
Alfred University CenterStage

Performing Arts Division Newsletter • Spring 2019



Alfred University Performing Arts Division presents an Evening of Dance on February 21 – 23 in the Miller Theater

Director's Welcome

Happy New Year 2019. It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of the 2nd decade of the 2nd millennium - so much has happened and yet there is much to look forward to, as we spring into a fresh new series of events.

Our 2019 spring season highlights include the AU Dance Theater, Saakumu Dance Troupe from Ghana, steel drum with Ted Canning, Korean violinist Hyeri Choi, Shakespeare's Tempest and more. The Center Stage contains all the information you will need to plan your calendar around inspiring performances and discover the excitement of world class music, theatre and dance: the hallmark of Performing Arts at Alfred University.

Our 2018-2019 performances are made possible through the extraordinary generosity of Marlin and Ginger Miller, David and Elizabeth Miller, the Herrick- Gallman Fund for the Performing Arts, The School of Arts and Design, the Alfred University Institute for Cultural Unity, the New York State Dance and New York State Council on the Arts Dance Program, as well as the support of our many Premiere Club members.

Curtain up. Enjoy the show!

Dr. Lisa Lantz
Professor of Music, Founding Director of the MostArts Festival
and Chair of Performing Arts at Alfred University

FEATURED PERFORMANCE

Saakumu Four-Day Residency & Performance



The Alfred University Performing Arts Division departments of Dance and Music are honored to co-host Saakumu Dance Troupe for a four-day residency March 18 - 22, 2019. The award winning Saakumu Dance Troupe is one of the leading traditional/contemporary dance and music groups in Ghana, West Africa. Formally led by master musician Bernard Woma who passed away last April, the company continues to honor his legacy with their commitment to introducing audiences to traditional and contemporary African dance and music. Their repertoire features a wide range of West African dance from spiritual, ceremonial and recreational genres to contemporary African dance forms. As the Director of Saakumu, Woma shared the performance stage with renowned artists such as Maya Angelou, Yo Yo Ma and Glen Velez. Saakumu, in partnership with the Slyboots Music, Art, and Dance School located in Buffalo, New York, brings traditional and contemporary African dance and music to the communities in western and central New York.



This residency will include drumming, dance and song workshops, as well as a full performance in the Miller Performing Arts Center at Alfred University on Friday March 22nd at 7 PM. Admission is free. The artists will also conduct a lecture demonstration for middle school students at Alfred-Almond Central School on Tuesday March 19th at 9:30 AM. The final performance on March 22nd in the Miller Performing Arts Center will include dance and music performed by the company. In addition, participants in Saakumu workshops will be invited to join the rehearsal on Friday and then to perform alongside the Saakumu Dance Troupe at the Friday night performance.

This project is made possible with funds from the NYS DanceForce, a partnership program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Additional support is provided by The Marlin Miller Dance Residency Program, and The Herrick Gallman Fund at Alfred University.

SPOTLIGHT ON music

Korean Violinist to Solo with Orchestra

Violinist Hyeri Choi will perform Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major with the Alfred University Symphony Orchestra, Friday, April 19 at 7:30 pm in Miller Theater.

Born in Busan, Korea, Dr. Hyeri Choi is an Assistant Professor of Violin at Idaho State University. Dr. Choi holds graduate degrees from Eastman School of Music and she received her Bachelor of Music from Ewha Womans University in Korea. As a soloist, she made her New York debut at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall as the First Prize Winner of 2014 American Protégé International Strings and Piano Competition. She recently performed Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with Idaho State Civic Symphony. Choi has participated in the various international summer festivals including Kirishima International Music Festival (Japan) and Music Alp Festival (France). Since 2014, she performs chamber music and serves as the Assistant Concertmaster of the MostArts Festival Orchestra.



Hyeri Choi

Alumni Chaz Bruce returns to work with AU choirs

Chaz Bruce will be joining the AU choirs this spring as they prepare for their concert "Common Ground". The program which focuses on acceptance, community and hope will include Aretha Franklin's "Respect", "Glory" from the movie "Selma" and a gospel piece.



Chaz Bruce '08

Bruce will teach the gospel piece and work with the choirs on interpretation and style. Chaz brings a special energy and commitment to everything he does and director Luanne Crosby is excited to bring him back to campus.

Guest Artist Ted Canning appears with PANLOCO

Are you interested in learning how to play Steel Drums? Steel Drum expert Ted Canning will be at Alfred University in April. There will be a FREE hands on workshop as well as concerts with the Jazz Band and the University Chorus. His ensemble PANLOCO will also be performing. For more information on the workshop, please contact Dustin Woodard at Woodard@alfred.edu.

April 26th – Performance with Jazz Ensemble in Miller Theatre, 7:30pm

April 27th – Steel Drum Workshop in Holmes Auditorium, 5:00pm

April 27th – PANLOCO Concert in Holmes Auditorium 7:30pm

May 4th – Performance with University Chorus in Miller Theatre, 7:30pm

Takahashi's *The Story Box* to be presented in March

On March 1 Performing Arts will be presenting *The Story Box* in the C.D. Smith III Theatre. *The Story Box* is a 50-minute, one woman show, by devised theater maker, Suzi Takahashi.* It is underscored with original music for guitar and shamisen by M. Gomez.

Set just after 9/11, *The Story Box* follows the story of a Japanese-American woman who seeks refuge from NYC in the months following the attack by accepting a summer stock job in Upstate New York. While shopping for props in an antique store, the woman finds an old suitcase that contains a mysterious wooden box.

The woman discovers that this box is a kamishibai (a miniature Japanese picture theater used for traditional storytelling) that has been abandoned by its owner along with a cryptic note. As the woman discovers how the kamishibai is used, she finds it hides a secret-- the story of its owner, a young Japanese American girl in an internment camp during WWII, who has been separated from her father who is part of the famous group of political dissenters called the "No-No" boys. As the woman uncovers the mysteries of the box, she is prompted to confront the story of her own family's immigration. Through a series of personal monologues woven through the main story line, the woman explores her feeling of inclusion and exclusion growing up in America. This play draws strong parallels to our current conversations about immigration and cultural otherness.

*Note- This work was originally co-commissioned by the Women's Rights National Park and the Bristol Valley Theater for its 2017 "Hear Me Roar" Celebration.

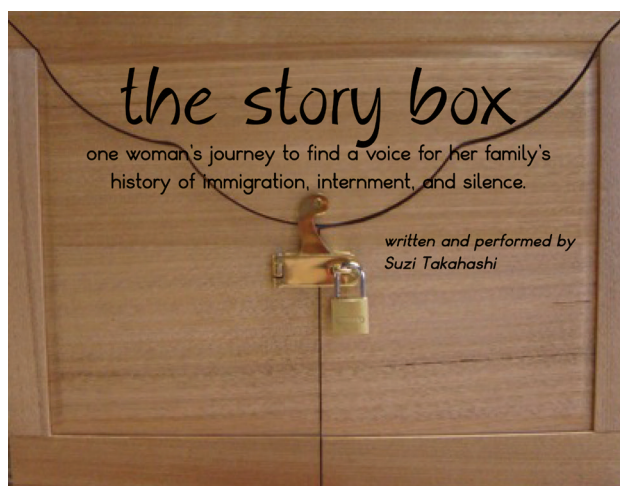
Artists' Bios:

Suzi Takahashi- is an actor, director, teacher, and theater maker. As an actor, she's worked with directors like Richard Foreman, Richard Schechner, Darko Tresnjak, Kristin Marting, and Nicolas Martin. Most

recently, she was a part of Taylor Mac's, *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, at St. Ann's Warehouse in New York City. As a director, Suzi won the 2009 Innovative Theatre Award for Best Director. She has been a Directing Fellow at The New York Theatre Workshop, and a HARP Artists-in-Residence at the HERE. As a theater maker she has collaboratively

created 15 original works. Most recently, her co-creation, *Chang(e)*, was presented by Boom Arts in Portland, Oregon. Suzi teaches movement and devising at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, in NYC. She is a long time actor/director at the Bristol Valley Theater in Naples, NY.

M. Gomez- is a New York City based musician who has toured extensively with the band Hazmat Modine. They have been featured on the albums *Leave Your Sleep* (Natalie Merchant,) *American Music for Gypsy Souls* (Bill Barrett,) and *Bahamut* (Hazmat Modine), as well as on the soundtrack for the Academy Award nominated documentary, *Pina*. Gomez is a graduate of The School of The Art Institute of Chicago and The New York Studio School where he studied visual art, and was a student of music with Michael Longo.



A Special Message from Steve Crosby

In mid-April, 1994, I arrived on the AU campus to interview for the position of Professor of Theatre. My first reaction was shock and uncertainty as I was greeted by 3 feet of snow. Although a bit worried at first, I was reassured by a warm and friendly welcome by the Alfred University community. Little did I know then that I would remain in Alfred for the next 25 years. Reflecting over this span of time, as my May retirement approaches, I am reminded of what an exhilarating journey this has been, both for me as well as the Performing Arts Division.

My first impression of the Division, Theatre Department and the students was to recognize tremendous potential. At first, I was taken aback by the abysmal performing arts facilities scattered all over campus. However, after seeing the active construction site above the football field which was to become the Miller Performing Arts Center, I saw the clear commitment made by the University to fulfill that potential and to launch its theatre, music and dance programs into a new era. Similarly, with the students, upon completing my first show *Table Manners*, I was struck by the remarkable progress they made during our 6 weeks of rehearsal. It was more than I had seen with any student cast during my previous 12 years of teaching. These two factors convinced me I was in the right place. I looked forward with anticipation. To be part of a team building performing arts programs with this unlimited potential was the kind of opportunity I had been looking for.

Standout memories from these past years are too many to count. Literally all productions I have had the opportunity to direct have a special place in my heart. Ranging from classical tragedies to modern comedies and everything in between, each has been



Steve Crosby in the 2009 production of *King Lear*

*Literally all productions I
have had the opportunity
to direct have a special
place in my heart.*

· Steve Crosby ·

tremendously fulfilling. The adaptation of the Greek classic *The Bacchae* in my first year was exhilarating. Multi-layered and complex works by Sam Shepard (*Lie of the Mind*, *Buried Child*) and Tom Stoppard (*Arcadia*) were full of amazing discoveries right to the end. Moliere's comedies (*Tartuffe*, *Imaginary Invalid*) and Christopher Durang's *Betty's Summer Vacation* were a blast to unleash. The magic of Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* were thrilling. Directing an outstanding cast in Tennessee William's American classic *Streetcar Named Desire*, which opened Miller Theater, was incredible. Collaborating on many musicals (*Mikado*, *Into the Woods*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Once on This Island*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*) with talented fellow artists have

been special experiences. Presenting multi-cultural, Latino plays (*¿De Donde?*, *Historias para ser Contadas*, *Widows*, *Anna in the Tropics*) to our student body and community has been a particularly fulfilling personal goal. Lastly, opportunities to bring Shakespeare to life, both through directing (*Macbeth*) as well as acting (*King Lear*, directed by Graham Watts), were amazingly

Continued on page 6

A Special Message *Continued*

fulfilling. For all productions, I offer a special thanks to Stephen Judd, Mike Dempsey, Tatyana Wilds, Debbie MacCrea, Chase Angier, Izmir Ickbal and of course Luanne, along with the many talented students I have been blessed to have worked with over the years.

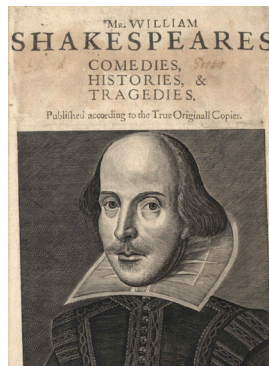
A major highlight during my time at AU was to chair our Performing Arts Division. The meteoric growth we experienced during the 12 years of chairing is something I am humbled by and proud of. With my colleagues, significant strides were made in our collective vision to not only excel in our education mission but also to serve as a cultural beacon in our part of New York State. We experienced growth in

enrollments, active participation in ensembles and many artistic successes in all programs. These combined with future potential led Dr. Marlin Miller and AU to expand the Miller Performing Arts Center with the addition of Miller Theater and establishing a major endowment to further the arts at Alfred. That potential, although not yet fully realized, is still present. I look to the future with hope and anticipation that it can reach those heights. As I close this chapter of my life at AU, I know I will miss the students, I will miss directing and I will miss teaching. I also look forward to what comes next.

Break-a-leg, all!

The Storm Breaks; Shakespeare's *The Tempest* Emerges

The Miller Theater stage on the Alfred University campus will be pounded the myth and magic of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The terrible storm raised by Prospero's enchantment of the natural elements brings shipwrecked terrified travelers to his lair. The bedraggled survivors, who years before raised arms against Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, now on the island will face the consequences of their actions. They followed Antonio to unseat his brother Prospero. Antonio's usurpation of Prospero's temporal powers created violent turmoil. The maelstrom of Prospero's much earlier abdication of his responsibilities to his dukedom and his people gave the cyclonic energy to Antonio's presumption and also to the storm that names the play.



Reputedly, the last play that Shakespeare wrote without a fellow writer, *The Tempest* tackles the themes of magic, power, civility, brutality, bondage, and freedom. As the themes are interrogated, some realize that the island is full of noises... that give delight an hurt not." For others the island is the place where they will meet their punishment for past crimes with sounds like the screams of the drowning and the pleas of the fully terrified.

Running from April 11-13, 2019, *The Tempest* is directed by Becky Prophet, Alfred University Professor of Theatre. Ao Li, scene designer for *Waiting for Godot* returns to Alfred to design the scenery for *The Tempest*. Also returning to Alfred after designing lighting for *Waiting for Godot*, is Andrew DG Hunt. Costumes will be designed by senior Meredith Prato. Sound design will be created by senior Joshua Benham.

Performing Arts Division News



Performing Arts is pleased to welcome Katie Vanorskie as our new secretary. Katie recently moved to the area from the Poconos and joined the Alfred University team in October. Outside of the office, Katie enjoys spontaneous midnight drives [watch out for the deer and porcupine!], hiking, biking, kayaking and camping with friends. "Although my time in Alfred has been brief, I have met a lot of wonderful students, faculty and people, both inside and outside of the campus community. I love this area and I can't wait to explore and discover more." Welcome aboard, Katie Vanorskie!

Evening of Dance performances in February

Alfred University Performing Arts Division presents an Evening of Dance on February 21 – 23 in the Miller Theater at 8pm. Admission is free. The concert, performed by AU students, will feature new original works created by Alfred University students Ariel Fitzsimmons, Emma Hildebrandt, Jillian

Hagadorn and Ryan Isabelle; faculty members D. Chase Angier and Colleen Wahl; and the Marlin Miller Resident Guest Artists Krystal Cooper and Martha Brim. Cooper is a 2012 dance minor / theatre major Alfred University Alumni. Lastly, Angier will also collaborate



Guest artist Krystal Cooper

on a new dance work with Arenze Wellington who specializes in hip hop. The evening will include dances of all sizes – intimate solos to energetic large group works. The costumes will be designed by Alfred University School of Art and Design faculty members Angie To and

Katarina Riesing, and Colleen Wahl's costume students – Joyce Parker, Luci Busch, Louisa Holbrook, Joslin Pettingel, Autumn Maggi, Sarah McCall and made by AU staff and students. Over 50 AU students will be involved in making this year's show happen.

Martha Brim Residency for the Spring Semester

Dance events for the spring semester start right away with our Marlin Miller Dance Resident Artist Martha Brim. During her residency, Brim will be creating an original dance work that will be created with and performed by ten Alfred University students and five community members that include Pat Lacourse, Carlyn Yanda, Amanda Oglesbee, Holly Dudley and Lana Meissner. The work will be included in the Alfred University Dance Theater Concert February 21 – 23rd at 8 pm in the Miller Theater. Admission is free. Brim will also be teaching five dance and choreography classes during her residency.

Martha Brim is a choreographer, educator and arts professional whose artistry is influenced by her early training as a visual artist and voice student (including a self-taught yodeling practice), early dance



training in ballet and the Martha Graham technique and now draws from body/mind investigations, various somatic practices, a strong foundation in feminist theory and many days of digging in the dirt. One review describes Martha's work as "intelligently conceived... quirky, with shrewd, robust humor."

In 2000 Martha founded The Power Company Collaborative, a company that instigates large-scale performance installations involving musicians, designers and artists as co-creators. Martha engages in creative projects and teaching a broad-spectrum population including incarcerated youth and adults, public school teachers and students and senior adults. Her mission is empowerment through dance; each creative project is guided by this purpose.

Alfred University

Performing Arts Division
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Save the Date for MostArts 2019:
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www.alfred.edu/MostArts

Visit our website for information and updates:
www.alfred.edu/MostArts or contact Lisa Lantz,
Artistic Director at MostArts@alfred.edu.

*Congratulations to Christopher
Zandieh, the 2018 MostArts
Festival Grand Prize winner (right).
Christopher will return for our
Opening Gala Concert, July 7, 2019*

