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In this issue of Dialogue, we focus on how School of Communication faculty are building relationships and projects that integrate faculty, students, alumni, and artists from outside Northwestern.

Our first feature reports on the first four years of the American Music Theatre Project. We are very excited about how AMTP has developed, and now we feel we have learned how to effectively combine the efforts of our faculty (and their creative goals), our students (not just their performing talents but also their educational needs), our visiting artists (and their ambitious projects), and our associates in the entertainment industry (and their know-how and resources). AMTP has become a prototype for advanced arts projects at major research universities, and we think you will enjoy reading about its results to date.

Our second feature showcases artistic teams and collaborations that have developed in our theatre and performance studies departments. We have been fortunate to attract a new generation of faculty who work together productively in their own creative projects as well as in our instructional programs. Their connections with outstanding theatre companies in Chicago and elsewhere — forged in part through the powerful Northwestern alumni network — have helped them to scale the heights of artistic achievement.

Of course, this developing synergy isn’t confined to theatre and performance studies. The school’s new dramatic writing initiative has brought faculty together from across the school, connected them with graduate and undergraduate students in wonderful new ways, and helped them enhance the program through partnerships with the Northwestern alumni community. In communication studies, the Media, Technology, and Society Program is prospering because of its exciting partnerships with external funders and other schools at Northwestern. In the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, faculty are finding more opportunities to connect as they pursue their dream of a new translational science of human communication.

All this networking and team building has made our school a very dynamic and productive place — and please keep in mind that building connections to our friends and alumni in the communication professions and industries is a key part of this success. We hope you will continue to engage with the school and will look for new ways to participate in its programs. One good place to start — also highlighted in this issue — is by visiting the school’s new web site at www.communication.northwestern.edu.

Barbara J. O’Keefe
Dean, School of Communication

Start a dialogue: dialogue@northwestern.edu
AMTP looks ahead

by Emily Hiser Lobdell

Before recent graduate Anna Eilinsfeld (C08) packed her car and drove across the country for her new life on the East Coast, she took the stage one last time at Northwestern.

Playing the courtesan Olympia in this summer’s American Music Theatre Project production of Dangerous Beauty, Eilinsfeld was able to “put her handprint” on one final AMTP production as part of a program that had shaped much of her collegiate experience. “Being able to apply the things you learn in the classroom to real-world projects is so special and rare,” says Eilinsfeld. “AMTP allows you to get to work by side by side with these New York professionals.”

With the production of Dangerous Beauty, AMTP has completed its first three years and the premieres of its first five new musicals; the project previously produced Was, The Boys Are Coming Home, Asphalt Beach, and, In the Bubble as well as the “opera electronica” Paradise Lost. Well-known professional directors Tina Landau, Gary Griffin, Amanda Dehnert, Michael Greif (C81), and Sheryl Kaller have staged musicals by Joe Thalken, Leslie Arden, Amanda Dehnert, Michael Greif, and Michael Friedman in collaboration with a host of other professional artists.

Working with directors who are active in the industry has led to amazing opportunities for Northwestern graduates. For example, Greif, who directed Adam Kantor (C08) in the summer 2007 AMTP production In the Bubble, chose Kantor for the final cast of the Tony Award–winning musical Rent as it ended its 12-year Broadway run. Greif also cast Morgan Weed in his new off-Broadway musical Next to Normal, which closed in March. A participant in four AMTP productions as a student, Weed was next cast in the spring off-Broadway production Saved, mounted by AMTP artistic director Stuart Ortiz’s Elephant Eye production company and directed by Gary Griffin.

“That’s one of the fabulous opportunities we provide our students — to get to work by side by side with these New York professionals,” says AMTP executive director Dominic Missimi. “It gives them a wonderful ‘in’ when they move to the city.”

Senior Christopher Strauss, who played Admiral Ludovico Ramberti in Dangerous Beauty, says that working with an accomplished Broadway actress like alumna Jenny Powers (BSM03) — who played the lead role of Veronica Franco — was an experience he won’t soon forget. “I had no conception of how dedicated someone could be,” says Strauss, recalling Powers’ exceptional work ethic and level of commitment.

He adds that working on an AMTP show allows a student to be “evaluated with an untainted set of eyes,” providing a chance to get honest feedback from an outside perspective. “Every day that I walked into rehearsal,” says Strauss, “I felt so blessed to be surrounded by these amazing people and opportunities.”

Opportunities with AMTP helped Emily Thompson (C07) make the transition from academic to professional theatre in the Chicago area. She has appeared in Little Women and Les Misérables (directed by Missimi) at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire as well as The Boys from Syracuse (directed by theatre associate professor and AMTP associate director David H. Bell) at Drury Lane Oak Brook.

During her four years at Northwestern, Thompson was seen in every AMTP production except Asphalt Beach. Thompson came to Northwestern because of its excellent music theatre program, but before arriving on campus she had no idea that AMTP was even an option. “It was totally a pleasant surprise,” she says, adding that being part of a new musical’s creative process taught her “a lot about music theatre on a different level than I ever expected.”

Thompson plans to continue doing shows in the Chicago area for the foreseeable future. She advises incoming Northwestern music theatre students to “get involved in AMTP as much as you can. Be prepared; it’s fast paced, but you can learn a lot, and it’s an invaluable experience. The shows that I did with these directors and songwriters are some of the best projects I’ve been involved with, and it’s really inspiring to watch these people create in front of your eyes. It shows you why you wanted to do this in the first place.”

As AMTP begins its next three-year phase, students can look forward to more readings of new works with greater involvement by student casts and directors. Plans include a workshop and a 2009 premiere for the new musical Girls vs. Boys, a collaboration with the House Theatre of Chicago. House artistic director Nathan Alan will direct.

Missimi is particularly excited about the addition of Heather Schmucker (C99) to the AMTP staff. Formely producing director and executive director for Chicago’s About Face Theatre Company, Schmucker is joining AMTP as producing director.

“My eyes were instinctively drawn to the wonderful guest artists and faculty who make AMTP a nationally recognized program. After eight years of producing new work in Chicago, I’m thrilled to be part of an initiative that creates safe space for artists to develop work while engaging students in that development process.”

“For me, it’s like coming full circle. I was excited to be back at my alma mater,” says Schmucker, “and for the opportunity to collaborate with the wonderful guest artists and faculty who make AMTP a nationally recognized program. After eight years of producing new work in Chicago, I’m thrilled to be part of an initiative that creates safe space for artists to develop work while engaging students in that development process.”

“AMTP artistic director Stuart Ortiz — AMTP executive director Dominic Missimi
Shapiro and Thebus to direct Schwimmer in Our Town at Lookingglass

Tony Award winner Anna Shapiro, director of Northwestern’s MFA in directing program, will team up with visiting faculty member Jessica Thebus to direct David Schwimmer (C88) in Lookingglass Theatre’s production of Thornton Wilder’s Our Town. The show runs February 11–April 5, and the many Lookingglass ensemble members to appear in the production include Christine Mary Dunford (C89) and David Kersnar (C87), Heidi Stillman (C99), Raymond Fox (C89), David Catlin (C88), Louise Lamson (C96), and former adjunct faculty member Thomas J. Con. The artistic staff includes scenic designer John Maizel (C89) and costume designer Janice Pyrdl (GC99). “It’s going to be a Northwestern homecoming party,” John Shapiro, adding that she and Thebus have wanted to direct a play together for a long time.

PBS picks up faculty-alumnus film

The documentary The Atom Smashers, a film created by Northwestern faculty and alumni, was acquired by PBS for the 2018–19 season of its Emmy and Peabody Award–winning series Independent Lens. The scheduled broadcast date is November 25. The film was also accepted to the 2018 Pairs Science Festival, Bergen International Film Festival, and the Vancouver International Film Festival.

Clayton Brown (GC04), who earned his MFA in film from Northwestern and teaches narrative and documentary film production in the radio/television/film department, is the project’s codirector with MFA alumnus Monica Ross (GC03), associate artistic director of the Arizona Women’s Theatre Company and a member of the Columbia College Chicago screenwriting faculty. The film was produced by radio/television/film alumnus Andrew Suprenant (C92). The Atom Smashers is about a group of American physicists leading the international search for the Higgs boson, a particle important to understanding how the universe is held together — the “holy grail” of physics. Using an aging particle accelerator while facing a government and culture sometimes at odds with science, the physicists race against a far more powerful European machine in the world working in our own backyard, and that makes the story of The Atom Smashers particularly important for the citizens of Illinois.

Brown, Ross, Suprenant, Stefani Foster, and other collaborators founded the Chicago-based nonprofit documentary production company 137 Films to “create films out of the stories found in the world of science” and to “entertain, educate, and inform by exploring how science’s search for answers impacts our cultural, political, and personal lives.” The Atom Smashers will be available on DVD at 137films.org, Netflix, and select retailers and via download at iTunes.

Speech Team standouts

The Northwestern Speech Team had an impressive showing at the American Forensics Association tournament in April, placing 23rd out of 101 teams. Sophomore Dillon White placed seventh after making the quarterfinals in prose, besting 300 other entrants for the team’s best-ever showing in this category. Junior Rachel Vaghi placed seventh as a semifinalist in dramatic interpretation.

At the National Forensics Association tournament a week later, the team standouts included sophomore Steven Pelt, national champion in biographic informative speaking; senior Sean Quindlin, a semifinalist in after-dinner speaking; and Quindlin and White, who made the duo semifinals.

Northwestern’s Lincoln-Douglas debaters placed fourth as a team with only two members, senior Connor Jones (seventh place overall) and junior Ryan Murphy (twelfth place overall). This was the first time in the Speech Team’s history that every team member reached an elimination round.

Monica Ross, Clareence Brown, and Andrew Suprenant

From left: Alessia Christine Mary Dunford, Heidi Stillman, David Kersnar, and Tracy Welsh in a scene from the upcoming Lookingglass Theatre’s production of Our Town.
Visiting artists & scholars

Alumni Award winners

Distinguished School of Communication alumni were among the honorees at the 76th annual Northwestern Alumni Association (NAA) Alumni Awards ceremony on September 26 at the Chicago Cultural Center.

Frank Galati (C55), GG57, GC71 received an Alumni Matri Award. A two-time Tony Award winner, nine-time Joseph Jefferson Award winner, and Academy Award nominee, Galati is a director, playwright, actor, and Northwestern professor emeritus of performance studies. His staging of his adaptation of Harold Marcus’s “King Lear on the Shore” is playing this fall at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre.

Husband and wife Robert N. Hiatt (C57) and Erica Lynn Schwartz (C57) were awarded an Alumni Service Award. The Hiatts recently established the Robert and Kaye Hiatt Fund for Research on Media, Technology, and Society for the School of Communication. The gift supports research in such areas as Internet studies, telecommunications, human-computer interaction, computer-mediated human communication, and the influence of networks on groups and organizations. A member of the School of Communication’s National Advisory Council, Robert Hiatt is the retired chairman, president, and CEO of Maybelline; he now serves as a corporate director and advisor. Kaye Hiatt, a member of the Main Theatre Company 2008-09 board of directors, has served in president of various nonprofit organizations and has worked with women from Titijua to raise funds for across-the-border endeavors.

Kennedy Leon (below), accomplished director and founding artistic director of Atlantic’s True Colors Theatre Company, spent two days on campus in May as the Hope Apollo artist in residence. In Cindy Golfs’s acting class he offered feedback on student-performed scenes and answered questions. In “An Evening with Kennedy Leon,” moderated by theatre professor David H. Hall at the Josephine Louis Theatre, Leon talked about his experiences as an artistic director, offering anecdotes from his work on such productions as “Flashdance and A Raise in the Sun.” The next day he taught a master class and linked with MFA students.

Prior to founding True Colors, Leon served 11 years as artistic director of Atlantic’s Alliance Theatre Company. He has directed three Broadway productions, beginning with the 2004 revival of Lorrisz Hammers’s “A Raise in the Sun with Sean Combs, Sanan Liban, Andrea McDonal, and Phylissa Rashad. The show garnered two Tony Awards and a Boston Drama Award nomination for outstanding director while racking up the highest weekly box office sales for a drama in Broadway history.

“Northwestern provided a valuable opportunity for me to bring Kennedy Leon to Evanston,” says adjunct faculty member David Kean (C98, G98), who attended the lunch. “Leon is a man of many accomplishments but still willing to take the time to encourage and inspire our emerging artists with solid industry advice.”

“I was pleasantly surprised at how accessible Kennedy Leon was to students,” says senior Melanie Bratall. “I felt that no question was off-limits, including whether he had ever felt he had failed. I was inspired to hear him speak about his ups and downs and encouraged by his belief that if acting was something you aspired to do, you could indeed succeed. He stressed that any question regarding an acting or directing choice could always be answered by the text; that advice is something I will always rely on when approaching a project.”

Denis O’Hare (C84) visited campus the last week of spring quarter to attend the senior showcases at the invitation of the theatre department. Seen on Broadway as Henri Ludger in Cabaret, O’Hare was also welcomed back by Arts Alliance in conjunction with its spring production of Cabaret.

The versatile television, movie, and theatre actor told stories about his early years in New York City: “He spoke about the auditioning process and shared some wonderful anecdotes about his own audition technique and experiences,” says theatre professor Henry Godinez. Professor Cindy Golfs adds that O’Hare “couldn’t have been more gracious and funny” when interacting with the students at a symposium. “It was exciting because he spoke extensively about his experiences as an artistic director, and inspiring our emerging artists with solid industry advice.”

In Mary the Hugh Knowles Center honored Brian C. J. Mauz, left, professor of auditory perception at the United Kingdom’s University of Cambridge, with the 2008 Hugh Knowles Prize for his contributions to the understanding of auditory perception in individuals with normal hearing and hearing impairment. In conjunction with the prize, which includes a $20,000 award, Mauz gave the lecture “Processing of Temporal Fine Structure by Normal-Hearing and Hearing-Impaired Listeners.”

Graduate students Margo Miller and Holly Griffith organized April’s Queer Media Symposium. Sponsored by the Center for Social Cultures and the Department of Radio/Television/Film, the event featured papers by three queer scholars: “Queer Times/Black Futures” by Kara Neiling, assistant professor at the University of Southern California; “Galfrid: Gamstrid, and Grown: The Evolution of the L Word’s Online Community” by Kelly Boster, a lecture at Rutgers University; and “Cinderella Man: Russell Crowe as El Sir” by Michael DeAngelis, associate professor at DePaul University.

For the third consecutive year, Northwestern’s American Music Theatre Project and the Johnny Mercer Foundation hosted “A Celebration of Johnny Mercer.” The weekend project featured singer-songwriter Lari White, lyricist Andrew Lloyd Webber, and songwriter Craig Carnelia in master classes and work- shops with a jury-selected group of young songwriters. The three master teachers also participated in the panel discussion “The Legacy of Johnny Mercer,” moderated by ASCAP musical theatre director Michael A. Kerker. “They were a perfect, balanced faculty,” says AMTP executive director Dominic Misumi.

Lippa, who wrote the book, music, and lyrics for The Wild Party (winner of the 2001 Outer Critics Circle Award for best off-Broadway musical), is currently creating the music and lyrics for a new Broadway musical based on Jules Feiffer’s The Man in the Cog, to be produced by Disney Theatrical. He also wrote the music for the world premiere of Aaron Sorkin’s play The Farnsworth Invention. White, a Grammy Award–winning country music artist, made her critically acclaimed Broadway debut in 2006 in Ring of Fire, a new musical about the life and music of Johnny Cash. Carnelia has received numerous Drama Desk and Tony Award nominations for his four Broadway musicals, including Swing, Sleet Smell of Success, and In the Heights.

The Mentor celebration continued with the Scene writers Showcase, spotlighting work by this year’s young songwriters. The work culmi- nated in a celebration concert at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall featuring Broadway favorites sung by Tony Award–winning guest artist Heather Headley (above right), whose Broadway credits include leading roles in The Lion King and Aida. Also performing were Lippa, the Chicago cabaret act of Becky Menne and Tom Michael, and students from Northwestern’s Music Theatre Program. The prestigious two-years’ celebration each show drew about 300 audience, this year’s audience totaled almost 800.

“We are planning a huge tribute concert next year,” says Misumi, as 2009 will mark the 100th anniversary of Johnny Mercer’s birth.

Dean O’Keefe with Alumni Merit Award winner Frank Galati
Communication faculty collaborations are lighting up stages from the Met to Broadway

by Emily Hiser Lobdell

Although actors on a stage literally stand in the limelight, in 2008 the Northwestern theatre limelight shone most brightly on professors.

In June, School of Communication faculty members Anna Shapiro, director of the MFA program in directing, and Todd Rosenthal, assistant professor of design, both won Tony Awards for their work on the Pulitzer Prize-winning play August: Osage County — Shapiro for best direction of a play, Rosenthal for best scenic design. August: Osage County won three additional Tonys, including the best play prize for playwright Tracy Letts, who has taught classes at Northwestern. The production’s costumes were designed by assistant professor Ana Kuzmanic.

“While scheduling conflicts can prevent the trio from joining forces for a play, the little team has been glued together for a particularly long time,” says Shapiro of her relationship with her favorite scenic designer, Daniel Ostling. “We’re great friends now as well as artistic collaborators.”

“Surround myself with people who are almost crazily perfectionist,” Ostling says of her relationship with his favorite director. “I like to have the great formal sense, and he’s exceedingly detail oriented, just their shared aesthetic that makes them a solid team; it’s also their shared theatrical value system. ‘It really is about telling the stories,’ Shapiro explains, ‘and there are these incredible moments of synchronicity when things click and you come up with ideas.’

Both designers say that when conflicts of opinion arise, what the director says goes. “Ultimately, it’s the director’s show — it’s her party,” Rosenthal says. “If we have disagreements, I know Anna pretty well, so I can tell her things I feel strongly about.”

“Finding collaborative partnerships is critical,” Rosenthal says. “We trust each other, he says. “I think that’s what it comes down to. We have a similar aesthetic. Sometimes that’s hard to explain. Things just fall together in the right way, and at the end of the project, it’s been tough or not so tough. Regardless of process, we sit in the theatre and look at what we’ve done, and we like it.”

Rosenthal adds that his strengths — coming up with conceptual ideas at the beginning of the creative process — complements Shapiro’s strengths as a “storyteller and an ender” who brilliantly works with the actors and carries the production to completion.

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This is surely the first time that collaboration among the Northwestern faculty has led to great success in the professional theatre world. In 2002 performance studies professor Mary Zimmerman (C82, GC95, GC94) won the Tony for best direction of a play for Metamorphoses, originally staged at Northwestern as Six Myths. Associate professor Daniel Ostling (GC96), a Northwestern graduate student when he first worked with Zimmerman on Six Myths, was a Tony nominee for best scenic design, and alumna Mara Blumenfeld (C92) designed the production’s costumes.

“This is scarcely the first time that collaboration among the Northwestern faculty has led to great success in the professional theatre world. In 2002 performance studies professor Mary Zimmerman (C82, GC95, GC94) won the Tony for best direction of a play for Metamorphoses, originally staged at Northwestern as Six Myths. Associate professor Daniel Ostling (GC96), a Northwestern graduate student when he first worked with Zimmerman on Six Myths, was a Tony nominee for best scenic design, and alumna Mara Blumenfeld (C92) designed the production’s costumes.”

Clearly the right combination of direction and design creates award-winning theatre. Finding that combination and cultivating the collaborative relationship are things that don’t happen overnight, but obviously they blossom at Northwestern.

Zimmerman and Ostling

“We’re both frantically interested in what we’re doing,” Mary Zimmerman says of her relationship with her favorite scenic designer, Daniel Ostling. “We’re great friends now as well as artistic collaborators.”

Ostling and Zimmerman have worked together on a total of 38 productions of 14 plays, often in collaboration with Blumenfeld. While scheduling conflicts can prevent the trio from joining forces on all their projects, this Northwestern dream team has been putting things together for nearly a decade. As Zimmerman says, “My little team has been glued together for a particularly long time.”

With funding from a Northwestern faculty research grant, Zimmerman and Ostling traveled to Scotland together to prepare for directing and designing the Metropolitan Opera’s 2007 season opener, Lucia di Lammermoor. Zimmerman recalls that their many adventures included “stripping the gears of a car within the first 20 minutes.” But the winter trip proved incredibly productive.

Ostling was drawn to the stark branches of Scotland’s trees, which became one of the production’s central design motifs. “I must have taken thousands of pictures of those tree branches,” says Ostling. Zimmerman found them reminiscent of the human nervous system; in her production the branches encroached on the space more and more as the opera progressed, paralleling Lucia’s descent into madness.

Ostling explains that while the tree limbs didn’t necessarily represent Scotland itself, the trip provided his scenic design with “a poetic stroke or a sort of nostalgia.”

“We have the same desires in our approach to the theatre.”

After a decade of collaborating, Zimmerman says that it’s not just their shared aesthetic that makes them a solid team; it’s also their different ideas. “I tend to have strong initial ideas,” she says. “Dan has the great formal sense, and he’s exceedingly detail oriented, which in certain ways I am and in certain ways I’m not. I like to surround myself with people who are almost crazily perfectionist.”

Ostling says that even before ever collaborating with her, he admired Zimmerman’s work as an integrated approach to creating art. “The acting and the script, and her take on the script, and movement and music and costumes and light and space are all woven together to create something that in its totality is more than the sum of its parts — like a tapestry.”

Shapiro and Rosenthal

Anna Shapiro and Todd Rosenthal met as graduate students at Yale University in the early 1990s but didn’t collaborate until a few years later. Now about 90 percent of Shapiro’s projects involve Rosenthal, whom she fondly calls “my guy.”

Of their collaborative relationship, Shapiro says, “I don’t know that we always succeed — I want to say that first and foremost. There are things we could’ve done better. But the bottom line is that I love Todd, and I can be myself with him. I feel like he knows me as a person. That might sound kind of Pollyannaish, but to be creative and vulnerable, expressing your feelings about your plays, you have to be in a really good environment. I don’t have to explain myself to Todd. I just get to do the work, and that’s a big deal.”

Rosenthal agrees. “We trust each other,” he says. “I think that’s what it comes down to. We have a similar aesthetic. Sometimes that’s hard to explain. Things just fall together in the right way, and at the end of the project, it’s been tough or not so tough. Regardless of process, we sit in the theater and look at what we’ve done, and we like it.”

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Anna Shapiro, Todd Rosenthal, Mary Zimmerman, and Daniel Ostling are just a few members of the Northwestern family making indelible marks in Chicago theatre. Associate professor David H. Bell’s new musical The Boyvay Boys, a collaboration between the American Music Theatre Project and the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire, opens there in December. His The Boys from Syracuse played at Drury Lane Oak Brook this summer. AMTP executive director and theatre professor Dominic Rives Collins says that without Northwestern, Chicago theatre would “be the best theatre city in the country,” she says. “This is a huge advantage, giving the Northwestern theatre student a context.”

To give students even more of that context, the School of Communication sponsors the Arts in the City program, providing students with discounted tickets to theatrical productions in the city and suburbs. Recent outings have included Les Miserables at the Marriott, The Crucible at Steppenwolf, and Around the World in 80 Days at Lookingglass. Northwestern theatre department chair Rives Collins says that without Northwestern, Chicago theatre would experience quite a void, as so many faculty, alumni, and even students work onstage and behind the scenes. “With the one-two punch of theatre and performance studies faculty for the two departments’ strong reputations and numerous success stories. “The faculty are some of the best in the country, and it’s proven by the fact that they work in some of the best theaters in the country,” Boynton explains. “The professors stay active in the community and stay integrated with the community.”

Zacek agrees, noting that “the faculty have been encouraged to be practitioners.” Lavey acknowledges that the conversation between Northwestern and the Chicago theatre community goes both ways. “We’re in this fantastic metropolis that many believe to be the best theatre city in the country,” she says. “This is the ultimate goal in producing great theatre, and ‘it’s up to a bunch of people to make it happen,” she explains. “I’ve been so lucky and blessed that we do get along and I do have these teammates.”

Collaborating in the classroom and beyond
Zimmerman, Ostling, Shapiro, and Rosenthal see no downside to working together both as faculty members and in professional theatre, agreeing that the dual relationship only enhances both worlds. “I’m a better designer because of my teaching and a better teacher because of my designing,” says Ostling. “Those things work together nicely.”

Collaboration is of course a major component of the theatre curriculum. Students designers and directors are paired early, mimicking a real-world theatre environment, and faculty members team-teach classes. “Our dialogue is useful for students to hear,” says Rosenthal. “It’s great to have a fellow team member in those classes.” Shapiro adds that the “unspoken collaboration in the theatre department” is the department itself. “There I am in my classroom, teaching this thing I know to be real, this collaborative thing, and I live it every day when I’m trying to figure out how to manage with under, and nothing good comes of that — holding on to something that isn’t catching.”
New faculty and lecturers

**Communication Studies**

**Jessica Greenberg** comes to Northwestern as an assistant professor of communication studies. She completed her PhD in sociocultural anthropology at the University of Chicago in 2007 and was a 2007–08 Academy Scholar at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. Greenberg’s research focuses on student activism, political communication, and democratic practice. She completed her PhD in sociocultural anthropology at the University of Chicago and is now a faculty member at Northwestern.

**Radio/Television/Film**

**Barna Kantor** comes to Northwestern as a lecturer in radio/television/film. He is a new-media artist and relapsing filmmaker whose main focus has been investigating cinema as a venue rather than in terms of filmic content. One outcome of this project is “Grey Room,” an interactive public space that celebrates and manifests the ongoing convergence between the cinematic black box and the white box of art exhibition venues. A more recent take on “Grey Room” involves interactive, emergent content generation and gaming — exploring portable platforms such as GPS devices, mobile phones, and laptops. Previously a full-time faculty member in Art Institute/Pittsburgh game art and design program, Kantor was a research fellow at the Kitchen Budapest (a T-Com modi lab in Hungary) and an advisor on MCI Chis’s 25-minute classic animation “912/913.”

**Theatre**

**Laura Schellhardt** is a lecturer in playwriting this year. Her plays have been produced in New York, Orlando, San Francisco, Los Angeles, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C. Original works include Air Guitar High, Awaiting the Adaptive, The Apothecary’s Daughter, The K of D, Counting Vampires, Stepmother, Inheritance, and Je Ne Sais Quoi. Adaptations include The Pleasure, The Phantom Tollbooth, The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, and The Ouftl (Jeff Award nominee), and Carole Fulda’s Author of Searching for Donmar. Schellhardt is a recipient of the Theatre Communications Group’s National Playwriting Residency, the Jerome Fellowship, the New Play Award from Steadman’s, and the Dramatists Guild Playwriting Fellowship. She has participated in the Stepmother’s Playwright/Writer/Director Lab, the Woman Playwrights Festival at SFC, the Orchard Project, and the O’Neill National Playwright’s Festival. In spring 2009 her play Astephler will receive its world premiere at Trinity Repuratory Company in Providence, and Stepmother’s will premiere at Brown University’s Center for the Performing Arts. She is currently cowriting a screenplay with Andrew Baikidi (director of Mutual Appreciation).

**Los Angeles Film Festival. Shot in Austin, Texas, and Bucharest, Romania in 2008.**

**Spencer Partners** joins the Northwestern faculty as a visiting assistant professor. His first feature, TV Come Banging, recently premiered at Film Independent’s Spirit Awards.

**Promotion and Tenure**

David H. Bell, associate professor of theatre, awarded tenure

Sunitra Jha, promoted to associate professor of communication sciences and disorders and awarded tenure

Escker Hargillt, promoted to associate professor of communication studies and awarded tenure

Angela Ray, promoted to associate professor of communication studies and awarded tenure

**Departures**

The School of Communication sends good wishes to faculty members who have retired or embarks on new endeavors.

**Bus Bauer, professor emeritus of theatre, awarded tenure**

**Craig Kizer, associate professor of theatre, awarded tenure**

**Joseph Mills, associate professor and director of the dance program**

**Domna Weirich, director, Communication Systems Strategy and Management Program.**

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**Domna Weirich, director, Communication Systems Strategy and Management Program.**

**After 14 years directing the program, Weirich returns from Northwestern. Weirich helped launch the program in 1993 and played a key role in developing and sustaining it and increasing its quality. The program’s innovative curriculum has trained students from faculty, alumni, and corporate constituencies. Weirich was always committed to recruiting the best and brightest students. Under her 14 years of leadership, the program has been a springboard for its graduates, who have become leaders in local, state, and national programs. Weirich left the program in August 2007. Weirich joined Domna on her retirement and wish her the best.**
Joseph Appelt (MA, Michigan), director of the MFA in design program, described the lighting for the March 15–September 1 Glass Experience exhibit at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. "The challenge in the exhibit for me was how to individually accentuate, support, or set off each area or object in the vast exhibit and at the same time help the viewer flow from one experience to the next," says Appelt. "As the same time, I had to make sure that all spills was captured and readily available for the light of the part for the exhibit was it intended to address."

James R. Booth (PhD, Maryland), professor of communication sciences and disorders, recently received a $5 million grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. "The research goal of the project, “Neural Development and Disorders of Math Processing,” is to use functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to study the neural basis of simple arithmetic problems (subtraction and multiplication) and how this breaks down in children with dyscalculia (math disability)."

Daniel Cantor (MA, American Conservatory Theatre), associate professor of theatre, appeared in the premiere of James Sherrman’s new play Relatively Close at Chicago’s Victory Gardens Theater this summer. Cantor’s other recent acting credits include television and radio work in New York — episodes of As the World Turns, an episode of "Law & Order" and an animated pilot for what could become another radio show on NPR.

Cindy Gold (MA, Alabama Shakespeare Festival), associate professor and head of acting, is appearing in Jeffrey Harroth’s new adaptation of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, directed by Jessica Thubau, at the Chicago-area Northlight Theatre this fall. She will also co-star this year Joseph Jefferson Award nominee for talent in dance, two additional Jeff Awards, and eight additional Jeff Awards, including James Druckman of Northwestern University. The production was nominated for the 2008 Clarence Simon Award for Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring in the theatre sciences and disorders division.

Peter Daltos (PhD, Northwestern), professor of radio/television/communication and biological engineering, and John Evans Professor in Neuroscience, Neurophysiology, and Psychology, was awarded the American Association for the Advancement of Science Achievement Award in March.

Ananda Dehnert (BFA, Illinois Wesleyan), assistant professor of theatre and music theatre, directed a production of La Joey de’l Ma, Hole, directed by Jessica Thubau, at the Chicago-area Northlight Theatre this fall. She will also co-star this year Joseph Jefferson Award nominee for talent in dance, two additional Jeff Awards, and eight additional Jeff Awards, including James Druckman of Northwestern University. The production was nominated for the 2008 Clarence Simon Award for Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring in the theatre sciences and disorders division.

Robert Hariman (PhD, Minnesota), professor and department chair of communication studies, authored "Framing the Presidency: The Evolution of the Campaign Image" in Apertures (fall 2008); "Political Parody and Public Culture" in Quarterly Journal of Speech (August 2008); and "A Corpus Analysis Evaluating Hartmann’s Theory of Political Style" with David Kaiser in Text & Talk (Fall 2008). His book Capture Natural Anecdote: Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy, co-authored with John Lewis Lukacs of in Budapest University (www.noslovakianstudium.com), has won two most awards: the Media Ecology Association’s 2008 Susanne K. Langer Award for Outstanding Scholarship in the Ecology of Symbolic Form and the 2007 Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha Dissertation Award and Media Communication Research Award for the year’s best research-based book about journalism or mass communication.

Chuck Kleinhans (PhD, Indiana), associate professor of radio/television/film, presented the paper “Wholesome Mix: VeggieTales as Commercial Entertainment in New Media” in April at the Console-ing Passions conference in Santa Barbara, California. The paper was subsequently published in Jump Cut. In March Kleinhans presented "A Checklist for Film/ Media Studies PhD Programs" at the Society for Film and Media Studies in Philadelphia.

Nita Kraus (PhD, Northwestern), Hugh Knox Professor and professor of psychobiology and physiology, was invited to make presentations at numerous 2008 conferences, including the Fifth World Congress in Amsterdam, the International Meeting for Autism Research in London, and the International Timmsus Seminar in Göteborg, Sweden.

Paul Leonard (PhD, Stanford), assistant professor of communication studies and industrial engineering and management science, won the 2008 Award for Outstanding Published Paper from the American Sociological Association’s communication and information technology division. The 2008 Canadian Deans’ Council Dissertation Award from the Academy of Management’s organizational communication and information systems division; and honorary mention for the 2008 Charles Reiling Dissertation Award from the International Communication Association’s organizational communication division.

Jennifer Light (PhD, Harvard), associate professor of communication studies and cultural studies, was nominated for the 2008 Clarence Simon Award for Outstanding Teaching and Culture and gave talks at Stanford University and the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, and a meeting on his historical GIS sponsored by the UK Economic and Social Research Council. Light spent last year as visiting associate professor of urban studies and planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Viorica Marian (PhD, Cornell), associate professor of communication and language disorders, received the 2008 Clarence Simon Award for Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring in the theatre sciences and disorders division.

Peter V. Miller (PhD, Michigan), associate professor of communication studies, is president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Public Opinion Quarterly, the journal Miller has edited since 2001, was recently ranked first among 45 communication journals, fourth among 90 public opinion policy journals, and second among 17 interdisciplinary social science journals by the ISI Web of Knowledge in terms of frequency of citations and overall impact. In addition to his current two terms, Miller will soon the editorship over to other scholars, including James Druckman of Northwestern’s political science department.

Dominic Misciagna (MA, Wayne State), professor of theatre, Donald G. Robertson Director in Music Theatre, and executive director of the American Theatre Project, was nominated for the 2008 Charles Reiling Dissertation Award from the International Communication Association’s organizational communication division.

Angel Bay (PhD, Minnesota), associate professor of communication studies, was one of two recipients of the 2008 Clarence L. Vos Grinnan Graduate Faculty Award for excellence in work with graduate students. Graduate students themselves generate the nominations and write the letters of endorsement for this award.

Hamid Na’tery (PhD, UCLA), professor of radio/television/film, was named a featured speaker at this fall’s Virginia Film Festival, whose theme was “Melons Among Us.” He gave the lecture “Making Films with an Accent,” presented the keynote talk “From Amazon’s Cinema toward Multiplex Cinema,” and led a four-day, one-credit master class, “Acclaimed Cinema.”

Eric Patrick (MA, California Institute of the Arts), assistant professor of radio/television/film, presented his work at the National Museum in Bogota, Colombia, in August. While there he gave a lecture on his work in animation at Bogota’s Museum of Modern Art. Patrick also lectured on narrative strategies in animation and conducted two master classes on animation techniques at Jourvannia University. He recently attended on the juries of the California Film and Video Festival in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Chicago Short Comedy Film Festival. His latest film, Satori Patterns, has won 15 awards at international festivals and most recently was screened in Shanghai and in part of the Ismailodin Film Festival in Lyon, France.

Michael Rohd (MA, Virginia Tech), visiting M. Uber’s Chair in Theatre, spoke this summer at the Theatre Communication Group and Association for Theatre in Higher Education conferences. His company, Sojourn Theatre, presented the 2008 Portland (Oregon) Emmy Award for outstanding production of the season for his production of the new play Good and recently premiered Built (for which Rohd and Cinema conducted a workshop with students on campus last spring) at Portland’s TBA Festival.

David Tolchinsky (MFA, USC), associate professor and department chair of radio/television/film, has been named a 2008 Charter Distinguished Professor of Teaching Excellence. The award recognizes individual faculty members who consistently demonstrate outstanding performance in classroom teaching. Tolchinsky has developed significant innovations during course syllabus and have influenced their own teaching and the teaching effectiveness of others.

Carlos M. Weng (PhD, Texas at Austin), associate professor of communication sciences and disorders, received two National Institutes of Health grants in the spring and summer to investigate foreign language learning in his laboratory with Northwestern collaborators Todd Paunick (radiology), Jifeng Wang (statistics), and Jia Zhang (communication sciences and disorders). Targeting language learning by comprehensively examining genes, the brain, and learning behaviors, these projects are a continuation of recent studies by Weng that have revealed neural indicators in auditory brain areas linked to the successful learning of a tone language by native English speakers.

Linda Roethke (MA, Iowa), professor of costume design, is the costume designer for Janice Shaffer’s Managing Maxie, presenting in October at Malpassus Alliance Theatre.

Elaine Wong (PhD, UC Berkeley), associate professor of communication studies, received the 2008 Clarence Simon Award for Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring in the radio/television/film and communication sciences division.

Patrick C. M. Wong (PhD, Texas at Austin), associate professor of communication sciences and disorders, received two National Institutes of Health grants in the spring and summer to investigate foreign language learning in his laboratory with Northwestern collaborators Todd Paunick (radiology), Jifeng Wang (statistics), and Jia Zhang (communication sciences and disorders). Targeting language learning by comprehensively examining genes, the brain, and learning behaviors, these projects are a continuation of recent studies by Weng that have revealed neural indicators in auditory brain areas linked to the successful learning of a tone language by native English speakers.
Robert Conrad (C56), president of Cleveland radio station WCGL, was honored by the Rainey Institute, an arts-oriented settlement house, for the station’s devotion to community service. The station called Conrad “a caring and compassionate man who has never hesitated to put his voice, and that of the radio station he helped found, in the service of those in need.”

Warren Beaty (C90), multiple Oscar winner and nominee, was presented with the American Film Institute’s Life Achievement Award at a gala on June 12.

Barbara Gaines (C88) an artistic director of the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, which received the 2008 Regional Theatre Tony Award in June.

Timothy J. Gura (C90, GC97), a professor of speech communication arts and sciences at Brooklyn College, was named to the college’s Board of Trustees.

Jeff Ravitz (C72) was nominated for a Pacific Southwest Emmy Award for television lighting for a Salute to Teachers 2007. Ravitz also designed the Barco Television broadcast of the GLAAD Awards 2008, which aired June 27.

Northwestern University Entertainment Alliance

NU-EA East beat the summer heat this year with a couple of cool events in the city. The biannual Biltmore Night, a cabaret event at the midtown Therapy Lounge, showcased music and comedy performances by Northwestern alumni, including Sally Murphy (GMU) from the original cast of the Broadway hit August: Osage County. With the NU Club and the Medill Club of Greater New York, NU-EA celebrated esteemed Broadway composer and former Waa-Mu writer Larry Grossman (C80) with a performance and conversation. This fall’s events include a welcome reception for the class of 2008 at the Boat Basin Cafe, an improv workshop, and Clay: a one-man show by Matt Sax (C86), presented as the inaugural performance of Lincoln Center Theatre’s new works division.

NU-EA West turned 16 this year and threw a Super Sweet Sixteen party to celebrate. Old and new members gathered on August 20 for a night of free bowling and birthday cake at Pic in Studio City. As a special promotion for new members, NU-EA-West offered a year’s membership for only $16. Recent events have included a preview screening of The Fast Foot Way on the Paramount lot, followed by a Q&A session with star Will Ferrell; the Short Film Night in June; a program of short films, webisodes, and animated films by Northwestern filmmakers in September; and the return of the Script Reading Series. Stay tuned for more mixers, panels, and events throughout the fall and winter as well as the annual holiday party.
Olympic silver and gold

The School of Communication is accustomed to throw Tour Award winners, but don’t count out our Olympic milestone. Former Olympian swimmer Matt Grady (GC01), a native of Lake Forest, Illinois, won the silver medal in the men’s 100-meter backstroke this summer at the Beijing Olympics. His time of 53.11 seconds placed second to U.S. team captain Aaron Payne.

“If you want a bad thing, it can happen,” Grady told NBC correspondent Andrea Kremer at poolside after the race. “I felt silver was right there, but it was that last wall.”

Grady also won a gold medal in the men’s 4 × 100-meter freestyle relay for his participation in the anchor leg of the preliminaries.

The preliminary time of 3:12.23 broke a two-year-old world record and helped the U.S. team grab the top seed for the final, a historic race in which Michael Phelps, Garrett Weber-Gale, Cullen Jones, and Grady led out the French team and broke the world record again with a time of 3:08.24.

Alumni

Melba B. Churchill (C32) died March 7 at age 96 in Long Beach, California. As a student Churchill was president of the Independent Women’s Association of Northwestern.

Evelyn Hale (C40) died April 3 at age 89 in Sturbridge, Florida. Hale appeared on Broadway in the original television At the World’s Fair in addition to starring in movie projects like Mad About You, Fast Palm Beach, and Helen Hunt. After moving to Florida in 1984, she was active in the local community and directed high school plays in Canton, Illinois, where she chaired the Illinois regional Red Cross chapter.

In her later years Churchill starred in Aristoc and Old Lady and The Ladies of the Garden Club at Canton’s Fulton County Playhouse.

Rachel Frankenthal (GC07) was recently seen in Happy Days on NBC. Written by Mozzochi, writers Marshall (with Frankenthal, above) — who has written for Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre.

Sarah Gubbins (GC08) has worked at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre as an dramaturgy. Her first role was the student director of Font Lois Reproducon of New Work this past summer. Directed by Merrill McNutt (GC30), the play ran July 25–August 10. For Eric was also named a finalist at the 2008 Kandall Graduate Playwriting Competition. Gubbins was chosen as one of six new resident playwrights at Chicago Dramatix.

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played principal roles in Fiddler on the Roof, Joseph and the Wind, and many other community theatre productions.

Mariette L. Me Blatz (GS55) died May 8 at age 86 in Toledo, Ohio. In her 39-year career at Loyola University Chicago, she served as dean of women as well as vice president for student services, making her the school’s first female vice president. She held that position until her retirement, upon which the board of trustees honored her an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Helen B. Zawacki (C51) died April 28 at age 94. After teaching piano in the early 1950s and beginning her lifelong theater career acting in the Chicago Community Theater, the Chicago Repertory Group, and Hull House Players, Zawacki joined the U.S. Navy in 1942. After World War II she attended Northwestern while directing dramatic activities at St. Mary’s High School.

Robert B. Abel (C55) died March 9 at age 77 in Winter Park, Florida. At Northwestern he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. He studied advanced finance and accounting at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and management and enjoyed a long career in business, serving as an associate professor of information management and retired as professor emeritus of special education at Rhode Island College.

David V. Skillman Sr. (C53) died April 4 at age 77 in Vero Beach, Florida. A member of Sigma Chi fraternity who later served on the local chapter’s board, Skillman was commissioned in the U.S. Air Force after graduation. He later worked for IBM and became vice president and general manager for Information Systems & Services Corporation and co-owner and CEO of Combined Printing Corporation, and founder and president of the American Color Forms, Danz Printing, and Skillcor Corporation.

Carl F. Titchenker (C55) died February 15 at age 75 in Rochester, New York. After pursuing a career in advertising and then in advertising research he earned a master of divinity degree from Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California, and was ordained. Titchenker joined the pastorate of the Unitarian Univeristarian Church of Rochester in Williamsville, New York, where his wife later joined him as a Sunday school teacher in the early 2000s, when they were honors as minister emeritus.

Thomas J. W. Stobling (C70) died March 28 at age 59 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He worked as an art teacher in Fort Wayne-area schools and was a lifelong volunteer for several children’s minorities.

William E. Bailey (C67) died June 2 at age 72 in Tucson, Arizona. After serving as an operating-room medic in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, Bailey earned a PhD in communication at Northwestern. He then moved to Tucson, where for 34 years he taught communication, with a special interest in Film Amendment issues, at the University of Arizona.

Peter M. Kapitan (C78) died June 4 at age 71 in New York City. At Northwestern he was a member of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and performed in the Waa-Mu Show and the Dolphin Show. An actor, singer, and dancer, Kapitan most recently appeared as a Ronald Reagan impersonator on Broadway in The Wailing Singer. His other Broadway credits included Get Ya Tux Done, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Titanic, and Sunset Boulevard.

Kimberly E. Forbes (C00) died April 15 at age 49 in Chicago. During her last year at Northwestern, she was the choral unit of her alma mater. She married an actor by the time she was 17. She then returned to the nonprofit world, primarily as a volunteer.

Eric M. Gold (C03, C95) died January 26 at age 60 in Gaithersville, Maryland. Despite undergoing a double lung transplant in 2004, Gold remains amazed at his last years of his life — running a half-marathon, working as a speech and language pathologist at Gaithersville’s Shands Rehab Hospital, and enrolling in the University of Florida Law School.

Although William Donnell (U6, G78) is a Medill alumnus, he knew from his college days that his heart was in the theatre. “All four years as an undergraduate, I was in the choral unit of Waa-Mu,” Donnell recalls. “I always wanted to work in the theatre somehow, but I was no Frank Galati [an undergraduate contemporary and accomplished actor-director] and didn’t know what to do with that interest.”

Who were your significant influences at Northwestern? Medill’s Ben Baldwin taught reporting, and he was as personable as he was tough. It was like learning from an old-time Chicago news editor. For years Ben ran the National High School Institute choral program, and he invited me to be on the faculty the two years running. Kepping to Ben Baldwin’s high standards while working with those high school kids was an experience I’ve carried with me. He taught me to be demanding and patient at the same time. Frank Rich was one of our best students. He went to Harvard and ended up as drama critic and later columnist for the New York Times. Years later I ran into him and his family at the theatre in New York. As he introduced me, he told his son he learned everything he needed to know about writing that summer at Northwestern.

What were some of your most memorable college experiences? Truthfully, the most memorable time for me was the weekend of November 22, 1963 — the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Before lunch at my fraternity house on Friday, our house mother came running into the lounge shouting, “The president’s been shot!” The campus was stunned, and that night there was a spontaneous march to the then-brand-new Alice Millar Chapel. No one knew what to do or say.

I also recall sneaking into one of Alma Krina’s acting classes and hearing her say, “Acting is reacting.” I didn’t belong there, but it was thrilling.

Have you stayed connected with your alma mater? I’ve been on the School of Communication’s National Advisory Council for three years, and I’ve loved it. Very accomplished and committed people show up, do work, make suggestions, and have a lively dialogue. The dean is very open and encourages everyone’s suggestions. We have opportunities to meet with the faculty and the students. Giving money is one thing, but seeing it spent to help others reach their potential is a glorious reward.

What would you tell other alumni who might consider making a donation? This is an institution that was created by people who were born. It was nurtured by others who came before us. We have a responsibility to future generations to make sure that it remains dynamic and that it’s here after we’re gone. At any educational institution, the students, the faculty, the administration, the alumni.

I used to think, oh, why give money to a big university? They have billions of dollars. Well, yes, but other priorities can relegate great ideas to the dustbin. In speaking with Dominic Misumi about the American Music Theatre Project, I realized that creative faculty and administration can have all the bright ideas in the world, but nothing is going to happen unless some of us help them.