

# culver city academy of visual and performing arts

# avpa spotlight

May 2009 Volume 4 Number 9

Inspiring and empowering students to build a compassionate and creative community through innovative and challenging arts education.

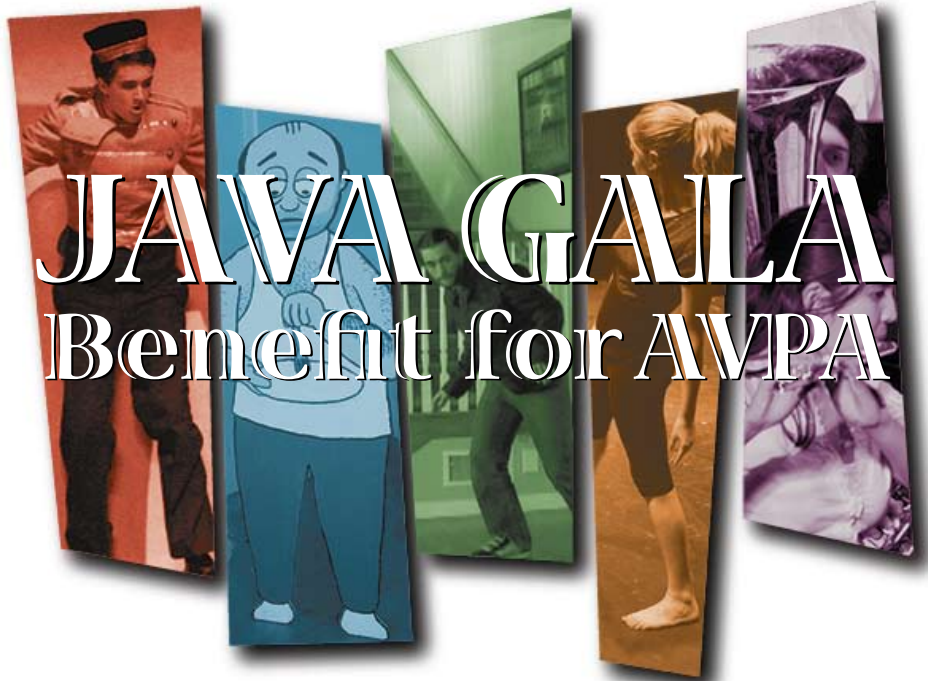
## Help Support the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts at JAVA GALA on Friday May 22, and enjoy an Evening of Theatre, Art, Film, Dance & Music

JAVA GALA is the second annual benefit production for AVPA, which combines the showcase and spectacle of previous years' Java Dramas with the polish and celebration of a fundraising gala. In an exhibition of collaboration, the AVPA departments of Theatre, Film, Art, Music and Dance come together to demonstrate the very best of what makes AVPA a special and unique arts education program in Los Angeles. Presented for one night only in the Robert Frost Auditorium on the Culver City High School campus, the gala will feature a reception included in the ticket price. Several local restaurants and bakeries have donated items for the reception, including Coppelia's, Empanada's Place, Gyenari Korean BBQ, Hot Cakes Bakes, Kay 'n Dave's, Lonzo's, M Café de Chaya, Sorrento's, & Taro's Sushi.

Live music and an art exhibition will take place during the reception between 7:00 and 8:00 pm. The main stage performances will begin at 8:00 pm.

Java Gala marks the 15th "Java" production by the AVPA. Java Drama has evolved into a full scale showcase of AVPA's very best creative work and collaboration. With last year's successful Kirk Douglas Theatre benefit, the AVPA and the AVPA Foundation have decided to create a once-a-year benefit gala to support the arts education programming offered by AVPA at Culver City High School. Java Drama was the chosen format to feature the program. In combining the format of Java Drama, and presenting it as a benefit production, entitled Java Gala, we are continuing the tradition of artistic excellence while raising much-needed funding for the program. It is because of the AVPA Foundation that our program continues to thrive. Without it, we would collapse under the weight of the economic strains that have gripped the nation, the state, and our district. Your support allows us to continue to provide an outstanding arts education and life experience for our students. Please consider attending Java Gala and helping us celebrate the achievements of our talented students and dedicated faculty and staff.

Dr. Tony Spano and Kristine Hatanaka, AVPA Co-Executive Directors



With a theme of “Made in Culver City,” Java Gala will present fun associations with Culver City’s film and television history, as well as presenting the great art being made by the students who work and learn here in the heart of screenland. Below each of the AVPA Creative Directors preview what to expect at this event.

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## **JAVA GALA Benefit for AVPA Theatre**

The 2009 Java Gala event has generated much excitement from the AVPA Theatre Department. It is an event which symbolizes celebration, high-caliber performance, technical, and directorial theatre work, as well as a yearly uniting of all five departments at the AVPA.

This year, the AVPA Department of Theatre approaches the Java event with an examination centering upon the work of Shakespeare and his enduring legacy. Not purely “traditional,” this examination offers ode and homage, a tad ridicule and some folly, remembrance, reverence, and prophecy – yes, all in one night! – all within a trio package of Shakespeare(an) pieces.

This package includes Jeffrey Wiesen’s examination of a classic Shakespeare piece, featuring the work of four seniors – Molly Sabet, Stephanie Fishbein, Sam Kestin, and Michelle Cahn – in *The Tempest*. Originally directed for the 2009 Drama Teacher’s Association of Southern California Shakespeare Competition, the AVPA Department of Theatre is especially proud and excited to present this work to the AVPA community at Java as it placed as one of six finalists in the DTASC competition on 24 April.

The Department is also delighted to present Katherine Fleeman’s original work entitled, *Romeo and Juliet in 15 Minutes*, directed by junior Theatre Design major, Joey Guthman. Fleeman’s piece explores *Romeo and Juliet* from what can be viewed as . . . a postmodern perspective!

Finally, Mr. Pernoon directs the first act of *Stageblood* by Charles Ludlam. *Stageblood* explores the eerie mirroring of the sequence of events in the original dramatic text of *Hamlet*, as experienced by a “local” theatre company’s touring production of *Hamlet*! The kaleidoscopic effect is sure to draw interest. Ludlam’s legacy as innovator of New York City’s “Ridiculous” Theatre movement adds further texture to this Shakespeare-fueled night of theatre pieces offered by the AVPA Theatre Department.

The Department looks forward to celebrating Java Gala with you!

Creative Director of Theatre, Farhang Pernoon



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## **JAVA GALA Benefit for AVPA Art**

This year’s Java Gala will be a unique opportunity for the entire AVPA to collaborate and celebrate the talent and creativity within our entire program. AVPA Visual Artists will exhibit their original artwork in the Lobby of Robert Frost Auditorium showcasing a variety of mediums, technical skills, and a diverse range of ideas and expressions created by each of the AVPA art students.

The art exhibition is the culmination and representation of an entire year of college art classes including: Design, Drawing II, Painting, and Watercolor classes with Jesse Benson; A.P. Studio Art, Studio Art, Beginning Drawing/Painting, MOCA artwork; Ryman Arts; scholarship and competition entries.

This year’s Java Gala theme is film and television shows made in Culver City, and is represented by the main stage Java Gala art panels, which are a long-standing Java tradition. This year, selected AVPA visual artists dedicated themselves to the task of recreating examples from Culver City’s rich visual history.

Each creative endeavor inspires young artists motivating them to develop and learn more about their creative process revealing the infinite possibilities within themselves. Making art is our humanity and our legacy. We hope you enjoy Java Gala and embrace the talent of our Academy students and faculty.

Creative Director of Art, Kristine Hatanaka

## **JAVA GALA Benefit for AVPA Film**

The Young Filmmakers are thrilled to present their best films from the past year. In the fall semester, we split up into production teams and created two films, "The Harry Hastings Method" and "Etiolate." Each film represents a unique approach to storytelling, directing, and the collaborative process itself. Josh Blake chose to adapt a short story by Warner Law and Nick Haley wrote an original script. Each production presented the director with myriad challenges including casting and directing adult actors and managing young film crews, some of whom were practicing their creative jobs on set for the first time. As the Creative Director for AVPA Film, I was pleased to see both directors work inter-departmentally: Josh cast a Culver City High School English teacher and also cast his lead actor from the talented pool of students in AVPA's Theatre Department. Concurrently, Nick worked on post production sound with a fellow student from the AVPA Music Department. These joint efforts are invaluable as the central duty of a director often involves identifying and allying oneself with other talented people. "Etiolate" recently won the Indieprinting.com Future Filmmakers Award for Best Male Actor in a Youth Film at The Method Fest, a film festival that focuses specifically on acting. "Hand to Hand", a script written by Cristián Rojas, won the Final Draft Future Filmmakers Award for Best Youth Screenplay in The Method Fest as well. As we began a new cycle of film production in the spring, the intersection amongst departments continued. Don't miss our Dance/Film installation on the patio outside during intermission and we hope to tempt you as well with a few film previews! Over spring break, we shot three more original scripts and at Java Gala we are pleased to present trailers for each of these films. Please join us at Java Gala, you the viewer and patron of the arts are the final piece of the collaborative puzzle...Enjoy!

Creative Director of Film, Alexis Butler

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## **JAVA GALA Benefit for AVPA Dance**

Java Gala is important to mark the year's end and to celebrate the tremendous effort made by both the teachers and the students. Week after week, month after month, the dance students perform endless plies, attempt to reach higher and lunge deeper, to turn with greater fluidity, and to invest in each movement with greater focus. In Java, we celebrate the technical and creative advancements of the year, and we honor the work that we have devoted ourselves to. Whether it is revisited from previous performances or created specifically for this event, Java Gala highlights significant artistic effort. For many of the students, Java not only marks the end of the year, but it signifies the end of their journey with the AVPA. After months and years of study, Java represents the pinnacle of their investment in their artistic study. It is their final expression and their closing statement. In Java Gala, we celebrate the Academy; the students and their teachers and mentors, their investments in the creative process, and their finest achievements.

Creative Director of Dance, Julie Carson

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## **JAVA GALA Benefit for AVPA Music**

"The showcase of the music department in Java Gala will highlight our ensembles: Jazz Ensemble, Chamber Singers, and our new Percussion Ensemble. The Jazz Ensemble will feature vocal soloists in two big band favorites, 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore,' and 'This Can't Be Love.' The Chamber Singers will perform a madrigal and a contrasting gospel song. The Percussion Ensemble, which is directed by Matt North, will perform a piece entitled 'Street Beats,' incorporating non-traditional musical instruments such as buckets and brake drums. The reception will also feature many of our smaller ensembles and soloists, including the Jazz Combo, as well as the String and Flute Ensembles. Music will be heard outside and inside the Frost throughout the reception and we hope everyone will enjoy the multitude of talent that night."

Creative Director of Music, Tony Spano

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**Join us for an outstanding evening of entertainment and help the AVPA thrive!**

**Tickets are \$35 in advance, available online at [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org). Tickets at the door will be \$40.**

## Art News

### AVPA Artist Wins Honorable Mention

Tatsiana Bondar was awarded Honorable Mention for this year's, "Water Is Life" art competition sponsored by The West Basin Municipal Water District for Southern California. Celebrating May 2009 as Water Awareness Month, the project was created to inspire students to learn about conserving precious water resources. Tatsiana was grateful to receive a \$100.00 gift certificate for her original artwork and earn the recognition for AVPA.



### La Ballona Mural Restoration Project

By Marisa Okano



AVPA Art Students helped to restore Postcards From La Ballona Mural at The Julian Dixon Library in Culver City. In commemoration of Earth Day, the restoration project required the involvement from the entire community. The original artists returned to bring the mural back to its original condition. Selected AVPA art students, students from CCMS, and adult volunteers all worked together in the sweltering sun to bring new life to a true Culver City landmark. The mural, originally completed in 1997, was ravaged by graffiti before a team of artists and other coordinators decided to give it a second chance. These artists stressed to many of the young volunteers that although graffiti is, at times, pleasing to the eye - it's not appropriate at all when covering another individual's work. Seeing the mural with its bright colors and cheerful images once again was a gratifying feeling. AVPA artists were given a unique opportunity to give back to the community with their creativity. A special thank you to Lori Escalera, Cathi Lamm, Francois Bardol, and Lucy Blake-Elahi for all their support in allowing us to help.

## The Rotary Club Awards AVPA Artists



AVPA Art Students are recognized for their original artwork for The Annual Rotary Club Art Competition. This year, Nozomi Uchida won First Place; Slaveya Minkova, Second Place; and Anisa Khanmohamed, Third Place. The Academy Art Students would like to thank Diane Kiyon and the entire Rotary Club for this opportunity. A special thank you for your continued support of the talented AVPA artists to Rotary Club President, Kathy Haworth.

### MOCA's Big Family Day & AVPA Artists

By Marisa Okano

On May 3rd, The Museum of Contemporary Art hosted its annual Big Family Day. Families from across Southern California visited the museum to gain new insight on various artworks and participate in fun activities relating to contemporary art. Along with Anisa Khanmohamed, I was trained by MOCA educators/artists to guide a short tour and a coloring activity based on Abstract Expressionist artist, Mark Rothko, and his series of expressive paintings. Rothko, an artist of the mid-twentieth century was someone who chose to portray emotion through shades of color rather than recognizable images. Although his work is minimal, I fell in love with the intentions he created in his work. Making a connection, I was able to present many eager parents and young ones what I had learned about Rothko's masterpieces.



The experiences that I have through the AVPA have allowed me to explore new areas of the art world while giving others new artistic outlets as well.

## **AVPA Artist Receives Summer Scholarship**

AVPA Art Student, Sequoyah Madison, received the honor of an Idyllwild Arts Academy Scholarship. Idyllwild Arts Academy is a private arts high school set in the San Jacinto Mountains of California. Idyllwild offers a disciplined college preparatory program for grades 9-12 and post-graduates-along with world-class training in creative writing, dance, film & video, interdisciplinary arts, music, theatre, and visual arts. Each year, one student from the prestigious Ryman Arts program is selected based on recommendation only to attend any visual arts class of their choice. On being selected, Sequoyah says, "I am ecstatic. The classes at Idyllwild requires that I live on campus for two weeks. Out of the numerous classes that Idyllwild offers, ranging from dance to film to painting, I have chosen to enroll into the Masters Art class which is a class designed to help students create a portfolio for college."

## **AVPA Theatre Students Attend 2009 Shakespeare Festival**

On April 25, four AVPA Senior theatre students, and three AVPA Junior theatre students attended the 2009 Drama Teacher's Association of Southern California Shakespeare Competition at Reseda High School. Michelle Cahn, Stephanie Fishbein, Sam Kestin, and Molly Sabet competed in the category "Shakespeare's Women" as directed by Jeffrey Wiesen in the 10 week Shakespeare workshop they have been enrolled in during Spring 2009.

Conor Murphy, Ben Klemes, and Madison Neufeld competed in the category "Modern Plays Based on Shakespeare" with a revamped and new staging of 2008's One-Act Festival centerpiece "An Actor's Nightmare" directed by Mr. Pernoon.

The campus was electric with hundreds of talented and passionate theatre students from across Southern California. The morning started with a rally and opening announcements. All performers competed in two preliminary rounds (Round I and II) by 11:00 a.m. After a one hour break, all seven of our AVPA Theatre students were announced as semi-finalists. After lunch, students competed in semi-finals and, after tabulations, CCHS AVPA went on to finals.

Mr. Pernoon is delighted and proud to announce that both pieces, "The Tempest," and "An Actor's Nightmare" placed as finalists with Honorable Mention at this event. Plaques will be presented to Mrs. Magee for display in the CCHS Main Office.

## **CCHS Music Department Spring Concert**

The Culver City High School Music Department presents its annual Spring Music Concert on Wednesday, May 27, at 7 pm in the Robert Frost Auditorium. The finale of the music program's 2008-09 year includes the high school's Concert Choir and Concert Band, both directed by Dr. Tony Spano. They will be joined by the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts' Jazz Ensemble, Chamber Singers, and Percussion, Flute and String Ensembles. The theme of the concert is "American Music." Some of the featured works are a choral setting of a theme from Dvorak's "New World Symphony" entitled "Goin' Home." The Concert Band will perform a stunning arrangement of "America The Beautiful" called "Amber Waves of Grain." The Band will also finish the concert with America's most beloved march, Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever."

The spring concert is also the last concert for many graduating seniors who will be recognized during the program, including those who are graduating from the AVPA. The AVPA Chamber Singers are directed by Lisa Michel, which will perform American composer Aaron Copland's "Ching-A-Ring-Chaw," as well as Duke Ellington's "It Don't Mean A Thing." The AVPA Jazz Ensemble, directed by Dr. Spano, will feature vocal soloists performing Ellington's "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and the Rodgers and Hart tune "This Can't Be Love," both classics from the Great American Songbook.

The AVPA Percussion Ensemble will perform two contrasting works - "Street Beats" and a fun arrangement the "William Tell Overture." The ensemble is directed by Matt North, who coached the Culver High Centaur Marching Band's drumline in the fall.

"We are proud to present the results of a semester's worth of work by all our students," says Dr. Spano. Admission is a suggested donation of \$5.

## **AVPA Academy Awards will be held**

on Saturday, June 6, at the CCHS campus quad near the cafeteria. A potluck lunch will begin at noon, and the awards and graduation certificates will be given out beginning at 1:00 pm. Contact your Department Representative on how you can help out.

## **SAVE THE DATE!!!**

AVPA Film Dept. presents 3 film premieres at Sony Pictures Studios on June 12, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

The spring film projects are: "Hand to Hand" directed by Cristian Rojas, "Vents for Angst" directed by Josh Blake, and "0h00" directed by Nick Haley.

More info will be in the next issue of the Spotlight!

## In The Spotlight with François-Pierre Couture

François-Pierre moved from Montréal to Los Angeles to complete his study in theatre at UCLA. After successfully completing a masters degree in scenic and lighting design in 2006, he joined The Actors' Gang Theatre and had the opportunity to design the scenery and lighting for several of their productions. He has also designed in several theatres in Los Angeles such as the Bootleg Theatre, the Los Angeles Theatre Center and the Geffen Playhouse, to only name a few. As a scenic designer for the touring production of *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, François-Pierre also had the opportunity to broaden his horizons and work across the United-States.

Since January 2009, François-Pierre has been teaching a Lighting Design class for the AVPA in addition to designing the lights for the spring musical, *Singin' In The Rain*. Third-year Theatre Design major Zak Malsich interviews François-Pierre:



### ***Where did you first find your interest in Theatre and Stage Lighting/Scenic Design?***

When I was 16 years old, in high school in Montreal. I was taking an art class and we had to help design the set for a production of a Moliere play in which I was in charge of painting the second floor of the house. But as a child, I always preferred to look at the scenery and lights rather than listening to the play, so we can say that I have been interested in visual arts for a very long time...

### ***What are some of the most interesting productions and projects you have worked on?***

It is very hard to answer such a question, as every production is interesting for different reasons. For example, I enjoy working at the Actors' Gang Theatre because of the strong and raw artistic content. I also worked on a play called *Beethoven As I Knew Him* that toured across the United States, which was very challenging to design the set for as it was featured in many different theatres. Every project is interesting in its own way... and I am not a "favourite" kind of person (favourite colour, food, etc.) as I like diversity and challenges and I see every project as a chance to outdo myself.

### ***What are some of the best, and worst, experiences you've had working in the theatre?***

Without giving names, I can say that the best experiences I have had always include people who are honest, generous, organized, and fun to work with. The opposite can be very frustrating but I think the worst experience was when I felt abused and left alone during the construction of a set.

### ***Do you find being a teacher more enjoyable than being just a designer?***

As I said before, I like diversity and challenges and being a teacher and a designer are not mutually exclusive. I actually think that working in the professional world is imperative if I want to be a teacher, which on the other hand, has allowed me to fill my need to share my knowledge to the next generation of designers. So I enjoy both, equally, for different reasons.

### ***What are some of your professional goals for the future, either with teaching or designing?***

As a designer, I would like to expand my career to Europe and Asia and be involved with new and exiting work, but everyone could say that! More specifically, I would like to work with the Cirque du Soleil, Robert Lepage (my long time theatre idol), le Theatre du Soleil in Paris, at the Lanterna Magica in Prague...

Teaching-wise, I do not have long-term goals yet. I am still learning the ways and I am open to what the future has in store.

To see samples of François-Pierre Couture stage designs please visit [www.fpcouture.com](http://www.fpcouture.com)

# AVPA Foundation Annual Membership Meeting

The AVPA Foundation was founded in 2005 by a group of parents dedicated to helping stabilize and grow the resources of the Academy. The all-volunteer organization is incorporated as a 501c3 public benefit corporation and is led by a board and officers who are parents of students in the AVPA. The board consists of one representative and an alternate from each of the 5 AVPA departments. Officers consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer who can be from any department. All parents of students in the AVPA are officially members of the AVPA Foundation. The Foundation's annual all-member meeting will be on Tuesday, June 9 at 7pm at the SPoT (black box theatre). The agenda includes:

- A summary of the year's accomplishments
- The financial report
- A discussion of the coming year's priorities
- Election of next year's board members
- Selection of officers.

All AVPA parents are welcome! Please plan to attend. If you have questions, care to nominate board member or officer candidates, or stake your claim to a committee chair, please email [info@avpafoundation.org](mailto:info@avpafoundation.org).

## AVPA Foundation – Special Committees

The AVPA Foundation Board is hoping to establish several special committees for next year to take charge of some of the year's most important fundraising opportunities and events. The Committee chair and members would be AVPA parents but not necessarily on the Board of Directors.

**Ad Sales** - The new AVPA production programs have been very well received this year with layout and design by James Malsich. Now we need to make the programs pay for themselves (ie for printing) and generate additional funds for the AVPA by focusing on selling ad space to our community and local businesses. Are you a great sales person? This is the committee for you!

**Stussy Sale** - We've conducted these parking lot sales for 4 years. This year's sales in November and April generated \$2,000 with additional proceeds from concessions and DVD sales. Susan Bronstein has done an outstanding job coordinating these sales for 2 years and is ready to pass on the job along with all the knowledge and systems she has created to make the sales run smoothly.

**Merchandise Sales** - This year we opened a new Café Press on-line store with all kinds of AVPA logo merchandise available. We can increase our margin on these items by having an inventory on hand to sell directly at AVPA events. We need a committee to promote the on-line store, manage a direct-sale inventory and be responsible for bookkeeping. This committee would also develop the potential of our existing links to amazon.com and e-Scrip. Release your inner entrepreneur and head this committee!

**Java Gala Benefit** - This is the first year for a combined AVPA showcase (as in Java Drama at the Ivy Substation) and benefit (as in Night of a Thousand Stars at the Kirk Douglas) and the Foundation Board

has learned a lot about what it takes to sponsor such an event at the Robert Frost. This committee would work together next year to publicize the event, sell tickets, and plan and execute a successful pre-show reception! Do you like to give parties? Then this is the committee for you.

### ***We are also looking for individuals to take over the following jobs:***

**Program Publisher** -The Publisher is responsible for working with AVPA staff to generate the program portion of the book and also places and formats the ads, delivers the final pdf file to the printer and ensures the correct printing of the book. About 10 programs are published per year. Appropriate software and skills are required.

**Database Master (apprentice)** - Our AVPA database is a critical resource for keeping in touch with students, parents, alumni as well as our supporters, donors, and the larger community. AVPA parent Allison Ocegüera currently keeps those records up to date but she's looking for an apprentice to learn the ropes and to take over when her daughter graduates in 2010. Internet access and general computer skills are required.

**Database Host/Programmer** - We would have no database if it weren't for the skill and dedication of Frank Giffen, an AVPA alumni parent, who programmed and now supports the database on his server. We're looking for another skilled parent to take over.

**Web Master** - The AVPA Foundation website is in need of a new look! Be a part of the redesign effort this summer and then become next year's Web Master who cares for and updates the site throughout the year. Our current Web Master is alumni parent, Steve Wallace.

# pictures



Photos from *Caution: That's a Dance* by Daniel Foster



# calendar

## JAVA GALA Benefit for AVPA

Friday, May 22, Robert Frost Auditorium

## CCHS/AVPA Spring Music Concert

May 27, 7 pm, Robert Frost

**Academy Awards:** Saturday June 6, 12 noon

## AVPA Foundation Membership Meeting

Tuesday, June 9, 7PM; SPoT (Black Box)

## Spring Film Premieres

Friday, June 12, 6:30 PM; Sony Pictures Ent.

## Ryman Arts Graduation/Exhibition

The California African American Museum

Tuesday, June 23, 6:00 - 8:00 PM

RSVP to [info@ryman.org](mailto:info@ryman.org) or 213-629-2787

Always check [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org)  
for schedule changes.

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