

CONNECT

UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts



Defining Journeys

Summer 2022 Season



Image: Doris Rivera, M.F.A. Thesis, di nak sagiden: how to eat with your hands and survive a baptism, exhibition view, Contemporary Arts Center Gallery, 2022.

Photo: Hiroshi Clark

Dean's Message



Dear Friends,

What a joy it has been watching CONNECT fulfill all of its promise: to connect CTSA students and faculty, staff and alums, new friends and old! This is the final time that as dean I'll be inviting you to dive into the wonderfully rich world of the arts at UCI. It's been my great privilege, over the past 35 years, to be part

of, and to help lead, the increasingly vital role the arts play at UCI and in the region. CONNECT is a vital part of that process.

As you'll see in this issue, CTSA is bursting with creative energy. The image from the New Swan on the cover says so much about how we bring people together with imagination and verve. Now that we are fully back in our theaters, galleries, studios, and shops, we're ready again to amaze you with the quality — and the sheer quantity — of what we do. Across the spectrum of the arts, from opera to Shakespeare . . . to *American Idol*, we do it all. One very happy note you'll find here and one sad one: It's a great pleasure to add my thanks to Mary Gilly and John Graham (and Rally!) for their long-term support of the arts, and very sad to report the retirement of the amazing Maestro Stephen Tucker, who has been such an inspiration to the UCI Symphony Orchestra. We wish Stephen all the best in new conducting opportunities.

The arts are a year-round activity, so please have a look at what summer fare might strike your fancy. We'll be delighted to see you.

And I want to thank you for your awareness of the importance of the arts to our community and of the amazing talent you'll find at CTSA.

Stephen Barker, Ph.D.
Dean



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CONNECT

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New Swan Theater, *A Winter's Tale*, 2018, photo by Paul R. Kennedy

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The Long Wait

In March 2020, UCI Opera was set to perform the West Coast premiere of Lori Laitman's 3-act opera, *The Scarlet Letter*, when the pandemic halted all preparations. "We actually thought everything would be better in a month and that perhaps we could still present the opera," said Darryl Taylor, professor of music and head of the vocal arts program. "This two-year wait to return to the Irvine Barclay Theatre is all the more poignant for us." The team presented *The Impresario*, a comic opera by W.A. Mozart, over Mother's Day weekend. Set in early 1960s New York City, the story followed a TV station solely devoted to broadcasting opera and their two dueling divas who argued over status and pay.



Left to right: Sean Agahee, Citlali Garcia, Abigail Mesel, Malcolm McGee

Photo: Paul R. Kennedy

IN RETROSPECT



Shakespeare, Reunited

By Christine Byrd

*This, this! No more, you gods! Your present kindness
Makes my past miseries sports.*

– *Pericles*

Pericles' joy over being reunited with his family after years apart may resonate with actors and audiences when *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* and *The Comedy of Errors* (note the erroneous r's) is performed at UCI's New Swan Shakespeare Festival this summer after two years that the theater was dark due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This summer we have a theme of families and loved ones lost, searched for and reunited," says New Swan founding artistic director Eli Simon, a Chancellor's Professor of Drama. "It's a big season to return for our 10th anniversary. We can feel the great energy from our company of artists and from the community that supports us."

Ten years ago, when UCI hosted its first New Swan Shakespeare Festival, Simon had no idea how it would be received. A cast and crew of faculty, alumni and students produced *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merchant of Venice* with just a dozen performances on the docket. Tickets sold out immediately.

Image: New Swan Shakespeare Festival presented Romeo and Juliet, 2014.

Photo: Paul R. Kennedy

"We had this crazy idea to build a portable, outdoor, mini-Elizabethan theater, but I didn't know that it would take off the way that it did. That was a matter of discovery," says Simon. "It immediately seemed to fill some kind of need the community had."

The festival has been expanding annually ever since, save for the pandemic's interruption, and

"We can feel the
great energy from our
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supports us."

continuing to sell out. In its most recent season, more than 5,500 guests visited the iconic theater-in-the-round over the course of 10 weeks and 30 performances.

"The quality of the acting, combined with the intimacy of the stage and the authenticity of the storytelling, I think make it the best way to see Shakespeare,"

says Shakespeare scholar Julia Lupton, professor of English and co-director of the New Swan Shakespeare Center.

The New Swan

The centerpiece of the festival is the New Swan Theater itself. Designed and built at UCI, the 15-ton wood and metal theater-in-the-round combines the best of open-air Shakespeare in the Park with the allure of London's historic Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare's plays were originally performed in the early 1600s.

Each spring, the New Swan Theater is moved from storage and assembled on the edge of Aldrich Park. Seating just 135 guests – some of whom literally sit on the edge of the circular stage – the theater is so intimate that, according to Simon, audiences can sense the actors' thoughts.

"The theater has such a personality of its own," says associate artistic director Beth Lopes, M.F.A. '11. "When we work on the scenic design, we have to consider the theater as a character in the plays."

Scenic, lighting, sound and costume designs are among the many unique elements that help transport the New Swan audience into Shakespeare's stories – whether they're set in the Wild Wild West or a 1950s prom. Founding company members costume designer Kathryn Wilson, M.F.A. '07 and lighting designer Karyn Lawrence, M.F.A. '12 are among the artists who have worked at New Swan year after year.

"Lighting is a big feature in the stage design. We always begin with the sun setting, and by the time it's over, the stars and moon are out, and the programmed lights are doing their magic," says Lupton. "In the theater, you'll see the natural lights fading and the stage lights coming on and the illusion is growing, and the sense of the



Image: New Swan's mini-Elizabethan theater provides an intimate experience for the audience. As You Like It, 2016

Photo: Paul R. Kennedy

cosmos is growing."

While casting for the New Swan has grown more competitive as the festival has gained acclaim, many of the cast and crew are UCI alumni who return year after year.

"We meet up every year, and some people are the same, and some are changed, and we're all outside for rehearsals and performances," says Lopes, who directs one of the plays each year. "It feels a bit like going into the woods in Shakespeare's Arden."

Regular New Swan theatergoers even recognize the Aldrich Park owl, dubbed



“The theater has such a personality of its own. When we work on the scenic design, we have to consider the theater as a character in the plays.”

Hamlet, who often swoops over the theater at dusk. The festival has grown an almost mystical quality over the years.

“New Swan is a community, a meeting place, where we sit around the campfire and share amazing stories,” says Simon. “This coming together live, under the stars, and reveling in the brilliance of the Bard has a vital place in our community – never more so than now.”

The Bard Today

Over the years, the New Swan Festival’s outreach events and educational programming have expanded thanks to the New Swan Shakespeare Center, a joint initiative of CTSA and the School of Humanities, co-directed by Simon and Lupton.

The center sponsors year-round events related to Shakespeare but undeniably kicks into high gear with the festival season. Among the highlights of the summer are First Folio Friday, in conjunction with the UCI Libraries, where visitors learn about the historic collection of Shakespeare's plays published shortly after his death, of which only 240 copies exist. They can then see UCI's copy of the rare book. An educators day invites teachers to learn and share methods for introducing the Bard to students. For those who want to dive deeper into the texts, the center offers an online reading group that meets weekly and a series of talks by notable scholars. All events are free and open to the public.

"Shakespeare wrote plays that address the human condition and so they are always relevant," says Simon. "We're the same creatures, dealing with the same psychological, political, and social issues that Shakespeare's contemporaries were dealing with."

Many of the events focus on highlighting Shakespeare's approachability and relevance, even four centuries after his plays were first performed. In planning the performances and programming, Lupton and Simon assume that half the audience every season is seeing Shakespeare performed live for their first time. Yet the New Swan's audience has changed with the festival over the last decade, too.

"Our audiences have certainly evolved," says Lupton. "We can stage a play like *Pericles*, which is a little bit more obscure, because people trust us to occasionally expose them to less famous great works."

Reunited at Last

Simon and Lopes are taking a calculated risk this season with *Pericles*, which is not just a lesser-known Shakespearean

play but widely believed to be written in part by another playwright, George Wilkins. This liberates the directors and actors, Lupton notes, because most of the audience will come to the theater without any expectations as to how the play should be performed.

Lopes, who is directing *Pericles*, loves its "wild" side: three shipwrecks, pirates and assassins all intermixed in a plot that travels across half a dozen ancient cities. It also touches on themes that remain relevant today, including sex trafficking and refugees. But at its core, it's a heartfelt journey of one man who

"Shakespeare wrote plays that address the human condition and so they are always relevant."

falls in love, gets married, becomes a father, and then loses it all – or so it seems.

"I love the play *Pericles* and think it's a hidden gem, and it resonates with everything we've been through the last couple years," says Lupton. "Shakespeare was experimenting with themes that would become central to some of his great late plays."

In contrast to the drama of *Pericles*, *The Comedy of Errors* is one of Shakespeare's well-known comedies and was performed at the festival's inaugural season in 2012. Yet both share a theme of families separated and then reunited – something especially poignant this year.

"Eli and I are always thinking about our artists, our audiences, and what kind of stories we're telling," says Lopes.

“That has never been more true than now. Ultimately, both of these shows are about families finding each other. Which just feels so resonant right now, as we’ve been apart from our families for so long.”

Night of Mirth

In this season’s *The Comedy of Errors*, another shipwreck separates two sets of twins who, in Simon’s staging, were meant to be a boy band in the 1970s. An original score written by UCI’s head of sound design Mike Hooker, incorporates disco and funk.

“Mike has melded the sounds of the ’70s into a beautiful fusion that reunites the boy band at the end of the play,” says Simon.

“It’s Shakespeare’s funniest play. A straight-up farce,” says Simon. “We all need a chance to laugh, and have an evening of mirth in the theater.”

Festival organizers expect the entire New Swan family of patrons and performers to feel a renewed connection to Shakespeare’s stories of families separated and reunited after two years of other kinds of separation caused by the pandemic.

“We relish every opportunity we get to dive headfirst into the Bard’s words, plots, and characters,” says Simon. “We have been sustained and nurtured by *Pericles* and *The Comedy of Errors*; pouring our creative souls into these works has given us reason to hope for better days ahead. We can’t wait to share these two amazing plays with our New Swan friends and supporters.”

To learn more about the New Swan Shakespeare Festival’s 10th anniversary season and to buy tickets, visit www.newswanshakespeare.com.

Image: One of the many magical summer nights at New Swan. As You Like It, 2016.

Photo: Paul R. Kennedy



The Maestro Has Left the Building

*Dr. Stephen Tucker,
22-year music director
for the UCI Symphony
Orchestra, reflects on his
time at CTSA*

By Matt Coker

Stephen Tucker's accomplishments would not only fill the orchestra pit but the entire Hollywood Bowl. The professor and Robert and Marjorie Rawlins Chair of Music teaches conducting, orchestration and analysis. He conducts for the campus opera, dance performances and, as its longtime director, the UCI Symphony Orchestra.

He has served as music director of Riverside Lyric Opera Company, frequently appeared with the El Dorado Opera Company in Santa Clarita, and conducted musical theater and opera at UCLA as a doctoral student. He has guest conducted the Pacific Symphony, Long Beach Symphony and Los Angeles Master Chorale. His baton has also guided musicians in Taiwan, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, and his native Jamaica.

Tucker's career highlights include Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center debut, where he conducted Beethoven's Choral Fantasy and Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand, and his sharing of the podium in performance with his identical twin brother before Paul Tucker retired as

Image: Dr. Stephen Tucker conducts the UCI Symphony Orchestra.

Photo: Paul R. Kennedy



the director of Choral Activities at the University of Kansas in 2020.

Changing Lives

As Maestro Stephen Tucker prepares to retire after a remarkable 22-year career at UCI, he ticks off another achievement he would rank “way up at the top” with others cited above: Changing the lives of Santa Ana schoolchildren.

“I don’t think there’s any greater accomplishment than inspiring young people in whichever way you can to better themselves,” he says while relaxing in the Department of Music chair’s office. “This is not about music. This is about making people’s lives better and making the students want to achieve more.”

Tucker was invited to a November 2012 benefit concert at Santa Ana High School’s Bill Medley Auditorium, where the headliners – trumpeter Arturo Sandoval and percussionist Sheila E. – were joined onstage by stringed instrument players from the school’s orchestra. Afterward, Tucker gave his business card to one of the conductors with instructions to call him if the program ever needed his help.

Shortly thereafter, Claire Trevor School of the Arts’ then new Director of Outreach Megan Belmonte met with Tucker to pitch having the UCI Symphony Orchestra do much more with the Orange County community.

“I looked at her very skeptically because I’d had people in that position say that before to me,” the maestro says. “I would say I want to take the orchestra to some high school, and they would do nothing. So I said to Megan that I would like to take the orchestra to three high schools, but Santa Ana must be one. I told her if we don’t get Santa Ana, we won’t go to any high school.”

Belmonte called Tucker a little while after that to say she could book only two high schools.

“I’m listening and waiting for the disappointing news,” Maestro Tucker recalls. “She said, ‘One is Huntington Beach,’ and I said, ‘They don’t really need us, but you did your job.’”

And more, because the second school was ... cue the timpani ... Santa Ana High School. But the maestro’s joy as

“I don’t think there’s any greater accomplishment than inspiring young people in whichever way you can to better themselves.”



his entire orchestra was being bused to the campus near downtown Santa Ana was somewhat deflated upon taking the stage. “There were only about five students in the auditorium,” he says. “But we played.”

Afterward, the high school’s two conductors were invited to come to UCI for a meeting with Belmonte and Tucker. “We are going to adopt you,” the maestro informed his guests – to puzzled looks. “I don’t know what adopting looks like,” he continues, “but I know when you adopt a child, you have to feed it.”

The maestro was informed by schoolteachers that many Santa Ana students would not be going on to college and that most would eventually leave the campus to stay home to help support their families. Sure enough, the first time he met with a group of young musicians and asked how many were

planning to go to college, no hand was raised.

“We wanted to motivate them through music and for them to visit the campus of UCI to see what goes on here,” the maestro says. “We tried to get them interested in going from high school to college. We became successful so quickly.”

By the second year, a few hands went up, and each year after that, the number of hands increased. Not all of those college-bound students continued in music, but some have gotten

Image: Dr. Tucker (front and center) leads the Santa Ana High Orchestra and the UCI Symphony Orchestra in a combined concert held at Bill Medley Auditorium on April 12, 2022.

Photo: Victor de los Santos



scholarships to prestigious universities, and a few have even landed in UCI Symphony Orchestra chairs.

The relationship with Santa Ana High School has resulted in students attending master classes led by Maestro Tucker, being coached by UCI orchestra players, and sitting in on rehearsals. It all culminates in a combined performance by the UCI and Santa Ana High orchestras, the most recent having been on April 12 in Bill Medley Auditorium.

Cherished Memories

Taking a brief break from preparations for the May 27 UCI Symphony Orchestra Spring 2022 performance in Irvine Barclay Theatre, the maestro was flooded with cherished memories, including weekend retreats in the mountains at the beginning of school years so university musicians could bond with one another.

“They will come back from the retreat and say, ‘I have never been this tired. Boy, that was good. That was really good.’ It’s because they also got a chance to get to know each other, which is something that does not happen in the orchestra normally,” Tucker says.

“The orchestra is at least 50% non-music majors. So they could go the whole year and not know each other. We started the retreat as a community builder and to help the orchestra get started and up to speed quickly. I certainly hope the concept of building community is retained after I leave. That would be an outstanding thing.”

He says he will also never forget the lifelong friendships forged with the music program’s generous benefactors. Their support, coupled with his grit, helped change Irvine Barclay Theatre from a ghost town during his earliest performances to standing room only today.

“I’ll miss the donors who supported us,” says the maestro. “I mean, there are people who just want to see the orchestra go forward and succeed. They put money in even if all they want is to be able to see us perform. Or some would say, ‘I saw an article on a project you are doing. Kudos! Go for it!’ You know, these are the people who you can’t replace in your life. You will always remember them.”

“I’ll miss the donors who supported us ... You know, these are the people who you can’t replace in your life. You will always remember them.”

Speaking of remembrances, Tucker mentioning, “I will always miss the orchestra,” is a reference to UCI’s, not Santa Ana High’s, because he has made it clear that while he soon will be retired from the university, “I am not giving up on the Santa Ana project. They know. I have told them in Zoom meetings, and I have told them in person. I am committed to it. They can put me on the schedule any time to come in and work.”

Only recently, because Maestro Tucker is hearing it from so many people, did he realize how many lives he impacted and how vital the orchestra is.

“People across campus who I didn’t even know or had not been paying attention to are pointing out how significant this organization is to the general university and the community at large. So it is now that I am becoming more aware of the significance of this group. One thing I want my colleagues in music and students past, present, and future to know is how important they are in the community and how they should

take it as seriously as I tried to do in making this a continuing, life-changing organization in Orange County.”

To learn more about Dr. Stephen Tucker and the UCI Symphony Orchestra, visit the Department of Music website at music.arts.uci.edu. Dr. Tucker will retire on June 30, 2022.



Image: Dr. Tucker leads the symphony at the investiture of Chancellor Howard Gillman in 2015.

Photo: Steve Zylus



Lighting design: Jacqueline Malenke
Costume design: Natalie Oga
Photo: Skye Schmidt

Explorations in Dance

Department of Dance students returned to the Claire Trevor Theatre stage April 14-16, 2022, to present a program of original new works for *Dance Escape*. This annual graduate student showcase featured nine premieres and over 50 dancers. “Our M.F.A. candidates in dance choreographed pieces from ballet to modern while focusing on social justice issues,” said Dr. Kelli Sharp, assistant professor of dance science and the show’s artistic director. “The show presented a wide spectrum of explorations and interdisciplinary collaborations representing each choreographer’s developing voice.”

Pictured is “Wildflower,” a piece choreographed by Lisa Allin, M.F.A. candidate in dance, in collaboration with her dancers. Bella Pepke, an M.F.A. candidate in music, cello, performed the music. The production was a joint effort with the Department of Drama design and stage management programs, who worked together to bring the choreographers’ vision to fruition.



‘We Need More’ of Taylor Fagins



The UCI Drama alum shares more about his journey to become an American idol

By Christine Byrd

It's nearly 10 p.m. on the third straight day of filming, and Taylor Fagins, '17 is the final contestant to audition for *American Idol's* celebrity judges.

He sits down at a grand piano — an instrument he plays but never for an audience — and sings the piece that earned him the 2020 American Songwriters Award. When he finishes 4 1/2 minutes later, Fagins tells the judges he's shaking.

"Me, too," says four-time Grammy winner Lionel Richie. "That was very powerful, and I'm very proud of you."

Then, in front of 5 million television viewers, Richie, Katy Perry, and Luke Bryan unanimously vote to give Fagins a "golden ticket" that sends him to the next round of auditions in Hollywood.

Creating Stories

Fagins reveled in creative talent while he grew up in La Palma, just 25 miles from UCI. He started singing at age 9, decided to become an actor in his teens, then began writing songs in high school to cope with his parents' divorce.

Although Fagins wanted to study musical theater at UCI, wires got crossed and he ended up auditioning for vocal arts. As he began to sing "Ave Maria," it dawned on him that this was not actually the way to get into the musical theater department, and he had no interest in becoming an opera singer. After he was admitted to UCI based on his academic standing, he made his way to the drama department, which includes musical theater.

"My education at UCI really set the foundation for being an artist who

tries everything, who doesn't say no; who just creates, creates, creates," says Fagins, who now lives and works in New York City.

In the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, Fagins found creative outlets around every corner. He and a friend started a show choir at UCI, and later he collaborated with other students to write and perform *Our Life: The Black Youth Stories Project* in the Experimental Media Performance Lab (xMPL).

"I'd rather spend my life creating the stories that should exist than being in the ones others created."

"Collaborators are everywhere at UCI, and that goes beyond the arts campus," says Fagins. "UCI is a research school, so when people want to do something, they'll do it. When you want to make something, you make it. When you have something to say, you say it."

His senior year, Fagins performed in UCI's production of *Parade*, the Tony Award-winning musical that explores anti-Semitism and racism in the American South.

"The minute he opens his mouth, he only sings with truth, which is what you're really looking for in a musical theater actor," says Myrona DeLaney, head of music theater at UCI, who directed the musical. "He was brilliant in this critical role in *Parade*."

Image (opposite): Taylor Fagins during his audition for *American Idol Season 20* on ABC.

Photo: Eric McCandless/ABC

ALUMNI





Image: Fagins performs his original song “we need more” during the American Idol season 20 auditions for judges Luke Bryan, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

Photo: Eric McCandless/ABC

But when Fagins was rehearsing a show written by New York University graduate students while he was participating in UCI’s New York satellite program, he had an epiphany.

“I realized, wow, I could write this whole musical,” he remembers. “Why don’t I just do that, because there are certain stories that I want to see on stage and I want to see exist in the world. I’d rather spend my life creating the stories that should exist than being in the ones others created.”

Voice of the Unheard

A year after he graduated, Fagins moved to New York City to continue writing, singing and acting. In 2019, he crossed the country again to join the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as an ensemble member in a 10-month run of *Hairspray*. While reminded of his

love for performing during that time, he also started sharing his music and plays with the cast and crew. Their reaction was a revelation.

“Being at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival gave me that confidence that I could really pursue writing as a career,” he says. “I realized I’m actually a good writer.”

The next year, one of his plays was performed online by the Rubicon Theater in Ventura, California.

Then, in May 2020, two days after a Minneapolis police officer murdered George Floyd, Fagins woke up, inspired to share his heartbreak through song. Written in a whirlwind half hour, “we need more” addresses the violence against young Black men and women like Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and Fagins’ fears for his own

younger brother and sister.

He posted it online that morning, and within hours, Fagins had an offer to produce a more polished version of the song, which attracted tens of thousands of views on social media. On a whim, he entered American Songwriter 2020, a nationwide contest, and won \$10,000 and a new guitar.

“That made me feel like my writing is pretty important and people are interested in what I have to say,” Fagins recalls. “I decided to be the type of writer who innovates, and stick to my life goal of writing the stories that are unseen, giving stage to the voices that are unheard.”

Fagins had just doubled down on that commitment by enrolling in graduate school at the Berklee College of Music’s New York campus when an *American Idol* producer called him.

Becoming an Idol

The producer just knew that the judges would be touched by Fagins’ song. After an initial screening over Zoom, Fagins was sent to Los Angeles with the first group of contestants to audition for the show’s 20th season. When he arrived, the producers threw a curveball: he couldn’t just sing for the judges, he needed to play his own piano accompaniment, something he had only ever done while writing music in his apartment.

It was worth it for the stunning visual of Fagins, dressed casually in a black polo, playing a white grand piano before the panel of celebrity judges for the audition.

“For me sitting at the piano, it was like everything stopped for a minute and I said ‘this is for you,’” he remembers. “I remind myself who this is for – God,

Image: Fagins performs during the Hollywood Week: Genre Challenge.

Photo: Eric McCandless/ABC



my mom, my little brother and sister and all the Black people who have died unfairly.”

Despite all the positive reinforcement over the years deep down, Fagins still felt insecure about his writing, so the glowing reviews from all three judges nearly brought him to tears.

“Part of me still felt like telling my story wasn’t worth the effort, but hearing Lionel Richie validate the space I take up in the world with my art – hearing him tell me to keep writing – it was breathtaking and inspiring.”

“He’s naturally gifted. His talent remains raw and open. He’s such a fine representative of what training in the arts can do for a student at UCI.”

Gaining Confidence

During Hollywood Week, about 100 contestants go through three rounds of competition. Fagins sang “Two” by Sleeping at Last, a love song that resonated with him and again led to positive reviews from the judges about his singing voice. Later in the week, when it came time to sing a duet with Bruno Mars’ “Locked Out of Heaven,” he felt his luck running out, and he was cut.

“The thing I take away from *American Idol* is confidence,” says Fagins. “I spent my whole life being afraid to share my voice with people, but now I think I can be honest with the world and people will understand.”

Fagins’ phone has been ringing off the hook since the show aired – sometimes with fans he’s never met

but also with real opportunities. He’s had meetings with Fremantle, the production company for *American Idol* and *America’s Got Talent*, and Araca Group, the production company behind *Urinetown* and *Wicked*.

In the spring, Fagins taught UCI drama students his process for songwriting, as well as the lessons learned from *Idol*, as an instructor for the New York satellite program – the same one he attended not too long ago that inspired him to become a writer.

“He’s naturally gifted. His talent remains raw and open,” says DeLaney. “When you look at artists like Lin-Manuel Miranda and others today, they do everything. There’s no reason for Taylor to close doors at this point, when he can just keep opening more.

“He’s such a fine representative of what training in the arts can do for a student at UCI. Taylor could explore his multiple areas of interest through our program,” she adds. “And now he is bringing that exploration to the world, through his music and through his lyrics.”

As he finishes up his master’s in creative technology from Berklee this summer, Fagins is keeping the door open for new opportunities in whatever form they come – and he’ll find an audience eagerly awaiting him.

As Richie said at Fagins’ audition: “I want to hear what his plays are like. I want to hear what his movies are like. This kid here is something special.”

With luck, we’ll all hear more from him very soon.

Follow Fagins’ journey on Instagram
[@taylorfagins](#)

Class Notes



Rachel Fine (Music, '94) Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills and member of the Dean's Arts Board of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, received a 2022 Lauds & Laurels award during a ceremony hosted by UCI Alumni on May 26. In its 51st year, Lauds & Laurels is UCI's oldest campus tradition recognizing outstanding individuals for their service to the community, professional excellence and campus involvement.

Marc Spaulding (M.F.A. '21) joined the Department of Dance at Park University in Pittsburgh, PA, as a visiting assistant professor in August 2022. "Students that take my class should come into the space with an open mind," said Spaulding. "They should be prepared to explore, move and create. I love moving with the dancers in my class."

Marlaina Alexis Owens (M.F.A. '19) recently performed the role of Anastasio in the Long Beach Opera's production of *Giustino* by Handel and in the ensemble for *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* by Terrance Blanchard, presented at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Owens will also continue her residency as a Chrisman Studio Artist Program for Opera Santa Barbara. The program aims to provide training and performance opportunities to a diverse group of promising young artists based in California. Artists are selected based on their career potential in performance and other areas of the performing arts industry.



Anna Ialeggio (M.F.A. '19) is an Ithaca-based interdisciplinary artist, performer, and wilderness guide originally from Vermont. They joined Wells College in New York as an Assistant Professor of Studio Art. "I believe that the role of the arts within a liberal arts education is to synthesize, interrelate and compassionately inhabit a wild biodiversity of ideas," said Ialeggio. "I share art-making as an inherently interdisciplinary practice. I love collaborating across disciplines and methodologies!"

Follow CTSA on social media (@ctsa_ucirvine) during August for our annual alumni appreciation month with various alumni profiles.

For UCI Alumni resources, visit engage.alumni.uci.edu

Are you an Arts Alum? Learn ways to stay connected at www.arts.uci.edu/alumni. Questions or stories? Contact artsalumni@uci.edu.

A photograph of Mary Gilly and John Graham sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. John is on the left, wearing a grey blazer and dark trousers. Mary is on the right, wearing a blue blazer and grey trousers. A large black dog with a striped tie is sitting in front of them. The background shows a building with large windows and greenery.

Q&A

 with **Mary Gilly & John Graham**

Mary Gilly and her husband, John Graham, professors emeriti of marketing, are passionate about theater and the dramatic arts. They have been loyal supporters of the New Swan Shakespeare Festival since its founding in 2012. They became charter members of the Claire Trevor Society in 2019 and now serve on the society's leadership committee. In addition to decades of academic service to UCI, the couple provide philanthropic support to the Paul Merage School of Business, the Center for Citizen Peacebuilding and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

How did your interest in theater begin?

MG: Growing up in Dallas, I would go to the State Fair every year and see the musical in the music hall. I was also in choir, but I really preferred being in the audience.

JG: And the first time she came out to visit me in Los Angeles, we had tickets to see *Evita*. And then there's Mary's whole stage mom thing.

To learn more about ways to support CTSA, contact Sarah Strozza, Director of Development, at 949-824-0629 or ssrozza@uci.edu.

Stage mom thing?

MG: Eli [Simon, director of the New Swan Shakespeare Festival] is a neighbor, and we see each other walking our dogs. We have this ridiculously big furry black dog, Rally, and Eli said for years that if we ever do *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Rally would be perfect for the role of Crab. So our dog appeared in 26 performances at the New Swan in 2019, and I was a stage mom every night. I took him to rehearsals and enjoyed seeing “behind the curtain.” He was very successful, and one night when he wasn’t in the curtain call, the crowd started chanting “Dog! Dog!”

How have arts at UCI and in Orange County changed since you came to UCI in the early 1980s?

MG: It was frustrating when we first moved, because we went to LA to see musical theater, but you’d get out at 11 p.m., and then you have to take the freeway home. When Segerstrom Center for the Arts opened, that was a life changer, and we got season tickets to the Broadway series from day one. When our kids were little, that was our date night with other adults. When the kids got older, we took them, too, and they got hooked. We’ve seen the quality of UCI productions improve over the years, and we like to hear about the students who graduate and end up on Broadway.

Why do you think it’s important for faculty to support the university philanthropically and the arts, in particular?

MG: When you take a position at the University of California, you’re making a statement of the importance of high-quality public education and the social mobility it offers to California residents and others. To me, donating is just an extension of that. I see the impact the university has on people’s lives and the community.

JG: In marketing, which is our subject area, creativity and imagination are essential. We know from studies that arts stimulate creativity and imagination. So on a campus where we’re trying to create knowledge, everybody – all faculty, and the business community – should be supporting the arts.

Why is it important to you to support the New Swan Shakespeare Festival?

MG: It’s just such a unique asset of UCI. Having this small, intimate, outdoor theater is so special and watching creative takes on Shakespeare under the stars is wonderful. It attracts both the campus community and people from off campus.

JG: Shakespeare was the innovator in telling stories, and that’s so important culturally and in business and politics – everybody’s trying to get their stories straight. Shakespeare really teaches you about that very important aspect of life.



Artful Summers

*Summer Academies in the Arts offer college
and career preparatory programs*

By Christine Byrd



Photo: XXXX

Mafer Reyes had been dancing at private studios and ballet academies since she was 5 years old. But when it came time to think about college, she realized she had no idea what to expect from studying dance at a university.

Browsing online during her junior year of high school, Reyes discovered the UCI Summer Academies in the Arts, which offer intensive two- and three-week programs in art, dance, drama and music geared toward students who are serious about pursuing their art professionally or in college. With the encouragement of her high school dance teacher, Reyes applied and earned scholarships to the Summer Academies' dance program.

"The best part was that I got an inside look at what a college-level dance program is like and met other students who also wanted to study dance in college," says Reyes. "It's a very good way of deciding if you want to go to college as a dance major."

College and Career-ready

Since 2012, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts has offered intensive, full-day programming in art, dance, drama and music through its Summer Academies. Over the years, the program has narrowed the ages it serves to focus exclusively on high school and college students who want to explore the university-level arts experience while strengthening their résumés and college applications.

"As we grew, year after year, more students were coming to us really looking to be pushed artistically," says Kaysie José '11 outreach programs manager, who managed the program for six years. "They wanted something next-level."

Image (opposite): Dancer and Summer Academies in the Arts alumna Mafer Reyes strikes a pose in front of the UCI water tower.

Photo: Emily Zheng

The 2022 Summer Academies feature intensives in chamber music, digital music production, drawing and painting, digital photography, musical theater, and conservatory dance. In addition to technical training in each art form the program provides practical advice and information about pursuing art in college or professionally.

"We're keeping the focus on career and college readiness, including audition preparation and résumé building."

"We're keeping the focus on career and college readiness, including audition preparation and résumé building – things that UCI is uniquely positioned to provide," says Megan Belmonte, director of outreach programs in CTSA.

The Summer Academies are designed to closely replicate the undergraduate arts student experience at UCI: classes take place in on-campus studios with 10 to 20 students in each course, and instructors include both arts faculty and M.F.A. students. The sessions include panels of alumni and current students to share their experiences in college and beyond.

While the Summer Academies primarily draw students from Orange, Los Angeles, and northern San Diego counties, some have traveled from across the country or all the way from Shanghai and Costa Rica to attend. To ensure students are placed in the



appropriate class level, beginning to advanced, participants submit samples or videos of their work when they apply.

All of the intensives culminate with a student showcase, whether that's a gallery showing for visual artists or a performance on a CTSA stage with costumes, lighting and sound.

"For us, it's about making sure they walk away more prepared for their future than when they came in," says José. "They are building connections,

networking, and getting a better sense of the college experience and the professional arts world."

Support for Young Artists

To ensure that financial burdens don't prevent promising young artists from participating, the Summer Academies offers full and partial scholarships as well as financial aid based on household income and family size.

"It's critically important to provide these opportunities, so we make sure



that no one is unable to participate because they cannot afford it,” says José.

The scholarships cover lunch at the campus dining halls and include transportation to and from the camp every day – additions based on feedback from students and families about the barriers to participation they were facing.

“We listen to and learn from our community,” says Belmonte. “The Summer Academies create connections

and opportunities that extend well beyond several weeks of summer. We enjoy keeping in touch with our students and seeing how they progress on their artistic and academic journeys.”

Reyes is one of the students who received a scholarship to attend the program. And, like a number of other Summer Academies students, she went on to enroll as an undergraduate at UCI, where she also received a generous financial aid package.

“I learned about UCI and fell in love with the campus and the dance studios that summer,” says Reyes, who is now a second-year dance major at UCI.

In addition to gaining insight into what ballet, jazz and modern dance classes are like at the university level,

“For us, it’s about making sure they walk away more prepared for their future than when they came in.”

Reyes discovered a whole new world of choreography principles through the Summer Academies.

“They taught about energy and using the space around you – so many things I didn’t know about from my conservative ballet school,” says Reyes. “I learned so many concepts that expanded my knowledge and my love for dance in a new way.”

Image: Students develop their drawing and painting skills in a variety of media at Summer Academies in the Arts.

Photo: Will Tee Yang



***Image:** Students collaborate while preparing for college and professional auditions in the Chamber Music intensive.*

Photo: Will Tee Yang

Belmonte and José aim to give exactly this kind of experience to the Summer Academies students across all of the programs. Students finish their intensives with both tangible takeaways, like an updated résumé, and intangible benefits, like becoming a more well-rounded artist.

“Maybe a student has only ever experienced drawing, and we’re able to expand their artistic vision in the summer,” says Belmonte. “It’s about expanding their artistry and perhaps even finding a love for something they didn’t necessarily expect.”

For other young artists like herself considering the Summer Academies, Reyes offers this advice: “You should do it, period.”



To learn more about the UCI Summer Academies in the Arts and other outreach programs, visit www.arts.uci.edu/outreach.

SUMMER 2022



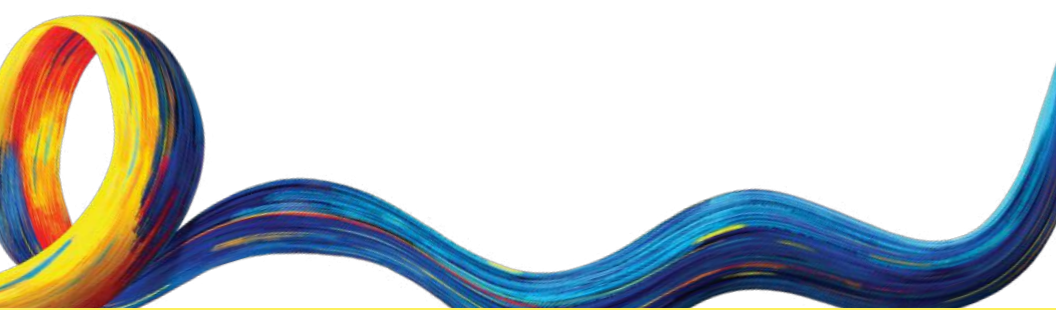
Photo: Rose Eichenbaum

SEASON EVENTS

2021-22 Season-At-A-Glance

Summer 2022

Through Aug. 27	Vera Molnár: <i>Variations</i>	BEALL
June 21-July 8	Summer Academies Dance: Conservatory Dance Advanced Pre-College Intensive	AC
June 21-July 1	Summer Academies Dance: Conservatory Dance Beginner/Intermediate	AC
June 27-July 8	Summer Academies Music: Digital Music Production	AC
July 8-Sept. 3	10th Anniversary New Swan Shakespeare Festival <i>Pericles, Prince of Tyre</i> , directed by Beth Lopes <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> , directed by Eli Simon	New Swan
July 15	Celebrate New Swan Gala	IBT
July 18-July 29	Summer Academies Art: Drawing/Painting Beginner	AC
July 18-July 29	Summer Academies Art: Drawing/Painting Advanced	AC
July 18-July 29	Summer Academies Art: Digital Photography	AC
July 18-July 29	Summer Academies Drama: Musical Theatre Beginner/Intermediate	AC
July 18-July 29	Summer Academies Drama: Musical Theatre Advanced/Pre-College/Pre-Professional	AC
July 18-July 29	Summer Academies Music: Chamber Music	AC



Venues

AMP	Arts Plaza Amphitheatre	R	Room Gallery
AC	Arts Campus	ONLINE	Live or recorded event presented online
BC	Beall Center for Art + Technology	SAΔ	City of Santa Ana
CAC	Contemporary Arts Center	SCΔ	UCI Student Center
CTT	Claire Trevor Theatre	UAG	University Art Gallery
IBTΔ	Irvine Barclay Theatre	WSH	Winifred Smith Hall
LTΔ	Little Theatre/ Humanities Hall	xMPL	Experimental Media Performance Lab
MM	Music and Media Building	VARIOUS	Multiple venues.
NS	New Swan Theater		Check website for specifics.
RCT	Robert Cohen Theatre		

Δ Venue not on CTSA campus. Consult CTSA website maps: www.arts.uci.edu/directions

Dates, venues, titles are subject to change.

Please check our online events calendar (www.arts.uci.edu/calendar) for the most current information.

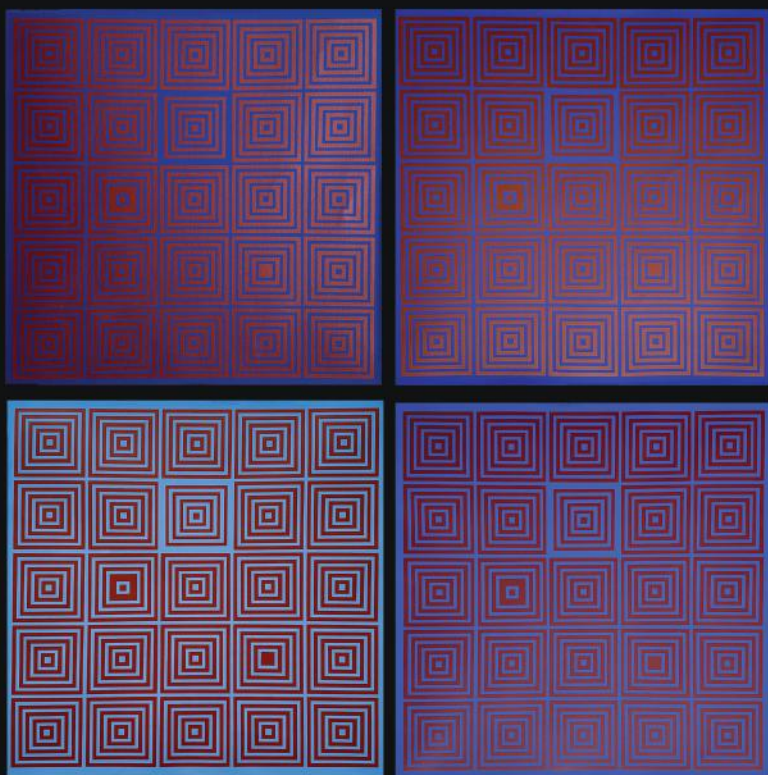
* indicates free event / ● indicates tentative shuttle availability.

VERA MOLNÁR

VARIATIONS

APRIL 2, 2022 - AUGUST 27, 2022

CURATED BY DAVID FAMILIAN



"1% DE DESORDRE - BLEU + ROUGE" 1-4

BEALL

Donald R. and Joan F. Beall
Center for Art + Technology
University of California, Irvine

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712 ARTS PLAZA
IRVINE, CA 92697
HOURS: MONDAY-SATURDAY, 12-6PM
FREE ADMISSION
BEALLCENTER.UCI.EDU





Recognizing an Art Pioneer: Vera Molnár



Image: The Beall Center for Art + Technology hosted the opening reception for Vera Molnár: Variations on April 2. Molnár is one of the pioneers of computational art, having created her first computer drawings in 1968 by using an IBM machine and punch cards. Variations includes 80 works by the 98-year-old artist and is the largest solo show of her work ever presented in the United States. Here, the Associate Dean, Research and Innovation, Jesse Colin Jackson, speaks to a patron during the opening. The exhibition will be on view through Saturday, Aug. 27, 2022.

Summer 2022 Events

The Summer Academies in the Arts are college and career preparatory intensives in Art, Dance, Drama, and Music focused on practical and technical skill development for experienced high school and college arts students on campus.

ART



July 18-July 29, 2022

Drawing/Painting – Beginner/Intermediate
Drawing/Painting – Advanced

Ages 14-19
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$1,299

Take your skills to the next level! Learn advanced studio techniques and complete portfolio-ready artwork. Materials included.

Digital Photography

Ages 14-19
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$1,299

From memory card to print! Develop a holistic approach to producing stunning digital photos. No previous experience required. Bring your camera, all other materials included.

DANCE



June 21-July 1, 2022

Conservatory Dance – Beginner/Intermediate

Ages 13-21
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$1,099

Build your repertoire! Strengthen technical base focused on ballet, modern, jazz and hip-hop, as well as various other in-studio and classroom-based topics in dance.

June 21-July 8, 2022

**Conservatory Dance – Advanced/
Pre-College/Pre-Professional**

Ages 14-21
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$1,499

Experience life as a UCI dancer! Strengthen technical base focused on ballet, modern, jazz and hip-hop, as well as various other in-studio and classroom-based topics in dance.

(No Class July 4)

DRAMA



July 18-July 29, 2022

Musical Theatre - Beginner/Intermediate Musical Theatre - Advanced/ Pre-College/Pre-Professional

Ages 14-19
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$1,099

Act, sing, dance! Advance your triple-threat skills learning from one of the top college musical theatre programs in the nation.

MUSIC



June 27-July 8, 2022

Digital Music Production

Ages 14-19
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$1,099

Record, edit, mix! Master the process of making digital music through theory and key production principles. No instrumental or programming skills required.
(No Class July 4)

July 18-July 29, 2022

Chamber Music

Ages 14-19
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
\$1,099

Refine your instrumental performance! Explore masterpieces in the chamber music repertoire while training with world-renowned faculty.

Learn more at www.arts.uci.edu/summer-academies



Celebrate **NEW SWAN**

Friday, July 15, 2022

A 10th Anniversary Gala celebrating the opening night of

The Comedy of Errors

Join us for a midsummer's night to remember as we make our triumphant return to the stage!

Proceeds support our 2022 season and year-long educational and community outreach programs.



NEW SWAN
SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

For ticket and table sponsorship opportunities, please contact Sarah Strozza at sstrozza@uci.edu or (949) 824-0629, or visit www.arts.uci.edu/NewSwan2022



NEW SWAN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

10th Anniversary Season

The Comedy of Errors directed by Eli Simon



JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	<u>9</u>
<u>10</u>	11	12	13	14	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u>	18	19	20	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
24	25	26	27	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>31</u>						

[PREVIEWS](#)

AUGUST & SEPT						
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<u>14</u>	15	16	17	18	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
21	22	23	24	25	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>28</u>	29	30	31	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

[PERFORMANCES](#)

Pericles, Prince of Tyre directed by Beth Lopes



JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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10	11	12	13	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
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<u>24</u>	25	26	27	28	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>31</u>						

[PREVIEWS](#)

AUGUST & SEPT						
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7	8	9	10	11	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>14</u>	15	16	17	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>21</u>	22	23	24	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>
28	29	30	<u>31</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

[PERFORMANCES](#)

For more information & tickets visit
NewSwanShakespeare.com



UCI Office of Research

UCI New Swan Shakespeare Center
School of Humanities | Claire Trevor School of the Arts

UCI Claire Trevor
School of the Arts

Drama

CLAIRE TREVOR SOCIETY

Join as a Charter Member today!



The Claire Trevor Society provides a front door to the arts at UCI for alumni, parents and friends to participate in exclusive experiences and network with fellow art enthusiasts, while receiving special recognition and opportunities to engage in the school's growth.

With your support the Claire Trevor Society enhances the academic and creative excellence at the Claire Trevor School of the Arts. Contributions to the Claire Trevor Society enable the Dean to provide essential support for:

- Student scholarships and fellowships
- Cutting-edge arts research
- Innovative exhibitions and productions

Each Claire Trevor Society member has a direct impact on the lives of our students and helps ensure a brilliant future in the arts at UCI.

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For more information, visit us at:
www.arts.uci.edu/claire-trevor-society

Or contact us at
clairetrevorsociety@uci.edu
(949) 824-0629

Photo: Jeanine Hill

2022 CLAIRE TREVOR SOCIETY SCHOLARS

Thanks to the generous support of Claire Trevor Society members, the annual Claire Trevor Society Scholarships have been awarded to exceptional students in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts in the departments of Art, Dance, Drama, and Music, and in the areas of Community Arts Outreach and Interdisciplinary Arts.



“It feels incredibly inspirational and invigorating to receive this support for my fine arts studies at UCI. I have been given the opportunity to initiate moments of discourse and experimentation, and interdisciplinary collaboration between art and ecology.”

—Liz Stringer, M.F.A. candidate in Art Interdisciplinary artist and arts administrator



“This scholarship allows me to continue learning and growing as an artist, and to thrive both personally and artistically, now more than ever.”

—Isaac Hayes, Ph.D. candidate in Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology Composer and multi-instrumentalist



“I’m deeply appreciative of your support that will not only alleviate my financial burden but also enhance my learning experience. With this assistance, I will be able to cover school expenses and fulfill my goal of creating a welcoming environment for all minority dancers.”

—Mafer Reyes, B.F.A. candidate in Dance Choreographer and dancer



“This scholarship has opened an opportunity for me to jump right into the artistic pool, where the possibilities of evolving the way art is being projected is endless. I am greatly appreciative, and the aid provided from this scholarship will immensely benefit me throughout my journey.”

—Mary Hill, M.F.A. candidate in Drama Actor and educator

Thank You!

The Claire Trevor School of the Arts would like to recognize those donors who gave \$1,000 or more during the 2020-21 fiscal year.

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* Dean's Arts Board Members
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WITH GRATITUDE

Swan Song

Dr. Stephen Barker gave his final presentation, “The Citizen-Artist: An Interdisciplinary Discussion,” as dean of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts on May 26, 2022, in Winifred Smith Hall. He was joined by William Maurer (center), dean of social sciences, and Tyrus Miller (right), dean of humanities. “I was so pleased to work with Tyrus and Bill (and the audience) to investigate a topic both dear to my heart and of immense importance in contemporary culture — the Citizen-Artist,” said Barker. The lecture and discussion focused on how we as educators build the citizen-artist across various arts disciplines, as researchers, and through the complexities of culture-building.



Photo: Emily Zheng

2021-22 Box Office Information

Hours — closed for summer

If you are interested in purchasing tickets for the New Swan Shakespeare Festival, please visit their website at newswanshakespeare.com or contact the Irvine Barclay Theatre directly at thebarclay.org.

Tickets for the 2022-23 season will go on sale on Tuesday, Sept. 6, 2022.

www.arts.uci.edu/boxoffice

Contact

(949) 824-2787 | artstix@uci.edu

Tickets

www.arts.uci.edu/tickets (24/7)

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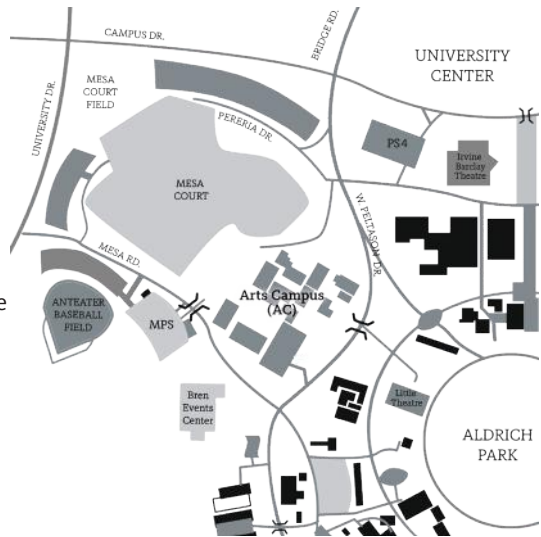
Please use the pedestrian bridge to get to CTSA galleries and theatres. Take elevator or stairs to Level 3 of Mesa Parking Structure (MPS) to access bridge, which is to your left as you exit elevator or stairs.

UCI Parking

www.parking.uci.edu

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CTSA strives to maintain compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policies. www.arts.uci.edu/ada



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School of the Arts

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