



The Fine Arts Edition

AN ACADEMIC BULLETIN FOR ALUMNI, FRIENDS,
STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

**SEAVER COLLEGE,
PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY**

FALL 2001

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Seaver College Academic News

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FINE ARTS AT PEPPERDINE

The arts at Pepperdine are regarded as essential elements in a good education, with the courses, performances, and exhibits on campus providing the cultural nourishment and multiple avenues of expression that all students need. Those who major in any of the arts are provided the very best training available. The Fine Arts Division emphasizes self-discipline, self-discovery, the skills and techniques needed for professional success, and the experience of studying and working with experts, both domestically and abroad. The division utilizes the outstanding Center for the Arts' facilities that include the 450-seat Smothers Theatre, black box Lindhurst Theatre, 118-seat Ralft Recital Hall, and Weisman Museum of Art, as well as the Fine Arts Division's intimate 50-seat Mini-Theatre. Programs are aimed at educating participants and the audience with uplifting and challenging performances that lead to both spiritual and intellectual development.

CENTERS and SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF CREATION

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God
He created him; male and female he created them.*
Genesis 1:27

God, the divine creator of all things, created humans in His own image, and He bestowed upon humans the desire and capacity to become creators in imitation of God Himself. Since the dawn of civilization, human beings have turned to the creative arts to express their spirituality, to celebrate their joy, to cope with difficult circumstances, and to mourn in times of loss. The arts are the essence of the human spirit made visible and tangible.

The arts reveal basic truths about human nature and therefore the arts are not only timeless, they are universal, speaking to the human heart in a language that erases lines of religion, race, ethnicity, and nationality. In times of abundance and peace, the arts enrich us with entertainment and pleasure. In times of adversity and war, the arts sustain us with solace and understanding.

The recent tragic events in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania brought inexpressible suffering and destruction, but at the same time they also brought the opportunity for individuals to show the very best of human nature. As rescue workers sorted through tangled masses of concrete and steel in search of human life, artists sorted through tangled masses of emotions and tears in search of the human spirit. Only hours after the worst disaster this nation has ever experienced, composers, musicians, performers, and actors from around the world came together in a show of unity and support for the victims of this terrible tragedy. In Washington, D.C., elected officials stood on the Capitol steps and sang God Bless America. Artists are beginning designs for a memorial in tribute to those lost in the tragedy, while architects are planning new buildings to replace those that were destroyed. These are all examples of human beings expressing the human spirit through the universal language of creation.

The students, faculty, and staff of the Fine Arts Division at Seaver College believe in the power of the creative arts to overcome adversity and to celebrate life. The recent events in America reaffirm our belief in the restorative powers of the creative arts. Our prayers and love go out to all those who are affected by the tragedies. May God bless and comfort you.

WRITTEN BY: Sonia Sorrell, Division Chair



BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE IN THE COLLABORATION OF TWO ROOMS

Terry Anderson, Frank Reed, Joseph Cicippio, Edward Tracy, Thomas Sutherland, Robert Polhill, Alann Steen, and Jesse Turner are just a few of the Americans who were kidnapped and held in Beirut between 1985 and 1991. William Buckley, Peter Kilburn, and William Higgins are three American hostages who were killed by their captors. As shocking as the deluge of the Beirut kidnappings were, for the most part the hostage-takers were intent on preserving their hostages so that they would have some political value. We have to ask ourselves why the acts of dissension against the United States have escalated into the events we all witnessed on September 11, 2001.

The play *Two Rooms*, by Lee Blessing, distills universal pain down to a personal level by exploring how a sudden, inexplicable act haunts the lives of four Americans. This arresting work tells the story of an educator at the American University in Beirut (Michael) who is taken hostage; his anxious wife (Lainie), who after countless efforts to seek his release, empties a room in her home and spends her days in self-imposed solitary confinement, mirroring her husband's plight and anguish; a reporter (Walker) who wants to expose government weaknesses; and a State Department official (Ellen) who handles the matter with professional detachment. Since governmental policies and procedures rule out rescue attempts, Lainie is

faced with the choice to either speak out through the media, possibly endangering other hostages, or maintain a vigilance of quiet hope

as the State Department wishes.

We often learn details of history from newspapers, television, magazines, or textbooks, but by working on *Two Rooms* and presenting it to the campus community, events can be reexperienced and examined with hind-sight.

Director and Assistant Professor Cathy Thomas-Grant worked with faculty in the Social Science Division while developing the production of *Two Rooms*. During collaboration with Dr. Robert Williams the following questions were posed: Should governments ever negotiate with terrorists? Was the Reagan administration's "arms for hostages" policy moral? How can we mediate between the moral claims of the individual ("Do whatever is necessary to save my loved one's life.") and the moral claims of the community ("Do nothing that would encourage terrorists to take additional hostages.") in situations such as the one depicted in *Two Rooms*? If the government "sacrifices" individual hostages for the sake of a policy that seeks to avoid rewarding hostage-takers, is it then treating those individuals as pawns in much the same way that the hostage-takers are?

Another expert resource was George Azar, a photojournalist whose work on the Middle East over the past twenty years has provided the director and cast with insights into origins of the kidnappings and the political issues surrounding these acts. The production of *Two Rooms* uses his pictures of locations and people mentioned in the story. Theatre projects based on true events offer the Pepperdine community an opportunity to experience, discuss, and wrestle with issues that on the surface seem black and white, but in reality may not be as simplistic as we would hope. It is through collaboration that complex issues are explored and presented, opening new academic methods for learning history, seeing optional points of view, and increasing awareness.

FINE ARTS FACULTY

GARY COBB,
Professor of Music

DANA COLLIER,
Instructor of Computer Graphics

AVERY FALKNER,
Professor of Art

LINCOLN HANKS,
Assistant Professor of Music

JERRY HENDERSON,
Professor of Theatre

GEORGE NELSON,
Professor of Theatre

THOMAS OSBORN,
Professor of Music

JOSEPH PIASENTIN,
Professor of Art

HENRY PRICE,
Associate Professor of Music

BOB PRUITT,
Professor of Art

MILTON PULLEN,
Professor of Music

MELANIE SMITH,
Associate Professor of Music

SONIA SORRELL,
Division Chair
Associate Professor of Art History

CATHY THOMAS-GRANT,
Assistant Professor of Theatre

POETRIA NOVA INSPIRES MUSIC COMPOSITION AS RHETORIC

The twenty-first century has presented a rapid-fire series of challenges to the way audiences have traditionally listened to music and, consequently, to the way new concert music has been composed. New technology and historical theories have both emerged to provide an eclectic foundation with which to approach performance style and composition.

Because no extant documents exist on medieval music, one way to understand the performance practices of the Middle Ages is to draw on the principles of rhetoric that were taught at that time, as outlined in Geoffrey of Vinsauf's treatise, *Poetria Nova*. During his studies of music performance practices of the medieval and Renaissance periods, Dr. N. Lincoln Hanks began to appreciate the rhetorical vocabulary that often arose during the course of this pedagogy. He saw how rhetoric could be more consciously applied to the music he composed and to pedagogy of music composition. He had finally found the tools needed to understand and discuss the phenomena of composing music using the basic concepts of the

spoken arts. In addition to teaching, Lincoln Hanks sings tenor with the Concord Ensemble, a vocal group that experiments with Renaissance and baroque vocal literature. They perform throughout the United States and won the Early Music America / Dorian Records Competition in 1998.

In the nineteenth century, Igor Stravinsky challenged the notion of music as an organic art form by using a "block and cycle" style of composition (e.g. *Rite of Spring*). Since the Second World War, music composition has focused on the ingenuity of technique and design, and good communication has often been compromised. Movies and television have taught audiences to associate music with visual imagery. Even new music composed for the concert hall often has a "visual feel." Scores make sonic references to physical action. (San Francisco composer John Adams' recent work, *Chamber Symphony*, had its inception when the cartoon music of his child's television program caught his ear—the final movement of this piece is cartoon music). Like the flickering images on the visual screen, music is now

often fragmented, juxtaposed, and nonabsolute. People often have little patience for complex musical processes, and they prefer soundbites over substantive and lengthier musical works that unfold meaning and value over a period of time.

All of these influences present a great challenge to the teacher of music composition. Prior to college, the average music student has little experience developing a pre-compositional rationale and executing it expressively in the form of a musical score. Even when the student has had performance experience where eloquent delivery is stressed and practiced, the creation and development of an idea according to rhetorical doctrines may be unknown. While Vinsauf's principles of rhetoric influenced Lincoln Hanks' thoughts about musical logic, the greatest benefit to him has been its application in the teaching studio. In its modern edition, the short outline form of *Poetria* provides relevant information that can be quickly and easily absorbed, even though the language is highly poetic. Students enjoy reading something that they know is more than eight centuries old, and yet directly

applicable to their own composition work. The sections on the order of an oration (natural order and the order of art), and amplifying or abbreviating a motive, can help illustrate how a musical idea can be made more poignant through such techniques as repetition (*interpretatio*, *expositio*), periphrasis (*circuitio*, *circumlocutio*), comparison (*collatio*), and digression (*digredi*), etc. After determining the intent and subject, the student can now begin an intelligent process of composition with the use of these rhetorical tools helping to establish an effective timing of events, thematic returns, climaxes, and anticlimaxes. Basic compositional techniques continue to be taught, but applying sound rhetorical principals can enhance the form, content, and eventual performance of a piece, to a certain extent exclusive of the pitch or rhythmic material. Student composers need to understand fundamental concepts of communication. Introducing rhetorical principals in the composition studio helps empower them to effectively reach both the ears and the hearts of the audience.

TAPPING INTO BROADWAY VIA 42ND STREET

"You're going out there a youngster, but you've gotta come back a star" was the classic line in the 1933 movie *42nd Street*. This fall our own Pepperdine students have a chance to "put on the glitz" of fame as they produce the musical of the same name, based on the eternal myth of instant stardom when an unknown actor steps into a lead role. This high-energy spectacular is one of the longest running musicals in Broadway history. It has sixteen dance production numbers, unforgettable songs, dozens of stage effects, and over 400 lavish costumes. It is the granddaddy of song-and-dance musicals, with "more tapping feet than you'd find on a centipede," and such torch songs as *Lullaby of Broadway* and *We're in the Money*.

Guest director/choreographer Jon Engstrom is the perfect choice for this production. A native of central California, Jon began taking tap lessons at the young age of four and continued to perform jazz and tap dance through high school. While in his first year of college, he received a Ford Foundation Scholarship to join the San Francisco Ballet. Later he became a member of the Eliot Feld Dance Company in New York, and was a featured dancer in five Broadway shows before returning to Los Angeles in 1984 to help set the Los Angeles production of *42nd Street*. He has worked throughout the United States and overseas, and his production of *42nd Street* in Germany was voted by the International Press as one of the two most popular musicals in Europe. Engstrom has worked with such notables as Gower Champion, Bob Fosse, Michael Bennett, Donald Saddler, Alan Johnston, and Danny Daniels. He has received numerous honors, including eight Dramalogue Awards and two Robby Awards.

Students from all majors join every aspect of the production, from acting, singing, and dancing; to building and modifying sets (under Rick Aglietti), designing costumes (under Carol Hack), performing music (under Dr. Thomas Osborn), and overall management tasks. Completing a full production in just ten short

weeks requires much collaboration, builds strong communication skills, and results in lifelong friendships. The initial audition includes three skills: singing, acting, and dancing. During their college years, participants change from shy, unsure personalities to self-confident, professional actors. The transformation can be remarkable. One student who was in last year's production of *West Side Story* stated that, although he did not want to become a professional actor, the experience changed his life, giving him the confidence to try other new things. Others go on to acting fame, including student Corey Greenan, who had the



starring role of Che in the Taiwan production of *Evita*, and graduate Jill Van Veizer, who has taken many lead roles, including Anna in the national tour of *The King and I*.

The musical *42nd Street* is all about great dancing and songs, with inspiring storyline and choreography. Its unforgettable opening on Broadway in 1980 was one of the most memorable theatrical events of the twentieth century. With its legendary potential as a showcase for craft, along with the expertise of director Jon Engstrom, we expect the Pepperdine production of *42nd Street* to be remembered as one of the best university productions in this new century. "Come and meet those dancin' feet!"

IF STONES COULD TALK—FOLLOWING THE PATH OF DA VINCI AND MICHELANGELO

Just steps away from Michelangelo's Medici Chapel, the workshop of Da Vinci, Brunelleschi's Cupola on the Duomo, and the Laurentian Library is Studio Art Centers International (SACI), a cultural mecca located in the heart of Florence, Italy. Firenze has some of the world's greatest artistic treasures, surrounded by a Tuscan countryside of remarkable beauty. It is the ideal place to study art and "absorb techniques" from the artists of the past. If only stones could talk!

In 1995, art professor Joe Plasentin received an invitation to teach at SACI. He immediately saw this as an opportunity to establish a high-powered art program for Seaver College students in Italy. Every other summer students accompany him to Florence for an education in studio art, art history, and Italian language that goes beyond course offerings in Malibu. The program draws upon the rich past of Florence, its artistic resources, its cultural offerings, and the use of SACI's premier studio facilities. The summer weather and long daylight hours in Italy at this time of year are particularly inviting. Students attend evening events and talks by faculty, distinguished artists, and lecturers. Field trips are taken outside the city to such places as Pisa, Arezzo, Lucca, Carrara, Ravenna, Siena, San Gimignano, and Fiesole. The art workshop atmosphere, combined with all of the above activities, makes study at SACI an enjoyable and creative experience.



During his twenty-two years at Pepperdine, Joe Plasentin has maintained a rigorous exhibition record in respected galleries, colleges, and museums throughout the world. He has been invited to teach at Stanford, Claremont Graduate School, Pomona College, the prestigious Santa Fe Art Institute, and SACI. He was also part of the inaugural program at the Julie and David White Artist Colony in Costa Rica. There he honed his own style of earthy,

indigenous art, which is developed by building up natural materials on canvas, much like the jungles have "things growing on top of things." He imparts to students the importance of finding their own styles through trying personally creative and unique techniques and using varied materials.

It is Plasentin's professional artist stature and his effective and dedicated teaching that has forged the success of the art program in Italy. He recently stated: "It has turned out to be even more significant than I dreamed. We have had students graduate from Seaver who have gone on to study art conservation, jewelry design, architecture, and even printmaking because they were introduced to these areas of study at SACI." Artists search for meaningful modes of expression with child-like open attention and unlimited possibilities. Walking in the footsteps of the great masters is an ethereal art apprenticeship our students will always remember.

A CAPPELLA A LA MODE

The heralded 75-voice Pepperdine University Concert Choir made its academic year debut with an a cappella program crossing many musical genres. Under the direction of Professor Milton Pullen, the choir consists of undergraduate students from a wide range of disciplines. The "Strictly A Cappella" program included Mendelssohn's Heilig, a double chorus number translated, "Holy, Holy, Holy"; cellist Pablo Casals' O Vos Omnes, a moving lament and appeal for God's people to repent; Alice Parker's arrangement of Kumah Echa, a celebratory Hebrew folk song proclaiming "Rise up, brother, spin round and round"; and "Java Jive," a modern swing piece straight off the recording of Manhattan Transfer. The concert closed with three spiritual arrangements: "Deep River," "My God Is a Rock" and "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord."

A cappella (singing without instrumental accompaniment, from the Latin phrase "in the chapel") ranges from sacred to contemporary secular works, which include chants by monks from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, ethnic and folk songs, to a modern fusion of swing, street-corner, barbershop, and jazz. The vox humane ensemble made a comeback in the 1980s when new voice techniques allowed singers to mimic instrumental and percussion scores along with traditional harmonies. The art form continues to push the limits of the voice and cross new boundaries in music.

The Fine Arts Division's Mary Pickford-Stotsenberg Performances continue the a cappella format when the University Chorale and the Concert Choir present holiday concerts titled "An A Cappella Christmas." This program traditionally reflects the peace and joy of the season. The University Chorale, made up of Pepperdine faculty, staff, and family members, was founded by Milton Pullen in the fall of 1999. Recently this choir combined with the Concert Choir to perform the Mozart Requiem. In the spring, the two choirs will again combine forces with a "Masterwork Concert" featuring the Beethoven Mass in C. This piece was commissioned during the classic period by Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy of Eisenstadt, Germany. Before the work was completed, parts were sung at a concert promoted by Beethoven and held in Vienna on December 4, 1808, the same concert that premiered the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies.

Unlike music performed with instruments, a cappella participants gain a better understanding of group interaction and synergy while developing novel vocal tones out of more simple linear textures. Both pitch and quality of the voice contribute to these special effects. Chrysostom (a Catholic authority) noted that "our tongues are the strings of the lyre, with a different tone, indeed, but with a more accordant piety." The intimate experience of singing with only the sound of voices penetrates our spirit, puts us inside the music, and teaches us more about each other.

“THE PHILOSOPHER’S STONE” CAUSES A STIR IN OPERA CIRCLES

The rediscovered singspiel, *The Philosopher’s Stone* (*Der Stein der Weise*) made its premiere at Pepperdine this year. Its musicological significance is heightened by the fact that sections of the opera were only recently attributed to Mozart. The 1790 work had five different collaborating composers: Benedikt Schack, Xaver Gerl, Johann Baptist Henneberg, Emanuel Schikaneder, and Mozart. This production is part of the Flora L. Thornton Opera Program, in cooperation with Pepperdine University’s Collegium Musicum ensemble. *The Philosopher’s Stone* and *The Magic Flute* are magic fairy-tale operas with similar stories. Two couples, one high-born, the other less concerned with lofty ideals, struggle against evil forces in their efforts to be reunited. The comic opera with dialogue is a new English translation by Barry Millington, with additional song lyrics by opera director Dr. Henry Price. Hailed by major critics as one of America’s finest singing actors since his New York City Opera debut as Alfredo in Verdi’s *La Traviata*, Price has appeared in over 50 leading roles with major opera companies throughout the world. He was named to the Board of Directors of the National Opera Association and serves as a trustee of the Goldovsky Foundation.

Since its inception in 1994, the Pepperdine Opera Program has flourished, and now includes full-scale sold-out productions. Students also have the opportunity to study opera abroad in the summer at the University’s campuses in Heidelberg and Florence. This season the main stage production is Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*. The

University Community Symphony, under the direction of Dr. Thomas Osborn, will accompany the performances. Set design is by Kermit Heckert and the stage director is Dr. Price. Other recent productions have included Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Così fan tutte*, and Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*. Pepperdine’s 1999 production of *The Marriage of Figaro* won second place in a national competition sponsored by the National Opera Association.

Because the Pepperdine opera program is an undergraduate one, students are able to gain experience more quickly than they would at many other colleges. Recent graduates are already making their way in the professional world and at some of the nation’s finest graduate schools and conservatories. Jessica Rivera (B.A. ’96) distinguished herself last season when she sang the difficult role of Susanna in Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* in the final dress rehearsal at the Los Angeles Opera. Consequently, the prestigious company offered her a contract as resident artist. Jessica Tivens (class of 2004) received a rave review in the *Los Angeles Times* for her appearance as Norina in Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* at the renowned Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. Piper Pack, (B.A. ’95) is currently singing with Opera Pacific in Orange County, and Joy Anne Moses (B.A. ’96) has recently completed her master’s degree at the New England Conservatory in Boston. This proven success led Mrs. Thornton to make her generous endowment and continues to draw some of the country’s most outstanding young singers to Pepperdine.

PUTTING ON EIRES: MUSICAL VOICES FROM IRELAND

Music of various genres, ethnicities, and periods provides a multidimensional window to understand and experience human culture. It utilizes physical, sensual, expressive, and audible images, through singing or playing an instrument, to reach people of all backgrounds through a “universal language.” The text and framework of a song offer insight into other disciplines, including literature, history, and international culture. Students are constantly influenced by music. Some of the most meaningful moments in their lives are attached to songs or musical artists.

Associate Professor of Music Dr. Melanie Smith recently attended the College Music Society’s biannual conference in Limerick, Ireland, to expand her knowledge of teaching skills in vocal history, literature, and performance. She is an accomplished singer, making guest artist appearances with the Abilene Philharmonic and Midland Odessa Symphony, and in many operatic roles that include Zita in *Gianni Schicchi* and Frasquita in *Carmen*. Her trip to Ireland was supported by a grant from the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Limerick is situated along the Shannon River and has a wealth of musical history through Viking, Celtic, and British influences, as well as a thriving traditional music scene. Presentations were designed to promote music teaching, performance creativity and expression, research, and interdisciplinary interaction.

The first day of the conference was devoted to Celtic music, from

its heritage to recent revivals. Ballads and folksongs were of special interest for vocalists. Traditional music bridges many generations, and a Celtic Ceilidh (folk song party) was enjoyed by all attendees. Later, a concert of Scots-language ballads was presented by faculty of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Of particular interest to Dr. Smith was a workshop titled, “The Music Teacher: A High-Risk Professional Voice User.” This dealt with damaged voices and the protection of voice professionals. A Voice Lab was described, which includes equipment to aid in training voices and to measure scientific recordings of vocal sounds (resonance, vibrato, vowel formation, etc.). Even though the voice is an instrument that cannot be seen, modern technology allows that capability. This is a growing interest among voice professionals, and plans are underway to seek funding for such a lab at Pepperdine and offer a workshop for voice students.

The conference included many experiential tours to musical sites, such as vesper services at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, medieval Gregorian chants at Glenstal Abbey, and an organ lecture-recital at St. Mary’s Cathedral (built in 1172). It was truly a rewarding and transformative educational experience, one that Dr. Smith will not soon forget. Nor will her students, who will gain from her new knowledge of vocal scores, historical concepts, and performance methodology gained in the Emerald Isle.

Career News from Fine Arts Alumni

Christina Ajalat (1983, theatre arts), Director of Creative Advertising, MGM Studios, Santa Monica, CA
Brianna M. Bourgi (2000, art), Art Consultant, Marlin Lawrence Galleries, Universal City, CA
Vanessa Capozzi (1991, theatre arts) Stage Technician, Tennessee Performing Arts Center, Nashville
Jill Morgan Daniels (1988, art), Art Director, Disney/Hyperion Studios
Kimberly De Roever (1977, art), Associate Editor, Architectural Digest Magazine
Pete Deutschman (1997, theatre arts), Executive Vice President, VPI.Net (web design), Laguna Hills, CA
Richard Force, (1989, theatre arts), Stage Manager, CATS & AIDA, Disney Theatrical, Los Angeles
Tom Gabbard, (1973, music), Executive Director, Weidner Center for Performing Arts, Green Bay, WI
David Greathouse, (1995, theatre arts), Vice President of Production, Stan Winston Production, Van Nuys
Lisa Hadley, (1992, theatre arts), Actress, General Hospital, Gilmore Girls, Port Charles
Chanda-Lyn Hildebrand (1996, theatre arts), Assistant Art Coordinator, 20th Century Fox/Dreamworks
Jorge Jarrin (1978, theatre arts), Airborne Traffic Reporter, KABC Talkradio
Sonserae D. Leese (1984, art), Media Design, Sony Imageworks/Columbia Pictures & Morning Start Media
Michael P. Linville (1987, music), Director of Admissions, Music Coach, New World Symphony, Miami
Lisa Livingston (1987, music), Soloist, Zurich Opera
Phila McDaniel (1953, art), Curator, Asian Textiles and Ornament, Mingel Intl. Museum, San Diego, CA
Jean D. Miller (1978, music), Voice Instructor, Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN
Carlo H. Ponti, Jr. (1991, music), Director and Principal Conductor, San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra
Jessica Rivera (1996, music), Resident Artist, Los Angeles Opera
Wayne Spellman (1985, theatre arts), Costume Designer for Annie, The Camelot Company, NY
Chris Stivers (1976, music), Original composition written for President Andrew Benton's Inauguration
Jill M. Van Velzer, (1998, theatre arts), Actress, Anna in national tour of the The King and I
Karen R. Wolfe (1992, music), Manager of Film and Television Music, Universal Studios

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