New Musical Theatre Festival Debuts

It’s one thing to put on a Rodgers & Hammerstein tried-and-true classic like “Oklahoma!” or “South Pacific.” Just about everyone has seen them—they’ve been around for generations and have been staged from Broadway to just about every dinner theatre from Lansing to Los Angeles.

It’s quite another to develop new musicals—originals, from the first word all the way through to full production—and that’s the journey the Drama Department of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts has embarked on. By forming an alliance with Los Angeles-based Academy for New Musical Theatre (ANMT), a 30-year-old creative incubator, CTSA hopes to become the new spawning ground for the classic musicals of tomorrow.

The plan, hatched by Drama Professor Gary Busby and ANMT executive director Scott Guy after serving together on a professional panel, is to create new art and, by doing so, get the opportunity to sculpt what Broadway looks like five or 10 years down the road.

“The University should be a place where this art form is being created,” said Busby. “The goal is to raise the School’s profile by creating a niche for ourselves, which in turn results in attracting better drama students and building a larger and broader audience base for all of our performances.”

The plays will be written by ANMT writers, composers, lyricists and producers. They will be performed, designed and directed by CTSA students and faculty.

“With a new bachelor of fine arts degree in musical theatre being offered through the Drama Department—and with our alumni starring in Broadway, off-Broadway and several national productions—the UC Irvine Drama Department is uniquely positioned to impact the future of American musical theatre,” said Busby.

Two original musicals were selected earlier in the year and were put through the table reading and workshop process. The months-long procedure culminated recently with the plays being presented in staged readings that launched the School’s annual New Musical Theatre Festival.

Attendees had the opportunity to see e-Scape, a suspenseful drama that takes place in a virtual world, and Aging Out, a woeful tale about the foster-care system, during their presentations on the Winfred Smith Hall stage. Without costumes, scenery and lighting, the audiences had a rare chance to see original works in their embryonic stages and provide feedback that will help determine which of the musicals will be selected to be fully produced during CTSA’s next season.

“It’s a rare chance to see how a show is built from the seed of an idea to full production, a part of research and pedagogy that students and audiences rarely get to be part of,” said Busby, who was responsible for developing the music portion of UCLA’s music theatre program before joining UCI’s faculty six years ago. “In order to maximize our students’ potential, we need to look at where the marketplace will be, rather than where it is now. Originating new works will allow us to do just that.”

Miles Coolidge to Chair Studio Art Department

Associate professor and acclaimed photographer Miles Coolidge has been selected as the new chair of CTSA’s Studio Art Department, whose faculty is celebrated in a variety of the visual arts, from painting and video to photography and digital media.

Born and reared in Montreal to American parents, Coolidge discovered his love for photography in the sixth grade, when he learned to develop film and make prints of his own black and white photos. But he put that interest aside during high school and was still searching for an area to concentrate on when he was accepted at Harvard. He decided to major in philosophy because of “its connection to virtually every academic field.”

While he found the academics of philosophy too confining, a class in Art Theory interested him enough to enroll in some studio art classes. He accumulated enough work to assemble an impressive portfolio, gained entry to Harvard’s selective Visual and Environmental Studies Department, and graduated as an art major with interests in photography and sculpture.

“Harvard didn’t really prepare me with the tools I needed to continue developing my work in photography, so I opted to work in virtually every service aspect of the field—from taking portraits in malls and on air force bases to assisting commercial photographers,” Coolidge explained.

Graduate school was the next logical step, and he selected California Institute of the Arts because of its exemplary photography program and emphasis on experimentation.

“I learned the most from my peers because they had such varied ranges of experience, capabilities and interest,” he said. “I took the time to work with video, computer modeling and animation. I can say that this is where I reinvented myself as a photographic artist.”

His artistic style was already developing and resembled a direction that was being produced in Germany at the time. With a postgraduate DAAD fellowship, the German equivalent of a Fulbright scholarship, Coolidge was able to study at Kunstakademie Dusseldorf with well-respected photographer and teacher Bernd Becher and his wife, Hilla. Coolidge became one of several former Becher students whose distinctive style became known as the Becher School.

Today, Coolidge’s photography can be found in galleries, museums and private collections all around the world. Permanent collections of his work can be seen at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Orange County Museum of Art, as well as the Guggenheim Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

HELP US GO PAPERLESS! REGISTER YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS!

To save a few thousand trees, and several thousand dollars in printing and postage, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts wants to convert this quarterly newsletter into an electronic format. To do that, we need your email address.

If you would like to continue receiving news from us, please go to the home page of our web site (www.arts.uci.edu) and click on the bright red envelope near the top of the page. You will be forwarded to a page to register your email address, ensuring that you continue to receive news about our Dance, Drama and Music performances, as well as the exhibits at our Galleries and the Beall Center.

Don’t delay—register today! Help us go paperless.

www.arts.uci.edu
From the Dean’s Desk

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is again an honor and a privilege to be writing to all of you from the office of the Dean as we begin this new academic year. We have much to look forward to in this coming year, much to discuss and much to celebrate.

Construction has resumed on the New Media Arts building and its opening is only one year away. I know that I speak for all of us in the School when I say that, even though we have to step around the construction site and smile through the noise, our excitement only grows as the potential beauty and promise of this facility become reality. I see the new building as a particularly apt metaphor for the institution of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts – built on a solid foundation, destined to define the arts for the 21st century, and illuminated by a rich and vibrant community of artists, scholars, students, patrons and collaborators.

As you read through this newsletter, you will, no doubt, be amazed by the accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students and alumni – remarkable work not only for the level of achievement, but also for the diversity of discipline. Even while the on-going California budget crisis continues to pull resources away from the University, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts remains committed to the professional quality of our 2009-10 season of performances, exhibitions, scholarship and service.

I welcome you all to an exciting year, and encourage you to take advantage of all the wonderful things the School of the Arts has to offer.

Alan Terricciano
Acting Dean

On The Job: Jon Agnew, Video Facility Supervisor

Q: What are your main responsibilities in the video department of Studio Art?
A: My primary responsibilities are managing our equipment, which involves checking gear in and out to students, handling general maintenance and repair, and purchasing. Video is a broad subject and, with rapidly changing technology, it can be difficult to keep up. Faculty never have enough time to teach everything in class, so a big part of my job is to supplement students’ course instruction with some of the more technical aspects of production. I am also here to assist both students and faculty with video projects.

Q: Tell me a little about your education, background and experience.
A: I studied Film and Television Production at Boston’s Northeastern University. After college, I moved to Los Angeles, where I worked as director of photography on a variety of television shows, commercials, promos, and independent films.

Q: How did you get interested in this field?
A: As a child, I had quite an active imagination. My friends and I used to shoot films with my dad’s video camera, then screen them for our families. ‘It’s not something I became interested in – I really can’t remember a time when I wasn’t interested in it.’ Orson Welles once said that a film set is “the best train set a boy could ever ask for.” That’s exactly the way I feel about it.

Q: What equipment is available to students? Can only arts students use the equipment? How do they go about reserving something?
A: We have a wide variety of equipment available to Studio Art graduate students, as well as to our undergraduates enrolled in video classes. They have access to everything they need from cameras to lights to audio to editing bays. We also have a sound stage, complete with green-screen, backdrops, and even room to build a set. I’m very excited about our newest toy, a 35mm adaptor that allows us to use SLR camera lenses on video cameras. It makes a difference you have to see to believe.

Q: What type of projects do students work on in this area of Studio Art?
A: The variety in the types of projects we see in the video area is one of my favorite aspects of the job. We see everything from traditional narratives to experimental installations. The breadth of creativity shown by our students is truly impressive. One of my favorite projects was done by a student who hired 23 SAG actors and shot a 90-minute experimental narrative film in one day on our green-screen. Ninety minutes in one day is unheard of – and the final product is one of the most original pieces of art I have ever seen.

Q: What careers are your video students prepared for after graduation?
A: While the primary focus in the Studio Art Department is to give students the necessary education and training for a career in the art world, our graduating students have the skills required to work in mainstream production as well. We have alumni who are now Whitney fellows, as well as those who have gone on to work on big-budget Hollywood films and in broadcast television. Our video students are certainly not limited in their options after school.

Q: Have you had any strange/weird requests from students for specific projects?
A: Most of our students are fairly aware of what we do and do not have, so weird requests tend to be rare. Although, one student did bring back a camera and informed me that it was broken. After a full weekend of shooting, he had found that the camera hadn’t recorded anything. I opened the camera and told him it was because there was no tape in it, to which he replied, “We need tape?!!”

Q: What is a typical day like for you?
A: I work in an arts school – there is no such thing as a typical day!

Q: What types of classes are taught in this area?
A: The video curriculum has recently undergone some really exciting changes. Our video classes cover traditional field and studio production, then move on to more advanced topics like video installation, audio production, editing techniques, color correction, visual effects, and DVD authoring. We also offer a very cool class called Collaborative Projects in Video, which seeks to match the top talent from Studio Art, Drama, and Dance in order to create an original work that utilizes the strengths of everyone involved. The students are responsible for everything from conception to completion, and the results so far have been very impressive.

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Loretta Livingston, associate professor, collaborated with Korean choreographer Dr. Sam-Jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea, on "A Certain Slant of Light," a new dance theater project inspired by selected works of Emily Dickinson. Accompanying her to the April premiere at the Seonyang Nam Arts Center were CTSA undergraduate dance majors Brittany Milidri and Armando Yearwood and alumni Aubri Siebert and Marci Tuttle (both MFA ’08). Other projects for Livingston included:

- Guest artist residency for the dance department of LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore and a new dance work to be premiered in the Singapore Dans Festival in October.
- Site-specific dance and video performance event in the Rahmi M. Koç Museum in Istanbul, Turkey. Prof. Livingston has recruited dance alumnus Melanie King (MFA ’09) and dance/video artist Kara Miller (MFA ’08) to perform and direct the media components, and join alumnus Onur Topal (MFA ’06) and other Turkish dance and media artists at the November debut.

Assistant Professor Jeff Russell (Dance Science):
- Attended the National Athletic Trainers Association Annual Symposium in June in San Antonio and the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine’s annual meeting in Colorado in July.
- Presented "Sonometry Of The Ankle For The Extreme Motors Required In Ballet" at the July International Ankle Symposium in Sydney, Australia.
- Presented at the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science in Den Haag, the Netherlands;
- Has completed setting up his lab in the CalIT2 building, where he has invited undergraduate students to participate in a Dance Science Research Group in order to train students in research and equip them for scholarship in the dance medicine and science field.

At the 2009 International Festival for Composers in Frigiliana, Spain, Dance Chair Lisa Naugle, choreographer in residence, and Professor John Crawford, media artist in residence, presented "Siheyuan Threads," a new dance film directed by Crawford and choreographed by Gao Yanjiao and Naugle, with a musical score by Alan Terriccione. Thirteen CTSA students from Dance, Drama, and Music participated in the International Festival for Composers, as well as at the CID Dance Conference in Malaga, Spain. The students performed original music by festival composers during performances in Seville, Malaga and Frigiliana.

This summer, Professor Nancy Lee Ruyter participated in two conferences;
- "Global Perspectives on Dance Pedagogy: Research and Practice," which was jointly sponsored by the Congress on Research in Dance and the Center for Excellence in the Performing Arts, and took place in Leicester, Great Britain. She presented a paper on the teaching and learning of dance genres outside of one’s own cultural context.
- International Federation for Theatre Research, which took place in Lisbon, Portugal, where she presented on Yuyachkani, a Peruvian theater group that performs politically and socially relevant works.

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Three Penny Opera” for CTSA. Co-producer and ICIT faculty member Jerzy Kosmala will serve as a jury member of the International Student/Alumni Dance Competition. He also was musical director of the production of “Guys and Dolls” and “Man of La Mancha” for the Coast Repertory and is now busy working on “The Peony Pavilion” with Tess Wu, other opera artists and students.

Jerzy Kosmala returned from his conference in Dublin, Ireland.

Music
Music Chair David Brodbeck has been busy researching 19th century Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick for a recently published article “Hanslick’s Smetana and Hanslick’s Prague” in the Journal of the Royal Musical Association and a lecture about Hanslick’s “Goldmark” that was presented at an international conference in Dublin, Ireland.

Music lecturer Jeyzer Kosmala just returned from his concert tours in South Africa and Europe. He conducted a series of master classes and performed two solo concerts with the orchestra at the International Viola Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, and taught and performed at the Summer Music Academy in Zagan, Poland. In the fall, Kosmala will serve as a jury member of the International Viola Competition in Scotland and will conduct viola master classes and seminars at the University of St. Andrews in St. Andrews, Scotland.

Assistant Professor and ICT faculty member Kojiro Umezaki performed with the Silk Road Ensemble at Lincoln Center’s Damrosch Park. Umaezaki was a featured performer on the shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) and a narrator. Famed musician Yo Yo Ma was the artistic director.

Students/Alumni

Dance
Soon after graduation, dance alumna Rachel Bell (MFA ’09) accepted a position with Dance/USA, a national service organization for professional dance in Washington, D.C. She started as the office manager/executive administrator in July and has been quickly adjusting to life in the nation’s capital.

Drama
Victor Vasquez, Brandon Spooner and Sage Howard, CTSA drama students, participated in the Cornerstone Theater Company, a leading community-based theatre group in Eureka, Calif. They took classes in community-based art making while also rehearsing for a new adapt of “Jason and the Golden Fleece.” Several graduate students and alumni appeared in Bryan Reynolds’ world premiere of his play “Eve’s Rapture” at the Hayworth Theatre. They included Chris Marshall (MFA ’08) and Martin Swoverland (MFA ’04) and MFA ’09 grad Sage Howard. Ryan Welsh, Karyn Lawrence, Christa Mathis and Megan Gwynn participated in the Choir of the World finals for the Pavarotti Award.

Music
Current ICT student John Byun (BM ’13) has won Ordi I - Mixed Chir, the highest honor at the International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales. Byun also was a participant in the Choir of the World finals for the Pavarotti Award, for which only five choirs from the 2009 competition are invited to compete. Byun, who studied with ICT Professor Joseph Hutschi, currently is the director of choral activities at Riverside City College in Riverside, Calif.

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Students/Alumni
Music Department Mourns Loss of Two Visionaries

Staff and faculty of CTSA’s Music Department were saddened to lose Peter S. Odegard, professor emeritus, this past March. Odegard taught music theory and history, composition, orchestration, and advanced violin and viola at UC Irvine from 1966 until his retirement in 1994.

Known to colleagues and students as “Sig,” Odegard directed the University Orchestra from 1968 to 1974 and chaired the music area from 1979 to 1985, during which time he established the Remi Gassmann Electronic Studio in the School of the Arts, one of its first endowed facilities. In 1980, he began the UCI Summertime Music Workshop Festival, a program for pre-college musicians that ran until 1988.

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At UCI, Odegard’s attention turned increasingly to stage music as he collaborated on productions in the School. His highly literate musical style was influenced by his study and love of Schoenberg and his fellow serialists, which led him in 1974 to found the Irvine Conservatory of Music, initially as a preparatory school for the UCI music program. As the Conservatory grew, it spawned several orchestras that each began with him as its conductor: the Irvine Youth Symphony, the Orange County Community Orchestra and the Irvine Symphony Orchestra.

Sig is survived by his children Philip, Bill, and Erika, who received her bachelor’s degree in dance from UCI in 2008.

We also mourn the loss of Marjorie Rawlins, philanthropist, patroness of the arts and musician, who passed away in May after a long illness. She and her husband, Robert, who predeceased her in 1983, were well-known in the community for their long history of generous patronage to the UCI Music Department and to many other institutions and arts organizations, including the Orange County Performing Arts Center and the University of South Dakota’s National Music Museum (previously called the Shrine to Music Museum).

In 1995, Marjorie Rawlins received the UCI Medal, the university’s highest honor, for her gift of $1 million for endowed undergraduate scholarships in piano, violin, viola and cells. That gift dramatically changed the face of a department that had struggled for years to attract high level students. In 1998, Rawlins donated another $1 million, which established The Robert and Marjorie Rawlins Chair in Music, the first endowed chair in the School of the Arts, named for her and her late husband. These visionary steps helped transform the Music Department’s performance program into one of the best in the UC system.

South Korean Artist Featured at The Beall Center

As part of an ongoing commitment to exhibiting various areas of experimental media arts, the Beall Center for Art & Technology is starting off its new season with a selection of work by world-renowned and pioneering video artist Nam June Paik (1932-2006).

“Media Alchemy of Nam June Paik” will be on view at the Beall Center through December 5.

Paik played a pivotal role in introducing artists and audiences to the possibilities of using video for artistic expression. The South Korean-born artist’s first video sculptures were exhibited in the early ‘60s and used TV sets as sculptural forms and a custom-made synthesizer to create images seen on the screens. This exhibition highlights works done towards the end of his life, including the rarely seen work “Gulliver” (2001).

For gallery hours, visit www.beallcenter.uci.edu or call (949) 824-4339.

“Gulliver” by South Korean artist Nam June Paik

ICIT: A Great Program No Matter How You Mispronounce It!

Last fall, CTSA’s music department implemented Integrated Composition, Improvisation and Technology (ICIT), a new master of fine arts program that merged two previous UCI programs, Composition and Technology with Jazz Studies. The program was started to give the Music Department an opportunity to revise the two graduate areas to better reflect the faculty’s specializations and to offer something that was missing in academia.

“Most graduate music programs are based on a long standing classical/jazz binary, and most separated technology into its own area,” explained Kojiro Umezaki, who joined the Music Department last year as an assistant professor in Composition Improvisation Technology. “The unique aspect of our ICIT program is that we have been able to create a framework that mirrors the current reality of the practicing freelance musician as opposed to having to fit it into an existing framework that may or may not be flexible enough to support the creative activity of this program.”

The department envisions ICIT as a new exploration in graduate music study that will prepare students to confront and contribute to current developments in multiple, overlapping fields. Students are encouraged to collaborate in order to foster new ideas in music and performance.

All the core faculty members in ICIT are practicing musicians and bring “real world experience” to the program, helping students make connections with music professionals and enhance their job opportunities upon graduation. The core faculty actively practice a wide range of improvisational styles including jazz, contemporary music, interactive technology-based systems, and non-western approaches.

Umezaki, who grew up in Tokyo in a multilingual/multicultural environment and attended an international high school in Japan, came to the U.S. for undergraduate studies in computer science and a graduate program of electro-acoustic music at Dartmouth College. He freelanced for many years in Japan, Canada and the U.S. as an educator, performer and developer of both music and technology. He currently performs with the Silk Road Ensemble, a collective of approximately 60 internationally renowned musicians, composers, arrangers, visual artists and storytellers from more than 20 countries.

“I don’t believe there is one ideal music genre for the future,” Umezaki explained. “Our goal is to help develop individuals who can adapt to the constant changes in the art form.”

A free concert by ICIT graduate students is schedule for May in Winfred Smith Hall. Check the CTSA Season Brochure or events listing (www.arts.uci.edu/events) for more information.
Free Gassmann Concert & Lecture with Award-Winning Composer

The celebrated Gassmann Series of Concerts continues with an appearance by award-winning composer Steve Lehman performing cutting-edge music for solo saxophone and live electronics on Wed., Nov. 4 at 8:00 p.m. at the CTSA Music and Media Building, room 218.

Incorporating detailed computer programming and real-time processing, Lehman creates computer-driven environments for improvisation. He was named a Rising Star on the alto saxophone in 2008, 2007, and 2006 by Downbeat magazine’s International Critics Poll and is recognized as one of today’s truly original creative voices by several prestigious international publications.

Join him in the same location at 4:30 p.m. for his free lecture presentation “Interactive Computer Environments for Improvisation,” a discussion of his work with computer-driven environments for improvisation, using Max/MSP programming.

For more information, visit www.music.arts.uci.edu/dobrian/gemseries/gemseries09-10.htm.

International Audience Expected at December Digital Arts Conference

Several hundred international guests will converge on the Claire Trevor School of the Arts campus this Dec. 12-15 for DAC ’09, the Digital Arts Conference being organized by Studio Art Professor and Conference Director Simon Penny.

DAC ’09 is an international interdisciplinary conference series involving a variety of fields, including media studies, media art, hyper-textual literature, computer science, cognitive science and human-computer interaction.

Themes for this year’s event include “Embodiment and Performativity,” “After Mobile Media,” “Software/Platform Studies,” “Environment/Sustainability/Climate Change,” “Interdisciplinary Pedagogy,” “Cognition and Creativity,” “Sex and Sexuality,” “Space-Time of Ubiquity and Embeddedness,” and “Present and Future of Human-Computer Interaction in the Digital Field.”

“Over 400 applications were submitted by interested participants, and 100 were accepted to make presentations at the conference,” said Penny, an Australian artist, theorist, teacher, and curator in the fields of digital cultural practices, embodied interaction, art and technology, and interactive art.

The conference is being sponsored by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, Claire Trevor School of the Arts, Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Science, and CalIT2. For more information, visit http://dac09.uci.edu.

We’d Like To Thank...

The stages, concert halls and galleries on the CTSA campus are accessible, and make a difference in our community.

We thank all of our patrons and donors. Every gift – large or small – is appreciated.

Become a Patron of The Arts

For those needing a unique and meaningful birthday, anniversary or holiday gift for a loved one, how about immortalizing them at UCI’s Claire Trevor Theatre? The Claire Trevor School of the Arts is offering commemorative engraved plaques that will be permanently affixed to the 290 seats within our campus’s main theatre. Honor a special occasion, pay homage to a departed loved one, leave your own legacy or just make a contribution to an important arts institution.

Tribute plaques on the theatre’s prime seats (Tier 1) are donations of $2,500 each; Tier 2 seating tributes are $1,500; and plaques for Tier 3 seats are $1,000 each. For more information or to make a donation, call Kerry Neal, director of development, at (949) 824-8750 or email him a Neal@uci.edu.

Give the gift that will last for generations!