

Alumni News

~ Theatre & Dance Chapter ~

S A C R A M E N T O S T A T E A L U M N I A S S O C I A T I O N

SPRING SEASON

- **The Lenaea Festival**, drama festival showcasing the work of over 1800 high school students (Jan 30–Feb 1, 2009)
- **Sacramento Black Art of Dance**, directed by Linda Goodrich, Solano Hall 1010 (Feb 26–Mar 8, 2009)
- **How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying**, by Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock, and Willie Gilbert (based on the novel by Shepherd Mead), music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, directed and choreographed by Ed Brazo, University Theatre (Mar 13–Mar 29, 2009)
- **In The Blood**, by Suzan-Lori Parks, directed by Melinda Wilson, Playwrights Theatre (Apr 16–Apr 26, 2009)
- **Senior Dance Concert**, directed by Lorelei Bayne, Solano Hall 1010 (May 6–May 10, 2009)



SALUTE TO THE 2009 LENAEEA FESTIVAL

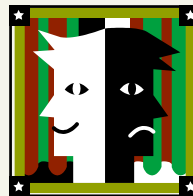
BY SCOTT ADAMS / BILL ZARRIELLO

Lenaea 2009 was another successful Festival for all involved. It was cold, yet sunny over the three days, but nothing could cool the enthusiasm of the participants and staff involved.

Inspired by the Lenaea Festival of Ancient Greece, Dr. Carl Thomas, then Chair of the Sacramento State College's Department of Theatre, initiated this program in 1955. His desire was to establish an event that would support and encourage high school students with an interest in theatre. Over the years, Lenaea grew into a multi-programmed event with recognition not only for one act productions but for audition pieces as well.

In 2003, following the passing of Professor Smart, Lenaea's primary motivator and lifeline over the past 50 years, the Theatre and Dance Department sought a new direction to highlight the traditions that brought Lenaea to its great heights yet still enhanced educational aspects of the festival. In response to feedback from school surveys and with the goal to enhance the educational aspects of the Lenaea, the Festival instigated some exciting new additions including: (1) Command Perform-

ances of the top scoring groups and individuals, (2) multiple workshops offered during the Festival given by experienced theatre professionals, and (3) networking and socializing opportunities for teachers and students such as a dance featuring fabulous lighting by alumnus Ron Dumonchelle (owner of Monkey Glue Lighting) and DJ'd by alumnus Hans Weichhart.



In 2006, the Festival added a brand new category in musical theatre solos which has been extremely well received. Students from each school are now encouraged each year to submit audition recordings from which a selected group will be chosen to compete at the Festival. The top scoring three are selected to perform during the awards ceremony on Sunday evening in the University Union Ball room. In tribute and memory to the Department's Creative Foundation builders, The Lenaea Festival offers awards in the names of Larry Shumate (Synergy Award for technical cohesiveness), Gerard Larson (Best Overall Direction of a One Act Play), and

Robert Smart (Spirit of Lenaea Award).

At Lenaea Festival 2009, we had a total of 71 schools attend, 56 one act plays, 16 student original written one acts, 22 student directed one acts, 244 monologues, 23 student original monologues, 126 duo scenes, 11 student original duo scenes, 22 musical theatre entries, 40 respondents, and over 1,800 high school students, 300 chaperones and 100 volunteers.

This year, the workshops were given by a combination of CSUS faculty and CSUS Theatre Alumni, all experienced theatre professionals. The workshops included **Broadway Dance** with Ed Brazo, **Sculpting with Lighting** with Willard Haynes, **Acting Shakespeare** and **Director's Tools** with Kim McCann Lawson, **Acting for Musical Theatre** with Bill Zarriello, **Voice and Movement for the Actor** with Michelle Felton, **Illusion of Make Up** with Christin O'Cuddeh, **How to Write a Play** with Tim Wright, and the ever popular **Improvational Comedy** with Brian Crall.

If you are interested in participating next year as a respondent, staff, or running crew, please contact the Lenaea Office at Lenaea@csus.edu.

MEMORIES, IMAGINATIONS, SENTIMENTS
BY BILL ZARRIELLO

As I speak with others (who are not 'theatrically oriented') about the Lenaea Festival, they can not understand what it is about three long days, spent with 1800 high school students, that would actually energize me. They ask what it is about the Lenaea Festival that makes it such a high point of the year for me, and as tired as I am the day after Lenaea concludes, my face and movement become more animated, and the stories come pouring forth.

I thought it would be interesting to ask other respondents, program directors and former students who participated in this year's Lenaea and Lenaea's past to share their stories as well.

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"My favorite Lenaea memory is my first year as a respondent (we were called "judges" then), 1969-70. Lenaea could only get the theater for one day that year, so the other respondents (Mark Rose, Rhonda Zaharris, Marion Rader) and I drove with Bob Smart all over California to see the entrants perform in their own venues. Then the "finalists" were invited to CSUS to perform that one day. It was a marvelous experience." ~**Jim Lane, Respondent**

"Lenaea gave me wonderful memories with my theater group, opened my eyes to the diversity and talent of other schools, and allowed me to be passionate and confident in acting. This experience helped me grow not only as an actor, but as a young woman."~**Lauren Hamilton, Lenaea participant, St. Francis High School 2007**

"Lenaea Highlights—A big, much anticipated hug from Georgia Larson, a feeling of awe and envy at the talents of some of these high school students, a sense of camaraderie and a chance to catch up with some other alums who are volunteering as respondents, a good cry with Bob Smart's daughters (cuz we still miss him too!), and an overwhelming sense of relief when it is successfully over (with a nagging feeling I wish there were still more to come). As a past participant, it was the most exciting weekend; it helped me decide to attend Sac State, and as a program director, it allowed for the greatest teaching moments." ~**Bill Zariello, former Lenaea participant, program director and current Respondent Coordinator**

"The Lenaea Festival will always be a cherished memory for me, a highlight of my youth and a pivotal point in my development as an artist. Though I was fortunate enough to win the Ultimate Gold medal at the festival, my best recollections do not come from winning awards; they consist in the memory of seeing so many other like-minded and passionate young thespians congregating and sharing their burgeoning talents with each other. Lenaea taught me that I wasn't such an anomaly after all."~**Matthew Sigl, Lenaea Participant, Sacramento High School VAPAC 2000**

"I participated in Lenaea when I was a high school student oh so many years ago. We'd always heard about it as the thing to do but it seemed to take us forever to get around to going. We performed in the Playwright's Theatre and our adjudicators were Professor Bob Smart and Sonia Meyers Memering. I was nervous as can be and thankful (now) that I had no idea who they were. Performing our one act was great fun but I enjoyed the workshops and the Lenaea experience even more. It was great getting to see other students' work and meeting participants from different schools. The memories I had of Lenaea influenced my decision to attend Sac State several years later in order to complete my BA in Theatre Arts. While I was a student at CSUS, I worked on Lenaea in several capacities. I enjoy returning every year to teach workshops and, when my schedule allows, adjudicate. I see the joy and enthusiasm on the faces of the participants, and I remember what a grand time I had as well. I am certain that my face had exactly the same expression as the faces I see in my workshops."~**Kim McCann Lawson, Respondent, Shakespeare and Directing Workshops**

"Coming to Sacramento to respond at The Lenaea Festival is what keeps me going all year long. I feel so fulfilled every year and look forward to every school that comes through my track. I have had more amazing artistic experiences at Lenaea than any other theatrical or cinematic endeavor in which I've been involved. There is nothing out there like Lenaea."~**Bill Voorhees, Respondent**

"Every year I dread and enjoy hearing Bob Smart's daughter come up and give out his award. I knew the minute they came up, it would be emotional, and I was holding back the tears, then I look over and Brian Crall has 'shiny eyes,' and that was it!" ~**Margaret Morneau, Respondent**

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To join the online Facebook community for **CSUS—Dept of Theatre/Dance—Dept, Alumni & Friends**, go to <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=22576630915>

ALUMNI SOCIAL EVENT – SAVE THE DATE!

BY KIM MCCANN LAWSON



Important
DATE!

The Theatre & Dance Alumni Chapter Board of Directors will be hosting a free mixer on **Saturday, April 4, 2009** from 5:00-8:00 p.m. The event will be held in the Alumni Center on the Sacramento State campus. Hors d'oeuvres, fruit, vegetables, and desserts will be served, and there will be live music. Invitations to Chapter members, alumni, faculty and graduating seniors will be sent in February. The Board hopes that Theatre/Dance majors graduating this year will stop by and learn about the benefits of being an Alumni Association member. The Board also hopes to see old and new friends for conversation and catching-up!

You can RSVP online at <https://www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/CSN/events/CSN2221303.html> by March 23rd, 2009.

Memories, Imaginations, Sentiments

(Continued from page 2)

"It was my junior year of high school, and my second time participating in Lenaea. I was in an original duet with my very good friend and hero, Victoria Alvarez-Chacon. She had written the piece. We performed it, and when we were done, our respondents (one being Tina Cole) got up from their seats, and actively became involved in our scene. They put themselves in the place of either of us students. They played with, and off of us, and it was a moment of true theatre experimentation, and we got incredibly amped! It was an experience that solidified my interest in becoming a theatre major, plus we won ultimate gold for duets that year. ~**Tygar Hicks, Lenaea Participant and Lenaea Administrative Staff**

"Lenaea was always one of the most-anticipated parts of my year! Experiencing varying styles and genres of theatre performed by my peers was truly thrilling for my close friends and me. We would pack snacks so we could see as many shows back to back as possible, then spend the evenings afterward talking about what we had seen. Four years later, we still reminisce about some of the favorite pieces we enjoyed at Lenaea."~**Hayley Higgins, Lenaea Participant 2003 - 2006**

"Being a 'theatre kid' in high school is not necessarily the most sought after stereotype but Lenaea made me proud, excited, and passionate about my love of theatre. Coming together with students from all over the west coast and sharing our passion for theatre was an unparalleled and magical experience. Lenaea provided me with an amazing community of artists and taught me the core values of theatre: collaboration, passion, creativity and joy. I thought that Lenaea had a lot of impact on me when I was in high school but now I find that it was actually more of a profound experience to participate from the other side. It was a fantastic energy to bring back with me to the quagmire that is L.A."~**Rebecca Sigl, Lenaea Participant 1999-2002**

"This is an incredible, rich experience for us as respondents and we take it very seriously; yet we have so much fun. The students and their coaches/directors/teachers are to be blessed for making the effort. I think it is one of those experiences they will never forget."~**Wendy and Ross Modlin, Respondents**

"The Lenaea Festival was an exciting time to meet theater students from all over Northern California and to share our passion for theater. We received priceless feedback from professionals in both our group and individual scenes and plays and got a chance to see the work of our peers. The ever-enthusiastic Sac State student leaders instilled in us an excitement about theater that will undoubtedly stay with me throughout my life." ~**Robyn Gram, Lenaea Participant, St. Francis High School 2003**

"When I was in high school, I was an actor, but I also wanted to write plays. My teacher at Armijo High School was a visionary by the name of William Siegfried. I made 8mm movies, and my big "hit," ROMIET AND JULIO, won a few film awards, and he encouraged me to act in plays at my school. Mr. Siegfried, realizing I was a writer as well as an actor, encouraged me to write stage plays. My first effort, a one-act entitled MY SON, THE REVOLUTIONARY was so well received that Mr. Siegfried entered it into the Lenaea Festival at Sacramento State University (which it was known as at the time). My life changed from that magical evening. Not only did I receive incredible professional reaction to my work, I was also blessed to meet the incredible Mr. Robert Smart as well as the generous Dr. Gerry Larson, who both spoke with me and gave me guidance as to my passion. At that moment, I realized that these incredible mentors would be the people I wanted to work with in my college career. Entering CSUS, I was enthusiastic, and absorbed all they, as well as Dr. Paul Waldo, could feed me. I graduated from Sac State, and then earned my M.F.A. in playwriting from U.C. Davis, where I also taught playwriting as a graduate student. Due to their mentoring and, specifically the Lenaea Festival, I have since become a published playwright, with my plays being produced not only in this country, but also in New Zealand, Switzerland, England and Canada. This is why I will always support the young artists/playwrights who have their first exposure at Lenaea as an adjudicator, and I am passing on the torch to the many young people who need feedback, support and the professional guidance I received, which definitely changed my life."~**Tim Wright, Respondent, professional playwright**



FOR MORE INFO ABOUT JOINING THE
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ASSOCIATION, VISIT
WWW.SACSTATEALUMNI.COM



SACRAMENTO STATE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
THEATRE & DANCE CHAPTER

Our Mission

To enhance the connection between the department and its former students and/or supporters through a variety of interactions, including networking, social activities, professional development, scholarship fund-raising, educational outreach, and artistic/creative collaboration.

Benefits to Chapter Members/Students/Department

Through the development of a strong connection between the Alumni Association and the department, current members, students, and potential students will benefit from a richer, more productive environment enjoying an alliance between historical continuity and tomorrow's innovations.

How Do I Join?

It is an annual cost of \$50 and if you choose Chapter Membership in the Theatre & Dance Chapter, \$5 of that will be pledged to go directly to the funds of the Theatre & Dance Chapter itself. So for \$50 a year, you can help support the theatre arts department and current students toward a more rewarding and exciting time at Sac State.

Benefits of Being a Member

Stay connected to a powerful network of 180,000 alumni: As an Association member you will receive newsletters and e-mails with updates and invitations to alumni events and networking opportunities. We host free or low cost professional development events, speaker series, alumni workplace lunches, tailgate parties and social/business mixers. **Information Access:** Enjoy access to the libraries at all 23 CSU campuses for only \$5 per year. **Health and Safety:** Sac State Alumni receive discounts on health, vision, life, auto, renters and homeowner's insurance through an alumni group-discount savings plan. **Save on campus activities:** Association members receive discounts at the Hornet Bookstore, the Sacramento State Aquatic Center, the Career Center and Hornet Athletics. Members can also purchase a discounted recreation pass for the campus swimming pool and racquetball and tennis courts. **Discounts:** Discounts on car rentals (National, Hertz, Budget and Auto Europe), hotels (participating Clarion, Comfort, Quality, Econo Lodge, Rodeway and MainStay hotels worldwide), vacations (book condominiums and hotels at World Class resorts in over 80 countries for only \$349 a week), movie passes (unlimited theater passes good at most Regal Cinema and United Artists Theater locations) and gym memberships (pay no initiation fees when joining any Sparetime Health Club).

What if I don't have \$50, but I Still Want to Help?

"I got a trunk of old clothes; I got a barn" We can always use the support of alumni when it comes to staffing the Lenaea Festival or creating events for the generation of scholarship funds. Volunteer your time and talents backstage, musical directing, stage managing, as a Board Member, or working on the Membership Committee. Contact us at theatredancealumni.sacstate@gmail.com if you are interested in serving on the membership committee on a regular or limited basis.

For more information, or to join the **Sac State Theatre & Dance Alumni Chapter**, please visit our website:

www.csus.edu/org/theatre_alumni

2008–2009 Theatre & Dance Alumni Chapter Board Members

Bill Zarriello—President/Editor, Kim McCann Lawson—Secretary, Scott Adams, Georgia Larson, Jim Lane,
Debra Hammond, Cheryl Watson, Larry Shumate, Nick Avdienko, Maureen Gaynor

If you are interested in volunteering or joining the Board, contact us at theatredancealumni.sacstate@gmail.com