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UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PARTNER TO INTEGRATE ARTS INTO THE CURRICULUM

U-M STUDENTS DEVELOP CRITICAL 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS IN “ENGAGING PERFORMANCE” COURSE, MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION GRANT

ANN ARBOR, MI (May 23, 2014) —The University Musical Society (UMS) and the University of Michigan proudly announces Engaging Performance, a 200-level course geared toward non-arts majors that is dedicated to developing arts appreciation, cultural fluency, and curricular connections through the performing arts. Made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the course is an incredible example of how universities and arts organizations can work together to achieve a well-rounded liberal arts education, complete with curricular integration of the arts. The course was piloted with 75 students in Winter 2014 and will be offered each Winter semester.

The Winter 2014 class was jointly taught by Matthew Thompson, lecturer of voice at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance and Yopie Prins, professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. The course encouraged students to consider what makes a performance engaging, as well as to consider what they can learn about themselves, the community, and the world at large from how they respond to a performance. The syllabus for the course was an enriching mix of attendance at UMS performances, in-

class visits from internationally recognized UMS artists and arts administrators, writing assignments, lively discussions, and hands-on creative responses.

"I had originally signed up for this class to fulfill a humanities requirement, but it was honestly one of my best decisions," says Karishma Satapathy, a U-M undergraduate in the Sustainability Scholars Program. "Being a student who had little prior knowledge of music and performance, I felt very welcome and comfortable in this class. I learned a lot about performance and have come to appreciate it so much more now. This has been my favorite semester, and I owe a lot of it to this class. I can honestly say that my favorite college memory of all time was due to this class; attending the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis concert and gala with my fellow classmates was an experience that I will always hold dear to my heart. I am truly thankful for being a part of the Engaging Performance community."

The course will be offered again in Winter 2015, taught by Clare Croft, assistant professor of dance at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, & Dance and Linda Gregerson, the Caroline Walker Bynum Distinguished University Professor of English.

"Integrating the arts into the curriculum at a major research university is critical to helping students develop a well-rounded understanding of the world they are acquiring the skills to change," says Shannon Fitzsimons, UMS Campus Engagement Specialist. "The Engaging Performance course has been wonderfully received by the students, faculty, and artists involved and will only continue to evolve and deepen as we move forward. The course, in tandem with programs such as our Arts in Context Guides, which provides curricular ties and contextual support for faculty as they incorporate UMS performances into their classes, ensures that University of Michigan students will continue to have the experiences they need to become the Leaders and Best."

UMS President Ken Fischer said, “Top universities require inquisitive minds — students and faculty who are constantly challenging the status quo and working towards a better tomorrow. The University of Michigan and UMS see the arts as playing a vital role in creating the curriculum and community where thought-leaders of all disciplines flourish. We are thrilled that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation champions these beliefs and has so generously supported the Engaging Performance course and all of our campus engagement efforts at UMS.”

Among many in-class artist visits, the winter 2015 course will include interactions with the Grammy Award-winning new music ensemble eighth blackbird and 2013 MacArthur “Genius” Kyle Abraham, choreographer and dancer. Visit umich.edu for enrollment details.

ABOUT PROFESSOR LINDA GREGERSON (College of Literature, Science, and the Arts)

A 2007 National Book Award finalist and a recent Guggenheim Fellow, Linda Gregerson is the Caroline Walker Bynum Distinguished University Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, where she teaches creative writing and Renaissance literature. She is the author of five books of poetry and two books of criticism, and the co-editor of one collection of scholarly essays. Gregerson's poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, *Granta*, *The Paris Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Best American Poetry*, and many other journals and anthologies. Among her honors and awards are an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, the Kingsley Tufts Award, four Pushcart Prizes, grants and fellowships from the Guggenheim, Rockefeller, Mellon, and Bogliasco Foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute for Advanced Study, the Poetry Society of America, and the National Humanities Center.

ABOUT PROFESSOR CLARE CROFT (School of Music, Theatre, and Dance)

Clare Croft is a historian, theorist, and dramaturg, working at the intersection of dance studies and performance studies. She specializes in 20th and 21st century American dance, cultural policy, feminist and queer theory, and critical race theory. In all of these areas, Croft considers how dance is a way of

thinking and a mode for asking questions. What does it mean to acknowledge that people have bodies and that they use their bodies to make meaning, create community, and critique social structures?

Croft's current book project, *Funding Footprints: Dance and American Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press), examines the history of U.S. State Department funding of international dance tours.

ABOUT SHANNON FITZSIMONS

Shannon Fitzsimons is the Campus Engagement Specialist at UMS. She is also a PhD candidate in Theatre and Drama at Northwestern University, where she is writing a dissertation about new play development in Chicago ensemble theatres. A professional dramaturg, she has collaborated with theatres across the country on both new and established work.

ABOUT UMS

The University Musical Society is an independent non-profit affiliated with the University of Michigan, presenting over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season. One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is committed to connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. With a program steeped in music, dance, and theater, UMS contributes to a vibrant cultural community by presenting approximately 60-75 performances and over 100 free educational activities each season. UMS also commissions new work, sponsors artist residencies, and organizes collaborative projects with local, national, and international partners.

For more information, please visit ums.org/learn

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