Browning Celebrates 50 Years of Culture

The Val A. Browning Center for the Performing Arts celebrated its 50th anniversary Jan. 9 with a free concert featuring some of the luminaries who have graced its stages.

Concert goers filled the 1,700-seat Austad Auditorium to enjoy the Joe McQueen Quartet, Ta'u Pupu'a, Jerry Steichen, Ginger Bess and a host of other performers. Popular X96 radio host and WSU theatre graduate Bill Allred served as master of ceremonies.

“The Val A. Browning Center is a cultural hub for this region and has become a place to experience innovative performing artists,” said Madonne Miner, dean of the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities. “During the past 50 years, we have welcomed nearly 10 million patrons, served nearly 1 million students and have helped create countless memories.”

The Browning Center is northern Utah’s largest venue for arts and entertainment and has hosted many famous figures including The Carpenters, Kenny Rogers, President Ronald Reagan, Fred Rogers, Jacques Cousteau, U. S. Sen. Orrin Hatch and Neil Armstrong.

“There is truly something profound about the opportunity to experience the passion, immediacy and power of live performances that you do not receive through television, mobile devices or on the printed page,” said Frank Bradshaw, Browning Center executive director.

KWCR TURNS 50

Over the course of 50 years, KWCR 88.1, Weber State’s radio station, has changed its name, music and studio location, but what has remained unchanged is its mission: to prepare students to work in media and serve the local community.

According to Weber State College: A Centennial History, KWCR received its Federal Communications Commission licensing in 1965 “to operate a 10-watt non-commercial educational FM radio broadcasting station.” It’s been known as “The Beat,” “The Edge,” “Weber FM” and currently “Ogden’s Radio Station.”

Student disc jockeys have played a variety of genres, including pop, hip-hop, alternative rock, “anti-corporate” and this year indie rock.

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, the station will host a number of events including open-mic shows, dances and remote broadcasts. Former staff members also will get a chance to reminisce about their student radio days.

Associate communication professor Ty Sanders advised the station for 25 of its 50 years. He encouraged students to try every aspect of radio production, including on-air performance, promotion, programming, management and sales.

“It’s been so much fun to watch students come in,” Sanders said. “They are so green...”
Construction began on what was originally named the Fine Arts Center in 1962. *My Fair Lady* premiered as the first musical theater production three years later. In 1978, the building was renamed the Val A. Browning Center for the Performing Arts, in honor of Browning’s tremendous support.

The facility closed in 1997 for a two-year remodeling and expansion project to address fire and seismic requirements and to better meet students’ practice and performance needs. A new revitalization plan is in the works, which includes replacing the seats that are now 50 years old and don’t conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The anniversary event kicked off the “Buy a Seat” fundraising campaign.

Performing arts professor Jim Christian, who directed the anniversary gala, said everyone can contribute to keep the Browning Center a cultural treasure for the next 50 years. “If you choose to participate in the new Buy a Seat program, the chair you purchase will be personalized with your name as a lasting remembrance of your generosity and support.”

That generosity and support has positioned the Browning Center as northern Utah’s cultural epicenter for 50 years and going.
CLASSIFIED!
WSU earns prestigious Carnegie designation

On Dec. 4, Brenda Kowalewski, director of WSU’s Center for Community Engaged Learning, opened an email from the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. It read: “On behalf of the Carnegie Foundation, congratulations! Your institution has been selected to receive the 2015 Community Engagement Classification.” She closed the email, smiled and breathed a sigh of relief. After a rigorous yearlong application process, Kowalewski was excited to receive the news. The only problem was she couldn’t share it with anyone — institutions were instructed to wait until Jan. 7 to announce the distinction.

“Not being able to tell anyone was very hard,” Kowalewski said, laughing.

The 2015 Community Engagement Classification is an esteemed designation from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching — only 361 of the more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States carry the distinction. It is an acknowledgement of WSU’s longstanding commitment to the community, as well as its dedication to teaching students through community-engaged learning.

WSU first earned the distinction in 2008 but was required to renew its application for classification for 2015. A committee of 28+ faculty and staff members, community partners and students worked diligently to detail Weber State’s commitment to and demonstration of community engagement.

The application required extensive documentation, including descriptions of 15 community partnerships and projects. Weber State has well over 125, including Intermountain Healthcare, Upward Bound Ogden/Davis, Hill Air Force Base, Weber School District, Science and Arts in the Parks, the College Town Initiative and more.

While the Carnegie designation is a classification for institutions of higher education, Kowalewski said that the honor is to be shared with Ogden City, Weber County, Davis County and all of the university’s surrounding communities.

“Community members opened the doors for us to work together, to let our students learn and contribute to their organizations,” Kowalewski said. “They welcomed us. In turn, we have helped them through service, advocacy and research. This designation affirms the reciprocal nature of our relationship.”

but have a lot of raw talent that needs to be cultivated. It’s been great to help them develop and leave the university and become successful, productive members of society.”

The current advisor, assistant communication professor Eric Harvey said students have to learn and do more than ever to keep the station relevant and accessible.

“The station has to keep pace with technological advancement and industry reorganization,” Harvey said. “We have a vibrant online presence with various social media platforms and live streaming on KWCR.org. You can’t hold back the tide of innovation and change. I have no doubt KWCR will proceed through the next half of the century as strongly as we have the first.”
Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

Gov. Gary Herbert appointed WSU’s assistant to the president for diversity, Adrienne Andrews, to serve on Utah’s Martin Luther King Human Rights Commission, a group dedicated to a conscious effort of promoting diversity, equity and human rights.

The WSU production of Wit, written by Margaret Edson and directed by WSU performing arts professor Tracy Callahan, has been invited to the regional Kennedy Center American Collegiate Theatre Festival in Los Angeles in February.

Zoology professor Jonathan Clark has been elected to a three-year term as director of the Northwest Region of Sigma Xi, the scientific research society. He will oversee activities of over 30 local Sigma Xi chapters in the U.S. and Canada. He also will serve on Sigma Xi’s international board of directors. Founded in 1886, Sigma Xi is one of the oldest and largest scientific organizations in the world. More than 200 Nobel Prize winners have been elected as members.


Vikki Deakin, associate history professor, received a fellowship from the University of Michigan’s William L. Clements Library. She will study one of the country’s best collections of 18th century documents for her upcoming book that will explore the definition of citizenship in the 18th century British Transatlantic.

Kathy Edwards, associate communication professor, presented a daylong interpersonal communication, skills-training workshop at the World Burn Congress in Anaheim, California. The workshop trains volunteers for the Phoenix SOAR program, which the American Burn Association has recognized as the standard of care for hospital peer support. Edwards is on the national advisory committee for Phoenix SOAR and has trained hospital volunteers from more than 50 hospitals throughout North America.

The American Respiratory Care Foundation selected assistant respiratory therapy professor Janelle Gardiner as the recipient of the 2014 William F. Miller, MD Postgraduate Education Recognition Award.

Forensics director Omar Guevara received the Dr. Amy Fugate Coach of the Year Award from Kansas City Kansas Community College. The annual award recognizes college debating excellence.

Sheree Josephson, communication department chair, has been selected as a member of the editorial board for the academic journal Visual Communication Quarterly, which is supported by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Associate director of Career Services Greg Nielsen received Best Presentation Award at the Northwest Association of Student Affairs Professionals annual conference for his presentation “Mental trails: Brain-based strategies for deep learning and retention.” Also, Nielsen, who holds a Ph.D. in geology, co-authored “Iron-rich horizons in the Jurassic Navajo Sandstone, southwestern Utah - progressive cementation and permeability inversion” in the Utah Geological Association Publication 43.

Associate communication professor Colleen Packer has been named director of WSU’s Teaching and Learning Forum.

Amanda Sowerby, associate dance professor, is president-elect of the Utah Dance Education Organization, which is dedicated to the art form of dance as an essential part of lifelong learning.


The Utah Nurses Association honored Susan Thornock, School of Nursing chair, with the Centennial Award for Established Nurse Leader at the annual convention in October.

Assistant criminal justice professor Monica Williams and a colleague from the University of California, Davis, published “Assessing Stereotypes of Adolescent Rape” in the November Journal of Criminal Justice.
