

culver city academy of visual and performing arts

avpa spotlight

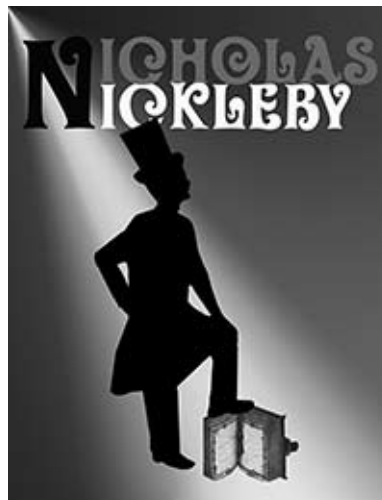
November 2009 Volume 5 Number 3

Inspiring and empowering students to build a compassionate and creative community through innovative and challenging arts education.

AVPA's Fall Theatre Production *Nicholas Nickleby* opens on November 12th

The AVPA Theatre Department is proud to present their first production of the season: *Nicholas Nickleby*, based on the novel by Charles Dickens, adapted for the stage by Tim Kelly, and directed by AVPA's new Creative Director of theatre, Sheila Silver. The show runs Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, November 12 to November 21 at 7 p.m. with 1:00 p.m. matinees Sundays, November 15 and 22 at the Sony Pictures Theatre (The Blackbox), behind the Robert Frost Auditorium, 4401 Elenda Street in Culver City. Tickets are \$15 general admission; \$10 ASB/Seniors/ Children/Faculty; free for holders of a Season Pass and can be purchased online at www.tix.com or www.avpa.org.

One of Charles Dickens' best-loved (and most complex) stories comes to life in this lively historical comedy-drama. *Nicholas Nickleby*, 19-year-old, becomes the head of the family when his father dies unexpectedly. Keeping watch over his mother and his sister becomes an even greater challenge when Nicholas discovers that his father lost the family fortune due to ill-advised investments. Without a shilling to his name, Nicholas turns to his wealthy but unforgiving Uncle Ralph for help; Uncle Ralph offers to find work for all three, and Nicholas becomes a teacher at a school for unfortunate boys run by Wackford Squeers and his contemptuous wife, who are cruel and frequently violent toward their charges. When Wackford, without cause, beats his most weak and timid student, Nicholas decides he can take no more and runs away, with Smike in tow. The two young men fall in with a traveling theater troupe run by the genially eccentric Vincent Crummles. In time Nicholas returns to London, where to his horror, he learns that Uncle Ralph has put his mother and sister in compromising positions. Nicholas attempts to tear his family away from Uncle Ralph's control, beginning with a job working for the warm-hearted Charles Cheeryble. Nicholas falls in love with the fair Madeline Bray, but when Uncle Ralph learns of



Design by Corrie Johnston-Grier

Nicholas' plot, he foils their love by forcing Madeline to wed the decrepit but wealthy Arthur Gride. Meet these and many more memorable characters in Nicholas Nickleby, where adventure sticks to the lad like jam on toast!

With costumes by Alicia Simmons of The Actors'Gang along with student designer, Jennifer Schallert, lights supervised by AVPA Instructor Francois Pierre Couture and student light designer Zak Malsich and sets designed by Brian Cole, theatre goers will travel alongside Nicholas in this melodramatic romp of a tale through the cobblestone streets of Victorian England.

Sheila Silver, AVPA Creative Director of Theatre, selected *Nicholas Nickleby* as her inaugural production with AVPA in order to build an ensemble-based production company and to bring a literary classic to life. 22 students play 41 roles in this onstage/offstage production. "Even before our audiences enter the theatre, they will be emerged in the world of our play," cited Silver, whose creative directing takes the production well beyond the theatre walls.

Nicholas Nickleby is produced in conjunction with The AVPA Foundation.

Be sure to reserve your seats at www.avpa.org

AVPA Theatre Students perform at DTASC Festival

At 5:40 the lights went off in the school gym and as if the cue had been well-planned and rehearsed, 2000+ cell phones came out and illuminated the space. "HELLO D-TASC" boomed the voice and the crowd went wild with cheers, chants and rhythmic stomping. The time-honored ritual had begun, much like our roots in the Festival of Dionysis - we had come together to celebrate theatre - AND THAT WE DID!

AWESOME! AMAZING! INSPIRING! Were the words used by AVPA Theatre Students to describe their experiences at the DTASC Fall Festival in which they participated on Saturday October 24th at Carson High School. Co-Coordinated by senior, Joey Guthman and sophomore, Amy King, thirty members of Culver City's Blurred Vision Theatre Company joined 71 other schools, over 2000 drama students from all over Southern California, to act, dance, sing, design and offer enthusiastic rounds of applause in appreciation of the talents that were shared. The Drama Teachers Association of Southern California (DTASC) is Culver City's Regional Division of the CETO (California Educational Theatre Organization) and our parent group for The International Thespian Society.



The rules for the Fall DTASC Festival are simple - no costumes, no props, no makeup - just 4 chairs and acting ensembles as small as two and as large as ten players. Stated King, "I now know that we can create 'SPECTACLE' out of 4 chairs and bodies!" CCHS participated in seven separate events including: Monologue, Top 100 AFI Film Scenes, Scenes for Social Change, Musical, Scenes by Irish Playwrights, Large Cast Drama and Large Cast Comedy. Having performed a 'SHOWCASE' of the scenes on Thursday, October 24, to a packed house and rave reviews, the students felt confident going into the day. All actors/ensembles competed in two compulsory rounds from which they emerged saying, "There are so many talented people here!" Four of our seven scenes went on to the semi-finals and CCHS had one survivor in the finals. Our entire group packed into room F1 at Carson High to root for Jesse Pilchin, Conor Murphy and Kevin Mitchell as they performed a five minute scene from *The Lonesome West* by Irish playwright, Martin McDonagh for the fourth time that day. "Nothing gets closer to an athletic event for drama kids than this," stated Pilchin after the final round was over. "I am so grateful for the support that our whole team gave us - to see everyone out there in the audience was amazing!"

Not only were the CCHS students applauding for this scene directed by junior Louie Chavez, but so was the entire gym-filled audience when it was awarded the first place trophy! One more time, Pilchin and Murphy took the stage for a fifth time (or gym floor as the case may be) to fight as Irish brothers while Mitchell's 'Father Welch' looked on in agony. The actors were giddy and exhausted as they handed the trophy to their director, Chavez.

Accompanying the students at the DTASC Festival was theatre parent, Pam Fader, who was in awe of the entire experience. "I am so grateful that our kids have such positive opportunities like this," she said at the end of day to AVPA Director of Theatre, Sheila Silver. As they boarded the bus fourteen hours later, students were already approaching Silver with ideas about "...what we want to act in and direct for next year's festival!" Inspired by the creative talent and wonderful collegiality of the day, Silver responded, "What do you mean next year? We have the DTASC Shakespeare Festival in April!" Up went cheers of joy as the bus pulled away and headed back home.



To see all of the 1st Place winners of the DTASC Fall Festival, join us at "SALUTE TO THE WINNERS" - Sunday, November 15th at the Barnsdall Gallery Theatre at 4800 Hollywood Blvd. in Los Angeles, starting at 6:00 pm. The AVPA scene will be at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$5.00 each, and are available online at www.bgttix.com

“RETIREMENT BASH” at The Senior Center

By Marisa Okano

On Saturday, October 24th, AVPA’s Visual Art Students hosted yet another hugely successful exhibition of performance art in association with The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles alongside artist, Elana Mann. The event titled, “Retirement Bash,” was an exploration of an exciting genre of performance art. Students performatively “retired” outdated sayings, symbols, and images from society in a variety of unique ways. Audience participation was encouraged for most of the work presented to an enthusiastic crowd.

In order to drive their creative process, 30 AVPA artists visited MOCA, the space of Machine Project, located in Echo Park. Machine Project is a non-profit community space investigating art, technology, natural history, science, music, literature, and food. Working as an artists’ collective, Machine Project produces events, workshops, and site-specific installations. AVPA artists were also given a sneak peek into The Echo Park Film Center to inform us of the resources available to young artists and filmmakers.

After five weeks of studying the work of an array of performance artists, sharing ideas and interviewing various members of the Culver City community, students were able to coordinate a number of fascinating works of performance art. In an effort to retire the notion of materialism, Victor Delgado-Lopez destroyed a number of designer-label shopping bags and even an Apple iPod. Anisa Khanmohamed invited visitors to drive a remote control car across a world map in order to retire cultural comfort zones. Beth Bolas encouraged adult visitors to become kids again by building a cardboard fort, all to retire the common idea that grown-ups shouldn’t be allowed to be playful. Angie Bac encouraged everyone to throw paint-filled eggs to retire cultural stereotypes.

With the guidance and inspiration taught by performance artist, Elana Mann, the generosity of Sony Pictures Entertainment and MOCA, and the venue offered by the Culver City Senior Center, the Academy Art Students were proud to showcase their performance art in a unique way. Thank you to everyone who made this event a success.



On October 16th, AVPA Department of Dance Hosted a Master Class with Luiz Badaró and Linda Yudin of Viver Brasil. Below two dance students share their experiences:

"I thought the class was a lot of fun and interesting. The culture was fascinating and I learned a lot about Afro-Brazilian dance and the mythical concepts that shaped the dances. I especially enjoyed the part at the end where we stood around in a circle and sang one of their beautiful songs, following the singer who had come from Brazil. I felt so lucky to hear her song, and to sing with her. Overall, it was a wonderful experience."

Allie Miks, Dance Major, Sophomore



My experience in the Afro Brazilian workshop was amazing. It exposed me to a different genre of dance, in a beautiful and artistic way. I enjoyed the stories that were told behind each piece of movement, it brought on a whole new perspective. When we danced while they played the drums, it was a lot of fun, very rhythmic and sort of soulful with a Brazilian touch. This class taught me a lot of new types of movement that I've never been exposed to before and I most definitely would like to take a class like that again! - Gabrielle Garcia, senior

AVPA Dance Company Shares at the ASB Halloween Party

A small portion of the AVPA Dance Company once again offered a "Halloween Happening" at the ASB Halloween Luau on Friday, October 30. A member of the ASB student council spoke briefly to Creative Director Julie Carson on Wednesday, October 28, suggesting that "maybe the AVPA Dancers could dance at the ASB-sponsored Halloween Party?" This set Carson into action. She had already planned to give the students a holiday-inspired combination for class, but this was just the motivation both the teacher and the students needed to kick a short performance into gear. After all of the students in class had a chance to work on the combination (danced to Oingo Boingo's "Dead Man's Party"), Carson asked for brave volunteers who would be willing to put a little more work into the combination and dance for the Halloween Luau. Eight brave dancers stepped forward, added rehearsal on Friday, to the quad and performed

and after 30 minutes of the dancers trekked out "Dead Man's Party" for the crowd. Carson was pleased with the spirit of the dancers and the dance, stating, "This is great. When invited to share a dance, I will usually respond with, "Let's go for it!" I love it when my dancers will embrace an opportunity like this, and just give it their best shot." This dance marks the 4th annual "dance happening" at the ASB Halloween Party.



Chamber Singers Perform for Mickey Rooney at Film Festival



On Saturday, October 10, the AVPA Chamber Singers, directed by Lisa Michel, performed a medley of songs at the Backlot Film Festival. Film legend Mickey Rooney was in attendance, receiving the Thomas Ince Award from the Backlot Festival. The Chamber Singers performed songs related to famed MGM producer and lyricist Arthur Freed, for whom the Backlot Student Film award is named. "Singin' in the Rain," "The Trolley Song," "On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe," and "How About You" were sung in a medley, featuring soloists Kayla Guirguis, Gina Chelette, and Brandon Blum.



"It was an extraordinary honor and opportunity for our students to perform for one of Hollywood's giants," said Dr. Tony Spano, AVPA Co-Director. Mickey Rooney was introduced by Ann Rutherford, who co-starred with Rooney as his character Andy Hardy's girlfriend. She also appeared in *Gone With the Wind* as Scarlet O'Hara's sister.

The Backlot Film Festival also honored AVPA by committing \$5 of each ticket sold for the gala awards evening to the AVPA Foundation.

Chamber Singers to Perform for Culver City Tree Lighting Events

In what has become an annual tradition, the AVPA Chamber Singers will perform at both the downtown Culver City holiday tree lighting on Thursday, Dec. 3, and the Veteran's Auditorium tree lighting on Friday, Dec. 4. Both events will begin at 6:00 pm. Come out and celebrate the holidays with the Chamber Singers!



AVPA Announces Spring Musical

AVPA will present the musical *Pippin* this spring, opening on April 21. With words and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, the 1972 Broadway smash ran for almost 2,000 performances. The original cast included Ben Vereen, John Rubinstein, and Irene Ryan (who played Granny on "The Beverly Hillbillies"). The story follows Pippin, son of Charlemagne in an off-beat and eclectic presentation, which was originally directed on Broadway by Bob Fosse.

Schwartz has had a long history of Broadway and Hollywood musical hits. From original stage hits *Godspell* and *Wicked*, Schwartz also contributed lyrics to Disney's *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

AVPA Music Majors 2009-10



Film Department News

5 student directors are currently in production on "Fall Films." The 5 directors include Duncan Ballantine, Jeana Linstrot, Jade James, Justin Kelly and Ben Mullen. Two student directors chose to adapt short stories and three wrote original scripts. We then broke up into five crews comprised of both new and resuming AVPA film students. Shooting began Friday, October 23rd and will continue on weekends throughout November. Fall Films will be completed by Friday, December 11, 2009. Look out for the screening of these films at the Frost Film Festival which is slated for January 22nd and 23rd.

AVPA FILM will host a GIANT YARD SALE on Saturday, November 21, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the home of filmmaker Justin Kelly, 10849 Garfield Avenue, Culver City (across the street from the school). If you would like to donate items to the sale, please contact Jean Ballantine at j.ballantine@ca.rr.com, 310-398-4200 or Ruth Zasadil at advancedmusical@ca.rr.com, 310-613-7053, or bring your donations to the Kelly home on Friday, November 20 from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Job Shadowing in Film Production by Katherine Maxwell

Over the spring and summer of last school year, I job shadowed a number of film industry professionals: freelance television editor Scot Kelly, music editor Erich Stratmann, and movie and television editor Johnny Caruso. After five hours with each person, I learned a lot about their daily procedures and duties.

Scot Kelly has edited TV shows, including CBS' "Moonlight". He attended the UCLA School of Film and Television. He uses AVID Media Composer, the main editing program in the film industry, though he also spoke of Final Cut Pro as a rising competitor in the industry. Mr. Kelly spoke of his process of cutting footage - first watching it, then creating a "bin" of shots he thinks he will use, called "selects". He categorizes different shots and prunes down the "selects" until they reach the correct time slot, usually 45 minutes for TV. He edits rough cuts of shows but also makes fine cut corrections as requested by the studio executives.

Erich Stratmann attended Yale University's Sound and Music Design Program. He was an assistant music editor on the movie "Terminator 4: Salvation". He uses Pro Tools as his primary music editing software, also an industry standard. He explained the concept of premixing, which he defines as the narrowing down of sets of tracks in groups, like brass, strings, percussion, and synths. After premixing, the process of combining multiple tracks down to one track begins. He mentioned a steep learning curve for new technology and the need for computers to be constantly updated to keep up to speed. Mr. Stratmann presented an interesting perspective because he had no previous music background before becoming a music editor.

Johnny Caruso is an Emmy-nominated music editor. When I job shadowed him, he was setting "temp music" to a TV pilot episode. "Temp" music means temporary music; it creates the sound the director wants using music developed for previous films. The temp music then serves as a template for the project's composers and editors. Unlike Mr. Stratmann, Mr. Caruso has an extensive music background. He has written his own music and played in an eighteen-piece band in New York. He explained that when the picture is "locked", there are no more picture changes, making it easier to edit. Mr. Caruso said that the coolest part of his job was "creating something out of nothing".

The next time you hear the music, dialogue, Foley, and effects in a film, pay special attention to it. A lot of work went into all of these post-production tweaks that many people do not consciously acknowledge. Both Mr. Stratmann and Mr. Caruso advised staying through the credits of the film, because that is when you can fully take in the film score. I learned to really appreciate all the hard work that goes into these details many people do not notice while watching a film.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT AVPA'S PRODUCTION OF NICHOLAS NICKLEBY?

**BECOME AN UNDERWRITER
FOR A PERFORMANCE!
COST: \$250.00**

**10 RESERVED SEATS FOR THE
PERFORMANCE OF YOUR CHOICE!**

**COMPLIMENTARY TREATS FROM THE
LONDON MUFFIN AND BISCUIT COMPANY**

PLUS - A CAMEO WALK ON ROLE IN THE SHOW!

CONTACT MS. SILVER FOR MORE INFORMATION!

AVPA Foundation Sponsors Two Fundraisers: Stussy and Menchie's

On Saturday, November 7 you can raise funds for the AVPA program by shopping at the Stussy fundraiser and then make yourself a yogurt at Menchie's.

The Stussy fundraiser has become a semi-annual event for the AVPA. Early in the morning on November 7, Stussy will drive their two trucks into the parking lot at El Rincon Elementary School on the corner of Sawtelle and Overland. A group of AVPA students and parents will unload all the merchandise from the truck in anticipation of the gate opening to the public from 10am until 2pm. Everyone is invited to shop. All merchandise is 50% or more off retail prices. Stussy, Inc. is an Irvine based clothing manufacturer that shows its support for students in the community by putting on fundraisers with school-based organizations. At the last Stussy Fundraiser, we earned \$1,000 for the Academy.

This year we are adding a Menchie's fundraiser starting on Saturday, November 7 through



Saturday, November 14 at 5622 Sawtelle Blvd (right up the street from the El Rincon parking lot). Flyers will be available at the Stussy sale. Menchie's will donate 20% purchase of your purchase to the AVPA Foundation. If you don't have a flyer, make sure you mention the AVPA Foundation fundraiser.

Both the Stussy fundraiser and the Menchie's fundraiser are Academy wide so all five AVPA departments—Art, Dance, Film, Music and Theatre—will benefit.

If you want more information about the Stussy fundraiser, please contact our new Stussy coordinator, Theresa West stahlmanwest@hotmail.com. If you want more information about the Menchie's fundraiser, please contact Susan Bronstein bronstein84@verizon.net.



Holiday Shopping Helps AVPA

Do your holiday shopping on-line and support the AVPA at the same time! Give a gift that gives twice...



amazon.com

Everyone needs a canvas tote bag and our roomy and sturdy AVPA logo tote makes a great gift. Check them out along with all the AVPA T-shirts, aprons, mugs, sweatshirts and more available at <http://www.cafepress.com/avpastore>

Books, movies, music, electronics, and almost anything else you might want to give is available at amazon.com. Shop there by clicking through the amazon.com logo at <http://www.avpafoundation.org> and a portion of your payment will automatically go

to the AVPA! Tell your family and friends to click through this link too!

The AVPA Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation that was started in 2005 by AVPA parents to generate much needed resources for the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts at Culver City High School.

AVPA Stüssy Fundraiser
Saturday, November 7, 10am-2pm
El Rincon Elementary

Theatre • *Nicholas Nickleby*

November 12-14, 19-21, 7 pm
November 15 & 22, 1 pm
SPoT Theatre at the Frost

AVPA / CCHS Assembly

Wednesday, December 9, morning

Music • Winter Concert

Tuesday, December 15, 7 pm
Robert Frost

Film • Frost Film Festival

January 22-23, Robert Frost

AVPA Cabaret Night

“An Evening of Sondheim and Bernstein”

Feb 4-6, 7 pm, February. 6-7, 1 pm
Ivy Substation, Culver City (TBD)

Theatre • Fullerton College

Theatre Festival
March 16-17

CCHS/AVPA Open House/Expo

Wednesday, March 17

Dance • Spring Dance Concert

March 18-20, 7 pm
March 21, 1 pm, Robert Frost

**Music • Chamber Singers at
LA Master Chorale High School Choir Festival**

Friday, April 16, 9am-2pm
Walt Disney Concert Hall

Theatre • DTASC Shakespeare Festival

Saturday, April 24

Theatre • Spring Musical *Pippin*

Opens April 21

Film • Annual Screening

Friday, May 28, 6-9 pm
Sony Pictures Entertainment

Music • Spring Concert

Tuesday, June 1, 7 pm
Robert Frost

AVPA Java Gala II

June 5 or June 12
Location & Details TBA

AVPA Academy Awards

June 5 or 12, TBA



AVPA Alumni Real World News

Class of 2007 AVPA alumni, Chris Narrie and Giana Bommarito will be starring in a production of Steven Sondheim's *Company* at USC in November. Chris will be playing the role of Harry and Giana will be playing the role of April. 4 years ago, Chris and Giana both performed in an AVPA production of *Company*, when they were juniors at CCHS. The dates of the USC production are Nov 19-22 at the Massman Theatre (on the USC campus). Showtimes are at 8 pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and 2 pm on Sunday.



Musical Theater Workshop for Dance begins on November 17!

Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Frost from 5:00 - 6:00 pm.
Come and practice musical theater-style dance techniques

(Especially helpful for those AVPA students who will be auditioning for the Spring Musical *Pippin*)

Contact Julie Carson for more information: note4julie@gmail.com

Dr. Tony Spano (AVPA co-director, music)
tonyspano@ccusd.org

Kristine Hatanaka (AVPA co-director, art)
kristinehatanaka@ccusd.org

Julie Carson (dance director)
note4julie@gmail.com

Alexis Butler (film director)
alexisbutler@ccusd.org

Sheila Silver (theatre director)
sheilasilver@ccusd.org

Karol Mora (administrative coordinator)
karol.mora@sbcglobal.net

Kathy McConkey (AVPA Foundation pres)
kamcconkey@pacbell.net

James Malsich (Spotlight Editor)
jmalsich@mac.com

AVPA www.avpa.org

AVPA Foundation www.avpafoundation.org



Next AVPA Convocation is Wednesday, November 18, @ 1:15–2:00 pm

**Next AVPA Spotlight will be Wednesday, December 9th
Please submit articles by Friday, December 4th**