

# LFA 2025: GHOSTED! PRESENCE, ABSENCE, AND ADAPTATION



**SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2025**

Hosted by Georgia Southern University  
at the DeSoto Hotel, Savannah, GA

**LITERATURE/FILM ASSOCIATION**



# LFA 2025

## REGISTRATION

Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Thursday, September 25

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

## LITERATURE/FILM ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

President: Amanda Konkle (Georgia Southern University)

Vice President: John Alberti (Northern Kentucky University)

Secretary: Seda Öz (University of Delaware)

Treasurer: Marton Marko (University of Montana)

Directors: Christina Parker-Flynn (Florida State University),  
Rob Ribera (Portland State University), John Sanders (Appalachian State  
University)

Ex-Officio Officers: Allen Redmon (Past President), Elsie Walker (Editor,  
*Literature/Film Quarterly*), John Sanders (Digital Media and Technology Coordinator),  
Ian Olney (York College Director of the LFA)

## SESSION 1A

Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Thursday, September 25

11:40 AM - 01:15 PM

## DIGITAL PHANTOMS AND AI SPECTERS (ROUNDTABLE)

Chair: Allen H. Redmon

Allen H. Redmon (Texas A&M University Central Texas) – The Presence and Absence of the Human in Benjamin Gutsche’s *Cassandra* (2025)

Chris Althoff (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) – Fear of the Dead Internet: When Technology Adapts and Users Adapt Back

Emma Kostopolus (Valdosta State University) – The Sincerest Form of Flattery? AI Imitation of Authorial Voice in Adaptation

Pete Kunze (Tulane University) – Agatha All AI: or, the (Dis)Pleasures of Posthumous Performance

John Alberti (Northern Kentucky University) – “You’ve Got AI”: The Specter of the Romcom in Spike Jonze’s *Her*

# LFA 2025

## SESSION 2A

*Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Thursday, September 25  
1:30 PM – 3:05 PM*

### **GHOSTLY FIGURES AND BIOGRAPHICAL ABSENCES**

*Chair: Bill Mooney*

Bill Mooney (Fashion Institute of Technology, SUNY) – The Ghost in the Biopic

Jack Ryan (Gettysburg College) – The Sixties Gap: John Sayles & Lawrence Kasdan

David Pellegrini (Eastern Connecticut State University) – The Hauntology of Roy Cohn, or Sympathy for the Devil?

Alan Nadel (University of Kentucky) – Pride, Prejudice, Depression Comedy, and Western Romance: *You've Got Mail's* Adaptation of Lubitsch and Austen

## SESSION 2B

*Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Thursday, September 25  
1:30 PM – 3:05 PM*

### **SPECTRAL TECHNIQUES AND AESTHETIC STRATEGIES**

*Chair: Christina Parker-Flynn*

Chris Lizza (Georgia State University) – Recording The Spectral: Mediated Authorship and the Hauntological Gaze in *Butterfly Kisses* (2018)

Christina Parker-Flynn (Florida State University) – Perpetual Motion (Pictures): From "The English Mail-Coach" (1849) to "The Phantom Carriage" (1921)

Claudia Calhoun (Hunter College, CUNY) – The Specter of Cinema in Jamie Lloyd's Production of *Sunset Boulevard* (2024)

## AFTERNOON BREAK

*Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*3:05 PM – 3:20 PM  
Refreshments*

# LFA 2025

## SESSION 3A

Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Thursday, September 25  
3:20 PM - 4:55 PM

### MEDIEVAL ECHOES AND MODERN SCREENS: THE HAUNTING WORK OF MEMORY

Chair: Carol Jamison

Carol Jamison (Georgia Southern University) – No Honor, But Death: Haunted Gawain in *The Green Knight*

Julianna Tillman (Georgia Southern University) – Reimagined Arthurian Legends: A Comparative Analysis of Knightley Franchise and Chivalry in *Le Morte D'Arthur* and Children's Animated Media

Henry (Hank) Nooney (Florida State University) – "Screened" Memory: *Aftersun* and the Cine-Prosthetic Psyche

Lisa Dusenberry (Georgia Southern University) – (Re)Constructing Memory Through Play: Absence, Exploration, and Emergent Narrative in *Blue Prince* and *The Roottrees are Dead*

## SESSION 3B

Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Thursday, September 25  
3:20 PM - 4:55 PM

### GHOSTS OF THE NATION: FOLKLORE, REGION, AND PLAY IN AMERICAN MEMORY

Chair: John Sanders

John Sanders (Appalachian State University) – American Hauntology: Adapting Folklore and Americana in *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine* (2018)

Tara Heimberger (Georgia State University) – Haunted by *Deliverance*: Regional Spectres and the Hicksploitation Legacy of Appalachian Representation

Kyle Meikle (University of Baltimore) – Poeland, Twainworld, Kingverse

Jacqueline Pinkowitz (Mercer University) – Silences, Absences, and Ghosts: Reworking the Native American Gothic in *Reservation Dogs* and *True Detective: Night Country*

# LFA 2025

## EVENT

Harborview Room, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor

Thursday, September 25  
5:15 PM – 6:30 PM

### WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

*Dr. Amanda Konkle,  
LFA President, Professor of English and Film Studies, Georgia Southern University*

*Dr. David Weindorf,  
Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Georgia Southern University*

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

#### **Haints, Saints, and Sinners**

*Dr. Joyce White*

*Associate Professor of English, Gullah Geechee Literature & Cultures, Georgia Southern University*

*Interim Director of Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Center, Georgia Southern University*

## EVENT

Harborview Room, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor

Thursday, September 25  
6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

### WELCOME RECEPTION

Following the keynote, we invite all attendees to join us for a welcome reception at the DeSoto.

The Literature/Film Association thanks Dr. David Weindorf and the Georgia Southern University Office of Research and Economic Development for sponsoring the Welcome Reception.





# LFA 2025

## BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION

Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Friday, September 26  
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

## SESSION 4A

Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Friday, September 26  
9:00 AM - 10:35 AM

### HAUNTOLOGY AND SPECULATIVE ECOLOGIES

Chair: Pamela Demory

Claire Patzner (Indiana University) – A Noah-Less Ark: *Flow* and Reimagining Inclusive Arks in the Eco-Apocalypse

Phill Harrold (Kennesaw State University) – A Sonic Confession: “I Lied to You,” Black Subjectivity, and the Hauntology of Sound in *Sinners* (2025)

Pamela Demory (Emerita, University of California, Davis) – Nature Writing During the Sixth Extinction: “an absence ... becomes visible”

Kim Waale (Le Moyne College) – Post-Mortem Daguerreotypes and Contemporary Environmental Art

## SESSION 4B

Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Friday, September 26  
9:00 AM - 10:35 AM

### POSTHUMOUS FREQUENCIES: SOUND, PLEASURE, AND THE GHOST IN THE MIX

Chair: Dave Johnson

Amanda Firestone (University of Tampa) – “You’ll forgive me if I take a moment to get accustomed to you.”: Captain Gregg and Lucy’s Affective Self-Confidence in *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*

Robert Terry (Georgia Southern University) – Machine Souls and Phantom Flippers: Hauntological Intensification in *Blood Machines*

Tobi Brown (Syracuse University) – Hedonistic Hauntings: The Pleasures of Plurality in Ryan Coogler’s *Sinners*

Dave Johnson (Salisbury University) – “Who Laughs Last”: Ghosts of Cinema in Post-cinematic Music Video

# LFA 2025

## MORNING BREAK

*Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

10:35 AM – 10:50 AM

*Refreshments*

## SESSION 5A

*Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

Friday, September 26

10:50 AM – 12:05 PM

### ADAPTATION, REMEMBRANCE, AND SEVERANCE

*Chair: Kyle Meikle*

Kim Wernsing (University of Baltimore) – *Severance* and the Split Psyche: Post-Covid Art, Identity, and the Stories We Need

Olivia Springer (University of Baltimore) – Death, Bones and Root-work: Black Spirituality and Our Connection with Spirits

Majiq Vu Mai (University of Baltimore) – Call me “Beloved”: The Spirit of Deadnames within Literature and Media

## SESSION 5B

*Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

Friday, September 26

10:50 AM – 12:05 PM

### TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MULTIETHNIC ADAPTATIONS OF AMERICAN LITERATURES (ROUNDTABLE)

*Chair: Kathryn J. McClain*

Shannon Branfield (Colorado Mesa University) – “Fearlessly Themselves”: Recasting Canonical American Heroes in the Remixed Classics Series

Rachel M. Hartnett (College of Coastal Georgia) – “Nah, that’s Captain America.’: The Race and Rebirth(s) of Isaiah Bradley and Sam Wilson

Kathryn J. McClain (Colorado Mesa University) – “Morning’s Takin’ Its Sweet Time Gettin’ Here”: Tom Robinson, Calpurnia, and the (Still Suppressed) Outspoken Voices of Black Americans in Aaron Sorkin’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*

## EVENT

*1540 Room, First Floor*

Friday, September 26

12:10 PM – 1:20 PM

### LUNCH , BUSINESS MEETING, AND AWARD CEREMONY

# LFA 2025

## SESSION 6A

*Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Friday, September 26*

*1:30 PM - 3:05 PM*

### **MEDIA ADAPTATIONS OF THE ABSENT-PRESENT WOMAN**

*Chair: Julie Grossman*

Julie Grossman (Le Moyne College) – Adapting Laura Palmer

Lisette Lopez Szwydky (University of Arkansas) – Frankenstein's Bride and Mary Shelley's Ghost

Kristen Figgins (Mississippi University for Women) – The Haunted Women of Edgar Allan Poe and Roderick Usher

Amanda Konkle (Georgia Southern University) – The Absent Presence of Marilyn Monroe in Conspiracy Narratives

## SESSION 6B

*Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Friday, September 26*

*1:30 PM - 3:05 PM*

### **POLITICAL GHOSTS AND PUBLIC HISTORIES**

*Chair: Marton Marko*

Marton Marko (University of Montana) – François Ozon's *Frantz*: The Ghost of Europe and the Specter of the Franco-German Frontier

Thomas Leitch (University of Delaware, Emeritus) – Holon Adaptation: The Ghost in the Other Machine

Anna Boginskaya (Wroclaw University) – Resurrected Theories: Revisiting Terminology in the Study of Transcultural Film Adaptations

## AFTERNOON BREAK

*Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*3:05 PM - 3:20 PM*

*Refreshments*



# LFA 2025

## SESSION 7A

Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Friday, September 26

3:20 PM - 4:55 PM

### REELS, RECORDS, REMAINS: ADAPTATION AND ARCHIVAL PRESENCE

Chair: Seda Öz

Seda Öz (University of Delaware) – Haunted Reels: Restoration of Memory and Media in *Cinema Paradiso*

Erica Moulton (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater) – Story Editors: Invisible Hands Guiding Adaptation in Classical Hollywood

Alyssa Canepa (Georgia Southern University) – Translating the Spirit Box: Adapting Static into Poetry

Laura Valeri (Georgia Southern University) – Ghost Whispers in the Archives: Retelling History and Family Lore through Speculative Nonfiction

## SESSION 7B

Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Friday, September 26

3:20 PM - 4:55 PM

### GENDERED GHOSTS AND PERFORMANCE

Chair: Navid Darvishzadeh

Christina Irmen (Indiana University, Bloomington) – *Misery's* Theater: The Crazy Bitch is Real

Emma de Beus (Queen's University Belfast) – "Remember Me": Shakespeare's Ghostly Presence in Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale* (2018-2025)

Navid Darvishzadeh (Grand Valley State University) – *Shade and Fade*, a Cinema Remade

# LFA 2025

## BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION

Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Saturday, September 27  
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

## SESSION 8A

Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Saturday, September 27  
9:00 AM - 10:35 AM

### HAUNTING THE GLOBAL FRAME: SPECTERS IN WORLD CINEMA

Chair: Elsie Walker

David Duponchel (National University of San Marcos, Peru) – Spectral Narratives: Audiovisual Representations of Death in Western and Latin American Cinema

Elsie Walker (Salisbury University) – *Once Were Warriors*: The Film as Adaptation, and My Pedagogical Adaptation to It

Steve Benton (East Central University) – ‘A Wandering Ghost, Living Between Two Worlds’: Adapting Viet Thanh Nguyen’s *The Sympathizer*

## SESSION 8B

Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Saturday, September 27  
9:00 AM - 10:35 AM

### ASYMMETRIES OF THE SELF: HAUNTING, SPACE, AND MEANING

Chair: Dan Burns

Geoffrey Stacks (University of Denver) – The Spectral Asymmetry of Alicia in Cormac McCarthy’s *Stella Maris*

Dan Burns (Elon University) – “An Immense Spiritual Dread of Space”: The Meaning of Miniaturism in Ari Aster’s *Hereditary*

Morgan L. Wade (North Carolina State University) – It’s a Ghost!: Societal Fears Reflected in Gothic Fiction

## MORNING BREAK

Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

10:35 AM - 10:50 AM  
Refreshments

# LFA 2025

## SESSION 9A

*Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Saturday, September 27*

*10:50 AM - 12:25 PM*

### **BODIES, IDENTITIES, AND POSTHUMOUS PRESENCES**

*Chair: Ian Olney*

Karen A. Ritzenhoff (Central Connecticut State University) – The Uncanny Ghost and Trauma of *Candyman* (Nia DaCosta, 2021)

Ian Olney (York College of Pennsylvania) – Becoming Other: The Substance of Body Horror

Mattius Rischard (Montana State University - Northern) – "Haunted by Race": Hauntology of *Trick Baby* (1972)

## SESSION 9B

*Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Saturday, September 27*

*10:50 AM - 12:25 PM*

### **QUEER SPECTERS AND FEMINIST RE-VISIONS**

*Chair: Cat Champney*

Ana Paneque (Texas State University) – "But This Is What I See; This Is What I See": Lacanian Queer Gaze in Céline Sciamma's *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* and Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*

Rhys Crumpton (Georgia Southern University) – It's the Monster that Keeps on Giving: Exploring Monsters, Seriality, and the Queer Missing Link

Cat Champney (University of Delaware) – The Invisible Bluebeard

Jennifer Cintron (University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana) – "I was Right Here the Whole Time!": Considering the Haunter and the Haunted in *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959, 2017)

## LUNCH

*Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Saturday, September 27*

*12:30 PM - 1:20 PM*

*LFA has ordered a limited number of sandwiches. Alternatively, you can explore some nearby dining, such as Zunzi's or Fire Street Food (quickest service), The Public, or Hitch.*

# LFA 2025

## SESSION 10A

Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Saturday, September 27

1:30 PM – 3:05 PM

### THE MEDIUM IS HAUNTED: SPECTERS IN DIGITAL AND ANALOG WORLDS

Chair: Kate Newell

Zoe Bursztajn-Illingworth (Texas State University) – A Specter is Haunting Europe—The Lyric and the TikTok in Radu Jude’s *Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World*

McKinley Keener (North Carolina State University) – A New Class of Terrifying: The Uncanny Experience of the Technological Glitch

Kate Newell (Savannah College of Art and Design) – “Still, it was a message”: Projections of the Unknown in Graphic Novel and Radio Adaptations of *The Handmaid’s Tale*

## SESSION 10B

Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Saturday, September 27

1:30 PM – 3:05 PM

### WAKE WORK AND BLACK HAUNTINGS

Chair: Hapsatou Wane

Anna M. McDonald (Georgia Southern University) – “A Storm with Skin:” Reclaiming Blackness and the Divining Feminine in *The Weight of Blood*

Hapsatou Wane (Georgia Southern University) – Ghostly Returns: Africanjujuism and Migratory Subjectivity in Mati Diop’s *Atlantics* (2019) and Nikyatu Jusu’s *Nanny* (2022)

Lei’anna (Syracuse University) – A Layin’ on of Hands: Black Feminist Healing Arts as Wake Work

Arianna Taylor (Syracuse University) – Black Intimacy Mode in Black Documentary Film

## AFTERNOON BREAK

Chippewa Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

3:05 PM – 3:20 PM

Refreshments

# LFA 2025

## SESSION 11A

Reynolds Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Saturday, September 27

3:20 PM - 4:55 PM

### HAUNTED HISTORIES: LABOR, LEGACY, AND AMERICAN RECKONINGS

Chair: Walter Metz

Walter Metz (Southern Illinois University Carbondale) – “Severing Work: A Hauntology”

Kristopher Mecholsky (Savannah College of Art and Design) – The Last Shall Be First: Springsteen’s Noir and Steinbeck’s Anarchist Politics of Recognition in *The Ghost of Tom Joad*

Christopher Garland (Georgia Southern University) – Living Ghosts: Crisis, Abjection, and *The Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia*

## SESSION 11B

Lafayette Suite, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Saturday, September 27

3:20 PM - 4:55 PM

### GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE: NAMING, RHETORIC, AND STORYTELLING ACROSS MEDIA AFTERLIVES

Chair: Sahar R. Hamzah

Sahar R. Hamzah (Arabian Gulf University) – A Gypsy-Rose by Any Other Name: The Haunting of Naming, Narrative, and Pop Culture

Lainie Pomerleau (College of Coastal Georgia) – Memorial Horror and Haunted Texts: Rhetorical Ghosts and the (Re)creation of *Harley Quinn’s* Poison Ivy and *The Bride from Creature Commandos*

David Duponchel (National University of San Marcos, Peru) – The Absence of the End in the Process of Adaptation: Kafka’s Unfinished Novels

# LFA 2025

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

### **Forsyth Park**

A central and expansive green space in Savannah featuring walking paths, gardens, and the city's iconic fountain.

### **The Flannery O'Connor Childhood Home Museum, 207 E. Charlton Street**

Visit the childhood home of iconic Southern gothic writer Flannery O'Connor. Conference attendees can get a 10% discount on a tour with their badge.

### **Telfair Museums**

Comprising three distinct institutions: the Telfair Academy, the Owens-Thomas House & Slave Quarters, and the Jepson Center.

### **Bonaventure Cemetery**

A historic cemetery known for its sculptural monuments, oak-lined paths, and cultural significance, particularly through its association with the book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

### **River Street and the Plant Riverside District**

Walk along Savannah's riverfront for shopping, bars, and dining. The Plant Riverside district features fossil exhibits, a rooftop bar, upscale shopping, and music venues.

## RESTAURANT/BAR RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Right outside the door:**

**Treyler Park Hitch.** Open 11 am - 1 am. "Cozy/cool vibes reminiscent of a whisky library or a chic, modern Saloon."

**Zunzi's.** Open 11 am - 11 pm. "Globally inspired hearty meals at this offbeat counter-serve eatery."

**The Public Kitchen & Bar.** Lunch: 11-3; Dinner: 4:30-10. "Elevated" casual farm-to-table dining.

**Emporium Kitchen & Wine Market.** Brunch: 7 - 3; Dinner: 5 - 10. "American brasserie located within the exquisite Perry Lane Hotel."

**Six Pence Pub.** Open 11 am - 11 pm. "The most authentic English pub in Georgia."

**Mellow Mushroom.** Open 11 am - 11 pm. "Funky, art-filled chain pizzeria featuring craft beer, calzones & creative stone-baked pizzas."

**Savoy Society.** Open 4 - midnight. "Global dishes & cocktails offered in a late-night, comfy bar & restaurant."

**Fire Street Food.** Open 11 am - 10 pm. "Colorful, contemporary counter-serve offering Thai plates, sushi, burgers, and more."

**J. Christopher's.** Open 7 am - 2 pm. Breakfast and Lunch. "Familiar Food . . . With Flair."

### **Worth the walk:**

**Wexford, Savannah's Irish Pub.** Open 11 am - 10 pm. Named USA Today's "Best Restaurant in Georgia, 2025."

**Crystal Beer Parlor.** Open 11 am - 9 pm. Cozy American bistro & bar in a century-old former grocery store.

**Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room.** Lunch only, 11 am - 2 pm. Southern food served family style.

**The Broken Keel.** Open 8 am - 10 pm. Southern-inspired seafood along Savannah's iconic River Street waterfront.



## COVER IMAGES



**Nicholas Hlobo, *limpundulu Zonke Ziyandilandela - The Lightning Firebird* (2011)**

Nicholas Hlobo created this giant rubber dragon for the 2011 Venice Biennale. Titled *limpundulu Zonke Ziyandilandela—Xhosa for “all the lightning birds are after me”*—the work draws on a song about a mythological creature that appears as a bird or a handsome young man, but only to women. Hlobo cited various influences, including Tintoretto’s bird-filled paintings, as sources of inspiration.



**Alfred James Munnings, *The Haunted Mere* (1986)**

The subject for this painting may have been inspired by a poem written by Robert Burns. Alfred Munnings describes the composition in his autobiography: ‘..a country couple, starring in the moonlight at a female phantom with outstretched arms, and a lovely head thrown back, appealing to the stars, her white robes trailing on the still water reflecting her luminous figure and the sickle moon.’



**Pablo Picasso, *Guernica* (1937)**

*Guernica* depicts the horrors of war and the suffering of innocent civilians. It became a powerful anti-war symbol and a global call for peace. After its completion, a world tour brought widespread acclaim and drew international attention to the Spanish Civil War.

## COVER IMAGES



**George N. Barnard, Buen-Ventura Savannah, Ga.**

### **Bonaventure Cemetery: Where Beauty and Spirits Linger**

Savannah, Georgia—one of the most famously haunted cities in the U.S.—has long been a place where history and the supernatural intertwine, and nowhere is this more evident than in Bonaventure Cemetery. Once part of a private plantation, Bonaventure began as Evergreen Cemetery in the 1800s. Immortalized in John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* and Clint Eastwood's film adaptation, Bonaventure has become synonymous with Southern Gothic lore. The cemetery's now-iconic "Bird Girl" statue—featured on the book's

cover—was renamed "Little Wendy" and is rumored to be haunted by the spirit of Lorraine Greenman, the young girl who posed for the sculpture. Some say she still lingers, drawn to her unintended fame. Then there's Little Gracie. Just six years old when she died in 1889, Gracie Watson was beloved by guests of the Pulaski Hotel, where her parents worked. After her sudden death from pneumonia, her grieving father commissioned a lifelike statue from a single photo. Visitors report sightings of Gracie's ghost in a white dress, skipping among headstones. Others say the statue cries tears of blood when her toys are disturbed. And Bonaventure doesn't only house ghosts of children and statues. It's the final resting place for songwriter Johnny Mercer and countless others whose stories—and possibly spirits—live on.

### **Savannah Theatre: Where the Curtain Never Falls—Even in the Afterlife**

Opened in 1818, the Savannah Theatre is one of America's oldest continually operating theaters—and one of its most haunted. Tragedy has struck the building repeatedly: a devastating hurricane in 1898, fires in 1906 and 1948, and an eerie pattern of misfortune that some link to a mysterious 1818 penny once sealed inside the walls. That "lucky" penny, lost by a former owner just before the 1948 fire, is said to have cursed the building ever since. Ghostly residents are often seen and heard. There's Betty, the actress who never left the stage, spotted in full costume waiting behind the curtain. Ben, a playful ghost child, tugs at spotlight operators and causes mischief in the balcony. And then there's The Director, a controlling spirit still critiquing performances from the shadows. Even police officers in the 1890s reported hearing unexplained applause from inside the locked theatre. Whether it's the chilling hole mysteriously burned into the dressing room floor or the dancers who fled from an unseen, malevolent presence mid-costume change, the Savannah Theatre's haunted history is written in fire, superstition, and spirits who refuse to take their final bow.



**Savannah's Haunted Lucas Theatre**



# LFA 2025

## LAND & LABOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Savannah has a rich history with roots long before its founding in 1733. The Yamacraw people, a band of the Creek Nation, originally inhabited this land, and we proudly honor their legacy.

We also recognize the contributions of the Choctaw, Cherokee, and other Indigenous peoples who have been a part of the fabric of this region.

We remember the atrocities of the slave trade that passed through Savannah's port and the heartbreak of 'The Weeping Time,' one of the largest slave auctions in US history, which occurred just outside the city. Since then, Black Americans have contributed to the area's development.

With this acknowledgement, we honor the struggle, resilience, and perseverance of those who came before us, and commit ourselves to a more just and equitable future for all members of our community.

### FOR THEIR LABORS, SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Ann Fuller and Kelli Ann Gecawich of Lane Library, Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Campus

The administrative staff of the Department of English, Georgia Southern University: Kati Manley, Theresa Thornburg, and Debra Lawrence

### AWARD SPONSOR

Dr. Christina Parker-Flynn

Please contact any member of the Executive Council if you are interested in sponsoring an award next year!

### CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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