The Nine to Five Grind Gets its Own Anthem

Musical sings of the American work-force experience

John Flynn
THE SANTA CLARA

Fridays often end with people swapping war stories from their work day. The Santa Clara Department of Theatre and Dance will debut "Working," a musical about those stories.


"Above all, the people in 'Working' are living out the choices they make in their lives," said Jeff Bracco, director of the show. "Some are pleased with where they are in life and some are not, but they all are trying to make things better for themselves and their families – something with which everyone can identify."

Despite its relatable theme, "Working" is not a typical musical. Instead of furniture, the stage will be dressed with three versatile structures made of industrial steel. Forgoing an elaborate set, there will be a stage-as-concrete set that will feature projections. Replacing scenic design, the majority of the show consists of one "worker" onstage delivering a monologue.

Monologues test an actor's ability to sing, dance and adequately capture an audience's attention for relatively long amounts of time.

"They have one shining moment to say what they want and you have to figure out why they say what they say," said junior actor Austin Johnson.

The burgeoning actors command attention on stage with professional presence and must take on multiple roles in the production. In addition to juggling characters, the cast had to find a way to convincingly portray real people.

"Since this script is based on interviews that were done with real working people, finding that balance between real people and theatrical characters was a challenge, but one that this talented cast has embraced," said Bracco.

"They have created very real, complex people on stage, who are also funny and entertaining to watch and listen to."

Most of the monologues culminate with a song performed with the live orchestra but, instead of dancing, the ensemble members join the lead singer as fellow workers performing mixed labor, such as truck driving or hotel cleaning.

"The substitution of non-traditional music for the conventional dance of typical musicals emphasizes the importance of the work few people think about.

In addition to examining over-looked American labor, audience members will witness the unseen work behind a theatrical performance. "Working" opens with a narration of the technical uses for lights, music and stage pieces. Usually, these cues are only heard by stagehands, but they are read aloud so the audience can follow the organized chaos that precedes a performance.

"It's very transparent what we're doing," said stage manager Brian Webster, who will orchestrate the exposed behind-the-scenes work. "You get to see the back stage happen onstage."

"Working" is based on a book by Studs Terkel named "Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do." The songs were written by prolific show tunes savant Stephen Schwartz and folk legend James Taylor, among others.

The musicalization of non-fiction may seem strange, but the tunes enhance the reality of the stories.

"The characters open themselves up more to the audience through the music so we can better see who they are and feel what they are feeling," said Bracco.

"Ultimately, through the music we get closer to these people and can see more of ourselves in them."

Max Wahl, '15
"Introduction to Voice, because it brought me out of my comfort zone."

Nicole Vanderloo, '17
"Italian, because we had food parties."

Cody King, '15
"Advanced Calculus with (Leonard) Klusinsky, I learned a lot."

Christine Wang, '17
"Business 70, because Mike's Bikes simulation is awesome."

Samantha's Spots: A Beautifully Strange Haven

"I've tried to create what's not in the Bay Area by combining aspects of Big Sur and San Francisco," said Bongiorno. "It's naturally geared to being a hub for spiritual seekers and artistic souls."

Bongiorno was attracted to the space because of its proximity to the cemetery.

In addition, the studio sponsors classes, workshops and hosts art shows for smaller, lesser-known artists. Each month, poetry readings are held and live acoustic music is performed. Studio-Bongiorno has also hosted a "death cafe," a European concept that involves eating cake, drinking coffee or tea and discussing mortality.

"Studio-Bongiorno proudly embraces its strange, dark and unconventional spirit. Bongiorno has tried to make it a place that can exist as an escape by setting up an area that speaks to the soul and it applies to a large range of people and patrons."

The patrons, often artists themselves, come to the cafe for a brief respite and some inspiration. They can grab a cup of coffee or tea and settle in as the artwork and wonderful cafe smells penetrate the creative spirit.

Studio-Bongiorno exists as a hidden "rabbit hole" leading down into a creative realm that at times can be scary, but is always exciting. Students wishing to take a journey down Bellomy beyond the familiar red cups zone will not be disappointed by this hidden gem.

Contact: Samantha Nitz at snitz@scu.edu or call (408) 554-4852.

Art and creativity co-exist at Studio-Bongiorno. With a unique mix of artistic mediums, this cafe studio inspires and awes all who find their way into the space that embraces the strange mysteriousness of life.

Art studio displays dark, daring and imaginative spirit through its crafts

Samantha Nitz
THE SANTA CLARA

Across from the Santa Clara Mission Cemetery, a sign bears the slogan "Embracing the Light and Dark Within Us." The bright, eclectic Bongiorno-owned Studio-Bongiorno, a small coffee shop and art gallery.

Filled with honeycomb rocking chairs set against a backdrop of glass and intriguing art, the studio makes any visitor feel like they've entered a kaleidoscope of visuals. The studio achieves this by displaying a dynamic array of mediums: pottery, canvas, jewelry, sculpture and cloth. The pieces, especially the jewelry, are reasonably priced and undeniably unique.

For those seeking an avenue into individual expression, this is a haven.

Studio-Bongiorno, owned by Phil Bongiorno, has been open for just over two years.
Top 10 Santa Clara Professors

Eddie Solls Jr.
THE SANTA CLARA

1. Laurie Poe
Mathematics professor Laurie Poe is academic royalty. She was listed among the "Best 500 Professors" in the U.S. by Princeton Review. She strives to present the material as clearly as possible so no student feels left behind. In math, it is easy to fall behind in the race, but Poe makes sure that her students cross the finish line together.

2. Dr. Stephen Carroll
If you want to become a better writer, take a class with Carroll for guaranteed improvement. "Dr. Stephen Carroll will rip your writing apart and force you to stitch it back together," said senior Kathryn Hackett. "His Great Writing class is everything you need to be successful. It was one of the hardest classes I've taken and I hated it while I was in the class, but by far one of the most fulfilling classes I've had at (Santa Clara)."

3. Michael Zampeletti, S.J.
Zampeletti is one of the first faces students were introduced to during their freshman orientation at Santa Clara, and rightly so. "His professor is an outstanding representation of our university's Spirit. Zampeletti is energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate. In addition, he holds the firm belief that all Jesuits aim to convey to their students educate the whole person."

4. Sam Conedera, S.J.
Conedera's passion for medieval history is infectious. "Take one of his classes to see what true passion looks like. "He's made me want to learn about the crusades for hours at a time when I had previously not even paid them thought," said senior Ryan Mahoney. "That's the mark of a real genius, he took a core class we were hoo-hoo about and turned it into the best class I've taken at (Santa Clara)."

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6. Dr. Sally Vance-Trembath
Theology professor Vance-Trembath encourages students to think about their own experience with religion and what purposes they wish to embrace. As a seminary, she shows a care for her "companions," as she likes to call her students, that is practically unrivaled. She has a genuine care for her students that she takes to every class. Vance-Trembath enjoys learning from her students as much as she likes teaching them. She believes education is a two-way street that should always be taken.

7. Dr. Lawrence Nelson
With Nelson, it's either his way or the highway. No ifs, ands or buts in his ethics classes. With all the class assignments you'll question why you ever wanted to earn a college degree. But once final exams are over, you'll look back and realize that he was challenging you because you knew you could do it. He recognizes his students' potential and pushes them to be their best.

8. Aldo Billingslea
Too breathless anyone? This theater professor has been responsible for turning many students toward the theatrical life. His Acting for Non-Majors class is fun and energetic, but demands students fully participate and put themselves out there — an important lesson for college and life.

9. Dr. Francisco Jimenez
Spanish professor Francisco Jimenez let the world into his heart and his life when he wrote his autobiography, "The Circuit." A fellow Bronco, he is the embodiment of the "Three Cs" — competence, conscience, and compassion. His struggles in life have created a professor who knows the value of education, hard work and love for those around you.

10. Dr. Anthony Hazard
This history professor strives to be a true source of knowledge for his students. His dedication to his field is a lesson that any Santa Clara professor could learn from. "Besides being able to talk football with him at any time, he opened up my eye to the diverserow we truly live in," said student Will Mitterwald. "Great professor in his own right."

Contact Eddie Solls Jr. at eddie@sbc.edu or call (408) 554-4852.

November Calendar

II/6 | THURSDAY

Difficult Dialogues: Israel, Palestine and Free Speech on Campus
Time: 6 p.m.
Location: Benson Memorial Center, Room 209
Why Go?: Engage in conversation about one of the most controversial and debated topics of modern times.

II/8 | SATURDAY

Women's Soccer: Saint Mary's College vs. Santa Clara
Time: TBA
Location: Buck Shaw Stadium
Why Go?: Cheer on your favorite Bronco as they take on the Gaels.

II/9 | SUNDAY

Liturgy
Time: 10 a.m., 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.
Location: Mission Church

II/10 | MONDAY

Fall Concert: White Panda
Time: 8 p.m.
Location: Locasciulli Activity Center
Why Go?: Join the Activity Programming Board for a night of heart-thumping, ear-thrilling musical bliss. APB will be talking in Benson Memorial Center calling tickets all week.
Cost: $20

II/11 | TUESDAY

Senior Night
Time: 4:30 p.m.
Location: Locasciulli Activity Center
Why Go?: Associated Student Government is sponsoring the first senior event of the year. Connect with your outgoing Bronco over good conversation, drinks and entertainment. Must be a senior in units to attend. Cost: $7 for 2 drinks, free entry.

II/12 | WEDNESDAY

Banana Institute: La Verdad Y La Justicia: Witnessing Truth in The Service Of Justice
Time: 4-6 p.m.
Location: Library and Learning Commons, St. Clare Room
Why Go?: In commemoration of the assassination of the Jesuits at the Universidad de Centroamerica in El Salvador.
Lucia Cerna, a housekeeper at the Salvadorian university, and professor Mary Jo Jorgensen will reflect together with Luis Calvo, S.J. on the events of November 21, 1989.

To suggest events for the calendar please contact Eddie Solls Jr. at calendar@sbc.edu.

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Th. 11/13, 10:30 am - 12 pm
Tues. 11/18, 7:30 - 9 pm
Cosumnes Prep, Mayer Theater
Call (408) 554-4852 for more information.