

THEATER

FILM

MUSIC

ART

DANCE

# SPOTLIGHT

*Culver City Academy of Visual & Performing Arts*

November 2005

[www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org)

Volume 1 Number 4

## Shim Sham Pink Elephant Extravaganza!

Get your dancing shoes on, because you're going to have a hard time staying in your seat during this first ever combined concert for AVPA's Shim Sham Move Co. and the Pink Elephant Music Co.

Lisa Michel's chamber singers will be singing madrigal music for the ballet class and a gospel piece for a group working on choreography. The beginning tap class will perform to some classic pieces by Tony Spano's jazz group. The Afro-Caribbean dance class will perform to live drums while the Tappa Tappa Tappas will give a repeat



Afro-Caribbean Dance Class

performance of the sand dance they performed at the UCLA Wac is Back event, so if you missed it then, be sure to catch this wonderful act. Also, Julia Dennis and Mallory Nicolas will be performing live vocal hiphop. And if that isn't enough, Mr. Day, a CCHS math teacher and composer, will play an original composition for a piece that CariAnn Shim Sham will premier entitled "Paperwork." Jon Black, Allegra Williams and Lora Myers are the dancers.

See you at this extravaganza: November 17-19 at

7pm in the Robert Frost Auditorium. \$10 admission; \$7 with ASB.

## Trainwreck Theatre

Had a rough week? There's no medicine like laughter, they say. And laughs abound at the comedy improv shows of Trainwreck Theatre. Friday and Saturday, November 4 & 5 Trainwreck will be performing at 7:30pm in the SPoT. Admission is \$7 general or \$5 ASB. If you present your ticket from Friday night's show on Saturday, you can see the second show for only a dollar. Come join the fun!

## Stussy Fund-raiser

Don't forget the Stussy clothing and skate shoe sale fund-raiser on Saturday, November 5 from 10am to 2pm in the parking lot of El Rincon Elementary School (1117 Overland Ave.). They'll be significant discounts on all merchandise, so come shop. With your help, the hard-working students from the Blurred Vision Theatre Company will get to the Fringe Festival in Scotland!

## Fuddy Meers

Fuddy what? This dark American farce by David Lindsey-Abaire is both poignant and wildly funny. The mother of the lead character, Claire, has suffered a stroke and now speaks "stroke-talk," so she pronounces everything wrong.



The Fuddies

Hence the “funny mirrors” Claire had loved as a child become “Fuddy Meers,” the play’s name. Claire herself suffers from psychogenic amnesia so she wakes up with no memory of her life and any memories she regains during the day she loses again when she falls asleep. But she learns about her life and the mystery of how she got amnesia through the “fuddy meers” into her existence provided by the other characters trapped in her mother’s house, including an escaped con, a puppet wielding felon, a teen drug addict... You get the idea.

Jonathan Fahn directs this play with an eye to the absurdity of the situation while still respecting the content, which runs too deep for the play to be simply categorized as absurdist. Join the cast and crew for *Fuddy Meers* at 7pm, November 30-December 3 and December 7-10 in the SPoT. Tickets are \$15 general or \$12 ASB, seniors, children and faculty. Seating is limited so be sure to purchase your tickets early at [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org).

## The Walls Between Us

Twenty of Kristine Hatanaka’s art students are putting the finishing touches on their own representations of the Berlin Wall. As part of the Wende Museum’s “Berlin Wall Mural Project” these student groups have illustrated six 9’ by 3’ panels to express their daily anxieties and concerns about division and the political, personal and cultural impact of

physical and psychological barriers.

Kristine’s been pleased with the results of the project, but also a little surprised – because they’ve all taken



Benjamin Hersh and Qubo Guo

more of a political bent than she had expected. But teaching often comes with its share of surprises.

And opportunities. The students are now working with a counterpart class in the United Kingdom so the students from two different continents can discuss their various perspectives on the Berlin Wall and its inspiration of artistic expression.

The panels will be part of a new exhibition at the

Wende Museum due to open in June 2006 which will feature a 2.6 ton segment of the Berlin Wall painted by famous wall painter, Thierry Noir. The Wende Museum is dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of social and cultural artifacts, artwork, and archives relating to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. For more information about the exhibit and the museum, go to [www.wendemuseum.org](http://www.wendemuseum.org).

## Three Faculty in New York

Last year **Tony Spano** continued a winning streak for Culver City High School with a fellowship from the Surdna Foundation. **Kristine Hatanaka** had won



Tony Spano in New York

the fellowship the prior year. Tony received a \$5,000 grant to attend the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles conference in Singapore last summer. Each fellow also received a \$1,500 grant for their school and program.

The program brings together all the fellows in New York City on November 11-13 to share their experiences and art-making with others and to discuss a variety of topics, including arts and academics, student preparation, alumni tracking and recruitment.

Joining Tony in New York this year will be **Darryl Hovis** and Kristine. Darryl is representing the administrative aspect of AVPA while Kristine was asked, as a former fellow, to help facilitate the meeting and to share some of the things that developed as a result of her own fellowship which she spent in New Mexico studying with an artist. For Kristine, the most exciting outcome of the Surdna fellowship was being asked by the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA)/Riverfront to participate in the Visiting/Exhibiting Artist program in January 2006. She has been invited to teach NOCCA’s advanced visual art students about collage and assemblage. She will also have the opportunity to exhibit her own artwork in the Goldring Riverview Gallery in February 2006. NOCCA is Louisiana’s Arts

Conservatory for High School Students. For more information, see [www.nocca.com/home.html](http://www.nocca.com/home.html).



Kristine Hatanaka with her door artists

## Door to Halloween

One thing about art students is they never do anything half way. Here's what they did this year for the Halloween Door contest. Enough to scare just about anyone!

## Announcements

**Dance Floor:** The sprung floor for the dance program is finally installed. The lyrical jazz, tap and ballet classes have been using the floor and love it! The dance department is planning a party to celebrate the floor. Watch for more information about this event!

**Concessions:** For any AVPA performance your student is involved with, please donate two cases of water and a case of soda. Some water goes back stage for the performers while the rest gets sold at concessions along with the soda. Every dollar earned on donated concessions goes directly to the Academy. Please deliver your donations to the Frost the week before the production when you drop off or pick up your child.

**Parent meetings:** Don't forget these regularly scheduled parent meetings. Film and Theatre parents meet the first Tuesday of every month at 7pm.

## Last Month's Company

By all accounts, Company was a great success, playing to mostly full houses. Heard more than once: "Every year these students raise the bar."

Want to see or order pictures? Click [here](#).

AVPA film students taped the performances and hope to sell DVDs. All proceeds will go directly to the film department to help finance future projects. Read the Spotlight for updates.

## What Happened at WAC?

At the WAC is Back event at UCLA, the Tappa Tappa Tappas performed for the largest audience of the day in the beautiful outdoor performance space, the Garden Theater in the brand new Gloria Kaufman Dance Building. Dancing to cheers from the audience, the tappers put on a great performance and were the talk of the event!

For Cari Ann Shim Sham\* that wasn't the highlight of the day, though. She was thrilled that the students got to perform among the professionals of the Los Angeles dance community while having the opportunity to see the new building. According to Cari Ann, "They would never see such a variety of work in such a small period of time outside this event. It was inspiring for them to see what's going on in the professional world of dance and to be a part of it."



## The Real World Edition

Here's what's happening with students, alums and faculty outside the Academy.

**Ben Sieke's** upcoming performances with various CSU Long Beach ensembles include the Brass Ensemble on Nov. 14 @ 8:00, the Percussion Ensemble on Dec. 6 @ 8:00, and a Caribbean Christmas (World Percussion & Steel Pan Orchestra) on Dec. 10 @ 2:00 and 7:00.

<http://www.csulb.edu/~music/>

Pepperdine's *Anything Goes* will feature **Tiffany Williams** (Theatre, 2005) Nov. 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 @ 7:30 and 13, 19 @ 2:00 [www.pepperdine.edu](http://www.pepperdine.edu)

Contact [tsonia@comcast.net](mailto:tsonia@comcast.net) with your latest achievement or next performance.

## Faculty Favorites

**James Bentley**, AVPA's esteemed Film guru, has some recommendations for you on what to watch for in these one-of-a-kind movies:

*Apocalypse Now* (1979) In addition to classic lines, this movie is a dream come true for everyone who's wanted to



James Bentley



waterski behind a swift boat. Now who hasn't had *that* fantasy?

*Raising Arizona* (1987) No need for a laugh track with this film. The dead-pan delivery of Holly Hunter and Nicholas Cage will have you choking on your popcorn.

*Casablanca* (1942) Play that movie again, Sam.

*Frankenstein & Bride of Frankenstein* (1931) You owe it to yourself to provide context to that face we all know so well. And when you do, ask yourself, is he really a monster?

*Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) These classic episodes deal with every conceivable story type and are well shot. You'll be surprised at how fresh these stories seem.

Click [here](#) for James' favorites.

## Alumnus in the SPOTLIGHT

This month's Spotlight highlights AVPA alum **Ben Sieke**, who is attending CSU Long Beach and is loving both what he's doing and where he's doing it.

Ben graduated in 2004 with a music major and decided he wanted to stay in LA. He auditioned for a number of different music departments and was accepted everywhere he auditioned. He chose CSU Long Beach because its focus results in very well-rounded players. And the school's emphasis on performance means he gets lots of opportunities to perform every semester, although Ben points out that it's only a little more than he got at the Academy!



Ben Sieke

Ben has been playing with the Steel Pan Orchestra, the World Percussion Group, the Percussion Ensemble, a wind ensemble, the symphonic band, and the University Symphony Orchestra. He picks up other ensembles whenever he can.

Ben also takes private lessons in marimba and drumset and looks forward to working with all seven of the school's percussion faculty who provide instruction on a range of instruments and styles.

## Parent in the SPOTLIGHT

"She's a superwoman" says **Stacey Wilson** of **Michael Laase**, this month's featured parent volunteer. Currently Michael tracks income and donations daily and makes deposits at the District office for the Academy.

Michael's volunteerism runs deep. She's been involved in the PTA and was president at both the middle school and the high school. She's been in the Booster Club for seven years, the last two as president. And as if that weren't enough, she's also active in the Education Foundation.



Michael Laase

The most amazing thing about her commitment to AVPA is that she doesn't even have a student in the academy! Her daughter, **Rachael Laase**, graduated last year. When the film students needed a place

to film their outdoor scenes for last year's *The Sky is Falling*, Michael's house was donated as "operations central." Michael provided food for the actors and crew, which included a trifle which Michael calls "total decadence." The desert made such an impression that **Darryl Hovis** requested she make it for the fundraising Gala after *Company*. And Michael, who had other plans for the night, cheerfully agreed and brought it in.

**Kristine Hatanaka** has worked with Michael for years and finds her positive attitude, sense of humor and honesty refreshing. "The AVPA Program remains strong because of people like Michael."

## AVPA Foundation Progress

The Foundation is making progress toward its goal of raising \$40,000 for the Academy. The current balance of \$8500 includes donations and the balance from Amazon.com.



## 2005-2006 AVPA Season\*

### *Trainwreck Theatre*

Nov. 4-5, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Shim Sham & Pink Elephant Extravaganza*

Nov. 17-19, Robert Frost Auditorium

### *Fuddy Meers*

Nov. 30-Dec.10, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Winter Music Concert*

Dec. 21, Robert Frost Auditorium

### *Cabaret Night*

Jan. 20-21, Robert Frost Auditorium

### *Woycek*

Feb. 1-11, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Trainwreck Theatre*

Feb, 17-18, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Frost Film Festival*

March 2-4, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Trainwreck Theatre*

March 10-11, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Chess*

March 22-25, Robert Frost Auditorium

### *Trainwreck Theatre*

April 21-22, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Spring Dance Off!*

April 27-29, Robert Frost Auditorium

### *Antigone*

May 11-20, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Trainwreck Theatre*

May 26-27, Sony Pictures Theatre

### *Spring Music Showcase*

TBD

### *Young Filmmakers Film Premier*

June 9, Sony Pictures Entertainment Lot

### *Java Drama Dozen*

June 5-6, 12-13, Ivy Substation

\*Always check [www.avpa.org](http://www.avpa.org) for schedule changes.

---

## Contacting the Academy

Dr. Tony Spano (executive director and creative director, music): [tonyspano@avpa.org](mailto:tonyspano@avpa.org)

Darryl B. Hovis (artistic director and creative director, theater): [dbhovis@avpa.org](mailto:dbhovis@avpa.org)

James Bentley (creative director, film):  
[jbentley@avpa.org](mailto:jbentley@avpa.org)

Kristine Hatanaka (creative director, art):  
[kristinehatanaka@ccusd.org](mailto:kristinehatanaka@ccusd.org)

Cari Ann Henderson (creative director, dance):  
[cariann@avpa.org](mailto:cariann@avpa.org)

Joseph Horn (creative director, theater design):  
[joseph@avpa.org](mailto:joseph@avpa.org)

Spotlight editor: [tsonia@comcast.net](mailto:tsonia@comcast.net)

---

You are receiving this newsletter because you've expressed an interest in the AVPA. Please feel free to pass it on to others. If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please contact Trudy Sonia, AVPA parent volunteer and communications coordinator, at [tsonia@comcast.net](mailto:tsonia@comcast.net).