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WSU School of Performing Arts Receives Regional & National Recognition

The beginning of 2016 has been a bountiful one for the School of Performing Arts.

Students and faculty from the theatre and musical theatre programs participated in the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) for Region 5 held January 17-23, 2016 in Minneapolis, MN. “Started in 1969 by Roger L. Stevens, the Kennedy Center’s founding chairman, the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) is a national theater program involving colleges and universities nationwide. Through state, regional, and national festivals, KCACTF participants celebrate the creative process, see one another’s work, and share experiences and insights within the community of theater artists. The KCACTF honors excellence of overall production and offers student artists individual recognition through awards and scholarships in playwriting, acting, criticism, directing, and design.” (information taken from KCACTF website: https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/actf/)

The School of Performing Arts fall musical Smokey Joe’s Café was selected for presentation at the Regional festival. The show was performed for an enthusiastic audience of over 1000 people. Several students and faculty received awards for their work. Musical Theatre major Da’Merius Ford won the Open Jar Institute National Musical Theatre Intensive Scholarship, Musical Theatre major Deiondre Teagle won Best Scene Partner in the semi-finals of the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Competition, Theatre Minor Elizabeth Eckrote won the Focal Press/Rafael Jean Award and received the Region V Costume Design Honorable Mention for her costume design for Mother Courage and her Children, School of Performing Arts Director Linda Starkey received the Kennedy Center Gold Medallion for “extraordinary contributions to the teaching and producing of theatre and demonstrating a strong commitment to the values and goals of KCACTF and to excellence in educational theatre. It is the most prestigious regional award given by KCACTF and is considered one of the great honors in theatre education.” (information taken from KCACTF website: http://www.kcactf5.org/fest-fac-teaching-awards.html)

The National Kennedy Center Awards for the American College Theater Festival were announced on March 22 and the WSU School of Performing Arts was recognized in a BIG way: Smokey Joe’s Cafe received a "Distinguished Production of a Musical" Award, Musical Theatre major Da’Merius Ford received a "Distinguished Performance by an Actor in a Musical" Award, Musical Theatre majors Keshana Yvette Cook & Madi White both received a "Distinguished Performance by an Actress in a Musical" Award, Theatre Design & Technology major Marlo Griffith received a "Distinguished Achievement in Sound Design and Engineering" Award, Assistant Professor Cate Wieck received a "Distinguished Costume Design" Award, Associate Professor Amy Baker Schweithale received an award for "Distinguished Director of a Musical" & an award for "Distinguished Choreography/Movement Direction."

Students and faculty from the School of Performing Arts Dance program participated in the American College Dance Association Regional Conference (ACDA) held in Anderson, IN March 14-16, 2016. “The American College Dance Association’s primary focus is to support and promote the wealth of talent and creativity that is prominent throughout college and university dance departments. The conferences provide the unique opportunity for students and faculty to have their dance works adjudicated by a panel of nationally recognized dance professionals in an open and constructive forum. The conferences are the primary means for college and university dance programs to perform outside their own academic setting and be exposed to the diversity of the national college dance world. Many conferences culminate with the presentation of pieces selected for their exemplary artistic quality.” (information taken from the ACDA website: http://www.acda.dance/ )
The dance piece “nosuchSymbiosis”, choreographed by Dance faculty Instructor Cheyla Clawson Chandler and danced by majors Max Mayerle and Kelsey Stoecklein with Hunter Jones and Gavin Myers understudying, was presented at the conference. “nosuchSymbiosis” was subsequently selected for presentation at the National Festival’s Gala Performance which will be held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC June 9-11, 2016.

The Theatre program’s radio show Stagestruck Audio Theatre’s episode ‘Academia Nutz: TP’ has been selected to be a part of the National Audio Theatre Festival’s HEAR Now Podcast Palooza, which will be held June 9-12, 2016. “HEAR Now is the audio equivalent of a film festival for contemporary audio story-telling in all its forms: live and scripted solo performances, multi-voiced performance, classic radio drama, experimental narrative, and much more. This four-day Festival offers a multi-faceted program showcasing the many forms of audio fiction and sound art story-telling in theaters and other “listening” venues. The Festival presents audio fiction programs that exemplify traditions of craftsmanship, as well as aesthetic and technological innovation.” (taken from the Hear Now festival website: http://www.hearnowfestival.org/)

The episode ‘Academia Nutz: TP’ features the voices of theatre majors Kyle Dilley, Rian Leigh, and theatre alum Trevor Comstock, and was written by Director of Theatre Professor Bret Jones. To listen to the episode, follow this link: http://stagestruckaudiotheatre.podomatic.com/entry/2015-01-30T11_04_20-08_00

All in all, a fantastic start to 2016.

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