“ARTS IN NEW YORK CITY” GARNERS RAVE REVIEWS

(Left to right) CAL Theatre Study Away student and faculty participants Katie Noyes, Jenise Cook, Melissa Mercieca, Ellie Seelye, Paige Conway, (Professor) Ann Folino White, Taylor Rupp, Steve Parkinson, Summer Henderson, Samira Mashni, Mike Temple, and (Professor) Daniel Smith toured New York City’s Guggenheim Museum among other arts venues.
Over the month of June 2014, 10 College of Arts and Letters Theatre students participated in an “Arts in New York City” study away program led by CAL Theatre Professors Ann Folino White and Daniel Smith.

Students in the program stay in a graduate residence hall at International House, near Columbia University on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, and the entire city of New York is their classroom as the location provides easy access to parks, subways, and bus lines. Participants also meet and network with alumni who live and work in New York City to learn more about strategies for success and potential career opportunities.

The 2014 program’s students had a full schedule of professional and/or cultural visits and activities on their daily calendars, including Broadway plays and musicals, workshops and classes—some with MSU alumni. They also enjoyed studio tours, readings by playwrights and designers, and other events designed for students to get to know one another as well as provide knowledge, experience, and in-person contact with the people and places of the arts and entertainment industries in New York City.

For example, places visited included the Two Palms Print Studio, Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, the Tenement Museum, New York City’s Hi-line, the Brooklyn Museum, the Performance Garage, Greenwich Village, CBS Studios, The Guggenheim Museum, Museum Mile and the Museum of the City of New York, Harlem and The Apollo Theater, MOMA, the Queen’s Museum, The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), Barkley Kalpak Agency event design and production company, the Museum of the Moving Image, Radio City Music Hall, the National Jazz Museum, and a class at Gotham City Improv.

PARAMOUNT RECEPTION

On Thursday evening, June 19, a reception was held for all CAL alumni on the second floor of the Paramount Hotel on 46th Street in New York City’s Broadway Theatre District. Over hors d’oeuvres and refreshments, students mingled with alumni who live and work in New York City and learned about strategies for success and career opportunities in “The Big Apple.”
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While in New York, students attended many types of performance, such as big Broadway musicals, concert dance, avant-garde theatre, and popular entertainment. Shows included Shakespeare in the Park’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, the immersive experience of *Sleep No More*, and the Tony Award-winning technological scenic spectacle of *Rocky*, among many others.

Guest professionals who taught classes, held workshops and/or gave tours and presentations included noted New York City-based artist Tom Smith; theatrical producer and general manager (and former MSU student) Carl Pasbjerg; actress/director and Okemos, MI, native Stephanie Fittro; director and playwright Gus Kaikkonen; casting director Stephanie Holbrook; and MSU Theatre alumnus (’84) and screenwriter David Magee (an Academy Award nominee for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Finding Neverland*, 2004).

The program’s incredible professional connections also included a CBS news studios tour with television, film and theatre designer Rob Odorisio; a tour of famed Lincoln Center with Associate Director of Education Alexandra Lopez; a meeting with the director of production and meeting services at Barkley Kalpak, Adam Suellentrop, and members of the artistic staff; sessions with actor, photographer, and MSU Theatre alumna (BFA 2010) Kellyn Uhl, and singers, actors, directors, and teaching artists Brandon Piper and Wes Haskel, who are also MSU alumni (MFAs in Acting 2012).

The student participants agreed that the College’s New York City Study Away program was more than a great value. It was an exceptional professional, learning, and résumé-building experience:

Taylor Rupp (Integrated Studies in Social Science major) stated, “Thank you so much for the opportunity to experience every part of such a vast, beautiful, growing, thriving city with an accepting culture to make us all feel like we belong anywhere.”

Paige Conway (Theatre major) commented, “I learned so much more than I ever expected to. I thought I would just learn a lot about the city. But I ended up learning so much about my industry and about myself, and what I want to do with theatre.”

**CLASSES, HISTORY & CULTURE**

The College of Arts and Letters “Arts in New York City” program was established in 2009 to give undergraduate students direct exposure to the vast artistic, cultural, and historical opportunities the city has to offer. The program features a special topics course (AL 491) on the history and culture of New York City, as well as electives associated with faculty leaders’ areas of expertise. The faculty leader(s) and courses for each coming year’s program are identified early in the fall and widely publicized throughout the semester with applications due each January for the following June.

Since 2009, CAL’s “Arts in New York City” program has featured courses in theatre, professional writing, history of art, integrative studies in arts and humanities, and independent study opportunities.