Drama Students Earn High Honors at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival

During the spring semester thousands of student artists from eight regions presented their work at KCACTF competitions and 125 were selected to travel to Washington, D.C. for an expenses-paid trip to participate in National Festival events that take place at the Kennedy Center.

Helmerich School of Drama students Chase Durrett and his partner Chase Bradshaw won the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship competition at KCACTF Region VI and earned a spot to compete at the national festival in Washington DC this April. Bradshaw won the VASTA Award for Vocal Excellence and the Society of American Fight Director's Award. Durrett won the Mark Twain Comedic Acting Award.

In addition, Brea Clemmons, Arts Administration, and Hannah Simon, Dramaturgy, earned top spots at KCACTF Region VI and won a trip to the national festival to meet professionals and attend master classes.

Musical Theatre Alumni Perform on Broadway and Across the Country

Several alumni from the Weitzenhoffer School of Musical Theatre are performing in professional productions this past year. On Broadway the musical theatre alums are: Kristen Beth Williams (HELLO, DOLLY!), Emily Mechler (WICKED), Dan Horn (MISS SAIGON), and Dorcas Leung (MISS SAIGON). On National Tours the musical theatre alums are: Dorcas Leung (HAMILTON), Jarmard Richardson (BOOK OF MORMON), Skylar Adams (WAITRESS) and Sarah Quinn Taylor (SOMETHING'S ROTTEN).

Saxophone Quartet Earn National Honors

OU’s Elysian Saxophone Quartet recently won two major national chamber music competitions. The quartet earned first place in the Music Teachers National Association (MNTA) Chamber Music Competition multi-round contest, held March 17, in Orlando, Florida. All wind instruments are eligible to compete, making the scope as broad as possible. Finalists were from OU, the Eastman School of Music, Central Michigan University, Montana State University, Florida State University, San Jose State University, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory.

Drama Students Shine at KCACTF Region VI Festival

Helmerich School of Drama students and faculty with awards from the KCACTF Region VI competition.

Drama students received many honors at the 2018 KCACTF Region VI competition. Recipients are: Caitlin Coffin, Meritorious Achievement in Lighting Design - Barbizon runner-up for Nice Work If You Can Get It; Elise Christiansen, National Partners in American Theatre Award for Hansel and Gretel; Elise Christiansen, Meritorious Achievement in Scenic Design - Barbizon runner-up for Hansel and Gretel; Elise Christiansen, Meritorious Achievement in Costume Design - Barbizon runner-up for Sylvia; Kaitlyn Souter, Meritorious Achievement in Stage Management - Barbizon runner-up for Nice Work If You Can Get It; Olivia DeLuca, Region VI Award for Excellence in Lighting Design for City of Angels; Serena Bunn, Certificate of Excellence in Costume Technology; Jenn Bobo Region VI Award for Excellence in Scenic Art for Angels in America; Erin Lavespere, Region VI Award for Excellence in Mask Work for The Rite of Spring; Ciara Smith, Region VI Award for Excellence in Mask Work; Erin Lavespere, Doug Getzoff Award for Undergraduate Design Excellence for The Tempest; Erica
The School of Visual Arts had a very busy semester with numerous lecturers, exhibition opening, events, and a new ceramics position search it’s been non-stop for the last few months.

The biggest event of the semester was the 104th Annual Student Exhibition, put on as a collaboration between SoV A and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. The MFA senior thesis exhibition was held at MAINSITE Gallery, and the Senior Capstone Exhibition was held in the Lightwell Gallery.

This has also been a great year for the newly developed support group ARTisans. Eight lectures were given to ARTisans patrons, at Norman and Oklahoma City locations. There were site and studio visits with Artist Paul Moore, and a presentation for all the founding members in March.

The School of Visual Arts is proud of its many accomplished students who have received recognition this year. Courtney Segrest was awarded an OU University Women’s Association Scholarship; Alicia Harris received the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Pre-doctoral Fellowship for Historians of American Art to Travel Abroad; and Denise Neil-Binion was awarded a Wheelwright Fellowship in San Antonio.

Mary Jo Watson, who has been a devoted teacher at OU for over 30 years, and is a Director Emeritus for the SoV A is retiring in May.

Jackson Rushing collaborated with the FJJMA on an exhibition of Native American Art called “Generations” which ran from January 26th through April 8th of this year.

Stuart Asprey won an Arts and Humanities Faculty Fellowship, he is the first artist to receive this for creative activity.

Paul Moore won the Regent’s Award for creative activity.

Competing against 50 saxophone groups in a multi-round competition, the Elysian Quartet placed first in the 2018 North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) Quartet Competition. The OU quartet was a featured performance in the winners’ recital at the NASA Biennial Conference at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music on March 11.

Members of the Elysian Quartet are OU School of Music students Jared Waters (master’s student from South Carolina), Damian Cheek (D.M.A. student from Tennessee), Spiro Nicolas (master’s student from Michigan) and Evan Harris (masters student from Michigan). Jonathan Nichol, associate professor of saxophone, instructs and mentors the group.

“These national competitions are populated with students from the best music programs in the country,” said Nichol. “Winning two national titles within two weeks is an extraordinary achievement. The rich culture of excellence and tradition in the OU Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts has helped to create a positive learning environment in which our students can experiment, create, grow and achieve at the highest possible level. Elysian’s successes are a direct result of opportunities afforded to them by OU, the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts, and the School of Music.”

Cruice, Region VI Meritorious Achievement in Stage Management for Angels in America Part 2: Perestroika; Taylor Fono is the alternate for the SDC Directing Initiative Fellowship; Alexis Ward and her partner Julian Walker were first alternate in the Irene Ryan competition; and Alyssa Fantel won the award for Best Irene Ryan Partner in the semifinal round.

Assistant professor Uldarico Sarmiento received the National Partners in American Theatre Award for mentorship. The Helmerich School of Drama received the Golden Hand Truck Award for Best Load In/Out.