



SIGHTS *and* SOUNDS

Summer 2023

A Newsletter for the College of Fine Arts & Communication

The best kept secret



Hello! My name is Golden Wright, and I am the Interim Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Lamar University. In my opinion, the College of Fine Arts and Communication is one of the best kept secrets. The students, staff and faculty in this college are brilliant and extraordinary. The creation of this monthly newsletter is to highlight and promote the amazing accomplishments of these individuals within each discipline of the fine art and communication

fields. Within this newsletter, one can find out when and where to experience live performances, learn about current research topics and the accomplishments of our students, staff and faculty. This is just one of the ways we are trying to rewrite that narrative and tell our story. The College of Fine Arts and Communication is a diverse college with communication being one thing we all have in common.

Each area relies on communication in various ways. The area of communication and media utilizes a variety of mediums such as television, radio, social media and newspaper to share information. Using voice or instruments, music majors use song to share a feeling or story. Speech and hearing sciences help us to hear and speak to improve quality of life. Deaf studies teach individuals to be the medium for individuals to communicate. Theatre and dance provide an

escape from reality through movement and text. Finally, art provides a visual communication that captures a time or place and transcends us to new places. As a college, communication plays an important role in the successes of our departments.

Golden Wright

Interim Dean, College of Fine Arts
& Communication

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Upcoming Events

Dishman Art Musuem Exhibition

Until August 5 – M-F (9 to 4), Saturday (12 to 4)

Tim Dueppen and Friends Part II

August 18 – 7:30pm - Rothwell Recital Hall

Athena

September 21-24 – TBD - Studio Theatre

Drs. Ilban and Clark Faculty Recital

September 26 – 7:30pm - Rothwell Recital Hall

LU Bands Concert

October 5 – 7:30pm - Julie Rogers Theatre

Cardinal Jazz Orchestra

October 11 – 7:30pm - Rothwell Recital Hall

Flute Eneseble Concert

October 13 – 7:30pm - Rothwell Recital Hall

The Incredible Fox Sisters

October 26-29 – TBD - Studio Theatre

You like jazz?

KVLU PUBLIC RADIO LAUNCHES NEW 'FRIDAY NIGHT JAZZ' PROGRAM



KVLU Public Radio at Lamar University added a new program to its schedule with “Friday Night Jazz,” a weekly show which will showcase many aspects of the jazz music genre and its history. The program airs every Friday night 11 p.m. and is hosted by LU alumnus Andre Harness.

Harness, a 2017 music performance and saxophone graduate, was presented with the opportunity to host this program following an interview with KVLU Station Manager Jason Miller. Inspired by the knowledge of the KVLU staff, Harness could not deny the opportunity.

Harness’ goal with this new

program is to bring jazz music back to the forefront of Southeast Texas.

“It’s important to note that jazz on the radio has become sparser compared to the past,” he said.

“Many radio shows are replacing jazz music with popular genres instead of adding jazz programs. ‘Friday Night Jazz’ aims to be a light in this darkness, offering an educational experience for our listeners and exposing them to this wonderful music. Our listeners can expect a mix of classic jazz standards and modern interpretations, along with fascinating insights into the history and evolution of jazz music.”

Harness added that there are plans to include themed shows,

with the first one happening on its premiere, and the theme being “90 Years of Big Band Music,” which will explore big band tracks from each decade since the 1930s.

Through this new program, Harness believes a stronger jazz community can be formed in the region.

“It’s about providing recognition and opportunities for these musicians who often go unnoticed,” he said. “In doing so, we not only celebrate the rich jazz heritage of Southeast Texas but also inspire future generations of jazz enthusiasts to embrace this incredible art form.”

Media excellence

MADDIE SIMS AWARDED 2023 PRESS CLUB SCHOLARSHIP



On June 2, the Press Club of Southeast Texas hosted its 32nd annual Excellence in the Media and Newsmaker of the Year Gala at the MCM Elegante Hotel in Beaumont.

Along with awards given out to media professionals, money raised during the event is used to benefit a student in the Lamar University Department of Communication and Media through the Press Club Memorial Scholarship. This year, the scholarship was awarded to journalism student Maddie Sims.

“It was surreal,” said Sims. “I had no idea if I was going to win it or not. I originally came to the event to help, and then I won.”

Sims, who will begin her junior year in the Fall, took an interest in journalism early on in high school. Despite not having a journalism program at her school, she began participating in UIL events and sharpening her craft and skills. After beginning at LU, she started learning under Andy Coughlan, director of the Lamar University Press, through a Cardinal Com-

munity. Shortly after, she began contributing to the UP.

Sims started out as a contributor and worked her way to a staff writer position followed by a promotion to managing editor. In the Fall, she will begin her tenure as editor for the UP.

Sims concluded with thanking Coughlan and Stephan Malick, assistant director of student publications and advertising manager for the UP, for their guidance, teaching and opportunities provided.

'After School Special 23'

Dishman Art Museum site of new alumni exhibition

The Dishman Art Museum on the campus of Lamar University is currently home to the fifth annual juried alumni art exhibition, "After School Special." The exhibition showcases the work of six distinguished LU alumni who had their work selected by two jurors. The exhibition will run until Aug. 5. Museum hours are Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and select Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m.

Works of art being shown were created by: Greg Busceme, Andy Coughlan, Robert Dandino, Mark Nesmith, Amy Tolbert-Faggard and Darrell Robins. Their work was selected by jurors Amanda Smith and Kevin Tully.

Busceme's work consists of four ceramic creations. His fascination with fire and a desire for a therapeutic distraction is what has inspired his interest in clay.

Coughlan's work consists of seven paintings from his series "A Crack in the World." His works are inspired by the cracks found in the streets that have been covered multiple times with black tar. Thinking on the wealth of history that has been covered up time and time again, Coughlan's works include many layers of paint on top of one another.

Dandino's work consists of six



His work is a visual representation of ancient archetypes with re-occurring characters and traits that humanity shares and unconsciously understands from the hero, warrior, lover or jester. These are meanings and motivations that are universal.

Nesmith's work consists of five oil paintings highlighting the material world. His work addresses the superficiality of modern society and reflects his unease with mankind's relationship to nature. His subjects range from consumerism to a growing reliance on technology and media.

Tolbert-Faggard's work consists of five paintings from her "Tranquility in Lace" series. Inspired by the complexity and beauty of lace,

her work demonstrates how lace is interwoven into people's lives in many ways.

Robins' work consists of five paintings inspired by his own experiences and using those to tell a captivating story. He uses inspiration from pop culture, anime, music, childhood memories, daydreams and the African American experience and involves vivid colors, composition, nature and more.

GORDON'S GLORY

LUTV'S GORDON WILLIAMS PRESENTED WITH SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION



Photography by Josh Wilson

On Friday, June 16, Gordon S. Williams, station operations manager for Lamar University Television News, received a congressional commendation and was honored with special congressional recognition from the office of U.S. Representative and Texas native Brian Babin.

The event took place in the University Theatre and was attended by members of the community, LU students and alumni family of Williams, faculty from the Department of Communication and Media, Mayor Roy West and more.

Several speakers, including Dr. Freddie Titus, Dr. Dann Brown, Dr. Golden Wright, Dr. Nicki Michalski, Josh Yawn, Alexis Miller, Tommy Byers and Candy Rodriguez, all spoke on Williams, his achievements and his importance to Lamar University and the community.

Lanie Brown, senior regional field director for Babin's office, was on site to present Williams with two symbols of recognition. First, a flag that was flown over the Capitol building in Williams' honor. Then, the official document placed in a leather folder that reads special recognition from Babin to Williams.

"Being in the audience as colleagues, alumni and students speak about your influence, your work and to receive a congressional commendation was a surreal and overwhelming experience," said Williams. I am sincerely grateful



to the College of Fine Arts & Communication, the Department of Communication and Media, all the individuals involved in making the event a reality, my family, and the audience that attended this milestone event in my life."

The recognition for Williams started in the mind of Byers, a recent LU graduate and student of Williams. After researching the qualifications for someone to receive this recognition, Byers began drafting a letter advocating and electing Williams to this honor. Shortly after, Babin and his office agreed with Byers and began planning the event.

"Once I found out Gordon would receive the recognition, I was overflowing with happiness and excitement," said Byers. "Gordon has won countless awards nationally and internationally, and now Congress is recognizing his talents.

The moment Gordon found out he had won was priceless. In life, our paths cross many individuals. I will be forever grateful my path crossed with Gordon Williams and LUTV."

Byers added that Williams has been a mentor, role model and life changer for all the individuals who have stepped through the LUTV studio.

Even with special congressional recognition, Williams remains humble. He continues to credit all the people who have poured into him, brings to light their mentorship on him and says that he is who he is because he stands on the shoulders of giants.

"I am honored to be a product of the contributions of all these individuals and entities, thank you for what you have poured into me throughout my career," he concluded.

Impact of interACT

Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences presents annual interACT performance

Over the course of four weeks and five days a week, graduate students from the Lamar University Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences participated in the fifth iteration of interACT, the annual production celebrating neurodiversity and supporting inclusion theater rehearsal with Beaumont Community Player's Kidmunity program. Performances took place on July 21-22.

Starting in 2017, interACT began out of Beaumont Community Player's desire for more inclusivity using theatre to promote social language and interaction. Through BCP's Kidmunity summer program, interACT was developed and born

from LU's speech and hearing department.

This year, 8-18-year olds came together to put on a 20-minute performance titled "The Hope - A Journey," a tale about the beauty that can be created when people work together and embrace each other.

"The common goal is for the kids to put on a play together," said Dr. Karen Whisenhunt Saar, assistant professor of Speech-Language Pathology. Saar added that bringing kids together with several different disabilities through theatre is a goal that she hopes to see more of.

"It's about the lives of these people, and the impact of the university on the community," she

said.

Several students in the graduate Speech-Language Pathology program volunteered their time over the month leading up to the performances.

Jessica Bisnar became interested in volunteering her time after discovering a social media post about interACT last year and wanting to work more with social skill development.

"It was fun and rewarding," said Bisnar.

The graduate students spent their time preparing the kids for the performances, collaborating with each other on new ideas every day, spent time with the kids in small groups and acted as models for the peer mentors. During the performances, they assisted with sign holding, scene transitions and sung with the kids in support.

The success of interACT at Beaumont Community Players is a testament to the dedication of the faculty and students of LU's Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences. As the curtains close on this year's performances, the impact of inclusive theater will continue to resonate within the hearts of the performers, their families and the audiences.





Around the campfire

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC HOSTS ANNUAL SUMMER CAMPS

Over the summer, the Lamar University Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music hosted two summer camps, the Lamar University Band Camp and the All-State Summer Choir Camp. Band camp was led by Drs. Andrew McMahan and James Han, associate professors in the department.

Band camp took place from June 11-15 and was attended by 318 campers across middle and high school grade levels. The camp also consisted of 50 staff members including McMahan and Dr. Eric Shannon, 32 LU students and 13 middle school and high school band directors from the state of Texas.

“Band camp included a variety of daily classes, full band rehearsals, group lessons, electives, daytime recreation and culminated with a grand concert of bands and percussion ensembles featuring camp participants,” said McMahan.

All-State Summer Choir Camp, led by Han, took place from July 5-8 and was attended by 100 Texas high school students. The camp

consisted of 16 clinicians and staff members, including LU choral music education students.

“The camp is a meaningful event for our campers each year as they begin their All-State journey,” said Han. “Attending camp allows students to build an understanding of the All-State audition repertoire prior to the school year beginning.”

Much like Band camp, the choral camp culminated with a concert in the Lamar University Theatre.



Artistic opportunity

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE HOSTS AIMED DANCE SUMMER FEST



Throughout the month of July, the Lamar University Department of Theatre & Dance hosted the 2023 Aimed Summer Dance Fest, presented by Aimed Dance and led by Assistant Professor of Dance Amy Elizabeth. Over 70 classes were taught from July 10-22, and three festival concerts took place between July 14-29.

Over 50 dance artists were hosted in the studio and on the stage. During the three-week concert series, six dance films and 23 live-dance works were presented.

“Our goal is to engage and invest,” said Elizabeth. “We want to engage with artists and audience alike. ADSF grants opportunities for the artists that they otherwise not have. We hope to engage with the audiences of Southeast Texas and build a program that not only introduces them to dance as

concert art but builds a community of followers that seek our participation in events such as ADSF.”

Beginning in 2021, ADSF started as a concert series presenting works by professional dance makers and the Emerging Choreographer Fellows. The Emerging Choreographer Fellowship grants artists ages 18 – 35 the resources needed to continue their creative practice. The Fellows are given dancers, space, time and production resources to produce a new work and have it professionally documented for their portfolios. This program now has 7 alumni Fellows.

In 2022, the Department of Theatre & Dance became a part of the concert series. This move allowed for two weeks of intensive-style training by theatre and dance faculty and special guest instructors.

“It is an honor to host so many

artists at Lamar University and be granted the opportunity to do so by the Department of Theatre & Dance and the many departments that came together to make the event possible,” said Elizabeth. “We are proud to be Cardinals and look forward to expanding our programming in years to come.”

Art education

ART & DESIGN DEPARTMENT HOSTS TWO EDUCATION FOCUSED ART CAMPS

Over the summer, the Lamar University Department of Art & Design hosted a summer workshop for region 5 teachers and an art camp for high school students.

The Bounce Back: Artmaking and Resiliency workshop was hosted as a three-part session from June 27-29. This set of teacher workshops for area art educators offered a variety of opportunities to participate in artmaking strategies that explore issues of resiliency, rebuilding and response to broader social concerns such as the pandemic, climate change and social justice. This project was funded by the Lamar University Center for Resiliency.

For Bounce Back, different printmaking and painting techniques are taught by Donna Meeks and Xenia Fedorchenko, faculty in the department. 7-8 teachers participated this year.



The SEAL summer art camp took place from July 17-21 and was supervised by Dr. Joanna Hyatt, associate professor in the department. Six high school students participated in the camp this year and were taught by art education students.





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