addresses many

important issues in society, such as racism and interracial relationships and how these issues affect one’s own life journey. It provides a viewpoint for both races, as well as their respective religions of Islam and Judaism.

You People revolves around Amira (Lauren London) and Ezra (Jonah Hill) as they navigate their interracial relationship in the face of prejudice and racism.

The film begins with a podcast featuring Ezra and his best friend, Mo (Sam Jay), where they discuss topics surrounding African American culture. From the beginning, the audience is introduced to his perspective on how both black and white people will never truly be content with one another and why.

However, Amira and Ezra challenge these notions when they form a friendship and unintentionally fall in love. The movie takes the viewer on a trip through this relationship, showing how other people’s opinions can affect one’s behavior. Before racism became ingrained in their thoughts as a result of their families’ beliefs, they enjoyed each other’s company and nothing else mattered. But as time went on, they started to distrust and question their relationship.

Near the end, when the couple split up and their parents bring them back together, it starts to seem a little too typical. This resembled an

adolescent film more than an adult one, in my opinion. However, they were able to repair what was broken.

Throughout the film, the actors also speak and use Gen Z slang such as “period” and “respectively” in a natural way. These colloquial references capture your attention and make the viewer relate more to the situations. The soundtrack was an excellent mix of R&B and rap.

They make references to various artists and draw parallels between Ezra’s actions and Drake’s different albums. It makes these scenes very comedic for those who are familiar with the work of these artists.

You People, in my opinion, was a film that stood out from others. They were able to tie difficult topics such as oppression that occurred hundreds of years ago to problems in today’s society while keeping the tone lighthearted. For me, this was the film’s most remarkable feature. On the other hand, racist jokes and accusations became tiresome. However, this repetition also seems to indicate the continuation of a never-ending cycle of racial prejudice.

This is a film that I believe is well worth seeing. While corny and predictable at times, the movie exposes viewers to the feelings and thoughts of people from both perspectives. It makes you think about how racism affects both parties, not just one, while also making you laugh.

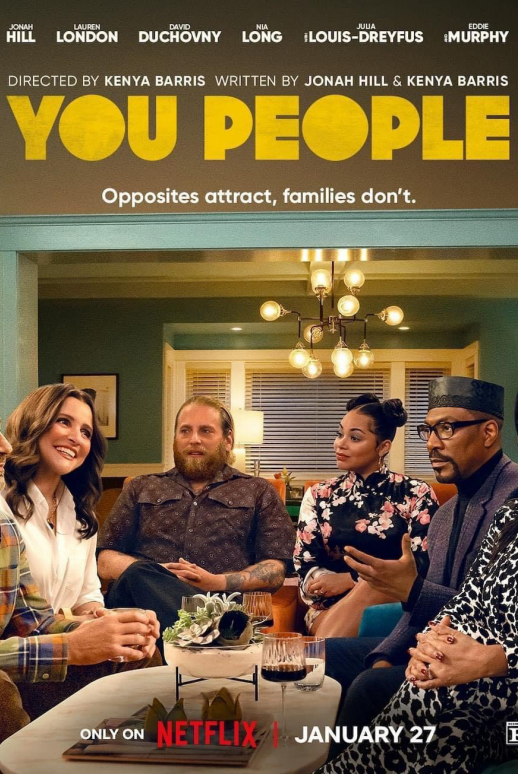


Image Courtesy of Netflix

ENTERTAINMENT

SHUTOUT SECURES SERIES WIN FOR UWG AGAINST AUGUSTA

GEORGE EDWARDS

Contributing Writer

The UWG Baseball team secured its first shutout of the season in a 13-0 victory over Augusta on Sunday, with the win securing a 2-1 series triumph at Cole Field. The side lost 11-2 against the Jaguars in the Feb. 4 season opener, before a 12-5 win as the second part of a doubleheader would leave a final game on the following day to decide who would take the spoils of the 2023 opening series.

Much of the game would prove quiet on the hitting front, with an Anthony Calabro solo home-run in the bottom of the first inning (his first of the season) proving all that separated the sides. A far cry from the high-scoring games of Saturday, UWG can credit a solid four inning showing to the starting pitcher Carson Crossley, who was awarded the win after striking out two, and allowing only three runners onto the bases (2 hits, 1 walk).

Relief pitcher Jake Jordan can also take pride in his showing, with the Ellerslie, GA native providing 2.2 solid innings in his first game for the team after arriving from Southern Union State Community College.

“I came here for a visit, and I instantly knew this was the place,” says Jordan. “I got my chance opening week, so it feels good.”

Jordan came into the game at the top of the fifth inning to protect UWG’s 1-0 lead, and after a full-count walk against his first hitter, he would settle in and strike out his next – be-

fore a runner caught stealing and a flyout to center field ensured his first outing of the season began with a shutout inning.

“The first batter was definitely just kind of a nerves thing,” says Jordan. “First outing, new school, it’s gonna happen but it felt really good to get through an inning and then get in a rhythm.”

A fine rhythm it was, at the top of the sixth inning Jordan would strikeout two of the batters he faced to protect the lead into the seventh. Starting his third inning of relief by surrendering a single to the leadoff batter seemed to momentarily shake the 6’5 right-hander, a flyout to deep left from the following batter being dealt with by Cooper Prince to keep the runner at first.

“It feels really good to have those guys behind you,” says Jordan. “You know that it’s gonna be an out if they hit it in play.”

After a grounded single to right put another runner on base and a double steal advanced them to second and third, it looked as if Jordan was struggling. A visit to the mound from the coach seemed to revitalize the pitcher though, with the next batter suffering a lineout to second base.

“He basically just told me I need to dig in deep and do my job, and get this guy out,” says Jordan. “That’s exactly what I did.”

With that, Jake Jordan’s first outing concluded, Jackson Hodnick replacing the newcomer to finish the 7th. “It was really just a matchup thing,” says Jordan. “I definitely would have dug in and gone for it, but I’m glad we switched and had the matchup.”

Jordan concluded his first outing for the team

with three strikeouts, two hits allowed, and one walk.

Hodnick would close out the game for UWG, striking out four batters over 2.1 innings. An Augusta pitching implosion and UWG batting explosion would change the game in the seventh and eighth innings. Five pitchers would take the mound for Augusta, with Cody Shieder being pulled after facing three (two on base), Turner Sircy would walk Edgar Cruz to load the bases, before a balk would see Jared Emory score. A two RBI double from Jonathan Hickman would see Augusta turn to the bullpen once more, with Jasper Dubberly surrendering a two-run homer to Anthony Calabro, his second home run of the day. Calabro would end the game four for five – with two homers, four batted in and three runs scored.

West Georgia would end the inning with five runs, taking the tally to six on the day. The bottom of the eighth would see the UWG batters cause even more problems for the Jaguars defense. A seven-run inning would leave the game without a doubt going into the top of the ninth, with a 13-0 lead being confirmed by an Augusta single, a strikeout, and a double play to end the game.

The result will leave UWG in high spirits looking into the next week, with a Feb. 7 midweek matchup against Emmanuel followed by a weekend series against Carson-Newnan from the 11-12th.

“It’ll be good for guys to get some more innings,” says Jordan. “It’s close to conference, we’ve really gotta dig deep and start playing together – we’ve been a lot better these past two games.”



Photo Courtesy of UWG Athletics