

DRAKE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

"Halloween and Cultural Appropriation"



MISSION STATEMENT

The Drake University Theatre Department Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee includes faculty and student representatives. This committee aims to promote and develop a culture of collaboration and inclusion in the department, college and university. The committee interprets diversity as embracing and respecting all races, nationalities, colors, creeds, religions, ages, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference. The committee works towards greater representation of those currently underrepresented in the department and in the theatre community.

VISION

We strive to cultivate a safe and supportive environment that celebrates the diverse, unique and multifaceted group of students and faculty in our department. We actively work to understand the complex and rich identities of self and those around us, and lean into difficult conversations related to equity, diversity and inclusion. We envision a department and university where equity, diversity and inclusion are recognized as core values that drive the development of all policies and practices. We believe in creating learning environments where hate, discrimination and microaggressions are not tolerated.

”WHAT IS SAMHAIN? WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE ANCIENT PAGAN FESTIVAL THAT CAME BEFORE HALLOWEEN”

Dressing up in costumes and trick-or-treating are popular Halloween activities, but few probably associate these lighthearted fall traditions with their origins in Samhain, a three-day ancient Celtic pagan festival. For the Celts, who lived during the Iron Age in what is now Ireland, Scotland, the U.K. and other parts of Northern Europe, Samhain (meaning literally, in modern Irish, “summer’s end”) marked the end of summer and kicked off the Celtic new year. Ushering in a new year signaled a time of both death and rebirth, something that was doubly symbolic because it coincided with the end of a bountiful harvest season and the beginning of a cold and dark winter season that would present plenty of challenges.

To read more of this article in the TIME MAGAZINE click [here](#).



Digital artwork by Martin Hicks

INCLUSIVE HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

As Halloween approaches, there are often questions and concerns about Halloween costumes. There are several examples of members of university communities choosing to wear costumes that are offensive and could even be perceived as harassing or discriminatory in nature. Concerns arise when people consider taking markers, stereotypes and stigmas of a culture – clothing, accessories, skin color, and/or religion – and replicate them into a costume; ‘Blackface’ and ‘Pocahontas’ are two examples of this type of costuming.



Ask yourself:

- 1) Is my costume depicting and perpetuating a stereotype or stigma associated with a particular race, culture or religion?
- 2) Does my costume include a replication of a garment that is a significant component of a particular religion or culture of which I do not identify with?
- 3) Is my costume depicting a historical time-period where that look/costume is now considered offensive and discriminatory? Does my costume represent elements of a culture or cultural practice that is being commoditized for consumption?
- 4) Can I look in the mirror and confidently say that my costume choice would not be considered offensive to a particular race, ethnic origin, gender or religion?

If you answered yes to any of the questions 1 – 4, it is likely that your costume has the potential to cause harm to the members of the cultural, racial and religious groups of which your costume is depicting.

[MORE INFO ON CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE HALLOWEEN COSTUMES HERE.](#)

WHAT IS CULTURAL APPROPRIATION?

Cultural Appropriation is the adoption of an element or elements of one culture or identity by members of another culture or identity. This can be controversial when members of a dominant culture appropriate from disadvantaged minority cultures. **Cultural Appreciation** is when someone seeks to understand and learn about another culture in an effort to broaden their perspective and connect with others cross-culturally.

WATCH A VIDEO ON CULTURAL APPROPRIATION VS APPRECIATION [HERE](#).

MISUSING CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

"Protests Shutter a Show That Cast White Singers as Black Slaves"

An article in The New York Times written on July 4, 2018.

"When the show "Slav," by the acclaimed Quebec theater director Robert Lepage, premiered at the Montreal International Jazz Festival, it immediately spawned a backlash and criticism that white artists had recklessly appropriated black culture. Critics roared that it was insulting and insensitive because it had white women playing black slaves picking cotton. The production bills itself as a "theatrical odyssey" inspired by "traditional African-American slave and work songs." It also features a nearly all-white cast performing the music. Its director, Mr. Lepage, is white, as is its star Betty Bonifassi. Two of the seven cast members are black, including Kattia Thony, who plays a young black woman searching for the roots of her identity. The play received so much hate that the jazz festival and Ms. Bonifassi canceled the show after only two performances. While Mr. Lepage a bilingual French Canadian gay director, has long grappled with questions about minority identities. When they responded to criticism in a statement on Facebook before the show's cancellation, Mr. Lepage and Mrs. Bonifassi initially said it was up to audiences to decide if they had the right to tell black peoples' stories."

TO READ THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE [CLICK HERE](#).

HOW DO OTHER CULTURES CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN?

Día de los Muertos

In Mexico, Latin America and Spain, All Souls' Day, which takes place on November 2, is commemorated with a three-day celebration that begins on the evening of October 31. The celebration is designed to honor the dead who, it is believed, return to their earthly homes on Halloween.

Many families construct an altar to the dead in their homes to honor deceased relatives and decorate it with candy, flowers, photographs, samples of the deceased's favorite foods and drinks, and fresh water. Often, a wash basin and towel are left out so that the spirit can wash before indulging in the feast.



How Guy Fawkes Day is Celebrated in England?

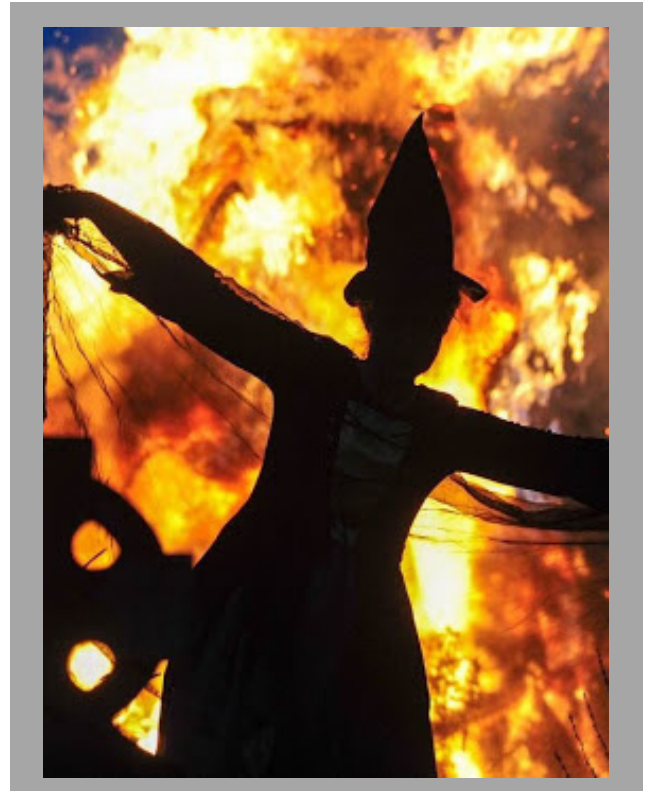
On the evening of November 5, bonfires are lit throughout England. Effigies are burned and fireworks are set off. Although it falls around the same time and has some similar traditions, this celebration has little to do with Halloween or the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The English, for the most part, stopped celebrating Halloween as Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation began to spread. As followers of the new religion did not believe in saints, they had no reason to celebrate the eve of All Saints' Day. However, a new autumn ritual did emerge.



Guy Fawkes Day festivities were designed to commemorate the execution of a notorious English traitor, Guy Fawkes. In addition to making effigies to be burned in the fires, children in some parts of England also walk the streets carrying an effigy or “guy” and ask for “a penny for the guy,” although they keep the money for themselves. This is as close to the American practice of “trick-or-treating” as can be found in England today.

How Halloween is Celebrated in Ireland

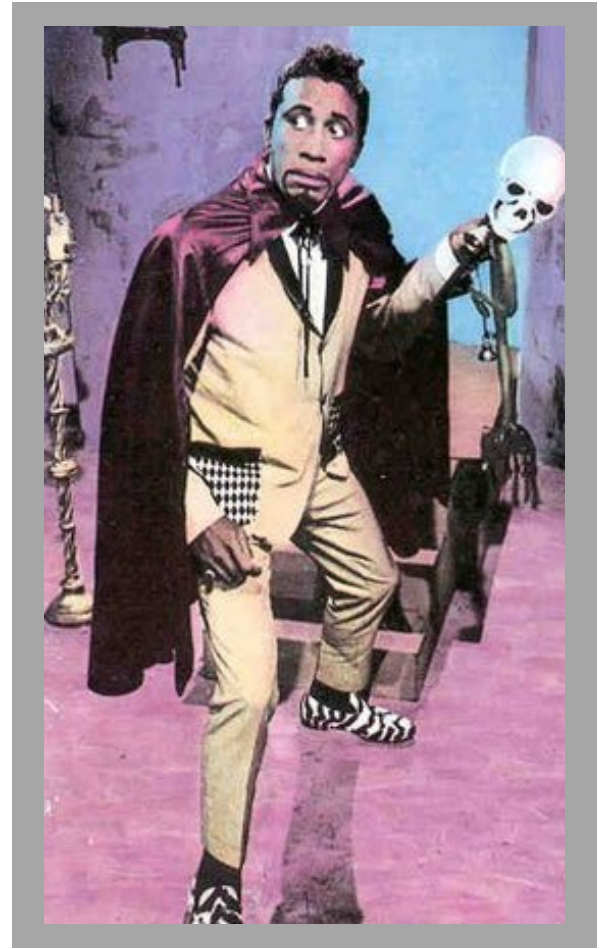
In Ireland, where Halloween originated, the day is still celebrated much as it is in the United States. In rural areas, bonfires are lit as they were in the days of the Celts, and all over the country, children get dressed up in costumes and spend the evening “trick-or-treating” in their neighborhoods. After trick-or-treating, most people attend parties with neighbors and friends. At the parties, many games are played, including “snap-apple,” a game in which an apple on a string is tied to a doorframe or tree and players attempt to bite the hanging apple. In addition to bobbing for apples, parents often arrange treasure hunts, with candy or pastries as the “treasure.” The Irish also play a card game where cards are laid face down on a table with candy or coins underneath them. When a child chooses a card, he receives whatever prize is found below it. [CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION!](#)



SINGER/SONGWRITER SPOTLIGHT!

Jalacy "Screamin' Jay" Hawkins (1929-2000) was a singer-songwriter, musician, actor, and producer. He was adopted by a Blackfoot Indian tribe and raised in Cleveland, Ohio where he learned classical piano and guitar. He originally aimed to be a professional opera singer but eventually focused on a blues career. Screamin' Jay Hawkins is most well-known for his rendition of the song "I Put A Spell On You" where everyone in the band, including himself, was intoxicated during the recording and ended up creating a performance that would become one of The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll. It was this recording that created Hawkins' trademark stage persona - a highly theatrical, somewhat gothic, shock rocker. In fact, Hawkins is the inspiration for other shock rock artists including Alice Cooper, Marilyn Manson, Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, and more. The rest of Hawkins' career is marked with albums of his original songs and covers of blues standards, composing film scores, producing his own films, and periodic television appearances.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO JALACY HAWKINS SING, "I PUT A SPELL ON YOU."](#)



PLAYWRIGHT SPOTLIGHT!

JOANNA BAILLIE (1762 - 1851) was a successful playwright during her lifetime, certainly in terms of her cultural importance and the reputation of her plays, if not for their success on the stage. She wrote 27 plays, and her *De Monfort* was performed in 1800 and 1821 at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane by the leading actors of the day.



Joanna Baillie

Her 1836 gothic drama ***Witchcraft***: A Tragedy in 5 Acts, revisits the history of witchcraft trials in her homeland, Scotland, through a conventicle of destitute female characters seeking power, love, and retribution in an elusive and illusory dark devil. Baillie explores mass hysteria and paranoia in witches and their accusers, in women and men, and examines how individuals struggle to navigate and negotiate in a culture of fear. The play is an important artistic and historical precursor for other dramatic representations of witchcraft, such as Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON JOANNA BAILLIE AND HER OTHER WORKS CLICK [HERE!](#)

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!
**FROM YOUR DRAKE THEATRE EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND
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