New Media Arts Center Breaks Ground

Nobody can put on a show like the folks at the Claire Trevor School of the Arts. People are still talking about the spectacular February 21 groundbreaking ceremony and reception for the New Media Arts Center—a five-story, $42.4 million, glass-and-brick building that will house the School’s programs combining high technology with dance, drama, music and studio art.

From the string quartet to the dancers, singers, jazz pianist, live mannequins of drama characters, art works, even musical plants—guests were treated to a dazzling variety show of talent and a sumptuous menu of catered food. Starting in a tent over the outdoor patio at Claire Trevor Theatre, the crowd moved indoors to the backstage area for food, beverages and more entertainment.

Local media outlets covering the event included The Orange County Register, KOCE-TV, The Daily Pilot, Orange County Business Journal and New U, the UCI student newspaper. UCI Chancellors Michael V. Drake, M.D., Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Michael R. Gottfredson and Dean Nohema Fernández spoke at the ceremony, along with Kris Elftmann, member of the Dean’s Leadership Council.

Dance department Chair Alan Terricciano, a noted musician and composer, was a hit as he played potted plants—a miniature date palm, a cactus and tall grass wired with sensors. The Orange County Register posted an online video interview. “This celebrates the imaginative use of technology as part of the creative process,” said Terricciano. Construction of the 38,564 square-foot facility signals a new era for the arts school, one that celebrates the School’s traditions while creating new futures, said Dean Fernández. She honored the past by recognizing some of the invited guests—a world-class cast of artists, performers, and thinkers who in the 1960s played major roles in the School’s foundation.

Key members of the founding faculty include Robert Cohen, professor of drama and former department chair and acting dean; Tony DeLap, professor of studio art; Clayton Garrison, founding dean and professor of drama; the late Eugene Loring, professor of dance; Mehdi Matta, former conductor of the UCI Symphony; Sid Goldlogie, professor of music; James Fenoll, current associate dean and professor emeritus of dance, and Colin Slim, professor emeritus of music. These founding faculty members and visiting artists such as Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein and Roger Wagner were trailblazers at the newly established University of California, Irvine campus. They changed the face of the arts throughout Orange County, California, and the nation, says Fernández.

“As the Claire Trevor School of the Arts grows and broadens its horizons, we have new programs in traditional areas such as curatorial studies and musical theatre, as well as cutting-edge, technologically dependent areas like sound design and multi-media performance.”

The New Media Arts Center will create dynamic public spaces, including a professional exhibition gallery, a multi-media “black box” stage, and a motion capture studio. It will also provide new offices, studios for students earning their master of fine arts degrees, computing labs, and production spaces.

“The integration of technology in the arts has resulted in an increasing emphasis on more collaborative, multidisciplinary work,” says Fernández. “For example, studio artists team with dancers to digitize their movements and convert them to animation. Another example is actors, musicians, and dancers sharing the stage with the projected images of colleagues half a world away, via a live internet feed.”

“As a result, the School of the Arts has come to rely as heavily on technology as some science disciplines,” she says.

A related part of the construction project will be a separate addition to the Production Studio, facing Mesa Road and the Bren Events Center. Steven Erlich Architects designed the center with “green” principles in mind. Construction is expected to be completed in March 2010.

Funding Set for Robert Cohen Theatre

Financial commitments made by many alumni and friends have made it possible to proceed on a long-standing plan to rename Studio Theatre the Robert Cohen Theatre, after the School’s iconic and illustrious drama professor and internationally-renowned stage director.

Dean Nohema Fernández announced the news in her remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the New Media Arts Center. The total cost of the project is approximately $1 million, which will go toward remodeling the Studio Theatre and its Mina Street façade, as well as creating a new entrance plaza to the School.

The remodeling project will coincide with the construction of the New Media Arts Center, scheduled for completion in 2010. Features will consist of a skyway to the Theatre Plaza, a large sign above a proscenium, new signage above the theater and a new box office facing Mesa road.

The gifts represent the contributions of many alumni from the earliest days of UCI to the present, friends of the School, and close friends of Cohen, including his childhood friends from Kamp Kewanee in upstate New York.

“Robert Cohen’s name is synonymous with the pinnacle of achievement and leadership in the field of drama,” says Fernández. “Naming a theater after him is one way of immortalizing his stellar career and contributions to our School and the field of drama in general.”

“His textbooks are considered the bibles of drama education and have been translated into 30 languages.”

Cohen has spent his entire career at the School, starting as a founding faculty member in the 1960s. He went on to serve as chair of Drama several times and interim dean in the School.

Since arriving in 1965, he has directed more than 70 productions on campus and 30 on the professional stage, published 12 books on acting and theater, written new plays and translated classic ones.

Cohen is Claire Trevor Professor of Drama at UCI. In 1993 he was awarded the UCI Medal, the campus’ highest honor.

His career is the subject of a retrospective exhibit, Stage to Stage: The Theatrical Work of Robert Cohen that runs April 29 through October at the UCI Libraries.
From the Dean’s Desk

To remember is to understand.

Good parents remember what it was like to be a child. Good teachers remember what it was like to be a student. Good artists remember the foundations laid by those who came before.

We remember the amazing people who, in the 1960s, had a vision for a new university in the gentle hills of the Irvine Ranch, south of Los Angeles. In a bucolic setting, surrounded by buffalo and rabbits, the University of California, Irvine arose with a daring vision for the future. One of the initial schools within UCI, Fine Arts was shaped by the enthusiasm and determination of its founding dean, Clayton Garrison. He quickly gathered around him a spectacular roster of artists as the first generation of our faculty: the young and promising theater director Robert Cohen (now holder of a Claire Trevor Endowed Chair), the influential editor of Artforum and artist John Coplans, sculptor Tony DeLap, dancer/choreographer Eugene Loring, orchestral conductor Mehli Mehta, renowned musicologist Colin Slim, scenery and costume designer Richard Triplet, and choral conductor Roger Wagner.

Within the first few years, the excitement and the very persuasive Dean Garrison brought both established luminaries and young, promising additions to the budding school. Musicologists Peter Odegard and William Holmes and performer/conductor Maurice Allard joined Colin Slim in laying the foundation for the Music Department. As Chair of the Studio Art Department, John Coplans’ renown and passion brought celebrated artists who had tremendous impact on the world of the visual arts: Frank Stella, Larry Bell, David Hockney, John McCracken, Roy Lichstenstein, and Craig Kaufman.

Our heritage is rich. The vibrant atmosphere of possibility is understandable when we remember our foundations.

As I frequently use these lines to celebrate the wonderful talents of our creative faculty, I want to salute those who infused their passion and vision into what would become the Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

We remember with gratitude.

Nohema Fernández

Lending a Hand to a Student: The Medici Way

Do you remember your student days? Were you bubbling with creative ideas and ambitions for your future, yet short of the resources needed to fulfill those dreams? You can play a transformative role in students’ lives today and give them the opportunity to test their ideas and spread their wings.

The Medici Circle provides students who win this award with $1,500 to carry out a creative project during the summer. Under the guidance of faculty mentors, winners have recently participated in music festivals in Alaska and Italy and dance festivals in North Carolina and San Francisco, exhibited work in Seoul, Korea, taught youth in Cambodia, and developed online, participatory performances that defined traditions.

Medici patrons are connected with their scholars and share in the unique experiences of these young people. If you are considering becoming a Medici patron for 2008, the time to act is now! Please contact Mia Martinez (miam@uci.edu or 949/824-0085) for more information.

Voices

“Art is a true expression of life. It dances, sings, frolics, paints, sculpts, laughs and cries. It is who we were at the moment of its creation. We find no better means to give birth to new life than supporting the Claire Trevor School of the Arts!” — Elizabeth and Tom Tierney

“We saw our first School of the Arts production more than 25 years ago and if anything, the students and faculty are more talented than ever. The role of the arts has grown during the ensuing years; on campus and throughout the world. As the School brings people from different cultures, age groups and parts of society together in ways that only the arts can do. We are enormously proud to be supporters of UCI’s Claire Trevor School of the Arts.” — Linda and Kris Elftmann
U.S. and Europe. He has given more than 1,100 performances of 65 opera and music theater roles; been mentored by great operatic artists Plácido Domingo, Béatrice Néhémie, and Hans Hetzer, and worked with acclaimed conductors and stage directors including Sir Simon Rattle, Eska-Pekka Salonen, and James Conlon. Since 2002, when Buck incorporated opera as part of the regular voice curriculum, UCI Opera has presented six operas and four programs of opera scenes, including Act III of Puccini’s La Bohème, Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi, Gilbert and Sullivan’s Trial by Jury, and Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas. UCI Opera has also produced several world premieres of contemporary works.

In opera, a person has to perform at a high level of technical ability, as singer and actor, in order to bring the work to life," Buck says. "The Germans describe opera as a Gesamtkunstwerk – a total, or complete, artwork – for its integration of music, movement, drama and visual intent. It is among the greatest challenges a singer can face."

Buck selects works with audience appeal that suit each year’s pool of musical talent. The Medium was produced primarily with student talent. Lighting, costume, sound, scenic design, stage management and stage direction were all handled by MFA students, mentored by faculty. Not only students, but also professional singers can gain from voice training at UCI. For example, graduate student and professional singer Marnie Mosiman came to UCI for a master’s degree in music after a significant career as a vocal artist and actor. "Robin Buck is the best voice teacher I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with," she says. "He has this amazing ability to diagnose problems and then provide clear and creative solutions." Buck proudly notes that current students and recent graduates are working with such professional companies as Opera Pacific, San Diego Opera, Los Angeles Master Chorale and Pacific Chorale. Some students have gone on to graduate school or apprentice programs, and others are teaching at universities or community colleges.

Buck hopes to continue staging full opera productions in collaboration with other departments in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts. "I get considerable help from my exceptional colleagues in the Music Department – Darryl Taylor, Joseph Huzice, Frances Young and Stephen Tucker," he says. "Each of them is essential to our opera and vocal arts program which we passionately hope to expand."
Student Affairs Office Keeps Them on Track

Helping students complete the long haul to graduation is one of the key roles of UCI’s Student Affairs Office. The staff is involved in student recruitment, certification of degrees, new student orientation, and academic counseling. Then there’s the job of helping certain students who are on academic probation in order to accommodate mixed-media focus and in danger of flunking out. Succeeding in school and graduating is not always automatic, says Student Affairs Director Shaw Wing Cloud Hsueh. “There can be some obstacles. I tell students that college is a difficult transition from high school,” says Hsueh. Student Affairs staff is here to guide them to success, not force them. The staff helps students realize that they may be watching too much TV, taking too heavy a class load, working too much. “I feel gratified advising students, helping them make decisions and pointing out resources available to them. For example, they can take advantage of faculty office hours, join a study group, take workshops, or get tutoring,” she says. “Sometimes you have to show your concern and a caring attitude. I’m truly interested in their progress and welfare and want them to do well in school.”

According to several students, all the staff members—Sharon Silva, Amy Fujitani and Haley Greenwald-Sonella—are helpful, but Hsueh stands out for going beyond the call of duty to help them get through school. She is the factor that made the difference in their completing their degrees, they say. (Hsueh is quick to credit her staff.) “I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing if it weren’t for Cloud,” says Matthew Lin, a ’01 Studio Arts. In his first meeting with Hsueh, Lin signed up for arts classes and discovered his life’s purpose — photography. Today he owns a thriving wedding photography business, Poetry in Light Studio. A web design class paid off when he designed the website for his business, which was recently featured in a bridal magazine and on a TV show. One quarter Hsueh saved Lin from flunking out by helping him explore alternatives for classes to fulfill his course requirements. “From the beginning, Cloud was completely approachable, like we had known each other forever. She continues to help people. She even refers me people who are getting married and want a wedding photographer,” Lin says. Drama student Donna Longabardi has already earned a UCI degree (’01 Social Ecology with emphasis in criminology). She works weekends and holidays as a 911 dispatcher for Santa Ana Police Department. She has days free to pursue an acting career. But she got discouraged after one quarter at UCI so she dropped out. A conversation with Hsueh turned her life around and got her back on track. “Cloud gave me interest in trying again, the feeling that I can do this,” says Longabardi.

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In the Spotlight

Colleen Reardon (Associate Dean) presented her paper, "Chopin in Paris: Pianist and Publisher," at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in November in Quebec, Canada.

Robert Cohen (Drama) published the eighth editions of his books, Theatre and Theater, Short Edition. He also signed a new contract for the seventh edition of his book, Acting Professionally, which he is co-writing with alumna James Calleri (MFA Drama, 1998), head of Calleri Cazin in New York. Cohen toured with Bryn Reynolds’ (Drama) all-umus cast of Blue Shade to the Romanian National Theatre Festival in Bucharest, where he also launched the Romanian edition of his book, Acting Power.

Daphne Lei (Drama) organized an international conference in January at UCI, the Multicultural Research Group Colloquium on Asian Performance. She presented her paper, The Posty Circuit: Phonotonic Globalization of National Heritage and Academia, at the American Society for Theater Research. She directed the intermedia performance, Fete de la Nuit, in Santa Monica in October. Her In the Grace of the Falling Girl, directed the intermedia performance, at the Berkeley Art Museum in June. She created and performed in November at a telematic concert with seven improvising musicians spread across three different sites (UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and Stanford University)

Claire Trever Professor of Dance Donald McKayle had three premieres of his choreography in February: "Syncoped Gamba" at UCI Dance Visions 2008 at the Irvine Barclay Theatre, with music by the UCI Ensemble Ensemble; "Hey, Hey, Going To Kansas City," celebrating the Golden Age of Kansas City Jazz, as the headliner for Kansas City Ballet’s 50th anniversary season, and "Revere," created for Darryl Taylor’s countertenor recital, "A fresh EnCounter" and performed by dance soloist Stephanie Powell (MFA 2004). He is directing and choreographing "Return" for the Festival of New American Musicals at Edgemar Theatre in Santa Monica, California.

Diane Diefendorfer (Dance) taught an eight-week session of Pilates classes at Haas Hospital for cancer patients and survivors in November. In November she presented A Dance's Workout, Beneficial To Everybody at the 7th Annual International Educational Conference of the Pilates Method Alliance in Orlando, Florida.

Simon Leung (Studio Art) received the 2008 Art Journal Award, given to the author of the most distinguished contribution published in the College Art Association’s Art Journal.

Gifford Myers (Studio Art) presented a 101 Dalmations and Friends, 101 Dalmations and Friends, at the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival this summer. The production is directed by Professor Robert Cohen, and is playing his suitor, Horace in the same production.

Jenn Colella (MFA 2002) is starring in the title role in the Off Broadway production of The Beedo Bimker Chronicles, directed by Leigh Silverman. Colella describes the show as "a combination of several Ann Bannon novels from the late 1950s." David Greenspan (BA 1978) is also in the cast.

Alan Minge (MFA 1998) performs this season on Broadway in the ensemble of Disney’s new musical, Little Mermaid.

Ted Kryczko (MFA 1978) won a 2008 Grammy Award for Best Musical Album for Children for A Green and Red Christmas: The Muppets, which he co-produced for Walt Disney Records.

Ashley West Leonard (MFA 1998) received positive reviews in January for her leading performance in the world-premiere production of Bob Dylan’s Tramoad at the Laguna Playhouse.


Kitty Felde (BA 1978) continues as a special correspondent for KPCC, Pasadena’s NPR station. Felde’s newest play, Johannesburg is the year produced this year by the Towne Street Theatre Company at the Stella Adler Theatre in Hollywood.

Last June Jim Sloviak (MFA 1985) gave a week-long session with his New World Performance Laboratory partner Jaro Cuesta at the Grotowski Institute in Wrocław, Poland.

DANCE

Marc Macaranas (BA 2005) landed a job in November at DanceWorks Chicago, a new group organized by Julie Nakajima, former artistic director of Hubbard Street 2. He previously danced with Lucky Plush Productions and Mordine & Co. Dance Theater while working at Goodman Theatre, teaching at two schools, and side projects.

Elizabeth Fortalo (BA 2003) is in her third season with OCD Dance in San Francisco, one of the country’s premier contemporary companies. Prior to OCD, she performed with BalletMet in Columbus, Ohio.

STUDENTS

Bobby Amamizu (BA candidate, Dance), pictured here with Israel “El” Gabriel, won third place at the regional semi-finals of the Youth America Grand Prix in March. Amamizu performed “Lakshemari variation” from the ballet, Le Corsaire. He will compete at the finals in April in New York City.

Six students who auditioned for Walt Disney Records won parts on three new CDs. Ryan Farnsworth (BA candidate, Drama), Zach Reiner-Harris (BA candidate, Literary Journalism), Jeffrey Benson Parker (MFA candidate, Drama), and Ian Stuart (BA candidate, Drama) supplied vocal fill for one track of 101 Dalmations and Friends, released in March in the U.S.A., Canada and Europe. Katie Horwitch (BA candidate, Drama) sang on a new Miley Cyrus karaoke CD. Maggie Parks (BA candidate, Drama) supplied vocal fill for "Dream It" on Stepping Beauty and Friends, to be released in October. The students were among 20 who auditioned for Walt Disney Records exec Ted Kryczko and his producing partner Gary Powell.

In Hollywood, Jordan Dessen also collaborated with pianists spread across different sites (UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and Stanford University).
April 3
Chancellor’s Distinguished Fellow Series
Meredith Monk and Vocal Ensemble
In Concert
“A composer, singer and theater artist for whom
experimentation has led to wondrous discovery. Monk
conjures up a spectrum of colorful and evocative
sounds from her one-of-a-kind vocal instrument.”
Claire Trevor Theatre, 7pm
$15/ $13/ $9

April 3 - 18
4th Annual Guest Juried
Undergraduate Exhibition
University Art Gallery
An Undergraduate Honors Project
Room Gallery

April 3 - June 7
Beall Center for Art and Technology
Live
Opening Reception: April 3, 6:30 - 9 pm
Family Day: May 3, 11 am - 3 pm
Artists use video, images and text captured from the internet creating artworks that offer a surprisingly diverse array of experience, ranging from social commentary to the unintended beauty of surveillance footage. Curated by David Familian, includes Radical Software Group (Alexander B. Galloway) and MTA (Mike Sarff & Tim Whidden), Natalie Bookchin, Apollo Stern, Michael Date, and Karen Finley.
Free

April 10 - 19
Drama at UCI
Uncle Vanya
By Anton Chekhov
Keith Fowler, director
Winifred Smith Hall, 8 pm, April 12 & 19, 2 pm
The second of Chekhov’s four masterpieces to be
produced by the Moscow Art Theater, Uncle Vanya focuses on the fulminating, querulous Vanya, an aging man who would be better off at the center of a comic mélange. The contrast of Vanya’s world-weariness with his niece Sonya’s simple faith endows this cherished drama with immortal and bittersweet poetry.
Fri. - Sat. eve: $17/ $15/ $9
Weekend & matinee: $15/ $14/ $9

April 24 - 26
Department of Dance
Dance Escape
New works by UCI graduate choreographers
Claire Trevor Theatre, 8pm
April 24, 26, 2 pm
$11/ $10/ $9

April 24 - May 9
MFA Thesis
Exhibition, Part I
University Art Gallery & Room Gallery

April 26
UCI Chamber Series
All Brahms
An Evening of Chamber Music and Song
Winifred Smith Hall, 8 pm, Pre-concert lecture: 7 pm with David Brodbeck, Brahms scholar
Nina Scolnik, piano
Frances Young, soprano
Haroutune Bedelian, violin
Maggie Parkinson, violoncello
Daniel Kasten, horn
$12 / $10/ $8

May 1 - May 10
Drama at UCI
Measure for Measure
By William Shakespeare
Philip Thompson, director
Studio Theatre, 8 pm, May 3 & 10, 2 pm
Deception and truth. Corruption and virtue. Justice
and mercy. Shakespeare's classic intrigue has it all. When the Duke of Vienna abandons his city, he places his zealous deputy in charge. Whom will the perturbing Angelo serve, as he delivers his uncompromising application of justice?
$10 / $9/ $8

May 3 (One Night Only!)
UCI Symphony Orchestra
Violin Spectacular!
Stephen Tucker, conductor
Irving Barclay Theatre, 8 pm
Dmitri Shostakovich – Festive Overture
Tan Dun – Violin Concerto – Cho-Liang Lin, soloist
Pietro Mascagni – Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana
W.A. Mozart – Concerto No. 4 – Cho-Liang Lin, soloist
$12/ $10/ $8

May 8 - 10
Department of Dance
Physical Graffiti
Original works by UCI undergraduate choreographers
Claire Trevor Theatre, 8 pm, matinee performance: May 10, 2 pm
$11/ $10/ $9

May 10
UCI Chamber Series
What A Swell Party This Is!
Tunes from the Great American Songbook
Jane Rhodes & Robin Buck, vocalists
Guest Jazz Combo
$12/ $10/ $8

May 14
UCI Jazz Orchestra
Spring Jazz Concert
Claire Trevor Theatre, 8 pm
$12/ $10/ $8

May 15 - 30
MFA Thesis Exhibition, Part II
University Art Gallery & Room Gallery

May 20
Small Jazz Groups
Winifred Smith Hall, 8 pm
Free

May 21
Department of Music
UCI Wind Ensemble
Winifred Smith Hall, 8 pm
Free

May 24
Department of Music
Chamber Singers and the Men in Blaque
Joseph Housto, conductor
Winifred Smith Hall, 8 pm
Presenting competition selections from their tour to
The International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen,
Wales and the Choral Olympics in Graz, Austria.
$12/ $10/ $8

May 29 - June 7
Drama All-Undergraduate Production
Reefer Madness
Written by Dan Studney
Music by Dan Studney, lyrics by Kevin Murphy
Vince Tyler, director
Dennis Castellano, musical director
Claire Trevor Theatre, 8 pm,
May 31 & June 7, 2 pm
This outrageously funny hit musical follows the
budding romance of high school sweethearts Jimmy
Harper and Mary Lane. Everything seems to be going
swell until Jimmy is lured into the evils of a reefer
den and tries his first hit of the “demon weed.”
Fri. - Sat. eve: $17/ $15/ $9
Weekend & matinee: $15/ $14/ $9

May 31
UCI Chamber Series
An Evening of Jazz and
Improvized Music
Featuring the Cosmicology quartet
Winifred Smith Hall, 8 pm
Michael Dessen, trombone
Jason Robinison, saxophone
Scott Wolten, bass
Nathan Hubbard, drums
$12/ $10/ $8

June 2
Drama at UCI
UCI Percussion Ensemble
Winifred Smith Hall, 8 pm
Free

June 5 - 13
Senior Exhibition
University Art Gallery & Room Gallery

June 6 & 7
UCI Symphony Orchestra
The Old and the New
Stephen Tucker, conductor
Irving Barclay Theatre, 8 pm
Pre-concert conversation: June 6, 7 pm
Richard Strauss – Till Eulenspiegel’s Lustige Streiche
Ralph Vaughan Williams – Tuba Concerto, with
Fred Greene, soloist
Manuel de Falla, El Amor Brujo, with
UCI Dance Department
$12/ $10/ $8

Exhibition Hours:
Beall Center for Art and Technology
Tue. & Wed., 12 - 5 pm, Thur. - Sat., 12 - 8 pm
Free
Information: (949) 824-4339, beallcenter.uci.edu

The University Art Gallery
Room Gallery
Tues. - Sat., 12 - 5 pm
Free
Information: (949) 824-3854, gallery@uci.edu

Tickets & Information www.arts.uci.edu  Box Office 949-824-2787

Spring 2008 Events