



Seattle Pacific University's

Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts Newsletter

creators

Winter 2011

Celebrating Theatre's Jubilee Season

Scripture speaks of the Year of Jubilee when the enslaved were set free and alienated land was restored. So joyous and special was Jubilee that it was observed but once in every 50 years.

"This is SPU Theatre's jubilee season," says Don Yanik, professor of theatre, whose department is marking its 50th Season with a return of some of the most enduring plays ever produced, such as "Our Town," "The Fantasticks," and "Godspell." "Godspell" premiered in the Northwest in 1974 on the Seattle Pacific College (SPC) stage.

Begun in 1961, the SPC Theatre Department bucked what was then a prevailing attitude among evangelical churches: Live theatre was sinful and therefore unfit for Christian campuses.

But SPC President C. Dorr Demaray and a young professor, James Chapman, begged to differ. "Theatre captured the deepest longings and understanding of the human condition," says Kim Gilnett, marketing associate for fine arts. And it did so in community with actors, technicians, and audience, providing a place of grace singularly

unmatched beyond the footlights.

So Demaray encouraged Chapman in his vision to create a program not only academically sound, but also one that took advantage of Seattle's growing professional theatre network.

"You can't build a strong theatre program on performance only," says Gilnett. "An equally strong technical program is crucial to success in the theatre world." SPU theatre majors are immersed in both, which makes them highly sought by professional theatre companies.

"We have had our students intern and work in every major theatre company in town," says Yanik, a well-known set designer whose work has enhanced Seattle's professional stages and the great majority of SPU's 263+ productions. An increasing number of SPU theatre graduates are attending graduate schools, as well, with a number of them working and studying in other countries.

"And we must not lose sight of the fact that of the thousands of students who have worked on our productions over the years, most have been students of other major disciplines," notes Yanik. "Many have gone on to use their gifts in Christian missions, having found the passion for their life's work right here in SPU theatre."



The original SPU cast in the Northwest premier of "Godspell," circa 1974.

Continue on back



Tending the Vocal Instrument

Stephanie Woods stands in the middle of Crawford 106, and sings oohs and ahhs as part of her vocal warm up. She occasionally lifts her hand as if she’s pulling a string from the top of her head, while her voice teacher, Cherie Hughes, sits at the piano with her back effortlessly straight.

Hughes, the head of vocal studies, is Woods’ first personal voice instructor, even though Woods has been performing in front of people since she was 5. “At first it made me so nervous,” says the sophomore, a theatre and English double major. “I would think, ‘Ah! She’s looking at just me. I wish other people were here!’”

Posture, for example, is something that Hughes mentions gently several times a lesson. Woods quickly noticed how helpful it is to meet with someone one on one. “I was a second alto for two years in high school,” she says. But it took Hughes no time to indentify her as a soprano.

“One of the big goals of voice lessons is to discover what the student’s instrument wants to do best and come up with things so that it can grow and blossom,” Hughes says. For Woods, that means working on both sides of her range to help her keep her voice in balance.

Woods will play Sonia in Seattle Pacific University’s winter production of Godspell, and Hughes wants to make sure that her voice stays in top shape. “I see my job as being a guardian of the voice,” Hughes says. “I’m here to protect it and to help students take care of the gift they have.”

Hughes has a lot of experience tending to her own voice in the midst of a production. She has performed in countless operas and orchestral concerts, and is getting ready to perform in her own recital at Seattle Pacific on January 7.

Woods says that she appreciates knowing that Hughes’ instruction comes from a place of vast professional experience. But she doesn’t dwell on that. “Otherwise, I’d feel intimidated all of the time.”

See Cherie Hughes in her Friday, January 7 faculty recital at First Free Methodist Church adjacent to campus. Doors open at 7 p.m., and the event is free. The program includes a variety of sacred music from around the world, including a Hebrew prayer, a baroque operatic scene, spirituals, medieval songs, and more.



Voice instructor Cherie Hughes coaches Stephanie Woods in both vocal balance and personal carriage.

a Ripe Harvest of Art

To say that “Ripe,” the autumn art show at the Seattle Pacific Art Center Gallery, is not your mother’s still life exhibition is both promo and caution. To be sure, the pieces by five outside artists and SPU adjunct faculty members Zack Bent and Natalie St. Martin capture recognizable objects: Fruit. Meat. Toys. Upon closer inspection, however, the familiar are caught up in the agony and the ecstasy of sensuality that careen from decay to glory, and back again. Hence the exhibit’s snaking tentacles and seeping physicality subtitled “Juicy Contemporary Still Life.”

“Still life is one of the four main genres of Western art,” says Gallery Director Katie Kresser. Portrait, landscape, and historical are the other three.

Kresser took artist recommendations, visited artists’ studios, and selected pieces that related and provided the best fit. In September, she talked with students about the exhibit before they generated the contextual language describing each piece and the show as a whole.

“In our world of synthetic materials and virtual realities,” they wrote, “still life can remind us of the beauty that’s painful and bloody: birth, woundedness,

ecstasy, transformation, decay, and death.”

“It has provided students a great opportunity for curatorial experience,” says Kresser. “They were hugely involved with the text, where the pieces were placed, how they were lit.”

The “Ripe” opened in October and ran through December 3. It was boosted by a Facebook page and press releases, and drew a sizable crowd to the contemporary experiments in still life. The Art Center Gallery, at 3 West Cremona Street, is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Thursday.



“Ruptured Abscess Pear Tower” by Gregory Jacobsen



Music Internships

Open Big Doors

Brea Edwards of Cheney, Washington, has a burning passion for music and performance. As a vocal performance major at a Christian university in a big city, she surrounded herself with like-minded professors, friends, and fellow musicians. And because she was positioned well in a metropolitan area known for the arts, the Tacoma Opera came knocking.

Actually, Edwards went knocking as soon as she heard of the audition for an internship with the Tacoma (Washington) Opera Young Artists program. She performed two arias before a panel of judges and submitted her résumé. Based on that audition and her previous musical experience, she was offered a year-long contract with the opera company.

A busy life just got busier. In addition to her academics in this her senior year, Edwards sings previews and benefits to promote opera in the community, and sings in the chorus and is covering a principal role in Tacoma Opera's fall production of "Elixir of Love." Rehearsals average three times a week and weekends.

"It's quite the time commitment," she says, "but I enjoy every second. I get to speak with the professional singers singing the main stage shows as well as receive vocal coaching from conductors and other staff. SPU being in the city opens immense

opportunities. What better place to boost my professional résumé?"

Derek Sellers, a 2010 SPU graduate, agrees. At the University, he sang with the Concert Choir, Chamber Singers, Gospel Choir, and Opera Workshop. "To create in the scope of vocal performance is not just singing a beautiful song, but becoming the artwork," he says.

For three years, Sellers took voice instruction from well-known Northwest performer, conductor, and SPU adjunct music instructor Bernie Kwiram. "He helped me break out of the bubble by offering me a spot in the Tacoma Opera chorus. That got me on a professional stage for the first time and I haven't been able to quench my desire for it since."

Today, Sellers is a computer systems analyst for SPU's Engineering Department (he minored in computer science). In his senior year, he rehearsed "H.M.S. Pinafore" as the understudy for the lead tenor after only twice having appeared on a professional stage. This past year he performed in "Pinafore," accepting the difficult challenge of learning both the chorus and principal roles. All this by the age of 22. He went on to a role in "Camelot" and this holiday season is a member of the Dickens Carolers.

Melyssa Norris '09 took rich advantage of the music education program at SPU, through which all music education majors have found "very desirable

positions," according to Music Department Chair Ramona Holmes. Many teaching opportunities exist in the Seattle School District and the surrounding region. Norris is the general and vocal music teacher at Seattle's Lowell Elementary School, where she interned as a student.

"It's a good sign when your professors are people you wish to be when you grow up," Norris says of her SPU mentors. "My favorite classes were with Dr. Holmes, who started off every single class session with a song."

Norris, who sings and plays numerous instruments, including piano, organ, violin, viola, and tenor saxophone, underscores that studying in Seattle meant having access to a variety of theaters, performance venues, and outstanding ensembles that helped refine her musicianship. "Going to school in the city was the most influential thing among the amazing opportunities I've had so far. I performed with international hip-hop artists, world-class opera singers, phenomenal jazz artists, and more."

"Our students can branch out into music technology, worship music, and multiple music genres," says Holmes. Not only does the music education program at SPU open doors professionally, the doors it opens are many and varied.



Derek Sellers



Brea Edwards



Melyssa Norris



Renowned Music Therapist

Headlines Symposium

Deforia Lane is one of those rare individuals able to empathize in words not always easily expressed -- about big things such as the pain suffered by those who have been abused, or who are aging, psychiatrically disturbed, or terminally ill. One of the nation's most highly regarded music therapists and author of Music as Medicine, Lane is the guest artist/lecturer for the annual Lawrence and Ruth Schoenhals Symposium February 25.

The director of music therapy at University Hospitals of Cleveland, Ireland Cancer Center, and Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, Lane is a pioneer in the design and implementation of music therapy programs for people experiencing a broad range of mental and physical challenges. One reviewer of her book says that she brings readers "from laughter to tears and back again, and again ..."

"She speaks from the heart," says Seattle Pacific University Assistant Professor of Music Carlene Brown, director of the only music therapy degree program in Washington state. "She is a solidly Christian woman who leans on her faith in the medical world." Among the institutions that Lane has served as a consultant are the Mayo Clinic and

Sesame Street (Children's Television Workshop). She is also a spokesperson for the American Cancer Society for which she composed and recorded the song "We Can Cope."

In its second full year of operation, the music therapy program at SPU is generating considerable interest among students and music educators across the state. Bringing Lane to the area is meant not only to inspire them to further investigate the field, but also to heighten general awareness of the program on-campus and off.

Lane, a researcher, will spend the morning at Seattle Children's Hospital meeting with medical colleagues and teaching SPU music therapy students. "One of my goals is to do research at Children's," says Brown, "so this is a great opportunity to strengthen those professional ties."

At 1 p.m. in a session open to the public, Lane will speak about her work and the intersection of music and faith. At 7 p.m. in Otto Miller Hall 109, she will make a research-specific presentation geared to music educators, medical professionals, and SPU faculty. There will be a time of questions and answers with music therapists from the region.

"Dr. Lane is delighted to come," says Brown. "Her visit is a great way for our students and prospective students to learn more about music therapy."

The afternoon public session will be **held in Demaray Hall 150.**



Deforia Lane

Theatre's Jubilee Season

Continued from front

He remembers Chapman's creative genius as a director, and the respect he had for each team member and what he or she brought to the table. "He was brilliant," says Yanik. "Of all the directors I've worked with, he's right at the top."

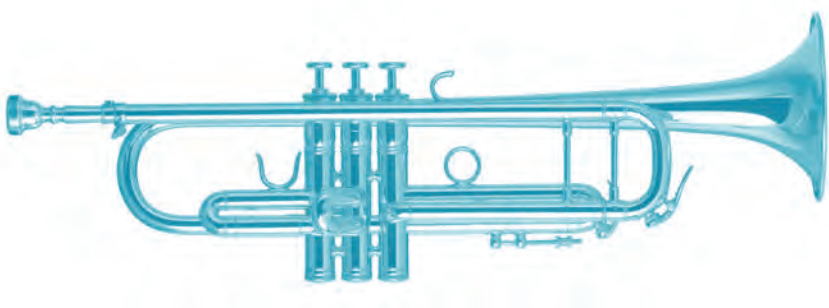
Chapman's work stirred the imagination and touched the hearts of audiences through a colorful parade of productions, including "Cry the Beloved Country," "Christ in the Concrete City," "Man of La Mancha," "Quilters," "Royal Hunt of the Sun" and 10 of Shakespeare's plays. Chapman, who prided himself on tackling difficult issues in new ways, was instrumental in creating the Los Angeles Film Studies Center and his students went on to establish Seattle's acclaimed Taproot Theatre.

Chapman, who retired from SPU in 2000 after 39 years in the classroom, died in 2002. The James Leon Chapman Stage in E.E. Bach Theatre is named in his honor.

The 50th Season began by welcoming New York playwright Arlene Hutton, who was in attendance for opening night of her work, "Gulf View Drive." The season will end May 24-28, 2011, with performances of "The Fantasticks," the longest running Broadway musical ever produced. It first appeared on SPU's stage in 1967.

"In any play we do, we want to build ensemble," says Gilnett. "Our theatre students do it all. When they leave here, they don't think it beneath them to pick up a broom. There are a lot of egos in the performing arts, but the theatres in town see how committed our students are and call asking for them."

That's a fact worth celebrating in a season of Jubilee. "I'm very proud that we're still committed to Jim's vision," says Yanik. "It's our strength!"



Is Your Artistic Talent Scholarship-Worthy?

Regardless of intended major, you are invited to audition for individual arts scholarships from \$500 to \$3,000 each.

Auditions will be held at SPU on January 22 and February 25-26, 2011. If you live far from campus, it is possible for you to audition by mail. Don't let anything stop you from showing us what you can do!

During your audition, you will be evaluated on overall talent, diversity of skills, and repertoire. For complete scholarship audition details and to apply online, check out www.spu.edu/finearts.

Winter Arts Calendar

January 20-22, 27-29

50th Theatre Season Presentation: Godspell

Directed by Andrew D. Ryder, a musical based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Matinee and evening performances January 29. E.E. Bach Theatre.

* Ticket required, Call Fine Arts Box Office at 206-281-2959.

All performances are open to the public and begin at 7:30 p.m. (except 2 p.m. Matinee). For ticket and other information, www.spu.edu/finearts, or call 206-281-2959.

February 25

Wind Symphony Concert

Free. Directed by Gerry Jon Marsh. First Free Methodist Church (adjacent to campus).

March 4

Concert Choir

Free. Directed by David Anderson. First Free Methodist Church (adjacent to campus).

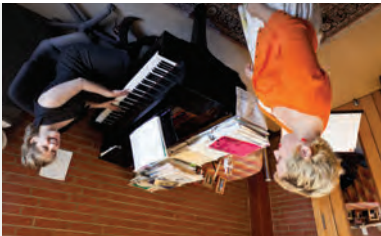
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Imagine a music
internship.

See the ordinary
extraordinarily.

Think of music
as medicine.

Wish SPU
theatre a happy
50th!



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