OUR UPCOMING PRODUCTION

MUSIC IS
FEBRUARY 4-5
BOOK BY: George Abbott, Based On Shakespeare's Twelfth Night
MUSIC BY: Richard Adler
LYRICS BY: Will Holt
MUSIC DIRECTOR: Bradley Martin
DIRECTOR: Catherine Cox
SHOW DATES: February 4 at 7:30 p.m. and February 5 at 3 p.m. (matinee)
VENUE: John W. Bardo Fine & Performing Arts Center Theatre
TICKETS: $20 Adults  |  $15 Faculty/Staff/Seniors  |  $10 Students ($7 In Advance)

Be a part of Broadway history ... in Cullowhee!
Our talented cast brings to the stage the first revival in the world since the Broadway premiere in 1976. This exciting concert production is based on a score lost among the vast files of the Rodgers and Hammerstein archives at the Library of Congress for more than a quarter of a century.
Theatrical legend Richard Adler was the writer of such beloved musical standards as Damn Yankees and The Pajama Game.
Amid tangled comic mayhem of mistaken identity and ever-shifting affections, Music Is ignites the Bard's lightning-paced plot with bubbling Broadway sparkle

Music Is ... Is the must-see musical of the season!

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   School of Stage & Screen at NCTC

THE WHY
March 21-24
BY: Victor Kaufold
DIRECTED BY: D.V. Caitlyn
SHOW DATE: March 21 – 24 at 7:30pm
March 24 at 3pm (Matinee)
VENUE: Bardo Arts Center Studio Theatre
TICKETS: $15 Adults  |  $10 Faculty/Staff/Seniors
$10 Students ($7 In Advance)

The Why is a fast-paced tragicomedy, one part modern satire, one part honest investigation. Robert, an American teenager, is guilty of murdering three of his classmates in what has come to be referred to as a school shooting. Spliced among the wry and insightful exchanges between Robert and his assigned social worker, a parade of fantastical stereotypes sweeps in and out, creating a dichotomy between moments of hilarity and sorrow. Confronted by disturbingly accurate exaggerations of the tabloid-like modern media, the influences of Hollywood, and the glorification of violence as a marketing tool, the audience is made to laugh, and then question that laughter. The Why features more than 25 characters, is written with a singular wit and, merged with unconventional staging in a black box venue, is crafted into a unique theatrical event.

Upcoming Events
Carner & Gregor concert ............ Apr 24
UP Productions ..................... Apr 20-21
Controlled Chaos Film Festival ... Apr 27
What a great school year it has been so far, and there is much more to come. During the fall semester we saw Paul Rudnick's comedy *I Hate Hamlet* nimbly directed by Claire Eye, and who can forget the 10-minute sword fight choreographed by DV Caitlyn? That was followed by the bloody box office hit *Sweeney Todd* directed by Terrence Mann, our endowed chair for musical theatre. The spring shows are already in preparation. First up is a concert version of the musical *Music Is* by Richard Adler and Will Holt. This is an opportunity to see this rarely produced gem. Following, and our replacement for the previously announced *Taming of the Shrew*, we have *The Why* by Victor Kaufold. This play tackles the important subject of violence in schools and our society. Rounding out our season will be our fourth annual film festival *Controlled Chaos*, featuring the best of our student films for the year, including our two senior thesis films, *Crossroads* and *Moses Cove*. This event is the highlight of our season because it showcases our entire student body's skills encompassing, directing, writing, acting, cinematography, design and production skills, culminating in a fascinating and eclectic mix of student films. Your attendance at our productions is the most important thing you can do to show your support, but if you would like to do more, consider becoming a member of our Friends of the Arts organization by donating to the School of Stage & Screen.

**Recent Productions**

**I Hate Hamlet – October 2011**

*Presented by: School of Stage & Screen's Actors Company*

This was a great turnout. Everyone enjoyed it!

**Sweeney Todd – November 2011**

*Presented by: School of Stage & Screen's Musical Theatre Program*

A wonderful production on all counts!

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**Sweeney Todd Silent Auction**

During this year’s musical theatre production of *Sweeney Todd*, the Musical Theatre Program held a silent auction to raise money for scholarships. Some of the amazing items were:

- A Sweeney Todd script signed by the original Sweeney, Len Cariou *(went for $60)*
- A Sweeney Todd script signed by Stephen Sondheim *(went for $195)*
- A Sweeney Todd script signed by Angela Lansbury, who portrayed Mrs. Lovett on Broadway *(went for $200)*
- A personalized letter signed by Angela Lansbury *(went for $125)*
- A date with Terrence Mann *(went for $195)*

The auction brought in a total of $3,900 at the auction. Congrats!

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FEATURED ALUMNI

Within every newsletter we introduce to you some of our alumni. This issue’s featured alumni are theatre program graduates.

WCU Stage & Screen’s own Bobbi Baker-James was recently honored with the Young Alumna Award at our Homecoming. Baker-James graduated with a theatre degree in 2001 and was one of the founding members of WCU’s Black Theatre Ensemble. She’s gone on to appear on stage and on television. She is a regular on Tyler Perry’s TV Series “House of Payne” and appeared in the movie “Madea Goes to Jail.” Here is what one of her professors, Dr. Richard Beam, had to say about Baker-James: “I remember Bobbi with great fondness both as a good student and as a fine actress in many roles”. Among her many roles, she was ‘voodoo’ Madame Arcadi in Blithe Spirit, Lady Montague in our ‘post-apocalyptic’ Romeo and Juliet and a wonderful Riff Raff in The Rocky Horror Show here at WCU. She studied at the Oxford School of Drama and went on to Julliard after graduating from WCU. If you would like to learn more about Baker-James, check out her IMDb profile as well as the article featured on the WCU website.

One of our recent design tech graduates, Beth Thiemann, gave us an update on what she is doing now and some advice for our future graduates. Beth has had a busy past couple of months working as stage manager for That 80’s Show at The Rep in Little Rock, Ark. The director of education at The Rep was so impressed with her that he asked her to stay on through next year as her assistant. She is considering it. Beth also worked as stage manager for A Christmas Carol: The Musical. This was the biggest show she has worked on, consisting of 115 props, six costume changes for each actor, two massive set pieces, lots of haze and a bed with two trap doors. Beth wanted to give this advice to future graduates: 1) Clear Marley tape (a.k.a. dance tape) is superior to packing tape on many levels; 2) Never put off what you can do now because later there will be more important things to attend to then the stuff that could have been done yesterday.

STUDENT NEWS/UPDATE

Alexander Volpi was accepted to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research for his abstract submission in his intro to design class. The project was to conceptualize a performance art costume design. It was not for a particular show, but the idea was of a child who grew up knowing nothing but genocide. The costume is a representation of what the child sees being brought up in a war-torn environment. Being an acting major, Volpi stretched his creative mind to incorporate a costume that he as a performer would find intriguing and interesting to see on stage. Congrats, Alex!
During this year's fall break, two motion picture majors, Chris Reed and Zach Heaton, filmed their senior thesis, *Moses Cove*. *Moses Cove* was written by Zach Heaton, directed by Chris Read and produced by the two. As well as producing and writing, Zach also was the cinematographer for the piece. Here is what the directors said about their experience: “The piece was a challenge from the beginning. We knew we had to build an interior matching set, and this required a matching exterior. Before anything could get under way a location had to be locked. Once it was, designing and building of the interior set began. It took Margaret Gordon (production designer), Zach Heaton and Chris Read two weeks to build the set from the first wall up. It would have taken much longer without the volunteered help of other students. Production took place over fall break. We had six days to shoot. More challenges in the mix were driving scenes, gunshot sequences and renting an industry-standard camera that the production had for only eight days. Once those days were up everything else would have to be shot on a different camera. All the money for the piece was raised by the above the line crew by asking fellows friends, family and strangers to donate. The piece was a challenge, but filming went smoothly and all the scenes were shot. Most importantly no one got hurt and everyone had fun. Overall, it was a learning experience for every student involved. Everyone who made the film possible can see the fruits of their labor, and all the WCU senior film projects, at the Controlled Chaos Film Festival on April 27.

For a behind-the-scenes look at the making of *Moses Cove*, go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RiaViqEI2s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RiaViqEI2s).
**FACULTY NEWS**

**Arledge Armenaki**  |  Cinematographer for the documentary “Birth of a Tartan,” which depicts the process and history of making of a new tartan fabric from conception to design on to the final fabric. The film is directed by Bob Currie of the New York Curri Clan and is being shot by four crews internationally. The film is expected to be aired on PBS. See featured online article.

**D.V. Caitlyn**  |  Contract was picked up again for a nationally televised NASCAR/Sunoco commercial; currently working on a full-length play, performance-related book and the text and music rights for an original WWII-related musical.

**Jack Sholder**  |  Featured on DailyGrindhouse.com with an interview, reviews, top 10 list, etc. See featured online article.

**Karyn Tomczak**  |  This past September she choreographed “Swamp Gravy: Solid Ground,” Georgia’s official folk life play, in Colquitt, Ga.

**Susan Brown Strauss**  |  Appointed to the Costume Society of America (CSA) Abstracts Review Committee for the 2012 symposium Global Gateway: Dress Scholarship in the 21st Century. The annual CSA symposium is the primary venue for the presentation of dress scholarships in the United States.

**RECENT GUEST ARTISTS**

*This semester we had the pleasure of having two guest artists come visit us and hold workshops.*

**JUDITH JAMES**

**WORKSHOP:** “What Does a Producer Do?”
**DATE:** Sept. 23, 2011

Originally a New York theatrical producer of 11 award-winning plays, her first television production was the Emmy winning “In Her Own Words” for KCET, American Playhouse and the Mark Taper Forum.

In a partnership with actor Richard Dreyfuss, her film credits include an executive producer of “Quiz Show,” a producer of “Mr. Holland’s Opus,” producer of “Trigger Happy” starring Dreyfuss, Jeff Goldblum, Gabriel Byrne and Ellen Barkin, and movies for HBO, TNT, ABC and CBS. In addition she has served as consulting producer on many of Dreyfuss’ films.

In a theatrical partnership with Camille Cosby, James produced the Broadway play and subsequent tours of “Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters’ First 100 Years” by Emily Mann. James and Cosby then produced the movie version for CBS, directed by Lynne Littman and starring Ruby Dee and Diahann Carroll. “Having Our Say” received a Peabody Award for excellence in broadcast journalism.

In January 2006, she wrapped principal photography on the thriller “The Forest,” which she produced in India in the foothills of the Himalayas. It is by writer/director Ashvin Kumar, an Academy Award nominee for a short film last year.

**CARYN MAMRACK**

**WORKSHOP:** “Reality TV”
**DATE:** Oct. 28, 2011

Originally from Atlanta, Caryn Mamrack received a bachelor’s degree in theatre and English from the University of Michigan. She spent four years teaching high school in Detroit before attending the University of Southern California, where she received her master of fine arts in cinema-television production in 2002. While at USC, Mamrack worked on a number of advanced productions as a producer, assistant director and director. Currently, she is working for Parkway Productions and spends her free time writing a feature script rooted in her teaching experiences.

**OUR MUSICAL THEATRE STUDENTS GO TO REGIONALS**

At this year’s NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing – North Carolina Chapter Musical Theatre Auditions) Western Carolina University won three out of the four categories for colleges. Here is the list of students who qualified to move onto regionals:

- **AMANDA KOURI**
- **JESSICA HUMPHREY**
- **ANASTASIA TEEL**
- **JONATHAN COBRDA**
- **BRIAN GAY**
- **TYLER MCKENZIE**
- **CASEY WEEMS**
- **CHARITY RUTH HASKINS**
- **PAUL THIEMANN**

We also had the representative from the Kennedy Center theatre awards select two actors from our production of “Sweeney Todd” to go to regionals to compete for the Irene Ryan Acting Award, a $10,000 scholarship. Those students are Tierney Cody and Joe Callahan.
During the summer and early fall of 2011 the School of Stage & Screen found that we were not connecting enough with high schools, their theatre/drama/film students or with their teachers. Many did not know of our program or all the great opportunities that we have to offer. We started asking questions: How do we reach these students and teachers? What methods can we use to communicate to these various groups about our programs, opportunities and events? After some discussions and help from our technically savvy students, we came up with our “Social Media Push Plan,” which we launched this school year. This initiative includes Facebook pages, Twitter postings, YouTube videos, and a website overhaul.

At the beginning of the semester we conducted an experiment of how much traffic we had on our existing Facebook page and how we could increase that traffic. We started posting pictures from shows that WCU produced in the past and tagged as many alumni as we could and sent messages to those tagged to tag others whom we didn’t know or have contact information for. We wanted to see if it would generate more traffic, and the response was great. We received messages from everyone from alumni and community members who were involved with the program in the past to current students, friends and even families of students. The number of “group members” rose from 276 to 352 in a matter of weeks. Our “School of Stage & Screen” Facebook group has 356 members and is growing daily.

The purpose of this group was discussed as well. We wanted to make sure that the School of Stage & Screen group was for alumni, current students and those who have been involved or want to be involved with the Stage & Screen programs at WCU. However, we also found that we needed another page, just for those prospective students who want to know more without all of the extra postings and information. We created the NEW page to provide information to prospective students. This keeps our two groups organized and still informed with the information that pertains only to them.

We encourage all of those alumni, former students, current students, families and friends who want to keep informed and/or involved with the school to join the School of Stage & Screen Facebook group.

We have also launched our YouTube channel at youtube.com/stageandscreenwcu, where we have posted videos from motion picture projects and senior theses, trailers from stage productions and various promotional clips for the college. We have a student group that has been formed this year to film students of the program during rehearsal, interviews and classes in an informal fashion. We are posting them on the YouTube page to give high school students a look into the life of a Stage & Screen student here at Western Carolina University.

Our initiative also includes launching a Twitter feed for current students to quickly inform them of updates, changes, job opportunities or even last-minute auditions. We are building an online production calendar for students, faculty and staff that will function like an electronic “call board.” Our fact sheets are being overhauled as well as all of our recruiting material in hopes that once we grab the attention of all those high school students we can send them interesting and accurate literature about the School of Stage & Screen.

However, our “social media push” will only be successful with the help of all of you. We need your help to keep our initiative growing and expanding. Join our School of Sage and Screen Facebook page, go to the Facebook page for prospective students and “like” it or send it to a high school student who you think would be interested. Go to our YouTube channel and share some of the videos with friends or community members. If they see what we are doing they may want to come and see a show with us. Send us an email, message or letter telling us what you are up to. We would love to update the alumni webpage we are working on with your current information. Marriages, births, new jobs or events – we are interested in them all. Also, if you have a website or Facebook page, send that information and we can post it so your other classmates and friends can find you.

We all know how joining, “liking” or signing up for things on the Internet these days can open up a can of spam, advertising and solicitation worms, but we promise that the purpose of the social media push is not to ask you for money. Instead, we want to use this initiative to keep our Stage & Screen family in touch with each other. We need your help to continue to improve and expand our School of Stage & Screen.