

# NEWSLETTER

## Bringing in the New Year!

After a much needed holiday break, the UALR theatre and Dance Department is “back at it” and projects and rehearsals are in full swing. First up is *Kate Crackernuts* by Sheila Callaghan. Sheila served as the guest playwright and judge last year for our first New Playwrights Student Fringe festival.

As part of the process, ASM and Videographer, Jeff Wright is making a documentary film of the evolution of the production.

“I think that we can put together something that will be useful as a teaching tool down the road. It is one thing to tell someone the steps involved but more exciting to demonstrate how the creative and production teams move from the initial conceptual approach of the production through to a finished performance. The “machine” that is collaboration and exploration is often as beautiful as the product.”



## It's The Straight Goods

Greetings and Welcome Back!! *Kate Crackernuts*, the Spring Dance Concert, our NAST accreditation visit, Shakespeare Days, The Fringe Festival Playwright

Competition, visiting guest artists in Design, Dance, and Playwriting, the American College Dance Festival trip to

Illinois, hosting the Young Dancer's Festival.....!! To quote Don Cornelius, “You can bet your last money, it's all gonna be a stone gas....” This semester promises to be rich and to offer exciting adventures in production and study. Opportunities abound to spread one's metaphorical wings beyond the classroom. I invite you all to check these pages for news and announcements, and to join us on the journey.



## Editor in Chief

Ross Jackson

## How About Them Dancers!!

Fall semester saw the department's first "harvest" concert featuring works choreographed, performed and designed

by our students. An exciting variety of dances brought large audiences and significant attention to the efforts of our new



degree program. *Invisible Chains* choreographed by Aeren Jhae Bates has been selected by the faculty to be presented at the ACDF in Illinois in March and will be seen again on campus as one of the presentations in the Spring Dance Concert.

And speaking of "tripping the light fantastic," auditions for the Spring production are scheduled for Wednesday, January 20, 2010 from 3:30 - 5:30pm in CPA 129—the large dance studio. The concert itself will be presented from April 15 through April 18. Choreographers for the concert include Nancy Happel, Rhythm McCarthy, Stephanie Thibeault, and our Guest Artist, Mr. Shouze Ma. Mr. Ma joins us in February and we will have lots more about this exciting artist in our next edition.

## ATTENTION PLAYWRIGHTS!

How would you like to win \$75? Better yet, how would you like to win 100? Or even \$150! Well, this semester's Fringe Festival can make that happen!



The Fringe Festival is a night of student-written short plays presented by the Theatre and Dance Department and Facilitated by Ms. Yslan Hicks. If you would like to enter your play for consideration, fill out a play submission form which can be found in the Theatre and Dance Department Office, CPA rm. 130.

A playwright may submit up to three plays, each must be no longer than ten pages, accompanied by a submission form and include a title page with the author's name. Up to ten plays will be selected, staged, and performed in the festival.

The deadline for submissions is February 1, and the plays selected for production will be announced on February 10.

The Fringe Festival runs March 16 - 18. For more information, visit our office or call 501-568-3456.

## Letter from Ryan Bona!

I'm finally starting to get into the groove of CalArts so I wanted to take a little time to tell you about what my normal week was like for fall semester plus other fun facts from my time so far at CalArts. The college itself is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week so no matter what time of day or night, you have access to your studio space and facilities. It took me a while to get used to this concept, but they know that some students are nocturnal while some are morning oriented so it makes scheduling work time very easy. The CalArts community is a huge collective of artists spanning all disciplines and as the credo says, "all the arts under one roof" It's great being exposed to such a variety of people and the arts from all over the world.



I can't speak enough about how amazing the studio experience is but I am going to try to give you an idea of what goes on here: The Design Studio is located on the 2nd floor of the main building and it houses drafting and design stations for almost all the MFA students from all levels with shared stations for the BFA students. It is a concept that dates back to a time right after many of the design faculty graduated from Yale and they started the first Profession Design Studio in New York which, at the time, was something that was never done before. The studio included designers such as: Don Holder, Chris Barreca, Mary Louise Geiger, and Susan Hilferty, just to name a few. I am very fortunate to have so many resources in the studio to ask for input on projects and general questions about the way CalArts works.

The MFA Lighting Design program currently has 8 students, with 4 MFA 1's, 2 MFA 2's, and 2 MFA 3's. The MFA 1 schedule is Monday - Wednesday with classes that include general design courses with other MFA 1's from our year with all of our lighting design courses on Monday because Don commutes from New York every week to be with us, it sounds crazy and it is but, he likes the school and really appreciates what they are doing here. I want to begin at the end of the week and work my way to Monday. Sunday and Saturday are our main homework days with the studio buzzing with everyone trying to get projects completed for Monday. Thursday and Friday are the work-study/stipend days. I work 10 am - 5 pm on Thursday and 10 am - 1 pm on Friday. I am a Specialist Electrician so we manage the four main theatre spaces and

maintain inventory and fill other designers show calls along with hangs and focuses. Wednesday, all the new MFA theatre students have Graduate Play Analysis which is team taught by three of the professors, and we span and critique plays from all over the world. It's a great class. Recently, we took a field trip to the Getty Villa right off the Pacific Coast Highway and saw

Aristophanes' *Peace*  
adapted by Culture Clash.

This was done in their outdoor amphitheater and it was unbelievable. On Tuesdays, I've taken an Isadora Video Programming class which combines live video with theatre.

The class uses the Isadora program and explores features through lab-based activities. This program would have been amazing for *Lear's Daughters* be-

cause it allows all kind of different platforms to work with it including DMX recognition!! The program is used primarily for dance and was created by a CalArts graduate. <http://www.troikatronix.com/isadora.html> - has even more great stuff about Isadora if you are interested.



A word on our Advanced Lighting Lab which is a laboratory based class where we recreate poems, paintings, and original concepts in light. This class is taken with all the lighting designers and other students from other areas and it is really a great chance to work with the upperclassmen and learn Don's tricks of the trade. Our final class was a Graduate Lighting Seminar which was the time when all the MFA designers met with Don (and Don fed us!). We talked about shows that we were working on and shows that Don was working on. For example, I got the opportunity to see many of the technical concept materials from *Spiderman*, hopefully opening on Broadway in February 2010. It is really going to be something to see and I can't expose many of the super secret details in this update for... sorry. I could go on and on but, this isn't the Ryan Newsletter. This place is amazing and I am looking forward to giving you guys more updates soon.

Ryan Bona  
UALR Class of 2009





"Invisible Chains "

Choreographer: Aeren Jhae Bates

Dancers: Ashley Banks, Calvin

Chester, Anthony Bryant