GLOBAL ARTS:

Performances For Schools

Presents **Tomáš Kubínek**



Friday, February 13, 2009 Concert Hall at 10:00 am

Study Guides for Teachers are also available on our website at www.fineartscenter.com - select For School Audiences under Education, then select Resource Room.

Please fill out our online surveys at http://www.umass.edu/fac/centerwide/school/index.html for the *Registration Process* and each *Event*. Thank you

Biography....Who is Tomas Kubinek?

Tomáš Kubínek's internationally acclaimed solo performances play to packed theaters around the world. After a sold-out run on Broadway, The New York Times lauded his work as "Absolutely expert!" "Hilarious and enormously talented!" trumpeted England's Time Out, after appearances at London's Royal Festival Hall.

A collision of theatre and music-hall, his exuberant one-man show is equal parts comic brilliance, virtuosic vaudeville and irresistible charm. "Physical Poet and



Verbal Acrobat! Needless Risk-Taker...Professor of Fantastically Useless Inventions...Arduous Advocate of The Commonplace Miracle.

Certified Lunatic and Master of the Impossible..."

The Early Years

Tomás Kubínek - (toh-mawsh koo-bee-neck), was born in Prague and at the age of three was smuggled out of the country by his parents to escape the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. After two months in a refugee camp in Austria, the Kubínek family was granted asylum in Canada and it was there, in St. Catharines, Ontario, that Tomas, age 5, witnessed his first circus.

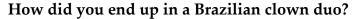
He became passionately interested in clowns, circus, theater and magic and his perplexed yet well-adjusted parents took him to see every show that passed through town. At age 9 he presented his first performance before a circle of elderly magicians. By age 13 he had an agent. He performed in coffee-houses between folk-music acts and while still in his teens, he made his circus debut with a Brazilian clown duo as the rear half of a two-person horse. There was no turning back...

Working any and all jobs related to showbiz, the enterprising Mr. Kubínek was able to save money and travel to Europe to study with some of the world's greatest teachers of theatre including; Monika Pagneaux, Pierre Byland, Jaques Lecoq and Boleslav Polivka. These studies, combined with his own tireless experiments in the art of live performance, led to the creation of his award-winning solo stage shows which play to capacity crowds at theaters, international arts festivals, and in television broadcasts throughout the world.

Interview....

What, exactly, do you do? your career has been so varied, how would you describe it?

I'm a rare type of actor and comedian who uses every trick in the book to charm, transport, move and elicit laughter from, an audience. The performance is unique and personal in that I am simultaneously author, director and performer in every moment being created before the public's very eyes.



I got a job when I was 19 or so through a friend with 'Circus Flora' which was playing in St.Louis. I would wear



an old-timey outfit with straw boater hat and spats and work the line-up doing schtick. A father and son clown duo, Leo and Nani Alarcon from Brazil had one number in the circus where the father played a mean horse trainer with a whip and there was a fake two-person horse and they needed someone to be inside the rear half of the horse costume... At the end of the number the gag was that the horse split in half and the front half would run away and I was left chasing after it in undershirt and boxer shorts with the back half of the horse costume around my ankles.

Does anyone help you come up with your ideas?

Mainly I do it all myself and on occasion have worked with directors or colleagues offering suggestions.

What do you like most about performing? (also a difficult question, sorry!)

I like all the aspects of performing. In particular, I like being alone and tired at the end of my performance, and feeling like I did a great job.

Can you tell me about the awards you have received, is one more meaningful to you than the others, or do you feel the same about all of them?

They all collect dust equally and are useless other than as paperweights, but getting them helps with the hype and people think you are more important just because someone else said you are.

History of Vaudeville in America...



Vaudeville, originally a light song, derived from the drinking and love songs formerly attributed to Olivier Basselin and called Vau, or Vaux, de Vire. Similar to the English music hall, American vaudeville was a live entertainment consisting of unrelated songs, dances, acrobatic and magic acts, and humorous skits and sketches by a variety of performers and acts, each on stage for about five minutes. From humble origins in barrooms and "museums," vaudeville became the dominant attraction in American popular entertainment, playing in hundreds of theaters throughout the United States. It flourished from 1881, when Tony Pastor gave the first "big time" vaudeville show in New York City, until 1932, when its greatest center, New York's Palace Theatre, abandoned live shows and became a movie theater. Such headliners as George M. Cohan, Harry Houdini, Eva Tanguay, W. C. Fields, Fay Templeton, Will Rogers, Ed Wynn, Eddie Cantor, Jimmy Durante, Irene Franklin, Fred Allen, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, and the Marx Brothers began their careers playing the vaudeville circuits. Beginning in the 1890s there also was an invigorating influx of performers from England and France who were a major influence on the growing sophistication and high quality of vaudeville. The popularity of radio and motion pictures caused vaudeville's decline, and many established performers moved into the new media. Television, however, brought about a revival of vaudeville-style revues.

"vaudeville." The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2008. Encyclopedia.com. 3 Dec. 2008 http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

History of Court Jesters (fools) and Clowns.....

The art of clowning has existed for thousands of years. A pygmy clown performed as a jester in the court of Pharaoh Dadkeri-Assi during Egypt's Fifth Dynasty about 2500 B.C. Court jesters have performed in China since 1818 B.C. Throughout history most cultures have had clowns.

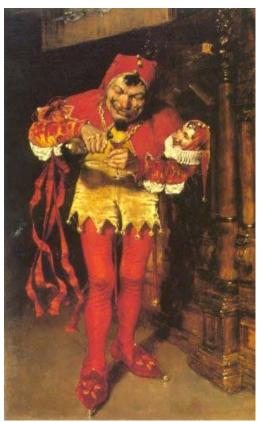
When Cortez conquered the Aztec Nation in 1520 A.D. he discovered Montezuma's court included jesters similar to those in Europe. Aztec fools, dwarf clowns, and hunchbacked buffoons were among the treasures Cortez took back to Pope Clement VII. Most Native American tribes had some type of clown character. These clowns played an important role in the social and religious life of the tribe, and in some cases were believed to be able to cure certain diseases.

Commedia del Arte

The Commedia del Arte began in Italy in the sixteenth century and soon dominated European theater. It was a highly improvised theater based upon stock characters and scenarios. It contained many comic characters divided into masters and servants. There were three types of comic servants: the First Zany, the Second Zany, and the Fantesca. The First Zany was a male servant who was a clever rogue often plotting against the masters. The Second Zany was a stupid male servant that was caught up in the First Zany's schemes and often the victim of his pranks. The Fantesca was a female servant, played by an actress, who was a feminine version of one of the Zany characters and would participate in the schemes

and provide a romantic story among the servants.

The history of clowning is a history of creativity, evolution, and change. Harlequin started off as a Second Zany, the victim of Brighella. Performers portraying Harlequin gradually made him a smarter character until he eventually usurped Brighella's position. In English Pantomime, a style of theater based on the Commedia del Arte, John Rich completed the evolution of Harlequin elevating it to starring position. New characters evolved to assume the position of Harlequin's stupid victims. One of these was the whiteface clown.



Court Jesters

Court Jesters, were often referred to as buffoons, zanies, fools and pantaloons. They entertained the Royals, like The King and Queen, or the Lords of the Manor at lesser notables courts in the surrounding countryside. They are the European forerunners of our present day clowns

were known by such names as fools, buffoons, zanies, pantaloons, and Merry-Andrews. Perhaps the first of these comic characters appeared in the theaters of Greece and Rome more than two thousand years ago. A favorite of kings and queens in the Middle Ages was the court jester, dressed in motley and wearing a fools cap with bells.

Clowns who performed as court jesters were given great freedom of speech. Often they were the only one to speak out against the ruler's ideas, and through their humor were able to affect policy. In about 300 BC Chinese emperor Shih Huang-Ti oversaw the building of the Great Wall of China. Thousands of laborers were killed during its construction. He planned to have the wall painted which would have resulted in thousands more dying. His jester, Yu Sze, was the only one who dared criticize his plan. Yu Sze jokingly convinced him to abandon his plan. Yu Sze is remembered today as a Chinese national hero.

The Circus Clown

The American Circus Clown provided comic relief between acts and filled in when staging was being changed. His most important function was to relieve tension between the serious and often times, dangerous acts of Lion Tamers, equestrians and trapeze artists. These clowns were talking and singing comedians, who most often did pantomime in the center ring and whose primary function was to punctuate the end or beginning of other performers' acts. Circuses were small then and clowns were singers and joke tellers. As Circuses grew and audiences got bigger, performers could no longer be heard. A new kind of clowning, called Pantomime, developed and clowns began walking among the crowds, repeating their act for small groups as they mingled. It became more difficult for clowns to become famous under these circumstances.

One clown that was incredibly famous was Dan Rice (1823-1901). He was a clown of the Civil War era. Like Will Rogers and Bob Hope he commented humorously on current events. A composer, he created many popular topical songs. He campaigned for Zachary Taylor for President. One of the things he would do was invite Taylor to ride on the circus bandwagon in the circus parades. Local politicians would clamor to ride as well hoping his popularity would benefit them. People would comment, "Look who's on Taylor's bandwagon," inspiring the phrase "jump on the bandwagon."

Rice had a goatee and wore a patriotic costume he referred to as his flag suit. Political cartoonist Ogden Nash based his drawings of **Uncle Sam** on Rice and his costume.

Rice was the highest paid person in America some years, earning more then his close personal friend Abraham Lincoln. A philanthropist he gave generously to many charities and erected the first monument to soldiers killed during the Civil War.

Multicultural Clowns

Most cultures have had their own clown character. Clowns have gone by many names around the world throughout history including: Auguste, Badin (Medieval France), Bobo (Spain c. 1500's), buffoon, Cabotin (Italy c. 1500's), Cascaduer (France), Charlie (European Tramp Clown), Chou (China), Claune (France 1800's), Contrary (Native America Plains Tribes), Excentrique (Solo French Clown), Fool, Gleeman (England, medieval), Gracioso (Spain, C. late 1500's), Grotesque (France, acrobatic clown, 1820-1850), Hano (Native American), Hanswurst (Germany "&" Austria c. 1700), Harlequin (Commedia Del Arte "&" English Pantomime), Jack Pudding (England, 1600's), Jester, Joey, Jongleur (ninth century Europe), Kartala (Bali), Koyemsi (Native American Hope Tribe), Merry Andrew (England, 1600 "&" 1700's), Minnesinger (Germany, 1100-1400), Minstrel (Europe, medieval, "&" America, 1800's "&" 1900's), Narr (Germany c. 1600), Newekwe (Native America Zuni Tribe), Nibhatkin (Burma), Pagliacci (Italy), Pantalone (Commedia Del Arte "&" English Pantomime), Pedrolino (Commedia Del Arte), Penasar (Bali), Pickle Herring (Holland "&" Germany, 1600 "&" 1700's), Pierrot (France), Rizhii (Russia, 1800's), Semar (Java), Skomorokhi (Russia c. 1000), Tramp (America), Trickster (mythology of many cultures), Troubadour (Medieval France), Vidusaka (India), Vita (India), Wayang Orang (Indonesia), Whiteface, and Zany (Italy).

<u>History of Clowning</u>-http://www.clown-ministry.com/index_1.php/site/articles/history_of_clowning_from_the_ancient_pharaohs_to_the_modern_day_by_bruce_jo/ The circus and the Clown- http://sunniebunniezz.com/clowning/clowncir.htm

Related Information....

1968 in Czechoslovakia....

http://www.photius.com/countries/czechoslovakia/government/czechoslovakia_government_the_1968_invasion.html Sources: The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was a pivotal event in Czechoslovakia's political development. The August intervention by forces from the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Poland, Bulgaria, and Hungary marked the beginning of the end of the Prague Spring and the reformist policies introduced by the Dubcek regime. It also set the stage for the reemergence in Czechoslovakia of a pro-Soviet regime and a politically orthodox environment.

In January 1968, Alexander Dubcek, who since 1963 had been first secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia (Komunisticka strana Slovenska--KSS), was chosen to replace Antonin Novotny as first secretary of the KSC. Dubcek was not then the leader of the KSC reformers but rather was a compromise selection. The removal of Novotny triggered an outpouring of demands for further changes in all sectors of society. The drive for reform centered on four broad issues: the overall question of political structure and participation, justice and civil liberties, Czech-Slovak relations, and economic organization and planning. In April 1968 the KSC Central Committee issued its so-called Action Program, which outlined steps toward constructing a "Czechoslovak way to socialism." Within the framework of a socialist society ruled by the communist party, the program attempted to decentralize and democratize the system of authority by reducing the role of the KSC in national life and transferring greater responsibility to the elected bodies of government. Other goals of the reform were to introduce strong guarantees of civil liberties and justice by establishing a system of checks and balances and reducing the power of police organs; to construct a more equitable relationship between Czechs and Slovaks by granting greater autonomy to the latter; and to institute a decentralized planning apparatus with aspects of market socialism.

A number of public opinion polls taken at the time indicated that the reforms envisioned in the Action Program received an extraordinary measure of public support. It was for this reason that they aroused deep concern among the leadership of the Soviet Union and neighboring communist nations. Those leaders feared that the reformist policies in Czechoslovakia would result in the erosion of the authority of the communist party, which in turn would weaken Czechoslovakia's commitment to socialist unity and to the Warsaw Pact and Comecon alliances. They also worried that the implementation of reforms in Czechoslovakia would lead to calls for similar reforms in the Soviet Union and other East European nations.

During the night of August 20-21, the armies of five Warsaw Pact nations invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia. The KSC Presidium issued a statement over Prague radio condemning the invasion and appealing to the people to remain calm and the army not to resist. No armed resistance was forthcoming. Instead, outrage at the massive invasion was expressed nonviolently: road signs were altered and removed to slow the oncoming invaders; radio transmitters were repeatedly moved to elude takeover; and foreign soldiers were refused service in stores and restaurants and were engaged in heated arguments with Czechoslovak citizens from whom they vainly sought cooperation.

As the Warsaw Pact troops moved into Prague, Soviet security forces arrested Dubcek and other top party leaders and flew them to Moscow. Meanwhile, despite the presence of Warsaw Pact troops in Prague, the National Assembly met August 21-27, and delegates managed to convene the "Extraordinary" Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Dubcek's supporters in the government refused to recognize the Soviet-imposed government and

instead demanded to join Dubcek in directly negotiating with the Soviets. The talks resulted in the signing of the Moscow Protocol, an uneasy compromise allowing Dubcek to remain in power but also requiring the dismissal of some reformists, a tightening of press control, a commitment to no persecution of pro-Soviet communists, and increased Soviet control over KSC appointments. After signing the Moscow Protocol, Dubcek was allowed to return to Prague, where he resumed his duties as first secretary of the party. Dubcek's efforts to maintain political control and to salvage the reform program were stymied by the new conditions imposed by the Soviets. Furthermore, popular resistance to the Soviet invasion continued and was reflected in such episodes as the public suicide of a university student and the vandalizing of Prague's Aeroflot office. All of these factors kept tensions high and led to Dubcek's ouster in April 1969. He was replaced by the more orthodox, Soviet-backed Gustav Husak.

Data as of August 1987

NOTE: The information regarding Czechoslovakia on this page is re-published from The Library of Congress Country Studies and the CIA World Factbook. No claims are made regarding the accuracy of Czechoslovakia The 1968 Invasion information contained here. All suggestions for corrections of any errors about Czechoslovakia The 1968 Invasion should be addressed to the Library of Congress and the CIA.

Activities...

Invent Your Own Vaudevillian Character All grade levels

Objectives:

- Learn about vaudeville in history.
- Practice performing skills.
- Creativity with costume.

Estimated Time Needed for Activity:

Two 90-minute classes

Notes:

- Do some research on old-time Vaudeville Theater. Short video clips should be shown of Buster Keaton, the Three Stooges and other vaudevillian entertainers, all of which should be available at the local library.
- This is an activity where students are encouraged to bring in their own funny costumes, props and objects. The more variety, the better possibilities for characters. It is important for the students to understand the potential of new vaudeville.

- Explain what the themes are, use of talents (juggling, singing, dancing etc.) slapstick humor, use of costume, use of props and overall silliness. Encourage them to be wacky with this activity, because that is one of the things that makes for good vaudeville. Keep in mind that slapstick is done correctly through lots of training and practice. You don't want anyone hurting themselves.
- This activity can easily be adapted for any age group

Addressing Cultural Diversity in the Learning Environment:

Invite students to create characters based on who they are culturally and personally. Ask them if they have ever been to a fair that celebrated a specific culture and the traditions. Cite examples of this in the classroom. How does your background effect the characters you choose?

Materials Needed for this Activity:

- Assorted fabric
- Assorted costume objects (eyepatch, fake nose, swimming mask, etc.)
- Assorted props (rubber chicken, fake stethoscope, cane, umbrella, etc.)
- Cardboard boxes

Additional Resources:

The television show, "Whose Line is it Anyway?" shows excellent examples of improvisational theater and work with objects and props.

Procedure:

- 1. Begin class by showing some brief clips of old time vaudeville. Give some historical context. Ask students what similarities and differences they see in the new and old vaudeville performers. This should take about ten minutes.
- 2. Divide class into groups of four or five, depending on class size.
- 3. Each group gets a box of fabric, costume objects and props.
- 4. Instruct students that they have ten minutes to dress themselves up as their own vaudevillian character, using what is inside their boxes.
- 5. When they have finished dressing up, give them five to ten minutes to come up with a skit.
- 6. If the instructor feels their class needs more structure, each group can be assigned a theme like "looking for a lost pet" or "a really bad job interview" or "the worst hockey team in the world".
- 7. Encourage students to use what talents they feel they have, whether it's impersonation or even drawing.
- 8. Each group performs their skit. Encourage improvisation!

Extensions and Adaptations

- There are many different ways this task can be modified.
 - o This does not necessarily have to be a single class.
 - o More time could be spent making costumes and developing skits.
 - o Characters generated from this activity can be used for the school fair activity at the end of this unit.
 - o With more time, students could be encouraged to generate skits at home and even bring in musical instruments if they wanted to.

For middle and high schools . . .

You may wish to look at this classroom activity regarding communism as a way of better understanding the sociopolitical circumstances in Czechoslovakia during Tomas Kubinek's childhood.

http://dailylife.greenwood.com/teacher/lesson.asp?id=DLO_WHM_TE_L17x

Additional Website References:

http://www.opb.org/education/atschool/lesson.php?rowid=58

Lesson plans and activities about Vaudeville

http://www.lazervaudeville.com/SGhistory.html

A history of Vaudeville

http://www.lib.umich.edu/spec-coll/czech/

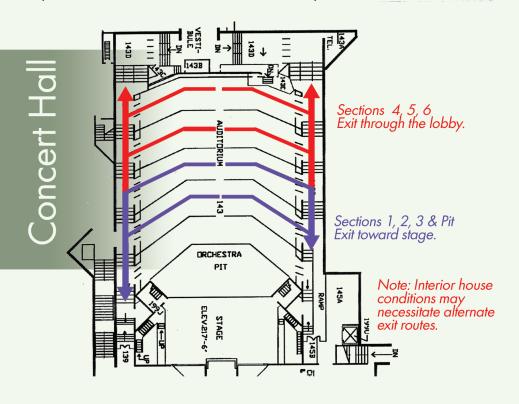
The University of Michigan Special Collections Library website dedicated to the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia

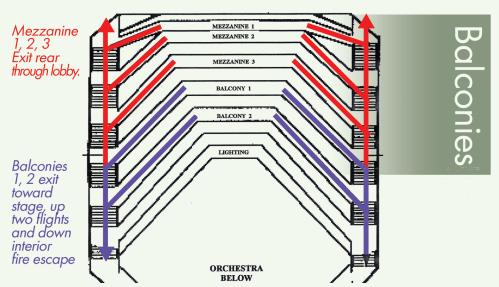
http://library.thinkquest.org/C001155/

Website with historical information about Prague Spring

Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the building, procedures are in place to ensure that the audience can exit safely.





NOTICE TO ALL TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES

- > PERFORMANCES BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 10AM
 - Many of our performances sell out. This means we can have up to 1,600 students to seat. Please help us by arriving 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow our ushers to get everyone seated and for you and your students to visit the rest rooms and get settled. It is important that we begin our performances on time so that all schools can meet their lunch and/or dismissal times.
- ➤ PLEASE CHECK LOCATION OF PERFORMANCE WHEN MAKING YOUR BUS RESERVATION.
- ➤ The staff of the Fine Arts Center needs your help! An increasing number of students are coming into the performance space with gum, food, beverages, cell phones and portable music players. None of these items is allowed in the halls for performances. Many of these items are stowed in backpacks and are not easily noticed. Our goal is to offer high quality performances for young people. In order to enhance the experience, we ask for your cooperation in preventing these items from entering the hall.
- For the comfort of all concerned, we ask that backpacks, lunches and other gear be left on the bus. Our long-standing policy of no cameras or tape recorders still is in effect.

We hope that you and your students enjoy your theatre experience!

PARKING AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FINE ARTS CENTER'S CONCERT HALL and RAND THEATER

School Bus Parking: Students should be dropped-off at Haigis Mall off of Massachusetts Avenue.

University Security will direct buses to an appropriate parking lot during the performance (typically by the football stadium). PLEASE BE SURE YOUR BUS DRIVER KNOWS THAT ALL PERFORMANCES LAST APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR AND THEY SHOULD RETURN A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE ANTICIPATED END TIME. If drivers are not with the buses, they may miss the radio call from security asking them to return for pick-up, resulting in unnecessary delays returning to your school.

<u>Individual cars</u>: If necessary, individuals may drop-off students with a chaperone at Haigis Mall (you will be directed by security to the mid-point turn of Haigis Mall – see map) prior to parking. **We recommend parking in the Campus Center Parking Garage to avoid searching for a metered space.** It is a five-minute walk to the Concert Hall. All other available parking during weekdays is at meters. Available lots and pricing (current as of 1/1/07) are listed below:

Parking in the Garage is available to our patrons at a discounted rate of \$1. To receive this rate you MUST give the Garage attendant a parking pass. To receive your pass, please call our office to let us know that you will be arriving by car. Parking passes are sent with the invoices. Please call (413) 545-2116 if you didn't receive one.

Parking meters are enforced Monday – Friday, 7AM – 5PM. Meter rates are \$1.00 per hour.

Parking Garage – near Campus Center, across from the Mullins Center off Commonwealth Avenue

Lot 34 – Behind Visitors Center with 3, 5 & 10-hour meters available

Haigis Mall – 2 hour maximum on meters

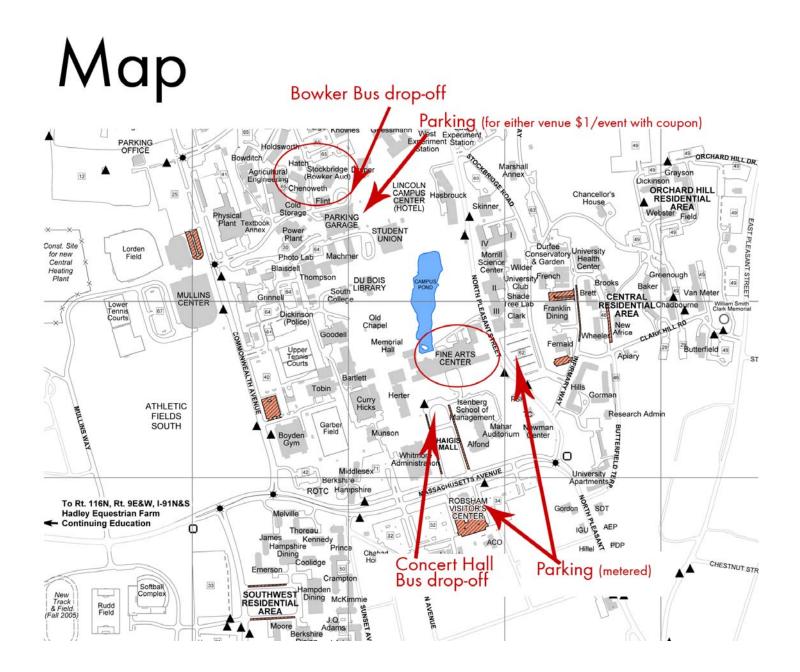
Lot 62 - Adjacent to Fernald Hall with 3 hour maximum on meters, limited spaces available.

From the North: (Vermont, Greenfield) I-91 south to Route 116. Follow signs on 116 "To the University of Massachusetts." Exit ramp leads to Massachusetts Avenue. Turn left (east) on to Massachusetts Avenue toward the campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the South: (Springfield, Holyoke) I-91 north to Route 9. Turn right (east) on Route 9 over the Coolidge Bridge and through Hadley. Turn left (north) on Route 116 (across from Staples) heading toward campus. Turn right at first exit at "University of Massachusetts," then bear right onto Massachusetts Avenue toward campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the West: (Northampton, Pittsfield) Route 9 east through Northampton and over Coolidge Bridge. Follow remaining directions under "From the South".

From the East: (Belchertown, Ludlow) North on Routes 21, 181 or 202 to Route 9 into Amherst. Right on to North Pleasant Street (main downtown intersection), north through center of town. Turn left at Triangle Street (Bertucci's Restaurant on your right), rejoining North Pleasant Street. To reach Lot 34 and Haigis Mall continue on main road, which becomes Massachusetts Avenue. Haigis Mall will be on your right, Lot 34 on your left.



For Concert Hall, Rand Theater and Bowker Auditorium – Patrons traveling by car are encouraged to park in the parking garage. Discounted parking is available in the garage for \$1. A parking permit is required for discounted parking in the garage. Please call the Arts & Educational Programs Office if you require permits at (413) 545-2116. All other parking on campus is at available meters at the rate of \$1 per hour. Parking is enforced Monday – Friday, 7AM – 5 PM.

Buses will drop-off students as indicated on map. Buses will be given parking instructions by Campus Security.