
Academy of Visual & Performing Arts Culver City High School

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For Immediate Release

AVPA Leadership Changes on the Heels of Success

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On the heels of a year of national recognition for the exceptional arts education it offers Culver City high school students, the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) is making changes that will make the program even stronger in the future. Dr. Tony Spano, the Music Director will be taking over for Darryl Hovis as the Executive Director for the Academy.



But Hovis, who founded the AVPA eleven years ago with Jim Knight, isn't leaving this team of dedicated artists and teachers. He is returning to his former position as Artistic Director for the Academy. It's the Artistic Director role that Hovis feels allows him to exercise his artistic and administrative passion for the AVPA, producing events for the entire academy. "This has been a year of transition for the Academy," said Hovis. "It's required more collaboration and selflessness from everyone. But, of course, everyone has delivered."

Although he's sure there will be challenges ahead for the AVPA, Dr. Spano is excited about assuming a larger leadership role within the Academy. According to Spano, "This talented and dedicated faculty provides incredible artistic experiences for our students and are the most creative team of professionals I've

ever worked with. I know they're the right team to maintain our high standards and grow the program."

The AVPA will have their work cut out for them to expand on the highly successful 2004-5 school year. National recognition of the program came with the Academy's Blurred Vision Theater Company being selected by the American High School Theatre Festival to perform at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh Scotland next summer and Dr. Spano receiving a fellowship from the Surdna Foundation to attend an international conference in Singapore over the summer. Kristine Hatanaka, the Art Director also received a fellowship to attend the School of the Arts Institute of Chicago this summer.

Locally, the AVPA was honored with a nomination for the Music Center's Bravo Award that recognizes teachers and schools for creativity, innovation and excellence in arts education. The art students held an exhibition with the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and won recognition for individual students in both the Music Center's Spotlight Award and the Scholastic Arts award program. The Film students showed their 16mm film "Fate Smiles" at the Big Bear Film Festival and the theatre troupe took Best Actor and Best Director at the University of LaVerne's high school theatre festival. One of the Academy's singers won "Most Outstanding Vocal Soloist" while the other groups brought home wonderful ratings in the Music in the Parks Festival. And the dance troupe, Tappa, Tappa, Tappa, has been selected to perform at the dedication of the Gloria Kaufman Dance Building opening next October on the UCLA campus.

And not only that. More than 80% of the high school seniors who have been a part of the AVPA will be going on to prestigious colleges and universities including Cal Arts, OTIS College of Art and Design, Tufts in Boston, Musicians Institute, Columbia College Chicago, and several University of California and Cal State campuses.

With these accomplishments for the AVPA and its faculty and students, Spano says, "I feel confident we'll be able to continue to lead the way in Arts education in our district and community for a long time to come."

The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) at Culver City High School offers a comprehensive arts curriculum after regular school hours for students who are committed to excellence in Art, Film, Theatre, Dance, and Music. Established in 1996, AVPA enjoys tremendous community support from SONY and other design, recording, and theatre companies in the area. For more information, go to www.avpa.org or contact Tony Spano at 310-842-4200 x6094 or x6009.

Photo caption: Darryl Hovis (L) and Tony Spano, AVPA's Artistic and Executive Directors