



## Platt Student Performing Arts House Newsletter

March 2011

### In This Issue

Nowhere Else I'd Rather Be -  
Ansley Sawyer '13

Collaborative shows - Ty A.  
Furman

After School Arts at Penn  
(ASAP) Hits its Stride - Laurie  
McCall

Recent Events

### Supporting the Platt House



We can't do what we do without your help! Over the years nearly 100 of you have generously supported the Platt House and its programs. Your [support](#) provides state of the art equipment including sound systems, keyboards, pianos and more for student (more than 1200) use at the Platt House. It also allows us to replace or repair damaged equipment, rooms or furniture or provide new equipment. One such new piece of equipment we are hoping to purchase in the near future is recording equipment so that our musical groups can record their music in a professionally equipped studio right here in the Platt House. Finally, it helps to provide for programs like [Penn Arts](#) which introduces up to 40 incoming freshmen to the arts at Penn and in Philly. Thank you for your continued support - keep

Dear Ty,

Happy Spring 2011. A great deal has been happening here at the Platt House and with [University Life Arts Initiatives](#) and we wanted to update you. We hope you enjoy catching up with us. Please use the forward button below to forward to other alumni and friends who may be interested in staying in touch with us.

### Nowhere Else I'd Rather Be

I'm perhaps one of the few who can say that they've been to both Penn State and UPenn. As a recent transfer from that greatest of football havens, I was ready for a shift in the opposite direction: arts, arts, and more arts. I know full well that there's no replacement for proper rehearsal and performance space. My PSU a capella group had to practice in empty classrooms, and perform in lecture halls. As a result, we were separated from the other artists on campus, and a false sense of competition and enmity was born. I never met any other musicians or actors beyond those I performed with. When I heard that there was a place whose sole function was to serve as a rehearsal space and hub for the performing arts community, I was sold.



Penn students believe in the importance of being whole people, and having a life beyond their academics. They just get it: all-nighters are pulled not because their work is too intimidating or hard, but because tech week is coming up and rehearsal lasts 7 hours. With an elegantly designed Keurig coffee machine and well-proportioned couches perfect for studying or sleeping, where else would we ever want to go but the Platt House?

In all seriousness, Platt has become one of the biggest parts of my life here at Penn. For me, it's a home base, essential for creating a community of hard-working students and performers, of like-minded artists who can sing, act, dance, study, play and live together. Platt has opened my eyes to new opportunities, and has broadened my horizons. Through Platt, I was able to perform for the first time in a Broadway house, take numerous workshops, connect with employers and Penn alum who are part of the theatre industry, learn more about life as an actor after Penn, apply for theatre-specific scholarships, and most importantly

it coming!

### Quick Links...

[Our Website](#)

[Student Shows](#)

[Facebook - Alumni](#)

[Facebook - Programs](#)

[Arts@Penn](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

become part of a community of hard-working and talented students. Given all of the offered opportunities, the great resources, and the inviting community, I can honestly say that on any given weekday night, there's nowhere else I'd rather be! - Ansley Sawyer '13

## Collaborative Shows



I wanted to share with you one of things about our student groups that has most impressed me in recent years, collaborative shows. In particular, our charity shows. It started in the 1990's with the passing of Emily Sachs, a dancer with Arts House Dance Company. Emily suffered and ultimately was taken by severe asthma. The entire Penn dance community (all student run organizations) responded by producing the **Emily Sachs Dance Benefit**. For years the proceeds went to support both Asthma research and the construction of the Emily Sachs Dance Studio in Irvine. The dance groups continue to produce the Emily Sachs Dance Benefit each January and proceeds (sometimes up to \$1000) go to support Asthma research and [Hope Dances](#), a local organization whose mission is to bring dance to the special needs community.

**Charitable Laughter** began five years ago when a number of our comedy groups decided they wanted to serve the community. This past October Mask and Wig, Bloomers, Simply Chaos, Without A Net and Pennsylvania Six-5000 joined forces to raise funds for [Art-Reach](#), a local non-profit whose mission is to provide access to the arts for individuals and groups who may not otherwise have access. Now a fall favorite Charitable Laughter has been selling out for the last few years.

This December, on the Murvchick Family Stage at the Platt House Quadramics Theatre Company hosted **MisQast**. MisQast is a collection of scenes, songs and monologues performed by folks who would "never" actually be cast for said roles for gender, racial or type reasons. MisQast boasted a dozen performances that night and raised over \$200 for Philadelphia's Young Performers Theatre Foundation which provides scholarships for children to attend summer theatre camp.

## ASAP Hits Its Stride

This semester something wonderful happened to our After School Program in Platt (After School Arts at Penn - ASAP)! Over 30 local middle school children signed up to participate. With them, they brought involved and caring parents. Our fabulous volunteers (Penn



students) now have more than enough participants to keep them busy every Monday afternoon in the Platt House. This semester we were able to add a singing section to our dance, theatre, and musical

instrument sessions. Add in workshops by our student groups and the chemistry is magical.

A sample day at ASAP includes a large group game, a rotation through 2 sessions of the child's choice of either instrumental instruction, theatre, dance or singing, and then a workshop by a group such as African Rhythms on African Dance and Drumming. At the end of the eight weeks, there will be a Talent Showcase where everyone gets to display something they learned or created such as a song (voice or piano, guitar, violin), skit or dance. And this year's Talent Show has one very new and special act. Some of the mom's will be singing as a motown inspired group.

The volunteers, children and parents have a wonderful rapport this semester. We hope to continue to reach as many local children as possible each semester.

### **Recent Events**

This year has been filled with some exciting programming - besides of course the 70+ student group performances. The list includes:

- Stage Management Training
- Light and Sound Board Training
- The first Platt House [Theatre Fellow](#) - Moisés Kaufman
- Stage Combat Training - Basic and Rapier
- Monica Bill Barnes Dance Master Class
- Musical Theatre Audition Training with Alum Eduardo Placer
- Playwright and TV Writer and Alum Meredith Stiehm

We are always thrilled when our alumni join us to talk to and work with students, and special thanks go to Meredith Stiehm and Eduardo Placer for coming this year, and to our panelists for the 2011 Alumni Performing Arts Career Symposium on April 9th which to date includes Ryan Ly and Kwasi Asare.

Finally, This past [Homecoming](#) - featuring arts & culture we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Bacchanal. More than 50 alumni returned to Penn and celebrated at the Platt House. The evening was filled with laughter and music, including some fantastic spontaneous performances. Special thanks to Jan Ohye and Lolita Jackson for organizing. Please join us for Homecoming 2011 for another exciting celebration - the fifth anniversary of the Platt Student Performing Arts House!

---

### **Looking for a few great alumni!**

We are looking for a few fantastic alumni to serve on the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council meets twice a year and provides advice and support for the Platt House and its programs. If you are

interested in joining please email [me](#) by April 20, 2011.

**Sincerely,**

Ty Furman, Ed.D.  
Director  
University Life Arts Initiatives

[Forward email](#)

Platt Student Performing Arts House | 3702 Spruce St. | 160 Stouffer Commons | Philadelphia | PA | 19104-6026