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SPOTLIGHT

Culver City Academy of Visual & Performing Arts

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www.avpa.org

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AVPA Chamber Singers directed by Lisa Michel

Cabaret Night

AVPA and the Pink Elephant Music Company present "Cabaret Night – The Great American Songbook." Featuring students and faculty singing the greatest hits of America's early popular songs, the fun-filled evening will take place on the Robert Frost Auditorium stage – transformed into a cozy cabaret.

The show will highlight seven great American songwriters and songwriting teams: George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, Fats Waller, Harold Arlen, Cole Porter, and Duke Ellington. The AVPA Chamber Singers will also perform a medley from Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess."

Performances are January 19, 20, and 21 at 7 pm. Tickets are \$15 general and \$10 ASB/seniors/children. Seating is limited so reserve early at www.avpa.org.

Actors' Gang Classes Going Strong

The members of the Blurred Vision Theatre Company have spent the semester attending classes at the Ivy Substation with the Actors' Gang. The classes have focused on expressing the four core emotions – anger,

sadness, happiness and fear while the students have also learned about costumes and makeup for Commedia dell'Arte characters.

The students got an extra treat just before the holidays. Tim Robbins, the well known stage and film actor, participated in two of the student classes. Robbins co-founded the Actors' Gang over 20 years ago and now serves as its Artistic Director.



Blurred Vision Theatre Company with Vanessa Mizzone, VJ Foster and Tim Robbins of the Actor's Gang.

The Process of Creating *Woyzeck*

Are those students really doing push-ups? One legged, in fact. *Woyzeck* director, Choelseung Kim, pushes his actors both mentally and physically. During the course of a recent rehearsal, he told his students they needed to risk their physicality. Then the group walked, ran, marched and swayed. They simulated falling asleep on their feet



until they were tired enough to actually do it. But they didn't stop. They were eager for the next task.

Their eagerness is because even in the first week of rehearsals for this new show, the actors realize the importance of working together and building a rock-solid ensemble.

In this version of Buchner's *Woyzeck*, the first German expressionist play, only two cast members have been given specific roles. Everyone else is responsible for learning all the dialogue, which is distributed throughout the group. During the rehearsal, Choelseung lets the actors explore potential reasons for doing it this way. Soon they're pin-pointing the industrial revolution and how, through it, people have become cogs in a wheel. Society is faceless and they, as the chorus, represent that society. Choelseung suggests *Woyzeck* is not a hero and asks what is he? Soon the students offer that he's a reflection of society's faults, projections of its influences on a single individual—influences that still apply today.

So why the emphasis on physicality? According to Choelseung, there are many reasons. Actors must control all parts of their body and master their movement to avoid cliché. They need this control in this play so that the individual chorus members form a cohesive unit – so cohesive, in fact, that individuals are physically interchangeable.

The students participating in this process of exploration toward story will be changed by the experience of putting on this play. You could be changed by watching their performance. Wednesday through Saturday, February 1-11 at 7:00 pm in the SPoT. Tickets are \$15 general and \$13 ASB/seniors/children. Seating is limited so reserve early at www.avpa.org

Academy Creates New Sound and Vision Course

By Stephen Day

Did you ever wonder where the sound of King Kong's roar came from? How about the whirring buzzing sound of the light sabers in Star Wars or the creepy wheezy breathing and low voice of Darth Vader?

Artists who had ears for shaping sound in new and innovative ways created these sounds to help films communicate their vision. AVPA is now transforming students into sound visionaries by teaching them how foley, sound design and music composition are used to create great soundscapes for films.

A new course, called Sound and Vision, covers the history of sound in film from Thomas Edison's first studio to the latest advances in computer technology. In addition to analyzing the sound techniques in several films, students from the film and music departments are

getting first hand experience using the technology that professionals use, including an industry standard sound



editing software and hardware program called Pro Tools.

These students have applied their skills to the fall film project "Ramblin' Man" by recording music with

equipment funded, in part, by the Culver City Education Foundation. This state of the art recording equipment lays the groundwork for future projects and is allowing students to project their talents into the real world of sound and film. In fact, they've already landed their first contract! They will be taking care of all sound needs for the short film "Rules of War" directed by Paul Marius. It begins shooting in late January and is intended for the festival circuit.

For more information contact course instructor and composer, Stephen Day at stephenday@ccusd.org or James Bentley at jbentley@avpa.org. There's also a class email discussion group at soundforfilm@yahoogroups.com

AVPA Wins Grants and Awards

Last month the Academy got two great pieces of news!

The Board of Trustees of the Culver City Education Foundation awarded \$5,000 to the Blurred Vision Theatre Company to help send students to the Fringe Theatre Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Also, the Culver City Council approved the Arts Commission recommendation and awarded AVPA \$4,000 toward production costs of *Antigone*. This show will have a two-week run in the SPoT theatre May 18-27 before the students create a traveling version of the show to take to the Fringe.

Blurred Vision Car Wash a Success!

It was a chilly, gray day but that didn't stop people lining up to get their car washed. The Elks Lodge generously donated the use of their parking lot and water and the students had a steady stream of cars to wash, thanks to the publicity the event received in the community.



Brian Sonia-Wallace, Deepika Singamassetti, Raul Calderon and Ali Seike cleaning up at the car wash.

The Blurred Vision Theatre Company made over \$800 toward sending the company to the Fringe Festival in Scotland next summer. Thanks to everyone who helped!

Art Students Work with Local Museums

AVPA Art Students have made four Haitian Voodoo flags for the Carnival exhibition at the Fowler Museum. The students will see the full exhibition on January 10th while the art, theatre, music and dance departments will participate in a procession scheduled for April.

Also, the students begin a program at MOCA this month in preparation for their own MOCA exhibit later in the year. The students' projects will be based on current exhibitions at MOCA and the UCLA Hammer Museum's "Masters of American Comics." You'll be hearing more about these projects as they unfold.

Academy DVDs Available

The film department now has two great DVDs available for your viewing pleasure--*Company*, the fall musical directed by Tony Spano and "The Sky is Falling," last year's 16mm film, directed by Eon Mora. Both DVDs are \$20 and proceeds help the film department. Contact James Bentley (jbentley@avpa.org) for your copy.

Fundraisers

Comedy & Magic Club

The Comedy & Magic Club in Hermosa Beach is partnering with AVPA to bring you a night of comic entertainment. Show times are 8:00 pm Tuesday through Thursday until April 20th at 1018 Hermosa Avenue. Tickets are \$10 each, all of which goes to the Blurred Vision Fringe Festival fund. Attendees must be 18 or older and there's a two beverage minimum. Contact Estela Narrie, narrie_estela@smc.edu for tickets.

AVPA Foundation Collecting Cell Phones

Consider donating cell phones that no longer work or you aren't using any more to the AVPA Foundation. For each cell phone you drop off in Tony Spano's office, the Foundation will receive money through eScrip.

Used DVD and CD Sale

The Blurred Vision students are selling used DVDs and CDs at all theater events. Please donate disks you no longer want and pick up something you'd like at the next show. Contact Alison Seike (alisavestheworld@aol.com) for more information.



Faculty Favorites

Anyone who knows AVPA's dance department director, Cari Ann Shim Sham*, knows she has decided opinions about dance, expression through dance, and what constitutes good dance. Here are her favorites:

Dance company: Sinkai Juku is a Butoh company out of Japan. Butoh, a Japanese performing

art form that evolved during the 1960s, is an expression of human awareness. The glory of Sankai Juku is that they achieve almost pure metaphor with their performance.

Choreographers: Pina Bausch and Mathew Bourne. Bausch has revolutionized dance and dance theater. She is known for organic staging and stage dressing and has toured shows that needed 1000 pounds of dirt and 100 tulips every night.

Bourne changed the face of dance forever with his groundbreaking *Swan Lake* in 1995 and continues to reinvent. In "A Play Without Words" he layers his story with several dancers playing the same roles on stage at the same time, dancing the same sequences in beautiful counterpoints and canons.

Dancer: Gregory Hines had a magical smile and magical movement. He was a walking encyclopedia for tap dance. Hines always pushed the envelope and was a progressive thinker and dancer, which you can see in his film, "Tap."

Go to <http://home.comcast.net/~AVPAFoundation/amazon.html> for links to these and other favorites.

Announcements

Sunday, January 8th is a **mandatory clean-out-the-Frost day for all theatre students**. Please plan on working from 10 am to 2 pm.

Theatre parent meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm in the Black Box. Please note the date for the meetings for the rest of the year and plan to attend: 1/10, 2/7, 3/7, 4/18, 5/9, 6/6.

Theatre students: All **money** for either production fees or Fringe fees must be turned in to Darryl Hovis either Monday or Tuesday at lunch. This is so the checks can be easily tracked and deposited in a timely manner.

The AVPA Foundation is looking for AVPA friends who work for either **Toyota** or **Starbucks**. They are applying for grants with these organizations and

employee contacts help in the application process.
Contact Steve Wallace, avpafoundation@comcast.net

Do you have **web site design** experience? The AVPA Foundation is looking for someone to take their functional website and turn it into something potential investors will find appealing. Contact Steve Wallace, avpafoundation@comcast.net if you can help.

Blurred Vision now has a **Yahoo group** to help students and parents keep current on everything happening in the company. Send a message to AVPA_blurredvision-subscribe@yahoo.com to join.

Contacting the Academy

Dr. Tony Spano (executive director and creative director, music): tonyspano@avpa.org

Darryl B. Hovis (artistic director and creative director, theater): dbhovis@avpa.org

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AVPA 2005-2006 Season

CABARET NIGHT

Jan. 19-21, Robert Frost Auditorium

WOYZECK

Feb. 1-11, Sony Pictures Theatre

TRAINWRECK IMPROV THEATRE

Feb, 17-18, Sony Pictures Theatre

FROST FILM FESTIVAL

March 3-4, Sony Pictures Theatre

TRAINWRECK IMPROV THEATRE

March 10-11, Sony Pictures Theatre

CHESS

March 22-25, Robert Frost Auditorium

TRAINWRECK IMPROV THEATRE

April 21-22, Sony Pictures Theatre

SPRING MUSIC SHOWCASE

TBD, Robert Frost Auditorium

DANCE-OFF!

April 27-29, Robert Frost Auditorium

ANTIGONE

May 18-27, Sony Pictures Theatre

JAVA DRAMA DOZEN

June 5-6, 12-13, Ivy Substation

YOUNG FILMMAKERS FILM PREMIER

June 9, Sony Pictures Entertainment Lot

*Always check www.avpa.org for schedule changes.

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