Dear Friends and Patrons,

In Millikin’s College of Fine Arts, the work being produced by our student- and faculty-artists, on stages and in studios, is enjoying wide recognition regionally and nationally. The features in this issue describe the kind of events, initiatives and successes we have come to expect from our CFA artists. I will let these artists and their work speak for themselves through these articles, but I do want to speak on their behalf in saying thank you for supporting their work, and for the Performance Learning your loyalty and generosity provide.

As you can see from our “Wish Lists” over the years, there are always items that enhance the educational and professional experiences of our students and faculty. Most of the items on this list represent equipment needs, but some represent our efforts to make sure our student artists can explore art-making in the larger world. Your gifts can be used to support international travel for our music ensembles, bus trips to regional museums and galleries for our art students, audition experiences in New York and Chicago for theatre and dance students, as well as travel to academic conferences to present research and projects in chosen art forms and industries.

In addition to the items on the Wish List, we will soon be drawing your attention to some larger efforts underway to update our CFA resources and facilities, including enhancement of our piano inventory through our partnership with Steinway, improvements to spaces that serve the art department and our new arts technology department, and the proposed new Center for Theatre and Dance.

We hope that you will join us as we continue Millikin’s legacy as a great place for student-artists to learn and shape their craft and share it with the world.

With your help, our great university is getting better every day.

Sincerely,

Laura Ledford
Dean of the College of Fine Arts
National Applause for School of Theatre and Dance

The Millikin community has long recognized that the School of Theatre and Dance does an excellent job preparing students for professional success and the industry continues to take note! The School of Theatre and Dance received accolades from the following respected industry sources within the last six months:

**August 2016:** Online theatre news and review blog “OnStage” listed MU as one of the “Top 10 BFA Musical Theatre Programs” in the country for 2016-17. The survey ranks Millikin as one of the best places in the country for musical theatre majors, based on tuition, curriculum, faculty and career support. “OnStage” mentions the many performance opportunities available to students and points to the success of Broadway performers Tim Shew ’80, Jodi Marzorati Benson ’83, Lavon Fisher-Wilson ’95, Sierra Boggess ’04 and Ian Liberto ’05.

**October 2016:** College Magazine ranked Millikin as the No. 7 best institution in the country to earn a BFA in musical theatre, pointing to several successful alumni, including Jodi Marzorati Benson ’83 and Jack O’Brien ’13. College Magazine is a national daily guide to campus life written by students, for students.

**December 2016:** “OnStage” named MU the Best Theatre College in Illinois for 2017.

**January 2017:** American Theatre Magazine included MU in a list of 13 musical theatre programs of note outside New York. American Theatre Magazine is published by the Theatre Communications Group, which serves as a communication hub for professional and university theatre companies around the country. MU’s profile in the article cites small class sizes, individualized attention and many performance opportunities.

Ten years ago, Lori Bales, associate professor of theatre and dance at Millikin, envisioned an innovative program where students would work side-by-side with professional playwrights in nurturing a musical from concept to stage. The New Musicals Workshop was developed and piloted by Bales with musical direction by artist-in-residence Kevin Long. The workshops provide professional writers with a laboratory environment where they can use the talents, skills and resources of Millikin theatre students and faculty. Millikin students serve as actors, production managers, stage managers, directors, accompanists, coaches and apprentice playwrights.

“We know from alums that the relationships developed in the workshops carry over into opportunities in their professional careers,” says Bales. “Students are often called by our writing partners to help further develop material because of the partnership experiences garnered through the New Musicals Workshop.”

This year’s cohort workshoped Sam Carner and Derek Gregor’s “Unlock’d” and “Island Song.” “Unlock’d” was presented in a public showing on Millikin’s campus. It was produced off-Broadway in 2013 and is being workshoped for a large production in Houston in 2018. “Island Song” garnered five MAC-nominated songs and is being workshoped for licensing.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary, a “Silver and Gold Cabaret” was held, featuring material from “Island Song” and student writers. The cabaret also honored the collected works of Michael Kooman and Chris Dimond, the first solo writing team to develop a new musical with the workshop.

Visit www.millikin.edu/newmusicals to learn more.
Scholarship Helps Foster Student’s Broadway Dreams

Last November, Millikin announced a partnership with Broadway Dreams, a premier performing arts education nonprofit organization. In celebration of the partnership, Millikin awarded a full-tuition theatre scholarship to Aaron Patterson, a deserving student who has participated in Broadway Dreams summer programs, workshops and residencies.

Since 2006, Broadway Dreams has awarded more than $1 million in financial need-based scholarships, providing youth and young adults of all socioeconomic backgrounds with performance training, life skills building and mentorship opportunities from the entertainment industry’s most distinguished talents.

“This partnership is one more visible sign of the wide scope and impact of Millikin University’s reputation and the high regard that professionals in numerous fields have for Millikin’s Performance Learning,” says MU President Patrick White.

Sean Morrissey, artist-in-residence in the School of Theatre and Dance, initiated Millikin’s partnership through his contacts with Broadway Dreams, faculty member Jamie Harris and executives Amanda Atkins and Annette Tanner. President White, along with Laura Ledford, dean of MU’s College of Fine Arts, presented the scholarship to Patterson in New York in conjunction with Broadway Dreams’ annual New York Showcase. The showcase affords select students the once-in-a-lifetime chance to perform for key industry professionals.

“By partnering with Broadway Dreams, Millikin can provide an opportunity for a deserving student with tremendous talent and potential but without financial means to pursue their dreams in an acclaimed program within an excellent comprehensive university,” Ledford says.

Where Are They Now: Founder of MU’s Theatre & Dance Program Looks Back

During his 14-year tenure at Millikin, Arthur Hopper, Ph.D., played an integral role in the development of the program that would eventually become Millikin’s School of Theatre and Dance. Dr. Hopper recently detailed his memories of that process and his life after MU.

Prior to coming to Millikin in the fall of 1970, I served as Director of Graduate Studies in Theatre at Indiana State University. I was hired by Millikin to be chair of the then speech department and to develop the literally non-existent theatre program. At that time, there were eight speech majors and one faculty member. Plays were produced under the auspices of a “town and gown” community-university organization.

In my first semester, I dropped the “town and gown” label and initiated Showcase Theatre as the producer of theatre productions. In my first year, I directed three plays and discovered that many of those who auditioned were music majors. The following year, we hired two new faculty, one in speech and one in theatre. The name of the department was changed from ‘speech’ to ‘speech and theatre.’

Kirkland Fine Arts Center had opened in 1969, but there had never been a theatre production staged there. So for the 1971-72 season, I persuaded Dick Collins, a member of the voice faculty, to do “Man of LaMancha” at Kirkland. He wanted to bring in a guest artist to perform Don Quixote. I resisted because I thought Gary Motta ‘74, a music major, could do the role. We did the show with Gary in the lead and a number of other music majors in the cast. It was a great success. The seeds had been planted for a musical theatre degree program. To my knowledge, there were none in the Midwest at that time.

The next year, I submitted a degree plan for the musical theatre program. It was approved, and we attracted quite a few very talented students. And so it began.

I left Millikin in 1984 to become the Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. I was hired to develop BFA programs in acting, dance, design and musical theatre. (You may be aware that “OnStage” listed UW-SP as the best theatre program in Wisconsin.) I stayed at Point for 16 years, retiring in 2000. In 2003, my wife and I moved to beautiful Door County, Wis., where there is a well-established professional and community theatre environment. I have been active in that environment since moving here. I serve on a theatre advisory board, have directed four plays, taught an acting class and participated in several staged readings. I have also become involved in the visual arts as a watercolorist and have exhibited in several galleries and art fairs.

I was recently in Decatur and read with a great deal of joy and pride that the department of theatre and dance is now the School of Theatre and Dance. My heartiest congratulations to the faculty and students. I am so proud to have had a part in launching a program that has become so successful.

I wish you continued success and recognition in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Arthur Hopper, Ph.D.
Retired Professor Emeritus
University of Wisconsin-Steven Point
Degrees: B.F.A, Studio Art at Millikin; M.F.A., Illinois State University

Employment: Department Chair and Associate Professor of Art and Design, Drake University

Current Home: Des Moines, Iowa

Tell us a little bit about your art. What are the themes or concentrations of your work?

My work is primarily based in painting and sculpture, with acrylic paints and wood. I’m interested in ideas of human existence and art and visual culture as material references to human existence. An example of this is the idea and images of the Yggdrasil, a mythic “tree of life” from Nordic texts as a cosmological symbol.

What is the most challenging part of being an artist?

Finding ways to validate what you do within yourself or externally. I think this changes depending on what each artist is going through; there are some opportunities that are incredibly validating at the time, but temporary. Exhibitions, meeting someone interested in your work and publications can all be great, but as an artist, you also need to find a source for that motivation and validation within yourself.

Has your artwork changed over time and how?

I think it is an organic process; the work changes but it depends on the scale in which one looks at it. If I look at my work from one year to the next I can see changes, but if I zoom out and look at my career of making art it all starts to coalesce into something more unified.

What do you think is the artist’s role in society? Why are artists important?

I think it’s probably best summarized by a quote from “Artists of Resistance” by Howard Zinn. “Whenever I become discouraged (which is on alternate Tuesdays, between three and four), I lift my spirits by remembering: The artists are on our side! I mean those poets and painters, singers and musicians, novelists and playwrights who speak to the world in a way that is impervious to assault because they wage the battle for justice in a sphere which is unreachable by the dullness of ordinary political discourse.”

What career accomplishment makes you most proud?

Exhibiting my work in New York has been the highlight of my career; not simply to be involved with galleries there but also to meet a number of great artists, gallery workers, etc. It’s the capital of American Art History to me as a painter. I met a number of artists that have been working in New York since the ’60s, and I spent a lot of time with younger artists in the city, too.

What do you enjoy most about teaching art?

What is the most challenging? And how do you balance creating art with teaching it?

Teaching is rewarding on a lot of levels, but the thing I enjoy most is mentoring different ways of thinking and different ways of looking at and interpreting art. I’m challenged by my students’ obsession with pop culture and resistance to digging deeper into music, film and art! The balance is tough, and there are some days that it is really difficult to get into the studio. When I do have time, I try to set up a lot of projects so that I can make the most efficient use of my time at the studio, and when I have more time I spend time thinking, writing and making plans. I also write and make music, so my priorities are to my family, my job (both teaching and studio), and then to writing and music. But the last two are the first to be cut when I’m short on time.

What is the best career advice you received?

I think it would be something from my aesthetics class with [professor emeritus of Continued next page
Dr. Jo Ellen Jacobs. That might be a funny way to answer the question, but Dr. Jacobs taught about aesthetics and being exposed to those ideas really helped form a priority for meaningfulness in my life. Traditional career advice isn’t necessarily for me, but different ways of seeing beauty in things helps me to balance out the stress of professionalism and careerism. Don’t get me wrong, I’m dedicated to my career and profession, but I think Dr. Jacobs’ class provided a basis for living amid my career as opposed to surviving my career.

How did Millikin help prepare you for your career? What is one thing you learned at MU that you use each day in your work?

I think Lyle [Salmi, art department chair/associate professor] ignited my drive to be in the studio as much as possible. He and Mike Wille ’98 are the foundation of my work ethic in studio art, without a doubt. I also think that I have a Lyle in my subconscious that is always saying “How do you know that painting is done?”

What are your future goals?
I would like to work with galleries in California. I’ve met a lot of great artists in the Los Angeles area and want to visit them and meet more people. I will also apply for promotion to full professor in a few years here at Drake.

What advice would you give new graduates who are planning to go into this field?
Patience and persistence are both really valuable, and you must develop strategies for working hard in the studio.

Why is it important to support the fine arts?
I think it’s an important document of human existence.

This spring, Millikin celebrates the 15th anniversary of the Hollis Prize. The highest award given to a School of Music student, the prize was first awarded during the spring of 2003. The Hollis Prize Competition showcases three top MU student instrumentalists or vocalists, with the winner receiving a $2,000 monetary award and a Performance Learning opportunity to give a special recital performance in Chicago. Each runner-up receives a monetary award of $500.

The Hollis Prize Competition is made possible by Dr. C. Kimm Hollis, a 1972 Millikin graduate who recently retired as department chair and professor of music at Hanover College in Hanover, Ind. Through his support, Millikin is one of only a few schools to offer such a prestigious prize through a music competition.

This year’s competition will be held Saturday, April 1, at 7:30 p.m. on campus in Perkinson Music Center’s Kaeuper Hall. This event is free and open to the public.

Patrons Society members: Join us for a special dessert reception immediately following the Hollis Prize Competition. Parking will be available in the Westminster lot. No RSVP required.
Tell us about your interest and career in technical theatre. What inspired you to go into the field and how did it lead you to Millikin?

I’ve always had a great love of theatre, and like many technical theatre professionals, started my career onstage as a performer in high school productions. I decided quickly that I wanted to continue studying theatre at the collegiate level but was incredibly intimidated by university-level auditions. I thus began volunteering in other areas of theatre and found a love of both design and production. By the end of my college career, I had explored scenic design and production, lighting design and production, and stage management, and I decided to pursue a graduate degree in scenic production. My assistantships in graduate school introduced me to teaching, and I knew very quickly that teaching theatrical design and production at the collegiate level was my passion. It is that passion for both teaching and theatrical production that led me to Millikin.

What do you most enjoy about teaching technical theatre?

I love teaching a subject that initially intimidates so many students. Many are hesitant early in my classes to use power tools or to try their hand at welding, and it is incredible to watch them grow in their knowledge and confidence as they learn those skills. I also love how practical many of these skills are in daily life. I love to see students and alumni who have applied their scenic construction skills to projects in their own homes and lives.

What advice do you have for students interested in pursuing a career in technical theatre?

I have the same advice for all my students, regardless of their area: work hard and keep learning. Our most successful students are those who have taken the initiative to learn as much as they can and to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible.

Last August, the Department of Theatre and Dance transitioned to the School of Theatre and Dance. What does this change mean for the program?

The Department of Theatre and Dance has grown in both size and complexity over the last several years, and restructuring our department into a school enables us to continue to grow and excel as we utilize the talents of our faculty in new ways. We are hopeful that the increased national recognition of our successful School of Theatre and Dance will help ensure continued growth and excellence.

That same month, you were named director of the School of Theatre and Dance. How has your role at Millikin changed? How do you balance your responsibilities in this position with serving as an associate professor in technical theatre?

My role at Millikin has changed significantly as I have stepped into leadership in the School of Theatre and Dance. The administrative load is significant, but I am glad to be of service to my school and my colleagues. And I’m very happy I’m able to continue teaching, as working with students in the classroom is the most rewarding part of my work.

What are some challenges you’ve faced in your new position?

My greatest challenges have been the increased level of interdepartmental collaboration, and the prioritization of current work and new objectives. I now work much more closely with faculty, staff and administrators in other academic departments, as well as with Admissions, Marketing and Student Development. Balancing that interdepartmental collaboration with the needs of my students and faculty has been my greatest challenge, but I am working toward becoming more efficient in my work to better support my students and colleagues.

Which of your career accomplishments makes you most proud?

I am most proud of earning tenure and promotion to associate professor at Millikin. The tenure and promotion process is demanding, and I am proud to be among my colleagues that have earned those designations.

What do you enjoy doing during leisure time?

I am happily married and have two children, Connor and Sophia, ages 5 and 2, who keep my husband and me incredibly busy. When we’re not working or on the run to school events, soccer, T-ball or swim lessons, we enjoy movies and spending time with friends and extended family.
JOIN US FOR AN UPCOMING FINE ARTS EVENT!

“MAURITIUS” BY TERESA REBECK
Thursday-Friday, March 23-24, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 25, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 26, 2 p.m.
Student Programming Entertainment Center (SPEC), 1099 W. Wood Street, Decatur
Tickets: $10
After their mother’s death, two estranged half-sisters discover a book of rare stamps that may include the “crown jewel” for collectors. In this gripping tale, a seemingly simple sale becomes dangerous when all the characters are willing to do anything to claim the rare find as their own. Rated R.

15TH ANNUAL HOLLIS PRIZE COMPETITION
Saturday, April 1, 7:30 p.m.
Kaeuper Hall, Perkins Music Center
This year’s Hollis Prize recipient will be named from among three outstanding student musicians at the competition recital. The award is made possible through a gift from Dr. C. Kimm Hollis ’72. The competition is free and open to the public; no reservations required.

SENIOR BFA THESIS EXHIBITIONS
Saturday, April 1 – Sunday, April 30
Kirkland Fine Arts Center, Perkins Art Gallery
Annual exhibitions featuring outstanding works by senior bachelor of fine arts (BFA) degree students.

SPRING JAZZ BAND CONCERT
Tuesday, April 4, 7:30 p.m.
Westminster Presbyterian Church

“AS YOU LIKE IT” BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Thursday-Friday, April 6-7, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 8, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 9, 2 p.m.
Albert Taylor Theatre
Tickets: $12-$14
When all the world’s a stage, love triangles become quadrangles, and gender-bending, disguises, wooing, betrayal and song all combine to create one of Shakespeare’s most popular romantic comedies. “Love is merely a madness” indeed! Rated PG-13.

ADAM TRENT – THE FUTURIST
Saturday, April 8, 7:30 p.m.
Kirkland Fine Arts Center
Tickets: $25-$40
Adam Trent is one of the stars of the hit Broadway show “The Illusionists,” which shattered box office records during its 2014-15 run. Described as Justin Timberlake meets David Copperfield, his audience-interactive performances are part magic, part concert, part stand-up comedy, with the fast-paced variety that today’s audience will enjoy.

THE BACHELORETTE” BY LESLYE HEADLAND
Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 22, 7:30 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.
Sunday, April 23, 2 p.m.
Friday, April 28 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 29, 7:30 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.
Sunday, April 30, 2 p.m.
Friday, May 5, 10:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 6, 11:59 p.m.
Sunday, May 7, 5 p.m.
Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre, 1099 W. Wood Street, Decatur
Tickets: $12
Ten years out of high school, Regan, Gena and Katie convene in the luxurious bridal suite of their old friend, Becky, the night before her wedding in New York City. Fueled by jealousy and resentment, the girls embark on a night of debauchery that goes from playfully wasted to devastatingly destructive. Their old fears, unfulfilled desires and deep bonds with each other transform a prenuptial bender into a night they’ll never forget, but who has the last laugh in this bitter comedy that will split you down the seams? Rated PG-13.

Faculty Biennial Art Show

The Faculty Biennial Art Show continues through Friday, March 31, in Perkins Art Gallery in Kirkland Fine Arts Center. Works from the faculty in the Art Department will be featured in this exhibition. On view will be a variety of mediums and styles representative of a diversity of aesthetic approaches toward art making. Included in the exhibition: Adjunct Faculty Members John Hansen, Jamie Niess Kotewa ’01 and Johnny Power; Chair/Associate Professor Lyle Salmi; Professor James Schietinger; Associate Professor Edwin Walker ’85; and Visiting Instructor of Digital Media Jessa Wilcoxen.

Hours are Monday – Friday, noon-5 p.m., or by appointment. The show is free and open to the public. A closing reception will be held Thursday, March 30, from 5-7 p.m. in Perkins Gallery.
For the third straight year, a Millikin art student was awarded “Best in Show” at the annual College Juried Art Exhibition at this year’s Self Employment in the Arts (SEA) Conference, held Feb. 24-25 in Lisle, Ill.

This year’s winner was Sydney Doherty, a senior graphic design major from Lake Saint Louis, Mo., for her painting “Damned If I Do.” Sarah Suits, a senior graphic design major from Loami, Ill., was awarded one of four Juror’s Awards for her printmaking piece “Dear Annelida.”

“The annual College Juried Art Exhibition is an opportunity for college-level art students from around the country to enter their artwork in a professionally juried exhibition,” said Lyle Salmi, associate professor and chair of the art department at Millikin. “It is precisely these types of opportunities that allow students to actively participate in the business of their career as artists.”

The competition juror selected 37 pieces for the exhibition, including artwork by Doherty, Suits, Hunter Wenstrom, a junior graphic design major from Durand, Ill.; Deborah Corr, a sophomore English writing major from Sycamore, Ill.; and Taryn Pepping, a senior art therapy major from Johnston, Iowa.

Thirteen Millikin students attended the conference along with six Millikin faculty members. Sara Theis, instructor of theatre/production management, and Mark Tonelli, assistant professor of music at Millikin, each presented at the conference.
How would you describe yourself?
I’m a huge dork. I love movies and television, especially those involving superheroes. The amount of trivia in my brain could fill a book.

What and/or who inspires you as a musician?
There are many inspirational musicians that I look up to, mainly jazz trumpet players like Miles Davis or Clifford Brown. Aside from jazz musicians, I look up to Justin Timberlake a great deal, as well.

What drew you to Millikin?
I’m from Decatur, so having Millikin in my hometown was an amazing opportunity. Randy Reyman, the trumpet professor here, gave me a call my senior year of high school and asked if I wanted to take a lesson. Once I did, I never looked back.

Why did you choose your major?
I was actually a commercial music major for about a year and a half. I began to realize that I wasn’t called to do that, but I did feel (and still feel) a very strong connection to playing trumpet, so now I’m a trumpet performance major.

What is the most challenging part of your major?
Probably the time commitment. Waking up at 5 a.m. to catch a bus to play at 8 a.m., and then not getting to sleep until 11 p.m. that same night is a little draining. But I wouldn’t trade it for anything.

Why did you decide to join Phi Mu Alpha? How has being a member of this organization influenced you as a musician?
Phi Mu Alpha has influenced me to be a manly musician and a “musician-ly” man. The guys in this brotherhood are so incredibly supportive and loving. It’s awesome knowing that I have an extended family here at Millikin that I never expected to have.

What has been the highlight/biggest accomplishment during your time at Millikin?
This past year, I’ve had the opportunity to play principal trumpet in the Wind Ensemble, as well as lead trumpet in Jazz Band. Considering last year I played third trumpet for both groups, popping up to a lead trumpet position has been an amazing experience.

What are your plans after graduating from MU?
I want to pursue graduate work for trumpet performance. I’ll be looking at potential schools next school year and hopefully getting some repertoire ready.

What advice would you give incoming freshmen?
Get involved. My experience at Millikin would be so completely different if I hadn’t gotten involved in all the bands and extracurricular activities that I have. Also, start practicing! It will help you in the long run!

If you could, what advice would you give your freshman self?
PRACTICE! It can only make you better! Get in that room and jam, man!

What will you take away from your Millikin experience?
Everybody here has been so supportive, including my professors. The connections that I’ve made here will stick with me for the rest of my life.

Why do you feel it is important to support the fine arts at Millikin?
Our students and faculty in the music department work diligently to provide a good experience for the patrons of the arts. It’s the patrons’ support that keeps us going.