

University of Utah
Department of Theatre

Departmental News

Fall Semester 2006

Faculty News

The opening prayer for the February 22 session of the Utah State Legislature will be given in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition by Lama Thupten (**Jerry Gardner**, ATP Faculty Member).

Professor **Sandra Shotwell** has been invited to direct Sophocles' *Electra* for the BFA Performance Season at the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis in February 2007. Earlier in the semester she received an interesting invitation (which unfortunately she was unable to accept) to spend several days with other arts professionals aboard a U.S. aircraft carrier!

Sarah Shippobotham, Associate Professor and Head of the Actor Training Program, will travel to Kansas City in January to serve as voice, text and dialect coach for Kansas City Rep's production of *King Lear*. In March, she will be a featured performer at the College of Fine Arts' Scholarship Dinner, presenting an "Irish Dialect Session" to the guests.

Assistant Professor **Tim Slover's** play, *Treasure*, recently won the Christopher Brian Work Award for Excellence in Playwriting. The award is given by the Abingdon Theatre Company in New York, and carries a \$1,000 prize. The play is based on the true story of our nation's first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, whose affair with Maria Reynolds was used in attempts to discredit him and derail his economic policies. Tim also recently published *Messiah: the Little-Known Story of Handel's Beloved Oratorio* (Silverleaf Press).

Debra Cook, Adjunct Assistant Professor with the Actor Training Program, was awarded first place in the duo category of the U.S.A. World Showcase international competition in Las Vegas in November. Debra and one of her 13-year-old voice students, Katie Fischer, sang "The Prayer" by David Foster. Debra has also been selected to present the closing Christmas Concert for the Festival of Lights on the grounds of the San Diego LDS Temple the evening of December 23rd.

Penelope Caywood has been named Artistic Director of Youth Theatre at the U, and Professor **Xan Johnson** will serve as Executive Director. **Amy Oakeson**, Artistic Director for the past seven years, will be greatly missed but we applaud her decision to spend more time with her children (including new baby Lydia) and return to her educational pursuits.

Associate Professor **Jerry Gardner** will travel to northern France in late March to present a Butoh workshop and performance at the Université d'Artois. He will also present a Butoh performance in Paris before returning home. In April and May, he travels to Japan and Indonesia to study Butoh and Topeng mask theatre, an ancient Balinese dance/theatre genre.

Peder Melhuse, our new Assistant Professor who joined the Department Fall Semester, has been cast as an FBI agent in Salt Lake Acting Company's world premiere of *Sexsting*, which opens January 31, 2007.

Adjunct Instructor **Jerry Rapier's** Plan-B Theatre Company has been awarded a grant to tour *Facing East* to New York City and San Francisco. Jerry directed this world premiere of Carol Ann Pearson's play, and will be traveling to NYC and San Francisco with the cast. The production (Utah cast and production team intact) will enjoy a limited off-Broadway run at the Atlantic Stage 2 in May-June, then travel to San Francisco in August to the Theatre Rhinoceros. Plan-B is the first company in Utah theatre history to transfer a production off-Broadway!

Professor **Gage Williams** served as Art Director for HBO's 2nd Annual Comedy Festival at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas in November.

Ron Frederickson, Adjunct Instructor, appeared in Plan-B's *Miasma* in September, then spent time commuting to the College of Eastern Utah to direct a production of Alan Ayckbourn's *How the Other Half Loves*.

The Actor Training Program will participate in the Unified Auditions Tour in February 2007. **Sarah Shippobotham** and **Jerry Gardner** will travel to New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to audition applicants for next year's class of ATP students.

Joe Payne's sound design and composition for Pioneer Theatre Company's production of *Julius Caesar* was accepted into the Prague Quadrennial Design Exhibition 2007. Joe's design and composition were chosen by the U.S. Institute for Theatre Technology for submission to this prestigious event. Joe, an adjunct faculty in the Department, is one of only 8 sound designers in the country whose work was chosen by USITT this year.

Student News

The University of Utah's student nominees for the 2006/07 Irene Ryan Acting Award, Region VIII of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival are: **Nicol Razon** and **Nicholas Zaharias** (Elektra); **Heidi Hackney** and **Rob Shand** (A Streetcar Named Desire); **Catherine Macmillan** and **Sam Wessels** (Urinetown, The Musical).

Actor Training Program Students interning with Pioneer Theatre Company in Spring Semester are: **Nicholas Dunn**, **Starley Flynn**, **Jamie Greenland**, **Heidi Hackney**, **Cory Huff** and **Ehren Remal**.

ATP students **Jamie Greenland** and **Stacy Sobieski** appeared as the two youngest Bennett daughters in Pioneer Theatre Company's production of *Pride and Prejudice* in November. **Stacy** is cast in Plan-B Theatre Company's *The Alienation Effect*, which opens in March.

ATP student **Shanna Jones** recently completed a run with the Hale Theatre, playing Aldonza in *The Man of La Mancha*. She will be seen as Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* in the Studio Theatre at the Rose Wagner Center in January 2007.

Also appearing in *Cabaret* will be ATP students **Kenya Baird**, **Stefanie Londino**, and **Brandon Tessers**, together with graduates **Clay Elder** and **Ben Brinton**.

ATP student **Lauren Bradley** and graduates **Cameron Jones** and **Ryan Shaver** will appear in *Sexsting* in January at Salt Lake Acting Company.

ATP Senior **Nick Dunn** performed for the first meeting of the College of Fine Arts Advisory Board on September 21.

Alumni News

In October, the ATP singing classes were honored with a visit from alumna **Klea Blackhurst**, who was in SLC starring as Mama Morton in the smash Pioneer Theatre Company production of *Chicago*. Students were entertained, energized and inspired by her visit.

Graduate **Stein Erickson** appeared in PTC's *Pride and Prejudice* in November and is currently appearing there in *You Can't Take It With You*.

Alumna **Anne Cullimore Decker** also appears in *You Can't Take It With You* at PTC, and recently appeared in *Rabbit Hole* at Salt Lake Acting Company.

Graduate **Jennifer Popple** is enrolled in the PhD program at the University of Colorado. In Summer 2006 she assisted former faculty member Tom Markus with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival's *The Merchant of Venice*, to excellent reviews.

Graduate **Josephine Wilson** is working with Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, MA. After directing high school students in *As You Like It* for the Fall Festival, she will join the Company's Spring Tour in the role of Lady Macbeth.

Mindy Dillard, a 2006 graduate, is living in Portland OR and apprenticing with Sojourn Theatre.

Graduate **Ashley Bryant** is front and center on the cover of Yale's School of Drama brochure and web page! Check her out at www.yale.edu/drama/

In Memoriam

Dian Woodhouse, MFA alumna, passed away on December 12, 2006. She was a gifted poet and playwright, and directed, produced, and performed in many plays. She served as President of the Utah branch of Screen Actors Guild for six years, and was active in a number of civic activities. Friends who wish to honor her memory may donate to the Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple of Utah.

Micaela Therese Nelligan died unexpectedly in her sleep on December 11, 2006. A Department of Theatre alumna, she was a popular Utah stage and screen actor, known for her ability to play drama and comedy equally well. She was also known for her compassionate nature and whole-hearted support of various causes. Friends who

wish to honor her memory may do so by sending donations to the Best Friends Animal Society, 5001 Angel Canyon Road, Kanab, UT 84741.