

Monday, August 25, 2014

Fall 2014 Performance Season Highlights

Just now our stages are empty and the rehearsal rooms are quiet. There are even available parking spaces! But in just a few days, Varner Hall will once again be filled with (dare we say it?) the sound of music, not to mention the gentle pounding of dancers' feet and all kinds of intriguing noises from theatre classes and rehearsals.

Please join us and be a part of the Varner audience and the Music, Theatre and Dance community by attending many of our fall season performances. As department chair Jackie Wiggins said, "Our students grow in their performance skills because of your presence and support."

Of course, not all our recitals feature student work. We have guest performers whose presence, both on stage and in master classes, provides our students with exceptional musical advantages and we invite you to share those experiences. This fall, we are proud to showcase the very finest in chamber music. On October 12, the **Juilliard String Quartet** will play in Varner Recital Hall as part of the Chamber Music Society of Detroit at OU Series. On November 9, the second concert of the series will feature famed guitarist **Celino Romero** and his special guest, OU's Provost and accomplished guitarist **James Lentini**.

The **Oakland Symphony Orchestra**, OU's resident orchestra, will perform two concerts during the fall semester, one on **October 5** and the other on **November 16**. These concerts allow our most advanced students to rehearse and perform alongside some of the area's finest musicians, including many of our faculty members.

The **OU Jazz Band** will give its first concert on October 9 when they will perform a night of hard bop and more with New York trumpet player **Joe Magnarelli**. The **OU Brass Band**, the first section winners at the North American Brass Band Championships in Grand Rapids, Michigan in April 2014, will offer an evening of "Triumphant Brass!" on November 2.

Some other music events not to miss include the **University Chorus and Oakland Chorale** on November 21 and 22, which is always a great crowd pleaser; and the **World Music Concert with Rahul Pophali** on November 14, when the African Ensemble, Steelband, and World Percussion Ensemble will share the stage with tabla master Rahul Pophali, who is a dazzling performer and an incessant innovator.

For new music *aficionados* we have the October 2 faculty saxophone/piano CD-launch recital given by **Jeffrey Heisler** and **I-Chen Yeh**, and on September 12, you can join us to hear **Miles Brown's Middle Game**, play. This ensemble is totally new. Miles said, "The music is inspired by the fluctuating dynamics common in the middle portion of a chess game. This is where chess players need to be the most creative, spontaneous, and resourceful. These are the characteristics of improvised music that I hope to present with this band, and the tunes are mainly vehicles to achieve this end." Sound intriguing? This concert is free!

The theatre program has two similar *sounding*, but very different offerings this fall. From October 9 to 19 you can see **The Life**, which is a musical that depicts the pulsating life on the streets around Times Square in the 1980s. It explores the lives of the pimps and prostitutes, druggies and dealers, runaways and street people who inhabited 42nd Street prior to its Disneyfication. However, its themes are far more universal than one might expect. It is a play about love, friendship, the strength of women, the will to survive, and the determination to maintain dignity and grace even in the most degrading circumstances.

From November 13 to 23 you can see **The Liar**. Hours after arriving in Paris, charismatic scoundrel Dorante is smitten by a pair of comely young ladies and confounded by a case of mistaken identity. Not to worry, Dorante is handsome, charming—and a pathological liar. He wins admirers wherever he goes...so long as he never has to tell the truth!



Misunderstandings, secret agendas, and witty wordplay abound in this ingenious and irreverent update of a classic French romp.

The dance program opens its season with company-in-residence **Eisenhower Dance in *On the Move*** on October 18 and 19. This year, our faculty-directed companies **Take Root** and **Patterson Rhythm Pace** will appear as special guests. It promises to be a spectacular performance.



The dance students will demonstrate their fall semester work on December 4, December 5, and December 6, when **Oakland Dance Theatre and OU Repertory Dance Company** present their annual showcase featuring works choreographed by OU dance faculty and guest artists **Laurie Eisenhower**, artistic director of Eisenhower Dance, and **Bryan Strimpel**, company member of David Dorfman Dance.

The December 4 performance is part of our Thursday Arts-After-Work Series, with a *pay what you wish* ticket price. Please check our other **AAW offerings**, beginning with our first event of the season, the **OU String, Wind and Guitar Faculty Collaborative** on September 11. These performances offer an opportunity to experience the work of our wonderful performing artists at the lowest price imaginable, all the while saving you the rush-hour drive home.

Finally, we want to remind you to join us on September 20 for the **Black and Gold** performing arts spectacular. This event is part of OU's new fall Homecoming and Reunion weekend. We'll see you at the Elliott Carillon Tower at 7:30 pm. This is one event you definitely don't want to miss!

You can find information about how to purchase tickets here.

Our season brochure can be downloaded from our homepage.

Photos:

Top right: The Juilliard Quartet

Lower left: Oakland Student Dancers

SUMMARY

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