UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

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The Stage is Set

The Department of Theater and Dance at UC Santa Barbara has reason to celebrate. This fall marks the beginning of its 50th season of presenting high-quality productions that showcase the campus's hugely talented theater and dance students.

Also cause for celebration is the department's receipt of a 2014 50/50 Applause Award from the International Centre for Women Playwrights (ICWP). The award recognizes theater companies and programs around the world that devoted 50 percent or more of their 2013-14 seasons to female playwrights.

UCSB is one of 67 recipients from nine countries. In addition to the United States, the list of winners includes theaters in Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy and New Zealand.

"It is a sad truth that often women are not as easily able to access platforms as men are, and there are so many stories that go untold," said ICWP President Karen Jeynes of South Africa. "This award is a fantastic way to acknowledge those who are producing women's work, and encourage those who aren't to think about whether there are more ways to include women writers in their lineup."

Said Risa Brainin, professor and chair of UCSB's Department of Theater and Dance: "We are truly honored to be one of the recipients. We are one of only three universities to be recognized internationally for gender parity on our stages: four of the six plays presented on the 2013-14 main stage were written by women."

Those plays include “Top Girls” by Caryl Churchill, “The Fairy Tale Lives of Russian Girls” by Meg Miroshnik, “Untitled IV by Ruth Markofsky” by Alison Tatlock and “Arabian Nights” by Mary Zimmerman.

“We thank the IWCP for this wonderful award and plan to continue supporting the work of women writers over the next five years to help the organization achieve its goal of ‘50/50 in 2020,’” said Brainin. “We aim to present a multiplicity of voices on our stages, giving students and audiences the opportunity to engage with a variety of writers with a wide range of ideas.”

Brainin, who in October was elected to a two-year term as president of the board of directors of the National Theatre Conference, expressed confidence that organization members can work together “as a community in the theatre world both professionally and in the university setting to ensure that all voices are represented on our stages,” she said.

UCSB theater and dance’s 2014-15 season kicked off with a production of “Middletown: A Play” written by Will Eno and directed by Tom Whitaker, associate professor of theater at UCSB. Written in 2010, “Middletown” received the inaugural Horton Foote Prize for Promising New American Play.

The annual Fall Dance Concert Directed by Christina McCarthy, a lecturer in the theater and dance department, the annual Fall Dance Concert highlighted 35 dancers performing six new works choreographed by fourth-year students, along with pieces by faculty members and guest artists. It also featured original costumes and lighting created by advanced design students in collaboration with faculty mentors and choreographers.

More information about the 2014-15 season, including a schedule of dates and times, is available at www.theaterdance.ucsb.edu.

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.