SHOWBOAT’S 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
Normally I would use this letter to welcome you to a new semester. This year, though, in my final year as chair of the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, I want to take a moment to reflect upon the six years that I have served the students and faculty of this department.

Since I became chair in the Summer of 2001, both the department’s geography and its programs have undergone a dramatic transformation. In 2002, the new Minnesota Centennial Showboat opened on Harriet Island, just across the Mississippi from downtown St. Paul, largely as a result of the dedication of my predecessor as department chair, Professor Lance Brockman. This added a new location for our summer programs, extending the reach of the department into St. Paul and even beyond, as the Showboat has drawn audiences from all over the nation.

And in 2003, the opening of the new Regis Center for Art, located between Rarig and the Barker, completed the physical construction of a West Bank Arts Quarter (WBAQ), a section of the West Bank campus that now contains within its boundaries the facilities for all four arts disciplines in close physical proximity. The WBAQ as a location and a destination has not only changed the geography of the arts at the University, but has also inspired a new cooperative spirit between the disciplines themselves, which in turn has opened up possibilities for students and faculty in the arts to collaborate on some very exciting interdisciplinary projects, such as the three-year old annual Spark Festival and our 2006 production of The Master and Margarita.

The WBAQ is something I have supported wholeheartedly; indeed its development parallels and complements the ideas and issues that I think define my tenure as chair of the department. During the past seven years we have been able to make a great deal of progress building and refining the special features that make us unique among university performing arts programs: our emphasis on collaboration across boundaries and disciplines; and our integration of the creation and practice of theatre and dance with the critical study of performance, both in relation to the other arts and, more generally, within the broader framework of contemporary thought.

I am especially pleased that while I have served as chair, the department has become increasingly committed to nurturing a creative, intellectual, and interdisciplinary environment that embraces the diversity of the ever-changing society in which we live, and fosters a spirit of collaboration and exchange among us and the world outside of the University. Especially now, looking around us and at the events unfolding in front of our eyes, we may pause to wonder what it means to represent and remain committed to the process of knowledge acquisition and dissemination.

For many of us, theatre education is much more than training: it is a process of self-discovery and a way of engaging with what is going on in the world outside the academy. This requires emphasizing the dynamic relationship between the process of thinking critically about theatre and dance, and the act of creating a performance. It also means understanding the connections between what goes on inside the classroom or the theatre, and what is happening around us.

Nothing points this up more vividly than last year’s production of The Pope and the Witch, which not only showed how powerful a force theatre remains, but how connected art is to personal feelings, to cultural issues and to social movements. In the end, despite a long and loud outcry designed to stop the production, we prevailed in our strong belief that theatre must be allowed to ask hard questions very publicly, so that participants and
Introducing IPCA
Welcome to the Interdisciplinary Program in the Collaborative Arts

by David Bernstein, Theatre Arts & Dance

This article is based on an interview with School of Music Professor Michael Cherlin, Founding Director of IPCA, conducted on October 10, 2007. All quotations are from that interview.

With the opening of the Regis Center for Art in the fall of 2003, the facilities of art, dance, music and theatre were finally located near to each other on the West Bank. This literally put the West Bank Arts Quarter on the map, at least as a destination and a location. More important, the new geography suggested a grander vision: namely that the physical proximity of the buildings might inspire students and faculty in each of the individual arts disciplines to think about crossing disciplinary boundaries now that all they had to do was cross a street to get from one arts facility to another. In short, imagining the University of Minnesota as a center for interdisciplinarity and collaboration in the arts had become something more than idle speculation.

A crucial piece of that vision was put into place this past fall, with the first curricular offerings of the new Interdisciplinary Program in the Collaborative Arts (IPCA). According to IPCA Founding Director Michael Cherlin, the IPCA curriculum is at once ambitious and quite unusual: “One of the interesting challenges we face in terms of student needs, is the idea that [IPCA] is an undergraduate program that takes collaboration and interdisciplinarity as its very basis – as its founding idea. And normally, when most of us think about collaboration, we think about people who have expertise in one area collaborating with people who have expertise in another area. This is a little different, at least from the students’ perspective, because the student won’t have a degree – won’t have expertise in one area. So the whole idea is to explore collaboration in and of itself, the very nature of collaboration, as a way to stimulate new ways of being creative.”

Born as part of the President’s Interdisciplinary Initiative in the Arts and Humanities, and driven by a College of Liberal Arts initiative to have interdisciplinarity and collaboration become paradigms for artistic creation and enquiry, IPCA “hopes to find ways for people working within the various fields of the arts to interact with one another, and to interact with students who are interested in some sort of cross-pollination of the arts.” In order to explore new art forms and new fields of enquiry, “IPCA is interested in some of the new emerging art forms and ideas that are swirling around in the new movements using new technologies...[and also in] reaching out to new constituencies in new ways: community-based art, site-based art, things of that sort.”

However, while the words ‘new’ and ‘adventurous’ clearly come to mind when thinking about IPCA, Professor Cherlin reminds us that “collaboration – despite what some people think – is not a new idea; it’s a very, very ancient idea.” Thus he hopes “that there is room for the old-fashioned ideas about collaboration ... as well,” so that the program can “explore as many facets of what it means to collaborate as we can.” In other words, a major goal of IPCA is to explore the idea of artistic collaboration in all of its permutations and possibilities.

This focus on seeing things from multiple perspectives is one of the defining characteristics of IPCA. Indeed, as far as a philosophy that undergirds the way the program conceptualizes aesthetics, collaboration, or the relationship of art to the culture in which it was created, Professor Cherlin says “I would be personally cautious about articulating an overarching philosophy [for IPCA] because I want to have room for not only diversity but disagreement.” So collaboration, the way IPCA sees it, involves artists learning to “be in dialogue with one another in meaningful ways,” even if that means they are not always on the same page. “Creativity needs confrontation; not confrontation in a bitter, acrimonious way, but confrontation in some meaningful way.”

So who, exactly, is IPCA? That is, who are the IPCA faculty members in this, its inaugural year? As befits an interdisciplinary program, each faculty member has expertise – a grounding – in one of the arts disciplines and, beyond that, the interest and experience to collaborate with artists in other disciplines. In music, the program has Guerino Mazzola, an expert in mathematical modeling of music and a free jazz player; and Doug Geers, who does electronic music composition and mixed-media work. In art, there is Ali Momeni, an installation artist who is interested in ideas that have to do with temporality and art in social settings; and Lynn Lukkas, on sabbatical this year, an artist whose creative work spans the media arts, including filmmaking, video installation, interactive media projects and...
2006:07 Undergraduate Theatre Highlights

BA Theatre Arts Program

The greatest strength of our theatre performance program continues to be the diversity of styles, techniques and points of view about performance that we are able to offer because the Twin Cities has such an active theatre scene. We are fortunate indeed that so many practicing locally-admired and nationally-known artists, with such wide-ranging artistic interests, have agreed to join our faculty and work with our students. This year we are pleased to welcome Nancy Donoval and Kevin Kling, two extraordinary storytellers who are team teaching a class in Storytelling, and Jan Mandell, long-time drama teacher at St. Paul Central High School and director of the Central Touring Theatre, who is teaching her unique ensemble method of developing new work in the Creative Collaboration class.

These are just the latest additions to a list of distinguished affiliate faculty who continue to teach for us. The sheer number and extraordinary diversity of Twin Cities artists who have worked with our students is stunning and deserves special mention. This year alone, the list of returning affiliates includes the three new faculty already mentioned, and, in addition: musician/accompanist Dawn Baker; actor/director Barbra Berlovitz, one of the founders of Theatre de la Jeune Lune; circus artists Meg Elias-Emory and Sean Emery; actor/director Brian Goranson; Gülgün Kayim, Co-Artistic Director of Skewed Visions; actress Barbara Kingsley; jazz dancer Linda Talcott Lee; Kym Longhi, company member of Margolis Brown Theater; choreographer Shawn McConneloug; playwright Kira Obolensky; actor/singer T. Mychael Rambo; actor/director Robert Rosen, a founder of Jeune Lune; and actress Shirley Venard.

Last year we continued to develop our guest artist/workshop program. At the top of the list was the third annual Wickedly Wild Workshop Week, a week of special, often wacky workshops taught by guest artists as curricular enhancements prior to the beginning of the spring semester each January. Last year’s guest artists included Cynthia Hopkins, Will Power, Elevator Repair Service, Lucinda Holshue and Norma Bowles with Fringe Benefits.

This year’s guests included Iguan, a Russian Dance/Theatre Company; Geoff Sobelle (of Pig Iron Theatre in Philadelphia), who co-created the acclaimed all wear bowlers; internationally-known performance artist Tim Miller; Ludmilla Ryba, former member of Tadeusz Kantor’s company; Joe Chvala, director of Flying Foot Forum, who provided a dance workshop for this year’s Wickedly Wild Workshop week; and Robert Rosen, director of last year’s controversial production of The Pope and the Witch, who, with his collaborator, the choreographer Shawn McConneloug, will work with students on an original creation piece.

This past summer saw the second year of our very successful summer intensive workshop, Stage Elements. This increasingly popular ten-day workshop introduces rising high school sophomores and juniors to the wide-ranging performance practices we teach in order to help students find their own artistic voices, as well as to expose them to some of the unparalleled opportunities that a university theatre program such as ours can offer them for further developing their craft. Twenty students participated in a range of workshops supplemented by field trips to the Walker Art Center and to a performance Little Shop of Horrors at the MN Opera Center. For an intense ten days, six hours each day, students trained with faculty members – from both the BA and the BFA programs – and professional community artists, doing workshops in, among other things, voice, movement, characterization, puppetry and mask.

A particular highlight for this year’s BA performance program is The Woyzeck Project, a class that is exploring Buchner’s play, Alban Berg’s opera Wozzeck, Werner Herzog’s film Woyzeck and the musical by Robert Wilson and Tom Waits as sources for the development of a new creative collaboration and performance. The new work thus created will be given public performances by University Theatre as part of next year’s season. Faculty members Luverne Seifert (theatre), Michael Sommers (puppetry), Carl Flink (dance) are collaborating with each other – and with students from several disciplines – on this ambitious project.

Another major event for this year is the addition of two new faculty members to the BA Performance Program: Lisa Channer and Dominic Taylor. Both are directors who have already become very active in the program. Professor Channer is directing The Galileo Project – a project she conceived in response to a suggestion to do something connected with Bertolt Brecht’s play, Galileo. And professor Taylor is directing this spring’s musical, The Wiz. If you’d like to know more about either of these very accomplished artists and teachers, we have included biographies of both in another section of this newsletter.
Finally, we would like to mention two very exciting awards received by members of our program. Last year’s original production of *The Master and Margarita* was named as one of the top ten productions of the year by *City Pages*, and Maren Ward, co-artistic director of Bedlam Theatre and an affiliate faculty member of our program, is the recipient of a 2007 McKnight Theatre Fellowship. Taken together, these two awards are one measure of the outstanding artistic quality of the work our students do and the extraordinary faculty we have helping them to do it.

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

The BFA program continues to thrive and grow. Last spring we graduated our fourth class, at the same time as our partners, the Guthrie Theater, celebrated its first anniversary in their new building near the river (and within walking distance of Rarig, which makes traveling between the two facilities easier for our students and the Guthrie artists who teach for us at Rarig). As always, many of our graduates perform professionally throughout the country, and our students often perform at local and regional theatres while still in school. This year, these venues include the Guthrie, the Showboat, Emigrant Theater, Door Shakespeare, Theatre L’Homme Dieu and Shakespeare on the Cape.

Namir Smallwood, a 2006 graduate of the program, was recently named by the Minneapolis Star Tribune as one of eight “Young Artists on the Verge.” Smallwood, who performed with Penumbra Theatre and the Children’s Theatre Company while still a student, has moved seamlessly into a professional career after graduation. This spring, he will play Puck in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Guthrie, in a cast that also includes 2005 graduate Jonas Goslow as Demetrius. Goslow, who is interviewed elsewhere in this newsletter, has already performed several roles at the Guthrie, both as a student and since graduating.

Harlan Chambers, a 2007 honors graduate of the BFA program, has been selected as one of three students to receive the U of M’s Katherine E. Sullivan Scholarship for Study Abroad for 2007-08. This highly competitive scholarship provides funding for three outstanding undergraduates to enrich their academic experience with a fifth year of undergraduate study in another country. Chambers plans to divide his time between two internationally renowned theatre schools in France: the Ecole Philippe Gaulier in Paris and the Centre Artistique International Roy Hart in Malérargues. He is interested in combining the experimental voice faculty member Elisa Carlson for Shakespeare on the Cape, a company founded three years ago by 2005 BFA graduates Eric Holm & Elliot Eustis.

This past fall, 22 Freshmen joined us from states all across the U.S. – Minnesota, Texas, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Illinois, Oregon, Maryland, California, Florida, Ohio and South...
2006:07 Dance Program Highlights

BA/BFA in Dance

During the 2006-07 academic year, the dance program sponsored several extraordinary residencies and some exciting events as well. Here are some of the highlights. Seattle-based artist Pat Graney was invited to reconstruct an excerpt of her signature work, “Faith,” for University Dance Theatre. Ms. Graney was joined in residence by her niece, film maker and youth queer activist, Elliat Graney-Saucke. Pat and Elliat organized multiple “Queering Art” presentations and discussions with students and local LGBT-identified artists and allies. The residency culminated with a “Queering Art Cabaret” drawing enthusiasm, support, and participation from recognized local dance artists, as well as first-time youth performers from District 202 and new audience members in Barker Center Studio 100.

Brenda Dixon Gottschild was invited as a returning Cowles scholar in Fall 2006. She spoke with students in two dance academic courses, Dance History 1 and Philosophy and Aesthetics of Dance. She also presented a public lecture, “Researching Dance: The (Black) Dancing Body as a Measure of Culture,” which was attended by students, faculty and staff from the department and from other area college programs. She performed a second public event, “Tongue Smell Color” – a movement theatre discourse in eighteen episodes with her artistic and life partner, Hellmut Gottschild. This performance/conversation engaged a group of 100 audience members to discuss the various ways race and difference are constructed.

Lorry May of the Sokolow Dance Foundation joined the Dance Program to reconstruct Anna Sokolow’s 1955 masterwork “Rooms,” which was co-presented with the Southern Theatre on October 27-29, 2006 to full houses. This was an important partnership for our students since it gave them a chance to perform at the Southern, one of the area’s most respected professional dance venues. Members of the local dance community noted the students’ high ability and commitment to the historic work. For example, local dance artist, educator, and administrator, John Munger, wrote a blog about the performance entitled "Rooms: A View,” which said: “...what a wonderful achievement by the U of MN Dance Department and the students dancing there, and what a wonderful achievement by Lorry May, the long-time member of Sokolow’s company who set “Rooms” on the students. It never looked ‘pasted on.’ They delivered the work with commitment, understanding and ownership.” Lorry, whose presence in the program inspired students, faculty and staff alike, returned in January 2007 to restage the work for the University Dance Theatre Dance Revolutions annual concert.

The Joe Goode Performance Group visited the Dance Program for a one week intensive in late February of 2007. Joe Goode, along with five of his long-time company members, “took over” the dance composition curriculum, teaching three levels of creative courses for Composition 1, 3, and 5. The artists also gave a company lecture-demonstration-performance and taught a “partnering” course for intermediate to advanced dancers. The short residency had a large impact on the program since it exposed dance majors at all levels to Goode’s working methods in a very intense way.

The Dance Program presented its very first Jazz Concert in December 2006 at the Barker Center for Dance, which featured jazz choreography by program faculty, students and alumni as well as by Cowles Guest Artist Katherine Kramer. The sold-out weekend was made possible by the creative and hard work of program faculty members Karla Grotting, Cyndi Gutierrez-Garner, Laura Selle and Linda Talcott-Lee.

Finally, to top off a great academic year, the program made another very successful appearance at the North Central Regional American College Dance Festival Conference, which took place at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Twelve artists from the program went, accompanied by faculty members Laura Selle, Cyndi Gutierrez and musician Manjunan Gnanaratnam. The Dance Program entered two pieces: a student choreographer’s duet, “Better to Have,” and guest artist Uri Sands’ quartet “Happy.” Both of them drew rave reviews from the conference adjudicators and attendees, and both were honored by being selected for the conference’s gala concert.

photo: Dance Program Professor Ananya Chatterjea rehearses her piece “Khonj” for the 2007 Dance Revolutions concert
PHOTOGRAPH: V. PAUL VIRTUCIO
Chase Korte
Sept. 6, 1982 – Feb. 10, 2007

Remembering Chase
by Adri Mehra, Class of 2007 BA Theatre Alumnus

“It’s not always easy for me to embrace new things. In fact, that is one of the things that I like about theatre: the perpetual challenge, the ongoing dare, the prodding, the danger, the cliff. In a way, I like that it is not easy.”

These were the words of former University of Minnesota theatre star Chase Korte (B.A., 2005), reflecting upon a workshop he had just completed with renowned author and performance artist Tim Miller at the Rarig Center in 2004. “[This] captures a sense of who Chase was and wanted to be,” comments Sonja Arsham Kufinec, director of undergraduate studies and associate professor in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. “It conveys both loss and positive memory.”

Two and a half years after sharing these thoughts with us, on the evening of Saturday, February 10, 2007, Chase was killed in a car crash four miles east of Needles, California. He was on his way home to Los Angeles following a production meeting in Bullhead City, Arizona.

After phenomenal success as an actor in a wide variety of local stage, screen, commercial and industrial roles (including many shows both on and off the main stage at the Rarig Center), Chase, a native of Elk River, Minnesota, had moved to North Hollywood in January 2006, less than a month after receiving his degree.

“Chase was something of an anomaly, even in the quirk-happy acting universe,” I wrote in a memorial for the Minnesota Daily several days after Chase’s passing. “Imagine all-American matinee good looks posterized over the icy intensity of Joaquin Phoenix, the wild-eyed abandon of Jack Nicholson and the short matinee good looks postered over the icy intensity of Joaquin Phoenix, the wild-eyed abandon of Jack Nicholson and the short fuses of Al Pacino – leavened with the Method School melancholy of a young Brando – and you’ve at least got a guy who might want to have a smoke with Mr. Chase Korte, ‘cause they’d have a lot in common.”

Chase’s agent, Nancy Kremer, said his career was going “gangbusters” and that she was “very confident he would get some major leads in films and TV series” in Hollywood, according to the Minneapolis Star Tribune. At the time of his death, Chase had just met with the director of the feature film he had been working on for the past six months, and he patched up some creative differences with her.

The project, “Peace Walker,” chronicled a fictional American man as he walked 1,100 miles across the breadth of the United Kingdom to pay tribute to his brother, who was killed in Iraq. The original trailer clip for the film, entitled “Why Walk?,” was honored recently at the first annual YouTube Awards as one of the top ten most inspirational videos of the year. Featured on the popular site’s homepage, the video has received more than one million views.

“I could blend in, and be forgettable,” mused Chase in 2004, in his reflection about the Tim Miller workshop. “No. That’s not me. The last thing I want is to be forgettable.”

Rest in peace, Mr. Korte. The last thing we want is to forget you.

Undergrad Theatre continued on page 21

Carolina. With the new nonresident tuition rates that go into effect next fall – the annual Minnesota resident rate plus $4,000 – we look forward to continued geographic diversity and, more important, to the ability to offer out-of-state students a relatively affordable education. Another fall 2007 highlight for us was the Senior Company production of The Crucible produced by University Theatre in the proscenium, and directed by Kenneth Mitchell.

This spring, the sophomore company will perform in two Shakespeare works in repertory: Othello, directed by Steve Cardamone and Romeo and Juliet, directed by guest director Harry Waters, Jr. The junior company will perform, in repertory, two Carlo Goldoni plays: The Venetian Twins, directed by guest director Rich Rand and The Superior Residence directed by affiliate faculty member Robert Rosen. And, to top off their careers here, the seniors will perform three new plays, plus a classic component, once again produced in the Dowling Studio at the Guthrie.

There are some ongoing areas that continue to be highlights of the program year after year and a few issues that we must address. The Study Abroad semester is one of our real successes. We hope to continue its growth and expand our partnership with the Globe Theater, which has become a crucial part of study abroad. Another success has been the extraordinary level of national recognition the BFA program has achieved in its relatively few years of existence. We will continue to develop our visibility and reach by increasing the number of geographic regions in which we recruit. For instance, this year, Las Vegas has been added to our recruiting tour.

It has always been a challenge for us to create opportunities for our students to collaborate with students in the BA Program and throughout the department. This year, for the first time, BFA students will have the time free (and are encouraged) to work on the Xperimental 24-hour play festival, and to participate in the Wickedly Wild and Way Our Workshop Week. We have also instituted a new collaboration for our freshmen called New Voices, a month-long workshop series held Saturdays in October at which Freshmen BFAs worked with students from the BA and Dance programs.

We encouraged BFA students to become Peers a few years ago, and since then, several BFAs have taken on this added responsibility. This year Ashley Peterson represents BFAs as a Peer, along with a BA and a dance student. And once again, BAs were cast alongside BFA Seniors in the annual BFA Subscriber Season show, The Crucible. In addition, more BFA students than ever are involved in the student-run X Theatre. Sophomore Josh Fazeli is on the X board and a group of senior men performed Shakespeare’s Henry IV: Part I on the X Season, to sellout houses, as their BFA Free Play project.

The future continues to look very positive for the BFA Program, and we want to make sure that the program becomes truly sustainable. So we are working on a renewed agreement between the Guthrie Theater and the BFA Program that will allow the program to survive changes in leadership, or other drastic changes, at either institution.
MA/PhD in Theatre History and Theory

Following the department's increasing focus on diversity in all its manifestations, we have agreed as a program that it is crucial for our curriculum and the events we sponsor to include many different aesthetic and theoretical approaches to performance and explore performance from an international perspective – that is, as an expression of diverse cultures – not just its Western roots, influences and practices. In keeping with this focus, most of the lectures, workshops and other events sponsored by the theatre historiography program last year had some connection to social and cultural diversity or to performance as it is understood internationally.

Highlights of last year’s events included a talk by professor Claire Conceison, a member of the Department of Drama and Dance at Tufts University and an associate in research at the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University. Co-sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), professor Conceison presented a lecture at IAS entitled “Contemporary Stagings of the American Other in China.” Another event co-sponsored by IAS featured Chen Alon, an actor, director and political activist who teaches and directs in the Community Performance program at Tel-Aviv University. He gave a public presentation on his site-specific work creating theater with polarized groups including students and prisoners, and Arab and Jewish teenagers. We also sponsored lectures by Susan Leigh Foster, a Dance Historiography scholar at UCLA (co-sponsored with Dance) and by Keya Ganguly, of the U of M Department of Cultural Studies & Comparative Literature, whose expertise is in ethnography and film studies, particularly post-colonial South Asian film and culture.

Well-known performance artist and activist Tim Miller joined us for two workshops and a performance of Sex, Body, Self, which was a highly stimulating and opinionated rant with performance about theater, identity, the culture wars and queer strategies for the future. And members of our program were actively involved in the IAS-sponsored conference, Art as Knowing, “a public conversation about art, ideas and practice.” Conference participants included theatre scholar/artists Ricardo Dominguez and Alan Read; choreographer/dance scholars Ann Carlson, Ananya Chatterjea, David Gordon, Dana Reitz and Valda Setterfield; poet Kamau Brathwaite; musician/visual artist Douglas R. Ewart; and photographer Joann Verberg.

As already mentioned, the issues of diversity and difference have occupied center stage for the department and for our program as well during the past few years. We have wrestled with how to define the parameters of this often over-used term in ways that challenge conventional thinking. Last year, as part of our ongoing conversation with students about these issues, we helped organize a major all-department Town Hall forum entitled Casting About: What does/can/should diversity in performance look like? Facilitated by Professor Harry J. Elam Jr., an August Wilson scholar, professional director, and director of Stanford University’s diversity in performance program, our students and invited guests had an often intense discussion that centered on casting and representation issues: “color-blind casting,” physicality in casting and representation and, more generally, who can “legitimately” represent who on stage. Invited guests included professor and Penumbra Theatre Artistic Director Lou Bellamy, playwright and performer Kevin Kling, Guthrie Artist Marcela Lorca, English and Asian Studies Professor Josephine Lee, Asian theater translator Claire Conceison, Mixed Blood Theatre Artistic Director Jack Reuler, Theatre Mu Artistic Director Rick Shiomi and the Guthrie’s Ken Washington.

We also helped put together a town hall and post-show panel discussion to address the very contentious issues raised by The Pope and the Witch. The town hall was for the benefit of our students, who had to bear some very vocal criticism of the department for choosing the play (which some found critical of the Pope and offensive to Catholics). The post-show panel was aimed at the audience, most of whom stayed for a long and lively discussion. Participants included guest theatre scholar/practitioner Herbert Blau from the University of Washington, Professor John Mowitt from the U of M Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature, and the show’s director, Robert Rosen.

We also hosted the annual Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference for the first time in May-June of 2007. The theme of the conference, What Does it Mean To Be a Citizen?, resonated quite well with our department’s new focus on the intertwining relationships between theatre and civic engagement, between theatre and culture and between theatre and social change. Invited guests to the conference included: Augusto and Julian Boal, Rosa Luis Márquez (Puerto Rican practition-
BA/MFA in Theatre Design and Technology

The 2006-07 University Theatre Season was a challenging one for our student designers, as it included some unusual offerings: the outdoor, promenade-style production of *The Master and Margarita*; two Ibsen plays, *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll’s House*, performed by the BFAs in rolling repertory with the same basic underlying set; and *Inspecting Carol*, our first winter production aboard the Showboat. These were in addition to the technically difficult (and controversial) production of *The Pope and the Witch*, a production of *The Arabian Nights* in the always technologically-challenging Arena theatre, and the annual University Dance Theatre concert which, with its large cast of dancers, always creates lots of work for the costume designers and builders. So the Program in Theatre Design and Technology would like to acknowledge the fine student design/tech work executed for that somewhat extraordinary season.

Our students won a number of awards for their outstanding work last year. This includes several students from Martin Gwinup’s video classes, who entered their work in film festivals both locally and nationally. One of them, Deborah Moe, who is an Individually Designed Interdepartmental Major (IDIM) with theatre as one of her areas of emphasis, won the top award in the “Get it on Record” contest. She was the director of photography and camera operator for the piece entered in the competition. And Jason Underferth, a graduate student lighting designer, was awarded a scholarship from the theatre lighting company ETC to attend the LDI 2006 trade show in Las Vegas last fall.

The Padelford Education Fund named two new awards for Showboat scholars last summer: In addition to the Lance Brockman Scholarship (won by Diane Rusk), the new awards were named the Jean Montgomery Award (presented to John Skelley) and the Vern Sutton Award (presented to Kristin Kenning). Several of our students participated in the USITT (United States Institute for Theatre Technology) conference in Phoenix courtesy of the Joncas Scholarship, and a few of our students attended the international Prague Quadrennial (PQ) exposition courtesy of the Scott/Norcostco Award and departmental travel funds. One of them, MFA student Lisa Kudas, has written an interesting piece about her experience at PQ, which we have included elsewhere in this issue of Applause.

University Theatre Managing Director Sherry Wagner-Henry was elected to the USITT Board of Directors for this year. She has also been appointed to the graduate faculty for Liberal Studies and the Non-Profit Management program, with several new graduate and undergraduate students declaring an arts management focus this year.

Finally, we had another successful MFA Designer/Technician showcase last spring. Evaluators included artistic directors Peter Brosius (Children’s Theatre Company), Jamie Rocco (Ordway Center), Jack Reuler (Mixed Blood Theater) and Peter Rothstein (Theater Latté Da); and designers Marcus Dilliard, Michael Murnane, Matthew Reinert and Amy Schmidt (Guthrie Costume Director), as well as other freelance artists and technicians from the metro area.
**Alumna Profile: Maggie Bergeron**

Based on an interview with Nora Jenneman, coordinator, University of Minnesota Dance
(all quotations are from that interview and follow-up e-mails)

Nora: You transferred to the University of Minnesota Dance Program. I’m curious to know what factors shaped your decision to come to this program?

Maggie: Many factors actually...I went to Interlochen Arts Academy for my junior and senior years of high school. I was a ballerina, the program was very much ballet-based, and that is where I was planning to go in life. I went to Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania for a year. But I was really unhappy and the ballet thing wasn’t doing it for me. I was very confused and conflicted about dance, period. I decided not to go back, and I went to my parent’s farm for a year. I did Americorps, tutored kids, and stopped dancing totally. Then got a call from a woman in New Mexico who wanted me to dance for her, and dance was back in my life. I was looking at the next year and thinking about an education degree. I thought that I would just look at the Dance Program at the University of Minnesota. I auditioned and totally fell in love with it. I saw all of the things that I didn’t see at Mercyhurst. I saw faculty who I could really learn from, faculty who had a really broad, deep base of knowledge that could feed me in a way that I hadn’t been fed in a long time.

N: So it was something about the way the audition was structured?

M: Yes, the audition structure – and the teaching, and the academics, the fact that there were all of these dance academics. The more I researched the program the more I was really, really drawn to it.

N: What surprised you the most in the span of your undergraduate education?

M: A couple of things come to mind right away, one of them being how exhausted I was constantly. But I think it was really good preparation for life. It was learning how to manage your time and manage your body. I supported myself through school, so I was always looking for scholarships and working all the time. I really had to figure out how to live on a very small budget. I think another surprise is the way the program really rearranged my world in the way that I think about life, dance, art, society and culture. Somehow the combination of the dance classes and the academics do that to you here. I was uncomfortable a lot because when your world is being rearranged, it is hard.

N: Was there a faculty member, and/or a Cowles Visiting Artist, who had a big impact on your education, your thinking about dance, your learning process?

M: A few people come to mind to mind right away ... Definitely [professor] Ananya Chatterjea who blew my mind apart and put it back together. Mary Cochran, who came in as a Cowles Artist, was huge as well because she is short. It was really great finding someone who had a niche in the dance world that I felt that I could jump into...

N: You danced her role in Paul Taylor’s ‘Esplanade,’ didn’t you?

M: Yes, at Mercyhurst they were choosing all of the tall, slender ballerinas for parts, and all of the sudden there was this archetype that was mine and I totally got it. Also [faculty member] Toni Pierce-Sands – her intuitive energy – was really big influence on the way that I made lines in dancing ... instead of going from the outside in, it was more from inside out. And then [professor] Joanie Smith, who really taught me how to trust my instincts in choreography, which I think the biggest lesson: to trust.

N: How does this come up in your work now? You recently completed a Walker Art Center and Southern Theater commission for the ‘Momentum’ series, a piece titled ‘House/Home’ that was presented on July 12-14, 2007. I know that you collaborated with multiple artists on this work, including a composer/musician, a carpenter/set designer, a clothing/costume designer. I am wondering how your experiences as a student, specifically in the West Bank Arts Quarter, prepared you for this collaborative work with other artists?

M: Yes, absolutely, the Arts Quarter was just emerging when I was here, but in my career as a student, I really tried to seek out musicians, sound designers and theatre students. I did a lot of
collaboration. Now that I think about it; it was all about just going over to Rarig and putting up a sign and saying, ‘Anyone want to work with a dancer?’ – and then making a piece. The response was overwhelming.

N: I just remembered that you did a duet with a BFA Acting student from the first graduating class.

M: Yes, Tony Clarno, which was incredible. It was the first time I had ever worked with text; and he was a really great mover and martial artist. It was about being in this community where all these arty people are walking around and it is just about meeting them and saying ‘let’s work together’ and being open to the collaboration and the many ways things might manifest themselves.

N: That leads very well into my next question. The dancers you work with in your company, and specifically for ‘House/Home,’ are your peers from the Dance Program. Can you talk about how your sense of community was shaped as a student? Did you feel that it was something that developed? Is there something about this program that changed your sense of community?

M: I feel as though my social skills didn’t really develop until I got here. I found like-minded individuals who were thinking and moving in the ways that I was thinking and moving, and I think it is such a testament to the program that we have all stayed such close friends, and that we have all figured out how to work together and play together. We’re friends, but we are also colleagues. I think that also speaks a little bit about how I like to work. I’m really interested in collaboration in the movement.

N: When Joe Goode was here as a guest artist last spring he talked to some of the composition students specifically about how your peers as a student will continue to be the people in your community. That conversation made me think about programs or situations where competition drives the agenda more than community or artistry. Have you experienced that in your other training?

M: My other training wasn’t so much about speaking as ‘doing’; it wasn’t so much about articulating something as it was just about doing what had been done before. So this program let me realize that I had a voice and I could figure out the medium for that voice. And the other people, my peers, the people I work with, my dancers, are into that too. I feel as if their training here has allowed them to really invest in the process. They are so open and so ready to be right there and are really supportive in that way. I think the Cowles Artist program – with so many different artists and different processes – helps nurture a flexibility and develop in you the instincts to really get at the root of what each of the artists is trying to get out of you.

N: I’d like to talk a little bit about your creative process. I am curious to know if you feel as if your process has shifted a lot since the time you graduated? What do you see in the future? Do you see your work going in a new direction? Are there new places that you want to explore? Especially with this latest work, I sensed that you are working with elements that maybe you haven’t worked with before?

M: I feel like my process has shifted because I felt like this project was some big, black ‘thing’ and the only way to really get into it was to take one little step at a time, and trust. I feel like I had gone through a really structured phase in my process in which I had made seven duets and put them together, and with this last project, I tried to be more organic about it. I didn’t put those types of structures on my process and that was new – and hard, and different. I think my next challenge – and the thing I’m looking forward to with the next piece – is that I want to make something from beginning to end, straight through. I think that I am really interested in challenging myself so that I don’t get into a rut in which I may have a formula that works, but it isn’t challenging for the dancers or the audience.

N: I am thinking about how much work you have done since you graduated. You have done technical theatre work, you have worked in arts administration, you have taught in private studios, and now you have a position directing the Dance Program at the St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists. I am wondering what has been the most challenging aspect of having a career in the arts?

M: It has all been challenging. Time management is very critical, but I think patience is the hardest thing for me, because it is so easy to get out of school and do everything or do nothing. Sometimes you do nothing and it just takes time and the right circumstances for work to come along, or someone to see something that you are

Maggie Bergeron continued on page 26
Alumna Profile: Lillian Stillwell

Based on an interview with Nora Jenneman, coordinator, University of Minnesota Dance
(all quotations are from that interview and follow-up e-mails)

Nora: You worked with a wide range of Cowles Land Grant Chair Visiting Artists when you were a student, including on a Lar Lubovitch piece and a David Parsons piece. You also worked with artists such as Bebe Miller (who returned as a guest artist at the U of M this past fall after ten years) and Neil Greenburg. Did a particular work or working style have an impact on your future artistic choices?

Lillian: One that sticks out the most for me is working with Bebe; I still think about things that she said when we were in the process of working. The feeling that I had as a dancer performing in her work was one of trust; she didn’t explain her choices, she didn’t deliberate in front of us about how she was going to choreograph something, but she had an instinctual sense of how things were going to happen and why. Somehow, as a dancer, that translated for me into a trust in her, and then a trust in myself – that I did not need to go into the ‘why’ so much as just simply ‘do.’ I remember her talking to us about tasks, and that stuck with me a lot because it gave me a trust that movement itself could speak; whatever the movement meant emotionally could come out by simply doing the movement as fully as possible … And I think what also affected me about it was that it gave me a sense of what I was looking for in a choreographer that I wanted to work with, which was someone that I had that same sort of feeling with in the room.

N: You have experienced a successful performance career since you graduated. You worked here in the Twin Cities, you moved to New York, and now you have a contract in Europe. I am wondering if you want to share more about your decision to move to New York from Minneapolis? Could you also please talk more about your work with Johannes Wieland, and how it is different working in Germany than it is in the States?

L: Moving from Minneapolis to New York was one of the most difficult things that I have ever gone through; it was incredibly hard. I was really fortunate to work right away out of school in Minneapolis with Danny and Joanie (Shapiro and Smith) and Emily (Johnson), and in a way I was sort of unprepared for the level of struggle and difficulty that I faced in New York. I actually took a break from dancing when I first came to New York because it was such a transition to go from somewhere that was like home to a place where I didn’t know anybody, where I didn’t have any connections and I didn’t have a base.

What I found through the experience of living in New York was that nobody cares if you dance, or if you go and work in an office, or if you become a caterer; you have to find your own internal source of survival and continue in the face of every obstacle that comes your way. You have to say ‘yes’ to your work everyday: ‘yes I’m still going to go take class,’ ‘yes I’m still going to audition,’ and ‘yes I’m still going to reflect as an artist.’

There was a really amazing transformation that came from living in New York as well, not just thinking about myself as a dancer but as a person. I had to take so many jobs to survive, everything from working at a coffee shop to temping, to yoga teaching – many, many things to make money – all of which had such an impact because they made me realize that I am not just a dancer. I am many other things and those things actually make me a better performer. It gave me a huge amount of gratitude because I’m going into a job now where I can dance and that’s all I have to do. That is a very rare thing that I didn’t ever expect to do with my life. I keep recommitting to dance everyday and I feel a lot of gratitude.

When I first moved to New York – maybe ever since school when I had worked with the Cowles artists, people like Bebe and Neil and Ron Brown – I wanted the experience of working one on one with a choreographer who was in the room. I think those experiences actually really set the idea in me that I wanted to work for someone who was young and current in this generation developing the new kind of dance. I was talking to Scott Killian who I had met through Danny and Joanie, and who was playing for Zvi’s (Gotheiner) class in New York. I told him that I wanted to dance for someone in this generation and not join some big established company, and he suggested that I find Johannes Wieland.

So it was sort of in a way through things that happened in Minnesota that I ended up with Johannes. I saw Johannes’ work and I waited two years for an audition. When I started with him he had an independent company in New York and the whole Germany thing sort of happened out of the blue because he had a commission there. I didn’t take the job in order to move to Germany, but I took the job because I was really interested in his work.

N: Do you want to talk about your experiences in Germany?

L: The theatre is a huge institution, it is state-funded and part of the city and there is a 900 seat opera house. It is a totally different feeling from being a freelance dancer in New York. There’s a massage therapist that you can see every week for four Euros; they have a beautiful studio that overlooks the city; there are people who do your makeup for you before the show; and there is an orchestra that will play live for the premiere in the fall when we do ‘Rite of Spring.’ There are many things that are different on a day-to-day level from working in New York. The biggest thing is that you don’t have to do anything else – you get up, you dance, you dance all day, and you go home: that’s your job. For me that was incredibly difficult, but it is also really a dream come true in a lot of ways,

Lillian Stillwell continued on page 29
Applause: It is November 19, 2007, and we are here to talk about Stage Elements with Luverne Seifert, Director of the BA Performance Program. First of all, what is Stage Elements and how did it originate?

Luverne: Stage Elements is a ten-day summer intensive workshop for high school students who are interested in performance. The workshop has been developed jointly by the BA and the BFA programs. It originated as a seed outreach and recruitment program in the summer of 2006, developed from a grant the department received from the University of Minnesota McKnight Arts and Humanities Endowment. The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) agreed to continue funding the program in its second year, which was this past summer.

A: As I understand it, Stage Elements was a continuation of a slightly different workshop program that was conceived of as a summer workshop for both high school teachers and students, but has ended up as a program just for prospective students...

L: Yes, in 2005, the year before Stage Elements started, we did a workshop for teachers that was funded by the Institute for Global Studies. We were hoping to introduce that workshop to students as well, but there wasn't sufficient interest.

A: What departmental and/or BA performance needs does it fulfill?

L: I think a couple of things. One, it's a great recruitment tool for bringing students into our department. The other thing that I think we've been very successful at is being able to differentiate for participants between the curricula of the BA program and the BFA program, so that, by taking workshops from practitioner/teachers from both programs, prospective students can see the differences between the two, which helps them determine which program they might want to apply to or enter into in the future.

A: Are the workshops valuable partly because a lot of the performance methodologies in the BA program are currently nonstandard or moving in different directions from what they might have learned in high school, so that the summer intensive also introduces them to the new kinds of performance paradigms we are moving toward?

L: Absolutely. And I would say generally that since a majority (though not all) of the high schools they attend are very traditional, students come to us with experiences in musicals or some of the more traditional or "standard" works. So when they participate in the BA program summer intensive workshops, they are introduced to a very different way of creating theatre than they are accustomed to. We try to empower them to do original creations, which is very new to them. And either they embrace this methodology and engage in it fully, or they have a little bit of a difficult time and realize that they prefer to work in a more traditional manner. We can tell almost immediately which students will be candidates for the BA performance program, and which might fit better in the BFA program. It's quite clear.

A: How has Stage Elements evolved over time?

L: I would say that we have become more focused in what we're offering. The curriculum has been better defined. We now understand what to include in the program. For instance, we are now going on various field trips, which we didn't do in the first year. We have always tried to include a Guthrie tour, and are now including a Walker Art Center tour for the students who are more interested in original creations. Also, we're really pushing to try to get students of diversity into the program, as well as students of need, which are two areas we focus on strongly during the application process. Consequently, we have made sure that the program includes enough funding so we can offer scholarships – through CLA and through our department as well.

A: How have you been measuring the program's success, and how successful was it last summer?

L: We have been able to follow most of the students after they've completed the program. We've just recently learned, for instance, that of the students from the 2006 summer intensive, 15 of the 16
Celebrating Jean Montgomery
by Professor C. Lance Brockman, Theatre Arts & Dance

Recently, we have been able to celebrate two important milestones in the history of the Department. The 75:20 event, two years ago, reflected on the combined accomplishments of 75 years of producing University Theatre and 20 years of our synergy as a Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. This summer will be the Sesquicentennial of the State of Minnesota but more importantly for many of us, the 50th Anniversary of producing on the Mississippi in both the old and new Minnesota Centennial for many of us, the 50th Anniversary of producing on the Mississippi in both the old and new Minnesota Centennial Showboat. More about this event is on the back cover of Applause.

One important celebration is sandwiched between these two events – the completion of the 35th season in Rarig Center. Apart from what you think of the aesthetics of the building, the four theatres and support spaces have proven to be invaluable in training three plus generations of students. That success has validated the incredible energy and wisdom of the faculty in the 1960s and early 1970s, which made Rarig an excellent training facility despite the fact that it was built on the “cheap,” resulting in many of the aesthetic choices that have fueled criticism of the building, including the infamous unpainted concrete block. Of course, I must state the obvious: it was the tireless energy of colleague Wendell Josal that, more than anyone, helped shape the excellent theatres and classrooms in Rarig. We owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Beyond the building’s design, Rarig’s spaces have continued to function through a myriad of changing and sometimes competing agendas by the tremendous efforts of one person: Jean A. Montgomery. In her own words, she has worn two hats – as both University Theatre’s lighting designer/teacher and as stage supervisor/stage management mentor. Actually, she donor a third hat as the Director of Graduate Studies, supporting and guiding students through the administration of three Chairs: Reid, Brockman and Kobialka. So, as we approach the 35-year milestone of Rarig, we are also marking the celebration and retirement of the “keeper of the keys” and the go-to person – Gino.

Jean and I were hired together in a concurrent search and our original charge was to consolidate and move the department’s technical/rehearsal equipment into Rarig Center and to get the building up and functioning for classes and productions. It must be remembered that before Rarig was built, the Department had rooms and “theatres” in over 11 buildings. Many were spaces that no one wanted; some were tucked away in attics or storage spaces; almost all were located up multiple flights of stairs, thus making that move a challenge.

I remember the first time I met Jean during my interview for the position as technical director. We convened at an Embers restaurant with Wendell Josal after a spirited tech rehearsal for A Dream Play – a Frank M Whiting swan song and one of the last productions presented by the Department in Scott Hall. My first impressions were that she was a “take-charge person” who was direct, practical and had a wonderful laugh. In addition, it was obvious from everyone I met during my interview that she commanded the respect of all of the senior faculty (Thompson, Graham, Moulton, Fredericks...) or old Buffalos as we affectionately called them (in retrospect, they don’t seem so old now). After 35 years, nothing has changed those first impressions in my mind. But what has become more apparent is that her devotion and passion for teaching and assisting students remains her main driving force.

Now if Jean has a minor fault, it is her propensity to focus on the exacting details that escape the usual “artistic” mind of students and colleagues of the Department, past and present. More than once, I have heard her stop a congenial conversation in mid-sentence during a faculty meeting as she reminds us that we had agreed to a position just last week that was 180 degrees from our “newest brainstorm.” Of course, that exactitude has been passed on to generations of student stage managers – most of them fully employed because of her serving as a model for precision in thought and action.

I would be remiss not to also acknowledge Jean’s artistry as a lighting designer. We have designed together on approximately 30 productions both here and professionally, many with Charles Nolte (I cannot recall the exact number, but I am sure Jean can). During the design process, she provides minimal discussion about her intent except to tell you “There will be light!” And yet despite the understatement, the end result has always been an extraordinary visual aesthetic that pleases the other designers while fulfilling the critical needs of the director and, most importantly, the play.

So Jean, you will be missed. True to your statement about always wearing two hats, two new colleagues will replace you – one for each hat. We wish you well in your future life’s journey and please accept our profound thanks for your tireless efforts in support of the true mission of this Department. As I think back on your tremendous energy and devotion to the students and to our colleagues, I am not sure that two new hires will be able to fill the void. Of course, the real burning question for all of us is: to whom will you turn in your keys when you finally walk out the door?

So in the spirit of celebration, I urge everyone – current Theatre Arts and Dance faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae and friends – to come see us during our annual Awards Day, or if that doesn’t work, during our 50th anniversary fete this summer on the Showboat. Both will afford you an opportunity to express your personal gratitude to Jean/Gino!

With that said, our very best to you,

Lance, A Fellow ‘Satrap’
Understanding the choices and projects that make up the former University Theatre and Dance Mainstage Season, now known as the Subscriber Series, must seem completely random when you are not directly involved with the process – and often it is just as confusing to those of us who are! So I have tried to put together a simplified guide to a lot of the thinking that goes into choosing the ticketed season of University Theatre and Dance works.

THE PRODUCERS – WHO ARE THEY?
The Producers is a group comprised of faculty, staff and student representatives from the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Each program (Dance, MA/PHD, Design/Tech, BA, and BFA) have both faculty and student representatives that, together with a representative from the X Board, Michal Kobialka as chair, and myself as Managing Director, attend bi-weekly or monthly meetings. We read plays, research and suggest new work or new artists to work with, and bring suggestions to the table from the communities that we each represent. We ask faculty to take the ideas and suggestions that come out of the meetings back to their individual program meetings to share information with other faculty and staff, while the student representatives disseminate information among their groups (e.g., the Peers keep the undergraduate community informed through town hall forums and Backstage Pass).

THE TIMEFRAME/MATRIX OF THE SEASON: SEPTEMBER THROUGH APRIL
Having been in this department for 13 years, I can tell you that we have played around with the structure of the season in as many ways as there are possibilities. But with only 14 weeks of classes in each semester, plus holidays added to the mix, the group has found that given the time needed to rehearse and build scenery and costumes, it is only possible to accommodate five or six productions each academic year, plus the summer Showboat season. The precise number depends a great deal on the resources that each show requires. For instance, when the creators and directors of our 2006 production of The Master and Margarita decided to perform outside, we needed to open as quickly as possible because of weather considerations. The artistic team needed at least four weeks of creation, staging, and rehearsals for performers, and design/tech needed the show to be simple in its requirements since they were already building the next project in the season – and planning the next one after that – when The Master and Margarita opened in October. Indeed, it is routine for design/tech to be working on three or four shows simultaneously: planning and designing one or two future shows and building the next show, even as the upcoming show is being built, loaded in and tech-rehearsed.

The Producers thus need to decide, along with the shows in the series, the level of production values each can have. This decision helps us manage the production of three or four shows simultaneously, as well as to manage the commitments to the students who are assigned/cast in them, and balance the financial resources we have.

For instance, the BFA senior show has a commitment from the Producers to be a fully-realized production, since this is the only fully-produced show in which the BFA students have a chance to participate during their time in the program (the BFA studio series has the same resources as classroom projects: pulled costumes and props). In 2006, we knew the Ibsen Project would take a lot of construction time in the shop, so it was decided that The Master and Margarita (the production that preceded the Ibsen Project) had to be done using a different approach: less expensive materials, simpler construction, found objects. In Spring 2007, Dance Revolutions, the UDT project, was a sizeable show to build for the costume area, but “light” in the scenic area, which meant that building The Pope and the Witch – which followed Dance Revolutions – had to, and could, start immediately.

This kind of planning is necessary to insure that processes flow smoothly. We simply have no extra time. The Arabian Nights had to be a smaller production in the Arena because it quickly followed The Pope and the Witch, which utilized lots of our resources, and because we were entering the build time frame for the summer Showboat. Simply put, you can rehearse three different productions in three different spaces with three different casts, but we only have one scene shop staff and one costume shop staff to build them. Therefore we try to choose and schedule the size and scale of shows very carefully and deliberately.

HOW AND WHY DO WE CHOOSE THE SEASON?
LET ME COUNT THE WAYS...
Each program has commitments they make to the students. A lot of these commitments stem from what is being taught and learned in the classroom. The Producers feel strongly that what we are teaching and learning should be reflected on the stage. For
Cindy García
An interview with our new professor about diversity and her research

Applause: Cindy García, this is the end of your first semester at the University of Minnesota – a very eventful semester that started with a strike by workers in several AFSCME union locals, and is ending with weather that must be somewhat atypical for you, arriving here as you did from Southern California. So, before we begin, a belated welcome to the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, and to the University of Minnesota. And now to our first question. What are your teaching and research interests, and how do these reflect your academic career and life experiences?

Cindy: I’m interested in popular culture … dance and popular culture, particularly Latino-American popular dance and the politics of performance. I’m interested in the ways that the arts have the power to both reproduce and challenge social gendered and racialized hierarchies. I’ve always been really deeply affected by the kinds of violations that occur as a result of class inequalities and racism, particularly within the United States, and I think a lot of what I teach and write about … that’s the basis for what I do, even though I’m working in the arts. I feel that they’re very linked … I feel like the best way for me to make any kind of intervention into this, however slight, is through education, which is why I became a bilingual elementary school teacher. As an undergrad I majored in cultural anthropology, after which for six years I taught bilingual elementary school and I had a number of students who were either immigrants from Mexico or were from the U.S. – Mexican Americans in the U.S. – and both sets of students struggled with a kind of second-class cultural citizenship in this country. So that underscores a lot of what I do.

A: As I understand it, you joined the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, half in theater and half in dance, as part of a CLA-sponsored “diversity initiative.” For you, what does the term “diversity” encompass?

C: I think diversity has been employed to mean so many disparate things that its meaning often gets flattened, especially when used as part of an agenda of “multiculturalism” that doesn’t question relationships between cultures in terms of privilege, access, exploitation and exclusion. I think it’s important to understand the ways that we are complicit in … making banal … these kinds of violences within our everyday lives. So I think that’s what diversity means … that is, its meaning must include those kinds of understandings.

A: What is your sense of the department’s – or of the entire institution’s – understanding of the term “diversity,” and how might that differ or be similar to yours?

C: Since moving to this university, I’ve heard people define the term diversity in terms of the recruitment of brown bodies – so in terms of the numbers. But I think often there’s no distinction made between international diversity and domestic diversity, and diversity … also usually isn’t … seen as intersected with class, which I think is a really important issue. But I have been impressed that the Office of Equity and Diversity actually does make this distinction between international diversity and domestic diversity, and doesn’t conflate the numbers when they’re giving statistics on faculty and students...

A: And that’s an institution-wide office...

C: Yes … yes, it’s headed by [Vice President and Vice Provost] “Rusty” Barceló.

A: And what about the department? What’s been your experience with how we’ve struggled with the definition of diversity?

C: I think that the structures of the university and the department need to be thought through in terms of how they may or may not accommodate and support people of color. I think we have to ask ourselves if the structures reproduce a class-based racism. Do we allow students who’ve never had the opportunity to have formal training in dance and theatre to explore these fields as undergraduates, or are we trying to recruit students of color who might come from a more middle-class or upper-middle-class background, and who have already had similar kinds of training as the majority of the students that we accept. What do we value and do we really offer opportunities for students who haven’t had certain kinds of training? Can we see the value in those kinds of students? So that’s what I’m thinking of in terms of the department. I’ve been asking these questions because I’m still trying understand … how the department as a whole thinks about diversity.

That’s because I work mostly in the Dance Program with [professors] Ananya Chatterjea and Diyah Larasati ... and Marge Maddux. All of us have been talking about – working through – how we are structuring the academic courses in the program. And there’s so much support there ... every single class that we’re offering really does pay attention to the issues I’ve raised ... to power [relationships], to inequities ... to the kinds of violences these perpetuate. With my hiring this year, and also Diyah’s, the two of us ... Ananya, Diyah and I all have a course with an international perspective. Ananya looks at the global stage, [while] Diyah and I look at other kinds of global issues – [such as] globalization and how these economic structures or circulations of bodies in a more global context affect ... readings of performance. So I feel like we’ve been able to have really, really great dialogues.
MFAs Visit Prague
By Lisa Kudas, MFA Candidate, Class of 2008

The 11th PQ 2007 marked the 40th anniversary of the International Exhibition of Scenography and Theatre Architecture. Held every four years, the 2007 PQ (Prague Quadrennial) featured displays from over 60 countries containing works from each participant’s best theatrical, dance and operatic designs of the past four years. The ten-day conference had so much going on every minute of the day that there was something for everyone. Any designer, student or professional can benefit from attending PQ. The conference inspires you to think about designing outside your own comfort zone, and it inspires you to push your own designs farther. I was most inspired walking through the expo floor viewing design work displayed from the countries spanning the globe.

Each person sees the world differently and these perceptions are based on cultural observations of the world that surrounds one. Seeing how different countries viewed themselves through theatre was very enlightening, and the differences in presentation of these ideas were also as eclectic as the countries themselves. Each country had a booth, often times an entire environment displaying the best designs of their theatre elite. The scenic designers from all countries were very adept in rendering and also at showing precise detail in models, some of which had motorized revolves, or showed walls moving to change scene. The Japanese booth had the most impressively detailed models housed in a booth that looked like a sushi restaurant. The Taiwan booth was a piece of art in its own right, completely constructed of interwoven bamboo, which made a structure of curved walls and a curved staircase leading to an upper level where you experienced images of their design work in an intimate haven above the expo floor. Exploring the US booth was also quite enjoyable. The booth showed design items ranging from the wildly popular Wicked by Eugene Lee to an inventive melting skyscraper design for West Side Story by designer George Tsypin.

There were even some Minneapolis designers displayed: Sonya Berlovitz, costume designer, and Marcus Dillard, lighting designer, for Theatre de la Jeune Lune’s production of The Miser. The quality of the displays, as well as the quality of the works that were being displayed, was exciting and stimulating.

Aside from the wonderful country exhibitions there were also many fantastic students’ expositions as well. Upon entering the PQ building, you were greeted by 40 student projects for Aristophanes’ The Birds. These projects were chosen from 150 entries and were amazingly inventive designs. I wish I had been able to participate, as I think this display offered a great chance for students in design classes to produce an interesting project for a purpose greater than a grade or a portfolio. Imagine your work being seen by almost 23,000 people from all around the world. This is definitely an opportunity that US colleges should take advantage of for PQ 2011. As a student it was very inspiring to see what my contemporaries from other countries are producing and it has both inspired me and pushed me to produce more innovative designs.

The workshops are also a great opportunity if you can get into them. The registration process was a bit rough, and I didn’t get into my first choice session, but I was lucky enough to get a seat in one of Richard Finkelstein’s photography sessions. He is an American scenic and lighting designer and theatrical photographer. I learned a great deal about how to get the best shot out of my little digital camera as well as what makes a good theatrical photograph. He also gave us some Photoshop hints and showed us a few of the programs that he uses to work with his own photos.

A final reason to attend PQ is the beautiful city of Prague. Walking down cobblestone streets, everywhere you look you find ornately carved art nouveau architecture. Even the smallest, seemingly insignificant building has its own beautiful artistic facade. There are also many beautiful sites to see around the city: St. Vitus Cathedral, the Charles Bridge, and Prague Tower to name a few. As a great admirer of Alphonse Mucha’s artwork, I would also suggest a visit to the museum dedicated to his work, which is located in Old Town Prague. His art nouveau designs represent the spirit of the city that houses them. I would highly recommend this conference to anyone who wants to broaden their views on theatrical design. While seeing other designers work you become inspired to get the best out of your own design work, something that is great for any designer, student or professional. √
Californian Jonas Goslow is a 2005 graduate of the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program. He currently makes his living on the Guthrie Theater stage. We recently had the opportunity to catch up with Jonas.

Applause: How did you get your start as an actor?

Jonas: When I was in kindergarten, my older sister encouraged me to try out for the part of Winthrop in our school’s production of *Music Man*. I got the part, and I had so much fun doing it that I was in every play at our school after that. By the time I was in eighth grade, I moved to San Francisco to study at School of the Arts; acting had become my passion.

Applause: What is it that makes you so passionate about acting?

Jonas: Some actors approach a new role by reading the script and imagining a character; their process is more cognitive than mine. For me, the character emerges in rehearsal through a discovery process. I try to work to a place where I am free enough to risk, to explore, to play. In this space, I’m not thinking about the other actors, or my fears. My instincts take over and a character comes out that sometimes surprises even me. It’s what I love about acting, the play aspect.

Applause: You honed your acting skills in the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program; how did you choose it?

Jonas: I was impressed by how selective the University of Minnesota was because I knew that if I got into the program, I’d be working with some of the best young actors in the country. I had been accepted at Boston University, Carnegie Mellon, North Carolina School of the Arts and some others, but these programs based their selection process on a ten minute audition. The University of Minnesota was the only school to do a call back and it was three days long! Over three days, I got to experience just how creative and talented and competitive the other actors were – and the caliber of the faculty was a step up from anything I had experienced. I desperately wanted to get in but wasn’t at all sure I’d make it.

Applause: Not only did you make it, but you’re one of our shining stars! In fact, you received multiple scholarships while you were a student at the University. What difference did scholarship support make to your education?

Jonas: Scholarship support made it possible for me to focus on my school work instead of having to take on extra jobs. The program was so demanding that it was really tough for my classmates who didn’t have financial help to fit in time to make money. Many of us graduated from college with debt (which is challenging to pay off as a young actor) but of course the burden was much greater for those who didn’t have any scholarship support.

Applause: You have said that you value the fact that the BFA Actor Training Program is in the College of Liberal Arts. Why is this?

Jonas: At CLA, I had the opportunity to study many subjects which interested me – social science, history, philosophy – all of it informs my acting. I also think about my classmates. Some chose not to pursue an acting career and today are working as agents, casting directors and drama teachers. The broader education prepared them for opportunities besides acting.

Applause: Can you think of any experience in the BFA Actor Training Program that was particularly formative?
J: There were several actually. Probably the most formative was the experience of working on the Centennial Showboat. It allowed me to get a glimpse of the life of a professional actor. I got to see what it was like to do 80 shows in succession and what it felt like to be paid for my work. It was the first time I could really imagine acting as a career choice.

Guthrie Mondays were also helpful. As freshman and sophomore students, each Monday class consisted of meeting with a different theater professional at the Guthrie – actor, director, marketing person, costume designer, accountant, stage manager, fundraiser, backstage tech. We learned about every aspect of theater and got a realistic understanding of the life of an actor.

And I have to say it was really enlightening to work with experienced Guthrie actors such as Sally Wingert and Lee Mark Nelson who were ripe with stories and tidbits about how to survive in the acting profession. But it was also inspiring to see their success and the lives they created for themselves.

A: And now you are applying all that you learned in the BFA program to your work on the Guthrie Theater stage. Tell us about your Guthrie experience.

J: I feel fortunate to be one of the actors Artistic Director, Joe Dowling, has taken under his wing. I've done seven Guthrie plays since graduation and have been cast in Peer Gynt and A Midsummer Night's Dream this season. I think Joe likes the sense of play I bring to my work, for the time being anyway; there are many gifted actors coming through the program so we’ll see what the future holds.

A: Where do you see yourself in the future?

J: I’m eager to work in New York at some point. And I can see myself teaching some day, but not any time soon. Right now I’m just letting the world show me where my purpose lies and for now it seems to be here in Minneapolis. There are fewer distractions than in Los Angeles or New York, and a rootedness that allows me to focus on my art and on learning all that I can.

A: We’re grateful you have chosen to work in Minneapolis, Jonas, so we can follow your acting career. We wish you continued success at the Guthrie Theater and in all of your artistic endeavors!
GREGORY HILL, MFA 1973
I was assistant art director/set illustrator for the film NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN. The film has won just about every major award for films in 2007 including Best Film Oscar. We also won the best design award from the Art Director’s Guild in LA, for a contemporary film in 2007.

In 2007 I worked as Assistant Art Director on two major films, BABY MAMA (starring Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, Steve Martin, Greg Kinnear and Sigourney Weaver) and BURN AFTER READING. This film was written and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, and starred George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Tilda Swinton, and John Malkovich.

I am currently working as Assistant Art Director/Graphic Designer for JULIE & JULIA (starring Meryl Streep and Amy Adams), written and directed by Nora Ephron. After this, I’ll be working on the next Coen Brothers film A SERIOUS MAN, which is scheduled to be filmed in Minneapolis later this year.

MARTIN HARRIGAN, B.SC. SPEECH, COMM., THEATRE ARTS 1969.
M.A. Univ. South Dakota 1972, 3 seasons Black Hills Playhouse, Custer State Park, 70-72, House Manager 71, 72.
Moved to Australia 1972, Victorian Education Dept recruited USA Teachers to fill Shortage in the State System.
1972-1973 Alexandra High School, Alexandra Victoria Australia..Taught English.
1982-1984 Returned USA to Las Vegas. Relief Teacher.
1984-to Present.. Returned to Australia.
1984 -1994 Timboon, Victoria..English Teacher
1995-1997 Camperdown High School, English Teacher
1996 Became Australian Citizen [dual national]
2007 Emmanuel College Warrnambool, English Teacher.
Recall freezing nights waiting for the #6 bus from campus to downtown Mpls..brrr. Worked 3 yrs in Walter Library deep in the stacks shelving books. A brief stint in univ hospital kitchen service. Hung out at drama library wesbrook hall. Very fond memories of UM days…

HAROLD DIXON (MA 1972; PH.D. 1976)
AND MAEDELL DIXON (MA 1975)
email for both of us: hmsw@comcast.net

HAROLD & MAEDELL TOGETHER:
Arizona Theatre Company:
October 6, 2007 in Tucson. We are the co-chairs for the Arizona Theatre Company Fall Gala fund raising event, at which they are honoring the U of AZ School of Theatre Arts.<http://aztheatreco.org>

Invisible Theatre:

MAEDELL
Arizona Theatre Company:
Mae well will appear in the American classic To Kill A Mockingbird.<http://aztheatreco.org>

Chamber Music Plus Southwest:

HAROLD
Arizona Repertory Theatre:
November 4 - December 2, 2007 at the School of Theatre Arts, University of Arizona in Tucson. Harold will direct the brilliant musical Candide, based on the Voltaire story.<http://www.uatheatre.org>

Arena Stage:
December 28, 2007 - February 24, 2008 in Washington, D.C. Harold will reprise his role of Norman Granz in Ella, as it continues touring the country.<http://arenastage.org/>

Repertory Theatre of St. Louis:

Cincinnati Playhouse:
In the Spring of 2004, I took professor Sonja Kufftinec's class, Performance and Social Change, where I was introduced to Augusto Boal's political activist theatre. I also became aware of the Twin Cities community of social justice theatre practitioners – and one of its most visible members, Jan Mandell, the drama teacher at St. Paul Central High School. I will never forget meeting Jan, who brought several of her students to my Performance and Social Change class to do a forum theatre workshop. From the moment I met her, I knew she was an artist and teacher from whom I could learn a great deal.

And learn I did. For the next two years, I attended any and all events I could in Jan's classroom, including workshops by the students in her Central Touring Theatre (CTT) company, which tours original shows to other schools throughout the metro region. One of these shows was actually developed for and sponsored by the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, and first performed at the Rarig Center in October, 2004. I saw this show, called Barriers to Entry, a play about the barriers high school students face when trying to get accepted to college. Almost three years later, I still remember how I felt after that performance. I had never seen anything like it in my life: high school kids, speaking truths about their lives in a creative, committed and distinct way. Not only speaking their truths, but my truths, and social truths that we so often try to shun, or pretend don't exist. Central Touring Theatre's work, which invites the audience to see and hear what mainstream media and culture choose to ignore, had affected me deeply.

Thus inspired, I did a full time internship in Jan's classroom as my senior project during the Fall of 2006. Working with the students to develop two original plays that were created in the classroom, I learned about making art with young people, about teaching arts in a public school setting, and about directing, playwriting and mentoring. My experience with the Central students has been one of nonstop learning, and has absolutely made me into a stronger teacher, artist and activist.

Jan's teaching is heartfelt, imaginative, intuitive and is based on her own educational experience as a child, when her need to learn kinespherically was deemed unacceptable by the teachers around her. Growing up with unique needs, Jan developed a way of learning through poetry and the arts that she has brought to her own teaching style, crafting a methodology that encourages students to pursue their education and artistry in a way that makes sense to THEM, rather than insisting that a rigid desk and a quiet mouth makes a better student. Jan does not force her way of learning upon her students, but uses her method to pull out the artistry that is already contained within her students. She allows students to bring their passions and life experiences to the learning and creative process, using her method to get the students to recognize and fine tune the beauty that already exists inside them.

I have certainly benefited from working with CTT, and the connection with our department has had a positive effect on St. Paul Central students as well. Several performers from Central Touring Theatre have chosen to attend the University of Minnesota, and some have received scholarships, primarily because of the growing relationship between Central High School and the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance.

With the University's decision to close down General College, our department has been strengthening its partnership with CTT as part of an effort to become more proactive in recruiting and supporting a diverse student body. A strong partnership such as the one with St. Paul Central will help emphasize that we welcome students from a wide range of cultural and class backgrounds. It also makes clear our belief that without members of communities of color and working class students, our art, our lives and our learning are limited.

Central Touring Theatre truly enriches the lives of the St. Paul Central students involved, and of the students in our department who, like me, have worked with the group. Students learn from Jan a wide range of theatre skills, including acting, playwriting and directing. But Jan does so much more for her students than that, teaching them how to be leaders in their own communities and in their own lives. She teaches how being an artist is also being an activist and that young people, by taking ownership of their choices as an artist, can take ownership of their lives, and of their futures. In times when the future may seem hopeless and bleak, I cannot think of a better message to propel the urban youth of America forward. √

Lou Bellamy, professor of directing, won an Obie for his New York directorial debut, a production of August Wilson's Two Trains Running that played at the Signature Theatre Company in New York. That production also won a 2007 Lucille Lortel for Best Revival. Mathew Lefebvre professor of design and design/tech program head designed the costumes for that production.

Ananya Chatterjea, professor of dance and Director of Graduate Studies for the department, was awarded a major grant from the University of Minnesota Institute of Advanced Study for her research on collaborative performance and social justice.

Carl Flink, professor of dance and dance program director, who is also the incoming department chair, received a large grant from the University of Minnesota Institute of Advanced Study for his original work, Wreck, which recently premiered to glowing reviews at the Southern Theater.

Michal Kobiálka, professor of theatre historiography and current department chair, was named a CLA Scholar of the College for 2007-2010.

Michael Sommers, professor in the BA performance program and in the Interdisciplinary Program in the Collaborative Arts (IPCA), was recently named one of 50 fellows for 2007 by United States Artists. Among the other recipients of this very prestigious award are artists such as Robert Woodruff, Bill T. Jones, and Ann Hamilton.
Lisa Channer is a director and actor with a teaching emphasis on leading students in the creation of original works for the stage. Professor Channer was co-founder and co-artistic director of Sleeveless Theatre, a political theatre company based in Northampton Massachusetts from 1989 – 1997. With Sleeveless she directed and toured six world premieres, founded the Sleeveless Theatre School and performed a unique brand of improvisation with the Sleeveless Improv Troupe. She is now co-artistic director of Theatre Novi Most, a performance and research project which builds theatrical bridges between the U.S. and the former Soviet Union.

She was producer last year of the First UAB/Birmingham Fringe Festival of New Theatre and was associate producer of The Meyerhold Project, from 1997-2000. Her directing and performance work has been seen at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre and WOW Cafe in New York, Organic Lab Theatre in Chicago, Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, The Market Theatre in Boston and at many clubs, theatres and odd spots throughout the U.S. Amsterdam, Russia and Ireland. She has received grants from the N.E.A., the New England Foundation for the Arts, Artslink International, the Fund for Women Artists, the Edith Markson Travel Fund, and the Fox Foundation among others.

Professor Channer was a tenured associate professor of theatre at Auburn University between 2002 and 2006 and a visiting associate professor at the University of Alabama/Birmingham during the 2006/07 academic year. She earned her BA from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and her MFA in Directing from the Yale School of Drama. She received additional training at the Dell’Arte School of Physical Theatre in California and the St. Petersburg Academy of Theatre Arts in Russia. She is married to Russian director Vladimir Rovinsky, with whom she is raising two sons, Sasha and Daniel.

Dr. Cindy Garcia is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities where she is also an affiliate faculty member in Chicano Studies. She joined the faculty after a year as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, San Diego Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. She teaches courses on Ethnography of Performance: Globalization and Mobility, Dance and Popular Culture, and Introduction to Dance. Professor García’s research interests include the performance of Latina/o-ness in urban libidinal economies and practices of racialization in the United States. She is currently working on a book manuscript entitled Un/Sequined Corporealities and the Deterritorialization of Salsa that addresses the politics of gendered performances of Mexican-ness, Latinidad, and cultural citizenship in Los Angeles salsa clubs.

Dr. Rachmi Diyah Larasati is a dancer and scholar from Indonesia, whose work critically engages the politics of the dancing body, transnational corporeality and women’s citizenship. Her book, Dancing on the Mass Grave, critically analyzes the value of corporeal punishment and the political economies of display through cultural exchange, tourism, diplomatic cultural missions and world/ethnic dance for the new global stage. Using the Indonesian massacres of 1965-66 as a point of departure, professor Larasati examines the fabricated memory of these events through the incorporation of media and collective amnesia, specifically in the narration of the vanished body. In her research, she analyzes media as a form of “global culture” which reproduces the capitalist model of cultural space. Looking back at the history of colonialism and the different forms of contemporary colonialisation, her work traces the political economies of the dancing body and its potential to intervene in the patriarchal nation-state project.

Professor Larasati is currently working on a new project, in which she explores the (in-)visibility of the female dancing body in post-conflict/war zones, specifically in connection to global tourism as a common economic and strategic approach in post-conflict recovery. This project is supported and hosted by a residential fellowship from the Institute for Advanced Studies at the U of M (spring 2009).

She is also currently working in collaboration with Indonesian choreographer Setyastuti to create a dance performance based on the oral history of Indonesian female dancers who are former political prisoners. The work seeks to explore the resistive efforts of these women, and how these efforts have enabled them to re-historicize memories of violence and challenge dominant historical narratives. This work-in-progress is supported by an Office of International Programs travel grant and a McKnight Travel Grant. Hosted by the Minnesota Supercomputing Institute at the U of M and in collaboration with filmmaker Dag Nygesson, professor Larasati is also working on the film and archival project “Body and the Politics of Global Culture.” The first phase of this project consists of fieldwork and filming with recent Indonesian immigrants in South Philadelphia, in collaboration with anthropologist Degung Santikarma.

Prior to arriving at the University of Minnesota, professor Larasati taught and conducted research at the UCLA Center for South East Asian Studies (2004-2007), and has previously...
received funding from the International Ford Foundation, the international fellowship from the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the home country project from AAUW, the UCLA Lemelson Post Doctoral Fellowship, the Asian Cultural Council/ Rockefeller, and the Asian Scholarship Foundation. She was also member of ministry of Culture and Education (P & K) of Indonesia as part of her prior position as professor of dance at the Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (ISI). Her doctoral degree is from UC Riverside.

Dominic Taylor has been a practicing theatre artist for the past 20 years, based in New York, but working throughout the world. He is Associate Artistic Director of America-In-Play, and was also the proud administrator of the Van Lier Playwriting Fellowship, distributed by New Dramatists. This fellowship selected and developed work by writers of color under 30 who lived in New York City. Most recently, he directed the developmental workshop of Space by Keli Garrett with the LAByrinth Theatre Company. He has directed a variety of theatre projects and musicals including the new opera Fresh Faust (librettist Greg Tate, composer Leroy Jenkins) at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and the cantata The Negro Burial Ground (librettist Ann Greene, composer Leroy Jenkins) at The Kitchen in New York City. Professor Taylor was a participant in the Lincoln Center Directors’ Lab in 2000.

An actor as well as playwright, his plays have been produced and developed throughout the country. His published plays can be found at both Broadway Play Publishing and Playscripts.com. He has worked with Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, The Public Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Crossroads Theater, The Kennedy Center, Rites and Reasons Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, and Ensemble Studio Theatre, among others. He has been awarded grants from The Golden Fund, Theatre Communications Group, The Jerome Foundation, The MacDowell Foundation, The Dramatists Guild, The Illinois Arts Council, The Connecticut Commission on the Arts, The International Theatre Institute as well as other organizations.

Professor Taylor holds both a Bachelors and a Master of Fine Arts Degree from Brown University. While an Undergraduate, he worked with George Houston Bass at the Rites and Reasons Theatre, Providence RI’s oldest Professional African-American Theatre. Working with this theatre helped shape many of his ideas about the function of theatre for Africans in the diaspora. He was a participant in the Black Theatre Summit Convened by August Wilson at Dartmouth College. There he helped construct the paper on Aesthetics.

He is also a scholar and lecturer focusing on Performance, Textual Interpretations and Dramatic Construction. Most recently, he has given lectures at Yale University (Ideology in Context in African/African-American Drama) as well as at the University of the South (Evaluating Hip-hop as a Tool in Performing Blackness in the 21st Century).

Professor Taylor has taught in a variety of institutions around the country including, Henry Street Settlement House, Columbia College of Chicago, Bemnington College, Brown University, City University of New York and Bard College. In addition to his appointment at the U of M, he has been named Associate Artistic Director at Penumbra Theatre Company.

and Goodbye to...

Nikki Schultz, BA Theatre Program Assistant

Shortly after graduating from the University with a BA Theatre degree in 2004, Nikki Schultz rejoined the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance as a member of our staff. As an assistant to our undergraduate theatre programs, Nikki helped shape what are now two separate assistant roles for the BA Theatre Program and the BFA Actor Training Program. Her accomplishments in the Department include playing a crucial role in establishing and operating the Stage Elements Summer Theatre Institute, helping to coordinate Fringe Benefits and other outreach programs and workshops, and finding ways to create better student and faculty communication. In her new, post-U of M chapter of her life, Nikki has become a development assistant with Free Arts Minnesota, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing the healing powers of artistic expression into the lives of abused, neglected, and at-risk children and their families. As a musician, she has also just recorded her first CD and frequently plays at local venues.

From student turned staff member, we got to know Nikki well over the years, and we wish her all the best. She is a fantastic leader, listener, an incredible thinker, and a change maker ready to take on any of life’s challenges. So, we’re pretty sure she’ll do just fine in the “real world.” Good luck Nikki!
JUDY BARTL (BFA, Program Director) taught workshops on Choosing a College at college fairs and high schools, nationally. She also was invited to speak to donors at the annual Heritage Dinner, and continued to serve as a board member and Regional Director for NETWORK (the National Association for Arts Educators).

LOU BELLAMY (Directing, on sabbatical 2006-07) directed Blue and Get Ready and co-created/co-directed Black Nativi, all for Penumbra, the theatre he founded and for which continues to serve as artistic director. He also won an Obie for his New York directorial debut, a production of August Wilson’s Two Trains Running that played at the Signature Theatre Company in New York. That production also won a 2007 Lucille Lortel for Best Revival.

DAVID BERNSTEIN (Development and Community Relations) wrote successful grants totaling almost $70,000 for the Showboat, for the production by Minnesota Public Television of a documentary about the Minnesota 8 and the making of Peace Crimes, and for Diverse Voices. He continued to serve on the Executive Committee of CAPA, the governance body for P&As.

LANCE BROCKMAN (Design/Tech) designed scenery and properties for Ain’t Misbehavin’ at Penumbra, which made the Top Ten Play List of the St. Paul Pioneer Press, and Old Four Eyes: A Mississippi Panorama aboard the Showboat. He also served as an advisor for the “Showboats” Exhibit at the Waterfront Museum in Brooklyn, NY, and chaired several panels and presentations at the annual USITT conference in both 2006 and 2007.

STEVE CARDAMONE (BFA, Acting) directed the University Theatre production of A Doll’s House, and several BFA performance projects, including two Shakespeare projects: Much Ado About Nothing and The Winter’s Tale.

ELISA CARLSON (BFA, Voice) directed the Shakespeare on the Cape production of As You Like It, and acted in a staged reading of Allison Moore’s End Times at Illusion Theater. She served as vocal coach for Lost in Yonkers, A Christmas Carol, The Glass Menagerie and Major Barbara at the Guthrie, for Metamorphoses at Georgia Shakespeare and for the Shakespeare on the Cape production of Romeo and Juliet. She also served as vocal consultant for Anon(y)mous at Children’s Theater Company and The Grapes of Wrath at Minnesota Opera.

ANANYA CHATTERJEA (Dance, Director of Graduate Studies) published articles for the Centre National de la France and the first festival of Odissi (Dance) in the UK. She gave 15 talks, many of which included performances, at conferences around the globe – in such locations as France, Kolkata (India), Indonesia, Osaka and Stockholm. She created Khonj for University Dance Theatre and created and performed in Duubaar, which was premiered by her company, Ananya Dance Theatre, at the Southern Theater. In addition, she was awarded a major grant from the Institute for Advanced Study for her research on collaborative performance and social justice.

CARL FLINK (Dance, Program Director) performed locally and on tour, as a guest artist in Smith & Shapiro Dance Company’s Anytown, and his own company, Black Label Movement, had its premier performance at the Southern Theater in 2006. He received a large grant from the U of M Institute of Advanced Study for his original work, Wreck, which recently premiered at the Southern. He was also featured as one of five arts faculty members in CLA Today.

MARTIN GWINUP (Design/Tech) served as Multimedia Designer and/or Sound Designer for three Penumbra productions: Ain’t Misbehavin’, Black Nativi and Blue. He also provided sound support for University Theatre (The Master and Margarita) and the Showboat (45 Minutes to Broadway), and was Director and Executive Producer for a student video project, The Typist.

BRENT “MICKEY” HENRY (Design/Tech, Technical Director) served as TD for the entire University Theatre Subscriber Season and the Showboat. He also organized a mini-series, inviting guests to speak to design/tech students about rigging and other technical issues, and about environmental health and safety.

LUCINDA HOLSHUE (BFA, Voice) served as vocal and/or dialect coach for The Great Gatsby, The Falls, Edgardo Mine, and A Christmas Carol at the Guthrie, I Am My Own Wife at the Jungle, and Educating Rita, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and The Miracle Worker at Torch Theater. She also taught a Guthrie class in Roy Hart vocal process, taught text and voice work for the Guthrie Summer Experience, and taught workshops for the department during both the Wickedly Wild Workshop Week and Stage Elements.

NORA JENNEMAN (Dance, Program Coordinator) performed in Claudia Robles’ Seed/Tree at the SPARK Festival, Maggie Bergeron and Company’s A is for Amy who Fell Down the Stairs at the Red Eye, and Time Track Productions’ The Closer I Get the Less I Believe It at the Ritz Theater. She also served as a Sage Cowles Community Dance Award panelist.

MICHAL KOBIALKA (MA/PhD, Department Chair) published articles in Performance Research and in the commemorative book Performance Cosmologies, served as a respondent at the Mid-America Theatre Conference and presented talks at the Simpson Center for the Humanities (University of Washington), the American Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) conference and a keynote at a conference in Amsterdam. He has been named a CLA Scholar of the College for 2007-2010.

SONJA ARSHAM KUFTINEC (MA/PhD, Director of Undergraduate Studies) published articles in the anthology Restaging the Sixties: Radical Theatres and Their Legacies, and in the journals Research in Drama and Assaph. She presented papers at the University of California-Davis, the University of Texas, the University of Illinois-Chicago and Stanford University (invited lecture). She also served as a main organizer for the Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference in Minneapolis. She is on sabbatical for the 2007-08 academic year.
MATHEW LEFEBVRE (Design/Tech, Program Director) designed costumes and scenery for Farm Boys at the History Theatre, and designed costumes for Tartuffe at Milwaukee Repertory, for Love Janis at the Ordway, for 1776 at the Guthrie, and for Jitney at Kansas City Repertory and the Arizona Theatre Company. He also designed costumes for Two Trains Running at Signature Theatre Company, whose director won an Obie award. His designs for A Flea in Her Ear were featured in the design exhibit at the 2006 USITT in Louisville, KY.

MARGE MADDUX (Dance) served as rehearsal director for the Ethnic Dance Theatre’s production of Nutcracker. She was re-elected to the Board of Directors of the National Association of Schools of Dance for a second term, 2006-2009.

KENNETH MITCHELL (BFA, Acting) directed and did the adaptation for several performance projects for the BFA students, including Medea and Spring Awakening. He also directed Fresh Scenes (for the freshman class) and several Shakespeare scenes for Senior Spring Showcase. He helped design the curriculum for Stage Elements and taught Shakespeare workshops for the program. He also conducted acting workshops for area high school students and for potential BFA students during “Call Back Weekend.”

JEAN MONTGOMERY (Design/Tech) designed lighting for 45 Minutes From Broadway (2006) and Sherlock’s Last Case (2007), both aboard the Showboat, and served as lighting coordinator for the University Theatre production of Hedda Gabler and A Doll’s House, which were performed in repertory. She is on the Board of Directors of USITT and also serves as Treasurer for the USITT Northern Boundary Section.

ELIZABETH NASH (BA, Speech and Singing) had a book accepted for publication with Edwin Mellen Press entitled I’m Gonna Sing! I’m Gonna Shout! She also presented a paper on the Negro spiritual at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Biannual Convention, and for a symposium held in conjunction with Penumbra’s production of Ain’t Misbehavin’.

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. She also served as a department representative to the U/RTA’s in order to help recruit MFA design students.

DEBORAH PEARSON (BFA) performed most of the administrative duties for the BFA Program, and served as academic advisor for all the BFA students. In addition, she taught career preparation, coordinated the London Study Abroad program and provided a range of student services for members of the BFA program.

TONI PIERCE-SANDS (Dance) serves as Artistic Director and Rehearsal Director for TU Dance, a company she co-founded with her partner Uri Sands, and performed with her company at the Southern. She also served as a guest teacher with Alvin Ailey American Dance, the North Carolina Dance Theater and for Groupe International Des 8 in Perpignan, France.

LUVERNE SEIFERT (BA, Performance Program Director) performed in Playlabs at the Playwrights’ Center, Antigone and Tales of a West Texas Marsupial Girl for Children’s Theatre Company, the Holiday Pageant for Open Eye Figure Theatre at the Pantages, The Pillowman for Frank Theatre at the Guthrie, and Richard III for Ten Thousand Things Theater. He also directed In A Garden for Ten Thousand Things and co-directed (with Michael Sommers) The Master and Margarita for University Theatre, which was named one of the top ten shows of 2006 by City Pages.

JOANIE SMITH (Dance) and her company, Shapiro & Smith Dance, continued touring the commissioned work Anytown, and also performed it locally at the Southern Theater. Her company’s original work Never Enough, developed in a residency with students from the University of Florida-Gainsville, was chosen from the Southern Regional Conference of the American College Dance Festival Association to be performed at the Kennedy Center.

MICHAEL SOMMERS (BA and IPCA) collaborated with Luverne Seifert to co-direct The Master and Margarita, which was named one of the top ten shows of 2006 by City Pages. He is artistic director of Open Eye Figure Theatre, for which he created several original performances, including Naughty J.J.’s Cranky Show and the annual Holiday Pageant, produced by Open Eye at the Pantages Theater. He served as a puppetry consultant to the Minnesota Opera and was recently named one of the 50 artists awarded a very prestigious United States Artists Fellowship for 2007.

SHERRY WAGNER-HENRY (Managing Director, University Theatre) served on the Board of Directors of the Arts and Cultural Partnership of Saint Paul, for whom she also taught a professional development workshop. She was a panelist and site reviewer for the Minnesota State Arts Board. She also serves as Vice-Comissioner of Arts Administration for the United States Institute of Theatre Technology, and is a member of the Board and of the 50th Anniversary Steering Committee for USITT, as well as serving on several community advisory boards.

MARGARET WERRY (MA/PhD) had articles published in Cultural Studies, in The Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies, and in a special issue of Performance Research. She made presentations for the American Society for Theatre Research, the American Studies Association, the Rethinking Marxism Conference, Performance Studies International, and a keynote address for the U of M Anthropology Department. She also won the ATHE Research Award for her 2005 article “The Greatest Show on Earth: Spectacular Politics, Political Spectacle and the American Pacific,” which appeared in Theatre Journal.
FFEEAATTUURREESS CCOONNUUEEDD

information, which is grounded in historical process. For me, the over-
reminded us that we must continue to question our own convic-
indeed, essential – to contemporary critical inquiry. In addition, it
take offense, I think the experience affirmed that, far from being
was performed amid controversy, and some people continued to
audience members can decide for themselves. So while the show
its limits…. √

we are more than ever recreating the impossible and pushing life to
reflect on where we have come, it is clear that we have reimagined
gories and concepts lose their meaning and right to exist.” As I
begins;” the other was from Tadeusz Kantor: “Theatre is an activ-
from Antonin Artaud: “Theatre is the place where the impossible
arge piece, Wreck, will help the students, the administrative support,
and the faculty realize their potential and dreams.

When I welcomed the students and faculty in the fall of my
year as chair, I began my remarks with two quotes. One was
from Antonin Artaud: “Theatre is the place where the impossible
begins;” the other was from Tadeusz Kantor: “Theatre is an activ-
ity that occurs if life is pushed to its final limits, where all cate-
gories and concepts lose their meaning and right to exist.” As I
reflect on where we have come, it is clear that we have reimagined
and refined the ways we make and teach theatre and dance; that is,
we are more than ever recreating the impossible and pushing life to
its limits…. √

From the Chair continued from page 2

Maggie Bergeron continued from page 11

doing, or someone to ask you to dance for them. You have to stay
active; you cannot separate yourself from the community. When I
first got out of school, it was really challenging trying to keep my
fingers in all of these communities because all of them really do
interest me: the tech work and the administration and the teach-
and performing and choreographing. It was sort of like jugg-
gling to keep just a little bit of myself in all of those places. But my
experience has been that if you hold on, and keep doing all of the
crazy things that you need to be doing, a path will reveal itself that
will lead to the next thing.

N: I think that is great advice for recent alums, because graduation
can feel a little bit like you are thrown out into the world after
being in a very structured place...

M: And support, you really need support, which you can get by
continuing to be part of a community after you graduate.

N: Thinking about your current work: in addition to being an
artist and performer, you have a big role as an educator. You are
still young and early in your career, yet you are already having a
huge impact on young people. I am wondering if you have any
thoughts about the role of dance in education, or your role in the
lives of young people, especially since you work with students with
varying experiences and resources?

M: The first thing that comes into my head is that I really feel as if
I’m giving back, as if it is my responsibility because I’ve had so
many really incredible opportunities and experiences. I don’t
know how I got here – it was so much a combination of scholar-
ship money, chance and sheer determination. I think of myself in
this little tiny town where I grew up, dancing in the cafeteria on
concrete, without ballet barres, and all of the sudden I have a
career. It really blows my mind.

N: And you have taken those themes into your work too. I think
another way of giving back is through your artistic work.

M: Absolutely, I feel really strongly about the education aspect of
my work. I had a great conversation with a friend recently about
how the element of creativity and imagination is so valuable in sci-
ence as well as in art. If I can teach a kid how to make choices and
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dance classroom. Everyone needs the openness and the confidence
to let her imagination open up to new possibilities, that is just
as valuable in the office or in the laboratory as it is in the dance
classroom. Everyone needs the openness and the confidence
to take a risk, to take a challenge, to make a choice and just jump in.
I really value the idea that if I can help students stand up straight
and be physically confident in themselves, that is going to help
them move forward in the world. It is not so much about the steps
themselves as it is about the gutsiness to take them, and I hope I
get that across in my classes. √

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photography. The theatre faculty includes Michael Sommers, a puppetry artist and actor who has connections to many Twin Cities community-based artists and arts organizations; and Martin Gwinnup, an audio and video designer and technician who also is well-connected to local and regional theatres. In addition, IPCA has taken a nonstandard path to creating a faculty position by developing a formal relationship – a kind of on-going guest artist residency agreement – with a group of internationally-known choreographers called the Center for Creative Research (CCR), whose members include, among others, Ann Carlson, David Gordon, Pat Graney, Ralph Lemon, Liz Lerman and Bebe Miller. Members of CCR teach very innovative courses centered on self-discovery and on developing the creative imagination through movement and the body.

This is a program still in the process of building itself. IPCA has two more faculty positions to fill. One of these could be another formal group relationship – such as the agreement with CCR – perhaps with the very prestigious Paris-based IRCAM (l’Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique), “a group that does work with sound synthesis and correlates sound structures with visual imagery.” Finally, down the road, IPCA hopes to be able to hire for its final position a person in creative writing, a discipline so far unrepresented on its faculty. While these two positions will complete the six new faculty positions allotted to IPCA, several faculty members from the individual arts disciplines teach IPCA courses. And the program plans “to reach out more generally to the humanities and even perhaps social sciences within the College [of Liberal Arts] – maybe even eventually go beyond the College into IT [the Institute of Technology] – and have people come in, collaborate, give innovative courses that have to do with collaboration or interdisciplinarity in various ways.”

IPCA’s first course offerings have included, last fall, a course called Move to Question taught by members of CCR, which used movement as a way of exploring a variety of questions about creativity, and a course taught workshop-style by Michael Sommers that used visual, auditory and tactile stimuli to lead students into a free-wheeling exploration of creativity. This spring, Ali Momeni is teaching a course called Art for the People, Art on Wheels, which examines flow expressivity, collaborative interaction, and gestural communication – all essential elements of this improvisational musical form. And Michael Sommers, Carl Flink and Luverne Seifert from our own department are collaborating on The Woyzeck Project, a course that will examine Buchner’s play, Alban Berg’s opera Woyzeck, Werner Herzog’s film Woyzeck and the musical by Robert Wilson and Tom Waits as sources for the development of a new creative collaboration and performance, which we plan to remount and offer as part of next year’s University Theatre and Dance season.

At its birth, IPCA is thus filled with both fascinating ideas, exceptional faculty artists and exciting course offerings. But there are some birth pangs as well. IPCA course offerings (listed in the course guide as COLA for COLlaborative Arts) lack the visibility conferred by an established history, so enrollments have been lower than anticipated in several courses. Indeed, despite the international reputation of the CCR artists, two spring CCR courses have been cancelled for lack of enrollment. And this happened despite promoting the program and its courses with posters, a brochure, e-mails and even information tables in each art building just before registration for spring semester began.

Perhaps the major obstacle, though, has been to get more of the faculty in each of the individual arts disciplines to buy into the idea of interdisciplinarity and collaboration in the arts, which is IPCA’s raison d’être. In response to this challenge IPCA is planning a series of three symposia to be held this year with the overarching topic: Why Art Matters. At the first of these, faculty, mainly if not exclusively from the College of Liberal Arts, will try to answer the question ‘why art matters’ from the perspective of their own disciplines. A second will involve artists and other people outside the university who are active in community-based initiatives. They will try to address the question ‘why art matters’ to the community – “in the neighborhood as it were.” The third will “invite some people who have worked specifically with different facets of collaboration, communicative flow, things of that nature. These will be people from industry but also people from other universities who work specifically on ideas about collaboration or interdisciplinarity.” While ambitious, IPCA sees this series not only as “a way of starting to get a presence for the program,” but also as a way to get arts faculty members “interested in it … to get faculty thinking about ideas … how they might contribute to it.”

In the end, IPCA plans to introduce a collaborative arts major, in which students “will have a concentration in one of the arts, and will also do foundational work in all of the arts.” So they will learn the “basic premises of the various artistic disciplines, and then concentrate in one, with a secondary concentration: the interdisciplinarity, collaborative atmosphere.” This may require attracting a different, more nontraditional kind of student than most of the students currently studying the arts at the U of M. A student interested in IPCA’s “idea of a synthesis of arts … [someone] … not interested in really training in one area so much as … in the way the different areas can interact with one another – that’s a different kind of student.”

Despite the challenges, IPCA opens up the possibility for exploring new art forms that artists working within traditional disciplinary constraints cannot quite imagine without crossing the boundaries. Moreover, the multiple sensibilities and aesthetic viewpoints the program teaches and encourages are crucial to fostering critical thinking about the arts, a primary Theatre Arts and Dance educational goal. So whatever else it is doing, IPCA is certainly breaking new ground.
And I’m also impressed with some of the students who’ve come out of the dance academic program. In my Dance and Popular Culture class, they have a really high level of understanding of concepts like cultural appropriation and racism ... sexism – and the intersections of all of these. Because diversity isn’t just about – that is, these violences are not just about – racial violence or class violence or gender violence; they’re all intersected, and I’ve seen that some students have really complex understandings of these relationships.

A: Given the similarities and differences between your understanding of diversity, and those of the department and the University as a whole, what do you think you can achieve in your teaching and your research that might enrich how everyone here – students, faculty, staff, and even the public – understands the idea of diversity, and practices it?

C: All right. I want to just start by talking about my interest in popular dance, popular culture. One of the ways that I come to dance is not as someone who has been trained in studios as a child – in ballet or tap or jazz or any of those forms. But I learned popular dance – a lot of it was Latin American popular dance – very informally. Yes, there was a learning process, but it wasn’t in a studio. It was with family. It was at parties. And I’m really interested in promoting popular dance as a legitimate aspect of dance; that is, as a formal part of the discipline – as something we study – while recognizing that it is also a very informal kind of process and practice in the way it happens.

This reflects the way that I got into dance as a dance scholar, which was not by being trained in ballet, for example, or modern, but when I went to the university, by being able to take one-unit courses in ballet, in modern, in jazz, in African dance, in Latin American popular dance. I took courses in a lot of different dance forms, which started my training. But more than anything, I think, it caused me to think critically about dance and what kinds of dance are represented in the curriculum. It also made me think critically about moving bodies not just in a studio, but also socially, and how different bodies have access to different dance forms.

So when I’m thinking about bringing students to the Dance Program from, say, Chicano Studies or other disciplines, they – like me – haven’t been trained in ballet or modem, but they are amazing dancers. And I’m thinking how can I attract them to the program when they have already learned to see it as a place that isn’t necessarily welcoming or doesn’t teach about the kind of dance that they do. In other words, I’m trying to find ways to connect with students who already know about dance and moving bodies, but whose dance knowledge just hasn’t been valued in the academy.
Lillian Stillwell continued from page 12

it is fulfilling.

N: I saw you perform as a student, and you were a beautiful technical dancer, but I also remember you having really great academic success. I know that you did an Undergraduate Research Grant with Judith Brin Ingber. Is there anything that you want to share with me about your experience doing research work and writing, and how that changed your thinking about dance? I’m also wondering if you feel that that perception of the Dance Program has changed? Something we really celebrate now is the idea of ‘Thinking Dancers’ and that the academic and theoretical work is as important as creative research or technical work in the studio. So I’m wondering about your academic experiences as a student, but also if it feels as if the perception has shifted?

L: I felt very encouraged because of Barbara [Barker], and Judith, and actually everybody – Marge [Maddux] and Erin [Thompson], but also in other classes. Almost everyone I met somehow knew of my interest in writing and really encouraged me to keep doing it, either by giving me chances to use those skills or by just recognizing what I had done. It is easy as a dancer to think that you are only your body, and when you are able to remember all of the other things inside of you – that you are more than your body – your performance can only get richer.

The creative process will also make it richer. For example take the creative process with Johannes. He works so much with tasks and he’ll say something like ‘for the next day you have to come back with a solution for the task’ and the task is, ‘create a juxtaposition where you are doing one thing and saying another.’ You have to create the action, the theatrical action whatever that is, and you have to create the text that you are saying, and it has to be a repetition. This is actually a recent task that we did at ‘the Yard.’ This task is not really going to use my movement training – yes it is going to use the body – but more than that I’m going to use my ability to question language and to pull from language what will work with what I am doing physically, and it will also use my observational skills. Johannes is not the only one. I feel as if people are asking more from their dancers than just their physical bodies; they are asking them to solve problems, they are asking them their political opinions, they are asking them to speak on stage. All of these things require that you read a lot, and that you think a lot for yourself and that you don’t simply stay a passive citizen.

I just think that this cross pollination between thinking and moving, and writing and reading, and observing and then moving and performing, is really essential to what I am doing right now and also, more generally, to what is happening in contemporary dance. I think that for me personally, because I was encouraged to use both my mind and my movement training by a lot of people; it helped me to believe in myself. It was really important to develop all of it, and not be shy about sharing it.

N: I hear that same sentiment coming from the mouths of so many Cowles Artists that we bring in and have brown bag lunches and students ask them ‘what are you looking for when you audition or work with dancers?’ So many of the guest artists talk about the importance of decision making, having dancers that can think for themselves and know what is happening in the world, which includes dancers they can have a conversation with because they are spending so much time with them in and outside of the studio.

L: When I auditioned for Johannes I had three interviews with him, three meetings plus the two-week audition process. He had these with everyone who was in the last small audition group just to get to know you as a person. How do you think? How do you feel? How do you articulate your views? He says the whole person is even more important than what they can do on stage because there are so many really fierce dancers out there.

N: Do you feel that having a liberal arts degree has given you an advantage over other artists?

L: ...I remember when I was in school, as a part of our senior seminar, there were a couple of days when we talked about ‘what else can you do as a dancer, because you’re probably not going to make all of your money as a dancer...’ And I remember sort of ignoring the topic at the time because you don’t really want to think about...
that when you are a student; all you really want to think about is
dancing, so you are purposefully ignorant. So many times I
thought of that moment – even today – because it is so true, you
need to know how to figure things out. It is so important to have
a bachelor’s [degree] because you need to be able to go get a job
where you can support yourself. I worked for four years in New
York so that I could dance. You couldn’t do that without a degree.
I think that it is really good for you to continue opening students’
ears and eyes and minds to all the ways they can use a bachelor’s
degree and use their learning to support what they want to do as a
dancer until they are able to do that fully … I think at the time, you
sometimes think ‘why am I getting a degree just to dance’ because
dance is such an unusual field. But I was really glad to have it so
many times because I was able to work in other fields. Also, a lot
of my colleagues are going to graduate school now. And if you
don’t have your bachelors, you can’t get your masters.

N: Toni Pierce-Sands was talking with some prospective students
recently, talking about how the field has changed, how a couple of
decades ago if you wanted to dance, you moved to a city, and you
started from the ground up; degrees had nothing to do with your
career process. The field has shifted and young people, dancers,
have had to think about how they are training, and how they are
educating themselves.

L: I also think it is where the good artists are. A lot of the good
artists, dance artists, choreographers, teachers, are in universities
because that’s where they can work. If you want to train with rea-

dly good teachers, and if you want to work with choreographers,
universities are the place to get experience. Sure you can come to
New York and go to class, but you’re not going to meet Bebe
Miller and you’re not going to get to work with Neil Greenburg.
You now need the setting of the university because that’s the way
the system is functioning. The structure is really helping students
to make connections in the field.

Choosing Seasons continued from page 15

example, Dance Revolutions is a culmination of Cowles Guest
Artist residencies; Bob Rosen was selected to direct The Pope and
the Witch because we wanted our performance students to have a
chance to study the Commedia dell’arte style, of which he, and his
former company, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, are well-known virtu-
osos; and The Arabian Nights came from a desire to support our
department’s increasing focus on giving voice to stories from cul-
tures outside our own personal experiences. Similarly, BFA acting
students are studying classically-based work, and therefore the BFA
senior show selection will always reflect that training.

It should be noted, however, that all these examples are related
to performance needs. What else do we need to consider? For
starters, Design/Tech students need to experience the design and
execution of created performance, scripted plays, lighting and cos-
tuming for dance, and designing in both formal spaces and found
or site-specific spaces. Students interested in dramaturgy (both at
the graduate and undergraduate level) need shows that are dra-
matically interesting and challenging, and for which they can
serve as dramaturgs and assistant directors. Arts management stu-
dents are learning how to market the shows, organize events, and
provide patron services, while stage management students are
learning how to coordinate productions. In short, the mix of shows
has to be able to serve all the different needs of our student popu-
lation and their level of interest and experience. That’s a lot to
expect from five shows a year!

So we look at providing other opportunities. One of the rea-
sons the X Theatre was created 13 years ago was as a response to
student performers, designers and directors who didn’t see enough
opportunities for themselves on the “Mainstage.” While the X
budget is small, it is supplied by the Subscriber Series season budg-
et. Therefore, the X board has representation at the Producers
meetings so we can share ideas and make sure we are not duplicat-
ing efforts (i.e., we don’t want to inadvertently have two very simi-
lar productions on both our seasons). Other opportunities that the
Producers look for are projects that enhance our Subscriber Series
offerings, such as our Diverse Voices collaboration with the X
Theatre Board. With only five slots on the Subscriber Series, two of
them pre-determined (UDT and BFA), we offer opportunities
such as the X Season, Diverse Voices, Creative Collaborations, pro-
gram-sponsored activities (the Wickedly Wild and Way Out
Workshop Week, the graduate students’ Articulations conference,
the BFA Studio Series, the informal Dance showings and projects,
residencies by guest artists such as Tim Miller, etc.) to broaden the
scope of the experiences that are all a part of University Theatre
and Dance.

FINANCES – HOW DO WE PAY FOR ALL OF THIS?

While I would love to say we don’t have to worry about
money, I would be lying – and it wouldn’t be representative of the
real world for which we are trying to prepare our students.
Financial considerations become part of the equation, along with
curriculum and breadth of experiences, when we choose the
Subscriber Season. Once the Producers have narrowed down the list of projects based on all the factors we have just previously discussed, we begin to consider resource allocation: performance space, money for materials, labor time/costs, shop space, etc.

Traditional theatre and dance companies rely on a variety of resources to help finance their seasons: earned income (ticket sales, concessions, gift shops, performance classes and workshops, to name a few) and unearned income (grants, sponsorships, in-kind donations, memberships or individual donations) – usually a combination of all these. Typically, a healthy organization has what is called the 55/45 split. This means that at least 55% of the organization’s income is generated through earned income, with the remainder coming from unearned sources. You never want one side of the equation or the other to get too big, since your organization suffers greatly if you have a low sales year, or lose a lot of grant funding.

University Theatre is different in that our revenue is made up of earned revenue (just ticket sales) that comprises anywhere from 20-40% of our revenue, subsidized revenue in the form of support from CLA, that comprises roughly 35-40% of our revenue, and rentals from partnerships in the summer through Penumbra Summer Institute, Theatre E3, and Minnesota Fringe Festival (5-10%). There is also in-kind support in the form of faculty labor (shop supervisors, design/tech faculty who work on a show, directing/acting faculty who work on a show, design/tech TAs and practicum class support). As you can see, even in the best case scenarios, we have a hard time hitting 100%, or covering all our expenses. So, in the event that our next season is a year with a musical (a commitment we made to students several years ago to do a musical at least every other year), we might gravitate to a more popular, mainstream work the season before because we know such a show will generate more revenue, as the musical will the following year. We have also found that Shakespeare sells well: many classes outside of theatre will bring students and groups to see Shakespeare, and since Shakespeare is part of our curriculum, it finds its way onto the season on a regular basis. While picking a box office “hit” is secondary to all the other reasons we have covered, it is part of the mix – in order to keep going, it has to be! – though certainly not a primary reason for making the choices we do.

So while some shows are picked purely for their ability to give students an important experience, many are picked because they can do that and at the same time generate some much needed revenue. The summer Showboat allows us to explore a non-contemporary style (mainly melodramas, period texts and musicals, olio vignettes, and period mysteries) both in performance, design and overall presentation. Because we are able to facilitate a much longer run of the show, we are able to provide performers, technicians and management students with a professional-like opportunity and a paying job in the summertime. And beginning last season, when the Showboat generated more money than it cost to produce the summer show, that extra income was diverted to the Subscriber Season, which in turn has allowed us to continue to make even bolder choices. This situation is not uncommon. If you look around at theatre and dance companies nationwide, every one of them has their box office standard, or “cash cow” that gives them the financial freedom to do all kinds of work the rest of the season. Dance companies have their Nutcrackers; theatre companies have their Christmas Carols and their chestnut comedy classics. As far as I am concerned, participating in “mainstream” work is no less valuable for a student than participating in new, experimental work — we need it all! And this balance is all part of the learning process.

IN THE END...

I’ve left a lot out, for example: procuring rights, shows in development, hiring guest artists and working their schedules into ours, etc. Yet I’ve probably told you more than you really wanted to know. And of course I’ve told it from my singular perspective as the Managing Director of University Theatre and the Minnesota Centennial Showboat. But hopefully, this helps explain the complicated process that the Producers group faces each year as we plan for another season. So if you are interested in what happens on our stages, let us know. There are multiple opportunities, through town hall forums and departmental meetings or an email to your favorite former teacher if you are an alum, who are always glad to hear what you think and pass it along. And that goes for me too! A question you have that this novella didn’t answer? Send me an email at swh@umn.edu. I’m always anxious to hear your opinions and perspectives! √
CALLING ALL SHOWBOAT ALUMNI
Whether you were an actor, designer, stage manager, or just a big fan, the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance invites you to the Showboat for our 50th Anniversary Reunion on Saturday, July 12th, 2008. Come back to everyone’s favorite floating theatre and celebrate by seeing our show, taking a backstage tour, and by sharing memories at the 50th Anniversary river gala on board an old-fashioned rivercruise. Please let us know in advance if you are interested in coming by dropping us a note at showboat@umn.edu. Look for your “official” invitation in the mail soon.

IT’S A SHOWBOAT ALUMNI REUNION!

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

by Charles Fechter/Alexandre Dumas, père
adapted by Robert Moulton
directed by Peter Moore
with olio direction by Vern Sutton

Don’t miss the epic drama, sweet revenge, and swashbuckling fun of The Count of Monte Cristo, presented by the U of M Showboat Players on board the Minnesota Centennial Showboat. From the writer of The Three Musketeers, this imaginative story follows the adventures of a dashing sailor who is wrongly sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison by those jealous of his good fortune. Matched with the “best of the best” olio from the Showboat’s first 50 years, The Count of Monte Cristo is great for a family outing or as a group event for your entire crew.

JUNE 13TH THRU AUGUST 23RD
Showboat.umn.edu or 651.227.1100