As Pittsburgh's presence on national lists of every sort attests, the secret is out about the city's cultural treasures and quality of life. Two recent recognitions worth noting are Pittsburgh's being named America's most livable city by Places Rated Almanac and the best arts destination in the country among mid-sized cities by AmericanStyle Magazine.

The two designations go hand in hand, since the arts play a critical role in the vitality and appeal of any community. In fact, Allegheny County's nonprofit arts industry generates more than $341 million annually in economic activity, according to a study conducted by Americans for the Arts in June 2007. And one of the most significant contributors to the city's vibrant arts scene has been the University of Pittsburgh Department of Theatre Arts, which this year is celebrating 25 years of offering undergraduate and graduate programs in the practical and academic aspects of theater.

Founded in 1982, the Department of Theatre Arts and its world-class programs focus on theater education within the context of the liberal arts experience at an urban university. Renowned Pitt theatre arts faculty include artists and scholars at the forefront of the theater world; they actively produce groundbreaking theory, research, criticism, and new work. Undergraduates may specialize in acting, directing, design and technical theater, theater history and criticism, or a combination of these specializations. This integrated approach allows for diverse experiences and varied opportunities for exploring every facet of theater.

“We are committed to enhancing the extensive theatrical opportunities available to our students,” said Bruce McConachie, professor and chair of the Department of Theatre Arts. “Our students enjoy experiences ranging from acting and directing to exploring the history of Elizabethan theater. Theatre arts majors have tripled in the last 25 years, and as the number of majors continues to grow, we are offering more lab productions, choosing plays with major specializations. This integrated approach allows for diverse experiences and varied opportunities for exploring every facet of theater.”

Just as the Department of Theatre Arts is dedicated to enhancing the Pitt community, it is also committed to taking theater education into the greater community. “Although the department has changed in many ways over the past 25 years, one thing has remained constant. We have maintained a lively and open relationship with the Pittsburgh region, our host community,” said Artiilio Favorini, professor and founding chair of theatre arts at Pitt. “We have consistently developed dramatic material born of the community, and we have cultivated the professional component of our program in ways that have enriched the local theater scene,” Favorini said. Over the years, Pitt’s Department of Theatre Arts has produced and supported works of regional importance; for example, the department gave a home to City Theatre, founded and managed the Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival, and currently hosts Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre. Theatre arts alumni have consistently played key roles—both onstage and backstage—in theater groups throughout the region and beyond.

In addition to partnering with local theater organizations, the department manages the acclaimed Shakespeare-in-the-Schools program. As the department’s educational outreach initiative, Shakespeare-in-the-Schools takes Shakespeare and other classical forms of theater directly to students in school districts throughout Western Pennsylvania and the tristate area.

With an accomplished past and a promising future, the Department of Theatre Arts will commemorate its 25th anniversary with special events and activities from February 29 to March 2, 2008. Look for details in the next issue of Pitt Pride or go to www.pitt.edu/~play.

As part of the 25th anniversary celebration, Pitt Repertory Theatre proudly announces the commemorative 2007–08 season, Playing With the Classics. For more information, go to www.play.pitt.edu.

The Recruiting Officer
October 10–21, 2007
Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief
November 7–18, 2007
The American Clock
February 20–March 2, 2008
Big Love
April 2–13, 2008

Student-directed productions that offer undergraduates a forum for producing classic, contemporary, and original works.

A Memory of Two Mondays – one of Germany’s rising playwrights.
September 26–30, 2007

Outside Inn – a new play by Andras Jungwirth.
October 24–28, 2007

The Chairs – an original work.
November 28–December 2, 2007

Cymbeline – an original work.
January 30–February 3, 2008

Pitt Repertory Theatre will partner with Theatre Rampe Stuttgurt, a theatrical company dedicated to German-language contemporary drama, to produce Outside Inn, a new play by Andras Jungwirth – one of Germany’s rising playwrights. Outside Inn will feature two performances in German and four performances in English, September 14–16, 2007.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

New Beginnings

When I first came to Pittsburgh in 1989, my wife and I planned to spend a year here before returning to my native Spain. Nearly 20 years later, we cannot imagine leaving. We discovered a city that is truly a gem. From education to culture to recreation, Pittsburgh is a vibrant and exciting place to call home. As you read this edition of Pitt Pride, you will see how the University of Pittsburgh has contributed to the community's notable quality of life through its world-class arts and sciences programs.

Much has happened in the nearly two decades since my arrival at Pitt. From a personal perspective, as a faculty member and chair of the Department of Mathematics in the School of Arts and Sciences, I have enjoyed diverse opportunities to engage in nationally funded research projects and to lead, with my colleague Frank Beatrous, the team that started Pitt’s Calculus Project, an initiative that brought core calculus instruction into the digital age within the context of undergraduate education.

On an institutional level, the University has established itself as one of the nation's premier research institutions, boasting both Rhodes and Marshall scholars among our undergraduate students last year as well as ranking in the top 10 among all U.S. universities in terms of competitive grants awarded to members of our faculty by the National Institutes of Health. Each year, the quality of our undergraduate students continues to be impressive, attracting students from more than 100 countries—nearly 80 percent of whom place in the top fifth of their high school class. Pitt truly is moving forward in distinguished company.

As I take on my new role this academic year as associate dean for undergraduate studies, I am excited at the prospect of continuing the School of Arts and Sciences’ legacy of excellence. My distinguished colleague and predecessor, Regina Schulte-Lathebeck, leaves a solid foundation upon which our undergraduate studies programs and services will continue to build in order to support our students. I look forward to working with the dedicated faculty and staff of undergraduate studies to ensure that each student achieves his or her academic potential. You and your student should always feel free to contact the team in undergraduate studies.

Whether your student begins this year as a freshman or a returning student, I hope he or she explores all that the University and the city have to offer. From cutting-edge theater productions and student art exhibitions on campus to downtown Pittsburgh’s outstanding Cultural District offerings, there is much to experience outside the classroom. (In fact, Pitt students can purchase discounted tickets to Cultural District venues through Pitt ARTS at www.pittarts.pitt.edu.) I hope that you will enjoy the University and America’s Most Livable City when you visit for Homecoming/Family Weekend October 19–21 or throughout the academic year.

With best wishes for a successful academic year,

Juan Manfredi, PhD
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies

FACULTY PROFILE

The Magic If

Ask award-winning fiction writer Kathleen George, professor of theatre arts in the University of Pittsburgh School of Arts and Sciences, what is at the heart of good theater and her answer sounds quite simple yet hard to achieve: It’s the perfect mix of “timing, rhythm, character, and movement,” she says.

George, who teaches playwriting and dramatic literature courses, strives to elicit that captivating combination from undergraduate students. She finds great joy in helping them to read classic plays, critique the work of their peers, and produce finished scripts. “When I produce student work, I cajole people to get directors, actors, and even the audience—wherever I can get them,” says George. “We’ve been known to have performances in Oakland restaurants where we knew we’d have a captive audience,” she adds.

George found herself turning to fiction writing, an early love. To get at dramatic scenes in fiction, George found herself using theater lessons she had been teaching for years; one is Konstantin Stanislavsky’s idea that the word “if” is a magic lever to the imagination. Never one to limit her pursuits, George asked herself, after publishing a collection of short fiction—The Man in the Buckle and Other Stories (1999)—“If I wanted to write a novel, how would I proceed?” The question allowed her to feel free to play. The result was Taken (2001), which was followed by Fallers (2004) and the soon-to-be-released Afterimage (St. Martin’s Press, December 2007). “I’ve used Pittsburgh as the setting, really a character, in my mysteries,” assures George. “I wanted to take the reader for a ride, and what better place to do it?”

From main-stage productions and luncheon theatre presentations in the Studio Theatre to short stories and novels, George clearly has found her own winning recipe for dramatic success.

For more information about Kathleen George and her work, go to www.kathleengeorge.net and www.pitt.edu/–play/kathleen.george.html.

ONE MAN WEARS MANY HATS

For Joel Ambrose, a junior theatre arts and communication major in the University of Pittsburgh School of Arts and Sciences, all the world truly is a stage. “Theater is my passion,” says Ambrose. “I started acting in high school and decided to pursue it as a double major at Pitt.”

Ambrose has dabbled in every aspect of theater during his undergraduate tenure, from directing to playwriting to stage managing. But acting is his calling. “I’ve always liked being the center of attention and interacting with other people. If you think about it, everyday life is drama itself,” Ambrose adds.

Ambrose has landed some parts in productions, including roles in Once Upon a Mattress, Calamity Jane, and The Proposal & The Wedding & The Beard. He learned early on that rejection is part of the business, and he has found it to be a valuable character builder as well. “If I don’t get a part, that’s not going to stop me. I go to each audition and callback with enthusiasm and see myself improving with each one,” The Johnstown, Pa., native has enjoyed his diverse experiences at Pitt. “I’ve successfully juggled a busy theater schedule and have been able to do so many different things. Seeing one of my own plays produced through the Redeye Theatre Project was particularly cool. My goal is to take this great experience and put it to work for a local theater company after I graduate,” Ambrose says.

In addition to his acting, Ambrose has played the part of public relations and marketing intern for the Department of Theatre Arts and is currently a resident advisor in Litchfield Tower A and a tour guide for Pitt’s Nationality Rooms. This fall, Ambrose will serve as stage manager for Pitt Repertory Theatre’s Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief. And, manager that he is, he’ll continue to answer casting calls in between.
Academic achievement brings many rewards— including this $50 University of Pittsburgh Book Center gift certificate. Students who complete the fall term with a minimum of 12 credits and a term grade point average of 4.0 will receive a certificate in the mail in January. In the 2007 spring term, 447 students received certificates! If your student qualifies for a gift certificate but does not receive one, contact us at pittpride@pitt.edu.

**Financial Aid**
To remain eligible for financial aid, students must continue to be enrolled as undergraduates on the Pittsburgh campus, complete the financial aid application process by the priority filing deadline, and continue to make satisfactory academic progress. Changes in student enrollment status (full time or part time), housing status, and residency may affect future financial aid eligibility. Students with questions are encouraged to contact the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid at 412-624-7488 or visit www.pitt.edu/afaid.

**Academic Resource Center Programs**
If your student is looking to get an academic edge or is experiencing challenges transitioning to college-level courses, the Academic Resource Center (ARC) is a one-stop shop for comprehensive academic services at the University of Pittsburgh. From study skills workshops to peer-led study groups to tutoring, ARC can help your student achieve his or her academic goals. For more information on ARC services, go to www.as.pitt.edu/arc.

**Homecoming/Family Weekend**
Mark your calendars for Pitt’s annual Homecoming/Family Weekend (October 19–21, 2007). Events and activities will provide you with a chance to visit with your student and enjoy the University of Pittsburgh campus community. To register and for details, including hotel and game ticket information, please visit www.pitt.edu/ffweeknd.

**OEL Events**
During the week of October 15, the Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) will host all Introduction to the Arts and Sciences’ classes to introduce opportunities for undergraduates to earn credits outside the classroom through research internships, teaching, and service-learning. OEL will also host an open house/information session about the Leadership Certificate program on September 17, Room 11, Thaw Hall. Students can learn more about this interdisciplinary program that is open to Pitt students who are interested in developing core competencies that will enable them to lead in their scholarly fields, communities, and families. For more information, contact OEL at 412-624-6828.

**Freshman Lectures**
The annual Freshman Lectures series, sponsored by the Office of Freshman Programs, kicks off on October 5, 2007. At each of the four listed for fall 2007 lectures, top faculty members from the School of Arts and Sciences talk about their work in an informal setting. Afterward, students are encouraged to stick around and ask questions, network with faculty and other students, and enjoy refreshments. For a list of this year’s lectures, please visit www.as.pitt.edu/ffweeknd and click on the Freshman Lectures link.

**December Graduation**
The School of Arts and Sciences will host a graduation reception and recognition ceremony on Saturday, December 15, for the Class of December 2007. An invitation will be mailed in mid-November to those Arts and Sciences undergraduates who have applied for December graduation. For more information, contact the Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies at 412-624-6480.
As to August Wilson, his works are regularly staged by Pittsburgh Public Theater, for international study from the University Honors College. But last winter, there was no Wilson play in Pittsburgh. So, with the help of funds from the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Rawson and his August Wilson class piled into two Pitt vans for an exhilarating albeit exhausting 24-hour field trip to Washington, D.C., to see Gem of the Ocean at Arena Stage and Jitney at Ford’s Theatre.

Leaving at 7 a.m. on a Saturday and returning about the same time the next day, they debated the plays as they drove. Meetings with two Pittsburgh actors—Leland Gantt in Jitney and Pitt graduate KenYatta Rogers in Gem—enriched the experience. Rawson is already planning another August Wilson trip for the current term, most likely to New York.

A member of Pitt’s Department of English for 39 years specializing in satire and Shakespeare, Christopher Rawson recently has found his choice of what to teach influenced by his other job as theater critic for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. The result has led to new courses in Irish drama and the great Pittsburgh playwright August Wilson. Realizing that you cannot properly study drama without seeing at least some in the flesh, Rawson has been eager to take his students to see the real thing.

The Irish drama course, the Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theater and others provide some good fodder right here. But in search of deeper immersion into Ireland and its theater, and drawing on his experience leading theater trips for the University Honors College, Rawson has been eager to take his students to see the real thing.

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