



Photo by Joan Marcus

A Night with Janis Joplin: Alum's Rocking Broadway Debut

By Lynne Heffley

Breaking box office records at regional theatres across the country, Randy Johnson's high-octane rock-blues opera, *A Night With Janis Joplin*, opened in October on Broadway at the Lyceum Theatre in New York.

Based on the life of the 1960s pop culture icon, the production, scheduled to run into January 2014, marks Johnson's Broadway debut as both writer and director.

It's a milestone for Johnson, a USC School of Dramatic Arts alum, but only one of many in what continues to be a remarkably diverse theatrical career. Johnson (BFA '81) co-produced the 1985 West Coast premiere of Larry Kramer's groundbreaking play, *The Normal Heart*, at the Las Palmas Theatre in Hollywood with Richard Dreyfus and Kathy Bates. He is the original producer of Ted Swindley's *Always*, *Patsy Cline* and co-conceived and directed the virtual interactive blockbuster, *Elvis: The Concert*. He created hit shows based on Conway Twitty and Louis Prima and Keely Smith, helmed Lorna Luft's *Songs My Mother Taught Me* in London, directed and co-produced Bernie Taupin's star-studded *Commitment to Life* fundraisers for AIDS Project Los Angeles, directed and co-wrote the 2012 Las Vegas production of *Mike Tyson: The Undisputed Truth* – and oversaw events for such political figures as President Ronald Reagan and former First Lady Hillary Clinton.

Biographical theatre is "a niche I've fallen into and I love it," Johnson said. "I'm also lucky enough to do concerts and other theatre pieces as well, so I get to live in a lot of different worlds."

Janis began three years ago, when Johnson met with Joplin's brother and sister, Laura and Michael.

"It was to be a 20-minute meeting and it turned into two-and-a-half

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DISCOUNTED TICKETS*:
\$90 for Orchestra & Front Mezzanine (full price is \$130) & \$70 for Mezzanine D-G – sides (full price is \$89).

*All ticket prices include a \$2 facilities fee. Blackout dates: Nov. 24 to Dec. 1, Dec. 23 to Jan. 5, and additional dates may apply.

A Message from the Dean

This Fall Semester has been one of the busiest and most exciting of my time as Dean.

Not only is the School gaining more and more national prominence with our alums succeeding in all forms of dramatic expression – from Broadway to webisodes – but we are also having an impact globally with an increased number of international students coming to study with us and our faculty teaching and leading workshops in countries such as Rwanda, Brazil, China, Norway and Iran.

And, at the end of the semester, a delegation from the Shanghai Theatre Academy will visit the School. It is my hope that we will be able to forge a relationship with STA, one of the

premiere actor training programs in China.

We are also busy planning our first New York Graduate Acting Showcase which will take place next April with both the graduating Seniors and graduating MFAs participating.

All this and visits from guest artists including Mike Farrell and Tony Kushner.

I hope this issue of Callboard gives you some small sense of the new excitements we are experiencing in the ever-evolving life of the School.

I look forward to see you at one of our productions.

Dean Madeline Puzo

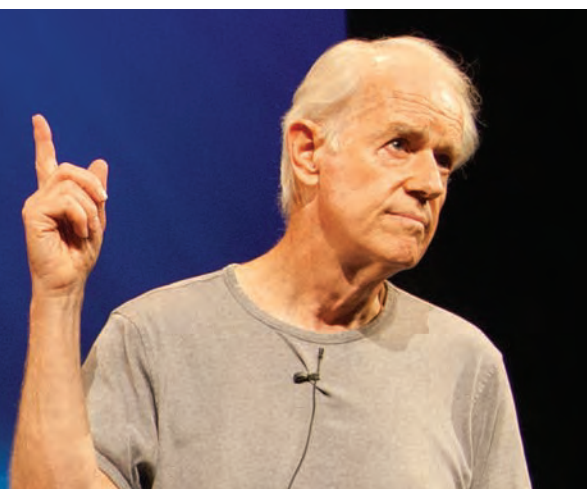
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Dr. Keeling's Curve

One-man Play Makes Special Performance on Bing Stage



When renowned scientist Dr. Charles David Keeling began his research of recording atmospheric carbon dioxide levels in 1958, he didn't expect that his findings would eventually uncover a jarring truth: the global climate was rising at a daunting pace.

"This is a guy who didn't start out on this journey as a believer. He stumbled into these discoveries," said actor Mike Farrell, who has performed onstage as the researcher since 2012. "[Keeling] had this kind of sweet, naïve faith that the people, given the facts, would respond appropriately. What he found was the countervailing point of view; the people who wanted to say these facts that are not facts, were much more powerful than he understood. As a result of that, he became even more outspoken."

Keeling's life work measuring CO2 levels, as

well as the impact of his discovery on the perception of global warming and his call to action, was portrayed in a special performance of George Shea's one-man play, *Dr. Keeling's Curve*. The SDA event was held in conjunction with the USC Visions and Voices: The Arts and Humanities Initiative on the Bing Theatre stage in September.

"...it occurred to me that if you were really trying to explain the intricacies and impacts of global warming, then one of the simplest and most direct ways of doing so would be to tell the story of this dogged scientist who opened the door to our modern understanding of climate change. And the most effective version of this story, I was convinced, would be one that took full advantage of all the drama surrounding his discoveries..." wrote Shea in an article for *OnEarth* magazine.

Dr. Keeling's Curve – which refers to the graphical

measurement of the dramatic rise in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over the last 60 years – was directed by Kirsten Sanderson and produced by The Blank Theatre. It starred Farrell, who is best known for his human rights activism and his role as Army Capt. B.J. Hunnicutt on the television show *M*A*S*H*.

The performance was followed by a conversation with the actor and Sanderson, which was facilitated by USC Professor of Biological Sciences Donal T. Manahan to discuss Keeling's work as well as global warming.

"We're talking about potentially drastic changes in the way we live in this world – we being all people in this world. Of course, as we have found in the past, it will have the most impact on the poor and the less developed countries. Ultimately, it will impact everybody," said Farrell, who helped Shea develop the piece for theatre several years ago. "We're trying to make it more identifiable by telling the story of this man and what he did."

A human rights activist, Farrell is co-chair emeritus of Human Rights Watch in Southern California, spokesperson for Concern America, co-founder of Artists United to Win Without War and president of Death Penalty Focus.

He said: "All my work in human rights has been about the value of the human being, and the fundamental nature of society and that it should be interested in preserving and protecting individual people's rights and value, and honoring that. When you see something as potentially devastating as this process, you begin to see there are issues that envelop the whole problem."

SDA Welcomes First International Artist Fellow

By Allison Engel



Fei Kayser says she's "desperate" to write plays about contemporary Chinese life. "There is so much story there," the former Xi'an, Shaanxi, and Beijing resident said.

The first-year MFA Dramatic Writing student is one of four inaugural fellows in the USC International Artist Fellowship Program who began their scholarly pursuits on campus this fall semester. She is joined by Vladimir Gorbach of Russia, Jacinto Astiazarán of Mexico and Frederico Fernandez of Brazil.

Kayser completed her undergraduate work at Yale University. After college, she was a founder and consultant on scriptwriting for a film production company in Beijing. The young playwright has also written for China Central Television, China Daily and interactive media.

At USC, Kayser will be working with professors Velina Hasu Houston and Oliver Mayer, and anticipates writing two plays per year during her three-year stay.

"I want to write things that are funny and accessible, and not in a didactic style," she said. "China is in the news all the time, so I have much to write about."

USC Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Elizabeth Garrett oversaw the creation of the new program, which highlights the university's six world-class arts schools and their place in the global metropolis that is Los Angeles. The program provides tuition, travel and living expenses for fellows, allowing them to focus on creativity and supporting the production of new work. Fellows stay at USC for two or three years, depending on the graduate arts degrees they are pursuing.

In a memo to the Trojan Family, Garrett wrote that the program links with the university's strategic vision of "bringing the best international artists from the Pacific Rim, South Asia and Latin America to our campus for study to form a cadre of creative leaders, whose work will influence USC, Los Angeles and the world."

The International Artist Fellowship Program was announced at the university's 2011 Global Conference in Hong Kong. It is expected to grow to about 15 fellows. Fellows will have planned opportunities to interact with their peers as well as with professionals working in Los Angeles' leading arts industries, including the downtown arts corridor and Hollywood.

Q&A with Fei

Fei Kayser is a first-year MFA of Dramatic Writing student and international dramatist, who has received numerous awards, prizes and fellowships for her written work. She has penned for stage, publication, television and film, as well as taught American and British literature, and film at the university level in China.

The School caught up with Kayser to find out how she has settling into USC and about her current projects:

How has your experience at USC been?

It is incredibly stimulating to be in a community of such talented, intelligent, curious, and ambitious colleagues and mentors. The intellectual energy on campus is prodigious. Students and professors are passionate about and dedicated to their art.

What are you currently working on within the Dramatic Writing program?

I am writing a rollicking musical comedy set in contemporary China. Creative juices really get going when there are no artistic limits placed on us.

What have you gained from the program so far?

I am learning from artists who have made, and continue to make, historical contributions to the field.

And, what have you learned about yourself?

Having great collaborators from the other arts schools at USC pushes me to work that much harder, that much better. I am also writing an animated film with the USC International Artist Fellow from the School of Cinematic Arts.

How do you see your studies at the School helping with your professional career/goals?

This is a protected time to write my best work. My focus is centered, the environment is ideal and I have access to a treasure trove of intellectual resources.

Any other thoughts?

I am very proud to be a Trojan. We are a community that celebrates the arts.

Introducing the Class of 2017

Hailed by Dean Madeline Puzo as "one of the liveliest, most engaging and robust" freshman classes, the Class of 2017 took its first family photo at the annual New Student Barbecue on August 22 in front of the Bing Theatre.



Introducing new Los Angeles Parent Ambassadors Lauren and David Rush

The USC School of Dramatic Arts is pleased to welcome Lauren and David Rush as our newest regional Parent Ambassadors representing the Los Angeles area.

The Rushs reside in Westlake Village, Calif., and are a true Trojan family. In addition to being parents to SDA sophomore Jake Rush, both Lauren and David are alumni and their oldest son Zach is currently studying Philosophy, Politics and Law at the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences.

In their short three-month tenure as Ambassadors, the Rushs have kindly hosted events on behalf of the School for fellow SDA parents, they have helped strengthen our parent network by welcoming new families at our Move-in Day and Trojan Family Weekend festivities, and they have made a leadership pledge to help support the Dean's strategic vision for the School. "Lauren and I are ecstatic

about the direction of and the opportunities within USC's School of Dramatic Arts. The expanded creativity of the classes, quality of the faculty and the Dean's direction, give us confidence of the superior education for our son and the scores of top SDA students," said David Rush.

We are grateful for the Rushs commitment to advocate on behalf of the School, our students and faculty. If you are interested in connecting with Lauren and David, becoming a Parent Ambassador for your region, or if you'd like to meet our Ambassadors in the Bay Area, New York, Boston or Houston regions, please email parents@sda.usc.edu for more information.



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The USC School of Dramatic Arts would like to recognize the tremendous generosity of the following individuals and organizations whose cumulative giving has exceeded \$1 million. Their foresight and commitment to the arts and higher education have helped transform the School into a leader in theatre education:

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We hope you will consider becoming a member by joining these supporters. Please take a moment to return the enclosed reply envelope. For more information about giving to the School of Dramatic Arts, please contact Sara Fousekis at 213.821.4047 or fousekis@usc.edu.

For the Love of Theatre

Artistic Couple Endow Scholarship Fund

It was love at first sight for Craig Zobelein ('60) when he saw his future wife Jennifer for the first time, sitting across the room at a church youth event held at his home. But, instead of getting his fairytale ending in that moment when the USC alumnus walked over to her, he would learn that his happily ever after would have to wait: she was engaged to another.

"A few months later, she decided to give back the engagement ring, and then we began dating. We have been happily married for 53 years," Craig said.

In their marriage, the Zobeleins have shared an especially deep appreciation for the performing arts. The couple recently gave the School of Dramatic Arts the **Jennifer and Craig Zobelein Endowed Scholarship** – a gift that provides, in perpetuity, an annual award to an incoming freshman.

"We wanted to support a program that provides a solid foundation for students who have the desire to act and perform, who need to enlarge their talents, hone their skills, and find opportunities to express themselves, encouraging future careers in theatre and film," they explained. "We both have great respect for the University of Southern California, and fully appreciate the excellent education it provides in so many diverse fields – but *our hearts are with the performing arts*, so that is where we chose to give our support."

Along with being supporters of the arts and believers in the transformative powers of theatre, the Zobeleins are talented artists in their own right. Craig, a native Californian, has performed for decades as a dancer, singer, actor and musician – including more than 20 years with the Conejo Players.

"While growing up, when I felt disturbed about anything, I would go to the piano and make up songs. It always helped me feel better, and this made me understand the importance of the performing arts, both for satisfying personal needs by expressing myself, and also for reaching out to others," he said.

During his childhood years, his home was filled with music – his grandmother sang at the Hollywood Bowl and his mother was an opera star. Craig learned to play the accordion at a young age and later advanced to the piano,



organ, and classical and folk guitars. His most recent work has included silent movie accompaniments, fundraising concerts for local arts organizations and solo performances. He is also a composer. Six of his big band compositions were recently released in the album *Big Band Stew*. Another album of popular songs, played on the Roland *Atelier*, called *Music is Magic! (Live)* – was released at the same time.

Graduating in 1960 from USC with an Electrical Engineering degree, Craig spent 15 years after college as a design engineer in the aerospace industry. His studies led to an achievement that is still perched on the moon today – a signal processor for the Surveyor Program lunar landing which he helped design. Beyond that, his professional career has been diverse. The alumnus spent 15 years as a Conejo Valley Unified School District teacher, served as a park ranger in Wildwood Regional Park in Thousand Oaks and, eventually, spent 11 years managing a multi-million dollar investment corporation in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, his wife has been equally accomplished. A graduate of UCLA (English major, Music minor), she has written a variety of educational materials, fiction stories, advertising copy, record inserts and political speeches. Her first book, *Great Dinosaurs*, was published by Hallmark in 1980. In 2007, Jennifer authored the book *A Forest of Pipes: The Story of the Walt Disney Concert Hall Organ* and helped to produce the premiere recording of the famed pipe organ, *First & Grand*, released in 2010 by organist Christoph Bull.

"I have always had a great curiosity about everything, so when I find out the facts about something, I feel impelled to write them down," the author said. "Since grade school, I have enjoyed writing, both fiction and non-fiction. I find great satisfaction in telling a story well, selecting the appropriate words and descriptive phrases."

Also a musician, Jennifer has served as a church organist in Ventura County and later as Dean of the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists for three years.

Additional to her musical and written achievements, Jennifer was a public school educator for 15 years, and worked as an office manager and corporate treasurer in the investment company her husband managed for 11 years. She also has volunteered for various charities – specifically as project chair for Habitat for Humanity's first house building in Thousand Oaks.

"Supporting community organizations has always been important to me. I derive great satisfaction from knowing that I have facilitated something of benefit to others that would not be there without the contributions of time, effort and money from people who care," Jennifer said.

With similar passions and more than 50 years together, the duo rarely find themselves un-supportive of each other. The only time is "during football season when UCLA and USC are competing. Then we cheer on opposite sides!"

Game Day rivalry aside, the pair continue to work harmoniously together. In 2012, they co-produced a documentary DVD/CD called *The Walt Disney Concert Hall Organ*. For the last three years, they have actively supported New West Symphony by contributing and raising money for this professional orchestra, which performs in three venues in Ventura County and Santa Monica. As the Immediate Past President, Jennifer successfully negotiated a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the American Federation of Musicians and chaired the Music Director Search Committee, which selected the new conductor. Both of them currently serve on the symphony board.

Above all, this artistic couple enjoy spending time with their grown children and four grandchildren, especially at their family recreational home on the shore of Big Bear Lake.

Upcoming Events

MFA ACTING SPRING REPERTORY

Scene Dock Theatre | February 8-March 9

OUR TOWN

By Thornton Wilder | Directed by Cameron Watson

A timeless, contemplative American drama that explores the inevitable cycle of life through the story of two childhood sweethearts who encounter the human experience together.

TROJAN WOMEN

By David Bridel | Directed by David Bridel & the MFA Acting Class of 2014

Inspired by the Euripides classic, this modern version of the epic story will be created by the company of actors in a creative collaboration with director David Bridel. Movement, music and original text combine to forge a contemporary, smart and powerful tale.

TARTUFFE

By Molière | Translation by Richard Wilbur | Directed by Andrew J. Robinson

The fraudulent and pious impostor, Tartuffe, ingratiates himself with a prosperous man and his mother in a humorous attempt to build wealth of his own.

THE ART OF SUCCESS

By Nick Dear | Directed by Stephanie Shroyer
McClintock Theatre | February 27-March 2

A tumultuous decade condensed into a single night, this bawdy comedy depicts the raucous underbelly world of artist William Hogarth in 18th Century London as he faces the boundaries of artistic expression.

MFA ACTING 2 SHOW

Bing Theatre | March 6-9

A spring production that showcases our second-year Master of Fine Arts Acting students.

GRAND HOTEL, THE MUSICAL

Book by Luther Davis
Music and Lyrics by George Forrest
and Robert Wright
Based on Vicki Baum's *Grand Hotel*
By arrangement with Turner Broadcasting Co.,
Owner of the motion picture *Grand Hotel*
Additional music and lyrics by Maury Yeston
Directed by John Rubinstein
Bing Theatre | April 3-13

A group of eccentric guests spend a lavish weekend at the opulent Grand Hotel in 1928 Berlin – when the Roaring Twenties are in high gear and where the city is the center of high life.

Faculty Abroad: Director of Applied Theatre Arts Program Visits Iran

Brent Blair, director of the Applied Theatre Arts program, was invited to Tehran in September to present a two-day workshop and presentation at the first Applied Theatre Conference of Iran. Returning from the conference, the associate professor of theatre practice wrote a first-person recount of his experience. By Brent Blair



As the U.S. and Iran have no official diplomatic relationship, bureaucratic suspicion is recognizably high on both sides of this divide. While standing in line at the Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport passport control a friendly German couple asked how on earth an American

got into the country, and was I going to have any trouble. I laughed looking at the line moving towards the passport officer, saying, "Well, we'll know in a few minutes." Forty-five minutes and three interrogations plus a fingerprint scan later, I tasted the reality of this frosty divide.

The warm manner in which the community of Iranian theatre practitioners welcomed me proves that art indeed dissolves political boundaries. Ali Zafar, founding host of the first annual Applied Theatre Conference in Tehran, invited practitioners in dramatherapy, theatre in education, and Theatre of the Oppressed from all over the world to participate in a five-day artistic dialogue on the power of theatre for social, political, and therapeutic transformation. In the end, I was among a small handful of foreign nationals who had managed passage to the conference.

Women and men alike engaged freely and vigorously in this week-long theatrical debate with some of the greatest controversy surrounding the presentation by the director of cultural affairs for Iranian prisons. His warm invitation for participants to create more prison theatre projects was met with no small amount of skepticism and challenge from the audience.

I led two days of workshops, including an Image Theatre session that bridged the English-Farsi gap and a three-hour workshop focusing on work with issues of trauma called The Museum of the Unspeakable that proved deeply moving for the more than forty people involved. Theatre of the Oppressed was the preferred artistic language of the conference, and groups from all over Iran showed Forum Theatre scenes about women's rights, the plight of Afghan child refugees in Iran, and struggles around sexual repression.

It was clear to me that there are many more similarities than differences in the desires of Iranians and Americans. As conference attendees quickly became family, the common cry was for artists on both sides of this impasse to warm the hearts and minds of their respective leaders, and to rehumanize this dysfunctional relationship. The conference proved that Applied Theatre was already making this road possible.

More Global Faculty News

- David Bridel Associate Dean of Global Initiatives and Associate Director of MFA Acting, Professor of Theatre Practice is the winner of a 2013-14 Zumberge Grant for his project *Clowns Across Continents*, and will be traveling to China in March to conduct research with Beijing Opera companies.
- Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Theatre Practice Dr. Sharon Carnicke is presenting a 10-day Intensive Active Analysis Class at the National Academy of Theatre Arts in Norway in March of next year.
- Faculty member Paula Cizmar was selected as one of eight recipients of an ON the ROAD grant, designed by Theatre Communications Group and funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. She will be travelling to The Hague and The Balkans to do research for a play about human trafficking.
- Associate Dean of Faculty Recognition and Development and Director of Dramatic Writing Velina Hasu Houston is the recipient of a grant from the Aurora Foundation. She will be conducting research in Hiroshima, Japan, next year in preparation for a new play. Also, Houston's new opera project *The Intuition of Iphigenia* is based at the Ryerson Theatre School in Toronto, Canada.

Alumni Marquee

Charlotte Ann (BA 2004) has voiced several characters for upcoming video games including Kim in Bizarre Investigations, the protagonist in *9 Clues: The Secret of Serpent Creek*, Nala in *Komodo Crunchtime: Ultimate Superstars*, the Protagonist in *ToyMaker*, and *Connie in Enigmatis 2*.

Inga Ballard (MFA 1983) played the Gospel Singer in the season finale of *30 Rock*, "Hogcock" episode – as well as Brock in *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, "The Good"; City Hall Clerk in *All My Children*; Singer in the *Ragtime* Concert at Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center; and Sarah's Friend in the 1st/2nd National Tour of *Ragtime*. Credits also include numerous regional productions of *Hairspray* as Motormouth Maybelle and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* at the Shakespeare Theatre Company as Lucretia.

Brice Beckham (1996) and **David Fickas** (BFA 1996) wrote the young-adult web series *In Bloom*, directed by Andy Tennant (*Ever After*, *Sweet Home Alabama*, *Anna and the King*).

ST Bende (BA 2000) recently released her Norse mythology-inspired novel, *Elsker*, and the sequel *Endre*.

Christopher Boltz (BFA 1998) is the Department Chair/Resident Scenery and Lighting Designer at Fresno City College. He is responsible for designing scenery, lighting and props on two main stage theatre productions, one fully produced studio production and one full staged dance concert per year – as well as additional design support to two theatre workshops and one dance workshop per year.

John Coffey (BA 2005), a talent agent for The Kohner Agency, was included in *Variety's* Top 10 to Watch in their Hollywood's New Leaders issue in October 2012.

Katrina Coulourides (BFA 2005) completed a certificate with UCLA Extension for Design Communication Arts. She is also an assistant Rose Parade Float designer for City of Torrance's 2014 entry, and a resident scenic artist and electrician at Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Amanda Dieli (BFA 2008) performed in *The Orpheus Variations* at HERE in New York.

Andrew Dits (MA 2010) got his first major recurring role on the TV series, *My Crazy Roommate*, on Bounce TV.

Alixzandra Dove (BA 2009) earned her

SAG card and filmed on-location in Hawaii for *Hawaii 5-0* and *Last Resort*.

Ryan Eggold (BFA 2006) co-stars in the new NBC drama *The Blacklist*.

Marcia Garcia (BFA 2009) was most recently an associate production manager at Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey. She was previously a production stage manager for Pacific Stages and stage manager at Busch Gardens Williamsburg.

Sarah Gise (BFA 2011) won leading female performance for her work in Ensemble Studio Theatre/LA's *The Belle of Belfast* at the LA Weekly Awards.

Lisa Gopman (BA 1999) recently cofounded the Oh My Ribs! Theater in Hollywood – a place for a variety of artistic endeavors including standup comedy, improv, music, plays, musicals, one-person shows and film screenings.

Patrick T. Gorman (BA 1995) recently had his first novel, *Quentin McFury - The Last Defender*, published. It is the first volume of the Quentin McFury Series.

Shelly Hacco (BA 2006) co-produced and starred in a play at Theatre 68 in Hollywood called *Crumble (Lay Me Down Justin Timberlake)*, written by Sheila Callaghan.

Jenna Heffernan (BA 2003) recently starred as Sunshine in *Nosferajew 2*, which won an Award of Merit from the Best Shorts Competition.

Briga Heelan (BA 2009) is a co-lead in the TBS show *Ground Floor*, and is a recurring role in NBC's *Undateable*.

Nikki Hyde (BA 2007) is a production stage manager for *Love on San Pedro* at the Cornerstone Theater Company and was production assistant for *The Scottsboro Boys* at the Ahmanson Theatre.

Margaret Ivey (BA 2011) was in the Light & Theatre Company's world premiere of *Stargirl*, an adaptation by Y York of the young adult novel by Jerry Spinelli.

Yafit Josephson (2008) is seen off-off-Broadway at the Kraine Theatre in East Village, New York City, performing her one-woman show *New Eyes*, which received a successful three-year run in California and around the United States.

Louise Abnee Keshaviah (BA 2009) was recently named one of *Variety's* 10 Assistants to Watch list in the New Hollywood Leaders issue.

Winnie Lok (BFA 2001) has been professionally stage managing in New York since 2005. Upcoming shows include August Wilson's *How I Learned What*

I Learned, starring Ruben Santiago-Hudson, at Signature Theatre and John Patrick Shanley's *Outside Mullingar*, directed by Doug Hughes at Manhattan Theatre Club.

Kristen Kopp (BFA 2007) was recently an assistant costume designer for the Warner Brothers' film *Inherent Vice* and assistant costume designer for the play *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* at the Mark Taper Forum.

Alma Martinez (MFA 1995) has been a recurring guest star on the dramatic FX series *The Bridge*, and also guest starred in the pilot for the comedy *Welcome to the Family*. Her article, *Pancho Villa's Head: the Mexican Revolution and the Chicano Dramatic Imagination*, was published in the anthology *Open Borders to a Revolution: Culture, Politics, and Migration* for the Smithsonian Scholarly Press. She also initiated, coordinated and acted in a production of *Zoot Suit*, written and directed by Luis Valdez, with the National Theatre Company of Mexico in Mexico City.

Sarah Milner (BA 2009) performed in Long Beach Shakespeare Company's *The Winter's Dale* as Dion/Emilia/Dorcas.

Ron Morehouse (BFA 2001) is one of the recurring characters in the new Burger King ads. This past year, Morehouse was the voice of Spiderman for Target and Carl's Jr., as well as Andrew Garfield's voice match for *The Amazing Spiderman*. He recently guest starred on *NCIS*, and performed in the highly-acclaimed *Don't Tell My Mother* show at Café Fais Do Do and in *Streep Tease* in L.A. for two years, as well as at Joe's Pub/Public Theater.

Reynaldo Pacheco (MFA 2009) was featured in *The Man Who Shook the Hand of Vicente Fernandez*, which was Academy Award Winner Ernest Borgnine's last performance. Among his accomplishments, Pacheco was in *Beginners* with Christopher Plummer and Ewan McGregor, and created an acting academy in three cities in South America.

Jeff Parker (BFA 1989) remains a Chicago-based actor whose most recent credits include Vittorio in *Sweet Charity* at Writers' Theatre Chicago; and Dickinson in *1776* and Higgins in *My Fair Lady* at Asolo Repertory Theatre, both directed by Tony-winner Frank Galati. Parker also appeared this fall in the remount of Frank Galati's production of *1776* at ACT in San Francisco.

Kimberly Patch (BFA 2008) is now the stage manager at the Forward Theatre in Madison, Wis., and is a proud member of

Actor's Equity. Prior to her most recent achievements, Patch spent the last three years as assistant stage manager at the Forward and at the American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wis., during summers.

Louie Piday (BA 1975 & MFA 1989) rejoined SDA faculty as associate professor of theatre practice, teaching acting in BA and BFA programs in fall semester.

Taylor Ruge (BFA 2012) is an assistant stage manager for the Boston Lyric Opera.

Ian Shain (BA 2007) was named by the Independent Reviewers of New England as the Best Young Performer for his moving portrayal of Aaron Fricke in the world premiere production *Reflections of a Rock Lobster*.

Katie Sickmeier (BFA 2006) is a costume coordinator/costume designer at Anderson University. During the summer, she was an assistant costume designer at American Players Theatre and costume designer at Indiana Festival Theatre.

James Snyder (BFA 2003) is featured in the Broadway-bound musical *If/Then* by Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning writers Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey.

Michael Solomon (BFA 1988) was recently appointed Associate Vice President of Programming for The Music Center.

Kristina Sorensen (BA 2003) is an executive management associate and producer at Vie Entertainment, owned by ID-PR's Kelly Bush.

Anthony Sparks (BFA 1994) is a writer and producer for the new NBC drama series *The Blacklist*, starring James Spader. In addition, the exhibit he wrote for Walt Disney World, *Re-Discovering America*, has opened at EPCOT and will run until 2016.

Kate Thomas (BFA 2011) is currently working in post-production for MGM, and titles have included *Skyfall*, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, *The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug*, *Carrie* and *Robocop*.

Bree Michael Warner (BA 1998) appeared in the feature film *Officer Down* as part of the ensemble cast opposite Stephen Dorff, James Woods, Stephen Lang, David Boreanaz and Dominic Purcell. The alum is currently producing and starring in two feature films, *Trust Me, I'm A Lifeguard* and *Eleanor Rigby Is Waiting*, both being filmed in NYC.

Callboard is published three times a year by the USC School of Dramatic Arts for alumni, parents, students and friends.

Dean
Madeline Puzo

Assistant Dean, Communications
Delphine Vasko

Director of Print and Digital Media
Stacey Wang

Design
IE Design + Communications



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hours," Johnson said. "The next day they gave me access to private archives and for the next two or three weeks, I shut off cable and I just

lived in the land of Janis Joplin."

It was a revisiting of sorts. Johnson was five years old when his father brought home Joplin's *Cheap Thrills* album, "and I played that album so much that my parents moved my record player out to the garage."

Inspired by Joplin's musical influences – Odetta, Bessie Smith, Aretha Franklin, Nina Simone – Johnson "woke up one day at 3 a.m., put on a pot of coffee and 18 hours later surfaced with the first draft of the show."

That was in October 2010. The following March, the formerly titled *One Night With Janis Joplin* opened at the Portland Center Stage. It was a box office smash. "Forty thousand people saw it," Johnson said. The show went on to other regional theatres, including the Pasadena Playhouse, where it was the highest grossing production in that theatre's history.

It includes personifications of the iconic rock star's muses as well as back-up singers called the "Joplinares" and on-stage musicians representing Joplin's original band, Big Brother and the Holding Company.

"With Janis especially, people have an idea of who she is and focus on the negative aspects," but there was much more to Joplin than her death at age 27 due to a drug overdose, he said. Starring "force of nature" Mary Bridget Davies, Johnson noted the show is "a distillation of the life and spirit of Janis Joplin" that resonates with teenagers as well as older and younger

"I think my years at USC helped in a major way define who I am as a person and as an artist."
— Randy Johnson

adults "because the music is timeless. Janis has remained contemporary throughout the years because those performances are truthful and raw and honest and full of integrity."

"I really feel like Janis would be thrilled and

chuckling that this was opening on Broadway," he added. "When Janis became a star, one of the first things she did when she hit New York was to go see *Hello, Dolly!* with Pearl Bailey. That's not the Janis that people think of as somebody hanging out in the East Village and rocking out in her shows."

Regarding his eclectic career choices, Johnson said that his experiences as a theatre arts student at USC "made me believe that I could do anything." His professor, the late theatre designer and director John Blankenchip, he said, "made me push and stretch further [and] the whole drama department was the same way. I think my years at USC helped in a major way define who I am as a person and as an artist."

The son of a Hughes Aircraft executive and a surgical nurse who "encouraged my dreams," Johnson originally planned to act, "but as opportunities came up for writing, directing and producing came forward, I always just said yes." "That was another thing that John Blankenchip taught me: say yes to your life. And here I am on Broadway."

Johnson will direct *Smokey Joe's Café* at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., in April, but after Janis, he said, "I'm going to decorate my apartment in New York, play with my dog and go Christmas shopping."