SPRING 2015 THEATER HIGHLIGHTS

SEATTLE THEATER

ACT Theatre and the 5th Avenue Musical Theatre are co-presenting a revival of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*. Featured in the cast is Theater faculty member Timothy McCuen Piggee (below, center).

In addition, Timothy has been chosen as a 2015 recipient of the prestigious Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship sponsored by the Ten Chimneys Foundation. Timothy will have the opportunity this summer to participate in a week-long master class/retreat with a world-renowned, respected Master Teacher (Tony-Award-winner Phylicia Rashad.)


Also, this spring at Seattle Rep, Emily Chisholm 2004 and MJ Sieber 2001 will be performing in Pulitzer Prize-winner *Outside Mullingar* by John Patrick Shanley, opening April 24.


Showtunes Theater Company will present a concert version of the musical *Nine* at Benaroya Hall on March 28 and 29, featuring Jose Gonzalez TH 1989 in the leading role of Guido Contini.
Theater Highlights Spring 2015

Theatre22 will be bringing back the Gregory-Award-winning play Live! From the Last Night of My Life, written and directed by Wayne Rawley TH 1993. The production, which plays March 26-April 18 at 12th Avenue Arts, features Theater alumni Samie Detzer TH 2010 and Alyson Bedford TH 1990.

Seattle Public Theatre’s spring production of Slowgirl by Greg Pierce features alumna Hannah Mootz TH 2011.

Look for Kaila Towers 2011 in Book-It Repertory’s upcoming adaptation of Little Bee, opening April 22.

Seattle Shakespeare Company’s version of Tartuffe, featuring local acting legend R. Hamilton Wright in the title role, features alumni Quinn Armstrong TH 2012 and Riley Shanahan TH 2014 and professional intern Reina Struk TH 2015. Seattle Shakespeare also has productions of Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth touring the state through the beginning of May. In the valiant cast of five who bring those plays to life for school audiences are Terri Weagant TH 2004 (Benvolio, Lady Macbeth) and Joe Cummings TH 2014 (Romeo, Malcolm). Also at SSC, Conner Neddersen 2010 is doing teaching residencies throughout the state.

Taproot Theatre’s successful production of The Explorers Club featured Conner Neddersen TH 2010 and Kevin Pitman TH 2006, with dialect coaching by Kayla Walker TH 2012.


Café Nordo opens its new dinner-theater venue the Culinarium in Pioneer Square with the premiere of Don Nordo del Midwest, featuring alumna Opal Peachey TH 2004 (below, left) and faculty member Keira McDonald.


PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Vancouver-based Emily Cawley TH 2012 appeared as Mollie in The Mousetrap at the Royal Canadian Theatre Company, and is in the company of My Fair Lady at the Royal City Musical Theatre in New Westminster, BC. She is understudying and will perform the leading role of Eliza Doolittle.

Portland Center Stage presents Cyrano De Bergerac, directed by frequent Cornish guest artist Jane Jones of Book-It Repertory Theatre. The title role of the romantic French soldier with the giant proboscis will be performed by Cornish Theater faculty member Andrew McGinn, while Colin Byrne TH 2003 plays his protégé / rival Christian.

ON THE AIRWAVES

Listen for Jorge Orozco 2011 as the voice of the Seattle Mariners’ 2015 TV ad campaign!
**MIDWEST**

**Ramiz Monsef** TH 2002 is performing in the world premiere of Charles L. Mee’s new drama *The Glory of the World* at the Actors Theatre of Louisville’s famed Humana Festival of New Plays. It plays March 20-April 12. Ramiz and his co-writers-performers also recently presented a concert version of their musical *The (Un)Fortunates* -- which was a smash last season at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival -- in a sold-out performance at the New York Public Theater’s Joe’s Pub. Ramiz is also co-writing a graphic novel based on *The (Un)Fortunates*, for release in 2016.

**Joetta Wright** TH 2008 recently performed in the musical *The Color Purple* at the Park Square Theatre in St. Paul.

A Host of People, the Detroit-based theater company founded by **Sherrine Azab** TH 2002 and **Jake Hooker** TH 2000, recently presented *The Modern Woman*, an immersive theater tribute to women artists of the last 100 years.

**NEW YORK**

**Don Darryl Rivera** TH 2006 continues to delight audiences as the villainous henchman Iago in *Disney’s Aladdin* at Broadway’s New Amsterdam Theatre.

**William Burke** TH 2003 wrote and directed the new play *Comfort Dogs: Live from the Pink House* at JACK in Brooklyn from March 6-14. In the cast was **Julia Sirna-Frest** TH 2005.

**Margot Bordelon** TH 2002 directed *Peerless* by Jiehae Park at the Cherry Lane Theatre Studio.

**Sophie Paterson** TH 2014 and **Eden Schwartz** TH 2011 are both interning this year at the NY Public Theatre, Sophie in Casting and Eden in their Public Works Program (where she works with **Sarah Grosman** TH 2010).

**EAST COAST**


**CALIFORNIA**

The Bay Area-based Living Arts Playback Theatre Ensemble is a troupe of improvisational actors and musicians who "play back" personal stories shared by audience members in ways that both honor and illuminate the original experience. The ensemble produces performances, workshops and events for personal, professional and organizational growth. **Anees Guillen** 2008 is a member of their company, performing most recently in *An Evening of Love Stories*, and can be seen in *Immigrant Stories* in March.

**TELEVISION**

**Brendan Fraser** 1990 (below, left) stars with Bill Paxton and Ray Liotta in the upcoming miniseries *Texas Rising*, premiering on the History Channel on Memorial Day.

**Ron E. Rains** TH 1995 (above, right) continues to win applause for his slightly unhinged movie reviews for the satirical website *The Onion Film Standard*.

**C.S Lee** TH 1993 recently appeared on ABC’s much-praised new comedy *Fresh Off the Boat*, and is filming the independent film *Everything Beautiful is Far Away*. 
ART SCHOOL THINKER: A STORY OF TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS
By Christopher Dodge TH 2011

While I can't recommend Cornish as the fast track to working at Google, I can say there's a high price on creativity in Silicon Valley and the tech sector in general. It's amazing to observe the amount of overlap between mounting a theater production and launching a product. The two creative processes mirror many of the same phases which is why I feel my Cornish experience gives me an edge over some of my peers who have attended traditional Ivy League colleges.

Let's rewind for a moment...after I graduated Cornish I did what every good student should do I threw myself into internships. To be honest, internships can be difficult, especially as a director, when who you really want to be is the captain driving the ship rather than a glorified fly on the wall. Don't get me wrong: internships are a necessary step in your career but they feel like a major speed bump. Internships are also difficult as they often pay you next to nothing and I knew my prospects for regular work in the theater world were fairly limited. So after working in retail during the four years I spent at Cornish I decided I needed something more substantial to sustain my income.

It just so happens that there is this whole world of field marketing and training that I never knew about until working at that crappy retail job. These old-school corporate trainers would visit our store to "educate" us on what we already knew and remind all of us that, "being middle of the road was good enough." I found their style to be outdated and most of them seemed like relics out of some "Mad Men" yesteryear. But I needed work so I stuck up a conversation with one of the few trainers I actually liked and found out that he worked for a marketing company called Marketstar. I thought to myself: flexible schedule, decent pay, business travel, access to the newest products... sounds like fun!

After being hired at Marketstar as a product trainer I quickly realized that my skills as an actor put me on a different level than everyone else. After all the job was to essentially memorize a script (product info), present it with excitement as if it was the first time you've spoken about it, and engage your audience. It felt almost too easy when compared with acting in a play. I quickly made a name for myself. However Marketstar was just a means to allow me to continue to do theater, that is until I got a job on a special project.

In mid-2012 I was hired as a Marketstar Market Manager as a contractor with this little-known search company called Google. They invited all of us to the Googleplex in Mountain View CA to learn about a new yet to be released product. The moment I stepped foot on their campus I felt like I was back at Cornish (if Cornish had an unlimited bank account). The Googleplex is electric, bursting at the seams with creativity -- and you could feel the innovation taking place. The future was literally being created there and in my mind something clicked. All of these years I had cultivated this strange hobby of watching every corporate keynote speech I could find and writing down notes about ways to improve the presentation. I ate up the words of Steve Jobs and Elon Musk; I thought to myself, "Why not me? Maybe that's the stage I belong on."

Fast forward to 2015 after zigzagging around the world, presenting to thousands of people and working my way up through the ranks at Marketstar I’ve been given an amazing opportunity to work at Google. My new title is Partner Education and Program Manager. I'm responsible for educating all of our global hardware partners on the sales and support of Chromebooks. Google has a culture that values thinking outside of the box and coming from my theatrical background at Cornish I have a director's and actor's toolbox filled with tricks that allows me to do just that.
UPCOMING IN THE CORNISH THEATER DEPARTMENT

GRAND HOTEL by Luther Davis, Robert Wright and George Forrest

It is 1928. The world is between wars, the stock market is booming, Berlin is a playground for the wealthy, and optimism rules the day. But darker shadows lurk in the corners. High society, financial ruin, love, and murder converge as people come and go through the lobby of the Grand Hotel!

The Cornish Theater Department has a dynamic and growing Musical Theater program taught by working professional artists such as Timothy McCuen Piggee (Catch Me if You Can on Broadway, ACT Theatre/5th Avenue Theatre’s upcoming production of Jacques Brel...), Frances Leah King (the 5th Avenue’s recent production of Carousel), Tinka Dailey (productions at the 5th Avenue as performer and dance teacher), Hugh Hastings (Village Theatre’s recent production of Mary Poppins) and others. After extensive singing, dance and performance skills studies, graduates have gone on to work at local and regional theatres, as well as on Broadway.

Each year Cornish presents a number of musical productions to enable the students to synthesize their acting, singing and dance skills through performance, including the annual Spring Musical in the Cornish Playhouse. The Spring Musical also allows our Performance Production students to display their skills in theater design and technology on the stage of the Playhouse. This year, the Theater and Performance Production departments will present Grand Hotel, directed by Richard Gray with choreography by Dannul Dailey and music direction by D.J. Gommels, at the Cornish Playhouse from April 8-11, performed by an ensemble of juniors and seniors.

TWELFTH NIGHT by William Shakespeare

Cornish juniors take an intensive course of study exploring the demands of classical theater, from the Greeks through Shakespeare, culminating in a spring production that highlights the verbal, textual and physical skills necessary to bring such challenging and rewarding work to life. Their faculty includes such respected local professionals as Hal Ryder, Robin Lynn Smith and Kate Myre.
Graduates have exercised their classical chops in such respected companies as the Seattle Shakespeare Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and many more.

This year, an ensemble of Cornish Theater students will perform Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, directed by Kerry Skalsky, who most recently played Macbeth and directed *King Lear* at the Key City Public Theater. It will play April 17-19 and 24-26 in the Cornish Playhouse Studio; all shows are at 2 pm and are free and open to the public.

**O! FEST 2015**

![Image of O!FEST sign]

Cornish has always been associated with the creation of new work; what else would you expect from a college that enabled the first collaborations of John Cage and Merce Cunningham? The Cornish Theater/Original Works is a unique program that facilitates the development of performers who want to develop the tools to express themselves as generative theater makers.

In addition to their core acting skills classes, students study playwriting and directing, ensemble creation and personal clown with such respected artist/educators as Kathleen Collins and Desdemona Chiang (Directing), Elizabeth Heffron and Stephanie Timm (Playwriting), David Taft (Clown, Mask & Character), Keira McDonald (Solo Performance) and Katjana Vadeboncoeur (Neo-Burlesque). New plays created by Cornish students are featured in our senior thesis season as well as in our annual Winter New Works Festival.

Cornish celebrates the creativity of our Original Works juniors with our first annual *O!Fest* this spring, with two shows running in repertory with *Twelfth Night* at the Playhouse Studio in Seattle Center.

**The Clown Show! April 16-17 and 23-24, Cornish Playhouse Studio, 8 pm**

The Cornish Junior Original Works students have been creating their red-nosed clown personas all year long. Come see what they have come up with in an evening of zany, touching and daring fun! Curated by Professor David Taft.

**The Ten-Minute Play Festival, April 18-19 and 25-26, Cornish Playhouse Studio, 7:30 pm**

A collection of short theater works including both live theater and short film written, directed and performed by third-year students in the Original Works program. Variety, ambition and striking new voices are guaranteed! Curated by Theater faculty members Kathleen Collins and Elizabeth Heffron.

**ALSO IN APRIL:** Our second-year Theater students present musical and ensemble-generative capstone projects at Raisbeck Hall from April 21-26.

See the Cornish Events Calendar for further details! [www.cornish.edu/calendar](http://www.cornish.edu/calendar)