

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE *Current*

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Eileen Conrad

UCSB Students Collaborate With Prominent Artists in UCSB Summer Theater Lab

Students at the University of California, Santa Barbara will have a rare opportunity to work with some of the most prominent theater artists in the nation during UCSB Summer Theater Lab, a three-week Summer Sessions course (DA 175) that will run from July 11 to 29.

Members of the Santa Barbara community will have the opportunity to see the results of those collaborations in a series of nine performances from Friday, July 22 through Friday, July 29---all free and open to the public.

Naomi Iizuka, a nationally recognized playwright and a professor of dramatic arts at UCSB, founded the Summer Theater Lab in 2004.

Iizuka's vision was of a hands-on experience where students and leading theater artists work together to create new theater pieces.

Such experience, she said, is vital to student growth.

"In theater, an apprentice-mentor kind of learning takes place," says Iizuka.

"Students need to work very closely with master theater artists.

If you want to be a playwright or an actor, you can't just read or see a play. You have to be in the middle of that collaborative process of creating a play.

"What is so exciting and unique about the UCSB Summer Theater Lab," she adds, "is that students actually get to work closely with these remarkable theater artists at an early stage of the creative process. They are not just spectators."

The program is open to both beginning and advanced students. Sessions will run from 2 to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and will include master classes in playwriting, acting, directing, solo performance, and choreography.

Students interested in enrolling should contact Amy Runjavac, undergraduate advisor for dramatic arts, at runjavac@dramadance.ucsb.edu

Izuka, who is also director of the UCSB Playwriting Program, heads the list of acclaimed artists teaching at this year's Summer Theater Lab. One of the most prolific playwrights of her generation, Izuka has had her work produced widely across the United States. Her plays include "At the Vanishing Point," "36 Views," "Polaroid Stories," "Language of Angels," "Tattoo Girl," and "Skin."

She has received numerous awards and fellowships, including a Whiting Writers' Award, a PEN Center USA West Award, and, most recently, a 2005 Alpert Award in the Arts.

Noted director Jon Jory, in an interview published in "Asian Week" magazine, called Izuka "one of the most important playwrights now writing."

When Izuka began teaching at UCSB, she knew she wanted to create the Summer Theater Lab in order to bring her students together with the country's most talented theater artists.

She also wanted to include scholars and community members in the program.

"I wanted to start new kinds of conversations and collaborations.

I wanted to bring the most exciting theater artists working today together with scholars and students from different disciplines to create new work," she says.

"The goal is to begin new collaborations across disciplines as well as to mentor a new generation of theater artists."

This year's UCSB Summer Theater Lab professional artists include:

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Luis Alfaro, playwright and solo performer.

His play "Electricidad" was produced at the Mark Taper Forum and the Goodman Theater.

Alfaro is the winner of a MacArthur Award.

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Eve Beglarian, cutting-edge, New York-based composer whose work has premiered at Lincoln Center, Carnegie's Zankel Hall, and China's National Beijing Opera.

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Ricardo A. Bracho, playwright, artist in residence at UCSB's Center for Chicano Studies. Plays include "The Sweetest Hangover," "A to B," "Querido," and his latest, "Mexican Psychotic."

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Campo Santo, acclaimed San Francisco-based theatre ensemble.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, "Campo Santo is hands down the best theatre company to come out of the Bay Area in the last decade."

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Lisa D'Amour, playwright, performance artist, and winner of 2003 OBIE Award for Best original Off-Broadway play.

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Anne García-Romero, playwright. Her plays include "Earthquake Chica," "Mary Peabody in Cuba," and "Desert Longing or Las Aventureras."

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Jonathan Moscone, Artistic Director of the California Shakespeare Theater.

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Johanna Meyer, experimental choreographer whose work has premiered at JoyceSoHo, Judson Church, and the Ontological Theater.

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Carlos Murillo, playwright. Plays include "A Human Interest Story," "Untitled American Highbwayscape #9 & 32," "Mimesophobia," and "Offspring of the Cold War."

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Stephanie Nugent, choreographer, and Assistant Professor of Dance at UCSB.

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Lisa Portes, director.

Portes was associate director of the Tony award-winning international touring production of "The Who's Tommy."

She currently runs the MFA program in Directing at DePaul University in Chicago.

The following Lab performance events are free and open to the public:

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"Stanley," OBIE award-winner Lisa D'Amour's contemporary one-person adaptation of Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire," 8 p.m. Friday, July 22, Performing Arts Theatre.

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"Summertime in Rome, New York," a new dance theater piece by UCSB student theater-artist Judy Bauerlein and New York-based choreographer Johanna Meyer. 8 p.m. Saturday, July 23, Performing Arts Theatre.

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A new play by Ricardo Bracho, directed by Lisa Portes. 8 p.m. Sunday, July 24, Performing Arts Theatre.

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"Dick Face," a new solo show by UCSB alumnus Mike Phillis. 8 p.m. Monday, July 25, Performing Arts Theatre.

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A new play by ENLACE students and their UCSB mentors about life as a Latino teen in Isla Vista.

Donations to the

I.V. Teen Center will be appreciated but are not required. 8 p.m. Tuesday, July 26, MultiCultural Center.

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A new play by Anne García-Romero, directed by Lisa Portes. 2 p.m. Wednesday, July 27, Performing Arts Theatre.

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A new play by Carlos Murillo developed with UCSB students through a series of collaborative exercises. Directed by Leo Cabrane-Grant. 2 p.m.

Thursday, July 28, Performing Arts Theatre.

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An adaptation of "Hamlet" written by UCSB Summer Theater Lab Director Naomi Iizuka in collaboration with Campo Santo and Oakland spoken-word poets. Directed by Jonathan Moscone. 8 p.m. Thursday, July 28, Studio Theater.

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A new dance piece by UCSB's Stephanie Nugent with music by composer Eve Beglarian. 2 p.m. Friday, July 29, Dance Rehearsal Room.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.