DEAN’S MESSAGE

As we welcome faculty, staff and students back to campus and embark on another year of discovery and adventure in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, it is a good time to reflect on why we do what we do. We take seriously our responsibility to educate the next generation of leaders and citizens with the skills of creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. We are in the business of bettering the quality of life for our students, our community and the region.

Over the past year, CVPA faculty members have engaged in creative scholarship across the globe. Closer to home, we have created the first online undergraduate degree program at UM, and are actively engaged in the Kennedy Center’s Any Given Child initiative to bring exposure in all of the arts to K-8 students in Missoula. Many of our students have won prestigious awards, gone on to graduate study, joined the workforce, earned internships and are sharing their talents and innovative spirits throughout Montana and the nation. In April 2014, I sang an opera at Carnegie Hall and was reminded that artistic expression is the greatest way to harness the power of the mind and the heart.

Thank you for supporting the arts as patrons, audience members and advocates. A life imbued with the arts is a life well lived.

Best wishes,

Stephen Kalm, Dean
College of Visual and Performing Arts

IN MEMORIAM
Joseph Henry • Bill Raoul • Rachel Sprunk Smith

ADVISORY COUNCIL
Cathy Capps, President
Gary Bowman • Kim Chambers • Pam Copley • Janet Haines
Mary Head • Bob Homer • Ron Klapakhe • Caryl Klein
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Sue Stanaway • Geoff Sutton • Twila Wolfe
ODYSSEY OF THE STARS 2015
Rene Haynes, Casting Director

The UM College of Visual and Performing Arts is proud to honor Rene Haynes, casting director and Theatre & Dance alumna. Haynes is a two-time Emmy nominee for the TNT/DreamWorks miniseries Into the West and the HBO feature Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, for which she also received the Artios Award for excellence in casting. Haynes is one of the foremost experts in Native American and First Nations casting, and consults on many domestic and foreign projects. She easily moves back and forth between large studio projects with industry icons such as Steven Spielberg, Terrence Malick, and the late Richard Attenborough, to casting lower-budget first features for emerging and student filmmakers. Haynes became part of the uber-crazy pop-culture world surrounding the Twilight series when she joined the casting team to find the Wolf Pack for Twilight Saga: New Moon and all the leads in Twilight Saga: Eclipse.

Among her recent independent film credits, she is particularly proud of having cast Jeff Barnaby’s feature debut, Rhymes for Young Ghouls, in which the young lead, unknown First Nations actress Kawennahere Devery Jacobs, went on to be nominated Best Actress for the 2014 Canadian Screen Awards (Canada’s equivalent to the Academy Awards) and the critically lauded independent feature Winter in the Blood, based on the acclaimed James Welch novel, for fellow Montanans Alex and Andrew Smith.

Haynes is recognized as the go-to expert in her niche and specializes in conducting international talent searches. She enjoys projects with very specific and challenging casting needs. Her worldwide search for the female lead in Terrence Malick’s The New World, for example. The film’s 14-year-old lead, Q’orianka Kilcher, went on to earn “Best Breakthrough Performance by an Actress” in 2005 from the National Board of Review.

Due to the search aspect of her casting outreach and the increasing use of the Internet as a casting platform, Haynes created the 10 Basic Steps for Taping Your Own Audition actor’s tool, which is utilized and published throughout the industry. Based on this work, she presents workshops to many acting programs and festivals. Haynes is dedicated to the ideals of mentorship and freely contributes her time as a member of the SAG/AFTRA diversity workshop The Business of Acting. She has presented this workshop throughout the US, giving individuals interested in the acting profession a comprehensive overview of the basic professional tools they need to develop, as well as invaluable insights on the film and audition process. These SAG/AFTRA workshops are always free to the public.

Never one to be put off by a challenge, Haynes has also cast foreign language films in languages that she does not actually speak ... Die Laughing (Vietnamese), and lead roles for Le Jaguar and Le Fil du Francais (French) and Der Freiheit Entgegen (German).

Haynes was one of the producers on the award-winning, independent film Butterfly Dreaming and is on the producing teams of The Baker’s Son, Bookworm, The English Major and several other projects in development.

She is the Native Casting Consultant on the Alejandro González Iñárritu feature film The Revenant, casting Soul Catcher, based on the Frank Herbert novel, which is in development and is in preparation to cast Lewis & Clark, an upcoming HBO miniseries.

Haynes’ family moved to Great Falls, MT, when she was in her early teens. She attended CM Russell High School and the University of Montana, where she was a Theatre major and a proud member of Alpha Omicron Pi sorority. She now resides in Los Angeles, CA.

CONGRATULATIONS TO AMBER BUSHNELL
UMArts Graphic Designer
(MFA Media Arts ‘11)

We would like to congratulate Amber Bushnell, UMArts’ Graphic Designer, for winning “Best in Show” at digitalgraffiti2014. Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach, FL, is the world’s first outdoor projection art festival. This innovative, one-of-a-kind dynamic event celebrates the many possibilities found at the intersection of art and architecture. During the three-night event, dozens of digital artist finalists from around the globe were invited to showcase their original work and competed for cash prize awards in a juried art competition. Utilizing the latest technologies, the finalists’ art is projected throughout the town on its iconic white walls.

Digital artists explore how fluid forms intersect with technology and wrap the architecture of Alys Beach to create entirely new art forms. Guests who attend Digital Graffiti are able to view and participate in these installments, experiencing some of the latest trends in digital art and technology. In 2014, 29 artists representing 24 cities in 12 countries on four different continents competed. “We definitely had an impressive group of artists representing Digital Graffiti this year;” says Digital Graffiti curator and judge Brett Phares. “You will see work that emphasizes design and shape; you will also see work that is very personal and soulful—these artists have stories to tell.” For more information, visit digitalgraffiti.com.

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UM SCHOOL OF ART INTRODUCES THE FABLAB

The School of Art has developed a digital fabrication laboratory, or FabLab. It houses cutting-edge equipment that helps students input digital files and export tangible objects. The lab will serve the entire School and will anchor courses such as Photo I, Photo II, Sculpture II: Digital Fabrication, and the graduate-level course Beyond Art School. The lab was developed by Assistant Professor Matt Hamon, Professor Elizabeth Dove and 2-D Technician Jason Clark.

The FabLab houses large- and small-scale 3-D printers, object and film scanners, figure scanners, large-format printers, and a vinyl cutter. As an extension of the FabLab, the sculpture studio houses a 4’ x 8’ CNC router. In addition to large equipment, the FabLab will serve as a hub for checking out School of Art technology such as DSLR cameras, audio equipment, lighting equipment and electronics kits. There are stations for soldering, basic micro-controller design used in art installations, and responsive ‘smart’ objects. The lab opened Fall 2014. For more information, call the School of Art at 406.243.4181.

MONTANA REP

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, adapted for the stage by Simon Levy

2015 National Tour

I think I can safely say I love The Great Gatsby. The power of the narrative; the accurate, haunting, and heartfelt snapshot of the Roaring Twenties; and the sheer beauty of the prose still take my breath away. I’ve discovered and rediscovered this masterpiece over the years with new perspective, joy and appreciation.

I first read The Great Gatsby in one thrilling afternoon on the Jersey shore during high school, and I have long dreamed of bringing the novel to the stage. Only recently has this become possible, with the publication of Simon Levy’s masterful adaptation. Although there are several movie versions of varying artistic merit, the stage offers a new, exciting, and fertile ground for the story. On the stage we can feel the energy of Jay Gatsby, the sensual allure of Daisy Buchanan, and the Everyman complexity of Nick Carraway.

As Montana Rep continues telling great American stories, we approach The Great Gatsby with all the honor and care such an outstanding work of art deserves. We’re pleased to reintroduce and reinvigorate this classic, bringing the beauty and poetry of this masterpiece—living and breathing on stage—to a new generation of theatergoers.

~ Greg Johnson, Artistic Director

VIENNA

City of Music

Every night in Vienna about 10,000 music fans are treated to classical music, something that is simply unheard of in any other city in the world! We invite you to join the fun during our 2015 Vienna Study Abroad trip, May 26-July 6.

Vienna’s musical life is dominated by four monumental performance venues, the Musikverein, Vienna Konzerthaus, Vienna State Opera House and Cathedral-Stephansdom. Combined with world-class theatre, art museums, galleries and historic sites that span the ages, there is something for everyone in Vienna. Students also participate in field trips to other areas of interest such as Salzburg and Prague.

Ranked as the “best city in the world to live,” Vienna has proven itself to be safe, friendly to Americans and clean. Students will live in apartments with full kitchens, living rooms or common areas close to classes, transportation, concerts, faculty, top medical facilities, shopping and recreation.

Students enjoy world-class concerts, opera and art, such as the Vienna Philharmonic, considered by many to be the best in the world. Students engage in performances and open rehearsals, and engage in the following. Vienna State Opera: participants experience one of the top opera addresses in the world—and hear the best in first-class productions. The famous stage offers a different program every day, with over 50 operas and ballets each season; Chamber Music: hear the leading pianists, violinists, cellists, string quartets, contemporary ensembles, vocalists, wind players, brass ensembles, percussionists and period instrument ensembles in the world; Venna Boys Choir: Attend grand choral concerts and performances by the Vienna Boys Choir who have an enthusiastic international following. They are often called “the youngest Viennese Ambassadors”; Museum of Fine Arts: built in 1891, near the Imperial Palace, houses the extensive collections of the imperial family. With its vast array of eminent works, it is considered one of the most illustrious museums in the world. Rembrandt to Monet, it is all there!

The 2015 Vienna program includes 178 miles of walking tours. Participants see the homes of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, and visit the graves of these Vienna composers Mahler and Brahms. Students will walk where they walked and listen to concerts in the grand halls that premiered their works.

If you are 50+, the Osher Lifelong Learning at the University of Montana (MOLLI) at UM is offering portions of the Vienna trip to members. For more information about this opportunity, contact MOLLI at 406.243.2905 or molli@umontana.edu.

To find out more information about the program, including courses, cost, housing and financial assistance, contact Maxine Ramey at maxine.ramey@umontana.edu or 406.243.6880.
AMERICAN COLLEGE DANCE FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION (ACDFA)
Facilitating the Convergence of Many Communities
by Ariana Hunter (BFA Senior, Dance)

In April 2014, over 400 dancers from across the western US came to the University of Montana for the Northwest Regional Conference of the American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) to share work, take classes, and build creative communities. A team of Dance Program faculty, two student coordinators, eight student interns, and over 30 volunteers from UM came together to host the event.

The group of volunteer interns began meeting in September 2013 to help prepare for the Conference. We brainstormed ideas, enacted projects and work groups, and worked extensively with our Conference coordinator, Professor Nicole Bradley Browning, to prepare to host an incredible Conference. Throughout the preparation process we all brought our own ideas and skills but worked well as a cohesive group to create the experience that we wanted to share with everyone who came. Our theme for the Northwest Regional Conference was “Converging Communities.” We were indeed bringing together a multitude of different unique artistic communities into one collaborative, supportive environment to share, grow, and learn together. Each college/university had their own community of artistry; it was incredible to share and celebrate each of them and to see the amazing things that could happen when these communities came together.

As a group of interns and volunteers, we worked extensively together to prepare for and run a successful event. Our interns worked throughout the year to fundraise and spread word of the event to the Missoula community and to plan classes, schedules, parties, food, and fun events. This allowed each of us to bring our own skills into the preparation and to explore new leadership roles while instilling immense pride about our own community in hosting the event.

It was incredible to spend such an extensive amount of time preparing for the event and knowing all of the ins and outs of it. I experienced all of the different sides of the Conference: as a host, dancer, volunteer, and performer. As one of the student coordinators, I worked extensively with the visiting programs to generate and design all of our playbills and other print materials for the Conference. I learned a great deal about how to organize and design information for a large festival into one booklet playbill and several small playbills for special events while also increasing my skills in how to correspond with many people to gather and edit this important information long before we were all in the same place.

Using our theme of “Converging Communities,” I came up with the idea to create a collaborative dance-for-camera piece that merged the artistic communities of each program into one film that brought us together. I was able to bring this idea to life for our Opening Concert. I created a short dance phrase that I sent out to each participating college/university. Their dancers made it their own and sent it back to me; I then edited together the 60-plus minutes of footage I received into a seven-minute film. It was incredible to have the chance to facilitate and complete such a large project within the framework of the many other projects we did for such a large event.

The Conference was truly amazing, bringing together faculty, students, and dance enthusiasts from all over to share in the love and power of dance. Dance, art, classes, ideas, feedback, friendship, and community were all cultivated and shared throughout the week. Working as a student coordinator was an extremely fulfilling, inspiring, defining experience: it brought me many skills and experiences that I will keep with me throughout my time at UM and as I go into the dance field.
ONLINE BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN MEDIA ARTS

Students can earn the University of Montana’s first fully online bachelor of arts degree. Beginning Fall 2014, the UM School of Media Arts launched its online bachelor’s degree in integrated digital media.

The program allows students to tap into their creative potential through the study and artistic application of emerging digital technologies. Courses will focus on interactive media, the web and internet, gaming and digital design applications.

According to Media Arts Director Mark Shogren, the online option allows students to pursue their degree or even a double major in a more flexible way. Taking advantage of UM’s flat spot tuition—no increase in tuition costs beyond 12 credits—adding a couple of classes from this innovative new program can help a student diversify his/her education and work around a busy schedule.

Shogren imagines two main types of learners will be drawn to the new online program. One includes on-campus students looking to supplement another major with complementary skills through media arts. Another is the distance learner, who either can’t make it to Missoula or would rather stay in his/her community or country to take advantage of a completely digital education.

The degree requires 42 core credits and six elective credits, as well as UM’s standard general education credits, which also can be completed online. Distance-learning students will never need to visit campus, but the School will offer a physical connection to the program for local students.

There are no prerequisites for students to enter the program. UM students enrolled in any of the first-year classes can declare the media arts major, and on-campus students are welcome in the online program along with students from across the globe.

“We want to not only create online courses, but online experiences,” Shogren said.

For more information on the School of Media Arts online bachelor’s degree, visit umt.edu/mediaarts.

AMERICAN COLLEGE DANCE FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION (ACDFA)

Stepping into the Professional World by Jessica Goldade (BFA Theatre ’14)

Being a part of the American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) Northwest Regional Conference was the perfect way to end my senior year. As the stage manager, I was responsible for making sure the technical rehearsals and the performances went smoothly.

This was the largest festival on which I have ever worked; there were over 40 schools from across the west in attendance, and we rehearsed and performed over 40 dance pieces by producing four concerts in two days. For some pieces the technical requirements were very simple … lights up and lights down with no props. Others were more complicated with multiple sound cues, light cues, and props involved. In some cases, I was given a list of times—for example I would call a particular cue when my stopwatch read 1 minute 23 seconds. In other cases, the choreographer would come up to the booth to call the show herself or himself. There were even a few cases when I called the cues for a dance based off the piece’s movement … that I had seen only once!

At first I was terrified. These dances were being adjudicated by internationally renowned choreographers and I wanted them to be the best they could be. Once I got started, though, I knew I could do it. After the first performance, my technicians and I got in a rhythm and the next three were easy to manage.

What made this experience so enlightening for me as a soon-to-be graduate was the ability to work with such wonderful collaborators. Peter J. Jakubowski from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, guided us and UM graduate Morgan Cerovski (BFA Theatre ’12) was the head of our technical crew. Both of them taught me so much about the professional world. As a team, we were able to bring all of the shows together very smoothly in an extremely brief time frame.

I learned a massive amount from stage managing for ACDFA, but what stands out the most is the realization that performing art is truly universal. Everyone wants to put on the best show possible for their audiences. We might not take all of the same steps to get there, but the goal is always the same—to put on a performance that we are proud of.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TREY HILL

Associate Professor Trey Hill was featured in the October edition of Ceramics Monthly, the most highly circulated craft publication in the world. This included a prestigious full-page front-cover image of his work “Navigating the Decline,” a 4.5 feet tall, underglazed ceramic sculpture with metal leaf and powder-coated steel, 2013 (photo at right: Louis Habeck, BFA ’11).

Hill and Associate Professor Kevin Bell explored international residencies for graduate students at the Da Wang Cultural Highlands in Da Wang, China. Hill was then invited to the Fule International Art Museum and worked for five weeks on a large-scale ceramic sculpture for an upcoming solo exhibition in Xian, China.

PROFESSOR BETH LO

Professor Beth Lo was commissioned to make an ambitious ceramic installation for the Seventh Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale 2013, in Korea’s Gyeonggi Province. In addition to this international honor, Lo was selected as the closing speaker and exhibiting artist at the American Pottery Festival held at the Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis, MN, September 11-13, 2014. Lo also exhibited at the Ohio Craft Museum (Columbus, OH) in an all-media national invitational titled Figure It.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LORI GRAY

Lori Gray presented two papers at the International Society for Music Education (ISME) conference in Brazil this summer. ISME is the premiere international organization for Music Education, with members from more than 80 countries. In addition to presenting, Gray visited local universities to network and to learn about Music Education in Brazil. She also recently attended the Kennedy Center’s Any Given Child exchange conference in Washington, D.C. Missoula was selected as the 13th city (of 14) to participate in the Any Given Child initiative. Several CVPA faculty members, including Dean Kalm, serve on Missoula’s Community Arts Team for this four-year initiative guided by representatives from the Kennedy Center. The program will help Missoula community members enact a shared vision to provide additional quality arts education programming to all Missoula County Public School students in K-8. Gray traveled to the exchange with three other Missoula representatives: John Combs, MCPS Fine Arts Supervisor; Tom Bensen, Missoula Cultural Council; and Mike Halligan, Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation. All 14 cities gathered for the two-day exchange to share ideas, present successes and challenges, and develop innovative plans to add quality arts education programs for K-8 students.

SCHOOL OF MUSIC WOODWIND FACULTY

During the past year, every UM woodwind professor has been selected by peer review to perform at national and international conferences and festivals in their discipline. This speaks to the strength of UM’s woodwind faculty and the national and international reputation that the Woodwind Division at UM holds.

UM saxophone professor Johan Eriksson and UM clarinet professor Christopher Kirkpatrick were selected by peer review to perform at the North American Saxophone Alliance Biannual National Conference held at the University of Illinois. Eriksson was also selected to give an hour lecture on jazz pedagogy for classically trained musicians. Jennifer Cavanaugh, UM oboe professor, and Kirkpatrick teamed up to perform at the prestigious International Double Reed Society annual conference in New York City. Cavanaugh also performed with voice professor Kimberly James at the same conference. Margaret Schuberg, UM flute professor, was selected to perform with the International Flute Orchestra in their tour of Spain. Kirkpatrick and Maxine Ramey, Director of the School of Music, toured South Korea, performing and presenting master classes culminating in a performance at the Busan International Clarinet Festival. Kirkpatrick, Ramey and Cavanaugh, along with UM violinist Margaret Baldridge, performed at the International Clarinet Association’s Clarinetfest2014 at Louisiana State University. Ramey and Baldridge performed at the Clarinetfest2013 in Assisi, Italy, and at the 2013 Spanish National Clarinet Festival. Ramey moved into the position of President of the International Clarinet Association in September 2014.
WELCOME ASSISTANT PROFESSOR TALENA SANDERS

Media Arts welcomes Talena Sanders to the School. Sanders is a filmmaker and interdisciplinary artist interested in the development of individual and collective senses of identity in the context of religious and affinity groups. Through examining the influences of visual and material culture, dress and adornment, and geographic place, her work seeks to understand the ways in which people produce their self-worth within and against social institutions. She holds an MFA from Duke University’s Experimental and Documentary Arts program and a BFA from the University of Kentucky. Sanders’ work has been screened, exhibited, and collected internationally, including at the New York Film Festival’s Views from the Avant-Garde, Marseille Festival of Documentary Film, Montreal International Documentary Festival, Indie Festival Brazil, Media City Film Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, and Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. She is a proud Kentuckian.

PROFESSORS MARK SHOGREN AND MICHAEL MURPHY

Media Arts Professors Mark Shogren and Michael Murphy attended the 68th annual University Film and Video Conference. This year’s annual gathering of filmmakers, scholars, and teachers was held at Montana State University in Bozeman, August 6-9, 2014. The theme was Nature and Narrative. Shogren and Murphy were invited to screen their award-winning short film Be Again on August 9.

MUST-READ BOOKS

Dance Integration, by Karen Kaufmann and Jordan Dehline

Written by Karen Kaufmann, Professor and Head of Dance, and Jordan Dehline, Adjunct Instructor of Dance (BFA Dance ’08), Dance Integration offers three dozen lesson plans that use dance learning to bring mathematics and science curricula to life. These plans, ideal for students in kindergarten through fifth grades, have proven to improve literacy in dance, mathematics, and science. The groundbreaking book infuses creativity into mathematics and science content; the lesson plans aim to increase student comfort in public performance and discussion while deepening understanding through their kinesthetic experiences. Kaufmann and Dehline provide teachers with tried-and-true methods for connecting to 21st-century learning standards and integrating dance into the K-5 curricula. Students who have exposure to the precepts found in Dance Integration will gain a wealth of critical knowledge, deepen their critical-thinking skills, and learn to collaborate and communicate effectively. The authors’ fundamental goal is to help bring joy and excitement into classrooms.

Acting Successful: Using Performance Skills in Everyday Life, by Jillian Campana

Dr. Jillian Campana (pictured below), Professor of Theatre and Head of Acting/Directing, published a new book, Acting Successful: Using Performance Skills in Everyday Life. The book demonstrates how students and scholars in any discipline can benefit from learning acting skills and techniques. Dr. Campana reveals how the development of acting talents leads to a more expressive, confident, and creative identity; how such abilities can guide and influence the reactions of others; and why the craft of acting builds social, emotional, and cognitive skills. In dealing with topics such as Imagination, Observation, Improvisation, Body Language, Character, Voice, and Movement, it describes how acting skills are truly life skills and offers a rationale for why everyone needs an acting class. Acting Successful has been designed as the first text for Introduction to Acting classes nationwide. The book is also useful as a training tool for business professionals and clinical practitioners and features real-world examples of how acting training contributed directly to the success of individuals now in a wide variety of fields. The book prominently features UM Theatre & Dance productions, classes, and students in photographs.
Christopher Stark is a composer of contemporary classical music deeply rooted in the American West. Having spent his formative years in rural western Montana, his music is always seeking to capture the expansive energy of this quintessential American landscape.

A 2004 UM graduate of composition, his music has been described as “fetching and colorful” by the New York Times, and his work has been performed around the world, from Berlin to Carnegie Hall. A recipient of the coveted Underwood Commission from the American Composers Orchestra, and recent winner of the prix de composition from the Orléans International Piano Competition, his music was featured on NPR’s “Performance Today” and broadcast as a fan-voted favorite on WQXR, New York City’s classical music station.

Stark has been programmed, rehearsed, and performed by such ensembles as the Sacramento Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Dinosaur Annex, University of Texas Wind Ensemble, CCM Wind Symphony, Israeli Chamber Project, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Momenta Quartet, and members of Eighth Blackbird. Most recently, Stark was awarded a Fromm Foundation Commission and was one of three winners of the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings Commission Project. He also worked with Grammy-winning country music artists Zac Brown Band on an arrangement of their hit song Free for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Slatkin.

Stark recently finished his doctorate at Cornell University where he studied with Roberto Sierra and Steven Stucky. He previously studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory, the University of Montana, and abroad with composers Samuel Adler, Michael Fiday, David Maslanka, and Charles Nichols. Stark was recently a visiting professor of composition, theory, and music technology at Cornell and UM. In Fall 2014, he began a post as Assistant Professor of Composition at Washington University in St. Louis. Stark was a resident artist in Italy at Civitella Ranieri in 2012.

Christopher Stark (BM, Composition/Music Technology, ’04)

UM Student and Alumni Win Prestigious Public Broadcast System’s P.O.V. Award

UM College of Visual and Performing Arts students and alumni took home top honors from the Hot Docs International Documentary Film Festival in Toronto, Canada. Director Rachel Stevens, a second-year MFA student in the School of Media Arts Digital Filmmaking program collaborated with Josef “Tuna” Metesh (BFA Media Arts ’13), Sarah Meismer (BFA Art, Media Arts ’13), and Caitlin Hofmeister (MFA Media Arts ’12) to create the documentary 20/Nothing. The film received the award for Best Experimental Film and the coveted PBS P.O.V. (Point of View) Award, which comes with opportunities for theatrical screenings in major cities and television exposure. P.O.V. is television’s longest-running showcase for independent non-fiction films. P.O.V. films are known for their intimacy, their unforgettable storytelling and their timeliness, putting a human face on contemporary social issues.

The short film was created in just five days as part of the International Documentary Challenge. 20/Nothing was selected as one of twelve finalists from over 100 entries to premiere at the 2014 Hot Docs Festival, North America’s largest documentary film festival. The team was encouraged to attend and began crowdsourcing the funds through theaudienceawards.com to attend. In addition, they received support from the Montana Film Office. 20/Nothing is the second collaboration for this group of intrepid filmmakers. Their first joint effort screened this winter at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in Missoula.

“I was blown away as we sat there watching the films from the International Documentary Challenge— they were all incredible,” says Stevens. “I was certain that 20/Nothing’s highest award would be showing a film that we made and love at Hot Docs alongside talented filmmakers from all over the world. When they announced ‘This year’s P.O.V. Award goes to 20/Nothing,’ directed by Rachel Stevens,’ we were absolutely shocked. Throughout the rest of the weekend we learned to trust that strong feeling we had during the making of 20/Nothing, which was, this is something good. We want to make more things like that, together. You will see more from us. Guaranteed.”

20/Nothing

Rachel Stevens, a second-year MFA student in the School of Media Arts Digital Filmmaking program collaborated with Josef “Tuna” Metesh (BFA Media Arts ’13), Sarah Meismer (BFA Art, Media Arts ’13), and Caitlin Hofmeister (MFA Media Arts ’12) to create the documentary 20/Nothing.

Win Prestigious Public Broadcast System’s P.O.V. Award

UM College of Visual and Performing Arts students and alumni took home top honors from the Hot Docs International Documentary Film Festival in Toronto, Canada. Director Rachel Stevens, a second-year MFA student in the School of Media Arts Digital Filmmaking program collaborated with Josef “Tuna” Metesh (BFA Media Arts ’13), Sarah Meismer (BFA Art, Media Arts ’13), and Caitlin Hofmeister (MFA Media Arts ’12) to create the documentary 20/Nothing. The film received the award for Best Experimental Film and the coveted PBS P.O.V. (Point of View) Award, which comes with opportunities for theatrical screenings in major cities and television exposure. P.O.V. is television’s longest-running showcase for independent non-fiction films. P.O.V. films are known for their intimacy, their unforgettable storytelling and their timeliness, putting a human face on contemporary social issues.

The short film was created in just five days as part of the International Documentary Challenge. 20/Nothing was selected as one of twelve finalists from over 100 entries to premiere at the 2014 Hot Docs Festival, North America’s largest documentary film festival. The team was encouraged to attend and began crowdsourcing the funds through theaudienceawards.com to attend. In addition, they received support from the Montana Film Office. 20/Nothing is the second collaboration for this group of intrepid filmmakers. Their first joint effort screened this winter at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in Missoula.

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UMArts prepares graduates for professional success. In today’s creative economy, our alumni thrive—sometimes, in unexpected careers.

EXHIBIT A: AMY ALMQUIST
(MFA Directing ’93)

Amy Almquist has the national distinction of being the only professional actor working full-time in a prosecutor’s office exclusively to train attorneys in courtroom presentation techniques and persuasive communication strategy. As the Training Supervisor at the Pima County Attorney’s Office in Tucson, AZ, her work has given Pima County a reputation for developing criminal prosecutors with presence and strong trial skills. We asked Amy to tell us more about her creative career and her advice for prospective students and recent graduates in the arts.

UMArts: Amy, you’re breaking ground as a professional actor/director training prosecutors in performance theory for the courtroom. But your work isn’t just limited to Tucson.
Amy: That’s right. I also work with the Pentagon and the U.S. Department of the Army’s JAG Trial Counsel and Defense Counsel Assistance Program. I am honored to travel to military bases around the world training litigators in strategic trial advocacy by immersing them into the world of theatre and the discipline of acting and applying it to their work. As part of my work with lawyers, I authored a manual for effective courtroom trial advocacy called Authentic, Persuasive and Strategic Communication: The Three Keys to Powerful Courtroom Performance. I guest lecture and lead workshops on strategic communication skills at the Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys’ Advisory Council, the University of Arizona’s Graduate College, International Doctoral Program, Eller College of Business and the James E. Rogers College of Law. I’ve presented communication training seminars at the National Advocacy Center in South Carolina and the JAG Criminal Law School for the U.S. Department of the Army.

UMArts: That’s impressive work—can you tell us more about your career path?
Amy: I began by studying acting at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago and then UM where I received my MFA in directing and served as a graduate instructor, teaching acting to non-majors. I worked professionally as an actor and director for over 25 years on stage, and in film and commercials, and I am a member of the Screen Actors Guild. For nearly a decade, I traveled internationally with LaughingStock Comedy Company performing customized comedy improv entertainment for Fortune 500 companies. I also served on the faculty at Pima College in Tucson teaching acting, public speaking and interpersonal communication before moving to my current role with the Pima County Attorney’s Office.

UMArts: Why did you choose the University of Montana and the Master of Fine Arts in Theatre?
Amy: I always loved Missoula for its rich arts scene and diverse population. I started my career as an actor and had minimal exposure to the complexities of directing. The UM MFA Theatre degree emphasized blending the discipline of acting with directing. I was able to work on my acting and become a better director because of it. In class I watched the way professors worked with my colleagues and then I applied those techniques with my own actors in rehearsals at night. The directing program at UM was also unique to other programs as it offered numerous opportunities to direct small scenes, fully-staged productions and film projects.

UMArts: How did your UMArts education prepare you for what you do today?
Amy: When I took performance-theory courses in my UM graduate program, I could hardly fathom a situation where I would use the information practically since I wasn’t looking to teach at the university level or pursue a doctorate. Working with lawyers has changed that for me. While actors openly embrace presentation and performance work with feeling, lawyers openly resist it with their intellect. I found myself re-learning how to teach acting from an intellectual perspective and performance theory really became the backbone of my work. I have the pleasure of being able to work with criminal prosecutors and defense attorneys much like a theatre director by helping them feel more comfortable and confident in their work. It’s a joy to workshop one-on-one with an attorney, get to the heart of their discomfort and see them grow and become more self-assured week by week. When I watch attorneys in front of a jury successfully put child molesters and murderers away, it’s tremendously satisfying to know that I played a part in making sure that justice was served.

UMArts: Was there a UM professor who especially influenced you?
Amy: The late Dr. James Kriley left an indelible imprint on me. He had a wonderful way of applying all disciplines of the arts to directing. Anyone who ever had the privilege of taking a directing class with him will never forget the discussion of My Last Duchess by Robert Browning. He taught staging through classical paintings and had an incredible eye for how stage pictures create impact and emotion. He taught me how to approach my work intuitively by listening to the needs of actors and finding a collaborative balance with my directorial vision.
GIVING BACK

UMArts: What advice do you have for a student considering an arts degree?
Amy: Odds are that you will never become a star or become wealthy by pursing an arts education. The competition is great and rejection is at every turn. Make sure you are ready for this life before you dive in. The desire to create and perform has to be in your bones from a need to do this work. It is a journey full of struggle and personal growth, but worth it if you are willing to open yourself, dump the ego and learn. With public schools dropping arts programs from lack of funding, the world needs you to remind it that the arts make a difference.

UMArts: Any tips for recent graduates embarking on their career?
Amy: First, keep your mind open. There are myriad ways to apply your training—you may be surprised. Always be open to learning and growing. Never work for free. The most successful people in this business are people that others like to work with. Finally, be memorable off stage—go the extra mile to be helpful, stay late, and get to know the people you are working with. Treat for coffee, buy donuts and show them you are part of the team.

Christian Gold Stagg is quick to point out the best part of her job: “It’s the people!” As the development officer for UMArts, Christian works in Missoula and around the country, connecting alumni and passionate arts advocates with UM. On a recent trip to Colorado, Christian and Dean Kalm had the opportunity to meet Jeanne Couture Kostelic ’54 (Music). In her home studio, Jeanne posed for this picture (right), next to a portrait of herself as Mimi in a UM production of La Bohème. The hand-painted black and white image was part of a friend’s MFA exhibit in the School of Art.

“Jeanne is a wonderful example of a thriving UMArts alumna,” says Christian. “She remains active in her profession as a vocal instructor and thoughtfully supports the College of Visual and Performing Arts. It was a delight to thank her in person and share what we are able to accomplish with her help.”

Everyone can be a philanthropist. UM alumni and friends made charitable gifts of more than $800,000 in the past fiscal year to support students and programs of distinction. To learn how you can make a difference, call Christian at 406.243.4990 or email christian.goldstagg@umontana.edu.

MASQUER THEATRE CHAIR CAMPAIGN

It may be hard to believe, but the Performing Arts and Radio/TV Center (PARTV) is rapidly approaching its 30th birthday! Completed in 1985, this building has housed over 300 theatre and dance productions featuring thousands of students dancing, singing, and acting in any one of its three performance venues. The Masquer Theatre specifically has been the home of more than 125 of those productions (such as Marat/Sade, 1985 and The Foreigner, 2008), with an estimated audience attendance through those years to be over 150,000 patrons. The Masquer is also home to many classes, lectures, and other public events … which means it gets used. A lot.

Like PARTV, the Masquer Theatre is starting to show the signs of such an energetic lifestyle. While the quality of our shows continues to grow, the experience of sitting in the audience has diminished due to the aging of our seats. The chairs (circa 1984) are starting to take on the appearance—and worse, the feel—of medieval torture devices rather than comfortable spots from which to enjoy the arts. At the urging of many patrons and to ensure the lower-back health of our faculty/staff and students, we have chosen new chairs for the space that will guarantee comfort and seating pleasure through even the bleakest of tragedies.

We need your help. The chairs that we have chosen are $300 each. We believe this is a worthwhile investment, partially because that’s less than the cost of a chiropractor. The Masquer can seat 268 people in its most generous arrangement, which totals just over $80,000. You can help us by purchasing one or more new seats for the Masquer. Your donation of a chair will include a recognition plaque in memory or honor of whomever you wish to acknowledge.

Please consider investing in the next 30 years of the Masquer’s life: contribute to a vital part of the next generation of students’ and patrons’ enjoyment of the arts by helping us make your lives more comfortable. You may sponsor as many chairs as you wish. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Simply visit umt.edu/umarts/theatredance/masquerseat.

For instructions on how to give off-line (or to additionally fund other CVPA scholarships and projects), please contact Christian Gold Stagg, UMArts director of development, at 406.243.4990.