



Alumnus Allan Barlow Returns

MTSU Theatre and Dance will present Allan Barlow's adaptation of the classic novella, *A Christmas Carol*, at 7:30 p.m. on November 18 in the Tucker Theater. "My inspiration came from the story itself," said Barlow, a 1983 graduate of MTSU's theatre program. "It's a splendid story, with a message everyone should hear; I never get tired of telling it."

As for his favorite role, Barlow said, "I love them all! That's part of why I developed the show: so I could play all of them!" He continued, "I guess if I had to pick a favorite scene, though, it would be the meeting between Scrooge and Marley. It's this scene that really sets the story in motion," he added.

Barlow will also work with students in several theater classes during his visit. "I am excited about returning," he remarked. "I haven't been an acting student myself for over 20 years. I'm very curious to talk with the current crop about how they view the prospect of a life in the theatre."

Recalling his tenure at MTSU as a student, Barlow said, "The best part of being an alumnus of the MTSU program is the people I came to know while in school. They are still the funniest, most interesting people I know. (And) even though I live 2,000 miles away, we are in constant contact. They are still my closest friends."

You can learn more about Allan by visiting his web site at http://home.comcast.net/~allan_barlow.

Tickets to *A Christmas Carol* are available at the door for \$5 general admission. Proceeds will benefit the Theatre & Dance Enrichment fund to support activities of the program.

Dance Major Becoming a Reality

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Kim Neal Nofsinger, Director of Dance, his fellow faculty in dance and MTSU administration, it appears as though the major in dance at MTSU is well on its way to implementation. In May, MTSU officials were informed that the Tennessee Board of Regents would accept a proposal for consideration of the degree program, which would be the first of its kind in the state university system. Nofsinger and colleagues are scheduled to submit that proposal for review later this fall, and the program could be ready to accept its first students as early as fall 2009. Learn more about the dance program by visiting www.mtsu.edu/dance.

Theatre Archives Project Underway

With the encouragement and support of several alumni, MTSU Theatre is beginning work on the restoration and display of its archive collection. Archival materials are stored in the university's Gore Research Center and include photos, playbills, and news clippings from productions over the past 40 years or more. Plans are to work with archivists, university historians, alums, and designers to create a visual exhibition for the lobby of Tucker Theatre for unveiling in the fall of 2009.

The "museum-type" display will incorporate a variety of resources and will present viewers with a historical perspective of the theatre program. Leading figures from the past, including former faculty and students, will be featured along with a timeline of the program's development. In addition to preserving and communicating the program's heritage, the exhibit should provide visual interest and fond memories for visitors.

Underwear, Fathers, Fringe? What's the Link?

Brandon Gwinn, MTSU Theatre graduate from May 2008, has had an impressive year by anyone's measure. In January, Brandon and co-author (and MTSU alumnae) Heidi Ervin, unveiled a work entitled *Underwear: a Space Musical*, in the BDA Studio Theatre before sold-out audiences.

In February, Brandon's original script, *Fathers*, received the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) Region IV Short Play Award and is slated for presentation as a fully realized production at the upcoming KCACTF 41 in Greensboro, NC. The show is being directed by MTSU Theatre professor, M. Crosby Hunt, and will perform on campus January 29-31, 2009, prior to its departure for the festival.

In May, Brandon and Heidi learned *Underwear* was selected for presentation at the New York International Fringe Festival in August 2008. The play performed to high acclaim, including reviews by *NYTheatre.com*, who dubbed the show, "hysterically funny" and "blastin'-ly good" and *Time Out New York* who gave the show "4 stars!" To learn more about the show, visit their web site at www.underwearaspacemusical.com.

To cap off his accomplishments, Brandon was accepted to and enrolled in the prestigious graduate program in Musical Theatre Writing at New York University this fall.

MTSU Theatre Planning Return to Honduras

MTSU Theatre is busy planning a return to La Cane, Honduras. Following its last trip in May 2006 where students presented an original play and participated in service projects in the small village, the upcoming summer 2009 trip will focus on education programs for the local schoolchildren. Students will spend the spring semester in preparation for the visit and part of planning involves training to utilize theatre skills in teaching English as a second language to the young children in Honduras.

As a part of the larger La Cane Project, the upcoming trip continues the ongoing research and service activities by several departments from across the university. The La Cane Project was developed to serve mutually the educational needs of MTSU students and the basic human needs of the citizens of La Cane, La Paz, Honduras. The project involves MTSU students and faculty as partners in service learning in an international context, learning how to help others help themselves.

Alums to Lead *Urinetown*

MTSU Theatre's final show of the 2008-09 season, *Urinetown*, will bring several alumni to campus as part of the artistic leadership for the production. Deborah Anderson, professor of theatre and the show's director, will be assisted by alums Richard Browder as choreographer and Diane Bearden as music director. Scott Boyd, theatre faculty member and scenic designer for the production, will collaborate with alums Michael Brown as lighting designer and Trish Clark as costume designer.

MTSU Theatre is committed to bringing guest artists to campus to work with students on a consistent basis as they are vital to our training program and to exposing our students to the variety and currency that is important to their future careers."

Urinetown is slated to perform April 1-5, 2008. Additional information is located on our web site at www.mtsu.edu/theatre under the "Current Season" menu option.

Did You Know?

MTSU Theatre has a current enrollment of 130 majors and well over 30 minors in Theatre and Entertainment Arts Design. In addition, the department houses a minor in Dance, which currently has 60 students enrolled. MTSU Theatre is the largest undergraduate-only theatre training program in the state.

Visit our new web site at

www.mtsu.edu/theatre

Alumni Updates

Amber Adkins (2008) recently took a teaching position in Williamson County. She is teaching theatre at Hillsboro Elementary Middle School to K-8 students. So far it has been an amazing and rewarding experience! She hopefully looks forward to teaching theatre at Hillsboro for years to come!

Teresa (Looney) Brolley (1981) is the Art Department Manager at Sterling Cut Glass and lives in Erlanger, Kentucky. After graduation she spent eight to ten years in professional theatre before entering graphic design school. Teresa has been a designer since 1992. She is married with two children, Maria and Ian.

Lauri Kaye Burns (2005) is a teacher of Theatre and English at Spring Hill High School, where she directs two productions per year. She and her husband, Phil, will celebrate 24 years of marriage in the coming year and have just purchased their first house "in the country" near Columbia, Tennessee.

Amethyst Cantrell (2007) currently works as an escrow assistant in Nashville, Tennessee. She worked as Properties Artisan for Tennessee Repertory Theatre's production of *The Goat*.

Ryan Chittaphong (2007) is an Administrative Assistant at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York City. He previously worked as Marketing and Development Associate for two seasons at the Berkshire Theatre Festival.

Paul Collins (2002) is a graduate student at California State University – Fullerton. He has just started his first year in the three-year MFA Acting program. The past four years Paul has lived in Bozeman, Montana, doing community theatre and student film work at Montana State University.

Stephanie (Walden) Conner (2000) lost the acting bug in 2003, and has had no desire to return to the stage. That is for the best because, in 2005, she and husband Jason had a daughter, Johanna Louise "Jolie" Conner. Since then, Stephanie has stayed at home to raise her daughter.

Sherri L. Edelen (1984) is an actress in Laurel, Maryland. Her career highlights include National Tours of *Big* and *Nunsense*, and Regional productions of *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Cabaret*, *Caroline or Change*, *Urinetown*, and many others.

Neal Figueroa (2008) is a musician for Holland America Cruise Line. He plays for the ship's shows and guest entertainers.

Donald Goldman (1974) is Vice President of Word and Brown University in Orange, California. Don has been elected to the National Board of Directors for the National Association of Health Underwriters. Don will serve for two years as that organization's Vice President of Region 8 serving the states of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

David James (1977) is a laser printer living in Lebanon, Tennessee. He has been married for 21 years to his wife, Nancy, and has two boys: Preston and Brandon.

Bill A. Jones (1980) lives in Los Angeles, where he continues his multi-faceted performance career, including acting, voiceover, radio, and singing. Watch for Bill in an episode of "Everybody Hates Chris" on the CW TV Network. The episode is titled "Everybody Hates Snitches," and Bill plays an award show emcee.

Thalia McMillion (1973) works in arts administration and teaching and lives in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. She's just completed 20 years as the Director of "Summer Arts at Derby," a multi-cultural arts program in Hingham, Massachusetts. She is married to Gerry Wright, and has two children: Matthew and Emily.

David Raynak (1994) is working in freelance production and lives in Mount Juliet, Tennessee.

Dawn Russell (1993) is a Guidance Counselor at Malvern High School in Arkansas. Dawn is completing an internship for a Master's in Education in Secondary School Guidance and will begin course work toward a Master's of Liberal Studies with a concentration in Creative Writing from Denver University in 2009.

Heidi (Faulkner) Schimpf (1998) is the Director of Education and Outreach for Joy of Motion Dance Center in Washington, D.C. For two years, she has served on the board of the Capital Region Educators of Dance Organization, the Metro/DC Dance awards committee, and D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities teacher mini-grant panel.

Janna Wheatley (1999) is currently selling her handmade jewelry and gifts online, at craft fairs, and women's expos. Her store, located in Dickson, Tennessee, is called "Made by Ms. J." It features affordable hand-made jewelry and crafts. Visit Jana's store at www.madebymjsj.ecrater.com.

We "thinks" it was a hit!



MTSU Theatre's first production of the 2008-2009 season, *Seussical*, was attended by over 4,500, including 1,200 area schoolchildren.

Upcoming performances...

MTSU Dance Theatre's
Fall Dance Concert
November 13 - 15, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

MTSU Theatre presents
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
adapted & performed by Allan Barlow
November 18, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

for more information visit www.mtsu.edu/theatre

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