Theatre Department

Seeing “Growth, Reinvigoration & Change”

“Hello Dolly,” the final show of the 2012-13 Theatre season, demonstrated, as the title song’s lyrics go, that the department is “still glowin’...still crowin’...still goin’ strong!”
As the College of Arts and Letters 50th Anniversary year began, Department of Theatre Chair Kirk Domer noted in his fall 2012 Message from the Chair that the past few years have been about growth, reinvigorating the program, and change, and that 2012-13 was no different.

Domer highlighted how the Auditorium building was undergoing major renovations, including the addition of a hydraulic orchestra pit in the Fairchild Theatre, new acting studios, and a new performance space in the old scene shop site. He added that a new scene shop has been created off-campus (on the grounds of the former Michigan Highway Patrol headquarters).

“This renovation provided us a chance to think about our 2012-13 season theme: “(New) plays in new ways,” wrote Domer. “You will note three world premieres this year, including a global culture play chosen from an international competition. The titles you may recognize in our season will be produced in unique ways or unique spaces.”

Domer also praised undergraduate student April Townsend, winner of the 2012 United States Institute for Theatre Technology Midwest Founders Award; graduate student Leslie Hull, winner of the 2012 Midwest Association of Graduate School Excellence in Teaching Award; and faculty member Rob Roznowski, winner of the Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year.

“Recognition of their excellent achievements is emblematic of the great work that happens daily in the Department of Theatre that I am proud to report will never be inert.”

True to Domer’s words, the 2012-13 MSU Department of Theatre season included engaging and exceptional performances of:

**“Three Sisters” by Anton Chekov, translated by Lanford Wilson**

In Chekov’s classic tragicomedy, the Prozorov family yearns to return to glamorous Moscow and escape the confines of their rural life.

**“Anton in Show Business” by Jane Martin, directed by Rob Roznowski**

Three actresses prepare to tackle the complicated roles of the dissatisfied sisters of Chekhov’s classic in this modern comedic examination of theatre.

**The Haunted Aud**

In its fourth year, Theatre’s scarcely successful “hellraiser of a fundraiser” continues to support numerous student initiatives and student organizations with its proceeds.

**Freshman Showcase**

The tradition continues as the Department of Theatre’s newest members, directed by Lynn Lammers, come together to create a unique production for the 6th Annual Showcase.
Orchesis Student Dance Concert

This biannual dance concert is entirely directed, performed and choreographed by members of the student dance group Orchesis as a showcase for their prodigious talents.

“James and the Giant Peach,” by Roald Dahl; dramatized by Richard R. George, directed by Edward Daranyi

Stratford Theatre Festival artist Edward Daranyi returned to MSU to direct an adaptation of Roald Dahl’s warped classic. An imprisoned boy! Insect friends! An incredible journey! This amazing adventure will fulfill the fantasy of anyone who has ever dreamed of escape.

“Measure for Measure,” by William Shakespeare, directed by Christina Traister

Hypocrisy and hysteria collide in this satire of religion and duty. One of Shakespeare’s darkest comedies, “Measure for Measure” is a compelling exploration of morality and mortality. This site-specific production put audiences up close and personal as neophyte nun Isabella begs for her brother’s life from power-hungry Angelo.

“Funny Girl,” music by Jules Styne, lyrics by Bob Merrill, book and original story by Isobel Lennart, directed by Dev Janki

Famed comedienne Fanny Brice goes from ugly duckling to beautiful swan in this classic, hilarious and heart-breaking musical. Guest director Dev Janki directed East and West Coast concert versions of “Funny Girl” starring Ana Gasteyer, Lillias White, Jane Krakowski and Bebe Neuwirth.

“U.P.” (World Premiere) by Mark Colson and Peter Mervis, directed by Mark Colson

“U.P.” tells the story of a man disillusioned by his life in Los Angeles. He sets out on a road trip searching for answers and ultimately finds himself in one of America’s only remaining “outbacks,” the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This multi-media production blended theatre and film.

“The Lady Victory,” adapted and directed by Ann Folino White

“The Lady Victory,” adapted from the poems of Jane Taylor, follows a group of teenagers at a Catholic home for pregnant girls. Sister B. tends to the girls and their babies while grappling with her own questions about duty and family.
2013-2014 Season is Set

As for 2013-14, Chair Kirk Domer says that in addition to Haunted Aud and Freshman Showcase, the scheduled productions promise a lively, inventive, classic and magical season of theatre and dance, including:

“Widows,” by Ariel Dorfman and Tony Kushner, directed by Ann Folino White

In a village where every man has disappeared during the reign of the former dictator, the women band together to defy the nation’s military.

“William Shakespeare’s Land of the Dead,” by John Heimbuch, directed by Christina Traister

What if the black plague actually turned those infected into zombies? This blood-drenched comedy combines history, Shakespeare, and the apocalypse.

“Xanadu,” book by Douglas Carter Beane, music and lyrics by Jeff Lynne and John Farrar, directed by Rob Roznowski

The story of a roller-skating artist in the 1970s visited by singing ancient Greek muses. This campy musical uses ELO’s greatest hits like “Evil Woman” and “Strange Magic,” along with the score of the hilariously disastrous movie starring Olivia Newton-John. This production is a collaboration with the Lansing Vixens female Roller Derby team.

Repertory Dance Concert, presented as a co-production with Orchesis

The bi-annual dance concert combines thrilling movement with unfettered imagination. Numerous guest choreographers showcase their unique points of view in this contemporary view of dance.

“Cyrano De Bergerac” by Edmund Rostand, directed by Edward Daranyi

The classic romantic unrequited love story opens appropriately on Valentine’s Day. The story of the nose-challenged poet who feeds his words of adoration through his handsome friend to the beautiful Roxanne is directed by Stratford Theatre Festival’s Edward Daranyi and stars MSU faculty member, Mark Colson.

“The Serpent Lady,” based on a fairy tale by Carlo Gozzi, adapted by Daniel Smith and Valentina Denzel, directed by Daniel Smith

The Serpent Lady, Cherestani, the queen of a magical land, must test her husband’s love. Will he recognize his beloved when she turns into a snake? This fairy tale by Carlo Gozzi is told in the style of commedia dell’arte, with masks, puppetry, and physical comedy.

“Peter Pan,” lyrics by Carolyn Leigh, Betty Comden and Adolph Green, music by Mark Charlap and Jule Styne, a musical based on the play by James M. Barrie, directed by Rob Roznowski

“Peter Pan” is a high-flying fantasy that tells the story of the young boy who won’t grow up. This beloved musical promises a new twist on the old classic including the songs “I Won’t Grow Up,” “Neverland” and “I’ve Gotta Crow.” Join Peter, Wendy, Tinkerbell and Captain Hook as they soar over the Pasant Theatre audiences.

Speaking of the renovations and additions to Theatre facilities and programs and the current and upcoming season, Domer, the Department of Theatre chair and professor of scene design, sees much promise for the future.

“Throughout this constant change, our educational mission remains sound. I am so fortunate to be surrounded by such innovative students and educators. We look forward to continuing the forward momentum of the Department and to remaining faithful to our mission statement, “To provoke and sustain truth and insight into the human condition.””

—Kirk Domer