A Legacy of Excellence

Today CUAdrama continues a legacy of academic and artistic excellence. The department offers undergraduate and graduate programs (acting, directing, playwriting, theatre history and criticism, and theatre education) designed on the premise that theatre is a fundamental cultural necessity that is enriched by and enriches the community in which it is located.

Students of the department work collaboratively — a hallmark of the program’s early years. This creative collaboration and familiarity with the dynamic interface between theatre and the “real world” form a first-rate foundation for a future in almost any field. CUAdrama continues to partner with the local D.C. theatre community to provide internships giving students practical experience in professional settings.

This overarching philosophy, combined with a nurturing, talented, and award-winning faculty with their own national reputations in acting, playwriting, design, and directing, continues to set CUAdrama apart from the field.

“Oscar Wilde wrote that ‘The stage is not merely the meeting place of all the arts, but is also the return of art to life.’ For 75 years, the alumni of Catholic University’s Department of Drama have been taking their artistic training out into the world to challenge and change our society. We are working to ensure that legacy continues for another 75 years,” says Gail Stewart Beach, drama department chair.

For more information, email cuadrama@cua.edu or call 202-319-5351.
CUAdrama Celebrates 75th Anniversary

April Gala to Honor Department’s History and Contributions to Theatre and Screen

Alumni and distinguished guests will gather April 26 and 27 for a gala weekend celebrating the 75th anniversary of The Catholic University of America’s legendary Department of Drama (CUAdrama).

CUAdrama veteran and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Michael Cristofer, who has most recently been seen as Jerry Rand, husband to Anjelica Houston’s character Eileen, on NBC’s “Smash,” will serve as honorary chairman for the weekend. Helen Hayes Award-winning actress Halo Wines and former CUAdrama Chair William H. Graham Sr. will serve as honorary co-chairpersons for the gala.

The celebration features:

**Friday, April 26**
- Panel discussions (acting, directing, playwriting, dramaturgy), 1 to 4 p.m.
- Pre-show champagne reception and performance of Ken Ludwig’s “Shakespeare in Hollywood,” 8 p.m.

**Saturday, April 27**
- Panel discussions, 1 to 4 p.m.
- Afternoon tours of Hartke Theatre
- Kaffee Klatsch, social gathering, 1 to 4 p.m.
- 75 Years of Excellence: A Celebration of CUAdrama and Post-Show Gala Reception including entertainment, Club Callan, wine bar, and more, 7 p.m.

Among the earliest University drama programs in the nation, and one of the first on a Catholic campus, CUAdrama was founded in 1937 as a graduate division within CU’s English department. Under the guidance of the program’s founding chair, Rev. Gilbert V. Hartke, O.P., together with Josephine Callan and the talents of Walter Kerr and Leo Brady, the Department of Speech and Drama quickly gained national prominence as a center of excellence in theatrical training.

“The theatre community realized that there was something special happening within the drama program here,” says Gail Stewart Beach, drama department chair. “Those early decades established a legacy of practical training and dedication to students that carries through to this day.”

A belief that students should learn the profession by hearing from and working in collaboration with professionals led to a host of stars of stage and screen spending time at CU — a tradition that continues as working alumni return to provide lectures and master classes for students.

In October 2009, acclaimed Broadway actors Philip Bosco, B.A. 1957, and Robert Milli, B.A. 1960, performed dramatic readings from George Bernard Shaw plays as part of an international conference hosted by the University.

George M. Cohan, Orson Welles, Carol Channing, and Julie Haydon all spent time at CU. Most notably, Helen Hayes made her final stage appearance at the Hartke Theatre playing Mary Tyrone in a 1971 production of Eugene O’Neill’s classic “Long Day’s Journey into Night.”
CUAdrama alumni are working in every branch of the entertainment industry and the department counts among its ranks winners of the Academy, Tony, and Emmy awards as well as the Pulitzer Prize. Drama graduates have made countless contributions to theatre, film, and television as accomplished actors, directors, writers, managers, designers, and producers.

CUAdrama veterans have gone on to form and strengthen theatre companies in D.C., New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, and beyond. St. Michael’s Playhouse in Colchester, Vt., the Olney Theatre Center in Maryland, and National Players, the nation’s longest running touring company, which will begin its 65th tour this spring, can all trace their roots back to CUAdrama, Father Hartke, and the department’s alumni.

The early successes of the National Players tours led to a partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense to bring American theatre to people living in countries such as Korea, Romania, and Poland. The partnership and tours continued from 1951 until the collapse of communism and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

The CUADrama legacy also reaches into academia — graduates have established themselves as educators and innovators in both secondary and higher education.

“One of Father Hartke’s earliest goals was to train teachers who would then go out and teach a whole new generation of professionals,” Beach adds. “That goal continues with the department’s graduate program in theatre education, the only program of its kind in the Washington, D.C., area, which we established in 2007.”

To purchase tickets online, click here. (http://drama.cua.edu/alumni/75thanniversary.cfm)

To arrange for interviews or to cover the events, contact Katie Lee or Janice Colvin in the Office of Public Affairs at 202-319-5600.
Notable CUA Drama Alumni

Noteworthy stars of the stage, screen, and television who have come through the drama department include:

- **Walter Bobbie**, M.A. 1985, choreographer and director, Tony Award winner
- **Philip Bosco**, B.A. 1957, actor, Tony Award winner
- **Patricia A. Carroll**, B.A. 1949, actress, voice of Ursula in Disney’s “The Little Mermaid”
- **Siobhan Fallon Hogan**, M.F.A. 1985, actress, “Men in Black,” “Forrest Gump”
- **Henry Gibson**, B.A. 1957, the late actor, “Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In”
- **Laurence Luckinbill**, M.F.A., 1958, producer, writer, director, Emmy Award winner
- **Ed McMahon**, B.A. 1949, the late comedian and announcer, “The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson”
- **Tony Messuri**, B.A. 1940, director of NBC’s “The Today Show”
- **Donn Murphy**, M.F.A. 1954, former president of the National Theatre, Washington, D.C.
- **Molly Smith**, B.A. 1974, artistic director, Arena Stage, Washington, D.C.
- **Paula Vogel**, B.A. 1974, playwright, Pulitzer Prize winner
- **Audrey Wasilewski**, B.A. 1989, actress, “Mad Men,” “Grey’s Anatomy”
- **Dennis Wholey**, B.A. 1959, host of PBS’ “This is America with Dennis Wholey”
Michael Cristofer

Michael Cristofer was awarded a Pulitzer Prize and an Antoinette Perry “Tony” Award for the Broadway production of his play, *The Shadow Box*. Other plays include *Breaking Up* (Primary Stages), *Ice*, (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Black Angel*, (Circle Repertory Company); *The Lady and the Clarinet* starring Stockard Channing, and *Amazing Grace* starring Marsha Mason which received the American Theater Critics Award for best American play. Mr. Cristofer's film work includes the screenplays for *The Shadow Box* directed by Paul Newman (Golden Globe Award, Emmy nomination), *Falling in Love*, with Meryl Streep and Robert DeNiro, *The Witches of Eastwick* with Jack Nicholson, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* directed by Brian DePalma, *Breaking Up* starring Russell Crowe and Salma Hayek, *Georgia O’Keeffe* (Writers Guild Award) with Joan Allen and Jeremy Irons and *Casanova* starring Heath Ledger.

His directing credits include *Gia*, for HBO Pictures starring Angelina Jolie, Mercedes Ruehl and Faye Dunaway which was nominated for 5 Emmies and for which he won a Director’s Guild Award. He next directed *Body Shots* for New Line Cinema and *Original Sin* starring Antonio Banderas.

For eight years he worked as co-artistic director of River Arts Repertory in Woodstock, N.Y., where he wrote stage adaptations of the films *Love Me or Leave Me* and the legendary *Casablanca*, directed Joanne Woodward in his own adaptation of Ibsen’s *Ghosts* and produced the American premier of Edward Albee’s *Three Tall Women* — a production which later moved to Off-Broadway. His most recent works for the theater are in workshop at the Actor’s Studio where he is a member.

After a fifteen year hiatus, Mr. Cristofer has returned to his acting career appearing in *Romeo and Juliet* (NY Shakespeare Festival), *Trumpery* by Peter Parnell, *Three Sisters* (Williamstown Theater), *Body of Water* with Christine Lahti, and the acclaimed Broadway revival of *A View from the Bridge* with Liev Schreiber and Scarlett Johansson. He appeared as the infamous Truxton Spangler in the AMC series *Rubicon* and in *The Other Woman* with Natalie Portman. He created the role of Gus in Tony Kushner’s *The Intelligent Homosexual*... at the Public Theater and starred in Stephen Belber’s *Don’t Go Gentle* at MCC Theater. Currently he can be seen in the NBC series, *Smash*. 
Calling All Drama Alumni

Don’t miss the chance to celebrate with CUAdrama and friends. If you’re an alumnus who would like to receive an invitation to the upcoming 75th Anniversary Celebration and event updates, contact the Department of Drama at 202-319-5351, or visit http://drama.cua.edu/ for event details. To celebrate its rich and historic past, the drama department is collecting memories from alumni. Is there a moment from a class or a stage performance that you’ll never forget? Send your reminiscences to cua-drama@cua.edu.