



Alumni Bulletin

Volume XXXIV Number 1

Spring 2009

Dear Alumni . . .

I am not certain if this counts as the absolutely last Bulletin, but I know for certain this is the last time I write to you as department Chair. "Finalmente," I am about to retire.

In the current economic climate those who insist that money is the only thing that counts find their self-worth as diminished as their net worth. They almost convinced me they were right, but as I approach retirement with less money in my pension, I still count myself wealthy, rich in memories of priceless experiences. I treasure most many of those I shared with students in this department. Einstein, a man of science, not art, wisely said, "Not everything that can be counted, counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." I count myself rich because I have, like the antler-wearing shamans of pre-history, donned fantastic garb and danced about the fire of the theatre's footlights to summon forth spirits.

How can the experience of the magic of live theatre not count?

Last Spring I designed animal costumes for a small Minnesota music festival project based on the Chester mystery play

"Noye's Fludde." I will never forget the spectacular parade up the church aisle of all those school children dressed as animals. It was not great art, just great magic, and I was thrilled to have a part in it. Recently I saw an artfully designed and directed production of *Suessical* staged by a Canfield, Ohio, middle school. The pride and energy emanating from those eighth-graders was contagious.

Perhaps no one can truly measure the value of a live performance, the value of the magic fire re-kindled regularly in school and community theaters all around because of very rich people like us who know how to summon the spirits. We cannot really quantify its value, but we know it counts.

I count as priceless the many moments I've spent with all of you and with the spirits of Chekhov, Ibsen and Goldoni hovering about the stage. I am absolutely certain that I would not trade the things I love for "a pack of gold." It is time to start act three. "Let's go on with the show." Farewell.

Keep the faith,

Phillip Graneto, Chair

Production Schedule Spring 2009



- February 27,28, *Our Country's Good*, by
March 1, 5-8 Timberlake Wertenbaker.
 Directed by David Sullivan.
 Tohill Theatre 8 pm. (3 pm 3/8)
- April 2-4 Lab Theatre: *Fools*,
 by Neil Simon.
 Studio Theatre 8 pm.
- April 16-19 *The Children's Hour*, by
 Lillian Hellman.
 Directed by Elisabeth Hostetter.
 Tohill Theatre 8 pm. (3 pm 4/19)
- April 30-May 3 Spring Dance Concert.
 Tohill Theatre 8 pm. (3 pm 5/3)

Production Plans for 2009-2010

Production Planning Committee Chair David Sullivan reports that selections for next year's season are still under study as the *Bulletin* goes to press. Current plans envision a "devised" (unscripted) work, a dance concert, a straight play and a classic American musical, the latter in collaboration with the Music Department's Opera Company and Orchestra.

For Tohill ticket information phone the Rowan Box Office at 856-256-4545, visit Wilson Hall box office Monday-Friday 9 am to 5 pm, or Tohill box office one hour before curtain.

14 Theatre Majors Enroll for London Summer Program

In a joint venture with Rowan's International Center Elisabeth Hostetter will take 16 students -- 14 of them theatre majors -- to London this summer. From May 17 to June 6 they will take Liz's Living Theatre course, attend shows at the National Theatre and the Old Globe and do day trips to Stonehenge and Stratford-upon-Avon. For many it will be their first time in Europe.

The trip follows on the heels of a successful tour Liz organized last summer when six Rowan theatre majors traveled with her to Ireland including attending a performance of *The Weir* at Dublin's Court Theatre (and kissing the Blarney Stone, of course).

This will be the first official study abroad program in the Theatre Department since then-Chair Michael Kelly took students to London during winter Intersession periods for several years from December 1973 for acting classes, theatre productions, trips to theatre sites and discussions with professionals.

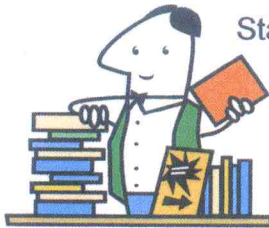
Last Bulletin! Or Is It?

As you know, this issue was widely "advertised" as the final *Alumni Bulletin*, ending 34 consecutive years of publication. And that could well be the case. Or, on the other hand, maybe not.

The new idea, in Dean Jon Robert Cart's vision of a unified "brand" for the College of Fine and Performing Arts, is to utilize an interactive website for on-going contact with and among alumni, chat rooms, updates of personal information, communication re events, etc. Its planning was assigned to Rowan's Community Relations office. So far, "They are working on it."

There being nothing yet to replace the *Bulletin* and the Dean not wanting us to jeopardize contact with you, our charge is "keep doing what you're doing until we have something in place." Thus, you should watch your e-mails for further word. Meanwhile, maybe we'll see you in October after all.

The Latest Doings of Our Busy Faculty . . .



Lots of directing credits to add to DAVID SULLIVAN's resume, including: staged reading of *Lenin's Shoe* at New York's Origin Theatre Company last May, *l'Uomo dal Fiore in Bocca* in Ortonovo, Italy, in July, *Evangeline Elsewhere* for Origin in September and *Swansong* for Boston's Tir Na Theatre Company in February. . . . ELISABETH HOSTETTER has published a review of Obie-winning John Clancy's play *Fatboy* in *Communications: From the International Brecht Society*. . . . MELANIE STEWART is on a full-year sabbatical to pursue a number of projects one of which is a new work, *Kill Me Now*, to premiere at the 2009 Live Arts Festival at Philadelphia's Arts Bank September 4-7. It's a cultural satire based on reality dance competition TV shows. . . . Retiree JOSEPH ROBINETTE will have his new musical *A Christmas Story* premiered by Kansas City Repertory Theatre this coming November-December. Based on the Jean Shepherd film, it had a staged reading in December in New York starring Beau Bridges. Joe was on a panel in Cleveland for the film's 25th anniversary ("4,000 attended -- it was Trekkie-like") and appears in the new documentary *The Untold Christmas Story*. . . . LESLIE ELKINS and her Foursome group presented the dance piece *Who Made You Boss?*, "an eccentric escapade merging the realities of American idol and Decision 2008," as part of the Philly Fringe Festival last September. . . . Speaking of dance people, we had a recent "called to say hello" from retired Dance Coordinator TAGE WOOD. She asked that her address be passed along as she'd be delighted to hear from you: 4620 W. Del Rio St., Chandler AZ 85226. . . . DAVID SULLIVAN was Artistic Associate and General Manager for off-Broadway's *Ladies and Gents* in Central Park last March and appeared on a Lincoln Center panel, "Directing Irish Plays for the New York

Stage," in September. . . . LIZ HOSTETTER will present a paper "Signs of Resistance under the Nazi Regime: A Study of Jurgen Fehling's *Richard III*" at the American Theatre in Higher Education conference in New York this summer. . . . To make up for the Speech Communications Department's failure to provide an advisor for the Rowan Forensics Team, PHIL GRANETO has been volunteering in that post for the past few years. The team must fund-raise to get a much-needed SGA supplement; Phil wonders if forensic-fond alums might help with a small check? . . . MELANIE STEWART was funded to commission a new solo *I'll Crane for You* from choreographer Deborah Hay in Scotland last summer. Hay's score and directives require daily practice for four months before performance and Melanie will premiere the work June 3 and 4 at Philadelphia's 2009 nEW Festival. . . . Costume Shop Supervisor STEPHANIE NICHOLS' recent free-lance costume design work includes two dance projects for Temple University, one last spring and another this April, *The Full Monty* last summer for Alpine Theatre Project in Montana and three dance pieces for Drexel University in January. . . . Ready for this? One of JOE ROBINETTE's plays is being performed in Wasilla, Alaska, this spring. Quoth our esteemed colleague: "Am I excited? You bet'cha!" Actually, world-wide Robinette stagings continue to mount: in Taiwan last fall, one each in Australia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Guam, plus several in Canada...ironically, some 25% fewer in the U.S. . . . MICHAEL KELLY and wife Barbara, fresh from a two-week January tour in Mexico, will lead a group of 23 in March/April on a cruise from Vienna to Amsterdam on the Danube, Main and Rhine Rivers. . . . PAULE TURNER and Dance Extensions are busily creating a site-specific dance work based on Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* to be performed outside in Memorial Hall Circle April 17 as part of the new Rowan Day. This is a campus-wide open house
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Musical Theatre Track Eyed

Department Curricula

Undergo Reviews, Changes

This past year has been a busy one for the department and its Curriculum Committee, striving as ever to keep current with shifting budgets and student demands. Here's a look.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS. The new *Master of Science in Teaching* (M.S.T.), a one-year program leading to a master's degree and K-12 certification, has been approved. There is one student enrolled, '08 Dance alum Amanda Priopi now student-teaching in Williamstown, with two more expected in fall. The M.S.T. actually doesn't "belong" to us -- it's a degree program within the Department of Teacher Education with endorsements available in various subject matters now including theatre. We offer just one course, Theory and Practice of Teaching Theatre K-12, and supervise Student Teaching. Prospective teachers are encouraged to pursue our B.A. in Theatre, using free electives to broaden knowledge and skills, then apply for the M.S.T. for certification.

In light of dwindling enrollment and resources, the department has decided to re-evaluate the *Master of Arts*, placing it "on hold" for two years. There are presently two thesis students who will be allowed to complete the degree but no new candidates are being accepted. A committee begins work this summer to consider how the program might be restructured to meet needs and interests of prospective students. Questions to be discussed: should it be production-based rather than research, an MFA rather than MA, can we focus on summer courses and performance components to enhance enrollment?

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS. The new *B.A. Dance Track* was approved June 30 and we are auditioning for fall entrants. We expect at least 6-8 freshmen.

Due to seriously declining enrollment the *Child Drama* specialization is reluctantly being

eliminated. No new freshmen will be enrolled though those in the program may complete it and transfers in by students already at Rowan will be accepted. Once Child Drama is phased out the courses Children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics will still be offered once a year.

Because of significant expression of interest by current and prospective majors, preliminary discussions have begun on a prospective *Musical Theatre* track for our B.A.

Our Busy Faculty (continued from page 4)

to let people know more clearly what various departments do within their walls. . . .A recent e-mail from our 1960's theatre education faculty member FRITZ BELL tells us he's still teaching in the Creative Arts M.Ed. program at Lesley University in Cambridge MA. Last spring he moved into a "green" solar house on his New Hampshire property and apparently local high school science teachers want to bring their students there to monitor the systems. . . .A productive sabbatical year for MELANIE STEWART. In addition to the above projects, her Melanie Stewart Dance company has received \$36,000 in grants to support the 2009 nEW Festival's premiere productions, community classes, open rehearsals and workshops. . . .Retiree WILLIAM MORRIS is supervising an Independent Study in Directing this semester for students in our Master of Arts program. . . .STEPHANIE NICHOLS gave a presentation at the annual symposium of the Costume Society of America in New Orleans last May. . . .Having lost a number of our alums to AIDS we have special reason to heed MIKE KELLY's wife Barbara, a Board member of the AIDS Coalition of Southern New Jersey, asking for support for two annual HIV/AIDS fundraisers: April 30's Dining Out for Life (check www.diningoutforlife.com for participating area restaurants) and September 26's AIDS Walk South Jersey. Info on all events including forming a walk team can be found at www.acsnj.org or by e-mailing Barbara at kellrain@aol.com).

