



The Stage Door: Musical Theatre at SHSU

Volume II, Issue I

Fall/Winter 2014

This is your backstage pass into current events and highlights from the Musical Theatre Program at Sam Houston State University. Come behind the scenes as we reveal the very latest happenings in and around our dynamic program.

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From the Head of Musical Theatre



This has been an exciting and rewarding fall semester. From our Scholarship Gala to our recent

production of A

Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum and everything in between, we have been happily busy working at a steady pace.

First, I want to say a big thank you to the many patrons and supporters who have made this a remarkable fall for us. I especially want to thank our generous Gala underwriters Streater-Smith Honda and Nissan and Sam Houston Catering Services. I am grateful for the support of Peter Roussel, the Warner Endowed Chair in Journalism and his Priority PR team. And I am thrilled to have artist David Addicks, sculptor of the Sam

Houston statue just outside of Huntsville, as a new friend and patron. These and other exciting relationships promise an exhilarating future for the Musical Theatre Program.

We are enjoying our new faculty who joined us this year. Kiira Schmidt Carper, whose Broadway credits include *Anything Goes*, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *Follies*, is dancing up a storm both in the classroom and as our faculty choreographer. She has been such a valuable addition to our program and we are so pleased to have her as part of our team. We are also fortunate to have Kevin Crouch as part of our faculty this year. Kevin received his M.F.A in Acting from New York University, and is a member of Actors' Equity Association. Kevin has taken a very active role in training our production stage managers. Dr.

Vicky Lanz holds a PhD in Theatre and Drama from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is bringing a global view to our students through her research on African, Caribbean, and American theatre and performing identities. Drew Prince has joined our applied voice faculty this year. Drew received his M.M. from New York University in Musical Theatre Vocal Performance. Drew teaches private voice to a full studio of musical theatre majors.

As I said, it's been a busy and productive semester and we are gearing up for many more rewarding projects waiting for us this spring. Visit our YouTube channel to see us in action!

www.youtube.com/user/SHSUMusicalTheatre

Laura

Musical Theatre Platform Performances

This fall we launched *Platform Performances* with MUSIC FROM THE MOVIES, an original revue of music from the Golden Age of Hollywood Movie Musicals. The revue was performed off-campus at a north Houston fine arts venue to an audience of over 300 patrons.

Platform Performances are concert versions of shows, musical revues, or themed sketches of different shows.

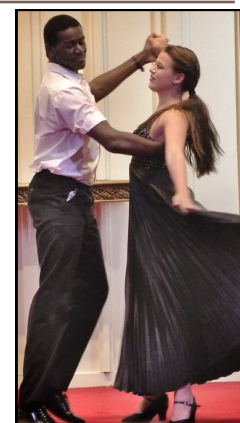
Platform Performances take place during the fall semester in

various locations on and off-campus. Events are free and open to the public.

We will be announcing our upcoming fall 2015 performance very soon!



Talking Pictures! - *Singing in the Rain*



Our Fred Astaire (Andrew Carson) and Ginger Rogers (Adrienne Whitaker) "Steppin' Out"

The 2015 Senior Showcase

2015 New York Senior Showcase

We consider it a real honor to be able to offer a capstone experience to our graduating seniors with a Senior Showcase in New York City. Auditions for this year's Showcase took place in early December and the planning is well under way!

We are so very thankful to our generous sponsors. Your kind support allowed our seniors to take advantage of this amazing opportunity at a reduced cost.

Please consider supporting our seniors by becoming a 2015

sponsor. When sponsoring a senior, you are aiding one of these aspiring artists in their career development by enabling them to be seen and heard by industry professionals in New York. They are also able to meet and network with many of our alumni now living and working in New York. Having these connections makes the transition to the city easier for our graduating seniors.

If you would like to receive our Sponsor-A-Senior Program

information brochure, please contact Dr. Laura Avery at 936.294.3404 or lka005@shsu.edu.

This year's Senior Showcase show will take place at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Monday, April 27 at TheatreLab, 357 W 36th, (3rd floor) New York. To reserve your seat, please contact Dr. Laura Avery at 936.294.3404 or lka005@shsu.edu.

**"His quick
paced class was
exhilarating
and inspiring"**



In November, Kevin Munhall took time from his busy *Dirty Dancing* tour schedule to visit campus and share some of the show's moves with us. His quick paced class was exhilarating and inspiring.

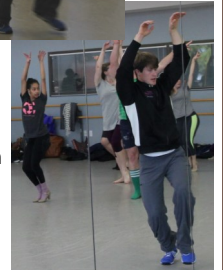
Check out a brief clip on our YouTube Channel.

Kevin's Broadway/NY credits include *Anything Goes* (Roundabout), *The Sound of Music* (Carnegie Hall), *Bells Are Ringing* (Encores), *Hansel and Gretel* (Avery Fisher Hall). Regionally he has performed at Walnut Street Theatre, Kansas City Starlight, Ogunquit Playhouse, MTWichita, and Tuacahn Amphitheatre. His television appearances include "One Life to Live" and "Smash."

The tour of *Dirty Dancing* started at the National Theatre in Washington D.C. in August



and was in Houston from Nov 18-23. We very much appreciate Kevin taking the time to come work with our students.



Coming this summer to SHSU



Sam Houston Musical Theatre is proud to once again host The Broadway Artists Intensive this June. This 3 week program is for talented students who are highly motivated to pursue a professional career in the performing arts. The mission is to foster talent and creativity in all areas of musical theatre through self discipline and

technique, while exposing students to passionate and dedicated industry pros who share their knowledge and expertise acquired along their own path to Broadway. Curriculum includes Acting, Vocal Technique, Vocal Repertoire, Ballet, Jazz, Theatre Dance, Tap, Audition Technique, Stage Combat and Improvisation. The Broadway Artists Intensive faculty is comprised entirely of Broadway veterans. Students

will be instructed by Broadway performers, Music Directors, and Casting Directors, as well as TONY Award winning Directors and Choreographers.

TBAI at SHSU June 8-27, 2015

Auditions: January 10-12, 2015
www.thebroadwayartistsintensive.com/texas/liveauditions/



Production Highlights

This fall, we produced Sondheim's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Set in Ancient Rome, written in vaudeville style and placed under the circus big top, this slapstick piece of musical comedy filled audiences with laughter and sent them home humming the great tunes.

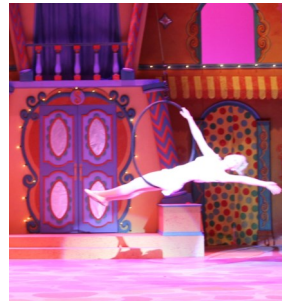
The production marked the first time aerial choreography was used in a department production. The talented cast of versatile actors

somersaulted their way through the show appearing on scooters, a trampoline, aerial silks and Lyra, and even a unicycle!

This spring, we will present the much acclaimed Broadway hit, *Cabaret* in the Erica Starr Theatre from April 15-18, 2015.

For tickets, please visit or call our Box Office at 936.294.1339.

<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/theatre/tickets/>



Alumni News

Our alumni have exciting careers in fields including Broadway productions, tours, film, television, and choreography. Explore our featured alumni profiles on our online ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT page at www.shsu.edu/academics/theatre/alumni/.

Alumnus Greg Graham is associate choreographer of the current Broadway revival of *On the Town*.

Alumnus Alissa LaVergne has pulled out her Radio City Rockette *Christmas Spectacular* costumes and is enjoying this year's run with the legendary troupe of extraordinary dancers.

Alumnus Allison (Alli) Forsythe competed in this year's episode of *The Amazing Race*. She and teammate, Kim did very well during this around the world race competition. We are very proud of Alli!

Alumnus Danny Dyer is performing with Houston Grand Opera in their December production of Iain Bell's *A Christmas Carol*.

Alumnus Eric Mota is currently touring with *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

Alumnus Johann Robert Wood sings the role of the young prince in Disney's *Lion King* in Orlando, Florida.

Alumnus Nkrumah Gatling is touring with *The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess*.



Radio City Rockette
Alissa LaVergne

In Our Community of Artists



We have in our community of artists wonderful faculty with rich experience and intriguing backgrounds.

I have had the great pleasure of getting to know one such individual this fall. With over 45 years of business, government, political and media experience,

including two tours of duty in the White House under Presidents Reagan and Ford, Peter Roussel is an author, television and radio commentator and public relations consultant.

From 1981-1987, he served in the White House as Special Assistant and Deputy Press Secretary to President Reagan. His duties included briefings of the White House press corps and accompanying President Reagan on foreign

and domestic trips, including the historic summit meetings with the Russians at Geneva in 1985 and Iceland in 1986.

In addition to his impressive media career, Peter Roussel also has a wonderful history with the performing arts. His late father, Hubert Roussel, served as drama, music and film critic for The Houston Post from 1933-66. His mother was an actress and his sister a ballerina.

Mr. Roussel has become a good friend to Musical Theatre. He has shared his wonderful stories, immense expertise and generous support. We look forward to many more opportunities to collaborate with Mr. Roussel in the future.



Our Spring 2014 Production Schedule

Produced by
Musical Theatre at SHSU
Dr. Laura Avery,
Head of Musical Theatre

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Find Us Online:

www.shsu.edu/academics/theatre/programs/musical-theatre/



SHSU Musical Theatre



Theatre at Sam Houston

Erica Starr Theatre

Fences

by August Wilson
Directed by Tom Prior
February 18 – February 21, 2015

Cabaret

Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Fred Ebb
Book by Joe Masteroff
Directed by Penny Hasekoester
April 15 – April 18, 2015



Showcase Theatre

Arabian Nights

by Mary Zimmerman
Directed by Kevin Crouch
March 25– March 28, 2015

The Language Archive

by Julia Cho
Director's Debut by Peter Ton
April 22 – April 26, 2015

The Other Place

by Sharr White
Director's Debut by Ryan Smith
April 22 – April 26, 2015

Our box office is located in the University Theatre Center, 1740 Bobby K. Marks Drive and 17th street. For tickets, call the box office at 936.294.1339.

Q the Music Fund

As we enter our twentieth year, we are challenged to continue creating top-notch performances amidst rising production costs and steady budgets. To ensure the future of these live entertainment events, we are seeking major funding for our musicals' orchestras and professional sound design. Consider becoming an Underwriter of our **Q the Music** fund.

This fund will be used to help cover the cost of our live musicians and their professional sound designer. As much as we've accomplished in our rich history, there is still much to be done to maintain our competitive place in the market.

Your donation is a gift for the future ... a gift that helps ensure quality musical productions for our Musical Theatre Program,

its students, alumni and our community... a gift that will tell the story of the Department of Theatre and Musical Theatre so future generations understand the superior education and programming offered at this great institute.

Please consider becoming an Underwriter of the **Q the Music** fund. By partnering with us in this capacity, you will assist us in furthering our mission to develop outstanding theatre artists with the professional skills, intellectual vigor, and creative resources necessary to excel and thrive in the Performing Arts of the 21st Century.

For additional information regarding corporate or individual underwriting of the orchestra, please contact: Dr. Laura Avery, Head of Musical Theatre at 936.294.3404 or lka005@shsu.edu.

