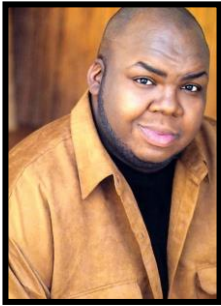


UCI DRAMA NEWSLETTER – 2015

COMPILED AND EDITED BY THE DRAMA DEPARTMENT STAFF

This is not a complete listing. Alumni are welcome and encouraged to submit updates on their current achievements and endeavors; please send corrections and/or additions (with images, when possible) to Leslie Blough at lblough@uci.edu.



IN MEMORIAM

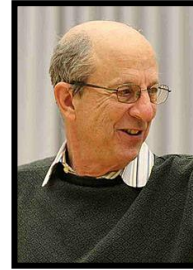
UC Irvine's Department of Drama mourns the passing of distinguished alumnus **WINDELL MIDDLEBROOKS** ('05). While Windell was best known for his Miller High Life ads, he was an accomplished actor with roles in series such as *Body of Proof*, *Scrubs*, *The Suite Life on Deck*, and *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. As accomplished as Windell was professionally, he will be missed most for the man he was: generous, loving, and guided by faith. He will be remembered by all who knew him, and were touched by his talent and amazing heart.

TRANSITIONS

This past year saw the appointment of **STEPHEN BARKER** as **INTERIM DEAN**. Barker, a 28-year veteran of the Drama Department, was chosen to take the helm of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts last September. We applaud his distinguished career as an educator and a scholar, and are pleased to realize our vision under his wise leadership.



THE DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA IS ALSO CELEBRATING THE STELLAR CAREERS OF FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS WHO WILL BE RETIRING IN 2015:



ROBERT COHEN, Founding Chair of Drama and guiding force on the campus and the international theatre scene for 50 years, will retire in June 2015. Cohen is the only continuously teaching founding faculty member currently at UC Irvine, and aside from his formidable influence in the classroom, he has garnered a reputation as a playwright, theatre critic, prolific author, and internationally renowned director. His influence cannot be overstated, and the imprint of his legacy will be felt for decades to come.

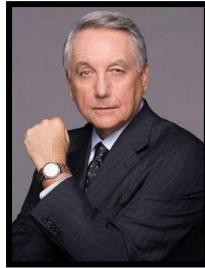
CLIFF FAULKNER and **SHIGERU YAJI**, who have given so much of themselves to the Department in a variety of capacities, will retire in June 2015. Faulkner and Yagi have touched countless lives with their professional design knowledge, their insightful and individualized teaching philosophies, and their boundless goodwill and positivity.



***We wish our retirees well,
and thank them for their service!***

1960s

BOB GUNTON ('68), previously featured in the films *Argo* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, has joined the cast of the now-filming Chilean miner drama *The 33*. Gunton will play Chilean President Sebastián Piñera. The film is shooting in Colombia before it heads to Chile.



Bob Gunton

1970s

NEVADA BARR ('78) takes her insights about the primal bonds between humanity and nature to an interesting level in her new book featuring National Park Service ranger character Anna Pigeon, and exploring her belief that “animals are better people than people.”

MARYJO LANG ('74) took home a trophy at the 51st Cinema Audio Society Awards for her work as Foley Mixer on Disney's *Frozen*.

MARK SICILIANI ('79) played Luther Billis in Modesto Performing Arts' production of *South Pacific*, a role he first took on with the company 40 years ago.

1980s

DENNIS CASTELLANO ('84) conducted an orchestra of excellent local musicians in California Musical Theatre's production of *Mary Poppins*. He also music directed *The Light in the Piazza* at South Coast Repertory, and the Music Circus production of *La Cage aux Folles*.



Mary Poppins

JOSHUA FINKEL ('84) directed three pieces at which were part of *New Musicals, Inc. (NMI)* at the Lonny Chapman Theatre in North Hollywood. NMI (previously *15-Minute Musicals*) is a decades-long tradition at the Academy for New Musical Theatre, and has a long-standing relationship with UCI Drama.

JOSE CRUZ GONZALEZ ('86) wrote *The Long Road Today/El Largo Camino de Hoy*, a powerful new play based on the life experiences of Santa Ana residents, which premiered at the City of Santa Ana Civic Center Plaza.



Jose Cruz Gonzalez

R. MICHAEL GROS ('81) directed The Theatre Group at SBCC's West Coast premiere of the new play *Ground* by Lisa Dillman.

JEFF MEEK ('83) and **R. MICHAEL GROS'S** ('81) free festival PlayFest Santa Barbara entered its second year, delivering new theater to SBCC and bringing in theater professionals from all over the country for staged readings with audience feedback.

1990s

KATHRYN BALAY ('90) played Gertrude to **MARK BOOHER'S** (90) Claudius in PCPA Theaterfest's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark* at the Marian Theatre in Santa Maria. BALAY and BOOHER were also involved in PCPA's *Noises Off* at the Marian Theatre, featuring fellow alumni **ANDREW PHILPOT** ('90) and **KARIN HENDRICKS** ('90).

LARRY BIEDERMAN ('92) directed *Backyard*, a tale of teenage backyard wrestling in the wasteland of San Diego's border suburbs written by Mickey Birnbaum, at the Echo Theatre.

STEPHEN BURDMAN ('95) directed *As You Like It* by New York Classical Theatre.

JAMES CALLERI ('90) helms Calleri Casting, whose most recent Broadway credits include *The Visit* starring Chita Rivera and Roget Rees, Renee Fleming in *Living on Love*, the Tony winning revival of *Hedwig & The Angry Inch* starring Neil Patrick Harris and Lena Hall, and the revival of *The Elephant Man* starring Bradley Cooper (casting **LUCAS CALHOUN** ['13] as Cooper's understudy).

CHRISTOPHER DUVAL ('98) played Garth Willias in Pioneer Theatre Company's production of Kenneth Jones' *Alabama Story*, the third installment of PTC's new Play-By-Play reading series.

CHARLIE HUSTON ('95) turns his dark imagination to a cyber-attack and economic inequality in his latest novel, the thriller *Skinner*.

ALAN MINGO, JR. ('98) and **IAN PARMENTER** ('11) reconnected at Houston's Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS) as Sebastian and Prince Eric, respectively, in Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. Mingo, Jr. also starred as Albin in the Sacramento Music Circus production of *La Cage aux Folles*, music directed by **DENNIS CASTELLANO** ('84).



Alan Mingo, Jr.

2000s

MARK BEDARD ('06) took the Agnus Bower Stage at Oregon Shakespeare Festival as Groucho Marx's "Mr. Hammer" character in *The Cocoanuts*. Mark is currently starring in *Fashions for Men* (by Ferenc Molnar) Off-Broadway at the Mint Theater, with OSF colleague John Tufts

TREVOR BISHIP ('06) directed Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play* at the Chance Theatre in Anaheim.

ALLISON CASE ('05) and Andrew Kober, who appeared together in the Tony Award-winning revival of *Hair*, reunited for *This Is 30* at the Cutting Room. Case was also in the new musical *Fly by Night*, a dark comedy rock fable that opened Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons.

JENN COLELLA ('02) joined the cast of the Broadway-bound musical *If/Then* by Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning *Next to Normal* writers Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey.



Idina Menzel & Jenn Colella

LAURA D'ANDRE ('07) was cast in *The Chocolate Show!*, the world's tastiest new musical, which recently had its world premiere in NYC.

JENIFER FOOTE ('00) starred as Sheila in *A Chorus Line* at Sacramento Music Circus.

DONNETTA GRAYS ('02) played American student Insitar in Tom Coash's play *Veils*, the winner of the 2012 Clauder Competition for New England playwrights, at Portland Stage.



Donnetta Grays

GLENN KALISON ('02) is teaching at Relativity School, a new media and performing arts studio founded in 2004 by Ryan Kavanaugh, which welcomed the first-ever accredited BFA program affiliated with a studio last October.

BETH MALONE ('00) starred as Annie Oakley in San Diego Musical Theatre's *Annie Get Your Gun*. She also starred as Nellie Forbush in *South Pacific* at the Sacramento Music Circus, and played the title role in the Denver Center Theatre Company's new adaptation of Meredith Willson's classic musical *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. In addition, she reprised her role as Alison in the critically acclaimed Off Broadway musical *Fun Home*.



Fun Home



Beth Malone

AMANDA MCRAVEN ('07) and **MEGHAN BROWN** ('07) were both 2014 Ovation Award Winners for *The Pliant Girls* at Fugitive Kind Theater, McRaven for Director of a Play and Brown for Playwright of an Original Play.

CARINA MORALES ('07) recently starred in the new play *A Natural Life* at T. Schreiber Studios in NYC.

MICHAEL DEAN MORGAN ('05) participated in *The Goldstein Variations*, a developmental production at The Playroom Theater.

BETSY MUGAVERO ('09) played Rosalind/Ganymede in Idaho Shakespeare Festival's *As You Like It*.

JEFF PARKER ('08) was featured as Frankie in PCPA's production of *Forever Plaid*, which had runs both in the Marian Theatre and in the

Solvang Festival Theater. Jeff is currently Assistant Professor of Theatre at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

ANDREW SAMONSKY ('03) played Phoebus in the stage musical adaptation of Disney's 1996 animated film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in San Diego.

PATRICK SABONGUI ('05) has been added to the cast of the CW pilot *The Flash*, based on the DC comic.



Patrick Sabongui

ROBERTO PRESTIGIACOMO ('03) is the Producing Artistic Director of AtticRep, an eight-year-old professional theater company that recently became the resident company at the new Tobin Center for the Performing Arts; he directed their debut show in the new space, *God of Carnage*.

TALIA THIESFIELD ('06) performed "I Know Him So Well," from *Chess*, as part of *Broadway Celebrates Pride Week*, a concert kicking off New York City Pride Week that benefits the Hetrick-Martin Institute.

QUINN VANANTWERP ('08), already a *Jersey Boys* veteran, returned to the Broadway cast in the role of Bob Gaudio.

TEAL WICKS ('05) played Jennie Dixiana in Goodspeed Musicals' production of *The Circus in Winter* at Norma Terris Theatre. She also joined the lineup for *The Contemporary Musical Theatre Songwriters You Should Know: LIVE!*, a concert featuring rising musical theatre songwriters that is based on the Playbill.com article of the same name.

Teal is currently starring in *Finding Neverland* at the Lunt-Fontanne Theater.

KYRA ZAGORSKY ('06) is starring as Dr. Julia Walker in *Helix* on Syfy. This new drama shattered channel ratings records, soaring 53 percent among total viewers (2.8 million).



Kyra Zagorsky

2010s

MO ABOUL-ZELOF ('10) landed the role of Ian in the upcoming film *Grandma*, starring Lily Tomlin and Marcia Gay Harden, written and directed by Paul Weitz.

HANNAH BALAGOT ('12) joined the cast of Surflight Theatre's production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

MADELEINE BARKER ('13) played the leading role of Rizzo in The Ogunquit Playhouse production of *Grease* in Ogunquit, Maine, meeting former president and First Lady George and Barbara Bush.



Madeleine meets President and Mrs. Bush



Madeleine Barker as Rizzo

LUCAS CALHOUN ('13) joined the cast of the Broadway revival of Bernard Pomerance's Tony Award-winning drama *The Elephant Man*, starring Bradley Cooper in the title role. He was cast by fellow alum **JAMES CALLERI** ('90).

ANTHONY CHATMON II ('12) was featured in *The Book of Mormon* at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

RACHELLE ROSE CLARK ('14) and **ANTHONY CHAN** ('14) joined the second national tour of the Tony Award-winning revival of *Anything Goes*, playing Hope Harcourt and Brother John, respectively. Anthony also recently did a workshop of *Allegiance* (with Professor Andrew Palermo) in NYC.

KRISTEN COEN CRUZ ('14) not only received her AEA card at South Coast Repertory with a three show deal, she is now also adjunct faculty at Azusa Pacific University teaching stage management.

PAUL CULOS ('10) played Bruce in William Inge's *Come Back, Little Sheba*, directed by Geoff Elliott, at a Noise Within Theatre in Pasadena.

GARRETT DEAGON ('11) landed the role of Rooster in the new national tour of *Annie*.



Garrett Deagon in Annie 1

LEAH DUTCHIN ('12) starred in *Skin Tight*, the remounting of the hour-long play by Gary Henderson at Renaissance Theaterworks, directed by Laura Gordon.

BETH GARDINER ('10), **DAVID HUDSON** ('10), and **LUCAS CALHOUN** ('13) are members of The Drunk Shakespeare Society, the self-proclaimed

“drinking club with a Shakespeare problem.” Directed by Hudson, the group premiered at Quinn’s Bar Upstairs in Manhattan.

GRACE GEALEY (‘10) has joined the cast of the Fox prime time drama *Empire* as Anika Calhoun, opposite Terrence Howard and Taraji P. Henson.



Grace Gealey

BEN GIBSON (‘13) and **PETER LEIBOLD** (‘12) both appeared in Sierra Repertory’s production of *Les Miserables* in Sonora, CA.

ERIKA HAALAND (‘11) played Isabella in Utah Shakespeare Festival’s *Measure for Measure*.

JACOB HAREN (‘13) starred as anti-hero Frank Abagnale, Jr. in *Catch Me if you Can* at the Moonlight Amphitheatre in Vista, CA.



Jacob Haren in *Catch Me if you Can*

BEN JACOBY (‘12) was cast as the romantic rival Raoul in the new national tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*.



Ben Jacoby in *The Phantom of the Opera*

LAUREN KADEL (‘14) received a nomination for the LA Ovation Award for Choreography for her work at Musical Theatre West’s Production of *Young Frankenstein*. She also served as Assistant Choreographer to Susan Stroman on *The Merry Widow* at The Metropolitan Opera.

KRISTEN LAMOUREUX (‘12) and **KARI YANCY** (‘11) were members of the 2014 company at The Tuachan Amphitheatre in Ivins, UT. They appeared in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. Kari starred in the principal roles of Ariel and Dorothy in the last two titles.



Kristen Lamoreaux & Kari Yancy

SHERYL LIU (‘11) was the set designer on the U.S. premiere of French playwright Mohamed Kacimi’s play *Holy Land* in Manhattan.

BETH LOPES (‘11) directed *Hamlet* for The Magik Theatre’s Shakespeare in the Park in San Antonio, TX.

MARLENA MACK (‘14) read Goldie in *That Old Feeling*, in the first reading of a new one-act play by Allen Davis at Stage Plays Theatre in New York.



Marlena Mack

SEPIDEH MOAFI (‘13) who recurs on ABC’s *Black Box*, has been cast as a regular in CBS drama pilot *Red Zone*, written by Nikki Toscano and directed by James Foley.

MISA MOOSEKIAN (‘14) appeared with Alex Desert in *Almost, Maine* at The Hudson MainStage Theatre.

SOPHIE ODA (‘12) was featured in *A Little New Music*, the premier night of new musical theatre in Los Angeles, which returned to Rockwell: Table & Stage in Los Feliz with a freshly innovative program.

HAYLEY PALMER ('11/'14) joined the national touring company of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.



Ian Parmenter

IAN PARMENTER ('11) appeared in *Victor/Victoria* at Theatre Under the Stars in Houston, and played Prince Eric to fellow alum Alan Mingo, Jr.'s ('98) Sebastian in *The Little Mermaid* at The North Carolina Theatre in Raleigh. Another recent credit is the character Munkustrap in *Cats* at The Theatre By the Sea in Wakefield, RI.

ROB SALAS ('11) is Artistic Director of Davis Shakespeare Ensemble, and recently directed *Much Ado About Nothing* at Veterans Memorial Theatre.

JESSE SHARP ('11) returned to the road as Walter in the touring company of the Broadway musical *Elf*.



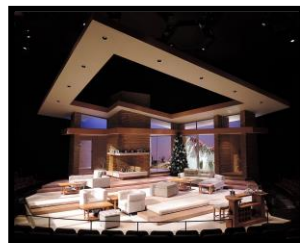
Jesse Sharp

LESLIE STAMOOLIS ('14) has accepted a faculty position at Gonzaga University in Washington.

VICTOR VAZQUEZ ('11) wrote *LaVíspera (The Eve)*, which premiered at 24th Street Theatre's Teatro del Pueblo (Theater of the Village). The play was co-directed by Jesús Castañón-Chima and Sayda Trujillo, and supported by The James Irvine Foundation Exploring Engagement Fund.

BENJAMIN WEILL ('11) provided the lighting design for *Ruddigore*, presented by The New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players, America's preeminent professional Gilbert & Sullivan repertory company, at NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts.

FACULTY NEWS



Other Desert Cities

Assistant Professor **Michael Ganio's** scenic design for *Other Desert Cities*, produced at The Repertory Theatre of Saint Louis, just received the 2015 Best Scenic Design for a Drama Award from the Saint Louis Theatre Circle.

Associate Professor **Vincent Olivieri** opened the world premiere of his musical *Extraterrestri Clandestini* last fall at the National Theatre of Romania in Cluj. Olivieri wrote the music and created the sound design; faculty member Eli Simon wrote the book and directed. Olivieri also created the sound design and score for the new play *Safe House* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. In February, he and his wife welcomed their daughter Hallie Maria, born safe and sound and squeaking like a little sound effects machine!

Ketu H. Katrak, Professor specializing in African Drama, Performance, Postcolonial Theory, and Women Playwrights, has two essays forthcoming--in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater*, and "Dance in South Asia" in *The Modernist World* (Routledge, 2015). Her current research project is on South African Indians' contributions to theater and dance in the post-apartheid period.

Jaymi Lee Smith, Associate Professor of Lighting Design, recently lit *The Missing Pages of Lewis Carroll* at The Theater @ The Boston Court and *Pygmalion* at Pasadena Playhouse. In May, she will be designing *Peter and*



The Missing Pages of Lewis Carroll

the Starcatcher for South Coast Repertory.

SAVE THE DATE:

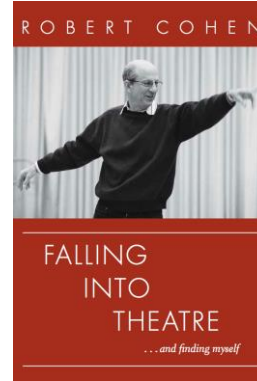
23 – 24 APRIL 2016

PLAN TO JOIN US FOR A CELEBRATION OF THE CAREER AND SCHOLARSHIP OF **PROFESSOR ROBERT COHEN**, WHO WILL BE AWARDED THE FOURTH CLAIRE TREVOR SCHOOL OF THE ARTS COMMEMORATIVE STAR ON THE WALK OF FAME IN FRONT OF THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER.

ON APRIL 23 WILL BE A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS CONNECTED TO COHEN'S TEACHINGS.

ON APRIL 24 WILL BE A RECEPTION IN THE ARTS PLAZA FOLLOWED BY A STAR-STUDED PERFORMANCE IN THE CLAIRE TREVOR THEATRE, A CELEBRATION IN SONG OF ALUMNI AND CURRENT STUDENTS, IN ROBERT'S HONOR.

WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US!



WE CONGRATULATE ROBERT ON THE RELEASE OF HIS MEMOIR, *FALLING INTO THEATRE...AND FINDING MYSELF*, AS WELL AS NEW EDITIONS OF *THEATRE* AND *THEATRE: BRIEF EDITION*, AND HIS NEW BOOK *SHAKESPEARE ON THEATRE: A CRITICAL LOOK AT HIS THEORIES AND PRACTICES*, TO BE RELEASED IN 2016.

THE PAST YEAR HAS ALSO SEEN A PRODUCTION OF ROBERT'S 1968 PLAY *BZAPP!* IN AMSTERDAM, DIRECTED BY HIS COLLEAGUE BRYAN REYNOLDS, AS WELL AS A ROMANIAN PRODUCTION OF

THE MÖBIUS STRIP, WRITTEN AND FIRST STAGED BY ROBERT IN 1971.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR THE EVER-PROLIFIC, CREATIVE, BRILLIANT ROBERT COHEN!