



Center Stage

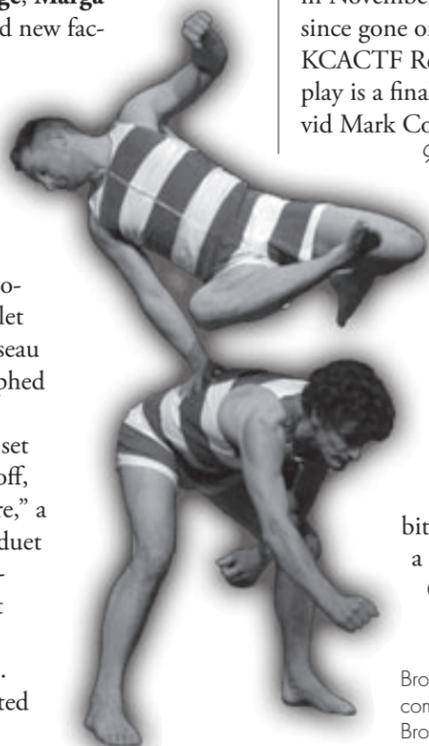
Newsletter of the UW Department of Theatre & Dance

Fall 2005

New Challenges, New Successes

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 breather in between shows! The season opened in October with *Collected Dances, I*, which featured original works by **Mel Claridge**, **Margaret Wilson**, and new faculty member **Vincent Brosseau**. The concert opened with Brosseau's contemporary pointe ballet "Là-Bas." Brosseau also choreographed "Whisper," a modern dance set to Rachmaninoff, and "Overtwore," a comedic male duet about competition. Margaret Wilson, back from her Ph.D. studies, presented "Valence," a



stark, athletic modern trio for women featuring music by Arvo Pärt. Mel Claridge contributed two pieces, "Home" a vibrant, fluid modern dance for ten women, and "Passion," a strong, driving, percussive dance with a hot, Latin flavor.

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. Sherrill**, Dickens' magical and haunting tale of a bitter old miser who is given a chance for redemption on Christmas Eve played to

Broc Timmerman leaps over the competition, Neil Humphrey, in Brosseau's "Overtwore."

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sold-out houses 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 design elements of the production were also noteworthy, from **Lee Hodgson's** beautiful period costumes to new faculty member **Casey Kearns'** spare and evocative set (replete with technically-demanding trap doors), and **Larry Hazlett's** elegant lighting design.

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 ACDEFA, which we are pleased to host this year (see UW to Host 2006 NW ACFDA 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!

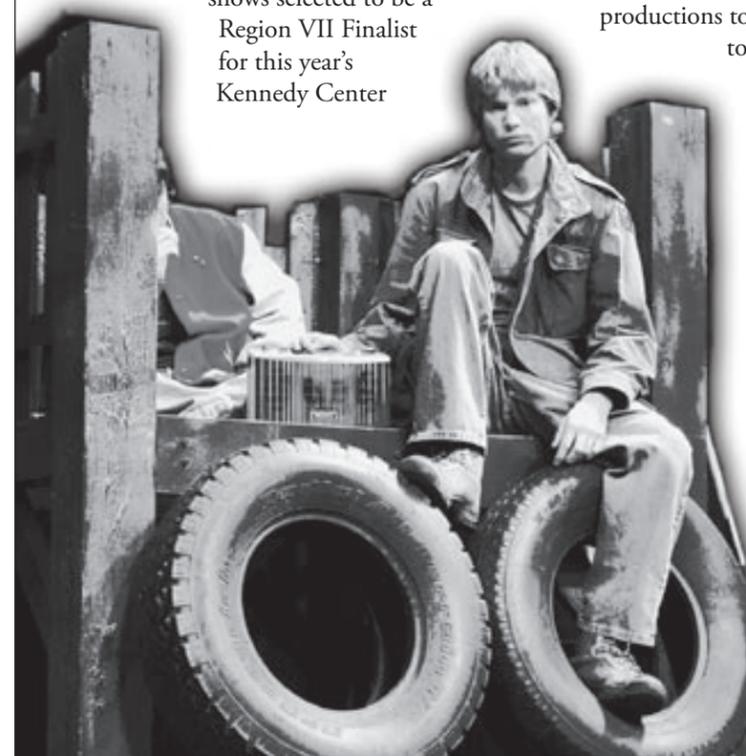
Frequency 98.6 Selected Production for Region VII KCACTF

Student's Play Also Finalist for David Mark Cohen Playwriting Award

UW Theatre & Dance's premiere production of an original full-length play was one of only four shows selected to be a Region VII Finalist for this year's Kennedy Center

American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF).

Frequency 98.6, written by UW student Dana Formby of Cheyenne and staged and directed by professor Leigh Selting, beat out nearly 80 other productions to be invited to the regional festival.



"It's a wonderful testament to the hard work of the students and the UW Theatre and Dance program on the whole," said Selting.

Thomas Stroppel (right) and Jake Staley (hidden) in *Frequency 98.6*.

"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 *Urinetown: The Musical*, Bellevue Community College; *Boy 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.

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 Stutheit*
- **Peter Koi Simpson Award** — *John Byron Hill*
- **Coco 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**

Brodersen Family Excellence Fund Established for Students

Evelyn and Bryan Brodersen have been unassuming leaders in the Laramie community for many years. So it wasn't surprising when the couple quietly took the initiative to embark



Bryan and Evelyn Brodersen

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 attempt to provide additional funds to assist with related student activities. The Brodersen Family decided to assist Fine Arts students because "little funding is available to them."

The Loleete J. Brodersen Scholarships 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 situations," Bryan said. "She may have come from a harsh, very poor background in southern Oklahoma, 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 instrument 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 accomplishment were missing from many people's lives. She always admonished 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 basically synonymous to my mother," observed 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 endowment 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 resounding in the arts."



Charles and Loleete Brodersen.
Photo courtesy Brodersen Family.

UW Dance Alums Make the Connection

UW Dance alums **Betsy Moon** ('00) and **Ty Tedmon-Jones** ('02) were best chums during their undergraduate years. From their freshman year on, both Dance majors studied, rehearsed in the studio, and performed constantly together, in what Ty terms "the powerful second-birth of university life." Already "dear friends and confidantes," the two say they became even closer while they worked for three summers at the Snowy Range Dance Festival as Assistant Directors under the direction of Dr. Pate Tate.

"One of the reasons our bond is so strong is because of how much time we spent together dancing and working with the festival," said Betsy.

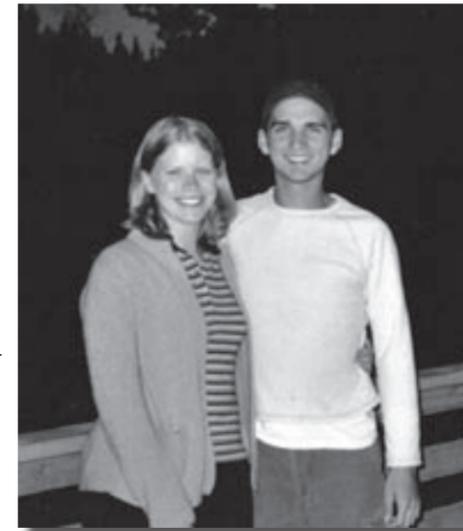
"Our love and respect for each other was only deepened as we worked side by side at an often grueling pace and schedule," observed Ty.

Their experiences at Snowy Range proved to be a launching point for the dancers, both personally and professionally. While working at the festival the summer after her graduation (2000), Betsy met Jay Franke, who convinced her to move to Chicago to teach dance and perform. While Betsy returned two more years to the summer festival, even dancing as an apprentice with Contemporary Dance Wyoming in Jackson Hole one year, her ties to the Windy City were solidified. Betsy eventually attended graduate school in Arts Management at Columbia College in Chicago, and also worked for a small theatre company there, ShawChicago.

Meanwhile, Ty finished up his own dual undergraduate degree in Art and Theater and Dance. During he and Betsy's final stint as Assistant Directors at Snowy Range in 2002, as Betsy was looking into furthering her studies, Ty also decided to go on to graduate school in Dance/Movement Therapy at Antioch, New Hampshire.

After completing his Master's training and an internship with a non-profit, community mental health organization in southeastern Vermont, Ty is now a

Registered Dance/Movement Therapist — 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 psychology. 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



Best buds Betsy Moon and Ty Tedmon-Jones.

arts to facilitate change in those I work with," work that he says is "endlessly enriching, fun, and exhausting."

Betsy has also moved on professionally. Through her years of professional experience, education in Arts Management, and with the recommendation of her good friend, Cameron Basden, Associate Artistic Director of The Joffrey Ballet (whom Betsy met at Snowy Range one summer), Betsy has secured a position with The Joffrey Ballet as an executive assistant/staff accountant in the Finance Department.

"I decided to work for The Joffrey because I love dance and the power it has to help people see life in different ways," said Betsy. "I wanted to assist in furthering the field by taking part in 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 interact 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 central power-source for me as an individual...we've agonized together over final exams, appraised and consoled 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.

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 starting 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 developments."

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 celebrate Betsy's marriage this December.

No More Books!

Downs & Wright Publish New Playwriting Textbook

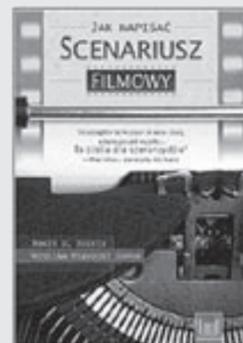
It took five drafts, over a million words, and four and a half years of constant writing, but **William Missouri Downs** and **Lou Anne Wright** have finished their new Introduction to Theatre book published by Wadsworth. There are two versions - *Experiencing The Art of Theatre* (a

concise edition) and *The Art of Theatre: Then and Now* (with expanded chapters on theatre history). The books include 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 Hazlett, Mike Earl, and Lee Hodgson, who supplied photos of their designs. The pages also include photos from UW productions directed by Rebecca Hilliker, Leigh Selting, 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 Russin (*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



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 Napisa 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!

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.

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 to recognize those who dedicate their time, passion, and financial support to Wyoming's cultural life, as well as to the importance of the arts in daily life. Bill also received an Extraordinary Merit in Research Award from the College of A&S. Congratulations to Bill!

Billie K. Gross designed costumes in April/May for DEATH OF A SALESMAN at the Off Square Theatre in Jackson. The show got good reviews and the company was a great bunch to work with. She then went to Skagway, AK, to do costume work for the Klondike Gold Dredge and the Days of '98 Show.

Casey Kearns served as technical director for the Rocky Mountain School of Dance's production of THE NUTCRACKER this December in Cody.

Marsha Knight received an extraordinary Merit in Teaching Award from the College of A&S. She's hard at work on 2006 NW ACDFA, which UW will host in February.

Leigh Selting was cast in the role of Arthur (and contracted to understudy the role of Morris) in the Equity production of THE HEIRESS in Denver, CO, at The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities. Previews begin Jan. 27th, 2006, and the show runs for a month. As a director, Leigh's production of FREQUENCY 98.6, an original student-written, full-length play, was one of only four plays selected to be presented at the Region VII Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Pasco, WA, in Feb. 2006. Leigh hopes to return to The New Harmony Project in Indiana, this May/June as an actor, where he will continue to assist in developing new plays and workshop productions with the company.

(Continued on p. 6)

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 ABD (not all but dead...all but dissertation), she is delighted to be back at UW teaching modern, Pilates, and vertical dance. Margaret choreographed for COLLECTED DANCES, I and will offer two works 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 Brosseau.

Margaret's Ph.D. research focuses on how dancers make meaning of kinesiologic 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 deals with the plight of the contemporary Yupik people in Alaska, was produced by the Playwright's Showcase of the Western Region. 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 Casper College.

UW to Host 2006 NW ACDFA Conference

Exciting news! UW Theatre & Dance is pleased to host the 2006 Northwest Conference of the **American College Dance Festival (ACDFA)** on **March 8-11, 2006**. The festival will include four days of exciting events beginning with the welcoming performance by **Alvin Ailey II** on Wednesday night, March 8. Four sessions of master classes will be offered each day (including Ailey classes on Thursday, March 9), followed by Adjudication Concerts on Thursday and Friday nights, an Informal concert, panel discussions, and the Gala Concert Saturday night.

We are thrilled with the adjudicators who will work very hard during the festival! Claire Porter, Elizabeth Zimmer, and Bill Evans will make a rich and diverse adjudication team. They are contributing significantly to the festival beyond their roles in adjudication and feedback. Claire will present *Namely Muscles* Thursday March 9th for all festival participants, followed by an adjudicator information and discussion session. Claire, Bill, and Elizabeth will each hold additional classes and discussions. And this is a National Festival year! Outstanding dances selected at Saturday's Gala Concert will represent our region at the National Festival May 16-18, 2006 hosted by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The festival will also present an exciting offering of music throughout, with emphasis on extraordinary instruments/sounds during and beyond class sessions. Jesse Manno of CU Boulder will coordinate events involving visiting musicians. The roster of musicians is exciting, and the festival should prove to be a fine and memorable event highlighted by their presence. If you have questions about the 2006 NW ACDFA, the festival registration or schedule, or ticketed events, please see the conference website at www.nwacdfa2006.com or contact Marsha Knight at mfnknight@uwyo.edu or 307 766-2160.



ALUMNI NEWS NOW ONLINE!

The updated UW Theatre & Dance website launched recently and has several new features for alumni.

Last fall, with the first edition of *Center Stage*, we began publishing departmental news separately from *Alumni News*, with the intention of posting it online. You can find our current edition of *Alumni News* at www.uwyo.edu/th&cd/alumni. From there, you can also link to the online

version of *Center Stage*, the Alumni News archives, or submit a class note or update your contact information.

As always, we would love to hear from you. Send a note to kirisk@uwyo.edu with "Alumni News" in the subject line or to:

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Dept. of Theatre & Dance
Dept. 3951, 1000 E. University Ave.
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Thank You to 2005-2006 Friends of Theatre and Dance!

We'd like to say a sincere "Thank you!" to all our faithful supporters in the 2005-2006 *Friends of Theatre & Dance*. *Your gifts have been instrumental in supporting and growing our award-winning programs!* (We apologize for any errors.)

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