



Alfred University Division of Performing Arts

CenterStage

Fall 2009

Miller Theatre Nearing Completion!

Can you believe the transformation of the Alfred hillside? Less than fifteen months ago, we were gathered at the ground breaking ceremony for the new Miller Theatre. Trees were cleared; caissons were drilled and set and tested again and again. Tons of concrete were poured; large steel beams were hoisted high into the air. As the shell of the building began to take shape, bit by bit, one could begin to identify the peaks and roof lines. By late July, bricks and mortar arrived to cover the pepto bismol pink insulation, and the new Miller Theatre began to mirror its older brother, the Miller Performing Arts Center. Slowly but surely, the building has begun to embrace the breathtaking splendor of its design. The 450 plus seat theatre, which will connect to the north end of the Miller Performing Arts Center, will be under construction for approximately eight more months.



This architectural rendering shows the soon to be completed Miller Theatre in its location next to the Miller Performing Arts Center.

In the meantime, the Division of Performing Arts at Alfred University will launch another exciting season of theatre, dance and music through its many performances and residencies. The fall season begins in early September with Afro-Semitic Experience, a jazz group blending Jewish and Afro-American musical traditions, followed by the first Marlin and Ginger Miller Dance Residency, featuring Caverna and Giesche in *“Wanderers and Wonderers”*. Our theatre program this fall will present two productions: an entertaining satire by Michael Weller, *The Heart of Art*, and the compelling *Widows* by Ariel Dorfman and Tony Kushner. Our featured production of the spring semester will be Oscar Wilde’s classic, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Music events funded by the David and Elizabeth Miller Guest Artist Series are *Diaspora Drumming*, a percussion trio specializing in music of the African Diaspora, in October and the Ithaca Wind Quintet in February. Other programs to mark on your calendars are the *Organ and Brass Spectacular*, our annual *Festifall Concert*, an *Orchestra Halloween Concert* and the Chorus and Chamber Singers performing John Rutter’s *Requiem*. Spring performances include a celebration of the 325th birthday of Johann Sebastian Bach with the Chamber Orchestra’s *Gems of the Baroque* concert and a Jazz Band and Chamber Singers event.

As Chair of the Division of Performing Arts, it gives me great pleasure to invite you to another exciting season of dance, drama and music. Through the generosity of Marlin and Ginger Miller, David and Elizabeth Miller and the support of our many Premiere Club members, we are thrilled to bring to you another eclectic and diverse season of visiting artists and residencies. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Lisa E. Lantz

Caverna and Giesche

First Miller Dance Residency

Amsterdam-based dance artists Bruno Caverna and Marcela Giesche will kick off the Marlin and Ginger Miller Dance Residency Program with a week-long teaching residency and two performances. During the week of September 7 to 11, they will guest-teach classes in contemporary dance technique, improvisation and composition. Their performances will take place on September 11 and 12 at 7 p.m. in the Miller Performing Arts Center.

Caverna and Giesche, who have danced and performed extensively together, connect their work to nature and to issues of sustainability and environmental awareness. Their duet "Wanderers and Wonderers" will be performed at AU. It is about returning to an "empty slate" and finding the flexible strength that true vulnerability and sensitive presence in the moment can bring. Also included in the program will be solo excerpts from Dutch choreographer Bianca Van Dillen's "Rite of Spring," performed by Giesche. Rounding out the evening will be a structured improvisation performed by Caverna, Giesche and members of AU's community.

Bruno Caverna is an internationally recognized dance artist/teacher from Brazil. His unique style has influences from capoeira, butoh, and chi kung; it is strongly characterized by a focus on states of mind and presence as tools for personal transformation and expression. He teaches contemporary dance at major dance festivals and for dance companies and schools in Europe and abroad. Marcela Giesche grew up in Alfred where she began dancing. She is currently living in Amsterdam working with several European choreographers, while at the same time developing her own research in movement improvisation. She is the daughter of Alfred University faculty member Herbert Giesche and Marcela Giesche.



The Heart of Art

Explores Ethics of Aesthetics

What happens when an aggressive producer meets an earnest young playwright? What if that playwright believes that no one can produce his work with the artistic purity that it needs? What happens when the producer is far more interested in making a hit, rather than worrying about what the playwright intends?

Comedy, that's what happens! The playwright, the producer, the girlfriend, the "has-been" who might be a "never was," and many other theatrical denizens circulate in the mazes of New York City's back rooms and theatre lairs never asking the questions but clearly stating what they believe a play, a production, and art should be. Their battles and confusions, changes and stubbornness, and penchant for impermanence create mayhem and near-murder in an already confused world of casting couches, uncertain relationships, and the steady demand for "interesting" work.

Alfred University's season opener *The Heart of Art* by Michael Weller will run Wednesday through Sunday, September 30 to October 3 in the C.D. Smith III Theatre in the Miller Performing Arts Center. All performances are at 8 p.m. Tickets are required. General admission is \$5, \$3 for students and \$1 for AU students. Reservations are strongly recommended. Directed by Becky Prophet with scenery and costumes designed by Marketa Fantova, this play set in contemporary New York City should entice all to engage the question of where we draw the line in pure art or art for commerce. Senior Dan Meltzer will design the lighting. Debra MacCrea will manage the costume shop, and Zach Hamm will serve as technical director.

Guest Artist Event

Afro-Semitic Experience

On September 4, Afro-Semitic Experience will perform in Holmes Auditorium at 8 p.m. The band is made up of six African-American and Jewish-American musicians who are dedicated to preserving, promoting and expanding the rich cultural and musical heritage of the Jewish and African Diasporas. Since 1997, the co-founders of the group, African-American jazz pianist Warren Byrd, and Jewish-American jazz bassist David Chevan have been presenting a unique musical program that merges their distinct cultures and heritages and delivers a positive and meaningful message about Black-Jewish relations. The group presents interpretations of music from the rich traditions of the two cultures: gospel, klezmer, nigunim, spirituals, bebop and swing. In performance the musicians frame the music, telling stories about what the pieces mean, how they relate to us as individual members of the community, and how they reflect upon the relations between Blacks and Jews.



"Chevan and Byrd's music is more Mingue than Masada, more Rahsaan Rolank Kirk than Klezmer."

Mark Corroto, www.AllAboutJazz.com

The public is invited to this performance, which is co-sponsored by the Division of Performing Arts and Hillel and generously funded by Hillel.

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FALL 2009 SEASON

SEPTEMBER

- 4 **Afro-Semetic Experience.** Free admission. Holmes Auditorium, 8 pm.
11-12 **Marlin and Ginger Miller Dance Residency: Caverna and Giesche.** Free admission; reservations recommended. CD Smith III Theatre, 7 pm.
30 ***The Heart of Art* by Michael Weller.** Reservations required. CD Smith III Theatre, 8 pm.

OCTOBER

- 1-3 ***The Heart of Art* by Michael Weller.** Reservations required. CD Smith III Theatre, 8 pm.
23 **Diaspora Drumming.** Free admission. Holmes Auditorium, 8 pm.
30 **Halloween Concert** presented by the AU Orchestra and a Monster of Ceremonies. Free admission. Holmes Auditorium, 7 pm.

NOVEMBER

- 1 **Organ & Brass Spectacular** with AU Brass Choir and organist Laurel Buckwalter. Free admission. Alfred Seventh Day Baptist Church, 3 pm.
6 **Festifall** with the AU Chorus, Chamber Singers and Jazz Band. Free admission. Holmes Auditorium, 8 pm.
14 **Requiem by John Rutter** with AU Chorus and Chamber Singers. Free admission. Alfred Seventh Day Baptist Church, 8 pm.
15 **Student Recital.** Singers and pianists will perform for your listening pleasure. Free admission. Howell Hall, 3 pm.
18-21 ***Widows* by Ariel Dorfman and Tony Kushner.** Reservations required. CD Smith III Theatre, 8 pm.
22 **Student Recital.** Free admission. Miller 301, 3 pm.

DECEMBER

- 3-5 **Informal Dance Showing.** Free admission; limited seating. CD Smith III Theatre, 7 pm.
5 **AU Concert Band.** Free admission. Holmes Auditorium, 8 pm.

Division of Performing Arts
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