



[Oedipus  
Apparatus](#)



[Post Traumatic  
Super Delightful](#)



[Do What You Love](#)



[Stella](#)



Segue • SIUE

## SIUE's Arts & Issues Xfest welcomes talent

Friday, September 8, 2017

Since College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean Greg Budzban, PhD, arrived to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, he has repeatedly seen first-hand the talent and strength of the Department of Theater and Dance, along with the high-quality performers and guest speakers brought in for its acclaimed Arts & Issues series.

On this week's episode of Segue, SIUE's premier radio show that outlines the ideas and issues within CAS, Budzban sits down with Grant Andree, director of Arts & Issues, and Chuck Harper, chair of the Department of Theater and Dance, for a conversation about this fall's lineup of musical and theatrical performances, speaking engagements, workshops and other presentations.

Harper and Peter Cocuzza, professor of theater and dance, founded SIUE's Xfest in 2009. With the creation of Xfest, the department strives to give alternative and experimental theater a thriving platform within the community. Originally a way to generate excitement for theater in the summer, students are now able to take full advantage of Xfest during the fall semester.

This year's Xfest, which is set for the week of September 11-15, will feature the following performances:

- "Oedipus Apparatus" by Equally Represented Arts, St. Louis
- "Post Traumatic Super Delightful" by Antonia Lassar, New York City
- "Do What You Love" by Naked Empire Bouffon Company, San Francisco
- "Stella" by Sidra Bell Dance New York

"If you ask most of the students in our department, Xfest is one of the things they look forward to the entire year," Harper says. "We bring in four theater companies or ensembles from around the country, and they have one performance each night. During the day, all the performing artists lead a series of workshops, seminars and master classes where the artists teach students in the department."

"In the College, we talk so much about experiential education, and there could not be a better possible way to do this than Xfest," Budzban says. "You're embedding those students in an experience that is so rich with educational content."

In preparation for its upcoming season, Arts & Issues continues to maintain its reputation as an important cultural institution for the region by inviting world-class speakers and performing artists to SIUE. The series represents the largest amount of community interaction on campus.

Along with Xfest's Sidra Bell Dance New York performance, Arts & Issues has also collaborated with faculty and staff members within CAS's Native American studies program, SIUE Center for Spirituality and Sustainability, Department of Physics, Department of Music, Graduate School, and other community partners to bring five unique performers and speakers to campus.

One of America's most celebrated and critically acclaimed Native American musicians, Joanne Shenandoah, is set to perform on Saturday, Oct. 7 in the Center for Spirituality and Sustainability.

On Tuesday, Oct. 17, conventional expectations of what a jazz trio is supposed to be will be shattered when The Wee Trio hits the stage in the Dunham Hall Theater. The trio features SIUE alum Dan Loomis, BA '02.

In a riveting multimedia presentation filled with rare footage and photographs, former Secret Service Agent Clint Hill will share his heart wrenching, first-hand account of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Hill will share his dramatic story of the five days that changed America forever on Tuesday, Nov. 7 in the Meridian Ballroom in the Morris University Center (MUC).

"Hill was the Secret Service agent you see in photos and videos that climbed into the limousine as it was driving along to try to save President Kennedy," Andree says. "Because he was guarding Jackie, he saw everything that happened, including planning the President's funeral."

After the holiday break, the Department of Physics will welcome Dr. Guion "Guy" Bluford, Jr., on Monday, Feb. 19, 2018 in the Meridian Ballroom. Bluford, the first African American to fly in space, logged more than 5,200 hours in high performance jet aircraft and has flown 688 hours in space on four Space Shuttle missions.

"It's great to have a real expert like Dr. Bluford to come in and talk about the future of the space program," Andree says.

In the Arts & Issues season finale, the orchestras of both SIU campuses will combine once again for another exceptional music event. Michael Mishra, SIUE orchestra director, and Edward Benyas, SIUC music director, will conduct a special concert featuring guest violinist Rachel Barton Pine.

"There's something that is so incredibly moving when you combine the orchestras and get all of that talent together," Budzban remarks. "The expansive orchestra produces this remarkable sound."

In addition to Xfest and the Arts & Issues series, the Department of Theater and Dance is in the thick of preparing for its upcoming production season. The jam-packed season will feature talent from throughout the department, including its largest class of incoming freshmen. The schedule begins with "Gem of the Ocean" by August Wilson, October 11-15.

For more information about Xfest and the Department of Theater and Dance's 2017-2018 production schedule, visit their website at [siue.edu/artsandsciences/theater](http://siue.edu/artsandsciences/theater). To view Arts & Issues' 2017-2018 schedule and purchase tickets, visit [artsandissues.com](http://artsandissues.com). Tickets can also be purchased by phone at 1-866-698-4253 or at the Morris University Center (MUC) Welcome Desk.

To hear the entire conversation between Budzban, Andree and Harper, tune in at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 10, to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound.

*By Madelaine Gerard, SIUE Marketing & Communications*