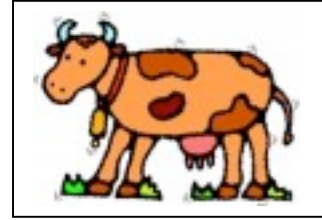


Cattle Call

News from the
Department of Theatre
University of Utah



Spring 2008

Events

In January, the Department hosted an **exciting day with Ray Roderick, actor/director/choreographer/writer**. Mr. Roderick auditioned young actors for an upcoming national tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, which he is directing. He also gave an informative Master Class for theatre students, which focused on musical theatre auditions. Thank you to NewSpace Entertainment for bringing Mr. Roderick to us!

An anonymous donor brightened the halls of the Performing Arts Building with a **donation of beautiful leather couches, loveseats, and chairs**. The new leather benches in the Babcock lobby were also part of this amazing gift.

Department faculty offered workshops and auditioned students for the Actor Training and Performing Arts Design Programs at this year's **Utah Theatre Association Conference**, held on the BYU campus January 31-February 2.

In March, seniors from the Actor Training Program offered a **Senior Showcase in New York** at The Studio Theatre (Theatre Row Studios). The exciting showcase was previewed in Salt Lake on March 2 in the Chapel at Salt Lake Acting Company (thank you Keven Myhre and SLAC for donating the facility). **Many thanks to ALL who donated toward taking the showcase to New York**. It was well attended, including many alumni, family and friends as well as industry representatives. The Department of Theatre is proud of our students, and thankful for the support received from the community.

Also in March, the Department participated in the University's Women's Week events, with our excellent **Top Girls** designated as the week's official cultural event. Two special performances of the play were offered to the community at no charge as part of this special

celebration. Thank you to director **Hugh Hanson and the wonderful cast and production team** for making this event possible.

The Department hosted the staged reading of a newly translated Chinese play *A Girl Named Xiao Ying*. **Elisabeth Shotwell, daughter of faculty member Sandra Shotwell**, translated this early play of one of China's premiere playwrights, Ouyang Yuqian, as her Honors Thesis Project.

In April, the Department will host **student Arwen Ek's performance of MU**, which blends movement, music, theatre, visual art and theoretical physics into one enlightening performance. Arwen has worked with theatre faculty **Jerry Gardner** to design this performance as a requirement for her Bachelor of University Studies degree.

Excellent productions of *Helen*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Tristan and Yseult* have delighted our Babcock audiences this year. Still to come at the Babcock – Federico García Lorca's powerful and passionate *Blood Wedding*. This production will NOT follow our usual Babcock schedule, so please check the times and dates on this web site. A free, informative panel discussion will follow the matinee performance on Saturday, April 5.

Audiences have also flocked to Studio 115 for an array of exciting performances. *Happy End*, *Experiments in Ink*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, and *Top Girls* played to sold out audiences. Don't miss our final two productions, *Notes on a Sunday* (a musical written by our senior ATP student **Sam Wessels**), which runs March 27-30, and *Treasure*, written by faculty **Tim Slover**, April 17-20.

Youth Theatre at the U presented *Charlotte's Web* at Kingsbury Hall in March. Hundreds of students attended the student matinees, and the three public performances drew hundreds of families and friends as well. The production featured actors aged 6-84, all of whom have close educational and family ties with the Department of Theatre.

Youth Theatre at the U's Artistic Director, **Penelope Marantz Caywood**, offered a Musical Theatre Workshop for the Salt Lake City School District. This well-received workshop will be offered again in the fall for teachers in the District.

Professor Xan Johnson and his Honors students are working with the PMPC Arts Collaborative on a new "Life Celebration" theatre project in conjunction with the Huntsman Cancer Center. Students work with individual cancer patients and their families to design a life celebration, which will culminate in a performance piece at the Babcock Theatre in April.

Dr. Johnson and adjunct faculty **Tommie St. Cyr** will host a number of sixth-grade students from the University's Bennion Center *Project Youth*, providing an introduction to the excitement of college courses to students whose backgrounds do not encourage the pursuit of higher education.

Faculty News

Professor **Xan S. Johnson** gave an SRO presentation, "What Theatre Professionals Need to Know About Mirror Neurons, Emotional Intelligence, and Learning-A Brain Research Update," at the Rocky Mountain Theatre Association annual conference in Denver in January. Xan is a recognized expert in the growing field of brain scan research and its relationship to theatre, child development, and learning theory.

Adjunct faculty **Morgan Lund** and ATP junior **Kenya Rene** starred in Salt Lake Acting Company's regional premiere of *Skin in Flames* in February.

Adjunct faculty **Kathleen Cahill** wrote Gillian Anderson's introductions to the recent Masterpiece series on Jane Austen on PBS. Kathleen is now at work writing the intros for PBS's *Mystery*.

The great success of last summer's *Toadally Frogs* presentation at the Utah Museum of Natural History by adjunct faculty **Margo Andrews** led to her current preparation of their spring interpretive program, *The Sands of Time*.

Professor **Jerry Gardner** headed to France again in March, invited to return to the Université d'Artois-Arras to present Butoh workshops and a performance of "Translucent Heart." He will also make a stop in Paris to present an informal workshop and performance with Butoh enthusiasts. Jerry also performed, with student **Arwen Ek**, at the Asian Theatre Workshop offered at the Salt Lake City Arts Academy in February.

In February, students from the Osher Institute were treated to a session of our **Stage Combat** class, taught by **Morgan Lund**. In addition to demonstrations, the visitors were able to participate in "menace" exercises.

Assistant Professor **Tim Slover** is busy with a number of projects: *The Christmas Chronicles*, a 2-hour radio drama commissioned by KBYU-FM; *Virtue*, a new play he is developing with the MFA Acting Program at Penn State University; *Shakespeare & Company*, or *All for Love*, a new version of one of his earlier plays which will receive its world premiere production at the Fulton Theatre in PA in March 2009; and a screenplay in the works, entitled *Despised*. Tim's play, *March Tale*, was produced in March by Illinois College Theatreworks, and his *Joyful Noise* will be produced in December at the Covey Center for the Arts.

Student News

Many seniors have been busy auditioning and applying for graduate programs across the nation. We expect to send students to a number of fine schools. Current acceptances include: **Jennifer Johnson**, Performing Arts Design, has been accepted to Yale School of Drama to pursue her MFA in Sound Design; **Anthony Gaskins**, Actor Training Program, accepted to the American Repertory Theatre/Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University; **David O. Smith**, Performing Arts Design Program, accepted to the University of Connecticut to pursue an MFA in Lighting Design.

ATP junior **Erica Richardson** won the statewide Kurt Bestor talent search, and sang with the Kurt Bestor Orchestra at its annual Christmas Concert in December.

ATP junior **Leticia Vélez** was accepted to the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts for a full-time, paid position in their summer arts program. Leticia will perform as Rosie in PCPA's world premiere production of *The Heart's Desire*, by José Cruz González.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR EXCELLENT PARTICIPANTS IN THE ACTF REGION VIII FESTIVAL! All our student participants did wonderfully well in their various events.

- **Leticia Vélez** was honored as "Best of Festival Actress". (Coincidentally, the play Leticia was in was *Brick*, written by UNLV MFA playwriting student Laura Neubauer, who graduated from our program.)
- **Nicol Razón** won two scholarships, should she decide to participate in either the Steppenwolf or Second City workshop through SummerArts.
- **Jack Rizzotti** was the first runner-up for the National Critics Institute Award. He did an excellent job as dramaturg and as the reader of stage directions during the staged reading of the ten-minute play *Rest.Stop*.
- **Gabrielle Gaston**, (with scene partner **Katherine Wroble**) was a semi-finalist in the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship competition.
- **David Bohnet** and **Gabrielle Gaston** did a great job as two of the seven actors in the one-act play directed by Bob Nelson, and **Nicol Razón** was great in the ten-minute two-hander, *Two Chairs with Adam and Sophie*.
- All our students who participated in the NEXT STEP auditions, **Leticia Vélez**, **Michael Nilsson**, and **Dominique Razón** received one or more call-backs and interviews with professional companies.

Alumni News

Colin Elliott and friends recently launched the Gaslight Theatre Company in Westminster, CO, in March. The black box theatre, in a renovated auto body garage, opened with *The Curious Savage*. In addition to starring as Samuel Savage, Colin was responsible for set design and construction. For more information about this exciting new theatre, see their web site at www.gaslighttheatrecompany.com.

Klea Blackhurst is thrilled to report she will be singing in *Jerry Herman's Broadway* at the Palladium Theatre in London. Accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic, this concert is a benefit for CRUSAID, which provides

support for people living with AIDS in the U.K. and Africa. Other stars in the show – Angela Lansbury and Jerry Herman!

Anne Cullimore Decker and **Camila Borrero** star in Salt Lake Acting Company's regional premiere of *The Clean House* in April. **Sarah Rae Mohr** is the Production Stage Manager for the show.

Christopher Van Dijk and **Jeremy Rische** are both currently working at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Chris is working with the repertory company on *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cymbeline* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, while Jeremy is working on the stock show, *Over the Tavern*.

Michael Cavanaugh has been accepted to the University of Connecticut's MFA in Puppetry, and will begin his studies in the Fall.

Corey Huff has been invited to the Board of Directors for Classical Greek Theatre of Oregon. Since moving to Oregon, he has appeared in *Titus Andronicus* at Northwest Classical Theatre, and in a 24-hour play festival with Coho Productions. He is now preparing for summer shows with Classical Greek Theatre.

After returning to Utah to assist with *Les Miserables* at PTC, **Erick Herrscher** assisted Nicholas Martin on *The Corn Is Green* at Williamstown Theatre Festival, where he also directed Caryl Churchill's new play *Drunk Enough To Say I Love You?* and a play of his own, *The Revolt of Little Ola*. Upcoming, Erick is assisting Mr. Martin again on the new Paul Rudnick play *The New Century* at Lincoln Center, and getting ready to direct Aurin Squire's *To Whom It May Concern* in an off-Broadway commercial run.

In January, **Stein Erickson** appeared in *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* for the Pinnacle Acting Company in Salt Lake City.

Penni Mendez starred in the Las Vegas Little Theatre production of David Lindsay-Abaire's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama, *Rabbit Hole*.

Glen and Linda Brown took first place at the West Virginia Theatre Conference with their production of *Scarecrow*.

Joel Richards' one-act play, *Duck, Duck Low*, was selected to participate in the Strawberry One-Act Play Festival in New York City, and received its regional premiere at the Churnuchin Theatre.

In Memorium

Our dear friend and alumni, **William S. (Bill) Barber**, passed away in Salt Lake City in December 2007. An MFA graduate of the U, in the 1970's Bill was Technical Director for the Pioneer Memorial Theater, and taught lighting, makeup, sound, and set design at the University of Utah. He then left for southern California to work with Walt Disney Enterprises on such projects as Epcot, Tokyo Disneyland, and various other endeavors. He returned to Salt Lake in 1996, and worked as a graphic designer until his death. Memorial contributions may be made to the Utah Humane Society or to the Juan Diego High School Department of Theatre.