We want to hear from you

Fall 2011 Events

Below is a selection of events from our exciting fall line-up. Visit lamar.edu/cofac for more details or to access the full list of concerts, plays and exhibitions offered through the College of Fine Arts and Communication.

Sept. 22 – 25
An Inspector Calls
By J.B. Priestley
University Theatre

Sept. 23 – Oct. 21
Hidden Worlds:
Paintings by Page Laughlin
Dishman Art Museum
Reception: Sept. 23 at 7 p.m.

Oct. 6
Lamarissimo! Jazz Band Concert
7:30 p.m., Julie Rogers Theatre

Oct. 22 – 23
Anandam: Collages by MG Raffic Ahamed
Dishman Art Museum
Reception: Oct. 22 at 7 p.m.

Oct. 29 – 31
Slasher
By Allison Moore
Studio Theatre

Oct. 30
Choral Concert
4 p.m., First United Methodist Church

Nov. 3
Lamarissimo! Faculty Artists
7:30 p.m., Julie Rogers Theatre

Nov. 11 – 12
Lamar Opera Studio
Amahl and the Night Visitors
By Gian Carlo Menotti
7:30 p.m., Rothwell Recital Hall

Nov. 17
Band Concert
Nederland High School
7 p.m., Performing Arts Center

Nov. 17 – 18
Bard on The Bayou Series:
Fall Dance Concert
7:30 p.m., University Theatre

Nov. 29
Lamar Civic Orchestra
7:30 p.m., Setzer Student Center Ballroom

Dec. 2 – 15
Senior Thesis Exhibition
Dishman Art Museum
Reception: Dec. 2 at 7 p.m.

Dec. 4
Lamarissimo! Holiday Concert
3 p.m., Julie Rogers Theatre

Dec. 5
Industrial Carillon
7:30 p.m., Mobil Oil Federal Credit Union

Dec. 1
Glory Box
By Special Guest Artist Tim Miller
7:30 p.m., University Theatre

Dec. 2
Body Maps
7:30 p.m., University Theatre
Student-performed benefit for the Triangle AIDS Network

Share your news and success stories with other College of Fine Arts and Communication alumni. If you have news to share, please send it to sharon.forret@lamar.edu.
Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music
honors transformational donation

The Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music became the official name of LU’s music department this spring in appreciation for a $2 million donation to the College of Fine Arts and Communication from Ray and Mary Moore of Beaumont. The Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music is one of only five named music departments or schools in the state.

Russ Schultz, dean of the college, said the gift will “lift the department to new heights,” allowing it to provide even stronger academic programs and further enhance the support it gives to the performing arts within the community.

“Lamar is so pleased to honor Mary and Ray for their tradition of philanthropy and community service,” said President James Simmons at the Jan. 28 ceremony. “Future generations of music majors will benefit from the generosity of the Moore family and will identify Mary and her family as leaders in supporting excellence in musicianship and music education.”

Simmons observed that “their generosity will transform our music department by enabling us to recruit the finest faculty and the most promising student musicians, and it will enable us to provide more scholarship assistance to students who need a hand to realize their dreams.”

For more than 60 years, alumnus Ray Moore has been an ardent supporter of Lamar University. Mary, his wife of 56 years, joins him in that passion, and together, they have given their time, talents and financial resources to the university and to Southeast Texas.

“Having a named department and a complete renovation of the Music Building enhances the prestige of the faculty and students, particularly within the professional community of performing and educator musicians,” said Schultz. “We are most grateful to the Moores for their transformative gift, which will facilitate the growth of the music program and contribute to the outstanding musicianship of young musicians for many years to come.”
Welcome to the 2011 back-to-school issue of Sights and Sounds, the newsletter for the College of Fine Arts and Communication. We look forward to an exciting school year with new programs and faculty, audience-friendly productions and continued growth in our student body.

We have a great deal to celebrate as we enter the new school year. Our Master of Science degree in speech language pathology and our doctor of audiology programs continue to grow and attract new students, as does the undergraduate program in American Sign Language. You can read more about one of our inspirational deaf studies/deaf education majors pursuing the ASL degree in the pages of this newsletter. The feature on Heather Moore is part of a series of student profiles put forth by the university to tell some of the individual stories of our dynamic students at Lamar.

The music department had a particularly exciting year as it moved into the renovated Music Building and the marching band entertained and wowed football fans. It was also named the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music in honor of a generous donation from Mary and Ray Moore of Beaumont. All of these tremendous advances will continue to attract the best and brightest students and spur growth in this department.

The Bard on the Bayou series got off to an auspicious start with talented guest artists helming The Tempest. Our students had an incredible experience working with theatre professionals, including multiple Tony-award winner Scott Pask.

The Department of Art added two new faculty members within the last year. Crispin Presbys is assistant professor of graphic design and helped facilitate the new state-of-the-art computer lab, where he teaches his classes. The old PC lab was completely upgraded with 20 Mac computers that run all the latest design software to meet industry standards. Electrical and networking capabilities were also revised, and the room itself was renovated. I’m also excited to welcome the other new faculty member in art, Jessica Dandona, art historian and director of the Dishman Art Museum.

The Dishman Art Museum featured a one-of-a-kind conference last year, the Gulf Print Storm, billed as a "printmaking extravaganza." Organized to promote fine-art printmaking, the conference featured exhibitions, demonstrations, lectures and live printmaking events. It was the only event of its scale on printmaking to occur on the Gulf Coast and attracted artists and students from Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Missouri and Texas.

The Department of Communication made a strong showing in two award competitions, earning honors from the Press Club of Southeast Texas and the Houston Press Club for LUTV on Fox. Please read the feature on LUTV productions for more information on these honors.

For more details on all our news and events, visit us on the Web at lamar.edu/cofac or call (409) 880-8137. You may also follow us at Facebook.com/LamarCOFAC and Twitter.com/LamarCOFAC. We are grateful for the support of our alumni and the college’s advisory council and Friends of the Arts.

Russ A. Schultz
Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication
Lamar University
The Dishman Art Museum is more than a building filled with paintings, prints, photographs and sculptures. For Jessica Dandona, the museum’s new director, it is a gathering place for the community. “The role of the museum in our society is to provide a forum to talk about ideas,” said Dandona, who is also an assistant professor in the Department of Art.

Dandona noted that she has always been interested in art. When she was a child growing up in Michigan, her father was an avid antiques collector, and her mother owned a shop that sold local artists’ works. “I grew up surrounded by art and antiques,” she said.

Dandona graduated magna cum laude from Brown University with a bachelor’s degree in the history of art and French studies. She furthered her education with independent graduate research in 18th-century architectural history as a Fulbright Fellow at Université Laval in Quebec. She earned her doctorate in art history from the University of California at Berkeley with her thesis titled “La Lorraine Artiste: Nature, Industry and the Nation in the Work of Émile Gallé and the École de Nancy.”

As an art historian, her main interest lies in French visual culture from 1789 to 1914, with emphases on colonialism, cross-cultural encounters, painting, material culture, photography and architecture. She admits that, although she loves art, she is not an artist. “I appreciate and support the work of others,” she said. “I don’t create my own art.”

A true Francophile, Dandona is fluent in French and has been traveling to France on a regular basis since she was 14 years old. During her undergraduate studies, she spent a year at the Sorbonne and the School of the Louvre.

“Dr. Dandona is a significant addition to our program,” said Russ Schultz. “She brings to us a tremendous background in art history, as well as an understanding of the relationship of the Dishman Art Museum to the academic setting. Given her extraordinary experiences at several institutions, we believe that she brings a new era of artistic accomplishment to view at the Dishman.”

Donna Meeks, chair of the Department of Art, concurs. “With her experience and education, I am confident that Jessica Dandona will be successful in bringing to the Dishman Art Museum new and challenging art and programs that will be enriching for both our students and the community,” she said. “I am very pleased to welcome her to the faculty.”

A major concept that Dandona learned throughout her education is that art is a language. “It’s a process of communication,” she explained. As a teacher, she wants her students to become empowered, not passive, observers. “I want them to become conscious and self-aware viewers of the world around us,” she said.

The new director’s family includes her husband, Larry Holderfield, who is pursuing his undergraduate business degree at Lamar, and their infant daughter, Rose.

Dandona looks forward to directing the museum and plans to host exhibits with broad appeal, such as a showing of contemporary comic-book art and a quilt exhibition. “Art is essential,” she said. “It allows us to see our world anew.”

KVLU celebrates successful campaign

Lamar University public radio 91.3 KVLU successfully completed its spring fund drive and exceeded the goal by $250 for a total of $50,250.

“We’re very encouraged by this result,” said Byron Balentine, co-manager for operations. “Our listeners have let us know with this show of support that they count on KVLU for great public radio programming and want it to continue.”

Balentine went on to say that with the continued threat of reduction of state and federal funding for public broadcasting it is more important than ever that users of these mediums rally to support what they enjoy.

“The funds from our pledge drives go directly into programming,” said Melanie Dishman, co-manager for advancement. KVLU is affiliated with National Public Radio and American Public Media. It is in its 38th year of broadcasting to Southeast Texas and is licensed to Lamar University with studios on the main campus.

“KVLU carries NPR news programs as well as classical, jazz and alternative music not viable to commercial radio broadcast,” Dishman said.

KVLU’s fall campaign begins in October, but listeners don’t have to wait until then to show their support. They can go online to KVLU.org to make a donation and become a member today.
Guest artists bring magic to The Tempest

Students of the Department of Theatre & Dance and audience members alike received a special treat when guest artists Nathanael Johnson and Tony-award winner Scott Pask brought their talents to the recent production of The Tempest. The fantastical hour-long adaptation of William Shakespeare’s work premiered in February to open the new Bard on the Bayou series.

Yale School of Drama graduate Johnson directed the play, while multiple-Tony Award-winner Pask designed the set. Pask most recently won the Tony in 2011 for The Book of Mormon. His other Broadway design credits include such shows as The Wedding Singer, Urinetown and the revivals of La Cage aux Folles, Little Shop of Horrors and Hair.

“Nathan and Scott are both extremely committed to ‘giving back’ to the field of theatre, particularly in terms of helping students succeed,” said Johnson. “Scott created a very visual and spectacular world for the play,” said Johnson. “His phenomenal design starts with a ship at sea. Then a storm comes, the ‘tempest’ of the title, and the ship is blown apart to become pieces of the island where the rest of the events take place. In a way, the set becomes its own character.”

The multidisciplinary production featured actors and dancers from the Department of Theatre & Dance as well as original music from Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music graduate student Robert Underhill of Port Arthur.

“Robert’s music completely catered to the events that happen on the stage,” said Johnson. “Having a play with an original composition is something that rarely, if ever, happens in a college-level production.”

Working with talented guest artists provided a valuable real-world connection for students in the department.

“I love that we get all these people in because we can talk to them face to face,” said Allison Underhill of Port Arthur (sister to Robert Underhill). She is a junior theatre education major and was assistant stage manager for the production.

“I’m thinking about graduate school, and I got to talk to Nathan all about it and learn about his experience at Yale School of Drama. And I got to Skype with Scott Pask for a production meeting on The Tempest and hear all of his thoughts and ideas and how he processes things and gets his inspiration. Then a few months later, he won the Tony. It was so awesome that I got to work with him,” Underhill said.

“Nathan and Scott are both extremely committed to ‘giving back’ to the field of theatre, particularly in terms of helping students succeed,” said Judy Sebesta, chair of the Department of Theatre & Dance. “Sharing their own creativity, training and expertise with our students was an incredible opportunity for both theatre and dance majors, and bringing in guest artists of their caliber helps revitalize the faculty and staff as well.”

To find out more about the department’s production of The Tempest, visit lamar.edu/theatre and explore the online production portfolio. The portfolio allows unique access to the behind-the-scenes work that goes into a production, including the fully detailed director’s concept, initial rehearsal/production schedules, sample costume renderings, meeting notes, production photos and more.

Speech & Hearing club earns recognition

Within a year, the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) chapter at Lamar went from defunct to distinguished, and Gina Watson, faculty advisor for the organization, credits students in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences for the achievement.

“The students were very motivated to get the chapter up and running. They did lots of planning and organization. They held local fundraisers and have done a great deal to raise recognition for our field,” said Watson, Speech Language Pathology clinic director.

Lamar’s NSSLHA chapter recently received bronze-level recognition from the national organization. Chapters that earn recognition demonstrate an awareness of student issues and concerns, outreach to the community, educational opportunities, and social and fundraising activities.

“NSSLHA is the first step in the development of professionalism and advocacy in the field of Speech-Language Pathology,” Watson said. “The association promotes community involvement which is one of the missions of our department.”

The campus chapter has provided speech and hearing screenings at several elementary school campuses in low socioeconomic districts, started a stuttering support group and held fundraisers to support the Stuttering Foundation of America.

“Our community service projects are all locally done, and one of our main goals is to promote awareness of our field. We are all very proud of this recognition and the valuable services provided by our students,” Watson said.
LUTV Productions earned first place in the television and radio category at the Lone Star Awards by the Houston Press Club for Jason Project: Operation Infinite Potential, and second place from the Press Club of Southeast Texas and for its quarterly television program LUTV on Fox, produced by the students, alumni, staff and faculty of the Department of Communication.

The 30-minute program highlights the people, organizations and departments that have helped Lamar become one of the fastest-growing universities in Texas.

“LUTV on Fox is an excellent opportunity for our students to work side by side with alumni and industry professionals and gain practical work experience,” said Gordon Williams, LUTV studio operations manager and producer for LUTV on Fox. “Having an opportunity to learn, network and work on award-winning projects helps motivate our students and gives them confidence in their abilities.”

“It’s great to get the experience to have your work shown at a well known multimedia outlet. Being able to see the finished product when it is aired on Fox 4 will give me a sense of pride in what I have accomplished,” said student reporter Lauren Gordon of Beaumont, who was featured in the most recent episode.

Under the name LUTV Productions, students, alumni, staff and faculty of the Department of Communication have produced a number of award-winning television commercials, programs and documentaries, such as Magnolia: A Century of Oil, Surviving Rita: Looking Forward, LU on The U and The Dean’s Corner.

Larry Elliott and O’Brien Stanley, associate professors of communication, are the program’s executive producers.

Former Houston Oilers coach and Lamar University alumnus O.A. “Bum” Phillips was interviewed for the episode that premiered in July.

A Southeast Texas native, Phillips attended Lamar and played football in the 1940s. KBTV Fox 4 sports anchor James Ware conducted the in-depth interview. Ware is also an alumnus of Lamar.

The interview with Phillips is available online at lamarcardinals.com/allaccess.

Lamarissimo! announces ticket sales for 2011-12 season

Season tickets and gift certificates for the upcoming 2011-12 season of the Lamarissimo! concert series showcasing the talents of outstanding student and faculty artists in ensemble and solo performances are now on sale in the Mary Morgan Moore Department of Music.

The Lamarissimo! season opens Thursday, Oct. 6, with the Jazz Bands concert, and continues with Faculty Artists on Thursday, Nov. 3; A Cappella Choir holiday concert on Sunday, Dec. 4; Wind Ensemble and Concert Band on Tuesday, March 3; and Cardinal Singers and Lamar Dance Company on Thursday, April 28. The holiday concert will begin at 3 p.m. All others will start at 7:30 p.m. All concerts will be in the Julie Rogers Theatre, 765 Pearl St., in Beaumont.

Season tickets, priced at $50 for adults and $25 for students, include admission to all five concerts. Lamarissimo! gift certificates may be used for purchase of adult season tickets. Individual concert tickets, $18 for adults and $12 for students, will be available before each concert.

For the season ticket order form, visit lamar.edu/music, or call (409) 880-8144.
Connecting lives: Heather Moore pursues her ASL degree at LU

Heather Moore traveled to and from her California high school by city bus. One day, a deaf man boarded the bus and, after a few minutes, became agitated and indicated to the driver that he needed help.

“I didn’t know how to sign yet, but I could finger spell because my great aunt was deaf,” Moore said. “I went up to him and asked if he needed assistance. His face lit up and he got very excited. I helped him communicate to the driver that he needed help. After a few minutes, became agitated and indicated to the driver that he needed help. Moore said.

Lamar had the degree she sought, but financial concerns and family obligations weighed heavily on her decision to return to school.

“My 5-year-old son has Asperger’s Syndrome, and we were already trying to figure out his schooling. In addition, my husband left his position with the church to travel full time with his own ministry, and I work 40 hours a week or more as an educational interpreter. I started investigating the ASL degree and found I could make my school and work schedule complement one another nicely. I take 12 hours each semester and take my core classes online,” Moore said.

Moore is the recipient of a Project Train grant that pays for tuition, room and board and books for students getting their ASL degree in return for two years of service as an educational interpreter after graduation.

Moore plans to graduate in May 2013. She is taking summer classes and mini-sessions in addition to her 12 semester hours.

“I love that all the professors in the department have been so supportive,” she said. “They’re all very encouraging because they know what a vital program this is and try to encourage you by every means possible.”

A slashing good time

The Department of Theatre & Dance had one main goal in mind when planning the 2011-12 season: involve the audience in a wide range of interesting productions.

“We wanted to select shows that we felt would be audience pleasing,” said Judy Sebesta, department chair. "In An Inspector Calls, there is a mystery of sorts, and we felt that held lots of audience appeal. We also have a hilarious dark comedy with Slasher, and conclude the season with a very popular Broadway and touring show, Twenty-Fifth Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.”

An Inspector Calls will take the stage first, premiering in late September. Bonnie Dupuis, a senior theatre major, will direct the play, while instructor Joel Grothe will appear on stage in the title role.

Slasher, written by Allison Moore, and set in the Austin area, centers on the production of a low-budget horror film. The show will run through Halloween weekend and, according to Sebesta, will be a true Halloween, with audience costumes and other fun stuff planned.

The Beauty Queen of Leenane, by Martin McDonagh, will run in the Studio Theatre in February. This darkly comic play is set in Ireland, and is the culmination of a course in Irish theatre taught by Grothe.

The Bard on the Bayou series continues this season with choreography at the fall dance concert in November, inspired by the works of William Shakespeare. Choreographers will present a variety of dance works at the spring concert in April, with styles such as ballet, jazz, modern, tap, musical theatre, improvisation and hip-hop.

The season will also feature internationally acclaimed performance artist Tim Miller, who will arrange a performance piece in December using students and community members in the show Body Maps. Miller will also perform his moving one-man show Glory Box.

For more details on these productions, including times, dates, and tickets, visit lamar.edu/theatre, or call (409) 880-8037.
William Vacchiano was principal trumpet of the New York Philharmonic, taught at The Juilliard School for 67 years and influenced countless musicians. But one of the things that most impressed Brian Shook about Vacchiano was his great love of people.

“He loved music, but his real passion was caring about people,” said Shook, assistant professor of music. “He taught more than 2,000 students, and he remembered them all by name and what mouthpiece they played! But, if something had happened in a student’s personal life, such as physical injury or the loss of a family member, he would always ask them about it – even decades later. He had an incredibly sharp mind and used it touch the lives of so many. That is the type of teacher and musician I aspire to be.”

Shook explores the life and career of Vacchiano (1912–2005) in Last Stop, Carnegie Hall: New York Philharmonic Trumpeter William Vacchiano, published by the University of North Texas Press. Last Stop, with a foreword by Wynton Marsalis, details the professional life of Vacchiano’s performing and teaching through the eyes of more than 50 of his students, colleagues, friends and family members.

“Few trumpet teachers impacted as many individual students professionally and personally as Vacchiano,” said Shook. “He won the job as principal trumpet for the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in the same day. He chose the Philharmonic and then had the tremendous honor of playing under the likes of conductors such as Toscanini, Walter, Szell, Rodzinsky, Mitropoulos and, of course, Bernstein. Vacchiano was always a student of music and gleaned as much wisdom as possible from all of these individuals. He was as eager to learn as he was to perform.”

At one point, Vacchiano’s students could be found in every orchestra in the United States. Before union laws, many conductors would call him up and ask him to recommend a student. According to Shook, every principal and co-principal trumpet of the New York Philharmonic since Vacchiano’s retirement in 1973 has been one of his students: Gerard Schwarz, Louis Ranger, Johnny Ware and Philip Smith.

Before his appointment at Lamar, Shook served as an adjunct brass instructor at Towson University and American University. From 2004 to 2009, Shook toured the United States with The King’s Brass and since 2009 has been principal trumpet of the Symphony of Southeast Texas.

When completing his doctorate at Arizona State University, Shook decided to write a biography of a famous trumpet player for his dissertation. He and his professor, David Hickman, composed a long list of eligible performers and were both astounded to discover that no major writing had been done on Vacchiano or his career. Hickman called Vacchiano to ask if Shook could write his biography, and he agreed.

“I was very lucky because after I started this project, I had a ticket to talk with almost any famous trumpet player that I wished,” said Shook. “At the top of the list were Philip Smith, Wynton Marsalis and Malcolm McNab. I got to interview Philip Smith in the brass locker room backstage at Avery Fisher Hall. Wynton Marsalis invited me up to his apartment in Lincoln Center at 11 p.m., interview until after midnight.”

“I’m honored to know that through this book more people will come to know the life and career of a musical giant whose humble heart and caring soul touched everyone he met,” said Shook.

Field Favorites

The LU Marching Band, nicknamed “The Showcase of Southeast Texas” (pictured here at last season’s homecoming game), delights football fans with performances that include military-style and block formations, rock ‘n’ roll classics and traditional marching songs.