On October 1, the School of Music, Theatre & Dance hosted a particularly noteworthy evening. Scholars, friends, fans, supporters, students, alumni, and organ lovers gathered in Ann Arbor to celebrate the life and career of Marilyn Mason, beloved professor of organ, whose first year on the U-M faculty was 1947! Any time is the right time to celebrate this legendary figure in the organ world, but this particular milestone made history: Dr. Mason’s 60 years on the faculty set not just a School but a University record, the longest tenure on the faculty since university administrators started counting these things.

Marilyn’s host of admirers gathered at Hill Auditorium for performances by former students and an evening of tributes, accolades, and anecdotes about the honored guest. Someone else might have taken their flowers and cards and confetti and gone home, eager to begin a much-deserved retirement. Not so Marilyn Mason. Just this fall, she welcomed sixteen students, her 61st class, into her studio.

With Dr. Mason back in the studio, we now look ahead to another full year of music, theatre, and dance. The University Symphony Orchestra is off to Carnegie Hall on February 28, 2008, playing Mahler and a new work by composition faculty member Evan Chambers. University Productions is staging a contemporary version of La Bohème, set in modern Paris and featuring an appearance by our distinguished professor emeritus George Shirley. Beethoven: The Sonata Obsession, a series of recitals, lectures, and chamber concerts sponsored by the School, will enhance the listener experience of the UMS-presented series of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas performed by guest artist András Schiff. Chamber Music @ Michigan enters its second year, with upcoming residencies by the Guarneri String Quartet and eighth blackbird.

Arts on Earth, the centrally supported initiative led by the U-M arts deans, has entered its second season with an unprecedented activity entitled “Arts and Minds.” Details of this enterprise, which has drawn participants from disciplines across the University and beyond, can be found on the School’s Web site and at www.artsonearth.org.

And that’s just for starters! You can read about these exciting developments and more in the pages that follow and find out about upcoming programming on our Web site www.music.umich.edu.

With all best wishes,

Christopher Kendall, Dean
School of Music, Theatre & Dance