

Backstage Pass

January 2010

Minnesota State Mankato
Theatre & Dance

A new semester of activities

Lolly Foy tops at KCACTF

For the second time in three years, a student from the Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance has won the prestigious Region V Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship nomination and will compete at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, in April.

Lolly Foy (3rd Year MFA Acting candidate from Charlotte, NC) captured the prize at the 42nd annual gathering in Overland Park, KS, Friday, Jan. 22, ably partnered by Joe Crook (junior BFA Acting, Delano). This same honor was bestowed in 2008 on our own Micah Kronlokken (BFA Acting 2009). In addition, Lolly won the 1st place Classical Acting Award, won last year by Mankato's Andrew Umphrey (MFA Acting, pending). More than 400 students from 78 colleges and universities were eligible to compete in this seven-state regional competition.

Along with Lolly, who also reached the Finals last year, three students advanced to the Semifinal round: David Wasylik (senior BFA Acting, Hastings), who was also a Semifinalist last year, partnered by Laura Otremba (junior BFA Musical Theatre, Andover); Megan Volkman-Wilson (junior BFA Musical Theatre, Minneapolis), partnered by Clayton Rutschow (junior BFA Acting, Red Wing); and Aaron

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Olivia (Stacy DeGolier) takes the men to task for their public drunkenness. They are (left to right): Fabian (Andy Gullikson), Sir Toby (Joel Partyka), Feste (J. Alexander Coe) and Sir Andrew Aguecheek (Craig Daniel Stastny) in William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, opening Jan. 28 in the Andreas Theatre.

Twelfth Night the first of three comedies set for this semester

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance will present William Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night* at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 28-30 and Feb. 3-6, and 2 p.m. Jan. 30 & 31 and Feb. 6 & 7 in the Andreas Theatre.

Several performances, including the evening performances Jan. 28-30, are sold out. Tickets may be purchased by

calling 507-389-6661 or stopping by the Theatre & Dance Box Office in the lobby of the Performing Arts Center from 4-6 p.m., Monday-Friday, or by purchasing online at MSUTheatre.com

In *Twelfth Night*, Orsino, Duke of Illyria, loves the Countess Olivia, but she refuses him. Orsino sends his page Cesario to plead his case. Olivia falls

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Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance

Rikkie Recycle & the Eko-Kidz hits the road

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance has a long tradition of sending a children's theatre production on the road January-March each year. This year, *Rikkie Recycle and the Eko-Kidz* joins that history, following most recent productions of *Abiyoyo*, *The Rainbow Fish*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Rising Sun/Rising Moon* and *Brave Little Tailor*.

This year, like last, the production is an original one written, directed and booked by third-year MFA Directing candidate Nikki Swoboda. Booking the show during its 8- to 10-week schedule is part of her graduate assistantship in the public relations office. Original music is by undergraduate Robb Krueger, with costuming by MFA candidate Nicole Pullaro.



Nikki Swoboda

The show is cast early in the fall and open only to first-year students (freshmen or transfer students), offering them the chance to get fully involved in a department full of students who are better known to their faculty directors. As a reward for their hard work—and getting up for morning and afternoon performances on Tuesdays and Thursdays—these students earn spots on the department's annual spring break trip to New York City.



Rikkie Recycle cast members include (left to right): Larissa Schmitz as Rikkie, Maggie Mae Dale as Polly Pollution and Austin England as Eric Earthenstein.

As an added benefit, the students gain a group of close friends who will be there to help them during their remaining years in the department.

In total, the show will be performed nearly 40 times for close to 10,000 elementary school kids. Tickets to a 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, performance at Minnesota State Mankato are just \$5 each.

Dance program welcomes Andreas Guest Artists this semester



Fancy dancer Larry Yazzi returns to Mankato as an Andreas Guest Artist again in February.

The following dancers will visit Minnesota State Mankato during spring semester as Andreas Guest Artists. Their visits are made possible through the generous donation by the Andreas family.

All master classes will be in PAC 126, lower level dance studio. They are free and open to the public. See Julie Kerr-Berry for details or e-mail her at dance@mnsu.edu

1. Native American: Thursday, Feb. 11, Larry Yazzie (9:30-11:00)

2. East Indian: Tuesday, March 16, Raneer Ramaswamy (9:30-11:00)

3. Ghanaian: Tuesday, April 6, Francis Kofi (9:30-11:00)

4. Gullah: Tuesday, April 13, Karla Nweje (9:30-11:00)

5. North American/US.: Tuesday, April 27, Christopher Yaeger (9:30-11:00)

Anyone from the community wishing to attend should park in the pay lot near the Centennial Student Union and arrive a few minutes before class starts.

Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance

Fourteen competed for Irene Ryans

The History Boys



Aaron Alan & J. Alexander Coe



Noises Off



Mathias Becker & Joel Partyka



Mame



Maxwell Thao & Megan Volkman-Wilson



One Flea Spare



Jessica Dougherty

Into the Woods



Natalie Schleusner & Meredith Larson



Twelve Angry Men



Anthony DePoto & David Wasyluk



A Christmas Carol



Craig Daniel Stastny & Kim Steffen



One Flea Spare



Lolly Foy

KCACTF Minnesota State Mankato successful (from page 1)

Alan (junior BFA Musical Theatre, Austin), partnered by Lauren Parsons (1st Year MFA Musical Theatre, Waco, TX). A total of 14 Minnesota State Mankato students competed in the Ryan competition, the third highest number in the region and one of the top in the nation.

Megan Gredesky (3rd Year MFA Directing, Fargo, ND) took 1st place in Theatre Dramaturgy for the department's upcoming production of *Twelfth Night*. Jim Gangl (3rd Year MFA Lighting Design, Eau Claire, WI) took 1st place in the Region V Lighting Design competition for his work on *The Rocky Horror Show*. Costumes by faculty member David McCarl for *Into the Woods* were invited to participate in the annual Costume Parade. In addition, Mankato captured six commendations from KCACTF for previous work: Achievement in Ensemble Acting for *The History Boys* (directed by faculty member Paul J. Hustoles); Allen Shannon (MFA Scene Design 2009) for the Scenic Design for *Noises Off*; Achievement in Ensemble Acting for *One Flea Spare* (directed by

faculty member Heather Hamilton); David McCarl for the Costume Design for *Into the Woods*; Benjamin Inniger (3rd Year MFA Sound Design, Mankato), for the Sound Design of *Into the Woods*; and Matt A. Gilbertson (junior BFA Design/Technology, Mankato) for Stage Management for *A Christmas Carol*.

Jam Jar Sonnets, produced by Bethany Lutheran College of Mankato, was one of four fully mounted productions invited to Festival 42 and has several MSU affiliations including Co-Composer and Sound Designer Ben Inniger, Lighting Designer Jake Yenish (MFA Lighting Design, pending), Costume Designer Brittany Katuin (BA Theatre Generalist, 2008) and it was the brain child of Peter Bloedel (MA Theatre Generalist, 1997) who was the show's author, co-composer, director, scene designer and technical director.

During the past year faculty members Paul Finocchiaro, Heather Hamilton and Paul J. Hustoles have served as Region V Respondents. Faculty member John Paul responded to produc-

tions, served on the Region V Selection Committee and is the Region V Chair of Design/Technologies. Finocchiaro served as an Irene Ryan Preliminary Round Judge and workshops were presented during the weeklong festival by Paul, Hustoles, faculty member George Grubb, and advanced students Jerry Jay Cranford (3rd Year MFA Directing, Kansas City, MO) and Michael James (2nd Year MFA Director, Las Vegas, NV).

The Immediate Past Region V Chair and current MSU Andreas Guest Artist in Residence Tom Woldt, who is directing the upcoming *On the Razzle* (MFA Directing 1984), was awarded the KCACTF Gold Medallion for Excellence in Theatre.

Paul J. Hustoles is one of three members elected to serve on the National Selection Team for Festival 42 and will travel to all eight KCACTF regions of the country to help select those productions that will eventually perform at the national festival in April.

For more information about this, see the related article on Page 4 of this issue.

Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance

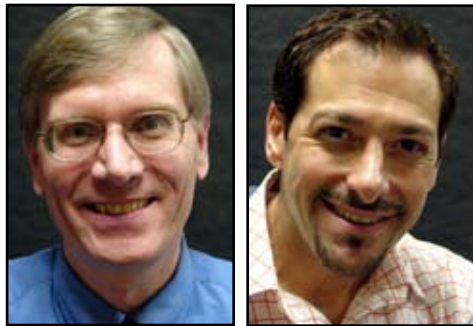
Hustoles is on the road for the Kennedy Center

Every year, the Kennedy Center selects three individuals to travel to eight geographical regions of the country from January through March, to “select” the plays and individuals who will be invited to the national Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in April. This trio is called the National Selection Team (NST).

One person is elected (by national and regional officers who specialize in playwriting) to represent all of the nation’s collegiate playwrights. Another is selected to represent the nation’s designers (by designers). The third is elected by the top leadership, current and past Region Chairs and National Officers. For 2010, Minnesota State Mankato Department Chair Paul J. Hustoles has been elected to fill that position.

Paul is a past Chair of Region V and was elected at that time to be the National Chair of Chairs. He was humbled, honored and thrilled to be elected as a National Selector for KCACTF Festival 42. Over 200,000 individuals presented more than 1,300 productions last year.

In order to accomplish this adventure, Paul finally applied to take a one-term sabbatical—his first. The regional festivals usually begin on a



During the spring semester sabbatical of Dr. Paul Hustoles (left), Paul Finocchiaro will serve as Acting Chair of the Department of Theatre & Dance.

“This is the opportunity of a lifetime and I am having a wonderful time on the road!”

— Paul Hustoles

Monday and last until the weekend. Paul has to get there by Tuesday and then is charged with seeing all plays invited to the regional festival. From those, the NST will select a very few to be performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

In addition, the NST can award “KCACTF Commendations” for outstanding work in any field (acting, directing, playwriting, design, etc.) and invite individuals from the festival to participate in the national gathering. He gets to spend Mondays back in

Mankato.

The process has already begun. Region III (including Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana) had their festival before classes began in the first week of January. Region II (including Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, Washington D.C., and parts of New York and Virginia) was next. Paul comes “home” to Region V (Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas) during the third week. And it goes on...

In addition to seeing plays, Paul will also present workshops and judge Irene Ryan scholarship nominees at the semifinals or finals level. He has directed the National Irene Ryan presentations at the Kennedy Center four times and last year served as the Master of Ceremonies for that event.

In his spare time this year, he is also serving as a national judge for the Mark Twain Comic Playwriting Award. One added bonus, Paul hopes to connect with Minnesota State Mankato Theatre alum all across the country and that has certainly been the case in the first three regions.

Paul reports, “This is the opportunity of a lifetime and I am having a wonderful time on the road!”

Twelfth Night being presented in court configuration (from page 1)

for Cesario. Viola’s twin, Sebastian, feared drowned, arrives in Illyria. Olivia mistakes Sebastian for his disguised sister, and he falls for Olivia.

Details of this delightfully complex comedic plot will be provided in the show’s playbill and at the concessions room before performances.

Minnesota State Mankato presented *Twelfth Night* in 1963 and 1985.

This show is directed by faculty member Heather E. Hamilton, with scenic design by third-year MFA Sound candidate Ben Inniger, costumes by David McCarl and lights by Steven Smith. Acting as Assistant Director and

Dramaturg is third-year MFA Directing candidate Megan Gredesky, who will direct *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* in March in the Studio. Poster design is by Jeff Smith.

The set design puts the players between to units of seating, much like the players on a basketball court. This gives the actors four spots from which to enter and exit the set.

The cast includes Kaija Pellinen as Viola, Stacy DeGoller as Olivia, Sara Pillatzki-Warzeha as Maria, Tim Gagne as Orsino, Joseph B. Crook as Sebastian, Mathias Becker as Malvolio, J. Alexander Coe as Feste, Joel Partyka as Sir Toby and Craig Stastny as Sir Andrew Aguecheek.