So you want to be a Theatre major. That’s great! Theatre is such an enriching and powerful form of art, and we would love to have you be a part of it. However, if you’re just looking for an effortless degree, time to look elsewhere. Theatre is fulfilling, but it is by no means easy. Our theatre freshmen typically start their first semester with a 16-credit hour workload, which includes two English courses, a Foreign Language course, and two Theatre courses, one of which is our Performance and Production class. This course requires students to put 60 hours of dedicated work into one of our semester’s productions. This includes jobs like acting, stage managing, scenic work, lighting, and marketing. On top of that, many of our students hold Student Assistant positions, which are paying jobs in the company’s office, scene shop, and costume shop. Juggling these and other classes is rewarding, but not for the faint of heart. So if you’re planning to start a Theatre degree with the expectation of a smooth ride, you may want to board a different bus. When I was in high school, one of my now ex-friends told me that theatre was an unsustainable career, that I looked stupid doing it and that the “real world” would eat me alive. Now, I’m not the smartest guy around, but she looked a lot dumber calling me a loser with an L on her forehead than I looked acting in the school’s productions. Well, the years went by quickly, and I found myself entering college. I figured out the rules, and I hit the ground running, getting cast my first semester in that fall’s production of Macbeth. The night of the last performance, I found myself thinking about that conversation from high school, and realized I finally had an answer for that girl. In my opinion, it simply doesn’t make sense to do work that you don’t enjoy, that doesn’t fulfill you both financially and spiritually. Sure, taking some number-crunching position at an accounting firm may pay better, but your mental health will deteriorate severely. There’s so much to see and experience
in life; what’s wrong with spending it on the stage instead of behind a desk? You’ll never know what makes you happy if you don’t at least try new things, and you’ll never succeed if you don’t get your foot in the door. Everyone has the potential to do amazing things, but only those who are willing to shoot for the moon will ever land among the stars.

Final Destination
Written by Saani Parham

Why should the University of West Georgia Theatre Company be on your radar? Because this program is pushing the boundaries of what theatre is and can be. There are lots of initiatives this company takes to stand out from other schools. In 2015, a group of individuals from the theatre department at The University of West Georgia performed for my high school’s drama and English classes. They were a high school recruitment tour, that is still active today, and they performed a devised parody of Romeo and Juliet. I remember sitting in the cramped lecture hall thinking, “That’s it. That’s my school.” I was so sure that I didn’t even visit any other campuses when I graduated 2 years later. Since then, I’ve pursued a higher education in theatre arts, and the journey has been long but worth it. I have grown so much from the individual I was when I first got here. I still have so much more to learn and I find comfort in that because I am a part of a program where the faculty truly cares about the students. However, it’s not just the faculty in the theatre department, but the entire school. The faculty here at UWG wants nothing but success for the students here, and it shows in their determination and openness with us. The time spent at UWG is well worth it, and that is why this should be a destination school for you!

My Very First Audition
Written by Alma Beauvais

Oh, Shakespeare! Wherefore art thou doing this to me. Auditioning is, in my opinion, a very challenging and nerve-wracking step in an actor’s life as it is. But our favorite playwright William Shakespeare makes this process even harder. Am I right? To ace a monologue, actors need to meticulously research the character they choose to portray, understand the context in which the monologue takes place, pursue the objective/action they’ve determined the character is chasing (and commit to it), and accurately convey the meaning and emotion behind each word to the audience - the casting director in this context. All of which is very difficult to do when it comes to a Shakespearian monologue. I had read Shakespeare’s plays before, and I truly did love his work. But that’s when I was in high school, in France. That’s when the plays were all translated into modern French, and I did not have to deal with the poetic nature of Shakespeare’s English.

Now that I am in the United States, I have to face the real complexity of a Shakespearian text. I still love the stories and the characters that he created. It’s the reading part that challenges me. Because it’s not just old English, It’s Shakespearian English. Hard, hard, hard to read. For a Non-
English native speaker, reading Shakespeare is to question most of the terms, to doubt your understanding of the situation, or to simply have no idea what the characters are saying. It’s also to have several open tabs of online translators for the Shakespearian language. It’s to cover an entire script with notes in the margins and to watch multiple YouTube videos that provide crash courses on the plots. To put it simply, it’s a lot of work. At least, for me. I recently auditioned for UWG Theatre’s Spring 2020 production of Much Ado About Nothing, written by William Shakespeare and directed by Dr. Amy Cuomo. Logically, I had to prepare a monologue by Shakespeare. I chose King Lear. More precisely, a passage said by Cordelia in Act One, Scene One. I did not choose a monologue from Much Ado About Nothing because I was already auditioning for it. I read King Lear when I was in High School. I remembered the plot, but since it was my first time reading the play in English, it required significant effort. Nonetheless, I did the necessary research, rehearsed, and performed my monologue as best I could. This was my very first audition, so you can imagine how stressful it was. I went into the room, internally shaking, and performed. Done! The worst part is done... Right? After presenting the monologue, I had to face the unexpected: I was given the script for Much Ado About Nothing and asked to read a few lines for the characters of Beatrice and Hero. Well, you could arguably say that I should have been prepared for that to happen. I admit it was my mistake. Oh, Shakespeare! Why? I briefly rehearsed the lines in the corner and read them aloud. I did not understand what I was saying because I did not have time to research. As I stated before, Shakespearean texts require research. No matter the outcome, I am grateful for the experience because it was an opportunity to learn and to improve.

Beauty in the B.(F).A.
Written by Saani Parham

There are lots of rumors and speculations about whether or not B.F.A is better than a B.A. I am here to put those to rest. Lin-Manuel Miranda said it best, “Study all the things that you don’t want to go into in theatre.” Theatre is all about collaboration, and collaboration is made easier when you have even the smallest bit of knowledge of the fields outside of your own. With a B.A., you get to do exactly that. Now, I’m not saying that a B.A. is better than a B.F.A. They are both beneficial to potential theatre artists. The B.A. degree supports the more holistic approach to higher education in theatre arts, whereas, a B.F.A degree is a more concentrated approach to your education as a theatre major. Neither one is better than the other, where one may be lacking, the other maybe striving and vice versa. So my question to you, the reader, is this: If you had to pick, which would you choose?

French vs. American Educational Theatre
by Alma Beauvais

I experienced the stage at a very young age when I was in kindergarten. Since then, I have discovered a passion for art, particularly theater,
which kept on growing over the years. There is something special about playing on stage, embodying characters in real-time, and transmitting emotions to the public. I don't think that acting, or the special feeling that comes with it, changes for actors who come from different countries. However, the process and methods of learning might differ. At least, that was my case. I grew up in France, where I enrolled in the Drama Club for my three years in high school. In my high school drama club, the focus was mostly on teamwork. From the very beginning, my classmates and I learned to be patient and to genuinely listen to each other to become actors. Class after class, we learned how to concentrate and memorize through exercises such as le Roi, Jean, and Toi, which were used for voice, listening, and concentration. Other services include John Wayne for movement, rigor, and vivacity. When in need of deep concentration, we would sit down in a circle and practice a passage of energy (le courant Electrique/ passage d'énergie.) Many would agree that it's pretty similar to the learning process in the United States’ drama clubs. However, contrary to the U.S, where students have to audition to be in school plays, my classmates and I were automatically cast in the play productions. The drama club worked more so as a class than as an extracurricular activity. We were graded based on our commitment to the course and our improvement throughout the year or over the years (we only have three years of high school in France). Each year, the teachers would agree on a play, assign characters to the students, who then would spend months rehearsing for the annual showcase. Auditions were unnecessary as the goal was for students to learn acting by being in plays. The annual showcase consisted of three play productions for each classification: Premiere, Seconde, Terminale (translation/equivalence: freshman, junior, senior). In other words, freshman students would present their work followed by the junior students, and so on. I enjoyed this method of learning because it allowed me time to work on my craft without feeling pressured. In the U.S, students have to audition to be in plays, which can be intimidating. This method is good too because it prepares American students for real auditions when they leave school. The drama club teaches not only how to become "actors" but also how to become active and critical spectators of theatrical creation. Since the beginning of my academic career here at UWG, I've attended several play productions. I am truly impressed by the craft, commitment, and professionalism of the students. I am just starting my journey in the theatre department. I have not found the courage to audition yet, because, as I mentioned previously, it is quite intimidating. But I will because it is necessary if I ever want to be ready for the industry.

*Editors Note: This article was written before the author was invited to the audition described in her previous article.