

# Applause<sup>2009</sup>

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*The Wiz* and *The Galileo Project: Brecht's Brain* made big splashes for new directing faculty Dominic Taylor and Lisa Channer. **More inside!**

# A Department on the Move

A Message from the Chair of the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance

by Carl Flink, Chair, Theatre Arts & Dance



As I begin my term as Chair of the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, I would like to welcome all of you – students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends – to what I see as a department on the leading edge of exciting new ways to critically examine and practice performance in the 21st Century. During the tenure of my predecessor, Michal Kobialka, the department began increasingly to focus on the intersections of theory and practice, on interdisciplinarity, and on becoming a site for multiple aesthetic and cultural perspectives, as well as a place that actively welcomes the different social and political contexts that inform theatre and dance. I believe these are all crucial to the department's future as well as to the disciplines of dance and theatre arts. I would like to thank professor Kobialka deeply for his leadership in moving us in these directions.

One of the most important things I hope to accomplish during my first term as Chair is to continue this evolutionary process. I will encourage all the programs to continue building bridges so that we can extend the practice of interdisciplinarity to our own programs, to break down our tendency to remain in the individual silos defined by the perceived parameters of our programs, rather than operate as citizens of the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance and the community in which it is embedded. As the first Chair to come from the Dance Program, one of my primary goals will be to continue to strengthen the connections between dance and theatre, as we recently did with the Mainstage production, *The Woyzeck Project*. I collaborated on this project with my colleagues, Luverne Seifert and Michael Sommers, working with over 30 undergraduates from dance and theatre in developing this original adaptation of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, which – as both process and product – was in many ways emblematic of the spirit of experimentation and exploration growing within this department alongside our ongoing and thoughtful drive for traditional excellence in dance and theatre. The simple fact that the department was ready to embrace a dance faculty member as its Chair reveals just how far the vibrant relationship between dance and theatre arts has come. It is an exciting time. One that I feel honored to be a part of.

Last year the theatre program underwent an accreditation review by NAST, which lauded us for our “inspired vision” even as it pointed up something we all know well – a severe lack of the facilities, equipment and staff necessary to realize this vision in practice. So another of my priorities will be to work with the College of Liberal Arts and Central Administration to develop a long-range plan that addresses these infrastructural needs, even during these challenging economic times. Finally, I intend to continue to ask students, faculty and staff to explore ways to situate our curriculum in a global context and to embrace a melding of artistic practice and academics. Given the watershed political change experienced in early November by our country, I am fully committed to having this department populated by socially-engaged, “thinking artists,” which I believe is something that can distinguish us from many other programs across the country. We have to be engaged and not removed from the social discourse in which we exist.

The department is also growing and changing. Not only am I the new Chair, but most of the department's leadership has changed as well. Please join me in welcoming Sonja Kuftinec as Director of Graduate Studies, Ananya Chatterjea as Director of Dance, Martin Gwinup as Director of Theatre and Head of the Design/Tech Program, Margaret Werry as Director of the MA/PhD Program and Luverne Seifert as Director of Undergraduate Studies. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to six new faculty and staff members: Marcus Dilliard, Lighting Design; Jennifer Germain, Information Representative;

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From the Chair continued on page 7

# Our Continually Evolving Department

by David Bernstein

“... he not busy being born

Is busy dying.”

— Bob Dylan, *It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)*, 1965

In the wake of a momentous national election, which may very well determine the direction the nation will take for a generation or more, it gives us pause to consider our own evolution as a department. We have recently gone through a major election process of our own, with a new Chair in dance professor Carl Flink, and new departmental leadership in all key positions. It is thus both appropriate and necessary to ask ourselves how the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance has evolved in the past few years, and to imagine where we want to be in three, or five, or even twenty years.

Last year the theatre program underwent an accreditation review by NAST (National Association of Schools of Theatre), our first since 1994. In their Readers' Report, the reviewers said that “the department [has] an inspired vision for re-engaging their community, strengthening their campus visibility, deepening their interdisciplinarity while maintaining high intellectual and creative standards, and promoting a high degree of diversity as intrinsic to the work they do.” It was of course gratifying to hear that the areas on which we have focused for the past several years – engagement with the community, interdisciplinarity, diversity in every sense of the word, and stretching ourselves and our students both creatively and intellectually – are apparent to a group of outside reviewers. But in the process of preparing for the review, we discovered several areas in which we need to evolve and grow.

One of these is the ongoing task of integrating the various programs of the department so that the commitment to interdisciplinarity, so apparent to the NAST reviewers, is not only a commitment to cross-fertilization in the arts, but also an internal commitment within our department to developing creative, intellectual and structural connections between our various programs. The NAST process of necessity focused on theatre (dance had a separate review by NASD, its accrediting body, several years ago). This emphasized more strongly than ever for us that, while all the programs are exploring ways to collaborate, we need to review and strengthen the connections between theatre and dance particularly. With Carl Flink as the first faculty member from the dance program to become Chair, we have already solidified the structural

connections between the dance and theatre arms of the department. And with the extension of our recent initiative to have MA/PhD students provide dramaturgical support to all productions – now including dance productions – we are opening up exciting new intellectual lines of communication, as well as breaking new ground by addressing in practice the question of what dance dramaturgy might look like.

We also need to continue re-imagining our commitments to global performance, to creative collaboration, to diversity, to civic engagement, and, perhaps most important, to the evolving relationship between our curriculum and our production season. The various programs have already done some of this, so that, for example, the Creative Collaboration class is now at the core of the curriculum for the



**photo:** A performance shot from 2008's *The Woyzeck Project*  
PHOTOGRAPH: LEIAH STEVERMER

BA in theatre, while the MA/PhD program has completely revised the introductory theatre course, to provide both majors and non-majors with a much more global view of what theatre is, and how it is practiced, worldwide. And a quick look at our 2008-09 Subscriber Season – which runs the gamut from the *The Woyzeck Project*, a collaboratively-created, interdisciplinary original work with a cast drawn from both dance and theatre, to the more traditional text-based Noël Coward comedies, *Hay Fever* and *Present Laughter*, performed in repertory by our very talented BFA Senior Company – emphasizes our commitment to a broad view of what constitutes theatre in the 21st Century.

Finally, we must begin to address what is perhaps our most pressing need: building an infrastructure that is adequate to our vision. The NAST reviewers described much of our technical equipment as “outdated” and in some cases, “ancient.” So, while it may be exciting to see students rehearsing scenes in the basement lobby of Rarig (“the pit”), or in the halls, this only points up our abysmal lack of dedicated rehearsal space.

Of course strengthening infrastructure in a scarcity economy, amidst dwindling state support for universities nationwide, will be a major challenge. But to achieve twenty-first century goals with twentieth century facilities and equipment is simply not possible. So if we are to continue to evolve as a department that strives to be located right at the intersection of experimentation, interdisciplinarity, and academic and creative excellence, we must find ways to acquire the facilities and equipment we need. This is a major priority for our new leadership, and it should be of concern to every current and former member of the department. ✓



# 2007:08 UNDERGRADUATE THEATRE HIGHLIGHTS

## BA in Theatre Performance

The greatest strength of our theater performance program continues to be the diversity of styles, techniques and points of view about performance that we offer both because we have been able to recruit some of the best local artists from the Twin Cities very active theater scene to teach courses, and because we have been able to attract internationally-known guest artists to lead workshops with our students. For example, last year our Wickedly Wild and Way Out Workshop Week, offered in January during the week before Spring Semester began, featured several internationally-known local artists.

Geoff Sobelle, Trey Lyford and Andrew Dawson conducted a workshop with students and performed a workshop production of *Amnesia Curiosa*. Fresh from St. Petersburg Russia, IGUAN – an exciting experimental dance/theater troupe that combines dance, drama, mime, clowning, digital media and physical theater to create new forms of expression – led a workshop with dance and theater students. And Joe Chvala, Director of Flying Foot Forum, did a workshop in which students from all of our performance programs participated – including theater BAs and BFAs in addition to dance students.

We also had several distinguished Guest Artist teachers last year. Ludmilla Ryba worked with students in her TH 4380 Creative Collaboration class to create and perform *Notes of the Blackbird*. Internationally-known performance artist Tim Miller created an original work with our students, as did Jan Mandell, director of the Central Touring Theatre, a group of Saint Paul Central High School students known throughout the region for original performance pieces that tackle tough issues.

Guest Artist Teachers this year include Live Action Set, who will be teaching the New Voices class. This is a course that brings together freshman and transfer students from the BA and BFA theater program, and this year it will also be taken by BA and BFA dance students in an effort to introduce the art of collaboration to first year and transfer students.

In keeping with our increasing emphasis on having our students create and perform in new works, we offer a number of Special Projects each year, most of them through the Creative Collaboration class. Last year, Carl Flink, Michael Sommers and Luverne Seifert, created *The Woyzeck Project* with their students and presented it at Norris Hall gym. This year it was remounted as part of the Mainstage Season.

There are four Special Projects in the current academic year, two led by artists from the community, and two by the new members of our directing faculty. Gülgün Kayim, Co-Artistic/Managing Director of the site-specific experimental performance company, Skewed Visions, is leading the creation of an original work entitled *Terror Town*, which explores the phenomenon of performing terror in towns such as Playas, NM, purchased by the Department of Homeland security specifically for the purpose of providing the setting for a variety of large-scale disaster

enactments. The primary participants in these sophisticated dramas are emergency first responders and troops bound for Iraq. On most days the streets are alive with SWAT teams, fire engines, emergency workers and “victims” playing out all kinds of grim scenarios. Still home to 100 residents, Playas’ citizens often find themselves serving as extras in suicide bombing 101 played out in the city’s main streets, or augment their regular, more mundane jobs with gigs ‘collecting the dead and dying’ in biological disaster scenarios. These large performances also attract professional actors from California looking to earn easy money literally lying around or starring as a dangerous terrorist.

In addition, Barbra Berlovitz, one of the former Artistic Directors of Jeune Lune, will lead a TH 4380 Creative Collaboration to develop an all female performance of *King Lear*. Directing professor Dominic Taylor lead a collaboration class that examined Wole Soyinka’s *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite*. Students did a close reading and an examination of the relevant texts – Soyinka’s play itself and the source text by Euripides. But the major area of study was the examination of the Dionysian and the Ogunian rites that surrounded the performance styles of both ancient Greek Drama and Yoruba Tragedy. More generally, the project looked at the areas of agreement and disjunction between Theater and Ritual. And there was focus on the function of both music and dance in dramatic forms. Lisa Channer, the other member of our directing faculty, will develop a piece with her students based on the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, perhaps the world’s oldest written story, whose central character is the legendary Sumerian King Gilgamesh of Ancient Mesopotamia (current-day Iraq).

This past summer marked the third year of our very successful Summer Intensive workshop for prospective theater performance students. Twenty high school students participated in a series of workshops taught by our faculty under the leadership of Kenny Mitchell (BFA Program) and Bob Rosen (BA Program). In addi-



**photo:** Students quickly write, rewrite, and rehearse for the Xperimental Theatre’s 24-Hour Theatre

PHOTOGRAPH: MANDY MAJOROZICZ

tion, the participants were exposed to a range of Twin Cities performances, attending *Titus Andronicus* by Swearing Jack Productions in a parking lot in South Minneapolis, as well as the Walker Art Center and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Guthrie Theater.

Other news of note for members of the BA Performance Program includes awards to several faculty members and students. Faculty member Laurie Van Weiren, who is teaching a course entitled Out Of Character this fall, received a McKnight Award this past year. Michael Sommers' theater company, Open Eye Figure Theatre, was named best theater by *City Pages*, and also won an Ivey Award for the overall excellence of its production of *Prelude to Faust*. Luverne Seifert, our program head, was a cast member of Frank Theatre's production of *The Pillowman*, which won an Ivey Award for unparalleled emotional impact. Barbra Berlovitz received a Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowship, which is designed to further an actor's artistic and professional development, deepen and enrich her relationship with a not-for-profit

theater and ensure her continued professional commitment to live theater. This fellowship enabled Barbra to go to Europe to work with two master teachers, Patsy Rodenburg in London and Philippe Gaulier in Paris, to further develop her teaching skills and her acting skills. It will also allow her to create a new show with a theater company yet to be chosen.

Jairus Abts, an Individually Designed Interdepartmental Major (IDIM) graduate of the department played Hedwig in the Jungle Theatre's production of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, for which he won an Ivey Award. BA graduates Jason Ballweber, Brant Miller, Nick Ryan, and Matt Spring were given the Producer's Pick Award at the Cincinnati Fringe Festival for their production of *Mortem Capiendum*, which has also toured to Fringe Festivals in Boulder, Toronto and Winnipeg, and was performed this summer at Rarig Center as part of the Minnesota Fringe Festival. And Robin Everson, a BA alumnus, played the role of John in *A Life in the Theatre* by David Mamet at the Jungle Theatre. ✓

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## University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program

We have now graduated our fifth class of students, many of whom worked professionally even while they were still in school, and continue to find work as actors or directors all over the country. For instance, the Spring 2008 Guthrie production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Guthrie featured many BFA alums, including Kathryn Lawry ('07), William Sturdivant ('05), Jonas Goslow ('05) and Valerie Mudek ('07) as the Lovers; Namir Smallwood ('06) as Puck; and Ian Holcomb ('06), Mike Rasmussen ('06), John Skelley ('07), Brandon Weinbrenner ('07) and Hugh Kennedy ('08) as Fairies.

Indeed, our partnership with the Guthrie continues to provide wonderful opportunities for our students and alums. Brandon Weinbrenner ('07) played Lord Alfred Douglas in *The Secret Fall of Constance Wilde*, which was directed by our own Marcela Lorca with Elizabeth Grullon ('09) as a Puppeteer. And Tony Clarno ('04) played Woodson Bull III in *Third*.

We also have students working all over the country, in established theaters or in companies they've started themselves. Shakespeare on the Cape, founded by 2006 BFA graduates Eric Holm and Elliot Eustis, continues to perform on Cape Cod each summer, often with other BFA students or alums as company members. Santino Fontana ('04) was in *The Fantasticks*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and currently, *Billy Elliot*, on Broadway; Ryan West ('04) was in *Jersey Boys* and Stanton Nash ('06) was in *Wicked*, while both were in the national tour of *Jersey Boys*. Aya Cash ('04) is in New York, performing at such theaters as

Playwrights Horizons; Leah Curney ('04) has worked at the Milwaukee Repertory. And these are only a very few of the more than 120 non-Guthrie professional performance projects that over 50 of our BFA students and alums have been involved with since 2004, when our first class graduated.

While our partnership with the Guthrie has clearly contributed a great deal to the careers of our students, it has also enriched the careers of Guthrie staff members who work with us. Ken Washington, the Guthrie's Director of Company Development was honored for his outstanding work on education programming for the theater, including the BFA Actor Training Program. A scholarship has been started in his name through the Guthrie. Jeremy Jones, Company Development Manager, was the Directing Intern on *A View From the Bridge* this Fall at the Guthrie. And last year we completed a new 10-year agreement with the Guthrie, so this very productive partnership will continue well into the future.

In what has become a capstone moment for our Seniors, the Guthrie has continued its support for a project called *New Talent, New Plays*, for which they commissioned three new plays last year that were performed by the graduating class in repertory at the Guthrie's Dowling Studio. These included, *Be Here Now*, written by Carson Kreitzer and directed by Ben McGovern; *When I Was a Ghost*, written by Deborah Stein and directed by Lear deBessonet; and *The End*, written by Sheri Wilner and directed by Jackson Gray.

**Undergrad Theatre continued on page 7**

## 2007:08 DANCE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Two of the distinguishing features of the Dance Program in recent years have been our students' outstanding work with guest artist choreographers and our partnerships with the Twin Cities dance community. These were both emphasized last year by our participation in the "Year of Trisha" with community partners, the Walker Art Center and the Northrop Dance Series. Trisha Brown herself visited a rehearsal of "Set and Reset/Reset" in September, where our students were working with Cowles Visiting Artists Katrina Thompson Warren and Wil Swanson (former Trisha Brown Dance Company members). Ms. Brown referred to the dance students as the "most sophisticated" student group she had seen take on the "Reset" process.

This project was featured in an article in the January 2008 issue of *Dance Magazine*. After "Set and Reset/Reset" was performed as part of *Dance Revolutions*, some of the cast members and other advanced dance majors performed with faculty and community dancers in Trisha Brown's 1968 "Planes" at the Walker gallery in conjunction with the Trisha Brown exhibit entitled, "So That The Audience Does Not Know Whether I Have Stopped Dancing." A great many of our dancers also saw the Trisha Brown Company's performance at Northrop, participated in a master class with a company member at the Barker, and attended the Walker exhibit opening and site-specific performances. All in all, it was a hugely successful year-long collaboration. As they have in the past, our dance majors attended the regional American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) conference in Madison, Wisconsin in March. The cast of Nathan Trice's "Impetus" was selected for the final gala performance, closing the show. The students' work on stage and in classes received much recognition from their peers.

A highlight of our program is the Cowles Visiting Artist series of guest residencies by nationally- and internationally-known dance artists and scholars. Last year, this program invited Center for Creative Research member, Bebe Miller, who returned to work with our dancers after a ten-year absence. Other Cowles Artists included the locally-based, nationally-recognized choreographers, Karen Sherman and Morgan Thorson, who created a new work for our dancers in their first choreographic collaboration. In addition to UDT, their piece "Double Rainbow" was also performed at "Queereographers' Evening," a co-production of the Dance Program and Patrick's Cabaret, a local venue.

Last year a number of our faculty members gained recognition for their outstanding accomplishments. Professor Ananya Chatterjea received a Human Rights Award, Diyah Larasati received an Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship for 2008-09, Carl Flink and Paula Mann received McKnight Fellowships for Choreography, and Erin Thompson won a Sage Award for Outstanding Educator.

In alumni news, Anna Marie Shogren was named Best Dancer in *City Pages*, and she also received a Walker/Southern Theater Momentum commission. Mathew Janczewski (who is

also an affiliate faculty member) was named as a "25 to Watch" by *Dance Magazine*. Laura Selle Virtucio and Eva Mohn received Sage Awards as performers. Nic Ceynowa joined Taylor II (Paul Taylor's second company in NYC) and Annie Hanauer joined the London-based company CanDoCo, with whom she performed in China for the Olympics. Finally, Eva Mohn is working with Johannes Wieland in New York and Germany.

This year is, for us, one of transition. Carl Flink has become Chair of the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, the first dance faculty member to achieve this. Ananya Chatterjea is the new Director of Dance and Michelle Kinney is the new Musician in Residence.

Other highlights of the 2008-09 academic year include our hosting the Regional American College Dance Festival in March, which alumna Maggie Bergeron will coordinate. Current dance major students Brent Radeke, Molly Stoltz, and Deepa Dharmadhikari, and recent graduate Jessica Briggs, were invited to present papers for the upcoming Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) conference. And the CORD board meeting will take place at the University of Minnesota. In addition, Our Cowles Visiting Artist and Scholar Program in Dance is a co-sponsor, along with the Department of Anthropology and Phi Beta Kappa, of a visit by scholar, Anna Tsing. Her public lecture, "Dancing the mushroom forest, or, biodiversity without guarantees," was on November 10. She also visited undergraduate courses in Dance and Anthropology, as well as meeting with students and faculty.

On the performance side, Cowles Visiting Artist Sarah Stackhouse was in residence to restage Jose Limón's 1958 masterwork "Missa Brevis." The Limón Company will be at Northrop in March, where dance majors will perform on stage with the company as part of the "Missa Project." Other Cowles Visiting Artists include internationally-recognized artist Sardono Kusumo, who was in residence in October to create a new work, and New York-based choreographer Max Pollak, who was commissioned by faculty member Karla Grotting for her 2008 McKnight SOLO performance at the Southern Theater. ✓



**photo:** Students perform Trisha Brown's "Set and Reset/Reset" during the *Dance Revolutions* concert.

PHOTOGRAPH: V. PAUL VIRTUCIO



## Undergrad Theatre continued from page 5

The Junior Fall Semester Abroad in London continues to be a success: our relationship with the Globe Theatre has grown, and the students now show their scene work on the Globe stage at the end of the semester. We are fortunate to have a terrifically qualified group of London-based faculty, in addition to master classes with John Barton, Patsy Rodenburg and Michael Langham. Deb Pearson has been instrumental in coordinating this program and preparing the students for the experience.

Other performance highlights from last year's season include several visiting directors who worked with our students. Harry Waters, Jr. directed our Sophomores in *Romeo & Juliet*, while, for our Juniors, Richard Rand directed *The Underpants* and Robert Rosen directed *La Casa Nova* (or, *The Superior Residence*).

This year we have invited several visiting artists as well. Sari Ketter directed *Hay Fever* and Suzy Messerole directed *Present Laughter*, which our Senior Company performed in repertory as part of the Mainstage Season in November, while Jaq Bessel will direct the Spring Shakespeare project with the Sophomores. And two of our own faculty members worked as directors with the Sophomore Company: Lucinda Holshue (*Anna in the Tropics*) and Steve Cardamone (*Book of Days*). Lucinda, along with Elisa Carlson, Mira Kehoe and Marcela Lorca, will provide vocal and movement coaching for all of our projects. You can find out more about our BFA Studio Season at [theatre.umn.edu](http://theatre.umn.edu).

This year's class of Freshmen is truly international, with one student from Mexico and one from Germany. Since we have a current student from Canada, we are thus on the way to our goal of making this a program for young actors worldwide. We are also attempting to reach out to all of our alumni so that we can continue to keep in touch with them as they follow their career paths.

To help support this goal to internationalize the program, and to fulfill our ongoing commitment to support young artists, we are starting a BFA Alumni, Friends and Family Scholarship Fund. We are proud to announce that the family of Chris Peltier ('08) has started a new scholarship, and if you'd like to join them in supporting this initiative, please contact CLA Development Officer, Ann Ullring, at [aulring@umn.edu](mailto:aulring@umn.edu).

Finally, we would like to congratulate Iman Milner ('09) on her election as a department Peer, and alumnus Matthew Amendt ('04), who won the Ivey "Emerging Artist" Award. In addition, thanks go to faculty member Kenneth Mitchell for working so hard to make Stage Elements, our summer intensive workshop for prospective students, a resounding success. And we offer our sincerest thanks to former Chair, Michal Kobialka, for all of his support and encouragement during his six year term. ✓

## From the Chair continued from page 2

Michelle Kinney, Dance Musician Coordinator; Cipriana Petre, MA/PhD Program; Christine Swartwout, Stage Management Supervisor; and Katie Willer, BA Program Assistant. With the four new faculty members who joined us last year, we have now outgrown our physical office, instructional and research space needs, and I am already in discussions with the College of Liberal Arts about ways to address these growing pains. While challenging, growing pains are the right kind of hurdles to face.

As for the year ahead, we have some extraordinary things to look forward to. The Subscriber Season features an arc that includes the ambitious *Woyzeck Project*; the more traditional, very popular Noël Coward comedies, *Hay Fever* and *Present Laughter*; Tony Kushner's first play, *A Bright Room Called Day*; Nilo Cruz's lyrical *Night Train to Bolina*; and, of course, University Dance Theatre's annual *Dance Revolutions*. Together with the student-run Xperimental Season, the Dance Program's informal showings and Student Dance Coalition Concert, and the various BFA performance projects, our students will have an incredible range of performance and design opportunities, and our audiences will have a chance to experience an unusually wide variety of artistic visions and performance styles under one "roof."

The next few years will be financially challenging ones for the University and, as a result, for all of its departments. Theatre Arts and Dance is no different. However, I am realistically optimistic that we can still move this department forward in dynamic ways because of how it was positioned under Michal's leadership, the talented new faculty and staff that have joined us, the ever more talented students attracted to this department and the ongoing dynamism of the established faculty and staff. Inspired ideas and motivated people can always build and move forward towards a powerful vision even in the leanest of times. Indeed, often the most profound art and scholarship occurs during times like these. I hope that we can capture your passion, interest and active support as we surge ahead in the coming years.

Intrigued? Then I urge you to visit our website at [theatre.umn.edu](http://theatre.umn.edu), where you can find out more about our students, our faculty, our public performances and other events. Better yet, call me directly at 612-626-1049, or e-mail me at [fink003@umn.edu](mailto:fink003@umn.edu). Best of all, if you are not already on campus, come visit us – to see a show or lecture, or meet our faculty and students, or just to walk around the West Bank Arts Quarter. After you do, I think you'll agree that we are indeed a department on the move.

Best wishes for a great year!

Carl Flink

Chair, Department of Theatre Arts and Dance

# 2007:08 GRADUATE THEATRE HIGHLIGHTS

## MA/PhD in Theatre Historiography

The 2007-08 academic year was a quiet but productive year in the MA/PhD program. We welcomed to the program Cindy Garcia, a scholar whose research interests include the performance of Latina/o-ness in urban libidinal economies and practices of racialization in the United States. She splits her time between theater and dance, and taught a course on Performance Ethnography



**photo:** Cindy García directed her play *How to Make it to the Dance Floor: a Salsa Guide for Women (Based on Actual Experiences)* as part of the annual Diverse Voices series.

PHOTOGRAPH: LEIAH STEVERMER

that was wildly appreciated.

As for events, we sponsored several visiting lecturers. These included Della Pollock from the University of North Carolina (co-sponsored with the Department of Communication Studies); artist-scholars Walid Ra'ad and Iris Haussler (co-sponsored by the Department of Art and the Space & Place Collaborative); Dipesh Chakrabarty from the University of Chicago; and David Roman from the University of Southern California. We also intersected with Marta Savigliano, the Dance Program's Cowles visiting scholar, and co-sponsored, with the BA Program, a residency with Geoff Sobelle and Trey Lyford from Philadelphia's imaginative, interdisciplinary "dance-clown-theatre ensemble," Pig Iron Theatre Company.

We graduated Wade Hollingshaus (now Assistant Professor at Brigham Young University), Lauren Love (now Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo), Karen Martinson (now working as an independent scholar and dramaturg in the Los Angeles area). And our current students were very active in everything – presenting research at national conferences, including ASTR (American Society for Theatre Research), MATC (Mid America Theatre Conference), ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) and international conferences in Scotland and Mexico. They have also become increasingly involved in department affairs outside of the MA/PhD Program –

## BA/MFA in Theatre Design and Technology

Last year marked the end of faculty member Jean Montgomery's tenure here as professor of lighting design and stage management. Professor Montgomery retired after a distinguished career of more than 35 years with the department. To replace her, we are pleased to welcome two new faculty members into the department: Marcus Dilliard, our new professor of lighting design and resident lighting designer, and Christine Swartwout, our new production stage manager.

The Design/Tech combo of Lance Brockman (Scene Design), Matt Lefebvre (Costume Design), Martin Gwinup (Sound and Media Design), together with students Kalere Payton (Assistant Costume Design) and Juliana Peterson (Assistant Scene Design), worked on the Penumbra Theatre production of *Redshirts*. The show premiered at Penumbra in September 2007 and was then restaged at the Round House Theatre in the Washington D.C. area.



**photo:** Students enjoy planning for their approach to scenic painting in preparation for the 50th Anniversary summer on board the Showboat.

PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK O'LEARY



as dramaturgs for the production season, and as active members of the Xperimental Theatre board, for example.

We are looking forward to a year of exciting growth and strategic planning, as Sonja Kuflinec returns from sabbatical into the DGS position, Margaret Werry takes on a new role as MA/PhD Program Director, Michal Kobialka concludes his term as Chair, and Cindy Garcia settles into her second year, becoming more involved in the work of the program. Several ideas will inspire and inform this visioning process. First, we intend to examine ways of strengthening linkages between the MA/PhD Program and the Dance Program, the MFA Design/Tech program, the department's production season, and affiliate faculty in other departments. Second, we wish to think about how we can accommodate the flourishing and evolving research agendas of faculty, especially our growing strengths in the area of theater and dance as global art forms, and the ways performance intersects with social justice. Finally, we will be thinking about the future of our field and how we, magnificent program that we are, can make a unique contribution. The MA/PhD program has developed a generation of strong and original scholars focused on historiography, who are making their mark on the field as teachers, researchers, and practitioners. What will the next generation of our graduates offer? ✓

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Resident sound/media designer Martin Gwinup was awarded an Info Tech Fees grant of \$53,000 by the University. The funds will pay for the purchase of a DL3 projector with control platform and software.

Other highlights of the program last year included: engaging freelance sound designer Montana Johnson as guest Sound Designer for the summer production of *The Count of Monte Cristo* aboard the Minnesota Centennial Showboat, and participating actively in the NAST Accreditation Review process, for which we focused heavily on the need for expanding our design/tech faculty and replacing a good deal of our technical equipment, much of which is sorely outdated. Finally, we are continuing to develop a new undergraduate Design/Technology curriculum with the intent of launching it in the fall of 2009. ✓

## Emmy Nomination

U Theatre/Peace Crimes Documentary  
Nominated for Emmy Award



PHOTOGRAPH: JUSTIN CHRISTY

*Peace Crimes – The Minnesota 8*, a program produced by a partnership between Twin Cities Public Television, the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance and The History Theatre of Saint Paul, and funded by a grant from the U of M McKnight Arts and Humanities Special Events Fund, was nominated for a prestigious regional Emmy Award™.

“It’s a testimony to the talents of TPT staffers as producer, as well as to the quality of the story being told, and the importance of the contributions of all the partners involved,” said Sherry Wagner-Henry, Managing Director of University Theatre. University Theatre is the production arm of the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, and was one of the collaborators on the *Peace Crimes* play and documentary project.

Folks may recall the co-production University Theatre hosted last spring on campus with the History Theatre dramatizing the “true story” of the Minnesota 8, which centered around former U of M students and community activists sent to prison for protesting the draft and the Vietnam War. Seven of the “8” were on hand for the development of the play and the shooting of the documentary, which examines the process of creating the play, and the issues the play raises.

The play itself, *Peace Crimes – The Minnesota 8 vs. the War*, premiered on Feb. 21, 2008 at the Rarig Center on the West Bank campus, and the documentary aired on TPT the following evening. The documentary program continues to air on the Minnesota Channel – visit [tpt.org](http://tpt.org) for listings and times. ✓

# Alumna Profile: Macelle (May) Mahala, PhD in Theatre, 2007

An interview with Macelle Mahala conducted on July 15, 2008 by the editor of *Applause*

**Applause:** May, I understand that you are currently an Assistant Professor in Theatre Arts at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. So you are a full-time tenure-track faculty member, a position which is becoming increasingly rare in the current economy of academia. Can you tell us a bit about how you got the position, and, more generally, about your transition from being a graduate student in our department to your professional career – it wasn't that long ago that you finished your doctorate and graduated, was it?

**Mahala:** No, I finished my PhD in Spring of 2007, so, yes, I got a job pretty much right away. I had been looking in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, which comes out with all the academic jobs, and I had done an internship in San Francisco, and I like the West Coast, so I was looking for schools on the West Coast. I applied for it, interviewed with them and got the job!

**Applause:** What type of position was it advertised as?

**Mahala:** My position is a generalist position. The Theatre Arts Department is in the College of the Pacific which is like the College of Liberal Arts at the U of M, except that we only have undergraduate students. I'm the person who teaches the Theatre History sequence, and I switch around with my colleagues teaching other classes like beginning acting, introduction to theatre and directing. I also teach a playwriting class every other year.

**Applause:** So how was it to make this transition? Was it seamless – from being a graduate student, and, I must add, the August Wilson Fellow, to being an assistant professor?

**Mahala:** Fairly seamless. It's a big transition, but all my colleagues at the university I teach at are really warm and welcoming, so that's nice. And they also have a support and development program for new faculty. They have senior faculty mentor the junior faculty, so it's a very supportive work environment. I would say the most difficult part of it was moving across the country and being in a whole different space. But in terms of the job itself, it was not too hard.

**Applause:** How did your tenure here as a graduate student prepare you professionally for your current position? What are some experiences other than being a graduate student at the U of M that helped you become a professor of theatre?

**Mahala:** What helped me prepare? The coursework here [at the U of M] really helped. I went back over my notes from Michal's [Kobialka] class, and from Sonja's [Kuftinec] and thought, OK, what do I really want to talk about and how do I want to approach

Macelle Mahala



this? So that experience was really useful. For my current position, I think they wanted an academic but also someone who had some practical and creative experience, so I think my experience with Penumbra, doing the dramaturgy and being the August Wilson Fellow there, helped. The former chair of our department was one of the actors in the original touring production of the Negro Ensemble Company's *A Soldier's Play* by Charles Fuller. So he was really a part of black theatre history and I was familiar enough with that company and that play to have a conversation with him about them which probably showed that I knew my specific field of research. Also, I did a lot of internships with different companies. I did one with the [San Francisco] Mime Troupe one summer and got to sort of know California. I did an internship with New World Theater in Amherst, Massachusetts, which is a theatre company that develops theatre artists of color. I did a summer residency with them and made connections with people there as well. I did some script readings for the annual play contest of the Marin Theater Company in Marin County because I knew someone who worked for that company as a result of that internship in Massachusetts. So those kind of professional development opportunities always help.

**Applause:** And you've had a couple of plays produced, haven't you?

**Mahala:** Yes, plays and poetry.

**Applause:** What are your main creative and/or scholarly research interests? How did our graduate program here help you develop or refine these? In what ways will you be able to pursue these interests in your position at the University of the Pacific?

**Mahala:** My research interests are in African American theatre, and I spent almost my entire graduate career here – except for one year – as the August Wilson Fellow. So I worked at Penumbra and

I really got to delve deeply into what's done over there specifically, and into the study of African American theatre in general.

**Applause:** From a performance point of view only?

**Mahala:** No, no, not only performance – also from a scholarly perspective. I took Lou Bellamy's black theatre courses at the U and then I wrote my dissertation on four contemporary African American playwrights: how their careers illustrate different strategies for the production of African American theatre. Those are my research interests. Currently, I have a two-year fellowship that's funded by my institution and I'm working to document Penumbra's history. So for the next two summers I'll be building upon some of the work that I did in graduate school.

**Applause:** For publication?

**Mahala:** Yes, hopefully.

**Applause:** So is this usual at University of the Pacific – supporting research even though they have no graduate program within the theatre department?

**Mahala:** I think so. I negotiated that as part of my contract and Michal really helped me to do it. All of the professors here really helped to steer me in the right direction – to the kind of job that would be a good fit for me and then the kinds of things I would need to ask for in terms of professional support and development. I am especially thankful for the advice and close attention that Lou, Margaret [Werry], Michal, and Sonja gave me as a graduate student.

**Applause:** What are some of the creative projects you are working on or dreaming about?

**Mahala:** That's a good question. I'm doing some creative writing with a group of people that I have worked with in the past to put together performance projects. So I am working with them this summer just generating material. I don't have any definitive plans, like staging a play or a production, but I am working steadily on my writing and I might want to try to put something together – not this summer and probably not next summer because I have this [research] project I'm working on, but maybe later. A collection of performance writing – not necessarily plays – but more like performance poetry. That's in the future, though.

**Applause:** Does the University of the Pacific have the capacity and facilities to produce, on campus, anything other than student work? If not, is there a theatre scene in or near Stockton?

**Mahala:** There is a small theatre community in Stockton. I mean, there's a community theatre, there's also a theatre department at the community college, but there are not any professional companies

that I know of in Stockton. But it's not that far from the Bay Area (about an hour from Oakland, an hour and a half from San Francisco) and there are a ton of theatre companies there, of course. One of my colleagues runs her own company – it's called Shakespeare's Associates – and they do plays in the summertime in the vineyards in the town of Livermore which is in between Stockton and San Francisco. So there are some opportunities to work professionally in the Bay Area, but not many in the city of Stockton itself.

**Applause:** Have you got any bits of advice for current graduate students or recent alums – many of whom read this newsletter – about how to pursue an academic career in theatre and at the same time remain actively creative as an artist and/or a scholar?

**Mahala:** At one of the new faculty lunches I attended this past year, there was a senior faculty member who gave us the advice to “just say yes.” Say yes to everything that excites you, but also guard your time and shut your office door sometimes, and really carve out space for your research or your creative projects. I think that is good advice. I also believe in self care; sometimes you have to say no to things if you're being overworked or if you need time for yourself or your family. But I would agree that one thing leads to another, so the more you say yes to things, the further you get, basically. That's kind of intuitive but I think it's really true.

**Applause:** Let's go back to the first question. You applied for several positions, didn't you, and fortunately got this one before you were finished with the process? So describe a bit about your strategy during the interview process.

**Mahala:** I applied to a lot of different institutions that I thought would be a good fit for me. I got several interviews, including a couple of in-person interviews, and then I accepted this position after some negotiation and weighing of all my options. Doing the interview process is good practice. I went to an interview at an institution where they cancelled their search so they didn't end up hiring anybody and that was the first in-person interview that I did. It was several days long and kind of intimidating and exhausting because you're “on” for two days. But it was really good practice. So for the second interview, which was the interview I did for the institution I'm at now, I was a lot more relaxed because I'd had that first experience.

**Applause:** Do you think the fact that you studied here helped you get your current position?

**Mahala:** Yes. I think this program has a really good reputation and also the advice from the professors here was really helpful for me in terms of making decisions about where I was going to go and what I was interested in. I had a great experience as a graduate student in all ways, but especially in the mentorship and the support I received for continuing with my career. ✓



# Alumnus Profile: Jason Clusman, BA in Theatre, 2003

An interview with Jason Clusman conducted on July 31, 2008 by the editor of *Applause*

**Applause:** When did you graduate from the University of Minnesota Department of Theatre Arts and Dance BA Program, and what were your areas of concentration in theatre – and/or areas of interest?

**Clusman:** I graduated in the Spring of 2003, and while I was here I focused on lighting design and stage management.

**Applause:** Why did you originally choose to enroll at the U of M and declare a theatre arts major?

**Clusman:** I actually started at the U of M as an architecture major, but spent my first semester doing that and decided that I needed a more creative outlet – something a little more freeing for me – so I started researching schools and found that the U of M theatre program was actually the perfect fit just because of the community we're in, and the opportunities it allowed, and how hands-on it was. So it was an easy choice once I researched it.

**Applause:** And where are you from?

**Clusman:** Neenah, Wisconsin.

**Applause:** So you actually researched the theatre program itself, and we had a reputation for the things you described?

**Clusman:** Yes, definitely. I had originally looked at Madison, Wisconsin and here, and as a theatre artist, I thought that it was important to be able to practice the art while studying it. The Twin Cities is perfect for that.

**Applause:** What/who are two or three stories and/or people that you remember vividly from your years here?

**Clusman:** I'd say the first thing that really stands out was working in the light lab. I started there fairly early on and it just was a great experience. I had a blast doing it but it also taught me a ton – about having a really great work ethic – how to get the job done but have fun doing it. And it introduced me to lots of people, most of whom I'm still friends with and I still work with closely to this day. Other stuff: I did the Showboat the first year that it was back – which was a blast and also a challenge.

**Applause:** In what capacity? What was your job?

**Clusman:** Assistant Stage Manager on the boat. So, because it was the first year back, there were a lot of new things to try to figure out; challenges, problems to fix. And we were kind of on our own on the boat, you know. We didn't have a full staff right there on

**photo:** Clusman poses candidly for his Guthrie Theater programs shot.



site so we had to do a lot of problem-solving. It was a great experience. And another opportunity that I got through the theatre department was to go to the Prague Quadrennial in 2003, which remains one of the defining moments of my theatre time here.

**Applause:** Tell us what the Prague Quadrennial is.

**Clusman:** It's an international festival that happens every four years to which theatre artists from around the world come to display their country's trends in theatre and design. It's pretty much all design aspects – costumes, lights, sets. It also had education sections, so there were different schools from around the world, and you saw how students responded to design challenges. It was a really great experience ... really rewarding ... great to see how the U.S. perspective on theatre was different from the other cultures of the world. It was fantastic – stuff I would have never been exposed to.

**Applause:** What work are you currently involved with, professionally, and how did your education here prepare you for your career?

**Clusman:** I'm currently Equity ASM (Assistant Stage Manager) at the Guthrie Theater and we're currently in the middle of our run of *The Government Inspector*. My time at the department here at the U of M really put me in contact with the folks over at the Guthrie and [so did] fellow stage managers that I've worked with. Ann Terlizzi on the Showboat was a great connection and Jean Montgomery put me in contact with Chris Code, who worked over there [at the Guthrie]. So there were a lot of conversations that put me on the Guthrie's radar. Also, [as a student] I remained active in the theatre community.

**Applause:** How did your education in our BA program influence

**Jason Clusman continued on page 18**

# The Dance Program's Exciting Arc:

## From José Limón to the American College Dance Festival

by David Bernstein



**photos:** Students rehearse José Limón's "Missa Brevis."  
PHOTOGRAPHS: V. PAUL VIRTUCIO

*Based on a conversation with professor Carl Flink, Chair of the department, and Maggie Bergeron, Coordinator of the North-Central Regional American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) Conference to be held at the University of Minnesota in March 2009.*

One of the ways we can think of the link between the Cowles residency that restaged José Limón's masterwork "Missa Brevis" this fall, and the ACDFA next spring, is, according to Flink, that these are "two year-long projects in the Dance Program that exemplify many of the things that we are trying to achieve. The Limón arc (I'll call it) starting with the residency with Emilie [Plauché] and I, arcing all the way through to the final presentation at the Northrop, which will include our dancers joining the "Missa Brevis" cast from the Limón Company – that particular arc exemplifies for me the kind of depth that we are trying to bring to at least one of these Cowles opportunities every year." In its length, intensity and depth, the Limón residency parallels what the program did previously with the "Year of Trisha" (Brown) and the "Month of Merce" (Cunningham). In short, it will provide many "points of contact that will allow our dance students – both in the piece but also in the program – to drill deeper," and at the same time, give our dance majors a chance to show their level of skill as performers and technicians.

The "Missa Brevis" project began last summer with an initial week-long intensive to familiarize the students with Limón's technique, taught by Flink and his wife, Emilie Plauché, both of whom were senior members of the Limón Company. On September 3, the Cowles guest residency to set "Missa Brevis" on our students began, taught by Sarah Stackhouse, who worked directly with Limón as a company member in the late 1950s and 1960s. The piece itself is, according to Flink, "a fantastic masterwork, which is José's response to his experience traveling in Poland in the 1950s [where] he was struck by how Poland at this time was still very much in a destroyed state from World War II. But he was inspired by the Polish people's embrace of the company and their passion for the arts; their energy seemed to be so incredibly hopeful." When he returned to the U.S., Limón made "Missa Brevis," a 35-minute piece with a very

powerful dramatic arc set to Zoltan Kodály's score: "A Brief Mass at a Time of War." The Stackhouse residency culminated in an informal showing at the beginning of October; a fully-staged performance of the work will be part of the University Dance Theatre's winter *Dance Revolutions* concert in February 2009. Several members of the cast of 20-24 will be chosen to work an additional week with the Limón Company, and then perform with the company in "Missa Brevis" at Northrop Auditorium in March.

The ACDFA conference has a somewhat different arc. It will take almost a year of planning, but the conference itself will happen only during a single week in March of 2009. The way that the ACDFA is linked to the Limón residency – and thus part of one important aspect of the Dance Program's current direction – is that, for Flink, "it's another way of us highlighting and revealing – not only within the University but in the local community, the regional community and, potentially, the national community – the professional dance that exists in our Dance Program through our faculty, and the depth and breadth of the thinking that's happening [here];" both of which are exemplified by what we've planned for the ACDFA. In particular, the conference will open with *Critical Mass*, a dance concert featuring eight local professional companies, directly connected to the Dance Program via faculty members.

Planning for the ACDFA began in earnest last summer, when Dance alumna Maggie Bergeron (BFA summa cum laude, 2003) was hired to coordinate the conference. She has been working incredibly hard since then to make sure this massive undertaking comes together as planned. The conference title is "Thought and Motion," which is also a descriptor of the Dance Program as a whole. According to Bergeron, as hosts, we get the opportunity to choose the theme for the conference, which, because of our program's emphasis on investigating the intersections of theory and practice, means "there are going to be lectures and talks at this ACDFA, and one of our adjudicators, [eminent dance scholar and performer] Thomas DeFrantz, is going to be doing a lecture as well as teaching a movement class with the idea that moving and think-

**Exciting Arc** continued on page 15

# Showboat Celebrates 50 Years on the River

by Sherry Wagner-Henry



**photos:** left: some of the 50th Anniversary Showboat Players; top: first cast 1958 Showboat Players (left to right) Shirley Venard, Jeanie Lipke, and Ed Felien; bottom: Kathy Stewart (left) and Jean Montgomery as she shows the "Jean Montgomery's MN Centennial Showboat Light Booth: ENTER IF YOU DARE" plaque given to her as a retirement gift. PHOTOGRAPHS: JUSTIN CHRISTY AND KRISTIE GAALSWYK

Saturday, July 12, 2008 was a gorgeous summer day, made lovelier still by the celebration of yet another major milestone for the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance and its alumni: 50 years of Showboat seasons on the Mississippi River.

Alumni, current students, faculty (both retired and current), staff and friends came together from across the country to celebrate both the accomplishments of the Centennial Showboat production program, and the memories that its existence has created for many of us. The day began with a matinee performance of *The Count of Monte Cristo* by the 2008 Showboat company, followed by a lobby reception on board the luxurious surroundings of the "still new to us" Showboat (christened the Frank M Whiting during its opening ceremony in July 2002).

After the performance, guests had a chance to visit with the 2008 company members and were then treated to a preview screening of the *Showboat @ 50* legacy video, featuring many of the alumni, faculty and students in attendance. The video was the work of student Sean Nolan, who had been awarded a University Research Opportunity Program grant earlier that year, and who spent countless hours researching, interviewing, scripting and editing in order to prepare the video for viewing on July 12.

Following the video premier, our celebration of 50 years on the river stayed on the river, as guests were ushered into the beautiful surroundings of the Betsy Northrup, a Padelford excursion boat, for a delightful summer buffet with all the trimmings. During the three-hour dinner and cruise, participants were invited to "take the mike" and share their favorite Showboat stories and memories. The

short program included a tribute to retiring faculty member, Jean Montgomery, presented by former students Pearl Rea and Kathy Stewart. Many of you marveled at the rarity of not only getting "Gino" to say a few words in front of an audience, but at us getting her to allow her picture to be taken. It was truly a momentous occasion!

Many thanks go out to the faculty, staff, student and alumni volunteers who made this event possible, including our faculty hosts Jean Montgomery, Lance Brockman and Charles Nolte. More thanks still to the staff and students of the University Theatre management office (Justin Christy, Jennie Germain, Sean Nolan, and Kristi Gaalswyk), who made a day-long event with 200 people run seamlessly. Also, a sincere thanks to the Office for Undergraduate Education, under the direction of Vice Provost Bob McMaster, who recognized the importance of this commemoration and provided much needed underwriting for the event.

As the Minnesota Centennial Showboat ends its 50th year, we look forward to creating our place in history for another 50 years and beyond. We hope you will want to be a part of that future. Currently, plans are underway to create DVD copies of the *Showboat @ 50* legacy video, which will be available as a benefit for making a gift to the Showboat Scholarship Fund or the Showboat Program Fund of at least – you guessed it – \$50 or more. To learn more about donating to the Showboat, and receiving your free copy of the DVD, please contact Sherry Wagner-Henry at [swh@umn.edu](mailto:swh@umn.edu) or 612.625.1052. ✓



## Exciting Arc continued from page 13

ing happen at the same time in the same space.” Thus we are aiming for a breadth of thought about movement during the one week of the conference, and this will mirror what is happening over the course of the year with the Limón “Missa Brevis” project.

“What’s exciting about what we’re trying to do,” Flink interjects, “is that the traditional model of an ACDFFA Conference is now so set – since the late 70s – that it’s very rare for people to play too much with the model, and it’s actually hard to play with that model.” But by limiting participation to 400 instead of the more usual 550-650 attendees, we have changed it, and are planning for an “intimate conference that will allow us to create more opportunities for multiple points of contact between students and teachers – and musicians and choreographers and the community – so that there can be many more substantive discussions around the material.”

Another change is in the way we want participants to view the adjudication process. Typically, student dance companies from colleges and universities bring one or two pieces to be performed and evaluated by guest adjudicators – nationally regarded artists in the field of dance – with the goal of having a piece chosen to be performed at the gala concert that ends the conference. This tends to lead to a heavy focus on the adjudication process and the gala concert, which limits the other dialogues we feel should go on – for example, around the creation process itself. As Bergeron put it: “I feel like there’s something to be said for taking the ‘comp’ out of the competition and putting it back in the composition (of the work).” Not that ACDFFA is only about the competition, but having only a final gala concert gives the conference a bit of an edge which we would like to soften somewhat. “So we’re also scheduling a number of “un-showings” or extremely informal showings in the evenings at the Barker – sort of a gathering of minds and thought [to which] students or faculty or musicians can bring in little pieces they’ve been working on to show,” followed by informal feedback at the end of the night. We also hope that these un-showings will promote the beginnings of dialogue, conversation and collaboration.

Of course, we didn’t limit participation in ACDFFA solely to encourage more dialogue and a bit less of an emphasis on competition. We simply do not have the facilities to support a well-organized conference with 600 participants. But in realizing that it would be very difficult for us to handle the logistics of a larger conference, we also began to understand how a smaller conference would, according to Flink, “emphasize the community-building aspect, and we felt that by doing that, we would help break down some of the competitive drive that of course exists because of the adjudication.”

While conceptually, as we have already seen, the arcs of the “Missa Brevis” residency and the ACDFFA Conference have several points of contact, the two projects will actually intersect spatially

and temporally on Thursday, March 19, 2009 – one day after the opening of the ACDFFA Conference – when the Limón Company will perform “Missa Brevis” at Northrop with several students from our residency in their cast. According to Bergeron, “we’re doing everything we can to get [conference] participants discounted tickets and to get them ordering tickets so they can see this dance company – and the University of Minnesota students in the show.” In fact, we are not scheduling any adjudication concerts during the Limón concert.

And we are developing plans to have Limón Company members participate in the ACDFFA itself, potentially to teach a master class and share with participants a documentary film about José Limón. Indeed, since we ourselves currently live in a time of war, and thoughts about war’s devastation and how people overcame it inspired “Missa Brevis,” having Limón company members participate in the ACDFFA will provide a living example of “Thought and Motion.” As Flink put it: “when we think about the opportunity [for our students] to do classic masterworks like this, it’s a question of how do we also engage them intellectually.” Specifically, how can we use Cowles Guest Artist funds to not just “give someone a performing opportunity, but to allow them to introspect and examine the historiography in which that piece is embedded, and how classical work is brought into a contemporary context.” This question has particular resonance in “Missa Brevis,” not only because of the connection to war and peace, but because the aesthetics of how gender operates in society – and in dance – have changed dramatically since the piece premiered in 1958.

Finally, while linking the ACDFFA to the Limón Company performance of “Missa Brevis” is a high profile way of introducing the public to the ACDFFA, there are other things that we think will help with our efforts to make the Conference more accessible and open to the public – and thus a community-building effort that reaches beyond the group of participants. The gala concert on Sunday, March 22 will be open to the public; so will the concert entitled *Critical Mass: Professional Dance Companies at the University of Minnesota* on Wednesday, March 18 at 7:30 PM, and the Thomas DeFrantz lecture from 4:00 to 5:30 PM on Thursday, March 19. Bergeron sums it up: “We are trying to involve the students, we are trying to involve the faculty, we’re trying to involve the musicians, we’re trying to involve the community, and then we’re involving students and faculty and staff from across the region and across the country.”

Thus both the ACDFFA and the “Missa Brevis” residency, both of which started with very different arcs last summer, will end up converging in March 2009. More importantly, both are exciting examples of the ways that Thought and Motion has redefined the Dance Program. ✓

# Thoughts on Directing

A conversation with Lisa Channer and Dominic Taylor recorded on July 25, 2008 by the editor of *Applause*

**Applause:** As our two full-time Directing faculty members, I would like the two of you to engage in a conversation that focuses on three questions. What is a director's role in a production? How do you teach students to direct, both in theory and in practice? Based on your first year in the department, how has working with our students contributed to deepening your understanding of the answers to the first two questions?

**Channer:** I think a lot of directors, young directors especially, come to directing with the idea that the job of the director is to tell people what to do. That's the default idea – the director as boss. But a good director does something different than that: asks questions, inspires a team, infects them with an idea and then tries to make a room where anything may be tried, an exciting, vibrant rehearsal room or design meeting room or whatever. For me, anyway, it has evolved into this. I think I started off really bossy, really controlling and knowing all the answers. But now I'm much more in need of actors who want to bring offers to the table that I get to be excited by, so that I can then put them together into a collage. I try to help the students make with me an atmosphere that's going to let them do their best work.

**Taylor:** Right. I think that the director ultimately has to be the shaper of this experience that the audience comes to...

**Channer:** Absolutely!

**Taylor:** George Bass [a playwright, the founder of Rites and Reason Theatre, and a Brown University professor] did this thing which used to drive me crazy, but I realize now that it has infected my work so much. The way Rites and Reason operated, it was a theatre, but George said that the theatre experience extended beyond the theatre space. So he would have performers – and when you are a student as I was, you're one of these performers – in the lobby starting to shape the experience, and then we would literally go into the street. And I would sit there and say, "George, what is going on?" His point was that we have to figure out how we shape this experience for everybody involved, because we've been doing this work as a group for a period of time on this stage – the play was called *Malacoff Blue* – and people will come in and sit in their seats. George was always engaged in this notion: how do we change the seats? How do we change the lobby? How do we change this thing or that? And he got a lot of feedback from students in terms of helping to shape that. I agree with you one hundred percent. Directors don't tell people what to do. The best thing they can do – I think I said this in my directing class last year – is to set up a room and get out of the way. You set up a series of places – rehearsal spaces and then subsequently performance

spaces – where you get out of the way and you let these people be whoever they are.

**Channer:** And then you jump in and shape it. I mean that's the important part that sometimes gets dropped. Things can be all happy and good, and everybody feels great, but the work is sloppy and a mess because the director didn't jump in. So I think it's a really intense razor's edge that you walk...as you said, shaping the experience, but also getting out of the way.

**Taylor:** In teaching students direction, the thing I think is the challenge when you are shaping that experience, the hardest thing, is to get the students to start to think about attenuating their eye. I'm not saying that they're not aware of visual composition...

**Channer:** Oh, no, but they need to be aware on a large scale.

**Taylor:** That's one of the things that I think directors need to do, and it is a challenge in the training of directors because for so much of their lives they have been engaged with this two dimensional visual understanding: film, TV...

**Channer:** Or in their brain, not outside themselves.

**Taylor:** ...or in their brain. Some of the students who were in my directing class last year had taken some acting classes and they knew some stuff about dealing with actors, but it always became these little pockets of acting and you kept trying to tell them to pull themselves back and look at ...

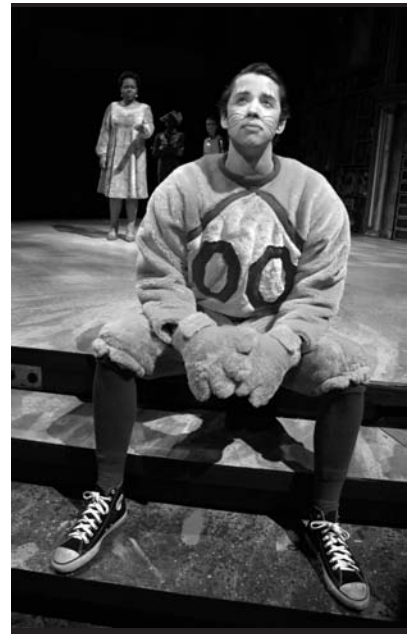


**photo:** Dominic Taylor (third from left) directs lead actors during an early rehearsal of *The Wiz*.

PHOTOGRAPH: CARRIE THOMPSON

**photos:** Lisa Channer directed *The Galileo Project: Brecht's Brain* (first two photos left to right); Dominic Taylor directed *The Wiz*. Both shows were part of the 2007-08 University Theatre Subscriber Series.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JUSTIN CHRISTY



**Channer:** ...the big composition...

**Taylor:** ...what they've got on stage. That's a hard thing for them to know – when to go in and say, “that doesn't make sense.” But they have to have an idea coming in; they have to have some kind of vision.

**Channer:** That's why I think director training at the early level does have to have a lot of composition. I tend to work a lot with composition. And I think that helps them get that eye. I agree, Dominic, I don't think you're just born being a good director. It's a real skill, a real learned skill. And it takes a certain kind of “attenuating” – the word you used, which is really a great choice of word for that. It's hard.

**Taylor:** The thing which I always think of as funny is when you think about teaching directing there are certain rules that you were taught at one point. And then you questioned those rules. Some of those rules are classic, i.e., the ridiculous rule that you always bring in your hero on the stage right side, and you bring in your villain on the stage left side. Where did that idea come from? It's the Greeks, or actually, the Romans, with *sinistra* (sinister) being left handed, and also your down-stage hand...And I think that's cute; I'm not saying it's a bad idea...

**Channer:** It's fun to subvert it.

**Taylor:** Yes! And that's one of those questions. Does the audience read left to right? I'll say to a student, I was taught that the audience reads left to right and when you bring on your main charac-

ter she or he should enter on the stage right side so the audience can read it. But that's not necessarily the case.

**Channer:** Not anymore. We read in all directions now, don't we?

**Taylor:** And that's one of the questions that I ask them. But it's really hard because students will often want the textbook in some way...

**Channer:** “Tell me how to do it.”

**Taylor:** Tell me how to do it.

**Channer:** But that's a problem with teaching art of any kind. You really have to just do it, figure it out.

**Taylor:** The basis for most of my Directing and Creating the Performance classes – and I'm sure you do the same thing – is that the students show us some stuff, preview it, we discuss it and then they have to show it to us again. And so they have to show it and show it. It's not purely trial and error because there are a bunch of things which start to work because of the discussion. But I think oftentimes – and this is really interesting – students think that once they've thought it all through, they've talked to their actors, they're going to bring it into class and it's done. And I'm thinking no...

**Channer:** There's so much deeper they can go.

**Directing continued on page 19**



## Jason Clusman continued from page 12

your thinking or practice for the projects in which you are currently involved – including your design/technical education, of course, but also your general theatre education, and actually your overall liberal education here at the U of M?

**Clusman:** Well, I would say the U of M Theatre Department is really great at giving an actor or a technician like myself the full experience. I had to take acting classes and costume design and set design and that has really helped me get an appreciation for what each of those individuals need in the professional world. As an Assistant Stage Manager, a lot of my job is to gather information or to relay information and I found that taking those types of classes and that [kind of] education has helped me to filter what's important and what's not. The program here really encouraged me to get out and work and make contacts and collaborate. I'm still in contact with lots of folks I went to school with – and I continually collaborate with them on new projects. Maggie Bergeron from the dance program is really a close friend of mine, and I work closely with her – we're always talking about how I can be involved in her next project.

**Applause:** So what about any general educational things? You had to take courses outside the department, right?

**Clusman:** Yes, definitely. I always tried to take courses that were going to help my artistic eye, especially lighting design. I took photography classes that really encouraged me to look at the light and the shadow, which is just as important in theatre. A lot of people, particularly directors or choreographers, will talk in terms of light and shadow, so you have to understand that – it's very important.

**Applause:** Have you got any bits of advice for current BA students about how to use their education in our department to keep themselves active and working in the theatre after graduation?

**Clusman:** I definitely recommend getting out and working as soon as possible. Start while you're still in school if time allows. And there's that all-important collaboration element. Keep in contact

with your peers. It's important to stay involved in your community whether it be theatre or dance, or both. As a theatre student, don't be afraid to walk up the street to the dance building and find a dance student who is looking for a set designer or somebody to build their costumes. Likewise, for the dance students. More and more these days theatre is becoming about expression through movement, and I think it's important for the theatre and dance programs to work very closely together. So, work in your community, be collaborative, and really see as much theatre as possible – it helps you develop a sense of what you like and what you don't like. Also, you should talk with other artists about their process and respond critically to it.

**Applause:** Did you get your job at the Guthrie right out of school?

**Clusman:** I didn't. I actually worked for four years as a freelance theatre artist before starting at the Guthrie. I toured with Shapiro and Smith [Dance Company] and that came from a connection here at the university because I had worked with Danny [Shapiro] and Joanie [Smith] lighting some of their stuff while I was a student here. As you know, several of their dancers were students here also.

**Applause:** What are some of your future plans?

**Clusman:** Well for now, I plan on sticking with the Guthrie for awhile. I think there's more to do and more to learn there, and more opportunities. But I'd also like to eventually get back out on the road and do a little more touring. I'll probably do some more lighting design.

**Applause:** So you've done some lighting design professionally?

**Clusman:** I have. While I've been working at the Guthrie, I have short little breaks and I've done some lighting design in between. It's always nice to get back to that and have a little creative outlet. Most recently I did a Young Dance concert over at the Barker. ✓



**photo:** Clusman gained lighting experience at the University, including for Shouze Ma in the 2002 University Dance Theatre concert.

PHOTOGRAPH: U THEATRE ARCHIVES

## Directing continued from page 17

**Taylor:** Yes, and oftentimes, when they look at it, they go, “oh yeah...”

**Channer:** With an audience there, you see it fresh. And then it’s about helping them bridge that gap between what they intended and what they actually made. Not just for students, by the way, this happens to all of us. I just sat in on the opening night of a show of mine last night, and I heard and saw stuff because the audience was with me – it happens every time – you go, “oh, it’s funny, that part is really, beautifully funny.” All that fun stuff...I love teaching students because of that.

**Taylor:** Let me give you an example about how different audiences give you different takes on a piece. I was at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, and we were doing this piece called *Fresh Faust*, which is a cantata written by Greg Tate with music by Leroy Jenkins. And that wasn’t the first time I became aware of black and white audiences. But that was the first time I became aware of black audiences being significantly different with their approach. This is not a conventional work, it’s a weird work. It had a *Danse Macabre* moment in it, and the set had an offbeat design. In this case, class and race manifested themselves. One day we were doing a performance and a big church group of working class African Americans were in the audience. And the rhythms of their response to the piece were so different from those, two nights later, when there was a group of academic African Americans in the space. So their responses were totally different. It was great to watch, and it also taught me a lot as a director.

**Channer:** Audience response matters.

**Taylor:** It matters so much, and I don’t think that beginning students get that.

**Channer:** When I founded Sleeveless Theatre, which I founded with five women because we were sick of the crap we got as women; the casting for women was pitiful. So we decided to make our own work that was bold and different and outside the parameters about what women were supposed to do in the theatre. Our work wasn’t just for women – it was about a lot of bigger issues – but we happened to be women performing it and making it. We found that the audiences were different depending on the primary gender of audience members, particularly the after-show discussions, which we did a lot of because the work was political and social. We toured all over the country. We started to keep a tally chart backstage because we thought we were onto something and we weren’t sure. But we were. It was almost 95% true that when a woman raised her hand to make a comment after the show, it was to ask a question or make a statement about our work. But when a

man raised his hand, it was to give us information that he knew. Down to the person. And that taught me so much. I don’t know why, but it was a fascinating experience in audience reactions. Also, I agree with you that class is actually more powerful than some of these other things that we think are the most powerful indicators of how an audience is going to react. Class really does transcend all of the other issues.

**Taylor:** I say to student directors when we do a final showing for the class, “invite some of your faculty to this.” Because there’s this thing when it’s only their friends...

**Channer:** ...Their peers, right, are the cheering section...

**Taylor:** ...and they’re going to love all the stuff. I tell them this because I’ve watched students...we used to do this thing at Bard (College) where the students would direct their pieces. And it would be really great to watch the students with all their friends one night, and then have the faculty come in. You’d get different rhythms of laughter, different reactions. It was this interesting moment, and one of the students, Drew, said, “Oh I think what I wanted to do, I wanted to get both those groups laughing at the same point at the same time.” And I said, “Drew I think that’s great...”

**Channer:** Universal – things that hit all humans...

**Taylor:** ...I told him I think that’s great; I’ve been doing this twenty years and I can’t figure out how to do it. I think that’s great if you can do it.” Because I think that there are certain things...that somebody who knows Watergate is going to laugh at, and somebody who knows Britney Spears is going to laugh at. And it’s cool. But I just think it’s interesting to watch all of those things happen. And that’s a hard thing to teach.

**Channer:** It is, very hard. I think the only thing you can do – and I really try very hard, and I hope I succeed – is to tell students that they have to start with themselves, what they know to be true. What their experience has shown them. They’re young, sometimes Freshmen right out of High School, so what you start with is, don’t try to be something you’re not; start with your life experience and then work out from there.

**Taylor:** Right, right. ✓

**Editor’s Note:** See *Dominic Taylor’s direction of Night Train to Bolina by Nilo Cruz and Lisa Channer’s direction of A Bright Room Called Day by Tony Kushner this spring on the University Theatre Subscriber Series. More information at theatre.umn.edu.*

# Introductions Please ...

We welcome new staff and faculty to the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance

**Marcus Dilliard**, Design/Tech Program-Lighting Design, has designed for theater, opera and dance across North America and in Europe, including numerous productions for Theatre de la Jeune Lune, The Guthrie Theater, The Minnesota Opera and The Minnesota Orchestra. He has also designed the lighting for productions at the Children's Theatre Company, American Repertory Theater, The Intiman, Dallas Theater Center, The Shakespeare Theatre, The Athens Festival, Arena Stage, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Minnesota Dance Theater, Flying Foot Forum, Katha Dance Theater, Portland Opera, San Diego Opera, The Spoleto Festival (Italy), Flanders Opera, The Opera Company of Philadelphia, Opera Pacific, The Ordway Music Theater, Pittsburgh Opera, Ft. Worth Opera, Vancouver Opera, Le Opera de Montreal, Canadian Opera Company, Chicago Opera Theater, and Boston Lyric Opera. Dilliard received his B.A. from Lehigh University and an M.F.A. from Boston University School for the Arts. He has been honored with McKnight Foundation Theater Artist Fellowships in 1998 and 2006, with an Ivey Award in 2005, and with a Minnesota State Arts Board Theater Fellowship in 2003.

**Jennie Germain** joins the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance staff as the Communications Coordinator after finishing her Arts Administration-focused Master of Liberal Studies degree this past August at the U of M. Not new to the department, Jennie worked during graduate school as a teaching assistant in the Theatre Department's marketing office. Prior to moving to the Twin Cities, she worked as the House Manager at Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI and earned her Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts and Communication Studies with a focus in Public Relations, from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

**Michelle Kinney**, Musical Coordinator for the Dance Program, teaches DNCE 1626: Music for Dance and accompanies dance classes. Michelle holds a BA from Northwestern University in Cello Performance and Composition, and an MA from New York University in Performance Studies. As a composer she has received awards and grants from The Bush Foundation, The Jerome Foundation, McKnight Foundation, NEA/Rockefeller, Harvestworks/Studio Pass, and the American Composers Forum. Michelle co-founded the music label Sugarfoot Music, which recently released "Touch It," featuring some of Michelle's compositions with the cello-focused project, Jelloslave (Sugarfootmusic.com). She is a passionate dance fan, and has worked as a composer for dance throughout her career, in both The Twin Cities and New York City, where she lived for 13 years. In addition to leading several of her own ensembles, Michelle has recorded, performed and toured throughout Europe and the United States with some of the most respected

innovators in new music today. Henry Threadgill, Butch Morris, Myra Melford, Leroy Jenkins, Shi-Zheng Chen, John Zorn, Bunching Lamb, Brandon Ross and Steven Bernstein are among the artists calling on Michelle's contributions as a cellist. She has also worked extensively in pop music, including many recordings and appearances live and on TV (*Tonight Show*, Letterman, *VHS Storytellers*) with artists such as Natalie Merchant, Sheryl Crow, Lou Reed, John Cale, and Richie Havens.

**Cipriana Petre**, MA/PhD Program, is a theatre researcher, translator, and cultural manager who has worked extensively in Central & Eastern Europe coordinating projects for the Royal National Theatre London, Theater Instituut Nederland in Amsterdam, and other European performing arts institutions. Prior to coming to the U.S. for her doctoral studies, she worked closely with one of Romania's leading theatre directors, Mihai Maniutiu, as dramaturg, assistant director, literary advisor, and executive producer for theatre and television. She graduated in 2008 from the UC Irvine-UC San Diego Joint Doctoral Program in Theatre and Drama. Her research is positioned at the crossroads of performance theory, the history of political thought, and performance historiography. She authored two theatre books, *Maniutiu: Theatre Images* (2002) and *Didascalia in Camil Petrescu's theatre works* ("Narrativizing the Dramatic Text in Camil Petrescu's Theatre," 2001), co-authored three volumes, and published over one hundred articles, interviews and translations.

**Christine Swartwout** is the new Stage Management and Building Supervisor. She just moved here from Binghamton, New York, and has an MA in Theatre (emphasis Stage Management) from Binghamton University, and a BA in Technical Theatre from SUNY-New Paltz. She has an abundance of both academic and practical experience. This year she is teaching Stage Management for Theatre, Advanced Stage Management, and Theatre Practicum.

**Katie Willer**, BA Program Assistant, is a graduate of the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, with a BA in Theatre Arts, and holds an MA in Performance Making from Goldsmiths College in London. She has served on the Executive Board of the Theater Space Project and the Advisory Board of the zAmya Theater Project, and has worked locally as the Theatre Coordinator with Project Success. As an actor and director, Katie has worked with Illusion Theater's Lighthouse Group, Emigrant Theater, Night Path, Cromulent Theater, Players of Notorious Temerity, Swearing Jack Productions, Urban Samurai, as well as Theatre Pro Rata. During her time in the BA Program, Katie served as a peer advisor, and, prior to her MA, worked at the University in the Office of Human Resources.

## Goodbye and our heartfelt thanks to...

**Justin Christy**, as he embarks on a new adventure in his arts administration career. Justin left the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance in early September to become part of the communications team at the Weisman Art Museum on campus, specifically helping with the rollout of their new building expansion project. Justin served as the Communication Manager for the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance for 5½ years, helping to bridge all the messages and information coming out of our very large and expansive department. He worked on creating new strategies for both internal and external communications, including the development of a new website, recruitment materials, marketing collateral and re-branding of the department and Showboat identities. While a river now divides us, our department will continue to work with Justin and the Weisman on arts and cultural planning for campus initiatives. We wish Justin all the best in his new endeavors (and to the new family member that he and his partner Amie and daughter Madeline will welcome into the world this December!).

– Sherry Wagner-Henry



## From the CLA Development Office

by Ann Ulring

*Help us in our work to develop the next generation of theatre and dance artists, educators, managers, technicians and scholars.*

My role as a development officer is to create opportunities for your involvement around the things that interest you most. As an alum or friend of the department, I invite you to go with me behind the scenes of a rehearsal, observe in the classroom, meet a faculty member or attend a performance. It is this kind of first-hand experience that will give you insight into the quality work currently being done in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance at the University of Minnesota – and perhaps remind you of the time you spent with the department. As a former student or supporter, you helped establish, and contributed to, this climate of creativity in the past. Now, more than ever, we need your continued support as a donor to keep these valuable experiences alive.

As you can see in this issue of *Applause*, the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance is a vibrant place where minds are being stretched and great creative work is being done. From the creative collaboration that produced the stunning performance, superb design and technical virtuosity of *The Woyzeck Project*, to the hilarity of our BFA's repertory production of Noël Coward's *Hay Fever* and *Present Laughter*, to the graceful arc of the Dance Program's in-depth Cowles residency that will restage the José Limón masterwork, "Missa Brevis," there is a wide array of brilliant work being done in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance.

This caliber of teaching, learning and research cannot exist without your help. There are many opportunities for giving to the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Right now the greatest need is student support. Scholarships not only allow students to focus on their studies but they also provide encouragement and build confidence. But scholarships are just one way that you can show your support. Other options might include mentoring a current student or arranging an internship or fellowship opportunity at your place of employment, particularly if you have been fortunate enough to continue working in the arts. Other forms of support could benefit the production programs in the department. In lieu of a financial contribution, you might consider donating clothing, furniture or theatrical equipment – or volunteering your time to make or gather these items.

Your gifts allow the department to recruit and retain the very best students and help the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance to thrive and grow. Best of all, by taking action now, before the end of the calendar year, you can take valuable tax deductions on many of these donations.

To discuss creating a fellowship or scholarship, or other gift opportunities, please contact me, Ann Ulring, at 612-624-8573 or [aulring@umn.edu](mailto:aulring@umn.edu). Thanks in advance for your continued support of our department and its students!



## Spotlight on the Faculty

**Judy Bartl** (BFA, Program Director) is responsible for all BFA recruitment, local and national. She taught workshops on Choosing a College at college fairs and high schools nationally, and served on an Educator's Panel for the Young Arts Program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.

**Lou Bellamy** (BA, Directing) directed *Redshirts* at Penumbra and Roundhouse Theatre; *Gem of the Ocean* for Penumbra at the Guthrie; and *The Piano Lesson* and *Fences* at Penumbra. In addition, he directed *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at the Kennedy Center, and *A Raisin in the Sun* for the Cleveland Playhouse. He also won a 2007 Loyd Richards Directing Award.

**David Bernstein** (Development and Community Relations) was lead member of the team that prepared for an accreditation review by NAST, the National Association of Schools of Theatre, for which he wrote the NAST Self-Study. He is also the editor of *Applause*.

**Lance Brockman** (Design/Tech) designed scenery for *Redshirts* and *Fences* at Penumbra, and *The Count of Monte Cristo* aboard the Showboat. He also presented at the Lake Superior Design Retreat sponsored by the American Institute of Architects and had design images selected for inclusion in the 2008 edition of the textbook, *Scene Design and Stage Lighting*.

**Steve Cardamone** (BFA, Acting) directed several BFA performance projects, including *Splendor in the Grass* and *Othello*, and appeared in *Talley's Folly* at the New Court Theatre in Beloit, WI. He also coordinated professional auditions for BFA students.

**Elisa Carlson** (BFA, Voice) directed the Shakespeare on the Cape production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and served as vocal coach for *Boats on a River*, *Pen*, and *A Christmas Carol* at the Guthrie. She also was a vocal consultant for *Lost Boys of Sudan* at the Children's Theatre, *Redshirts* at Penumbra and *The Poetry of Pizza* at Mixed Blood.

**Lisa Channer** (BA, Directing) directed one play for *365 Plays/365 Days* at the Birmingham Fringe Festival (Alabama). She also directed and performed in *Delirium For Two* with her company, Theatre Novi Most, at the Minnesota Fringe Festival, and directed *I'm Telling* at Illusion Theatre. She presented at panels and workshops in New York City, Atlanta and Birmingham, Alabama.

**Ananya Chatterjea** (Dance, Program Director) published articles in the series, *Worlding Dance*, and in the collection, *Dignity in Motion: Dance, Human Rights and Social Justice*. She gave presentations at eleven conferences around the globe – in such locations as Singapore, Paris, Barnard College, Temple University and UCLA. She also created *Pipaashaa, extreme thirst*, which premiered at the Southern Theater. She was named Best Choreographer by *City Pages* and received the prestigious U of M Josie R. Johnson Human Rights and Social Justice Award.

**Carl Flink** (Dance, Department Chair) choreographed and performed with his company, Black Label Movement (BLM), the critically-acclaimed dance work, *Wreck*, at the Southern Theater. In addition, BLM, in partnership with TU Dance, was commissioned to choreograph Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" by the Minnesota Orchestra Young People's concert series. He also received a Grant-in-Aid from the U of M, and a grant from the U of M McKnight Special Events Fund. He is the first Dance faculty member to become Chair of Theatre Arts and Dance.

**Cindy Garcia** (Dance and MA/PhD) published a book review for *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* and an article for a special issue on Latina Performance in *Women and Performance*. She presented at conferences in New York City and Paris, and did choreography for the "El Día de los Muertos" procession at an event sponsored by the U of M Department of Chicano Studies.

**Martin Gwinup** (Design/Tech, Program Director and Director of Theatre) served as Multimedia Designer and/or Sound Designer for three Penumbra productions: *Black Nativity*, *Redshirts* and *Get Ready*, for *Blues in the Night* at the Ordway; for the joint U of M/History Theatre production of *Peace Crimes*; and for *Sherlock's Last Case* aboard the Showboat.

**Brent "Mickey" Henry** (Design/Tech, Technical Director) served as TD for the entire University Theatre Subscriber Season and the Showboat. He also served as a consultant for Simpsonian LLC and Norcostco.

**Lucinda Holshue** (BFA, Voice) served as vocal and/or dialect coach for *Private Lives*, *Jane Eyre*, *Peer Gynt*, *Third and Nine Parts of Desire* at the Guthrie; and *Two For The Seesaw*, *Shining City* and *Syringa Tree* at the Jungle. She also led the BFA Town Hall Forum, which focused on Anne Bogart's book, *And Then, You Act*.

**Nora Jenneman** (Dance, Program Coordinator) coordinated the "Year of Trisha" Dance Community events on behalf of University Dance Theatre, the Walker Art Center and Northrop Dance Series. She performed in Time Track Productions' *The Closer I Get the Less I Believe It* at the Ritz Theater, and also served as a Sage Cowles Community Dance Award panelist and presenter.

**Michal Kobialka** (MA/PhD) published articles in *Performance Research* and in *Leituras da Morte* and presented papers or lectures at Performance Studies International (New York) and Sala Crisantempo (São Paulo, Brazil). He is Associate Editor of *Theatre Journal* and of the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*. He is on sabbatical for the 2008-09 academic year.

**Sonja Arsham Kuftinec** (MA/PhD, Director of Graduate Studies) published articles in *Considering Calamity: Methodologies for Performance Research* and *Research in Drama Education*. She presented papers and moderated panels at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference and the Society of Theatre Research conference. She was the 2007 Fulton Lecturer at Brigham Young University and also delivered lectures at the Swedish Academy of Mime and Acting, and at Arizona State University.

**Diyah Larasati** (Dance) published articles for the Congress of Research in Dance; the national Indonesian Arts Journal, *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*; and *Inside Indonesia*. She presented papers at ten conferences in such places as Yogyakarta, Indonesia; the International Convention of Asia Scholars in Malaysia; and the Society of Dance Scholars in Paris. She was awarded research grants by the U of M Institute of Advanced Studies, CLA, UCLA Southeast Asian Studies and *Hibah Bersaing*. She also created the original dance work, *Mari Bicara* (Let's Talk).

**Mathew Lefebvre** (Design/Tech) designed costumes and scenery for *The Poetry of Pizza* at Mixed Blood and Penumbra's *Gem of the Ocean* at the Guthrie. He also designed costumes for *Enchanted April* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* at Milwaukee Repertory, and for *Redshirts* and *Get Ready* at Penumbra. His costume designs for *Two Trains Running* at the Off-Broadway Signature Theatre were nominated for a 2007 AUDELCO award and were featured in the design exhibit at the 2007 USITT. He is on sabbatical during the 2008-09 academic year.

**Megan Lewis** (MA/PhD) finished reimagining and diversifying the curriculum for the Introductory Theatre course, which she has taught for the past two years. She published articles or reviews in *Performing Arts Journal* and *Theatre Journal*.

**Kenneth Mitchell** (BFA, Acting) adapted and directed *The Persians* for the BFA Juniors. He directed *Fresh Scenes* for the Freshmen, and several Shakespeare scenes for Senior Spring Showcase. He also did conceptualization and curriculum planning for Stage Elements, in addition to teaching workshops for the program.

**Jean Montgomery** (Design/Tech, *Emerita*) designed lighting for *Inspecting Carol* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* aboard the Showboat, after which she officially retired. She has given almost 35 years of service to the students, the department, the University and the profession.

**Elizabeth Nash** (BA, Speech and Singing) published a book, *Autobiographical Reminiscences of African-American Classical Singers, 1853-Present*, with the Edwin Mellen Press. She also contributed to an oral history project for the Longyear Museum in Boston.

**Deborah Pearson** (BFA, Teaching Specialist) served as academic advisor for all the BFA students, coordinated the London Study Abroad program, helped coordinate national BFA recruiting, and provided a range of student services for members of the BFA program. In addition, she taught audition preparation privately.

**Susan Pettigrew** (Design/Tech, Costume Shop Manager) served as head draper for the Showboat and for all the shows on the University Theatre Subscriber Season, in addition to supervising the operations of the Costume Shop.

**Toni Pierce-Sands** (Dance) served as Artistic Director and Rehearsal Director for University Dance Theatre, and also for TU Dance, a company she co-founded with her partner Uri Sands. She and her company performed in Klamath Falls, Oregon and at the Southern Theater.

**Luverne Seifert** (BA, Acting; Program Director and Director of Undergraduate Studies) performed in the *Holiday Pageant* for Open Eye Figure Theatre at the Pantages; in *The Pillowman* for Frank Theatre at the Guthrie, which won an Ivey award; and in *Forced Matter* for Shawn McConneloug and her Orchestra, in Florida. He also directed *The Visit* at Augsburg College, and taught two workshops in clowning for that institution.

**Joanie Smith** (Dance) created "Two" for TU Dance and "Caitlin, Sam and Me!" for Minnesota Dance Theater, both of which premiered locally. She also received commissions for new work, or licensed existing repertory, from the University of Florida and Gustavus Adolphus College. She and her company, Shapiro & Smith Dance, received a "Best Of" award from *City Pages* for *Anytown*, and also received grants from the NEA, Target Foundation and the McKnight Foundation.

**Michael Sommers** (BA and COLA, Puppetry) is the artistic director of Open Eye Figure Theatre, which opened its own theatre space in September 2007. For the new theatre, he created and/or directed, and performed in, several original works, including: *Come and Get It*, *A Prelude to Faust*, which won an Ivey, and *Eleanor's Cabinet*. He also served as scenic designer and consultant for *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* at the Children's Theatre Company.

**Sherry Wagner-Henry** (Managing Director, University Theatre) served as Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Arts and Cultural Partnership of Saint Paul, and as a panelist and site reviewer for the Minnesota State Arts Board. She also serves as Vice-Commissioner of Arts Administration for the United States Institute of Theatre Technology, and is Coordinator/Advisor for the Arts Management concentration in the Master of Liberal Studies program at the U of M.

**Dominic Taylor** (BA, Directing) published *Upcity Service(s) in 7 More Different Plays*, edited by Mac Wellman. He also wrote and directed *Overdrive*, which was performed as a reading at New Dramatists in New York. As associate artistic director of Penumbra, he contributed to *Redshirts* and *The Piano Lesson*. He also was a lead organizer for "Framing Suzan-Lori Parks" at the U of M.

**Margaret Werry** (MA/PhD, Program Director) had articles or reviews published in *Cultural Studies*, *The Review of Education*, *Pedagogy and Cultural Studies*, *TDR: The Drama Review* and *JAE: Journal of Architectural Education*. She chaired a panel at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and made presentations at the University of Kent (UK), for the American Studies Association, and for several international conferences at the U of M. She also received a Fellowship from the Institute for Advanced Studies at the U of M.

# spring events highlights

TICKETS AND INFORMATION AT [THEATRE.UMN.EDU](http://THEATRE.UMN.EDU)

## SUBSCRIBER SERIES at Rarig Center

University Dance Theatre presents  
*Dance Revolutions*  
February 6–8

*Night Train to Bolina*  
By Nilo Cruz  
Directed by Dominic Taylor  
February 27 – March 7

*A Bright Room Called Day*  
By Tony Kushner  
Directed by Lisa Channer  
April 17–25

## EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE COMPANY at Rarig Center

24 Hour Theatre  
January 23–24

*Shadows/Reflections*  
Directed by Annie Katsura and Wade Haynes  
and *Will Talking/George Eating*  
Directed by Will Daddario and George McConnell  
March 5–8

*The Odyssey*  
Directed by Wyatt Weber  
April 23–26

## DANCE PROGRAM EVENTS at the Barker Center for Dance

Dance Program Spring Concert *Unplugged*  
Featuring the work of Paula Mann, Erin Thompson and  
student choreographers  
March 6

Student Dance Coalition Concert  
April 23–26

## BFA STUDIO SERIES at Rarig Center unless noted

Junior Greek: *Oedipus Cycle*  
Directed by Kenneth Noel Mitchell  
March 5–8

Sophomore Shakespeares:  
*As You Like It*  
Directed by Jacqueline Bessell  
*Twelfth Night*  
Directed By Steve Cardamone  
April 2–5

Junior Comedies:  
*Slavs*  
by Tony Kushner  
*Illusion*  
by Pierre Corneille  
April 23–26

Senior New Plays & Snapshots  
Performed in the Guthrie's Dowling Studio

*Fresh Scenes*  
Acting scenes directed by Kenneth Noel Mitchell  
Poetic works directed by Lucinda Holshue  
April 30 – May 2

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# Is There a Doctor in the House?



by Molière  
adapted and directed by  
Kenneth Mitchell

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!



Join the U of M Showboat Players on board the Minnesota Centennial Showboat this summer for a healthy dose of ol' fashioned fun. *Is There a Doctor in the House?* is your cure for the summertime blues. Based on *The Imaginary Invalid* by Molière, the story centers on Argan, a hypochondriac whose obsession with his health and following his physician's advice becomes more intolerable than actually being ill. A comedy of misdirection, mistaken identities, and misdiagnosis, the production will also fill your prescription for musical entertainment with its delightful olios. *Is There a Doctor in the House?* is sure to leave you in stitches, whether you need them or not.

JUNE 19TH THRU AUGUST 29TH  
[Showboat.umn.edu](http://Showboat.umn.edu) or 651.227.1100