From the Department Chair

Now that winter is (sort of) behind us, we’re thinking about the goodness that spring brings! Some of those things are more exciting performances, courses, and guest lectures.

But before I get to what’s coming up in spring, I want to note how wonderful it was to have our own Eileen Cherry-Chandler return to perform and to have Paul Edwards adapt her stories for the stage. The stories, the adaptation, and the students’ performance were all amazing. We hope to see this work travel beyond Northwestern. Chloe Johnston’s adaptation of Hawthorn stories, “Twice Told,” was a visually stunning presentation of this canonical author’s work. The Wallis Theater will never be the same.

Our lecture series this quarter was also well received. Professors Josephine Lee and Karen Shimakawa both gave engaging talks in our “Issues in Asian and Asian American Performance” lecture series. While Professor Eng-Beng Lim could not make it this year, we hope to have him give a talk in the near future.

Looking ahead to spring, I’m excited to announce two undergraduate and two graduate student performances in April and May. Two undergrads, Sydney Howe and Sophie Angelson, will each direct shows in the Studio Theater, and two graduate students, Sage Morgan-Hubbard and Olateju Adesida, will each direct shows in TIC. We’re excited to see out students at both the undergrad and grad levels engage performance as intellectual inquiry.

I’m also excited to announce the first seminar offered through the Critical Studies in Theater and Performance Cluster. This faculty/grad student forum will be led by Tracy Davis and will bring in a number of speakers from the US and UK, including PS alum, Patrick Anderson. All the lectures will take place on Mondays.

Finally, Holly Hughes will return in the spring to teach Performance Art for us. After the popularity of her courses in the fall, I know that the students will produce some fascinating work in that class.

As usual, our cup runneth over with good things in the department.

—E. Patrick Johnson, Chair

P.S. Don’t forget to come out and support our shows next quarter.

Performance Studies welcomes alumna Eileen Cherry-Chandler

On March 4-7, 2009, the Department of Performance Studies presents The Winter Barrel, an adaptation of short stories by Performance Studies alumna and Assistant Professor of Theatre and Film at Bowling Green State University.

Respoding to questions from P.S., Dr. Cherry-Chandler reflects on her career as a student, academic, activist, and writer.

You received your PhD in Performance Studies in 1997, and your undergraduate degree was also in the department [then the Department of Interpretation], correct?

Yes, in 1973. There were 35 undergraduate majors and the department was housed in a white frame house on Sheridan Road.

Were there particular professors, and students, at Northwestern that helped shape you and inspire your work, creatively and academically?

As an undergraduate I loved my classes with Lee Roloff, Charlotte Lee, Karen Anderson and Njoki McElroy. I learned much from Robert Breen and was inspired by Wallace Bacon’s challenging Shakespeare classes. My classmates, Linda Pierce, introduced me to the Department of Oral Interpretation and Angela Jackson encouraged my writing through her own work and by bringing me into contact with the artists in Chicago’s Black Arts Movement, particularly editor and publisher Hoyt Fuller of Johnson Publications who started the OBAC (Organization of Black American Culture) Writer’s Workshop. Through workshop activities I wrote and performed with Val Gray Ward,

(Continued on next page.)
Haki Madhubuti, Carolyn Rogers, Johari Amini and a lovely community actress named Soyini Dyson. I also observed the work of two graduate students, Frank Galati and Paul Edwards. As an undergrad I was FMO’s first cultural coordinator. I started “The Ritual,” an annual initiation ceremony for black NU Students and founded Black/Folks Theatre (the forerunner of NU’s African-American Theatre Workshop) with fellow student Kent Waters (Theatre professor Les Hinderycks was very supportive) and the Northwestern Community Ensemble with L. Stanley Davis. Our musical mentor, Professor Thomas Willis, Davis and I continued our work after graduation and started what is now known as Chicago’s annual “GospelFest.” Later professors Reginald Gibbons, Dwight Conquergood and Margaret Drewal were my closest circle of influence when I returned to NU for graduate study in 1993 and Carol Simpson Stern was of invaluable support.

Has writing always been a part of your life? Was there a particular point, or period, when you developed a sense of your particular voice? Have you been able to continue writing fiction while also doing scholarly/academic writing?

My writing began at adolescence, though I was always a storyteller. Growing up in Toledo, Ohio, I devoured all kinds of folk and fairytales, poetry and Bible stories that I shared with classes in elementary school. Then I discovered Arna Bontemps anthology American Negro Poets. Combined with the rise in the Civil Rights movement of the late 50s and into the 60s, writing and performing became my vehicle for expressing my desire for social change and justice: particularly the Birmingham church bombing, the lynching of Emmet Till and the struggle of the Little Rock Nine among other events impacting my youth.

Writing creative fiction and academic writing has been a challenge for me to juggle. I’d like more psychological space to do more fiction – and I enjoyed the two residencies I had that produced the first two stories of the trilogy. But academic writing demanded my attention because I wanted to be in the academy. Though now, my most recent publications combine biographical storytelling with theoretical ruminations.

Regarding The Winter Barrel stories, are they primarily autobiographical?

No, though they are based on some incidents and circumstances in my life and of course I draw heavily upon the imagery I’ve experienced. I notice that I use a lot of images of my mother. The narrator and I have a lot in common in our viewpoint on life and I have “known” the featured characters. There are images from my youth in Toledo and my college and later years living in Chicago and other places in the states.

Are there particular ideas to which you want to draw the reader’s attention?

Leon Forrest commented that they represented a “sensibility” that he had not experienced before. I guess what he meant by that was the voice of a black urban girl confronting a moral issue (though there are many women writers representing such a voice). I’m honored by the attention he gave me.

How do you see Chicago of the 1960s from the perspective of the 2000s? Do you still think of Chicago as home?

I lived so many years in Chicago and it is so much a part of who I am that I do consider it home. It gave me so much and I want to write about the gifts Chicago and my journey to Northwestern gave me. My family was broke and I applied because my counselor said it would be impossible for me to get in. I didn’t know how I was going to get from Toledo to Evanston and I arrived at Shepherd Hall with $2.50 and a change of clothes. It was an exciting time in the country – protests against the Vietnam War, the Black Panther shootings on the West Side, it was a time of growing cultural awareness, study and activism. This was my promised land for a while. Now, after all these years, I’m experiencing another: small town life. But if I had not spent those years in Chicago and had my Northwestern experience, I don’t think I would enjoy it as much.

How does it feel to have your work adapted for performance?

I’m nervous and intrigued. Not just nervous for myself, but for the production. I know I’d feel on edge with the author of the work sitting in the audience. But its good to know that the person doing the adaptation is competent and respectful and also shares my intensity for the material. So it will be very interesting. I’ve never heard these stories enacted by anyone other than myself.

The Department hosted the “Issues in Asian American Performance” lecture series, which featured talks by Josephine Lee, Associate Professor of English at the University of Minnesota, and Karen Shimakawa, Associate Professor of Performance Studies at New York University. A lecture by Eng-Beng Lim, Assistant Professor of Drama Studies at SUNY-Purchase, was cancelled.

In her January 14th lecture, “Decorative Orientalism and Commodity Racism,” Josephine Lee discussed the Western consumption of oriental objects from the 19th century to the present. With rich examples ranging from the 19th-century oriental-themed home decoration to the casting call for “beautiful Asian women” to attend the after-party of the premiere of the 2003 movie “Last Samurai,” Lee examined the dissemination and persistence of certain racial fantasies through bodily practices of consumption, use, production, and reproduction of “oriental objects.”

Josephine Lee is the author of Performing Asian America (Temple University Press, 1997) and co-editor of Re/collecting Early Asian America (Temple 2002). She has also published numerous book chapters, articles, and reviews on modern drama, theater history, performance, cultural theory, and Asian American Studies.

Karen Shimakawa’s lecture, “Discomforting Identity: Asian Americanist and Performance” took place on February 11th. Recounting the audience response to Julia Cho’s play Durango, a Korean-American family road-trip drama, she problematized the subjectless critique of Asian American plays that regarded any claim of cultural specificity as self-diminishing. The audience’s refusal to acknowledge or understand the Korean-American cultural context of the play revealed the pitfall of “universalism” in which the specificity of minority culture was muted and neutralized. Shimakawa then discussed the official policy of a hospital that prohibited its Filipina nurses from speaking Tagalog even during their social chitchatting, with the rationale that some patients might feel uncomfortable listening to a language they couldn’t understand. Both cases pointed out how little cultural difference was endured by the American mainstream amidst its celebration of cultural diversity.

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Faculty News


Mary Zimmerman’s Metropolitan Opera production of Lucia di Lammermoor was broadcast live in movie theaters nationally on February 7, 2009. Her production of La Sonnambula opened at the Met on March 2nd, with live movie theatre broadcasting scheduled for March 20th.

Mary directs Lookingglass Theatre’s production of The Arabian Nights, which will run from May 20 to July 12, 2009 at the Water Tower Works downtown. Mary also directed the play at Kansas City Repertory Theatre (where the artistic director is Performance Studies alumnus Eric Rosen) in a co-production with Berkeley Repertory Theatre.
Planning is well underway for Radical Intersections: Performance Across Disciplines, an interdisciplinary graduate student conference scheduled for April 24-26, 2009, hosted by the Performance Studies Department and coordinated by PhD students in the department. Students from over 30 universities internationally will present on such topics as:

- Bodies, Memory and the (Im)material
- Transnational and Transgenerational Gendered Communities
- Surveillance, Visibility, and Silent Resistance
- Gender Crossings
- Performance Out of Place: Travel, Im(migration), Pilgrimage
- Instigating Radical Spectatorship
- Performing the National Body
- Building Radical Communities through Performance
- Sensing the Spiritual in Performance
- Sensual and Affective Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality
- Science, Nature, Animals and Subject Formation
- Something Old, Something New: Appropriating Tradition
- Laughter, Amusement, Power

Additional information is available at http://www.radicalintersections.northwestern.edu.

PhD Program News

Greg Mitchell’s review of Lydia’s Open Door: Inside Mexico’s Most Modern Brothel by Patty Kelly was printed in the November issue of The Journal of Latin Americans and Caribbean Anthropology. In December, he presented a paper entitled “Sex Tourism as Civil Right?: Neoliberalism, Gay Rights, and Brazil’s Gay Sex Tourist Industry” at the American Anthropological Association’s annual meeting.

Lori Barcliff Baptista has published an article titled “Peixe, Patria e Possibilidades Portuguesas: Fish, Homeland and Portuguese Possibilities” in Text and Performance Quarterly special issue on food and performance, January 2009.


Edwin Corbin has received the Helzinki Prize for new scholars essay contest, awarded by the International Federation of Theatre Research. Also, he is convening a workgroup called “Activism Beyond the State” at the Hemispheric Institute of Politics and Performance encuentro in Bogotá, Colombia this summer.

Derek Barton has two new short films out on Mickee Faust’s compilation “Mickee Faust’s Gimp Parade.” The films are “Disability Factor” and “Professor Ringer Answers Your Questions on: Ethics.” He will be premiering them in a panel he is chairing at the next NCA convention.

Sage Morgan-Hubbard’s workshop “Remixing TO a Hip Hop beat” was accepted to the 15th annual 2009 Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference. She also was accepted to be a fellow as part of the ACN Mini Think Tank Fellowship: Eco-Performance and Arts-Based Methods at the Earth Matters conference.

Undergraduate Program News


Senior Julia Kluger is singing in Dan Black’s graduate conducting recital on March 8, 2009, at 3:00 pm in Alice Millar Chapel. They will be performing Mozart’s Requiem.

Sophomore Kate Reed is stage manager for the Danceworks, which has performances February 27–March 8, 2009, in the Josephine Louis Theater.

Freshman Rachel Cali directs Twelfth Night, which features freshman Jeremy Fassler as Olivia, March 13–14, 2009, in Chapin Hall.
Winter Quarter Performances

WINTER QUARTER 103 PERFORMANCE HOUR
An evening of performances by students in the department’s introductory course The Analysis and Performance of Literature.
Wednesday, January 7, 8:00 pm, Mussetter-Struble Theater

TWICE TOLD
Adapted and directed by Chloe Johnston
From the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne
An adaptation of three stories by the great American writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne. A young man loses his faith in humanity during a midnight stroll with a mysterious stranger. A woman loses the love of her life when he decides to hide his face behind an ominous mask. A scientist performs an experiment that will destroy what he loves best. Set against the earliest years in this nation’s history, Hawthorne’s tales examine love, belief and the nature of good and evil.
Performances February 6 - 14, 2009
Hal and Martha Hyer Wallis Theater

THE WINTER BARREL: STORIES BY EILEEN CHERRY-CHANDLER
Adapted and directed by Paul Edwards; assisted by Casey Hartley; performed by Dominique Johnson, Johanna Middleton, Sonya Roberts, Carlylnne Robinson, and guest artist Jessica Young.
A new one-act play based on a trilogy of stories: “The Winter Barrel,” “Her Crowning Glory,” and “Rosalind’s Song.” In the early 1970s, a young girl from Alabama comes north to live with her great aunt, on Chicago’s near west side. She quickly learns to defend herself from tough girls in the neighborhood and helps her new friend “strike a blow for decency.”
Performances are March 4, 5, 6, 7 at 8 p.m. and March 7 at 2 p.m. The Friday, March 6th performance features a performance by author and Northwestern/Performance Studies alumna Eileen Cherry-Chandler
Annie May Swift Studio

GRADUATE RECITALS
Two nights--two different performances--two different venues:
March 13, 7:00 pm: Ashley Black and Edwin Corbin. Annie May Swift Studio
March 14, 7:00 pm: Jessica Mills and Kareem Khubchandani, Struble Theater

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www.communication.northwestern.edu/performancestudies