



Whittier College

Dramalum Cues

November 2006



Tartuffe by Molière

November 15-18, 8:00 p.m.
November 19, 2:00 p.m.

Considered Molière's best play, this French comedy takes place in the home of the wealthy Orgon, where Tartuffe—a fraud and a pious imposter—has insinuated himself. He succeeds magnificently in winning the respect and devotion of the head of the house and then tries to marry his daughter and seduce his wife and scrounge the deed to the property. He nearly gets away with it, but an emissary from King Louis XIV arrives in time to recover the property, free Monsieur Orgon and haul Tartuffe off to jail. And so his duplicity is finally exposed and punished. But not before the author has mercilessly examined the evil that men can commit in the guise of religious fervor and the dangers that imperil those who would believe only what they choose to believe despite a mountain of evidence to the contrary.

Theatre Department Reception

Saturday, November 18, 2006 5:00-6:30, Shannon Center Lobby

Calling all past, present and future Whittier College Theatre Majors, Minors and people who just hung around the department.

On Saturday, November 18, 2006, you'll have another excuse to hang around the department, as the Whittier College Theatre Arts Department hosts a reception in the lobby

of the Shannon Center.

Come enjoy a glass of wine, light refreshments and the company of your fellows from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. before the performance of *Tartuffe* at 8:00 p.m. If possible, please r.s.v.p. to Lynne Wagner lwagner@whittier.edu. If you are able to attend but didn't r.s.v.p., please show up anyway.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR . . .

We are midway through the fall semester, and the department is busy with preparations for our upcoming production of **Molière's *Tartuffe***, which will be an Associate Production for the American College Theatre Festival (Region 8). The department is filled with new energy, and I'm not just talking about our first-year students.

If you graduated in the spring of 2002 or earlier, then you might not have met my two young colleagues, **Jennifer Holmes** and **Gil Gonzalez**. Jennifer started teaching at Whittier in the fall of 2002, and she was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor at the conclusion of the 2006 spring semester. Gil, who is directing *Tartuffe*, began teaching at Whittier last year as an Irvine Fellow and is continuing this year as a tenure-track Assistant Professor. Jennifer originally hails from upstate New York and received her Ph.D. from Northwestern University in performance studies. Gil comes from Wisconsin and completed his MFA in acting at the University of Virginia. I'm also happy to report that I was promoted to the rank of Full Professor at the end of last semester, so things are looking up for the theatre faculty. All in all, 2005-06 was an eventful year, and we are in the midst of another one filled with challenges and excitement, including spring productions of *Into the Woods* and *Stop Kiss*.

Another New Face: After 17 years at Whittier, I finally have a staff member to oversee technical production in the department. **Monte Cooper** is the new Technical Director and Scene Shop Supervisor. He comes to Whittier with a wealth of experience, including stints with Cirque du Soleil, South Coast Repertory, and many other venues.

Alumni News: The **most important news** might be the upcoming **2nd Annual Reception for Alumni and Current Students** on Saturday, November 18, from 5:00 to 6:30 PM in the Shannon Center Lobby. This will be an opportunity, I hope, for alumni to meet and greet each other and to get to know our current students. (In this business, after all, it's all about networking.) If you can make it, my suggestion is that you come for the reception, then have dinner with fellow alums at one of the Uptown restaurants, and then come back to the Shannon Center for the 8:00 PM performance of *Tartuffe*.

As you read this newsletter, you'll see that Bob Treser has supplied some information on alumni who were his students back in the good ol' days. I have some news to report, too, based on contacts I've had with alums over the past year or so. Here are my notes, trying to relay the information as correctly as possible:

It was last year that I found myself at Angstrom Lighting in Hollywood to purchase some Roscolux for a production. I asked about **Topher Best**, who—last I knew—was the shop foreman at Angstrom. Well, it turned out that Topher had become the General Manager of the company. We had a nice chat in his roomy office (seemingly twice the size of mine with a lot less stuff in it).

During the Nixon Administration, in the midst of the Vietnam War, I recall Orson Welles saying on the Dick Cavett Show that "It is every American's right to take the mickey out of the President." These days, **James Adomian** seems to be very busy doing just that, what with his comic antics on stage in L.A., on youtube.com, and occasionally on television (*The Late, Late Show with Craig Ferguson* and *The Mind of Mencia*). His impression of Dubya is a thing to behold, and his version of Joe Lieberman is pretty funny, too.

When last heard from in June, **Christian Bollacker** was getting ready to start his second season with the Seattle Repertory Theatre as a union apprentice carpenter. He went to Seattle in 2005, after a season as a scenery intern at the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago.

Matt Gorka and **Cristina Trepesowsky Gorka** are alive, well, and gainfully employed in Rancho Cucamonga. They both work at the Lewis Family Playhouse, a beautiful new 500+ seat theatre across the street from the Victoria Gardens shopping district. Matt is the Master Electrician and Cristina is the Box Office Manager. Thanks to them, I was treated to a tour of the new facility just before its opening.

Christina Gutierrez is in her second year in the MA program in theatre history & criticism at the University of Colorado in Boulder. As part of her participation in the program, she also works for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Among other CSF duties, she'll be a dramaturge for one of the 2007 summer productions.

I see **Laura Gomez Hahn** every so often on campus. Having completed her teaching credential at Whittier, she is working as a teacher at the Broadoaks School on campus.

Dave Hanson continues to perform stand-up comedy in southern California. His most recent gig was at the The Improv at the Irvine Spectrum Center this month. His recent acting credits include the independent films *Twixter* and *Gamers*, plus guest spots on two television series, *Ghost Whisperer* and *Carnivale*.

I got an email last month from **Jim Hart**, who recently moved from Maryland to Long Island. Jim wrote in part: "Our story begins in Salisbury, Maryland. This is where the Harts landed after Florida. If you aren't familiar with the "Florida Exodus" part of the story, give me or Jen a call—it's a doozie! But alas, since I am typing, it would take too long to relate here. Salisbury is a lovely town on the eastern shore of Maryland, just south of the Delaware border. I was working at Salisbury University. I truly enjoyed my time there . . . After long deliberation we decided that Jen should further her career, and that meant, to us at least, more education. Having already received her MA from UCF, she began to pursue a terminal degree . . . Jen was accepted into the MFA Directing program at the New School for Drama in NYC. Then came the scurry for me to find a job in or around NYC <gulp>. It looked for quite awhile like she would be attending school in NYC and I would remain in Salisbury, MD with Charlie—a 4 hour drive . . . Then, in the eleventh hour, the planets aligned and Hofstra University called and offered me a position. I am now the Production Manager/Technical Director at Hofstra, and Jen is attending classes at the New School. Charlie, too, has a new routine—Day Care! So, we are all off on a new adventure."

Prior to his email, I saw Jim for a few seconds last March, outside the Actors Theatre of Louisville, at the very end of an intermission. He was watching one show and I another, so there was no time to talk. We both were in Louisville for the 2006 USITT Conference, but we didn't manage to hook up later in the conference. I hope we'll have more time to get together at the 2007 USITT Conference in Phoenix, March 14-17. If any other alumni are planning to attend the conference, please let me know so that we can get together.

Shing Khor is in her second year in the MFA scenic design at Cal State Long Beach, having already designed sets for three productions in her first three semesters. Her talents are in demand for productions off-campus, too, including designing the set for a production of *Best/Worst* this month at the Electric Lodge in Venice. Last summer, Shing was a big help to me as assistant scenic designer and scenic artist at the Kingsmen Shakespeare Festival, where I designed the settings for *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream and *Othello*. She also was a scenic artist for Shakespeare/Orange County, where Shannon Center manager **David Palmer** designed the lighting for *Hamlet*.

I saw **JR Luker** last February. He was working at Advantage Ford-Lincoln-Mercury in Duarte as Internet Sales Manager, but making plans to move to Seattle.

Josh Machamer is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Cal Poly SLO. I saw Josh last May, when I traveled to the university to serve as an outside evaluator for the Theatre Department. (I hope his department has recovered from that experience.) Josh and his wife Kristin and their two daughters are thriving on the Central Coast.

Karen Maness is still working at the University of Texas—Austin in the Performing Arts Center as the Resident Scenic Artist and the scene painting instructor to both undergraduate and graduate students. Like me, Karen is active in USITT, serving as Scene Design Vice-Commissioner for Programming. (See you at the next conference, Karen.)

I heard from **Guy Marziello** last May. He has moved to Paso Robles, started his own business, The Candy Cellar, and he occasionally performs in local theatre productions. If you have a hankering for old-style candies, Guy is the man to call.

Desma Murphy keeps busy designing for both theatre and film. Besides her award-winning scenic designs for theatre productions in Los Angeles, she also works as an Assistant Art Director for film. She recently worked on the film *Poseidon*, and on the upcoming release, *Next*, starring Nicholas Cage.

Zach Stecklein has returned to California from the Lone Star State, having completed his M.A. in theatre history & criticism from Texas State University—San Marcos. Welcome back to the Golden State, Zach.

Those are my notes for now. Please write me or the Dramalum Cues with new information (or old information that I should have included here).

Wishing you all the best,

Brian
breed@whittier.edu
562-907-4831

**Please see the back page for
important Theatre Department
dates for the rest of the year**

Dr. T.'s Bob's Corner

ROBERT M. TRESER (DR. T—or, preferably, BOB): I'm staying quite busy these days, volunteering at the La Habra Public Library four evenings a week, and also tutoring six young people in ESL sessions (always one-on-one) as they struggle with English. Then I just started with a new first grade student in the Wonder of Reading Program at El Portal School. In addition, I'm in the closing stages of putting on a Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre show with the youth group at my Church. (NO, you are not invited!) And, of course, I try to keep up with you Dramalums whenever I can.

Recently at the Chorale Bel Canto concert in La Habra I enjoyed the group's work and chats with STEVE GOTHOLD (conductor), NEAL FUGATE, and STEFANIE HULT (both singers). At intermission STEF took me to see her former teacher, SHARI HARVEY (I cannot remember her married name, darn it!) who was also in the audience that performance. SHARI is the reason STEF came to Whittier, incidentally. We had a quick chat to get caught up on a number of years.

ELDA LOPEZ and I had dinner together recently and went to see MORGAN RUSLER in his performance at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in LA. It was SO great to be able to see her for the evening and to talk about old times. MORGAN, by the way, is about to open with his THIRD performance in "The Foreigner"; this one is in Palos Verdes, I believe.

ROXIE MOREY LEE continues to guide the Whittier Community Theatre onward as their President (and to keep me current on their work and to go with me on an occasional trip to the Odyssey). ROXIE had CANDY BUMGARDNER BECK featured in the WCT's recent "How to Succeed in Business..." (lotsa fun!), and tells me CANDY will be directing their closing show, "You Can't Take It With You" next Spring.

RICHARD DE VICARIIS has been doing so much lately it's getting hard to keep up! Most recent was his work as Peacham in "Three Penny Opera," one of best things I've seen him do. He performs a lot at the Hunger Artists Theatre in Fullerton. That Theatre was also the site of JACK MILLIS's production of "Leopold and Loeb," the opening production of a new group JACK is starting in Orange County, hoping to bring a strong homosexual theatre group into the Orange County scene. Show was quite good—watch for their work.

JOHN MURDY, one of the real brains at Universal Studios in Hollywood has just completed one of the most major projects in recent years for Universal. It was his brainstorm and planning and working and driving that caused HALLOWEEN HORROR NIGHTS to be such a success this past month. Reviews were very good, and they had to keep the doors open until 2:00 AM some evenings to get the crowds all taken care of. If you missed it (as I did!) be aware that you missed a biggie! You might note, however...we could not turn the first two "R" letters in "Horror" into their flipped position, as they appear at the Studio. My unit simply would not do it!

Congratulations, John—would love to have taken one of those walks from the Tram through the back lot and visited the Bates Motel!!

Just heard that CHRISTINA PURCELL will be leaving her gig of over a year on that cruise ship and returning to LA. She had been debating signing on for another year as the lead singer of the Cabaret shows on the ship, but decided enough was enough. She's due back here in LA in December or January; it'll be great to see her again!

BILL FERBER and I often join to see shows playing around the area—he's in the process of making arrangements for a production of "The Bone Squad" at the Odyssey—it's one of BILL's plays, and I'm hoping it will work out well for both him and the Theatre. Watch for that, too.

You may already know that ALMA MARTINEZ has been signed to teach at Pomona College up in Claremont, and will be starting her work there in February. In case you had not heard, she's finished her work at Stanford, and is now officially ALMA MARTINEZ Ph. D. Three cheers!

I went recently to see an evening of poetry readings by a group that PEGGY DOBREER has organized and conducts. Some very nice work by a wide assortment of people. QUITE a different kind of theatre experience, but a pleasant evening under the stars. Some of you OLD time folks may remember going to see Murray Mednick's "The Coyote Cycle" up in the hills above Claremont? Well, PEGGY was part of that group, after her time with us at Whittier, and was the reason a bunch of us went up to see the Coyote plays.

And, finally, LINDA (MATTI) VALLEJO's work is part of a new art exhibit at Carlotta's Passion on Colorado Boulevard in Eagle Rock. It remains there through the first of December, if you're out that way. MATTI, incidentally, had that wondrous dinner party for a bunch of us "older" Dramalums a few months ago. Still wondrous memories of that evening.

I'm absolutely certain I've missed reporting on some of you folks and your activities that have been a part of my busy life lately—and please accept my apologies. I still love you all!! And I HOPE I can soon be "BOB" to all of you!

Do You Remember.....

It is great to see the Dramalum Cues back up! After serving time at Knott's Berry Farm in tech, I decided for a career change. I am an English teacher for San Diego City Schools. I recently have been named Dean of the Freshman House, in addition to Department Chair for Gifted and Talented Education. I am returning to school in the fall at SDSU to work on my Master's in education.

I was married four years ago to my husband Michael, and in 2004 we had our daughter Annella Victoria. Nellie is following in my footsteps...she seems to have a flair for the dramatics! I look forward to hearing from more of you.

Rachel Homel Rice
Class of '96

A big "Hello" to Dr. T! It has been so long since I've heard anything from Whittier, but I think about Dr. T all the time.

He'll remember me as Hillary Taylor (class of '91), but it is now Hillary Branda. My husband and I just celebrated our second wedding anniversary (late bloomers!) and our first year in our new home. We now live just outside of Sugarland, about 30 or 40 miles southwest of Houston. My husband works for The University of Houston, keeping all the computers running for the Math Department, and I score the TOEFL and TOEIC exams (English as a Foreign Language, English for International Communications) from my computer at home. No kids yet, but we are hoping!

Every time I go by the Alley, I think of Dr. T and his January Theatre class. I have nothing but fond memories of it.

Hilary Branda

Keep up to date on what's happening in the department and at the Shannon Center.

See: <http://web.whittier.edu/academic/Theatre/index.html>

and

<http://www.shannoncenter.org/>

Join the Dramalum mailing list on the Shannon Center web site and get notice of when these nifty new issues of Dramalum Cues are out!

Please pass it on to anyone who might be interested.

We'd love to here from you! Please send information by e-mail to:

dramalum@ShannonCenter.org

or by snail mail to:

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Passings.....

Dear Friends,

My apologies for using this impersonal way of telling you such sad and personal news. Our friend Jane Comstock died on September 7 in Denver. I'm attaching here the obituary from the newspaper and a lovely photo of Jane-o that accompanied the article.

As some of you know, Jane was diagnosed with leukodystrophy, a rare and hideous disease a few years ago. There is no known cure for this disease that affects the muscle walls in the small arteries that provide blood flow to the brain. As Jane-o described it to me, "I am literally losing my mind." By that she meant she was losing her ability to process information - to think. It was very sad and frustrating. She moved from having live-in caretakers to being moved, by her family, to an assisted living facility in Texas near where her sister Peggy and family live. She was very unhappy in Texas, and moved back to Denver to an assisted living facility in March of this year. In July she got quite sick and was hospitalized, and when she left the hospital went to a nursing home. *Donations* can be made to:

Jane M. Comstock Memorial Fund, Denver Art Museum, Development Department, 100 W. 14th Ave. Pkwy, Denver, CO 80204

or

CADASIL Foundation, Bille Duncan-Smith, 3605 Monument Drive, Round Rock, Texas 78681

I'm hoping that we'll decide collectively we want to do something in Jane's memory at Whittier College. Perhaps we can discuss when we are together in October (those of you who can make it). If we can decide upon something (maybe Bonnie can help us structure some sort of materials endowment for Wardman Library - which would mean a lot to Jane), we can let others who can't be in Whittier for Homecoming this year know about it. And, those of you on this e-mail who are not fellow Poets, we'd welcome your ideas and suggestions, as well.

Amy Pulver

Verla (Driggers-Gruennert) Huckaby died August 11, having never regained consciousness from a car crash a few days prior. No one was in the car with her. Verla's husband, Eddie Huckaby, was with her when she died. They lived in Mina, Arkansas and had no children. I've written this to you three because I think that, among you, there is probably a fairly comprehensive contact list if you are inclined to pass along the news. Verla graduated Whittier in 1975, so just about any Dramalum from the '70s would have known her. I'm happy to say that Verla and I had only just recently (within the past two years) reconnected. We had occasional phone and e-mail chat - plus I was able to spend some time with her (having not seen her in about 30 years) when she came to visit relatives in Southern California last month. Sigh.

-Richard Scaffidi

For the Dramalum newsletter. I don't remember whether you overlapped with Sheryn or not - she was an English major, our outstanding grauate in 1990, who had started college at fifty or so, an was really a part of the whole campus. I don't remember evrything she did in the theatre department, but her Titania in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (the best Shakespeare production I've seen on this campus) was wonderful.

-Ann Kiley

(Start of quoted text-editor)

I am the son-in-law of a former student and advisee of yours, Sheryn Gray, who enrolled in the Religious Studies Ph. D program in 1990. Due to a number of circumstances, she never continued her program, but I feel confident you will rememeber her.

Last night (*August 8, 2006-editor*), Sheryn passed away after a long, brave bout with cancer. My wife and I thought you would want to know.

As you will likely recall, Sheryn possessed a keen intellect, a boundless curiosity, and great energy. This is good for me to pull back into mind after her disease-related decline.

We are in the process of making arrangements for a memorial service to be held at St. Paul's Memorial Church here in Charlottesville. If you are in town and interested in knowing the details, please don't hesitate to contact me at xxx-xxx-xxxx. (*number availalbe on request-editor*) If you know of any one else who would benefit from this information, please feel free to pass it along.

All my best,

J.J. Cromer



Whittier College
Theatre & Communication Arts Department Fall 2006 Upcoming
Events

December 5 & 6, 2006 at 7 PM
Play Directing Showcase: An Evening of Scenes
Studio Theatre

December 11, 2006 at 7 PM
Advanced Voice & Movement, Acting I, and Intro to Design/
Technology Presentations
Studio Theatre

Coming Spring 2007

March 7 – 11, 2007
Into the Woods by Stephen Sondheim
Robinson Theatre

May 2 – 6, 2007
Stop Kiss by Diana Son
Studio Theatre

May 16, 2007
Acting II, Voice & Movement, and Scenic Design Presentations
Studio Theatre