2006 off to a great start!

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ummer is bursting out all over here in Laramie, thanks to welcome wet snows and spring and summer rains! We at the University of Wyoming Department of Theatre and Dance hope this issue of Center Stage finds you well and enjoying these warmer days while gearing up for fall.

This spring has been one of the busiest in recent memory. The semester kicked off in January with a staged reading and world premiere of _Un-American Activities_, written by Keith Hull, former English department head, and directed by William Missouri Downs and Lou Anne Wright. Based on original transcripts from the House Committee on _Un-American Activities_, the play interwove real testimonies of celebrities with the fictional story of Hollywood starlet who is preparing to testify. The production featured freshman and sophomore performers and also served as a benefit for UW Playwrights.

John Gay’s landmark ballad opera, _The Beggar’s Opera_, followed in February. Directed by music faculty Dr. Larry Hensel, this ground-breaking political and social satire set in the seedy London underworld of 1720 played to full houses.

Right after the opera’s closing, the department scrambled to take _Instability_ 98.6, student Dana Formby’s original Vietnam-era, coming-of-age play to the regional Kennedy Center/ American College Theatre Festival in Pasco, Wa. While the production did not go on to the national KC/ACF in April, the play was a Finalist for the prestigious David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award.

Once again, our acting, directing, playwriting, and design students took top honors at the Region VII KC/ACF, with several going on to national competition (see UW Theatre Students Claim Top Honors At 2006 Regional Festival, p. 4).

We had barely unpacked the truck from KC/ACF when it was time to tech the well-received _Collected Dances, II_, which opened in early March. The concert featured works by UW dance faculty Mel Claridge, Margaret Wilson, Marsha Knight, and Vincent Brosseau, with highly inventive ballet, modern, jazz, swing, and vertical dance pieces.

Less than a week later, UW Theatre & Dance students, faculty, and staff were busy hosting the 2006 Northwest Conference of the American College Dance Festival (ACDFA), under the able direction of Marsha Knight. The festival, which had more than 425 participants, included four days of exciting events, with the welcoming performance by Alvin Alley II, four sessions of master classes each day, Adjudication Concerts, an Informal concert, panel discussions, and the final Gala Concert.

Marsha Knight’s original ballet, _Of A Mind_, which was presented at the Northwest ACDFA, was selected for performance at the Gala Concert and also for performance at the national festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in May (see article below).

Our spring season ended in late April with a new play by Deborah Brevort, _The Women of Lockerbie_. Directed by Rebecca Hilliker, this lyrical drama charted the journey of an inconsolable couple looking for closure and their dead son’s remains in Lockerbie on the seventh anniversary of the crash. The play was written and staged in the form of a Greek tragedy, providing a great opportunity to work in that style for our acting students.

Summer theatre is in full swing (see Snowy Range Summer Theatre & Dance Festival Continues to Grow, p. 3) and the 2006-2007 academic performance season is almost upon us. We look forward to keeping you up-to-date on activities as we continue to make UW one of the best undergraduate theatre and dance programs in the country!

Please continue to tell us about your whereabouts and goings on as well — we are in the process of updating the online Alumni News section of the UW Theatre and Dance website that was launched last fall, and will have current news up soon. All the best and feel free to stop by anytime to visit.

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**Contemporary Ballet Selected for Performance at the Kennedy Center**

_Contemporary Ballet Selected for Performance at the Kennedy Center_
**Former Professor Dr. Patricia Tate Passes Away in Florida**

Former Professor Dr. Patricia Tate passed away in Florida on July 31, 2006, while on vacation at her Ft. Lauderdale residence.

Dr. Patricia Tate was a longtime member of the faculty at UW, where she held a longstanding record of excellence in research and teaching. She was a beloved member of the community and will be greatly missed.

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**Snowy Range Summer Theatre & Dance Festival**

The 2006 Snowy Range Summer Theatre and Dance Festival, an outgrowth of UW’s longstanding summer theatre program and annual dance festival, was so outstanding in last year’s productions. It was a terrific drama about genius and madness. Di rected by Wolf J. Sherrill, the event was just another reason for our students, she said.

The Theatre and Dance Festival in 1999 to provide the highest level of professional training for young dancers in Wyoming and surrounding states. In 1999, Tate received the Wyoming Governor’s Arts Award.

The Tate Patric Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established to honor Pat’s memory and provide assistance to students attending the Snowy Range Dance Festival. If you would like to support this fund, please send donations to the UW Foundation using the return slip in this newsletter.

The 2006 Snowy Range Summer Theatre and Dance Festival, an outgrowth of UW’s longstanding summer theatre program and annual dance festival, is just drawing to a close and has included an exciting and diverse performance season with many guest artists.

Serving as artistic director for the theatre portion of the festival was Leigh Setling, while Margaret Wilson and Vincent Brosseau led the dance portion.

“Moving to a festival format last year was a really positive step for us,” said department head and professor, Rebecca Hilliker. “It allowed us not only to provide a whole season’s worth of cultural offerings, but also to attract more professional performers and designers, which has been a great experience for our students,” she said.

The season opened with **Headon: A View from the Light Booth**. Wolf J. Sherrill and Guiseppe Petrucci, an adventure fantasy directed by Cecilia Aragon, and live music by Thomas Pfenenbauer, Rod Garnett, and Kevin Hart.

From July 19-29, the dance festival and concert series brought dozens of students to campus for 11 days of immersion in dance and studies with professional faculty and performers.

The free Student Showcase Concert on July 27 featured festival participants, while the festival resident company Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago gave a solo concert on July 28. The Dance Festival Gala Concert on July 29 features guest artists from local and area companies.

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**University of Wyoming Students Claim Top Honors at Regional Festival**

University of Wyoming Department of Theatre and Dance faculty and students received top honors at the Region VII Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) and Northwest Drama Conference (NWDC) held in Pasco, Washington this past spring.

UW actors swept the KCACTF Region VII Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship competition, picking up their ninth regional win. Senior Stephanie Lovell, Enfield, CT, is one of two Region VII Irene Ryan winners who will go on to compete at the national festival in April at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Other Irene Ryan awards went to sophomore Andrew Franks-Ongoy, Helena, MT, who was selected as second alternate and won the Mark Twain Comedy Award; junior Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako, Laramie, WY, who won the Musical Theatre Award; and junior Katie Herbert, Granby, CO, who won the Best Partner award.

Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako also won a full-tuition scholarship to attend the 2006 TVI Summer Professional Acting Program in London, New York, or Los Angeles. Nako will train at the TVI Actors Studio with industry professionals including producers, directors, talent agents, casting directors, and faculty members from prominent theatre schools across the country.

The production of **Frequency** ran June 27-July 1.

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**Alumni Focus: James Weber, BTD, ‘93**

We caught up with alumnus James (Jim) Weber during the summer season while he was performing in a new play by senior Leigh Selting, this hilarious parody ran July 11-15 and featured John Mayer and UW alumns Jimmie Galates and Garrett Neergaard.

Vertical Dance, Children’s Theatre, and Music at Veduwann ran July 14-16, during Shakespeare (Abridged) and provided a segue into the dance festival and concert series. The event featured vertical dance in the natural rock formations at Veduwann, choreographed by Margaret Wilson and Neil Humphrey; the children’s show Alicia in Wonder Tierra, an adventure fantasy directed by Cecilia Aragon, and live music by Thomas Pfenenbauer, Rod Garnett, and Kevin Hart. From July 19-29, the dance festival and concert series brought dozens of students to campus for 11 days of immersion in dance and studies with professional faculty and performers.

The free Student Showcase Concert on July 27 featured festival participants, while the festival resident company Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago gave a solo concert on July 28. The Dance Festival Gala Concert on July 29 features guest artists from local and area companies.

It’s exciting to see how our summer program is growing and expanding,” noted Hilliker. “We had a great run last year and were thrilled with the performers and designers who took part in this year’s productions. It was a terrific season and we hope audiences really enjoyed it,” she added.

UW Theatre & Dance would like to thank everyone who has given to our summer programs and helped them to grow. We appreciate your support!”

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**Jim Weber at George Washington in a film series for the Mount Vernon museum.**

Jim Weber as George Washington in a film series playing at the Mount Vernon museum. We caught up with alumnus James (Jim) Weber during the summer season while he was performing in a new play by senior Leigh Selting, this hilarious parody ran July 11-15 and featured John Mayer and UW alumns Jimmie Galates and Garrett Neergaard.

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Jim is an associate member of Transport Group, a New York theater company founded by fellow University of Virginia graduate students. Since Transport Group’s inception, it has received five Drama Desk Award Nominations, most recently is The Audience, a new musical that used the talents of over 30 New York playwrights, composers and lyricists and 66 actors to create the journey of one vibrant group of theatergoers who venture to a Broadway theatre one rainy Saturday night to see a new contemporary American musical.

Jim also works full time with Loose ly Translated Productions, his film and video production company that has produced content for AOL, Sports Illustrated, Entertainment Weekly, American Express, Teen People, Time Magazine, Loses Theaters, Travel & Leisure Magazine, and an original award-winning documentary (Farang Bo) for the Trio Network.

Loosely Translated Productions is currently working on “Temp’s,” a half-hour comedy pilot about the travails of two temp workers in New York City, starring Devin Sanchez (BFA ’94). Jim serves as one of the Executive Producers and will also be the Director of Photography on the project.

If you’re planning a trip to the Big Apple, Jim invites you to contact him at: james@looselytranslated.com.
Also leaving us this spring is General Macarthur Hambrick, who has served with the Snowy Range Dance Festival, taught dance classes in our program, occasionally performed, and, for the last several years, taken over leadership of Centennial Singers. General leaves us to pursue his own professional performance opportunities. We wish him the best and hope to see him back at UW before too much time passes.

Billie K. Gross retired from the department at the end of the spring semester and made her annual trek to Skagway, Alaska this summer to do some work and catch up with her old friends up North. Congratulations Billie K., and don't keep yourself too busy now that you're “retired.”

General Macarthur Hambrick has moved on from his stint as director of Centennial Singers this spring in order to pursue more professional performance opportunities. We wish him well and hope to see him back at UW some time in the future!

Larry Hazlett sets lights for his lighting design to Marsha Knight’s Of A Mind, which was performed at the national ACDFA festival at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. on May 18, 2006. This was Larry’s second lighting design to be seen at the Kennedy Center. Larry recently presented a lecture entitled “Lighting: The Invisible Theatre Art” to the Lara- mie Lyceum. Also, Russell Gilbert, Larry’s student, was given an “Honorable Mention” award for his lighting design presentation for Frequency 98.6 at the NW KCACTF festival in Pasco, WA.

Rebecca Hilliker received her second Kennedy Center Gold Medallion in as many years for her outstanding leadership in KC/ACTF Region VII.

|Continued on p. 6|

Faculty Spotlight (Cont.)

Marsha Knight directed the 2006 Northwest Region American College Dance Festival in March, which was a major undertaking. Her original bal- let, Of A Mind, was presented at the festival and was selected not only for performance at the Gala Concert, but also for performance at the national festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in May.

Leigh Selting directed Frequency 98.6, an original student-written full length play that was chosen to be produced at the Region VII KC/ACTF festival in Pasco, WA in February. The production was named to the short-list for selection to go on to the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. This spring, Leigh also spent two months acting in an Equity production of The Heiress in Denver, CO, and this summer he will return to the New Harmony Project in Indiana, where he will once again work with the company to develop new plays and screenplays, including a new piece by Jim Leonard, Jr. (The Diviners). Leigh was awarded the John P. Elbogen teaching award from the university this year, and is the University of Wyoming’s sole nominee for the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) national teaching award.

Wolf J. Sherrill directed Proof for the 2006 Snowy Range Summer Theatre and will also be attending an actor combattant workshop in Las Vegas later this summer.

Margaret Wilson has been busy directing the Snowy Range Summer Dance Festival with Vincent Brosseau this summer. Margaret, along with Neil Humphrey, also choreographed and put together the Vertical Dance, Children’s Theatre, and Music at Vedauwoo performances that were held in mid-July.

Commencement has come and gone, taking a fantastic group of UW Theatre and Dance graduates with it! Though we’ll be sad to lose so many talented students, we wish them the best of luck in their endeavors!

• Dana Formby
• Stephanie Schingle
• Anna Keller
• Ellen Soderberg
• Stephanie Lovell
• Krystall Stovall
• Norman Mabbit
• Thomas Stroppel
• Heather Malek
• Jesse Sundell
• Sarah Oman
• Jennifer Yarder

ALUMNI NEWS UPDATE
The updated UW Theatre & Dance website launched last fall and has several features for alumni.

Two editions of Center Stage, the departmental newsletter, are online, with others to soon follow. We also have an online Alumni News section at www.uwyo.edu/th&d/alumni, which we are about to update again. We are working with UW Visual Communications to automate submission of online notes and changes in contact information, so watch for changes to this in the near future.

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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