"I THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS A DANCER WHEN I ARRIVED. I had, indeed, been dancing since I was four. However, what I would learn in the next few years at SPCPA would transform me into an artist. Challenged at every turn to raise the bar, I found comfort in the routines of disciplined study. As working artists, our teachers bring a connectivity to the Tri-Cities arts community, a practical access to how art lives and breathes in real life. Daily immersion in training, access to master classes with renowned visiting artists, and opportunities to work with staff strengthened my understanding of offering service to one’s art. I continue to be inspired by what surrounds me.

STUDENTS ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER, TEACHERS GUIDE, THEATERS HOST AND AUDIENCES SUPPORT, ALL RELYING ON ONE ANOTHER TO CREATE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL.”

"EVERYTHING ABOUT SPCPA PREPARED ME FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT Awaited ME UPON GRADUATION..."
MISSION

The mission of the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists (SPCPA) is to provide the highest caliber of academic and artistic education for aspiring pre-professional performing artists in the areas of instrumental and vocal music, theatre and dance, and to fully prepare students for college and conservatory.

From the open campus which literally breathed life into our school day, I learned to manage time and navigate the city independently. That freedom came with responsibility, and I welcomed it. The challenge became how to fill the eight-hour day with the most opportunity. From honors courses to earning college credits, master classes to creating our own string ensemble, the goal was not how to get by, but how to make the most of this incredible moment in time. Today I balance a full collegiate course load, work, and write for the school paper, calling often upon my experience at SPCPA. Hours of disciplined training at the Lowry taught me more about the pursuit of passion in all things, not just art. This aesthetic education became an ideal foundation for the exploration within the arts and beyond.”
"BEING IMMERSED IN DOWNTOWN SAINT PAUL has given her a sense of pride for a city that she did not know before. This atmosphere is so similar to college life that I anticipate a smoother transition (for both of us) when the time comes as a result of SPCPA."

- Parent
ABOUT SPCPA

A broad base of leaders from civic, arts and public school sectors joined together with the mayor’s office to create the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists. SPCPA officially opened its doors in 2005 to 146 students. By the fall of 2014, the school had grown to 650 students. SPCPA’s campus is located in the heart of downtown Saint Paul, near beautiful Rice Park, the Landmark Center, and the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. In 2013, SPCPA purchased 64,000 square feet of space on the first three floors of the Lowry Building, where most classes are conducted. The Conservatory’s campus also includes the RiverCentre for dance and musical theatre instruction.
“MY DAUGHTER HAS TRANSITIONED FROM A STUDIO DANCER TO AN ARTIST WHO HAS BEEN TAUGHT BY THE BEST OF THE TWIN CITIES. She’s become someone who appreciates the arts in total, and in new and sophisticated ways. She’s also grown tremendously academically and has recently been accepted to attend the University of Minnesota next year where she will benefit from bringing with her credits from two college-in-the-schools classes.”

-Parent
DANCE

Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists’ Dance Department offers students a rigorous, versatile training geared toward the serious aspiring dance artist. Students are guided in their education by working artists who help them realize their potential technically, artistically and intellectually. The Conservatory’s training is modeled on college-level B.F.A. dance programs, and as such, successful graduates of the Conservatory’s Dance Department transition easily into arts programs at post-secondary institutions. Dance students prescribe to a practice of self-discipline and artistry, and maintain the highest respect for themselves, their peers, their instructors and their art.

The curriculum is designed to create versatile dancers by training students each semester in both ballet and modern dance. Peripheral classes include Jazz, Hip Hop, Repertory, Pilates, Tap, Afro Modern and Character. World Dance forms are studied to develop a global understanding of dance. Students will also take Dance Studies each year, which includes units on dance history, dance writing, anatomy, nutrition, and dance composition. Dance Studies allows students to develop a scholarly and articulate understanding of dance and its role in culture and society.
“TREAT PEOPLE AS IF THEY WERE WHAT THEY OUGHT TO BE AND YOU HELP THEM TO BECOME WHAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF BEING.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
THEATRE

Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists’ Theatre Department offers students training geared toward the serious aspiring theatre artist. Using a wide variety of both traditional and cutting-edge techniques and methods, students are guided in their education by working artists who help them realize their potential. The Conservatory’s training is modeled on college-level B.F.A. acting programs, and as such, graduates of the Conservatory’s Theatre Department transition easily into arts programs at post-secondary institutions. Each semester students take an acting class which focuses on their overall artistic growth, two courses that address the development of the student’s vocal and physical instrument, and a Theatre Studies course that offers them a scholarly perspective of the art form. Students have multiple opportunities to share what they are working on in class in formal and informal settings.
MUSICAL THEATRE

Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists’ Musical Theatre Department provides professional conservatory training designed to help singers, dancers and actors acquire the skills necessary to become polished performers of the most collaborative of all the arts. Musical theatre demands the highest level of commitment from the students, as they must necessarily attend to a broad range of skill-sets. Core classes include Dance Technique, Singing and Acting. This foundational musical theatre curriculum is supported by classes in music theory, musical theatre history, cabaret, and aesthetics – all necessary elements that help form America’s greatest contribution to world theatre.
The Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists’ Department of Vocal Arts prepares students for top undergraduate vocal music degree programs with extensive exposure to music performance, interpretation, theory and history. Each student will receive a more personalized education based upon prior knowledge and ability. Students will be trained in a classical vocal technique through study with industry professionals and participation in solo as well as ensemble singing with a rigorous curriculum. Student progress is highlighted by numerous publicly attended concerts throughout the year.

“HAVING TEACHERS THAT ARE LOCAL ARTISTS IS REALLY HELPFUL BECAUSE IT ALLOWS US TO GAIN INSIGHT into what the field is really like. Getting training from people who have been through similar training has affirmed that we really are learning what we need to know. And we’re making great connections.”

-Former student
"I TRULY ADMIRE THE WORK THAT SPCPA IS DOING. Their approach to education is fresh and the learning environment they are providing to students is unique and professional. One would expect this type of environment from a private school, but to have it offered publicly is amazing. The exposure these students are given through the talented faculty and experiences (like coming across the street for a concert by The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra) creates an unparalleled opportunity for the student looking to explore a career as a professional artist."

- Erin Jude, Education Manager, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists’ Music Department prepares talented young musicians for a range of successful music careers and for admission to the finest colleges and conservatories in the country. An orchestral and jazz-based curriculum is supported by four years of coursework in music theory and composition. Large and small ensembles meet weekly. Each year brings numerous performance opportunities for the full chamber orchestra and the jazz ensemble.
“EVERY YEAR J-TERM ALLOWED ME TO REFLECT ON THE BIG PICTURE to see my place in the circle, recognizing that significant growth comes as often through collaborative endeavor as solitary pursuit.”

- Former Student
J-TERM

For three weeks in January each year, students focus completely on arts programming and are immersed in rehearsals for a performance project. Following a rehearsal schedule similar to that used by professional companies, students collaborate with Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists faculty and guest artists in professional venues throughout Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Casting for these projects happens in the fall, mid-semester, and J-Term rehearsals take place during the usual school day and range in length from four to eight hours daily, depending on the project.

J-Term culminates in a week of performances of more than 20 projects including instrumental, vocal and dance concerts, plays and musicals, operas, creative collaborations, and experimental pieces. Students perform in professional venues throughout Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

“HISTORY THEATRE AND SPCPA TEAMED UP TO PRODUCE Sister Kenny’s Children, Hiding in the Open and The Buddy Holly Story with student actors working side by side with our professionals. We are proud to call the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists our partner in artistic excellence. They are well trained and respectful young artists, all eager to learn and grow.”

- Ron Peluso, Artistic Director, History Theatre
JURIES
At the end of the school year, students in each discipline must demonstrate learned skill for a panel of faculty and outside guest professional artists. Students receive feedback and leave for summer break each year with tangible goals to work toward during the year ahead. Juries are also an opportunity for faculty to assess individual student progress, overall departmental growth, and to discuss and assess current curriculum with outside professional panelists.

MASTER CLASSES
Professional guest artists serve as master class teachers for all artistic disciplines throughout the year, provide specialized, niche training, and further create bridges for SPCPA students to the Twin Cities professional arts community. Every major local arts organization has conducted a master class at some point for SPCPA students.

ARTS FACULTY
The arts faculty at SPCPA is comprised of working professional artists who bring current training, authentic experience and practiced expertise into the classroom. They understand the conservatory model because they graduated from conservatory training programs themselves. A number of them also teach at local colleges and universities. SPCPA’s 30-40 professional musicians, actors, singers and dancers on staff each year can be seen regularly on stages throughout the Twin Cities.
"I found SPCPA students to be talented and committed young professionals in the making. They were prepared, thoughtful, supportive of each other and eager to learn both in the classroom and in rehearsal. The school provides a great environment for youth to work with the best artists in town, practice a craft and, most importantly, learn important life skills that benefit them in all they do in their lives. A pleasure to work with SPCPA, and I might add a great learning experience for me as well."

- Michael Robins, Executive Producing Director, Illusion Theater
SPCPA's Arts Advisory Council is comprised of local professional artists who meet each year to discuss ways in which the community can connect with the school. The council also provides feedback and support. Recent members have included:

Diane Aldis
Gary Briggle
Steve Busa
Jeremy Cohen
David Damschroder
Bradley Greenwald
Nora Jenneman
Chuck Lazarus
Peter Leggett
Wendy Lehr
Carey Nadeau
Todd Petersen
Ron Peluso
Tori Pierce-Sands
Faye Price
Randy Reyes
Peter Rothstein
Luverne Seifert
Michael Robins
Jack Reuler
Uri Sands
Abdo Sayegh
Steven Stucki
Laurie Van Wieren
David Walsh
Ken Washington
Dave Williamson
Perchich Center for the Arts
Freelance Theatre Artist
Red Eye Theatre
The Playwrights’ Center
University of Minnesota, Music
Freelance Theatre Artist
University of Minnesota, Dance
Minnesota Orchestra
Walker West Music Academy
SPCPA Artistic Director Emeritus
American Composer’s Forum
Freelance Theatre Artist
History Theatre
Pillsbury House Theatre
Theatre MU
Theater Latté Da
University of Minnesota, Theatre
Illusion Theater
Mixed Blood Theatre
TU Dance
Minnesota Dance Theatre
Skylark Opera
Freelance Theatre Artist
University of Minnesota, Opera
Guthrie Theater
Minnesota Orchestra

For the current list of SPCPA Arts Advisory Council members, please visit www.spcpa.org.

SPCPA connects the students to the vibrant local professional arts community in numerous ways:

- During J-Term, students rehearse and/or perform in professional venues including Children’s Theatre Company, The Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts, Gremlin Theatre, History Theatre, The Lab Theater, Illusion Theater, Intermedia Arts, McNally Smith Recital Hall, The Minnesota Centennial Showboat, Mixed Blood Theatre, Open Eye Figure Theatre, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, O’Shaughnessy Auditorium, Park Square Theatre, EM Pearson Theatre at Concordia College, Penumbra Theatre, The Playwrights’ Center, Studio Z, TU Dance Studio, and Walker West Music Academy, amongst many others.

- Local professional artists are hired as guest J-Term directors, choreographers, conductors, and mentors.

- All arts instructors during the school year are local professional working artists.

- Professional performance opportunities are occasionally made available to SPCPA students, and collaborations between SPCPA and various arts organizations are nurtured.

- Students are offered at least four master classes each year from outside guest professionals.

- The course Twin Cities Professional Arts Community, which invites a different local artist into the Lehr Theater each week to dialogue with students, is offered to juniors and seniors every other year.

“SPCPA PLAYS AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASPIRING ARTISTS. WE SEE IN THESE STUDENTS THE IMPACT OF EDUCATING BOTH BODY AND MIND.”

- Tori Pierce-Sands and Uri Sands, Artistic Directors of TU Dance
“SPCPA MODELS THE BEST OF WHAT WE HOPE FOR IN SECONDARY EDUCATION—
a secure, nurturing environment that challenges the minds, hearts and imaginations of the young; a place
where the individual student matters. It’s a visionary institution that provides ambitious students of all
backgrounds a place to seriously pursue their dreams.”

-Parent
ACADEMIC OVERVIEW

Academic standards, aligned with state standards, define expectations for the educational achievement of students attending the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists (SPCPA). These standards ensure all students have access to high-quality content and instruction. Standards and benchmarks are important because: (1) They identify the knowledge and skills that all students must achieve by the end of a grade level (2) They help define the course credit requirements for graduation (3) They serve as a guide for the school’s adoption and design of curriculum. SPCPA measures student mastery of the standards through state and local assessments.

Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists aligns with Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Standards in World Languages developed at the local level coincide with national standards.

Students engage daily in academic programming to meet graduation requirements, as determined by the state of Minnesota and Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, and prepare for the college or a post-secondary conservatory program of their choice. All academic teachers hold licenses granted by the Minnesota Board of Teaching.

For more information please visit the Minnesota Department of Education website: http://bit.ly/hsrequirements

HONORS

The Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists provides honors courses to students seeking advanced academic expectations and opportunities for learning. The structure, content, processes, and assessments associated with honors courses combine with inspired instruction and academically motivated students to create a dynamic, interactive environment that fosters greater intellectual development. Honors courses show students how to discover, develop, evaluate, argue, test, compare, and apply content knowledge. Honors students must display high-quality academic performance as they continually engage in robust, challenging, and enriching experiences.

COLLEGE IN THE SCHOOLS (CIS)

The Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, in partnership with the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, affords qualifying juniors and seniors with rigorous college level courses. The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships accredits College in the Schools. Accreditation guarantees the following: (1) Courses offered through CIS are University of Minnesota courses, and CIS students earn University of Minnesota credit (2) High school students enrolled in University of Minnesota courses through CIS are held to the same academic standards as students on the University of Minnesota campus (3) High school teachers teaching University of Minnesota courses through CIS are selected, trained and continuously supported by University of Minnesota faculty.

Students are able to obtain college credit recognized by post-secondary institutions coast to coast. In addition, students experience increased academic rigor and develop skills for college success, as well as demonstrate learning over an entire semester, not just on a single, high-stakes test.

SCIENCE

SPCPA strives to ensure science content and instruction aligns with the belief that all students can and should be scientifically literate. Scientific literacy enables students to use scientific principles to make personal decisions and participate in discussions that affect society. Classroom experiences include hands-on activities rooted in scientific inquiry and collaboration. The classroom environment fosters the development of thoughtful, creative and knowledgeable citizens that possess understanding and knowledge of key scientific concepts.
“SPCPA HAS PROVIDED OUR SON WITH AN EDUCATION THAT IS STIMULATING, RIGOROUS AND MOST IMPORTANTLY SIGNIFICANT FOR YOUNG ARTISTS.

With an equal value placed on excellence in arts and academics, he’s been able to take a host of college level courses without sacrificing his passion or commitment to the arts. Most importantly, he is part of a community of fellow artists, faculty and peers, who share his drive and enthusiasm.”

- Parent

MATHEMATICS

SPCPA provides a rich and rigorous mathematics curriculum that prepares students for post-secondary courses. All students can and should be mathematically proficient. This belief compels SPCPA to focus on the teaching and learning of important mathematical concepts, skills, and relationships. Instruction aligned with standards emphasizes a connected body of mathematical knowledge which students learn through engaging in problem-solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation.

ENGLISH

SPCPA engages students in the interpretation and creation of meaning through language utilizing English curriculum characterized by high standards and expectations of student achievement. Students interact with texts using critical and rhetorical analysis, taking into account social and historical perspectives. They approach reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking as integrated skills in their study of poetry, non-fiction, drama, and prose. SPCPA prepares students to be communicative and insightful citizens and leaders.

SOCIAL STUDIES

SPCPA utilizes the multidisciplinary study of the humanities and the social sciences to prepare students to become responsible, engaged citizens through disciplinary knowledge and skills, commitment to democratic values, and citizen participation. SPCPA emphasizes literacy in all courses to engage students in local, national, and world issues and events. Students learn to think critically as socially and culturally aware individuals as they attain knowledge and skills in civics and government, economics, geography, and history.

WORLD LANGUAGES

SPCPA assists students in becoming diverse and active citizens by preparing them to communicate with people of other cultures and backgrounds. Courses challenge students to expand their worldview. Students purposefully acquire listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as they engage in the process of learning a second language. Although not a graduation requirement of the state or school, many post-secondary institutions require a minimum of two or three years of the same language studied at the high school level.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

In accordance with state and federal mandates, SPCPA seeks out, assesses, and appropriately serves students with disabilities. School staff use a comprehensive child study process to systematically screen, assess, and, if appropriate, place students in special education services.
“WE APPRECIATE SO MANY THINGS ABOUT THE SCHOOL, the teachers and staff. The school overall is progressive and approaches education in a manner that is visionary yet well grounded. It has flexibility to allow the students to develop and explore their artistic nature, yet provides solid structure to prepare them for college.”

~Parent
POST-SECONDARY ADVISING

Post-secondary advising services support students and families when making decisions regarding students’ future goals and plans. This service functions as a guide to students and families as they engage in the process of planning for the next steps.

SPCPA welcomes post-secondary institutions to its campus to share opportunities and experiences with students of all grade levels throughout the school year. SPCPA invites all students and parents to attend these visits and learn more about potential post-secondary options.

GRADUATION

The Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists’ graduation ceremony is held on the main stage at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. Previous graduation speakers include Peter Brosius (Artistic Director, Children’s Theatre Company), Gary Gisselman (Artistic Director, St. Olaf Theater), Patricia A. Mitchell (President and CEO, the Ordway), Joe Dowling (Artistic Director, Guthrie Theater), Ananya Chatterjea (Director of Dance, University of Minnesota), Kevin Kling (NPR’s “All Things Considered”), Lou Bellamy (Producing Artistic Director, Penumbra Theatre Company), Manny Laureano (Minnesota Orchestra, Co-Artistic Director of the Minnesota Youth Symphonies), and Libby Larsen (American Composer and Co-founder of American Composers Forum).

“I JUST WANTED TO SAY HOW OUTSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS HAVE BEEN. YOU ARE CLEARLY RUNNING A SUPERB PROGRAM. We see hundreds of students from around the country and yours are among the finest we’ve encountered. I’ve been around long enough to know that this is not coincidence. They are rigorous, imaginative and grounded. Please continue to keep CALARTS on your students’ radars.”

- Travis Preston
Director of Performance Programs
California Institute of the Arts
POST-SECONDARY SUCCESS

SPCPA alumni attend(ed) these outstanding post-secondary institutions:

The American Academy for Dramatic Arts
American Musical & Dramatic Academy
American University, Paris
Arizona State University
Beloit College
Bennington College
Berklee College of Music
Bradley University
Butler University
California Institute of Arts
Carnegie Mellon University
Century College
Century Community College
The City College of New York
Coe College
Columbia College Chicago
Columbia University New York
Concordia University St. Paul
Cornell College
Cornish College of the Arts
DePaul University
Dominican University CA
Emerson College
Evergreen State College
Florida Atlantic University
Grinnell College
Gustavus Adolphus College
Hamline University
Hofstra University
Illinois Wesleyan University
Inver Hills Community College
Iowa State University
Ithaca College
The Juilliard School
Kendall School of Culinary Arts
Lawrence University
Le Cordon Bleu
Loyola University Chicago
Loyola Marymount University
Lynn University
Martin Luther College
Marquette University
Marymount College
McNally Smith College of Music
Millikin University
Minneapolis Community and Technical College
Minnesota State University Mankato
Muhlenberg College
New York University
Normandale Community College
North Dakota State University
North Park University
Northwestern College
Northwestern University
Oklahoma State University
Point Park University
Purdue University
Rutgers
Saint Mary’s University
Sarah Lawrence College
St. Catherine University
St. Cloud State University
St. Paul College
St. Xavier University
South East Missouri State University
Southern Methodist University
State University of New York Purchase College
Tisch School of the Arts
University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music
University of Colorado
University of Evansville
University of Indiana
University of Iowa
University of Kentucky
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota Duluth
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
University of Minnesota BFA Guthrie Training Program
University of Nebraska
University of North Carolina School of the Arts
University of Oklahoma
University of St. Thomas
University of Tampa
University of Texas Austin
University of Vermont
University of Wisconsin River Falls
University of Wisconsin Stout
Vassar College
Viterbo University
Western Michigan University
Yale
SPCPA is situated right across the street from its authorizer, the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. The Ordway, recognized as one of the country’s leading nonprofit performing arts centers, is home to a wide variety of performances throughout the year that encompass the finest in American musical theater, world music, dance, and vocal arts on its Music Theater and McKnight Theatre stages.

The Ordway also embodies a rich tradition in education and engages more than 50,000 students, educators, and families through its Arts Education and Community Engagement programming each year. Since the conservatory’s inception in 2005, the Ordway has provided SPCPA with numerous classes, artist residencies, workshops, and opportunities for students across all disciplines to see a wide variety of performances from around the world and interact with top professionals in the field.

To learn more about the Ordway, please visit: ordway.org
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PREPARE