

scenes



Spring 2019

STORIES FROM THE STAGE

The Spirit of Harriet
Tubman Lives On

VIP Experience Guests
Will Meet Marc Martel

"The Ultimate Queen Celebration"
starring Marc Martel

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*Written by Sharon Morrissey
Designed by Carollyn Hamilton*

Mission

The mission of the Center for Performing Arts (CPA) is to serve as a public square within Governors State University, to encourage and support arts education, presentations, and community dialogue; and to provide creative innovation for students and community members throughout the Chicago Southland. CPA uses the arts as a platform for initiating community dialogue across social issues with relevant programs, making its community a better place to live and raise families.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE MIC: DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the second edition of Scenes, where we share behind-the-stage activities to educate, inspire and connect you, our arts community, to all that goes on while the theatre lights go down. We've been busy since last fall, hosting thousands of community members, multiple performances, School District 162 holiday concerts, and countless academic activities in our beautiful venue. We've updated some spaces for multi-functional use, welcomed artists to campus, and have been actively working with our volunteer Board of Advisors on plans for next season, celebrating GSU's 50th anniversary, and beyond.

I'd like to take a moment to share one of my favorite moments since we last connected. On February 4 and 5, we had the pleasure of welcoming over 4,000 area school children for the Arts in Education production of *Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad*. When welcoming the children to the theater, I asked them if they knew about slavery, and if it still existed. Their mixed response reminded me of the importance of the work we do, illuminating social issues that are perhaps even more relevant today than ever before.

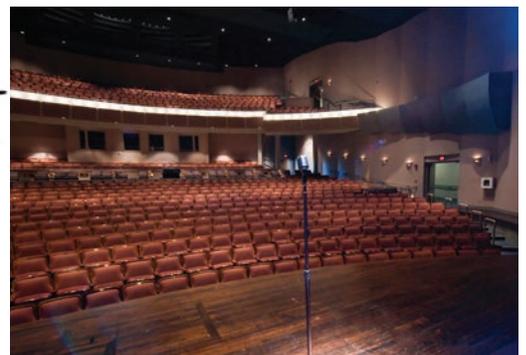
The moment I am most looking forward to is our upcoming residency with Chicago musician and educator Adrian Dunn. He'll be joining us for an on-campus student workshop on March 26th and again on April 6th for his dynamic performance of *HOPERA*; an innovative blending of hip hop, opera, gospel, dance, a live band, and more (see our Arts Innovator profile). I'm also excited to meet Marc Martel, the star of *The Ultimate Queen Celebration* (featured on our cover), and the voice in the new hit movie *Bohemian Rhapsody*!

I hope that when you join us your visit is comfortable and seamless. We work hard to deliver the best in customer service, but know that we can always improve! In fact, we recently sent our Box Office Supervisor to learn from the best at the Disney Institute® in Orlando, FL. So, you might notice a few changes on an upcoming visit as we upgrade our customer service policies and find new ways to make you feel right at home.

Until we meet at the theater, don't hesitate to share your feedback with me on your experience at tickets@govst.edu.



Lane Kopchensky



The Spirit of Harriet Tubman Lives On

Freedom is not free. We have heard this axiom many times, yet it is still food for thought as we face issues in our own communities that require courage and hard decisions. Harriet Tubman, a slave born in 1820, knew hard decisions well. She faced the fury of slavery and came out a liberator, as she ushered countless others to safety through an elaborate network of safe houses. Harriet's innate sense of right and her desire to break the chains of bondage empowered her to do this difficult work. We can instill this sense of right in our youth through exposure to cultures and customs other than our own, through social emotional learning and through developing strong community bonds that embrace unity in diversity.

On February 5th, a group of 35 philanthropic women gathered for a benefit luncheon in Harriet's honor after enjoying the performance of *Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad* by Virginia Repertory Theatre. Phyllis Monks, associated with the Crete Historical Society, spoke about our local connections to the Freedom Trail.

At the lunch, donors also spoke about why they support the Arts in Education series. Inge Marra was one who shared with the group why she supports, Center for Performing Arts (she is underwriting the upcoming performance of *Anne Frank: Through the Eyes of a Friend* on April 10th).



Phyllis Monks and Lana Rogachevskaya

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD



"After the performance we just experienced, we will agree that the Arts and Education program is our jewel in the crown. It contributes to experiences for children in our area that enrich them and deepen the understanding of their school curriculum. In times of ever-increasing digital encroachment, going to a theater with live performances becomes so important.

My relationship to the Children's Programming here at CPA goes back to the time when my grandchildren used to come to the Saturday Matinees. These still happen, a wonderful experience for grandparents and parents alike. The children's programming, the legacy of Jean Bernstein, continues to flourish under Kathleen Brennan's direction, and I must mention Marie lafallo who brings opera from the Lyric to the children. All this could not happen without the help of so many others.

We all have our favorite organizations to whom we donate what we can. In my case, The Center for Performing Arts is at the top of my list, both the General Fund, the Arts and Education Fund and The Medhurst Fund. All these provide great opportunities for all of us to support the programming for the children in our area."

Inge's spirit is the spirit of one community. The spirit of Harriet Tubman indeed lives on in Chicago's Southland. Invest in the future of our youth and supporting Arts in Education at www.govst.edu/CPAdonation/.

"It is because of donors like you that the arts will continue to bring unity where there is division, and inspiration for the development of tolerance in our youth; the next generation of leaders."

*~ Lana Rogachevskaya
Executive Director of the Center*

PERFORMANCE EXTRAS



VIP Experience Guests Will Meet Marc Martel

CPA will close this season with a rock concert starring Marc Martel, who spent 13 years recording and touring the globe with Canadian rockers *Downhere*. After winning a nationwide Freddie Mercury contest spearheaded by Queen's band members, where Martel cut a version of "Somebody To Love" in 2011, and received 30 million cumulative YouTube and Facebook views, Martel was declared the victor.

Roger Taylor remarked to the *Daily Record*: "That voice. You listen, close your eyes and you think it's Freddie. It's really uncanny."

Now, Martel headlines his own tribute *The Ultimate Queen Celebration*, coming to our stage April 27th. VIP tickets are available for \$54 additional to the cost of the concert ticket. The VIP experience includes an opportunity to witness sound check, meet and greet with Marc Martel, refreshments, autographed CD and event poster. Visit CenterTickets.net, or call 708.235.2222.



HOPERA™

Adrian Dunn
production

Group Leaders Meet Mr. HOPERA

On Saturday March 9th, twenty local leaders from church, social and civic organizations attended a complimentary luncheon and artists meet-and-greet with Adrian Dunn, CEO of Hoperaworld Entertainment and Producer of the upcoming *HOPERA: A Fallen Hero* production on April 6th. Adrian Dunn spoke about his creative blending of opera, hip hop, gospel and more to share the stories of so many young Chicago youth affected by gun violence today. He also shared information about his other recent musical projects, including a gospel CD *Revelations* and new music "NEVER DIE" available on Spotify & iTunes.



Marie lafollo: A Lifetime of Sharing Arts Education

After teaching for the Department of Defense in Japan and Italy and serving as Principal of the Siboney American Defense School, Marie lafollo began teaching fifth grade art in Park Forest's Sauk Trail school in 1956 where she developed a Gifted Program that was implemented for all seven District 163 schools.

Marie devised a student art fair in connection with the Park Forest Art Fair, held extensive art workshops for teachers on the use of the Montessori Method and organized student field trips to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Art Institute.

In 1990, Marie helped start the Tall Grass Art School with donations of time and money. In 1993, she retired as the School District's Art Director, but returned in 1995, working with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in its "Opera in the Classroom" program where students perform an opera with the use of costumes and props. This led to a production of "Barber of Seville" by fifth grade students at Mohawk School which was filmed by Channel 11.

Marie is active with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, the Illinois Theatre Center acting lessons program, the Center for Performing Arts and College of Education advisory boards at Governors State University, and as a "Friend" of the Steger-South Chicago Heights Library where she teaches art classes. In 2016, as an honor of being a lifelong Steger resident and pioneering library advocate, the Steger-South Chicago Heights Library dedicated its Community Room to Marie, naming it "The Marie lafollo Community Room." Marie was inducted the Hall of Fame at Park Forest Historical Society in 2012.

Written by Jessica Butler



Marie lafollo, (pictured right) with Sharon McCaffery (left)



Marie remains busy today advocating for youth arts education. She works tirelessly on our Arts in Education series, and is an active member of the Center for Performing Arts Advisory Council. Marie spearheaded recent donor luncheons to engage women in the community, introducing dozens of new supporters to our mission. If you are part of Marie's book club, visit a library in town, or are in any way passionate about our local youth, chances are Marie has invited you to Center for Performing Arts to witness our program, and its impact on students. The Center for Performing Arts staff and Advisory Council are grateful to Marie for her dedicated service!

Adrian Dunn: A Man on a Mission

Adrian Dunn is on a mission to share opera with the next generation. That's why the Center for Performing Arts was excited to invite him on campus for a unique residency featuring speaking opportunities and workshops with students and a live full theater performance of **HOPERA: A Fallen Hero on April 6th** at 8 p.m. featuring a cast of twelve musicians and singers.

When asked about his inspiration for *HOPERA*, Dunn says, "When I performed traditional opera, I did not see myself in the audience, and if opera was going to have a life—if it was to live on—it had to change." And there is no one more uniquely qualified to share his love of opera, gospel and other genres with today's youth. Not only does he have the skills, but his career has kept him in touch with both worlds – traditional opera and pop culture.

As the founder and CEO of HoperaWorld Entertainment was nominated for "Best Music Director" from the Black Theater Alliance Awards for his work with *HOPERA – A hip hop opera* in 2010. A versatile, classically trained opera singer, he was a featured solo artist on the Higher Ground Live DVD recording in Finland (2007). He has prepared and provided background vocals for numerous pop, R&B and gospel artists in the United States and abroad, including Tony Momrelle (UK band Incognito), Rena Darling (EU), Max C (EU) and others. He has also sung with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park Symphony Chorus, and appeared as a vocalist with the Rob Parton Jazz Orchestra. Adrian holds a Bachelor of Music and Masters of Music in vocal performance from Roosevelt University and additional studies at the Sibelius Academy of Music, Helsinki Finland.



Adrian Dunn



Dunn participated in a GSU's Male Success Initiative (MSI) event on **March 11**, led by Sean Smith. MSI is an enrichment program for male students, particularly men of color, that provides opportunities for professional, academic, and personal development. MSI helps participants develop a game plan for success, from orientation to graduation.

He spoke about his experiences as a black man, and as a black man in the opera world. His *HOPERA* concept came from his identification with the struggles of, and is loosely based on, the libretto from *Otello*. Dunn, however, makes the opera and the story accessible to today's youth who may be affected by gun violence through the use of dance, a contemporary band versus an orchestra, and spoken word. He says of his musical play,



"This project is a slice of America. This is opera on my own terms, outside the confines."

On **March 26th**, Dunn's on-campus residency continued with a student-centered workshop discussion on the role of music in community action. Dunn talks about the multiple curricular and community connections explored in his musical play, such as teen pregnancy, gun violence, fatherlessness, male mentorship, and more.

In the **April 6th** production, the music ultimately is the star. In the end, that is what opera is all about—the music. In fact, Dunn previewed a song from *HOPERA* while performing at Center for Performing Arts in January of 2018 at the *Lift Every Voice* opera, and the audience requested an encore! Patrons will also enjoy dance, a live band, gospel vocals and dynamic acting.

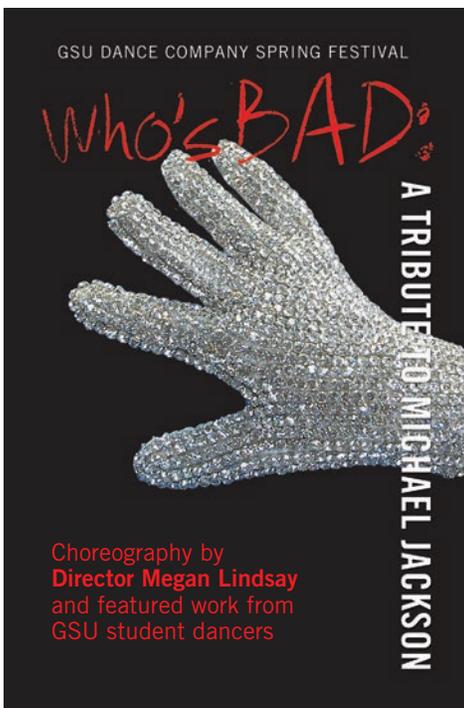
Tickets are only \$28. Group, student and senior discounts are available. For tickets, visit Centertickets.net, or call 708.235.2222. This production is generously funded by The National Endowment for the Arts, and Illinois Arts Council Tour Fund.

STUDENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



DeMario Tribett

The Next Generation is Nurtured Here



DeMario Tribett is a Theatre and Performance Studies student at GSU, expected to graduate in Fall 2020. This is DeMario's third season with Center for Performing Arts, working in the box office with his exceptional, sunny disposition. If you attended the recent performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar* presented by Southland Area Theatre Ensemble, you would know DeMario as the character of Peter. Or, you might find him dancing in the Green Room during his hip hop dance class with Professor David Ingram (he says the class is not too bad if you've got rhythm, like he does!). But he wears many useful hats. The CPA staff members, for example, know DeMario as the "tip jar" king. What is the "tip jar", you ask? It's a way our patrons can add on a donation to their ticket purchase through our ticketing system "tip jar" function. He is passionate about asking every person who calls if they would like to donate, and he has a few tricks up his sleeve to encourage participation. He says, "It's the simple things, like a smile, a good tone of voice and eye contact," that work every time!

Why is DeMario so passionate about his work here at CPA? "I want to ultimately go into musical theatre as an actor and a singer. Working at a theatre that has such great productions, and learning all the functions like Box Office, Patron Services, and more, will make it an easy transition when I start my career." You may have seen DeMario dancing with the Hip Hop dance class and stage managing the CPA's performance of *Who's Bad: A Tribute to Michael Jackson* on March 28th.

VENUE NEWS

Green Room Gets a Refresh for New Dance Courses

Our backstage space where artists and crew gather before the show is now also a lively space during the day. It's received some new updates to equip the space for our growing dance program, and a range of music now entertains as classes are in session. A new parquet floor, mirrors and three standing ballet barres were added to accommodate the needs of Professors Megan Lindsay and David Ingram. Megan, who taught as adjunct faculty of dance and Dance Company Director at IU Northwest from 2004 – 2010 and 2012 – 2015, has been teaching at GSU since fall of 2014. Courses have included Intro to Dance, Intro to Jazz Dance, Advanced Jazz Dance, Intro to Modern, Intro to Tap Dance, Intro to Social Dance and, for the first time, Ballet.



Jason Zingsheim

David Ingram, formerly of Chicago Dance Crash, is GSU's new hip hop dance instructor. His class already has thirteen students! Updates on the wish list for the future include a marley floor, especially for modern dance, which is meant to be danced barefoot.

Since demand is growing for Dance as part of our Theatre and Performance Studies program, Jason Zingsheim, Division Chair, Arts and Letters, says a minor in Dance is a real possibility. He says, "The proposal is currently under review by the University Curriculum Committee, and we are hopeful we will have it in place in the near future."



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



The Rosie Mae Riley Scholarship Fund

Join Rosie's family in honoring her memory by supporting the theatre program she loved so much.

Rosie Mae Riley was a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, and friend to many; who all loved her dearly. She was a staunch supporter of education and believed strongly that it was the key to changing one's life. Rosie was a frequent patron of the arts at the Center for Performing Arts with her family. To celebrate Rosie's life and pay tribute to her passion for education and the arts, the Rosie Mae Riley Scholarship is endowed in her name to create opportunities for students in the Theatre and Performance Studies program.

To donate, mail donations to:

Governors State University Foundation
1 University Parkway
University Park, IL 60484

To donate online, visit:

<http://www.govst.edu/rosie-mae-riley-scholarship/>

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