



The Stage Door: Musical Theatre at SHSU

Volume I, Issue I

January/February, 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



Wishing you a very happy 2014! Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter! We wanted a way to stay connected with our patrons,

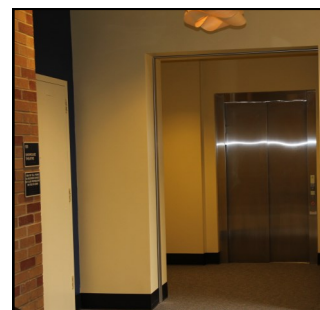
parents, alumni and community. It is our hope that the start of a program newsletter will help us share the exciting things that are happening in the Musical Theatre Program at Sam Houston. Our Newsletter is available online at our website and Facebook page. You can pick up a hard copy at our Box Office or request to receive one via US Mail or email. We value your support and look forward to connecting with you in this way.

In 2010, we opened the doors to the Gaertner Performing Arts Center. The addition of this beautiful, state of the art facility has enhanced our

program and provided much needed studio and rehearsal spaces for our faculty and students. This year, our University Theatre Center is receiving some upgrades and facelifts including a new elevator which will enhance the entrance into our Showcase and Erica Starr Theatres. With the installation of the elevator, we gained new restroom facilities, a new entrance to our Showcase Theatre and fresh paint! We also just completed the installation of a state of the art lighting system in the Erica Starr Theatre. We are very proud of our facilities and feel fortunate to have such functional spaces in which to create theatre. Want to see more? Come take a tour and see for yourself the exciting changes taking place.

Enjoy the newsletter and thank you for your support.

Laura



The UTC has a new elevator!

It's our birthday!

This year, the Musical Theatre Program is celebrating 20 years of outstanding arts education! We remain a vibrant, competitive and effective training program. Since our founding in 1994, the Musical Theatre Program has produced nearly sixty musical productions. We've developed professional internships with five Houston area theatres. Our alumni are seen regularly on Broadway stages, in reputable regional theatres and in national and international tours. We have

had the great fortune of hosting wonderful guest clinicians over the years including former Associate Director of the Ford's Theatre Washington D.C. Mark Ramont, Broadway composer Georgia Stitt and Pastorini Bosby Talent agent Cindi Davis. In 2006, we hosted renowned British actor Michael York for a three day lecture series. We have enjoyed strong ties for many years to the Broadway Theatre Project and have formed a new relationship with the recently established

Performing Arts Project. In the fall of 2012, we welcomed alumni Greg Graham as guest director for the production of *Spring Awakening*. Greg was one of the first to receive the BFA in Musical Theatre when the program started twenty years ago. We are proud of all of our alumni and celebrate their many accomplishments since participating in the Musical Theatre Program at Sam Houston. Happy Birthday to the program and wishes for many more years of proven success!

2014 New York Senior Showcase



A critical step in launching our musical theatre students' professional careers is presenting them to artistic and casting directors, agents, and other VIPs in the industry in New York. This is our New York Senior Showcase. Eight of our graduating seniors have been selected to participate in this year's NY Senior Showcase in April. They will spend three days in New York City

rehearsing, performing, auditioning and exploring. This year we initiated an annual fundraising Halloween Concert where we launched our Sponsor-A-Senior program which provides a major portion of the funding needed to successfully bring the New York Senior Showcase experience to our students. Sponsors are paired with individual seniors. When sponsoring a senior, you are aiding one of our aspiring artists to participate in this capstone experience. There are many benefits to becoming a

Senior Showcase Sponsor. 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 7 p.m. on Monday, April 28 at The Network, 242 W 36th, (3rd floor) New York. To reserve your seat, please contact Dr. Laura Avery at 936.294.3404 or lka005@shsu.edu.

**“Jonathan
was the
embodiment
of musical
theatre
dance”**

Studio Dedication

In February of 2013, the Musical Theatre Program lost one of its founding fathers, long time faculty member Jonathan Charles Smith. In a dedication ceremony on November 23, 2013, dance studio 260 was named “Johnny’s Studio” in loving memory of our friend and colleague. Jonathan Charles was a beloved teacher of all levels of ballet, tap, and jazz dance techniques in the Department of Theatre & Dance from 1993-2012. When the Department split into the

Department of Theatre & Musical Theatre and The Department of Dance in Fall 2012, he continued to be an active, vibrant member in both departments giving generously of his time and energy. Jonathan was the embodiment of musical theatre dance and a driving force in the musical theatre program from its inception in 1994 choreographing the first show performed with students of the



Musical Theatre Program-*The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. You will find Jonathan’s tap shoes hanging in memoriam outside his studio on the second floor of the Performing Arts Center.



Greg Graham
on the set of
*Spring
Awakening*

The Broadway Artists Intensive at SHSU

Since graduating with his BFA in Musical Theatre from Sam Houston, Greg Graham has worked hard to establish a career as a Broadway artist and choreographer. He made his Broadway debut in *Fosse* and has appeared on Broadway in *Chicago*, *Hairspray*, *Never Gonna Dance*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and *Billy Elliott*. Greg makes a real effort to graciously give back to his alma mater serving as guest choreographer for the production *Full Monty* in 2008

and guest director/choreographer for *Spring Awakening* in 2012. When looking to establish a host school for his newly created summer training program, The Broadway Artists Intensive, he and co-founders Jason Gillman and Jacqueline Bayne found the perfect fit here at Sam Houston. The Broadway Artists Intensive is a three-week training program for students aged sixteen thru college who are motivated to pursue a

professional career in the performing arts. The program hosts industry professionals who share their knowledge and expertise acquired along their own path to Broadway. Topping the list of guest artists are multiple TONY Award winning director/choreographer Jerry Mitchell and one of Broadway’s top casting directors, Justin Huff. The summer intensive will take place June 9-28, 2014.

Production Highlights

In November, we mounted a fresh, imaginative and energized production of the satirical and unconventional *Urinetown: The Musical*. Directed by Tom Prior and Music Directed by Dr. Laura Avery, the production welcomed back guest choreographer Michael Tapley. Mr. Tapley worked with Director Penny Hasekoester on Joseph Papp's adaption of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* last spring. Together with student Assistant Choreographer, senior Caleb White, *Urinetown* was rich with

musical parodies of *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Les Miserables*, *Fosse*, and more.

In April of this year, we open the iconic rock musical *HAIR*. Auditions were held in January, 2014. The show will be directed by Department Chair, Penny Hasekoester and choreographed by Kiira Schmidt. Kiira has enjoyed a successful career in New York having appeared in the Grammy and Tony Award-winning *Anything Goes*, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and

Follies, which she was also fortunate to represent in the 2012 Tony Awards. She has also served as associate choreographer to Emmy Award Winner Joshua Bergasse on NBC's hit TV show *SMASH*. We are excited to have her here to work with our students!

Hair will run from April 23-26 in the Erica Starr Theatre. Look for more details in the Production Highlights of upcoming issues of the newsletter.



Student and 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/.

Musical Theatre alumni Traci Lee and Josef Anderson just concluded a run of *Les Miserables* at the Zach Theatre in Austin, Texas. Alumni Tony Johnson and

Michael McClure are currently on national tour with *Ghost*. Alum Garret Storms just closed *Santaland Diaries* at the Watertower Theatre in Dallas and *The Rivals* at Stage West in Fort Worth.

Alumni Kate Rose and Randall Carpenter are currently on national tour with Dallas Childrens Theatre's *Stuart Little*. Current Musical Theatre majors Cameron Davis, Sarah Myers, Daniel Rosales, Adrienne Whitaker, Nathan

Wilson, and Thomas Williams along with Musical Theatre alumni Teresa Zimmermann and Nina Garcia just concluded a run of *Panto Goldilocks* at Stages Repertory Theatre in Houston Texas.

Current Musical Theatre majors Kasi Hollowell and Katie Porterfield and alumnus Christina Stroup are cast in a production of *Sondheim's Into the Woods* at Main Street Theatre in Houston Texas.

“Musical theatre alumni just concluded a run of *Les Miserables*”

In Our Community of Artists

The College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication is enjoying our third year. Our Department of Theatre and Musical Theatre together with the Department of Dance, the Department of Art, the School of Music, and the Department of Mass Communication form an active and dynamic community of artists. This year, Dr. Ronald Shields was named our new Dean. We could not be more thrilled to have his leadership and support as we

continue to develop our educational programming to advance the talent of our students and shape them into contemporary, competitive artists.

“I am honored to be selected as Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication at Sam Houston State University, an institution known for leadership in education, engagement with the

community, and excellence in the study and practice of the arts and mass communication,” Dr. Shields said. “My immediate plan is to begin the work of partnering with the college faculty and staff to advance the goals and mission of the University and prepare our students for the future.”



Dr. Ronald Shields

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

Much Ado About Nothing

by William Shakespeare
Directed by Maureen McIntyre
February 19 - February 22, 2014

Hair

Music by Galt MacDermot
Lyrics by James Rado and Gerome Ragni
Directed by Penny Hasekoester
April 23 - April 26, 2014



Showcase Theatre

Lucy

by Damien Atkins
Directed by Charles Daniels
March 19 - March 22, 2014

Stonewater Rapture

by Doug Wright
Directed by Adriana Dominguez
April 1 - April 5, 2014

Dog Sees God

by Bert V. Royal
Directed by Tyler Martin
April 1 - April 5, 2014

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 programing 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.

