

Dr. Paul Siemers: Profile of Theatre Chair

By Mark Edwin Boehme
People of Concordia University, a gentle giant walks among you. At six-foot-five his shadow has probably silently eclipsed you without you even realizing it. This quiet, yet entertaining 47 year old rides a classic 1977 Goldwing and bears a striking similarity to "The Undertaker" from the World Wrestling Federation — minus the leather outfit and tattoos. He can usually be seen in a colorful denim button down shirt and jeans working as the Chair of the Theatre and Dance Department here at Concordia University. This man is Dr. Paul Siemers.

Siemers graduated in 1975 from Bethel College in St. Paul, with a double major in Theatre and Theology. He participated in basketball, baseball, and two theatre performances a year at Bethel and still finished his double major Magna Cum Laude. He was immediately offered the position of Assistant Professor of Theatre for the next school year from Bethel. He took the job and after his year of work there, Siemers went to semi-

nary to explore his dream of becoming a pastor.

"I always wanted to be a pastor," Siemers said, "but I did-

"I always wanted to be a pastor."

n't take to the profession. I didn't like the 24/7 aspect of being a pastor. That year teaching at Bethel changed my career. I realized what I love doing is teaching, directing, and hanging out with my students."

So Siemers went back to school and earned his masters in theatre from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in 1979. Then Siemers worked for the next 13 years while trying to finish up his doctoral dissertation. He held positions at the University of Minnesota; Golden Valley Lutheran College, Minneapolis; Augsburg College, Minneapolis; and Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, IA; he even owned and worked at his own roofing company for three years. Siemers finished his dissertation in 1992 earning a Ph.D. in

Theatre from the University of Minnesota.

Siemers then went to work for five years as Director of the Theatre Department at University of Louisiana, Monroe. "I hated it so much that I couldn't wait to leave. Northern Louisiana and me were not a good fit. I love New Orleans, but I wasn't in New Orleans. The only nice things about Louisiana were the music and the mild spring and fall," said Siemers. The first chance he got, he headed back up north to teach at the University of Minnesota. He taught there for two years before being hired at Concordia.

Siemers is now working on this season's musical, "South Pacific" which will be showing in the E.M. Pearson Theater on Nov. 14 at 10a.m.; Nov. 15, 16, 17, and 18 at 7:30p.m.; and Nov. 19 at 2p.m. He is also excited about the rest of the year and the possibilities for the future.

"I was thrilled when Concordia offered me the position of Department Chair and Artistic Director, and I'm enthusiastically working to help meet

the short and long-range goals of the Department of Theatre and Dance," Siemers said. "We have already grown from six majors at this time last year to 21 majors and 10 minors at the start of school this fall. I am excited about that growth and the potential for future growth as we showcase our superb students, faculty, and facilities here at Concordia."



Dr. Paul Siemers working on the set construction of his next show, South Pacific.

Photo by Brian Berwald

Focusing on Portraiture

By Kjel Alkire

The tunnel hall was a-buzz Monday, Oct. 9 at 7p.m. as Concordia University's Professional Gallery opened its second show of the year. A crowd flocked to see the work of seven Twin Cities photographers in CSP's second Biennial Photography Exhibition. Curated by Professor Cate Vermeland, this show features a breadth of portraiture work by Timothy Piotrowsky, Steven Larsen, Kristine Heykants, Francine Anderson, Susan Schumacher, Eric Riha, and Brian Lambert.

The tradition of portraiture began in painting and drawing, but clearly has been adopted by photography. However, the variation we see even within photographic portraiture is quite significant, especially considering the relatively limited history of the medium. With the noteworthy exception of the over-calendared Ansel Adams, photographers have been busy capturing the human countenance since the camera was invented. This show's curator gifts us with a slice of that history.

Vermeland works as the only adjunct professor in the art department. At CSP, she exclusively teaches photography. In her "other life," she works as an administrator in a successful Minneapolis architectural firm. As curator, she primarily invited artists whose primary income is not from photography or visual arts.

Vermeland explained her perspective on the show. "I cre-

ated the Biennial Photo Show as a means to show photographers who aren't often shown. It's not an 'emerging artists show.' These are artists interested in interpreting the world in an established manner. It's just that for whatever reason, they don't focus on finding exhibition opportunities."

And indeed, finding exhibition time or space in the Twin Cities is a daunting task. These seven photographers range from their late twenties to 40 years old. They come from a variety of backgrounds; not all of them were educated in the arts. And all of them, except Christine, are employed outside of photography. According to Vermeland, "all would prefer to have more time to do photography. Some of the shown work here was accumulated over the last decade. It takes awhile to build up a body of work."

The opening evening was a smashing success. In a festive atmosphere of conversation, laughter and food, nearly 50 people chattered away over the course of the evening. The gallery was as full as Professor Keith Williams could remember.

Beginning on the north wall of the gallery, Steven Larsen's four large silver prints practically stand off the wall. "Seven-Year-Old-Poets" is a portrait series of Polish children with sad expressions. Larsen's compositional style seems to be split-personality; the piece nearest the windows is incredibly dynamic and textured. Most engaging are his rich and deep

blacks and visual play of texture of clothing with background. I'm still convinced that the piece nearest the door needs to be on the cover of "TIME."

Susan Schumacher's "Portraits of Infants and Children" is subtly disturbing. Working in the style of 1950's children's portraiture, Schumacher crops an oval around the face, leaving little to no background. These highly posed, central images are framed in quiet gold antiques. Not quite over-the-top, her super angelic images exude an earnestness that runs counter to the cynical post-modern aesthetic. What is most frightening about these works are the dates: 1999 & 2000. It is like Beaver Cleaver going to school in Columbine, Colorado. Schumacher more than succeeds with her beautiful, delicate, sentimental portraiture.

Kristine Heykants' documentary series currently entitled "American Beauty" is conceptually interesting. These images of contestants "construct (a new) language concerning cultural values, dynamics and motivation." Heykants focuses particularly on beauty at the 1997 Klondike Kate auditions, talent shows, Ft. Madison, Iowa Jr. Miss Rodeo contest and Minneapolis' Worlddance '98.

Francine Anderson photographs people close to her as

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Events

By Lisa LeGrand
Biennial Photography Exhibition

October 9th through the November 3rd. Curated by Cate Vermeland, the photography exhibition is a showcase new work of area photographers. For more information call (651) 641-8494.

Faculty Recital

October 20th. Dr. Yali You is performing a program of cello music by Concordia's adjunct instructor in cello. For more information call (651) 641-8494.

Senior Recital

October 22nd at 3:30 PM. Heather Hoff performing her Senior Viola Recital in the Buetow Music Auditorium.

October 29th at 3:30 PM. Rosie Daak performs her Senior Piano Recital in the Buetow Music Auditorium.

November 9th at 7:20 PM. Leah Domke performs her Senior Voice Recital in the Buetow Music Auditorium.

November 11th at 7:30 PM. Rebecca Schaffer performs her Senior Voice Recital in the Buetow Music Auditorium.

Fall Band Concert

November 3rd at 7:30 PM. The concert band will be performing, and a free will offering will be taken.

For more information call (651) 641-8255.

The Sacred Body

November 14 through December 17. The opening reception will be held in the Concordia Gallery on November 14th at 7:00pm through 9:00pm. The art work, of fresco to transparent acrylic banner murals, were created by Karla Ness. For more information call (651) 641-8740.

South Pacific

Mark your calendars now! November 15th through the 19th. All shows Wednesday to Saturday at 8pm, 2pm on Sunday

The Department of Theatre and Dance will perform Rodgers and Hammerstein's most beloved musicals, South Pacific. The cost for adults is \$8.00, students and senior is \$6.00 and CSP students and employees is \$2.00. For more information call (651) 641-8248.

Concordia University - St. Paul
Department of Theatre and Dance
and Department of Music presents

South Pacific
Rodgers and Hammerstein II
Music by Richard Rodgers
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

Directed by Cate Vermeland
Book by Cate Vermeland
Set Design by Cate Vermeland
Costume Design by Cate Vermeland
Hair Design by Cate Vermeland
Makeup Design by Cate Vermeland

November 15 - 18 at 7:30 pm, 19 at 2 pm
E. M. Pearson Theatre - 312 Hamline Ave. N.
Ticket info: 651-641-8248 or www.concordia.edu

Attention: One Act Auditions

By Lisa LeGrand

Are you itching to get that in the spotlight experience without a long rehearsal period and with a small script to memorize? Then you might be interested in the fall one acts. There will be auditions for the fall student directed one acts on October 23, 2000 at 8:00 in the Westlund Theatre. Sign up for your audition spot on the call board in the theatre hallway. Sarah Millhouse and Lisa LeGrand will be directing two different one hour one acts to be performed on December 13th and 14th. Along with needing actors, Millhouse and LeGrand are searching for stage managers, and people to help or design lights, sound, costumes and set. Millhouse and LeGrand are fourth year seniors in the theatre program at Concordia, and will be directing for their Advanced Directing class. "I'm excited for this project because I had a great time directing my first one act last spring. It was challenging but I'm ready for the challenge. The play I'm directing will be fun because of the mystery!" said Millhouse. Please direct all your questions or sign-up for positions to Millhouse and LeGrand at phone number (651) 645-6039.