

# OFFBEAT

Jan  
2009

student monthly voice

## Politics Influencing the Arts

By Michael Kane

A couple of weeks ago, I watched the 1999 film *Cradle Will Rock*, which tells a story of theatre life during the Great Depression. The plot follows Orson Welles as he attempts to create a pro-union musical about the struggles of the lower class worker. Against him, however, is the Works Progress Administration, a government agency created by the New Deal that bans the play and takes away its funds.

An interesting story supported with an all-star cast, but *Cradle Will Rock* is more than just a Cannes Film Festival selection; it's a social commentary about the relationship between politics and the arts. This got me thinking: does politics influence the arts?

The answer is quite obvious. Of course politics influence the arts today, but not in the controlling sense that *Cradle Will Rock* portrays. The political influence of the arts that I'm talking about can be seen in many movies, TV shows, literature, and fine art, especially within the past few years.

Films about political figures, policies, and events are nothing new to Hollywood. Michael Moore, for example, has based his whole career on making controversial films about politics. In *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Moore gave his own perspective on September 11th, saying that the Bush administration used American sympathies to invade Iraq and Afghanistan.

Not all political movies, however, push an agenda on the audience. Some just tell the story of a political event or person. It only took 5 years after September 11th for filmmakers to make *World Trade Center* and *United 93*, which didn't really push an agenda.

Last year's batch of political movies included Oliver Stone's *W.* and *Frost/Nixon*. While *W.* attempted to give audiences a "behind the scenes" look at the

life of our current president, *Frost/Nixon* actually accomplished the job of telling the untold story of the famous television interview between Richard Nixon and David Frost, without making the film appear more like a comedy than a documentary.

On TV, Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert rely on politics every weeknight in order to give the news with their own style of comedy. The daily political events that shape the lives of the American public also shape the content of "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report."

Similarly, "Saturday Night Live" is also influenced by politics. A presidential election year is a gold mine of comedic material for "SNL" writers to use in their skits. No one should be surprised to see that "SNL" received some of its highest audience viewership ever in the weeks leading up to the November 4th presidential election. If Sarah Palin hadn't been selected as John McCain's V.P. candidate, then "SNL" would never have been able to cash in big with Tina Fey's insanely accurate and hilarious impression of Palin.

In literature, the presidential election also influenced the topics of many political books. A search on Amazon.com revealed that there are over 900 nonfiction books about Barack Obama and over 3,000 about John McCain. That's an incredible number of biographies and novels about the presidential candidates, most of which were published before Election Day.

Even the fine arts have been influenced by politics. One of the most famous political paintings is Picasso's *Guernica*, which conveys the artist's horror about

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## Politics (continued from pg. 1)

the bombing of the city in Spain during the Spanish Civil War.

Many modern art exhibitions also feature artists who create sculptures, paintings, and drawings with political messages. Throughout the months of November and December of last year, an exhibition called *Speak Out: Art, Design and Politics* in New Mexico gathered artists and designers who spoke out against injustices through their art; a perfect example of how politics influences the fine arts.

The relationship between the arts and politics can be seen in both old and new movies, TV shows, books, poems, songs, and artwork. The political figures, events, and laws of our government shape the way art is made and seen. Politics have an interesting and unique influence over the arts that I look forward to seeing take shape in the future.

## Project: Music to My Ears

By Erin Grotton

I didn't know exactly what to expect when three men walked into my Writing and the Arts class with a bass, a cello and a flute. They seemed very relaxed and ready to enjoy themselves.

When they started to play, I was surprised by the music that flowed from their instruments. The mix of modern, jazzy, beat-boxy music warmed me. The sound was classical yet modern, upbeat and fun. The musicians were surely enjoying themselves. Each had a different style that seemed to fit their individual personality and instrument.

Greg, the man playing the flute, was very talented. He really got into the music. His facial expressions and body motions added to his beat boxing approach to the classical flute. He moved his whole body with the music. He not only played the song, but expressed the feeling of the music through motion.

Eric, the bass player, seemed approachable and fun. The smile on his face and his curly hair bouncing around as he would peck his head sporadically along with each song was very engaging.

Peter, on the cello, seemed to be a little more serious and the most classical out of the group. It was apparent, however, that he enjoyed each song as a broad smile spread across his face every so often.

Together, their vibe was perfect. The Project members meshed without words and brought an enjoyable twist to such classical instruments. It left me wanting more.

# ArtStreet Spotlights Saturday Night Events

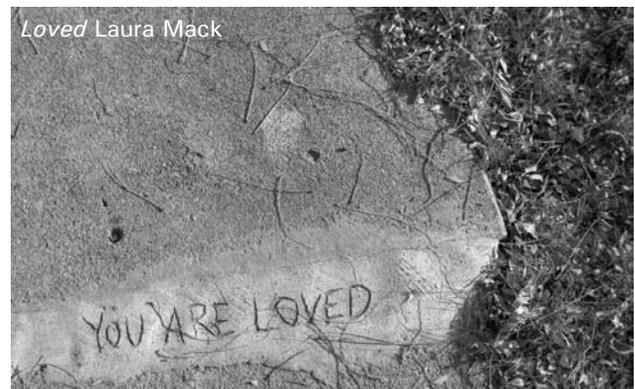
By Julie Roth

What are you doing this Saturday night? Through the collaboration of student organizations and ArtStreet staff and residents, ArtStreet is being transformed into UD's weekend hotspot. Whether you are interested in planning or participating in unique activities, you won't want to miss this semester's ArtStreet Saturday night festivities.

Although many activities are still in the works, possibly including a fashion show, clothing swap, formal dance, and karaoke event, there are still several Saturday nights available. If you, your friends, your roommates, or an organization that you're involved in would like to host an event at ArtStreet, we would love to help you! The events run from 9-11pm and utilize one or more of the unique rooms of the ArtStreet building. ArtStreet can not only help plan your event, but will also assist in funding it. There are endless possibilities and numerous ways to engage other UD students in your event.

Several organizations have already taken advantage of the many uses of the ArtStreet facility through their contributions to Saturday night programming. Last semester, the ArtStreet residents hosted UD's first haunted house on Halloween weekend and also organized a Chinese International Night for Citizens of the World. This semester, ArtStreet will host the Human Rights Week Kick-off event, REACH's annual M-Fest, and Lit Fest.

The next time you catch yourself sighing of boredom, due to your lack of interest in UD activities, consider ways that you could use ArtStreet to entertain yourself and fellow UD students. Contact the ArtStreet office for more information at 937-229-5101 or [artstreet@udayton.edu](mailto:artstreet@udayton.edu).



Loved Laura Mack

# Food for Thought

## Black Bean, Goat Cheese and Cranberry Ragout

### Ingredients:

- 2TB olive oil
- 2c cooked or one 14.5oz can organic black beans
- 1/2 c organic onion diced
- 1/2c organic red bell pepper diced
- 1/2c organic zucchini diced
- 1Tb fresh sage minced
- 1/2c organic vegetable broth
- 1/2c dried sweetened organic cranberries
- 8oz goat cheese (preferably French and organic)

*(All these ingredients can usually be found at Kroger or your local health food store)*

### Directions:

1. Sauté the onions, peppers and zucchini in a skillet over medium-high heat for 2-4 min. or until veggies soften slightly.
2. Add sage and broth, then let cook down for a minute or two.
3. Toss in the cranberries and simmer for one more minute. (This is the ragout.)
4. Divide the goat cheese into four chunks and fold into ragout at the end, leaving some cheese unmelted and still in globs.
5. Serve over greens, rice, crackers or whatever suits your fancy.

*Recipe from Brian Rainey, Chef from Sunrise Cafe in Yellow Springs.*



## Neighborhood News



**By Resident Fellow Isabel Manzanillo**

Here are some random, but important, updates from your Fellow:

1. We will be having a program every week next year! It will probably fall on the same day, same time, but a different location. Some of the themes we will be planning around are: "Community Service," "Health: Mental and Physical," "Careers: Job Hunting, Interviewing, etc.," "Community Development/ Neighborhood Pride," and "How to Cook/ Take Care of Yourself in the Real World." So watch out for dates and times and mark your calendars accordingly.

2. The Neighborhood does, in fact, recycle. You can recycle magazines and catalogs, telephone books, aluminum cans, steel containers, glass bottles and jars, and newspapers. Recycling pickup occurs every other Thursday: December 4th, January 8th and 22nd, February 5th and 19th, March 5th and 19th, April 2nd, 16th and 30th. Look for the Commingled recycling containers and dumpsters in the parking lots around campus, where you can drop off your recycling.

3. The RA application process is starting. Do you have what it takes to be one? Residence Education is looking for responsible, caring, and hardworking students to become Resident Assistants for the coming 2009-2010 school year. The application deadline is Wednesday, February 4, 2009. Working with Residence Education, you have the opportunity to gain experience with job skills you wouldn't gain anywhere else, meet tons of new people, work with an amazing team of concerned individuals like yourself, and have a profound positive impact on your residents. It's a perfect way to be all you can be (wait, does that sound familiar?). For more information: <http://campus.udayton.edu/~reslife/>

4. Lastly, I hope everyone had a safe and very Happy Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or whatever you celebrated over the break! It's always great to see friends, watch TV, and eat some real food. Goodbye to a great 2008 and cheers to a divine 2009!

# Jump into January

By Kelly Amshoff

We all know that January is the pinnacle month to start fresh with all of those good intentions. How about instead of focusing on hitting the gym or skipping those sweets, you think about diving deeper in to the arts on campus? January is bursting at the seams with great shows, art galleries, and music for all interests! Take a look...

- First and foremost, make sure you get your tickets early for UD's main stage performance of *Speed the Plow*. This is a three person show starring Reed Motz, Tristan Sample and Theodra Bane. Learn all about Hollywood's callous producers and the ends they will go to make a profit. *Speed the Plow* has recently hit Broadway and is now gracing KU Boll Theatre's stage at the end of the month. It goes up the last two weekends in January and tickets will be available at the box office.

- In case you are looking for a way to plunge into the theater on Dayton's campus, *Batboy: The Musical* auditions are happening at the end of the month on January 28th and 29th. Prepare a song, cross your fingers, and you may just make the cut for this "story about a half-boy, half-bat found living in a cave in West Virginia!"

- The Arts Series is hosting *Curtis Barnes: A Jazz Tribute* on January 17th in Sears Recital hall at 8 pm with some amazing music to tribute all of Barnes' inspirational artwork that has been on display around campus for the months of December and January.

- The Victoria Theatre Association, located in the heart of downtown Dayton, has events going on all month long, including the musical, *Chitty Chitty, Bang Bang* and much more! Along with the Human Race Theatre Company and the Loft Series, there is plenty of theatre and music to be appreciated downtown this month! Bring your ticket stub and receipt to ArtStreet to receive \$10 back on any professional arts ticket.

While there will be art, theater and music filtering through the bitter January wind on and around Dayton's campus, make sure that you set a few goals for this new year. Make the goals smaller and easier to reach and that way, you won't find disappointment as easily and will be motivated to make higher and more challenging goals in the future. Make one of your goals to be more enthusiastic about the amazing fine art opportunities all around you!

# Curtis Barnes, Sr.: A Retrospective

By Sara Garchar

Dayton native Curtis Barnes returns this winter to showcase his paintings on UD's campus—and what a perfect time to view his work! Barnes' beautifully rendered pieces on display through January 30th will certainly warm and bring life to the campus as the chilly snow falls outside.



Barnes received a degree in art education at Wright State University and went on to teach in the Dayton Public Schools and at Sinclair Community College. While deeply inspired by jazz music, Barnes' influences also include African traditions, tribal masks, mythology, and family. His paintings are dynamic and colorful compositions of people and places, ranging from non-objective and abstract to realistic

studies.



Barnes' paintings are all excitingly unique while unified by the rhythm and mood of jazz that is easily discovered in his brushwork, colors, and style. His extensive collection of works are featured in three locations on campus—Roesch Library, the Rike Center Gallery, and ArtStreet's Studio D Gallery—so you'll have several chances to check out

his work wherever you are on campus!

In addition, an ensemble consisting of regional jazz musicians will honor Barnes and other jazz legends such as Miles Davis and Louis Armstrong in a concert this month. The musical tribute will be held on January 17 at 8 p.m. in Sears Recital Hall. Tickets are \$14 for general admission; \$8 for UD faculty, staff and alumni; and \$5 for students.

## **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

**Show Opens:** Tuesday, December 9

**Gallery Reception:** Thursday, January 8 from 5-7pm (Rike Center Gallery)

**Jazz Tribute Concert:** Saturday, January 17 starting at 8pm (Sears Recital Hall)

# Humans Have the Right to Food, the Right to Work, and the Right to an Education

By Maggie Deininger

Human Rights Week 2009 will take place February 2nd-13th. As part of the events, an art exhibit will be held in ArtStreet's Studio D Gallery. This year's theme is free and fair trade. Joanna Dean, this year's art exhibit coordinator, is a senior art history and fine arts major who has been involved with Human Rights Week since her freshman year by volunteering as an usher.

Dean's personal interest in human rights focuses on the importance for child rights and the discussion of where the line falls between child and adult rights. She explains however, that the comprehensive purpose of Human Rights Week is to educate the student body about human rights and the impact that abuse of human rights can cause among individuals who suffer.

This year Dean is coordinating with the featured artist, Ashley Cecil. Dean is very excited for this year because Ashley Cecil is a UD alumna. In previous years they featured current student artwork only. Cecil, who considers herself a painting activist, understands that great art has a deeper meaning and a deeper cause. Her



work is the result of interviews with women who have suffered from the abuse of their human rights. These women have overcome their abuse each in a different and unique way, and the paintings focus on the issues each woman dealt with.

"What I hope people take away from the art exhibit is that art can be used as a tool to bring people together under one cause," Joann Dean said. "Art today can relate to a personal, political, or social message. We live in such a visual society, people may lose sight of the power art can have when used to positively promote human

welfare, and it draws a wider group of people than just your average art show."

Human rights are issues that affect everyone. Therefore, it is important for the student body to be knowledgeable about these issues. Human Rights Week 2009 will offer a week-long schedule of programs and events to help students understand how human rights issues are affecting people around the world. For more information: <http://campus.udayton.edu/~hrw/>

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## Thursday Night Live



at the  
**ArtStreet Café**



If interested in performing, please contact  
Julie Roth at  
[rothjula@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:rothjula@notes.udayton.edu)

**Want to be a part of OffBeat? Email your  
ideas for articles, pictures, poetry or  
recipes to OffBeat Editor Michael Kane at:  
[kanemicw@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:kanemicw@notes.udayton.edu)**

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# The Gamelan:

## Calling All Students Interested in Music

By Kelly Amshoff

As the notes from the gong, metallophone and drum wash over you as you listen to the Javanese Gamelan, just imagine yourself as a part of the ensemble. Even though you may not be the most talented musician, still try to imagine yourself as part of a new and exciting group of individuals who are about to delve into the depths of Indonesian culture and tradition. The music is different and vibrant; each note is colorful and bright. The best part: this beautiful music is relatively easy to learn and is also accessible to all students for the spring semester!

The Javanese Gamelan, sometimes known as the Gong Orchestra, is one of the largest ensembles in the world, other than the European classical orchestra. Consisting of those three instruments, the Javanese Gamelan is being organized on Dayton's campus for the spring semester and anyone can join! There is no musical training necessary; all you need is an enthusiasm for new and exotic music.

Dr. Mary Arlene Chongson is the director of the ensemble and has been a teacher in the music department for the last year. She encourages students to join the ensemble and "learn about music and cultures through experiential and collective music-making." There is a weekly rehearsal every Wednesday from 6:15-7:45 p.m. in the Music/Theatre building,

room 104. This exciting new opportunity is made available through the Habits of Inquiry grant funded through the Office of the Provost.

Teaching Music History, Music in Concert and Introduction to World Music courses must make for a full workload for Dr. Chongson, but that has not dimmed her excitement for this upcoming opportunity. She is thrilled to share her passion for music to the community of UD and had already scheduled to have a guest come next semester to talk about the Gamelan. The distinguished visiting artist will be Sumarsam and from March 16-19th, he will be sharing his experiences and insight. Do not miss out on such an amazing prospect!

After all of the hard work that will be put into a semester of learning new and inventive instruments, the UD Javanese Gamelan Ensemble will grace the audiences on April 19th at 5:30 in KU Boll Theatre. The concert will be a joint performance with the percussion ensemble as well to make a splendid combination that will promise a rewarding evening.

If there are any questions or inquiries on this ensemble, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Chongson at [Arlene.Chongson@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:Arlene.Chongson@notes.udayton.edu) or try her phone at (937)-229-3915. She will be more than happy to share her knowledge and zest on such an incredible dream that she has come true for this upcoming year!



## Upcoming Events



### Wednesday Workshops:

January 14: Origami and Sushi Making

January 21: Knitting with Patricia Moore  
(\$5 charge for non students)

January 28: Watercolor Painting with Brother Joe Barrish

February 4: Paper Making with Ellen Schneider

All workshops held from 7-9 pm in ArtStreet Studio E  
FREE for UD students, staff and faculty  
(unless otherwise noted)

Email [artstreet@udayton.edu](mailto:artstreet@udayton.edu) to reserve your spot!

### FRIDAY NIGHT FILM SERIES

January 9: *Hairspray*

January 16: *City of God*

January 23: *Burn After Reading*

January 30: *Taxi to the Darkside*

February 6: *Moolaadé*

FREE and open to the public. All films at 9 PM in ArtStreet Studio B.  
For more info: 229-5101 or <http://artstreet.udayton.edu>