

Backstage Pass

September 2008

Minnesota State Mankato
Theatre & Dance



Theodore "Ted" Paul, Jr.

The end of an era

The Ted Paul Era of Minnesota State University, Mankato came officially to an end on July 14, 2008, when Ted passed away at Mankato House at the age of 92.

Friends, family, colleagues and students said good-bye to Ted with a memorial tribute in the theatre that bears his name on Saturday, Sept. 13. It was a celebration of the 35 years he spent at Minnesota State University and the thousands of students he touched through the more than 125 plays he directed here. Speakers included Micah J. L. Kronlokken, current recipient of the Ted & Katy Paul Theatre Scholarship, and Ken Rosen, who received the scholarship in 1993 and 1994.

For more information about Ted's life and examples of how he touched people, visit the department web site at MSUTheatre.com.

Online ticketing launched

Our switch to online ticketing, which involved changing the way we process ticket orders, has survived its first big test: season tickets. Our thanks to everyone for their patience during this change.

Please know that we're taking close notes on what did and didn't work and will continue to be in touch with our online ticketing provider to smooth out the problems. We welcome your comments on the process.

Perhaps the biggest advantage, in addition to being able to order tickets

at any time from your home, is that beginning Oct. 13 you'll be able to order tickets for ALL remaining shows in our Mainstage and Studio seasons. And please don't forget about our Dance Concerts.

One advantage of the online option is that you will be able to choose your own seat for the production. You'll be able to see the layout before choosing.

Please take advantage of the opportunity to order ahead and save yourself time at the window the evening or afternoon of the show.

Andreas Guest Artist Fiona Hui stars as Kim in *Miss Saigon*

The Department of Theatre & Dance is extremely pleased to bring Fiona Hui to you for our Mainstage Season opening *Miss Saigon*. She has been in residence since Sept. 14, working with our students who had been rehearsing for more than two weeks already.

Fiona Hui has continually found great successes with Classical Concert, Opera and Music Theatre, as well as professional Christian recordings with the company Music 2000. In the past 15 years, she performed as a soloist in North America, Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Japan, Beijing, Macau, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Upon graduation from the Chinese University of Hong Kong with a Bachelor's Degree majoring in music in 2001 and then from the New York University with a Master's Degree in vocal performance in 2005, she has found

success as the principal vocalist in major professional productions such as *Miss Saigon* as Kim (The Richard Perry Theater), and *Golden Mickey's* as Bebe (Hong Kong Disneyland, Storybook Theater).

Fiona serves as the church pianist in a Baptist church and has been seen in several Asian American Heritage and Chinese American organization performances in both New York and South Carolina. In 2008, New York Senator Martin Golden proudly presented her the Distinguished Citizen Award.

She is here as an Andreas Guest Artist. Fiona is a member of the American Actor's Equity Association.



Fiona Hui

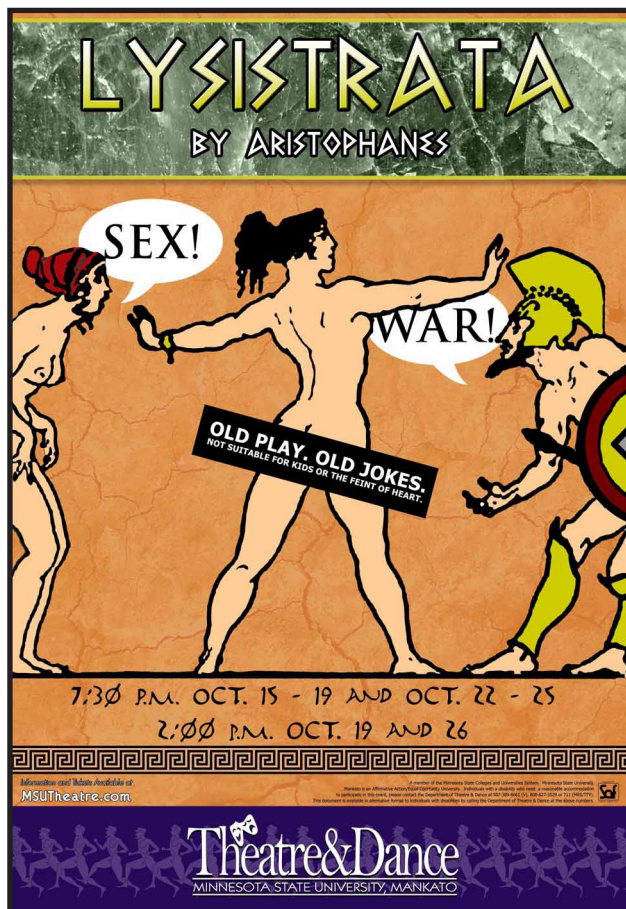
Remember Studio shows

In addition to our six Mainstage shows, don't forget about the variety of productions in our Studio season. This year we opened with *Cloud Tectonics*, Sept. 18-21, following that this semester with a musical production called *See What I Wanna See*, Nov. 20-23. They are directed by Megan Gredesky and Nikki Swoboda, respectively, and are also mostly student designed. They star the same students you see in Mainstage shows.

In the spring, two of our new MFA Directing students make their Minnesota State Mankato debuts. Jay Cranford directs the Jack Kirkland adaptation of Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road*, March 26-29, with Michael James bringing David Lindsay-Abaire's 2007 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Rabbit Hole* to life April 23-26.

Regular tickets for Studio shows are just \$9, \$8 for seniors and youth or groups of 15, and \$7 for current Minnesota State Mankato students. All performances are at 7:30 p.m. and are staged in the Andreas Theatre.

ABOUT *LYSISTRATA*: Our next Mainstage show deals frankly with subjects of a sexual nature. The play and jokes are old, but concerns like this are eternal.



Two Spend the Summer with Sondheim

By Claire Wellin and Mollie Fischer, BFA Musical Theatre

This summer, we decided to spread our “acting wings” and fly to Fairfield, Iowa, to participate in a brand new theatre company called Way Off Broadway. We were two of twenty interns from around the country participating in three musicals, including two original pieces in which we were able to work with the creators. The company, directed by Randy West, performed its shows at the Stephen Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts, a building that serves as a theatre as well as a civic center. The program was created to introduce young performers to working in a professional setting.

Days at the Sondheim Center included rehearsals for shows, workshops with guest artists and directors, and working on technical elements—including sets, lights and costumes. In addition to learning musical theatre skills, we also were introduced to other art forms, including martial arts, aerial silks and color guard.

The opening musical was *Open Heart*, which was written by Robby Benson, who also performed in the

work along with his wife, Karla DeVito, and friend Stan Brown. This was the first time it had been performed with a chorus, although the trio had performed it in New York previously.

The second musical was the ever-popular *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* by Andrew Lloyd Webber. This specific production showcased many different iconic choreography styles, using techniques developed by Tommy Tune, Jack Cole and Jerome Robbins. The closing musical was a world premier about the fictionalized life of Meredith Wilson called *Banjo Boy*. This was a brand new experience for both of us, and the rehearsal process was very different due to daily rewrites and changes. The writer/composer/lyricist, Randy Hobler, was with us for the duration of the project as well.

Summer away from MSU was an excellent way to introduce us to professional theatres outside of Minnesota and gave us a taste of how differently things can be run. We are grateful for our experience away but glad to be back doing theatre in Mankato, where our education has proven to be incredibly beneficial.

Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance

Bridge Project3 Concert

Moving Texts

7:30 P.M. Thursday & Friday
Dec. 4 & 5

And now offering a matinee

1:00 P.M. Saturday, Dec. 6

Visit
MSUDance.com



Featuring choreography by
Andreas Guest Artists
Cynthia Gutierrez-Garner
& Morgan Thorson

Dance Welcomes Guests

Morgan Thorson conceives and creates dances and movement-based projects with dancers, theater artists and designers as core collaborators. Dodging a trademark style, her ensemble and solo works address: the state of being in general and within the context of the theater or performance site; her own personal relationship to dance; and the perception and representation of the body. Often at the center of her inquiry is an interest in the tension between the physical limitations of the body, the expansive nature of the imagination, and the emotional current inside the movement. Theatrical timing—the visual and rhythmic dynamics in choreography and performance—are portals for entry into the work, as is embracing and breaking with “subjective” narrative. Each project—whether evening-length or a shorter piece—is developed and edited through its own physical process and formula. The audience’s gaze, and the nature and history of the performance site, are paramount considerations in its pro-

cess, presentation and performance. Detail, humor, critique and formal concerns emerge, allowing the work to broadcast a social commentary beyond the work itself.

Based in Minneapolis, her work has been presented by venues worldwide, including Jacob’s Pillow; the Walker Art Center and Southern Theater in Minneapolis; Links Hall in Chicago; PS 122 and The Kitchen in New York City; Performing Arts Group in Seoul, South Korea; LIP in London; and Link/Vostok in Yaroslavl, Russia. In 2009, she will premiere a new work co-commissioned by The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, DiverseWorks in Houston, and PS 122 in New York City.

Cynthia Gutierrez-Garner began her modern dance experience at Arizona State University in her hometown of



Morgan Thorson

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Dancing Shoes

Current students and alums of the Dance program had a busy summer:

Current Students

Nicole Curry, a senior, danced for Suzanne Wiltgen at the Minnesota Fringe Festival with the “Cast of Dancing Delights.” She took classes with the work study program at Zenon Dance School. Nicole also attended a few outdoor improvisational jams in the cities and started her senior dance project.

Senior **Dani Friedman** auditioned for Jolene Konkel and performed the piece *Upheld* on Sept. 19 and 20.

Jennifer James, a senior, also auditioned for Jolene Konkel and got into a jazz piece as well as an improv/partnering number that she performed Sept. 19 and 20. She also taught and choreographed a piece for Dance Express in Mankato where she works and teaches year round.

Kaitlin Johnson received a scholarship for Zenon School of

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As part of their residencies, Andreas Guest Artists teach classes and present events that are open to the public. Here, Morgan Thorson gives instruction in movement at one of the Dance classes.

In addition to having pieces they choreographed as part of the *Bridge Project3: Moving Texts* concert, each guest artist this semester will have an open rehearsal. Gutierrez-Garner will have hers at 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 14, in PA 126 (lower level dance studio), with Thorson's open rehearsal at 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21, in the Ted Paul Theatre.



Dance Guest Artists (from page 3)

Tempe, AZ. In 1995, she transferred to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and discovered her interest in choreography from an outstanding faculty including Erin Thompson, Dan Shapiro, Joanie Smith, Zoe Sealy and Danny Buraczkeski. Her choreography, which researches both contemporary modern and traditional American jazz, is highly musical and borrows from all aspects of art and life to create a unique dance experience enjoyed by dancers and non-dancers alike. Her work has been produced at numerous theaters in Minneapolis, MN (including the Southern Theater, the Fitzgerald theater, the Walker Art Center, the Illusion Theater, the O'Shaughnessey Theater and the Pantages Theater), several Arizona venues (including the Herberger Theater, the Orpheum Theater and the Scottsdale center for the Arts) and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

From 1998-2001, she served as the Choreographer in Residence for the Minnesota Dance Theater under the direction of Lise Houlton. Original works by Gutierrez-Garner have been commissioned by Maca-

laster College, Glendale Community College, Scottsdale Community College, Arizona State University, Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota State Mankato, the

St. Paul Conservatory for the Performing Arts and the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Gutierrez-Garner's work has seen support from organizations such as the Jerome Foundation, the Mcknight Foundation, the Walker Art Center, the Maricopa Community Colleges and the Arizona Commission on the Arts. She is a four-time winner of the Arizona Choreography Competition's Professional Division. She has taught for the faculties of the Arizona State University, Glendale Community College and Scottsdale Community College. She teaches techniques of both modern and jazz dance at Gustavus Adolphus College and the University of Minnesota dance program.



Cynthia Gutierrez-Garner

Dancing Shoes

(continued from page 3)

Dance and worked with artists Mathew Janczewski, Stephanie Harmon, Jennifer Glaws and Lisa Roubal. A sophomore, she also performed in the summer concert in a piece by Carrie Lande.

Senior **Sara Jump** was "Ethel Toffelmeier in *The Music Man* for Highland Summer Theatre.

Stephanie Narlock, Dance senior, went to the Bates Dance Festival in Maine. She worked with Colleen Thomas, Chris Aiken and Kim Konikow. The Dance senior also worked with Christopher Williams, a Bessie Award winner from New York.

Alumni

Bryan Gerber has been performing regularly at St. Croix Casino and Hotel with a band called the Capone All Stars. He's choreographed for two plays at North Hennepin Community College, as well as working for the University of Wisconsin-River Falls teaching Dance Improvisation and also choreographing two pieces there. "The Grief of Humanity" was performed at American College Dance Festival in the Informal Concert and Gerber performed in a piece he co-choreographed with Mari Kline called "Proximity." He performs with the Christopher Watson Dance Company and Kinetic Evolutions.

Janelle Morrison is a Dance and Music instructor for Quest Academy in St. Louis Park. It is a newly chartered school with a holistic approach to teaching. She is working toward her certification in yoga.

Jena Sandell danced in the Block E scholarship for Zenon School of Dance. In mid July, Sandell started teaching dance in Woodbury. She also choreographed a modern dance piece called "Harmonic Intersections" at the Walker Art Center for Choreographers Evening Night Out.