

# School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts

Newsletter Fall 2024



Dean's Corner

Since our Fall 2023 newsletter, the School of Visual and Performing Arts changed its name. We are now the School of Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts (SVPCA). We welcome the department of Creative and Professional Writing and the department of Communication and Media Arts.

I am also happy to report that our discipline-specific accreditations remain in excellent standing. Within this year's cycle, the department of Art received reaccreditation by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), and the department of Theatre received reaccreditation by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

Our robust curriculum in SVPCA continues to grow. Last year, we launched a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre, and a Bachelor of Arts in Popular Music. This year, we launched a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art, and we are in the final stages of re-launching our graduate Music degree. This time, it will resurface as a Master in Music with options for Education and Jazz Pedagogy.

Truly, there is never a dull moment, and we are grateful that our students remain in good hands with world class, compassionate professors.

I hope to see you at any of our hundreds of events that we produce each year, featuring our talented students—from film festivals, to writing residencies, art gallery shows, music concerts, plays and musicals.

Happy Fall, and Happy Holidays,

Brian T. Vernon, Dean

Scan QR Code to view upcoming SVPCA events



## Recent Student Accomplishments

**Carlos Pérez** (2025) Selected as a semifinalist for The American Pops Orchestra's 8th Annual Next-Gen National: Finding the Voices of Tomorrow vocal competition

**Phoebe Jane Hart** (2019) short film "Bug Diner" received awards at 2024 Sundance Film Festival and SXSW

**Claire Gaudette** (2017) Head of Wardrobe for The Metropolitan Opera

**Andrew Gusciora** (2017) Video programmer for Broadway production of *Water for Elephants*

**Amanda Head** (2014) Marketing & Public Relations Manager at Georgia State University

**Rachel Daddona** (2013) Post Production Producer For "Karamo" (NBC Daytime talk show), recent GLAAD award nomination

## Professional Development Day for Arts Educators

Many school districts in the tristate area schedule Election Day as a day off for students and an in-service day for teachers. Since 2010, the SVPCA has used Election Day to their advantage. What first began as PD for K-12 music educators has expanded to include sessions for art and theatre educators, always held on Election Day.

WCSU's SVPCA Professional Development Day for Arts Educators has grown into a highly regarded opportunity for K-12 arts teachers to expand their own knowledge while fulfilling their District's in-service day requirements. The day begins with a notable keynote speaker, followed by breakout sessions specific to music, art, or theatre, culminating with a choice of Reading, Curriculum Sessions, or Discussions. The program has gained such a stellar

reputation, that this year's registration sold out in two weeks, with over 300 educators attending. Session leaders include SVPCA faculty and adjuncts, plus outside experts in arts education. This year's lineup included two Connecticut Teachers of the Year, and a Grammy Educator of the Year nominee.

In addition to serving the K-12 Arts educator community, Professional Development Day helps anchor the School of Visual, Performing and Communication Arts as a premier Arts education institution in the tristate area.



# SVPCA Faculty Spotlight

**Art: Sabrina Marques** (Associate Professor), served as Director of Kathwari Honors Program at WCSU 2020-2023; mentored SXSW and Sundance Film Festival award winner Phoebe Jane Hart

**Communication & Media Arts: Guy Perrotta** (Adjunct Professor), two-time Emmy award winner, served as co-producer, director, and writer for *Voices Over the Water*, a documentary airing on PBS

**Creative & Professional Writing: Anthony D'Aries** (Assistant Professor, Coordinator of MFA program), Author of *The Language of Men: A Memoir* (winner of INDIES Gold Medal); this past year his work has been published in *Connecticut Literary Journal*, *Red Coyote Literary Journal*, *Cutleaf Literary Journal*, *Cream City Review*, and *South Dakota Review*

**Music: Danton Boller** (Adjunct Professor), performed in HBO documentary film *Taylor Mac's 24-Decade History of Popular Music* and in the film *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* starring Melissa McCarthy

**Theatre Arts: Maureen Freedman** (Visiting Assistant Professor), served as scenographic model maker and design assistant for the recent Broadway revival of *The Wiz*

## SVPCA Dean's Circle

The SVPCA Dean's Circle is a premier leadership society for annual giving towards the SVPCA at WCSU. Members of the Dean's Circle provide vital contributions towards the Dean's support funds, used to sustain and grow the school's wide-ranging and ever-expanding educational opportunities. Supporters receive recognition in SVPCA programs and the SVPCA website.

Dean's support funds are used for:

- Supporting SVPCA students in financial need
- Sponsoring student trips to supplement student's education
- Enhancing technology in our educational and performance spaces, allowing students the ability to explore emerging technologies and expand

industry knowledge

- Funding renowned guest artists of diverse backgrounds and offering masterclasses and workshops to enrich our students' education

The Three Tiers of the Dean's Circle are:  
**Supporter Level \$500+; Soloist Level \$1,000+; Principal Level \$2,500+**

**Thank you to the Current Members of the Dean's Circle:**

**In Memory of Warne Marsh and Henry Alvares, Soloist; 2024**

**Michael Doyle, Supporter; 2024**

**Kelly Mangold, Supporter; 2023**

**Dr. William Petkanas Supporter; 2024**

For more information about the SVPCA Dean's Circle, visit:

[wcsu.edu/svPCA/circle/](http://wcsu.edu/svPCA/circle/)

## 16 Exciting Degrees

### UNDERGRADUATE

#### ART

**NEW! B.F.A. Art** | options:  
Graphic Design | Illustration  
Photography | Studio Art: Painting

#### B.A. Art

#### THEATRE ARTS

##### B.F.A. Musical Theatre

**B.F.A. Theatre Arts** | options:  
Acting | Design/Technology  
Stage Management

#### B.A. Theatre Arts

#### MUSIC

##### B.A. Music

##### B.A. Popular Music

**B.M. Music** | options:  
Audio & Music Production | Jazz Studies  
Performance: Vocal & Instrumental

#### B.S. Music Education PK-12

#### COMMUNICATION & MEDIA ARTS

**B.A. Communication** | option:  
Communication Studies

##### B.A. Digital & Interactive Media Arts

**(DIMA)** | options:

Art | Computer Science | Media Production

**B.A. Media Arts** | option:

Media Production

#### CREATIVE & PROFESSIONAL WRITING

**B.A. Professional Writing** | options:  
Business & Technical Writing | Creative  
& Professional Writing | Journalism &  
Public Relations

### GRADUATE

#### ART

**M.F.A. Visual Arts** | options:  
Painting | Illustration | Interdisciplinary  
Visual Art

#### CREATIVE & PROFESSIONAL WRITING

##### M.F.A. Creative & Professional Writing

#### MUSIC

**M.M. Music** (Beginning Fall 2025)

Theatre Arts | *Sunday in the Park with George*

February 21 through March 2

Inspired by the painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, this musical merges past and present into beautiful, poignant truths about life, love, and the art of creation. This moving study of the enigmatic painter Georges Seurat by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine won a Pulitzer Prize and was nominated for 10 Tony Awards. Directed by Justin P. Cowan.

## Upcoming Events

### Music | Holiday Pops

December 7 and 8, at 3:00 p.m.

Join the WCSU Department of Music for an afternoon of holiday music, featuring performances by the Percussion Ensemble, University Choir, Chamber Ensembles, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, and more. Get in the holiday spirit with holiday treats, music, and photo ops.

### Art | *Color and Light Exhibition*

on view February 6 through March 2  
*Opening Reception February 6, 6:00 p.m.*  
Post-Impressionist French painter Georges Seurat is the subject of the Dept. of Theatre Arts' spring production of Stephen Sondheim's musical *Sunday in the Park with George*. The exhibition will feature artists whose work, like Seurat's, is primarily concerned with the interaction of color and the phenomenon of light. This exhibit title is derived from a song in Act I.