

# [The University of Alabama](#)

## [University of Alabama News](#)

 

- [Video Newsroom](#)
- [Research Magazine](#)
- [Dialog](#)
- [Experts Directory](#)
  
- [UA Matters](#)
- [UA in the News](#)
- [UA Student News](#)
- [UA Preview](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Submit News](#)
- [About](#)

## Panitch Named UA's 2014 Burnum Award Winner

Apr 17, 2014 | Tags: [College of Arts & Sciences](#), [Department of Theatre & Dance](#) | Posted in [Awards & Honors](#), [Faculty & Staff](#) |

Tweet < 6

Like < 0

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Following his passion has led Seth Panitch to some interesting places, from the stage, to overseas, and finally to the department of theatre and dance at The University of Alabama. The zeal he brings to the next generation of acting students has led Panitch to the 2014 Burnum Award.

The Burnum Award is one of the highest honors the University bestows on its faculty. Established by Celeste Burnum and the late Dr. John F. Burnum, of Tuscaloosa, it is presented annually to a professor who is judged by a faculty selection committee to have demonstrated superior scholarly or artistic achievements and profound dedication to the art of teaching. Panitch's selection for the award is gratifying for those who work closely with him.



Seth Panitch

“Seth is a model faculty member in every way,” said William Teague, chair of the department of theatre and dance. “He sets high standards for himself in his professional work, whether it be directing, writing or performing. He expects no less from his students. And they have learned that by buying into his process, they will succeed.”

“Over the last eight years, his students have participated in three Off-Broadway productions, multiple performances in Cuba, Shakespeare festivals in Utah, Colorado and Texas, as well as countless projects here at the University,” said Teague. “His students have an implicit trust in Seth. That trust has been earned, and it is that trust that makes him an excellent educator.”

For his part, Panitch sees the Burnum Award as something to live up to.

“It is more than a little humbling to receive an award stamped by so many of our most distinguished faculty,” he said. “Rather than thrash about in a pool of self-doubt, I am resolved to look at this award as a call to action – to live up to the fine work of the superior educators that have preceded me.”

Panitch, associate professor of acting and director of the undergraduate and Master of Fine Arts acting programs at UA, is quietly racking up awards for his teaching skills. In addition to the Burnum Award, he earned the 2010 Alabama National Alumni Association’s Outstanding Commitment to Teaching award. That same year, he was named the Druid Arts educator of the year. He also earned a Leadership Board Faculty Fellowship from 2009-2012.

The University will present the award at 4:30 p.m. April 24 at the Child Development Center. Panitch will present a lecture: “My Life in the Theatre ... Or ‘What Happened?’” The event is open to the public, and a public reception will follow.

Panitch is uniquely qualified for the Burnum Award, said Dr. Robert Olin, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

“Seth Panitch is a valuable asset to our College and University,” Olin said. “While he is highly accomplished as an actor, playwright and director, he is particularly dedicated to his students. When appearing on stage, Seth is surrounded by his students in all of the other roles. He becomes a literal ‘role’ model, always professional in his approach, constantly coaching and supporting the students.

“In the classroom, he is known as a gifted, tough, demanding, fair, intuitive and exciting teacher,” Olin said. “He brings distinction to The University of Alabama.”

Panitch has worked internationally in Havana, Cuba with the Ministry of Culture, directing productions of “The Merchant of Venice,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “The Importance of Being Earnest,” “Beyond Therapy” and his own play, “Alcestis Ascending”; Off-Broadway at the Harold Clurman Theatre, American Place Theater, Westbeth Theater Center, 59E59 Theatre and Urban Stages Theatre; regionally at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespearean Festival, Texas Shakespeare Festival and Idaho Repertory Theatre; and in Los Angeles at the Globe Playhouse, Odyssey Theatre, Complex Theatre and the Hillside Repertory Company.

His documentary, “A Night in the Theatre,” has been published by Insight Media and his plays, “Dammit, Shakespeare!,” “Hell: Paradise Found,” “What’s Taking Moses So Long?” and “Alcestis Ascending,” have received critical success in both New York and Los Angeles productions.

At The University of Alabama, Panitch has directed “Into the Woods,” “Henry V,” “Romeo and Juliet,” “The Heiress,” “Saint Joan,” “Animal Crackers,” “Fifth of July,” “The Government Inspector,” “An Enemy of the People,” “Moby-Dick,” “Animal Crackers,” “Othello” and “Seven Guitars,” and he has performed as a guest artist in “Moon Over Buffalo,” “A Flea in Her Ear” and “Blithe Spirit.”

Panitch received his Master of Fine Arts in acting at the University of Washington’s Professional Actor’s Training Program and is a member of both the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers and the Dramatists Guild of America.

UA’s department of theatre and dance is part of the College of Arts and Sciences, the University’s largest division and the largest liberal arts college in the state. Students from the College have won numerous national awards including Rhodes Scholarships, Goldwater Scholarships, Truman Scholarships and memberships on the USA Today Academic All American Team.

The University of Alabama, a student-centered research university, is experiencing significant growth in both enrollment and academic quality. This growth, which is positively impacting the campus and the state's economy, is in keeping with UA's vision to be the university of choice for the best and brightest students. UA, the state's flagship university, is an academic community united in its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all Alabamians.

- **CONTACT:** Bobby Mathews, UA media relations, [bwmathews1@ua.edu](mailto:bwmathews1@ua.edu), 205/348-4956
- **SOURCE:** Seth Panitch, [spanitch@as.ua.edu](mailto:spanitch@as.ua.edu), 205/348-4300

## Related News

- [UA Press Awards Manuscript Prizes](#)
- [UA Receives DOE Grant for Carbon Storage Research](#)