

Mesa Community College earns extraordinary recognition at theater fest

Mesa Community College's theater and film arts and music departments competed in Region VIII of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in St. George, Utah, Feb. 10-14 at Dixie State University. The annual Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival recognizes and celebrates the finest and most diverse work produced in university and college theater programs, according to a press release.

Students tested their talents in a vast array of theatre specialties and MCC's theater and film arts department and music department students earned extraordinary recognition against rigorous competition from not only other community colleges, but four-year institutions and graduate programs as well. Nationally, 550 colleges compete in KCACTF, with approximately 55 competing in Region VIII. Approximately 35 of the colleges in Region VIII are four-year schools with the remaining 20 being two-year institutions.

Mesa Community College's Theatre and Film Arts Department students were successful at the competition. Design student Jessica Thompson earned an emerging talent award for her set design of "Dead Man's Cell Phone." Ms. Thompson's award allows her to attend the Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas, an organization that trains theater and film artists has a national network with working professionals.

In addition, Caitlin Hardwick took second place in Technical Direction, a theater



Special to the Independent/MCC
Students from MCC's theater and film arts departments in Utah, from left, Tom McCoy, Brittany Wojciehowski, Marissa Salazar, Dolores Mendoza, Cedar Cody, Caitlin Hardwick, Zack Bell, Samantha Hanna, Jesus Reyes, Janae Dunn and Kiri Malolo.

position that wears the multiple hats of a draftsman, engineer and budget manager. Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship nominee, Janae Dunn, was a semi-finalist in acting with her scene partner, Thomas McCoy.

Several pairs from Mesa Community College's music department competed for the Irene Ryan Scholarship. Kinsey Peotter, with partner Jonathan Holdsworth, reached the finalist round in the competition and achieved a second place finish out of a pool of 300 acting participants from across the region. According to the release, the MCC music department also was invited to bring

a 10-minute scene from its fall musical "Hairspray" and performed in front of a full house on the opening night of the conference.

Actors from the theater and music programs also auditioned for acting conservatories and professional theater companies in the Next Step Auditions. MCC theater and film arts student, Marissa Salazar and MCC, music students Kinsey Peotter, Ariana Lucius, Nicole Knox, Rachel Heitkamp, Kamie Tierce Nault, Laynee Overall, Katie McCarthy, Jonathan Holdsworth, and Angelica

McGrew earned callbacks to professional theater companies such as the Neil Simon Festival and Missoula Children's Theatre; and, scholarship opportunities to study theater in the California State University system and at the Open Jar Institute.

Students were nominated for the Region VIII competition by being adjudicated from a group of local professional theater respondents. MCC design students selected from the college's production of "Mother Hicks" included Caitlin Hardwick, technical director; Cameron Bennett, lighting design; and Kerry Trevet, makeup design. For "Dead Man's Cell Phone," design nominees were Jesse Thomson, scenic design and Jesus Reyes, costume design. Student nominees for "Rumpelstiltskin" include Zachery Bell, stage manager and Shaun Smith, sound design. Brittany Wojciehowski competed in playwriting in the One-Act Play Competition.

Kevin Dressler coached the theater student actors. Cathy Hauan, Jere Van Patten, and Allyson Van Patten served as coaches for music theater student actors. All design and technology students were coached by Kara Thomson, design and production faculty; Mallory Prucha, faculty designer and costume shop supervisor; Chris Tubilewicz, coordinator of performing arts; and Jeffrey Parulski, technical theater coordinator. Stephanie Salem, scene shop foreman facilitates many student designers as well.

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