Greetings from the University of Wyoming Department of Theatre and Dance! We hope this issue of Center Stage finds you healthy and happy and enjoying the holiday season.

We hit the ground running this fall and have scarcely had a breath in between shows! The season opened in October with Collected Dances, 1, which featured original works by Mel Claridge, Margaret Wilson, and new faculty member Vincent Brosseau. The concert opened with Brosseau’s contemporary pointe ballet “Li-Ba.” Brosseau also choreographed “Whisper,” a modern dance set to Rachmaninoff, and “Overtwore,” a bitter old miser who is given a chance for redemption on Christmas Eve played to a sold out house and fabulous audience response. And this, in large part, thanks to the outstanding contribution of beloved UW alumnus Peter K. Simpson, who played the cantankerous Scrooge with a sly wit and great aplomb. The unique challenges for the actors and the play was one of only four productions to be invited to the regional level is quite special.”

Next came Frequency 98.6, an original play by senior Dana Formby and staged and directed by Leigh Selting. This Vietnam-era, coming-of-age story sold out three weeks before opening in November. The production has since gone on to be invited to the 2006 KCACTF Region VII Festival and the play is a finalist for the prestigious David Mark Cohen Award (see Frequency 98.6 Selected Production for Region VII KCACTF). Last, but certainly not least, for the first time we staged Charles Dickens’ yuletide classic, A Christmas Carol. Faithfully adapted and directed by Wolf J. Sherrell, Dickens’ magical and haunting tale of a bitter old miser who is given a chance for redemption on Christmas Eve played to stark, athletic modern trio for women featuring music by Arvo Pärt. Mel Claridge contributed to the production, “Home” a vibrant, fluid modern dance for ten women, and “Passion,” a strong, driving, percussive dance with a hot, Latin flavor.

As we head into the new year, we look forward to an exciting spring production season ( Beggar’s Opera: Collected Dances, II; and Women of Lockerbie), KCACTF, and ACDFA, which we are pleased to host this year (see UW to Host 2006 NW ACDFA Conference). We wish you all the best and can’t thank you enough for your support of our programs! Drop us a line or stop by any time — we would love to see you!

Student Award Winners Announced

Each spring at DramProm, the “Oscars” for UW Theatre & Dance, our department gives out acting, technical, and dance awards. The awards, most of which are sponsored by private donations from individuals and foundations, provide recognition and much needed financial assistance to our most outstanding students. Winners for 2005 include:

- The Jack Oakie Award for Comedy — Stephanie Lovell
- Jeff Lee Acting Award — Brandon Taylor
- June S. Lee Dance Award — Callie Snuteit
- Peter Koi Simpson Award — John Byron Hill
- Cocoa Kleppinger Scholarship — Thomas Stroppel

Congratulations to each of our winners and special thanks to those patrons who make these awards possible:

- Jack Oakie Foundation
- Jeff and June S. Lee
- Pete Simpson and family
- Kent and Nicko Kleppinger

This production is a wonderful mix of faculty design and mentoring, coupled with student designs in lighting and sound. To have our work recognized at the regional level is quite special.”

Selting’s production of this Vietnam-era, coming-of-age story features a strong cast and a lively radio chorus that provides commentary on the action. “Dana’s script provided some very unique challenges for the actors and me,” said Selting. “They’ve done a nice job of patiently working through changes, rewrites, and so on. It’s a sign of the maturity and talent of our acting program here at UW, as well as the quality of our young playwrights,” he added.

Frequency 98.6 will be performed February 25 at the Region VII KCACTF hosted by Columbia Basin College in Pasco, Washington. The play will compete with the three other invited productions for the chance to go on to the KCACTF National Festival in April in Washington, D.C.

Other Region VII KCACTF invited productions include Uttermost: The Musical, Bellevue Community College; Bay Gets Girl, University of Idaho; and Waiting for Godot, Colorado State University.

Formby’s play is also a Finalist for the prestigious David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award, which promotes the writing and production of new plays. Formby’s accomplishment is especially remarkable considering that the competition is open to professional playwrights and professors as well as students.

A special benefit performance of Frequency 98.6, which was sold out during its regular run, will be given February 12 at 1:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Studio Theatre. A donation of $10 is suggested. Proceeds will be used to defray the cost of taking the production to the regional festival.
Brodersen Family Excellence Fund Established for Students

Evelyn and Bryan Brodersen have been unassuming leaders in the Lara-mie community for many years. So it wasn’t surprising when the couple quietly took the initiative to embark on a new endeavor — establishing the Brodersen Family Excellence Fund for all three segments of the Fine Arts: Music, Art, and Theatre & Dance.

The Fund will provide scholarship monies to each department, plus at-tend to provide additional funds to assist with related student activities. The Brodersen Family decided to assist Fine Arts students because “little fund-ing is available to them.”

The Loleete J. Brodersen Scholarship will be offered annually to deserving students in each of the Fine Arts departments. The Brodersens named the scholarships in honor of Bryan’s mother, Loleete, who was a great lover and patron of all the arts.

“My mother, Loleete, never had much chance to experience the arts as a young person growing up in rural Oklahoma,” said Bryan. “Her dad left when she was very young, and she lived with her grandmother, who already had 12 children of her own to care for, while her own mother worked. They made do,” he said.

Loleete enjoyed living with her large adopted family, and even learned to play the piano from her aunt during this time. “My mom was just one of those people who was really classy in very difficult situa-tions,” Bryan said. “She may have come from a harsh, very poor background in southern Okla-homa, but she treasured what art, music, and theatre and dance could do for a person’s character,” he added.

By the time the Depression hit, Loleete was a young adult and artistic pursuits still had to remain on the back burner.

“The Depression changed people,” said Bryan. “People used to sit around and entertain one another & someone always played an instru-ment or sang. But then came radio and TV. People stopped being as creative.”

After high school and secretarial school, Loleete married Charles E. Brodersen and began raising a family. When the family was trans-ferred to Washington, D.C., in 1944, Loleete finally had the chance to explore more cultural pursuits.

“My mother loved all the museums and art galleries in D.C.,” noted Bryan. “She attended all kinds of events and took art classes. She became a painter later in life — we still have her easel.”

Loleete thought a sense of culture and a feeling of personal accomplish-ment were missing from many people’s lives. She always assembled her children to never forget how fortunate they were to live in a country where they were free to challenge themselves.

“Culture and education were basi-cally synonymous to my mother,” ob-served Bryan. “The main idea behind these scholarships is to meet the need for funding, but we also want to give kids a chance to explore their culture and creative abilities,” he said.

In line with that goal, the Brodersens also hope that this scholarship endow-ment will help to stimulate interest in and support of art with more of a Western flavor.”

“Evelyn and I really love the West and the liveliness of Western art,” said Bryan. “I like to see that cross-section of the American West re-sounding in the arts.”

 UW Dance Alums Make the Connection

Registered Dance/Movement Thera-pist — his current position as an Early Children’s Mental Health Clinician is also with that organization. Ty spends his days, alongside counselors, clinical social workers, and traditional therapists, working from a dynamic, body-oriented framework that incorporates both his passion for dance and love of psychol-ogy. Ty loves that his work employs techniques from all the Creative Arts Therapies… I have my hands in the expressive process every day utilizing the day-to-day operations of the company.”

Betsy says that the best thing about her work is the incredible experience she is getting by doing many different tasks and projects; she is learning how to in-teract in a major ballet company — such as keeping donors, staff, and board members happy — all the while staying true to the art form and mission.

Despite major life changes, Master’s degrees, and large geographical distances, these two old friends haven’t let anything keep them from staying in touch.

“Ty is one of the best people I know,” said Betsy. “We were there for each other through all of life’s challenges for many years and still are to this day. We have a bond artistically…we love each other too much to let distance get in the way!”

Betsy’s friendship has impacted my life enormously,” observed Ty. “The support, guidance, and mutual love and respect we have given each other through the years has truly been a cen-tral power-source for me as an indi-vidual…we’ve agonized together over final exams, apprenticed and consolied one another’s blisters (literal and figurative), celebrated in one another’s accomplish-ments, mourned the bitter losses, and have continued to influence each other artistically and professionally,” he added.

Both Betsy and Ty say they enjoy working with children and want to stay involved in the dance world. And both would love to start a joint dance venture together given the opportunity.

“Betsy and I have dreamed of start-ing a professional venture together in the future,” said Ty. “She is one of very few people I trust on every level from personal to professional – we make a dynamic team. I can only hope that in another five years we can report on develop-ments.”

In the meantime, these two boon companions will just have to settle for their first face-to-face reunion in three years — they’ll meet up again to cele-brate Betsy’s marriage this December.

Best buds Betsy Moon and Ty Tedmon-Jones.

“Betsy’s friendship has impacted my life enormously,” observed Ty. “The support, guidance, and mutual love and respect we have given each other through the years has truly been a central power-source for me as an individual…we’ve agonized together over final exams, apprenticed and consolied one another’s blisters (literal and figurative), celebrated in one another’s accomplishments, mourned the bitter losses, and have continued to influence each other artistically and professionally,” he added.

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Faculty Spotlight

William Missouri Downs will be honored in February by Gov. Dave Freudenthal and state leaders with a 2005 Governor’s Arts Award. This prestigious award acknowledges the recipient’s extraordinary contributions to the arts in Wyoming. The Governor’s Arts Awards provide a forum for Wyomingers who dedicate their time, passion, and financial support to Wyoming’s cultural life, as well as to bring the arts to their community. Mr. Downs is also a former director of the Denver Center Theatre Company and a photojournalist who redesigned and expanded the photos from UW productions direct from Poland. There are two versions—Experience The Art of Theatre (a concise edition) and The Art of Theatre: Then and Now (with expanded chapters on theatre history). The book includes almost 200 photos, eight timelines and 30 sidebars.

Bill and Lou Anne also had to please sixty-five outside reviewers.

Many other UW professors contributed to these books, including Larry Harlett, Mike Earl, and Lee Hodgson, who supplied photos of their designs. The pages also include photos from UW productions directed by Rebecca Hilliker, Leigh Setling, and Wolf Sherrill and a photo production layout by Don Turner. Both books were co-authored by UW alumni Erik Ramsey (Acetylene), who is now co-head of playwriting at the University of Ohio.

Also, this year, Bill finished Naked Playwriting, a new playwriting book published by Silman/James. Naked Playwriting was co-written by Hollywood screenwriter Robin Russian (On Deadly Ground) and contains a forward by Broadway playwright Milan Stitt (The Runner Stumbles). Naked Playwriting has received great reviews. Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright Charles Smith said “If you want to know anything about the process of contemporary playwriting in America, this is the book for you.” Kate Snodgrass, the artistic Director of Boston Playwright’s Theatre called it, “thorough” and “thoroughly entertaining.” You can find it at bookstores nation wide or at Amazon.com.

To top it off, Bill’s screenwriting book Screenplay: Writing the Picture, published by Silman/James in 2003, has been translated by Wojciech Marzec and published in Poland. Jac Napiątka Scenariusz Filmowy is now one of the top selling screenwriting books in Warsaw and has received great reviews from top Polish directors.

Bill and Lou Anne say it’ll be a while until they write another book — their fingers are tired!

Faculty Spotlight (Cont.)

Assistant Professor Margaret Wilson returned to UW Theatre & Dance after a two-year leave at Texas Woman’s University to pursue a Ph.D. in Dance. While Margaret is ABG (not all but dead…all but dissertation), she is delighted to be back in UW teaching modern, Pilates, and vertical dance. Margaret choreographed for COLLECTED DANCES. I and will offer two workshops for the spring concert, COLLECTED DANCES. II. Along with Neil Humphrey, she will present vertical dance at Vedauwoo in July and will be co-directing the Snowy Range Summer Dance Festival with new faculty member Vincent Bosseau.

Margaret’s Ph.D. research focuses on how dancers make meaning of kinesthetic information in their dancing. Her biomechanics work has allowed her to study specific dance movements using motion analysis technology, most recently, the interaction of the pelvis and gesture leg in grand rond de jambe en l’air. She published an article in the Journal of Dance Medicine & Science last spring on this research and will submit an article on the teaching of grand rond de jambe en l’air to the Journal of Dance Education. This past fall, Margaret presented her research at the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS) in Stockholm, Sweden. Margaret is the chair-elect for the Dance Kinesiology Teachers, a subgroup of the IADMS organization.

Lou Anne Wright was hired as dialect coach and actor for the world premiere of WITNESSES at the Arvada Center. The play, which dealt with the plight of the contemporary Yupik people in Alaska, was produced by the Playwright’s Theatre of the University of Washington. She served as dialect coach for UW’s A CHRISTMAS CAROL, starring Pete Simpson, and was hired as dialect consultant for MASTER HAROLD...AND THE BOYS at the Bas Bleu Theatre in Ft. Collins, and as speech consultant for the upcoming production of THE BACCHAE at Cooper College.
In support of the UW Dept. of Theatre & Dance, enclosed is my gift of:

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