

# Journaler

THE WORD ON COLUMBIA ARTS

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## Dear Friends,

We've had a lot of fun putting together this issue of *Jasper*. It's a bit more eclectic than the past couple of issues – no real theme, but a lot of inspiring and interesting stories.

For one thing, we're announcing the first ever Jasper 2012 Artists of the Year. When we came up with the idea of an artist of the year competition we knew that we, at *Jasper*, wanted to act primarily as facilitators for the contest, giving you, our readers and Columbia's best art critics, the power to select the artists you think have had the most exceptional year. At printing time, only three people knew who the winners were. You can know now, too, by turning to page 11.

This issue also allows us to introduce our new film editor, Shane Slattery-Quintanilla. Shane is an Emmy-nominated Harvard grad who has made a new home in Columbia, teaching at Columbia College and continuing to make films, both here and in other parts of the country. We've already had Shane sit down with other local filmmakers and talk about ways to make Columbia's filmmakers more visible to the community at large as well as to one another. Several exciting ideas are brewing now and we look forward to seeing them

come to fruition. Read Shane's first article on page 42.

Since November is Native American Heritage Month we asked *Jasper* associate editor Kristine Hartvigsen to write a survey piece about some of the many contributions made to Columbia arts history and the contemporary arts scene by local Native American Indians. And while we're sure Kristine did a comprehensive job of covering the artists she spoke to, we feel fairly certain there are more Native American Indian artists who we may not be aware of. Please, speak up and let us know who you are – we'd like to write about you, too. In the meantime, you can find Kristine's story on page 38.

Our cover story this issue is on Alexander Wilds, a local sculptor who divides his time between an idyllic spot in Japan and the South Carolina Midlands. I first saw Alex's work last spring at an exhibition of his and his wife's work at the local gallery, Anastasia and Friends, and I pinned him down and made him promise to let us cover him for this issue, as soon as he returned from his summer in Japan. His work haunted me from the moment I saw it. Finally getting to spend time with the artist

and learn more about what drives his particular aesthetic sense was an honor for me. I hope you enjoy reading about Alex and how he comes to create the work he does.

Finally, please mark your calendars for the afternoon of Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> when *Jasper* will present our first intimate book festival as a fundraiser for the magazine. A dozen authors have been invited to join us at the historic Arcade at 1332 Main Street where they will read from their works as well as sign and sell their books. It will be one of those times when we kill two birds with one stone, as they say. We'll be taking one of our first steps toward making another arts community, this time the literary arts, again more visible to one another as well as to the greater community at large and, at the same time, raising funds for *Jasper Magazine*. With tongues firmly in cheek, we're calling the event An Authors' Roundtable. Rest assured, there's a seat at the table for you.

Take care,



**Jasper** // as in Johns, the abstract expressionist, neo-Dadaist artist  
as in Sergeant, the Revolutionary War hero  
as in Mineral, the spotted or speckled stone  
as in Magazine, the Word on Columbia Arts

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Photo Courtesy The Sweet Adelines

## BREAKING INTO SONG WITH THE SWEET ADELINES

With the success of television shows like “Glee” and “The Voice” – as well as this fall’s hit movie *Pitch Perfect* about an all-woman a cappella group – vocal performance has reach new heights in popularity. Columbia is rich in vocal talent, but in recent years, a new ensemble has burst on the scene, an all-female a cappella group that sings in the traditional barbershop style. Chartered in 2008 as a chapter of Sweet Adelines International, the Heart of Columbia Chorus, under the direction of Sweet Adeline veteran Virginia King, is gearing up for its annual fundraiser and busy holiday performance schedule. They also have a few surprises in store. The next time you’re standing in line at the mall food court, the lady behind you might break into song. You just never know.

“There has been discussion about some surprise flash mob singing during the upcoming holidays,” says Lu Smith, the chorus’s performance coordinator. “Watch out; you might get caught in the moment. Wherever we can be found, there is always a song in the air. We won’t let an opportunity pass us by, plus, we simply love to sing.”

The Heart of Columbia Chorus will present *Going, Going, Gone!* its annual fundraising performance and silent auction on Saturday, November 17, at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History Center. Emceed by TV personality Joe Pinner, the event promises to be great fun with great items up for action, including an iPad, handmade quilts, and a getaway to Charleston. Tickets are only \$10 (\$5 for seniors and children). “We will perform, of course, and also have light refreshments,” Smith adds. “We are a not-for-profit organization, so this is a way for us to get some of our bills paid.”

December will be busy with a full slate of performances at area churches and holiday events. For the fifth year straight, the chorus will perform at Wreaths Across America’s annual wreath-laying ceremony at the Fort Jackson National Cemetery on Saturday, December 15, at noon. “What a sacred event,” Smith says. “It is so humbling to see the wreaths laid on the graves. It is so moving to see these men and women being honored and remembered.”

And on January 5, 2013, you can have your flapjacks acapella-style at Fatz Café in Irmo, as the chorus hosts a pancake breakfast served by singing waitresses. The chorus will gear up for its annual Region 14 chorus competition in the spring. To date, the chapter has about 45 members total; about 38 are active “on-the-riser” members, while the others are associate members. The chorus rehearses every Thursday night at 7 p.m. at Lexington Baptist Church, and the public is invited. “We love to have visitors,” Smith says. Those who are interested in joining are welcome to audition. “There is a place for everyone, from the novice beginner to the highly skilled arranger and composer. ... Sharing our joy and love of music is what Heart of Columbia is all about.” For more information about the Heart of Columbia Chorus, visit [heartofcolumbia.com](http://heartofcolumbia.com) or call 803-252-7038. // KH

## RECORD REVIEW: THE RESTORATION’S *HONOR THE FATHER*

While there is many a singer/songwriter in the indie rock world that gets praised for the literary qualities of their output, few can match Lexington’s The Restoration, led by lead singer and songwriter Daniel Machado, for an absolute commitment to musical storytelling. Their last release, the 11-song full-length *Constance*, was a deeply involved, near-Faulknerian tale of miscegenation, racism, and religion that unfolded over several generations, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a fictional version of their hometown. Machado wrote each song in character, and at a different time period, mimicking Faulkner’s use of multiple, unreliable narrators that gives a high modernist tinge to his sprawling Southern gothic concept album.

For *Honor the Father*, the band moves forward in time to the mid-twentieth century and tackles the issue of religion more directly, with their central character, Roman Bright, taking up for the “old ways” his father taught him, with predictably abject results for his family

and children. Even more so than Constance, Father has a film noir feel, opening with a county sheriff venturing into the woods before diving back fifty years into the back story of the main character, Roman Bright, who we follow from his early romantic insecurities to his maniacal-yet-somehow-trenchant defense against alleged acts of murder and witchcraft.

Despite a more concise 7-song recording, Machado and company seem even more intent on melding the storytelling and musical elements of their craft. Gone are the grandiose pop swells and extended narrative tangents—in their place are songs that stay tightly locked on progressing the story, with a musical backing that takes historically appropriate cues from ragtime, Dixieland jazz, and torch ballads. Even when it's just Machado on banjo or guitar, the sense of historical period is rarely lost.

What's perhaps most compelling about this recording, though, is how limber and powerful the performances are in spite of the streamlined sound. "Sweet Talker," one of the most rollicking things here, is Dixieland jazz shot through with early rock and roll, and the band burns through the jittery tune with inspired zeal, culminating in an extended horn coda and an audacious ragtime solo by pianist Sharon Gnanashekar. Guest vocalist Lisa Stubbs (of Greenville, SC) takes a particularly inspired turn on the would-be torch ballad "I'll Stay" as Diana Colly, Bright's romantic foil. And throughout, Machado turns in an im-



Album Artwork Courtesy: The Restoration

passioned performance, bringing to the character of Roman Bright a sense of desperate commitment and zealotry that leads to the climactic howls of "The 20<sup>th</sup> Century" and "The Trial" being truly terrifying.

Perhaps most reassuringly, this recording makes clear that the ambition and power of Constance was not a one-off thing for this group, as Honor sees the group shifting and changing without losing what made them so great in the first place. An assured statement from one of the most compelling and treasured acts our community has to offer. // KP

## COLLABORATION

Artist Toni Elkins was suspicious. Who was this strange guy on Facebook contacting her requesting a meeting? He described himself as an artist, but she had never heard of him. Yet he wanted to collaborate with her under the theme, "Two Artists, One Painting." He began tagging her on images of his own works posted on Facebook. They began a dialogue and eventually met at a coffee shop in Columbia.

"I am so open-minded, and I don't let anyone tell me what to do. But I didn't want to say no without listening first," Elkins recalls. "Still, I was so cocky, and I was being guarded, thinking, 'Why do I need you?'" In fact, Elkins asked Curran Stone that very question in a somewhat confrontational way. After all, Elkins was established and successful. The first South Carolinian to be inducted into the Watercolor USA Honor Society, 1999 recipient of the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award for contributions to South Carolina arts, winner of many awards domestically

## Wanda Steppe

"Sticks and Stones"



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"Naughty is the Word"

and beyond, and most recently a winner in the Cultural Council of Richland and Lexington's Billboard Competition, Elkins felt she certainly didn't "need" anyone. This guy really had some chutzpah.

But as Stone began to speak, his words connected with Elkins on a cerebral level. "He said something that got my attention: 'Do you think you know everything?' Well, I never want to cease learning," she says. "He was prepared for every question I had for him; he had answers to everything, and I thought, wow, this guy is sharp!"

Stone had attempted to collaborate with another artist along the same theme a few years earlier. "Our painting styles were really different. I am more modern, and she is more traditional. I paint loose, and she paints rigid. It didn't work," Stone explains. He learned from that experience and approached the idea much more deliberately this time. He studied the work of many prospective local artists before choosing Elkins.

Stone says he generally doesn't exhibit his art pieces in galleries because he works primarily on commission. So it was not surprising that Elkins hadn't heard of him before. He paints, but he also does mixed media and sculptural assemblages. Some of his favorite mediums include metal, wood, and fiberglass, and he likes to use recycled objects.

For the past several months, Elkins and Stone have been collaborating on an exhibit called "Area 51," which opened in the Hallway at 701 on November 6, 2012, and runs through the end of the month. The show will feature 12 collaborative works, as well as selected individual works by each artist. And while they collaborated, they never worked side-by-side in the same studio. They met weekly and traded the works back and forth, each contributing something to it until they had a finished piece.

"I am absolutely amazed with what we have come up with. I am so proud of it. I love to see rules be broken," Elkins says. "That is what I love about what we are doing. I used to paint primarily watercolor, but I am bored with that. Now I have to throw something on top of something else. ... We put so much love and time into our pieces." // KH

*'Area 51' is on display until November 30, 2012, in The Hallway at 701.*

## COLUMBIAN COMIC HERO – PRINCESS CALABRETTA

Princess Calabretta is not your typical damsel. She lives in the Kingdom of Columbia, daughter of the late Queen Nancy (killed during the war against the kingdom of Cayce) and banished King Ted (who arranged for her to be raised safely at court under his successor, King Frank, and the mysterious Chancellor Steve), and whose best friend, Ellie Mae, is a goofy looking giraffe whose language Calabretta understands.

If all of this sounds familiar, and possibly a little dear, consider the fact that Calabretta is an undefeated mixed martial arts expert who breaks the back of the man she loves (and who may be her only chance of ever attaining her rightful sovereignty) and you'll begin to discover where this story begins to diverge from typical fairy tale fare onto its own beaten, battered, and bloodied path.

*Princess Calabretta*, the graphic novel and its titular character, are the creation of Columbia-based writer Shigeharu Kobayashi and writer/artist John Pading.

Kobayashi, who received his undergraduate degree in East Asian Studies, with a focus in Japanese Language and Literature, from Oberlin College in Ohio, began looking at comics as a creative outlet while studying for a year abroad in Japan. Once he returned to Columbia, he and Pading be-



gan collaborating on story ideas regularly. One of these stories, "Reflect the Dead," not only received comic treatment, but was adapted into a short film which screened at the first Indie Grits Film Festival at Columbia's Nickelodeon Theatre. In addition to creating graphic stories for compendiums by such companies as The Acme Comics, Kobayashi and Pading have modestly self-published several books under the moniker Frank Comics over the past few years.

But *Princess Calabretta* is shaping up to be different. Kobayashi explained that when they launched a Kickstarter campaign in August to raise funds for printing *Calabretta*, an already completed story, they hoped to reach a wider audience but never imagined how wide that reach would be.

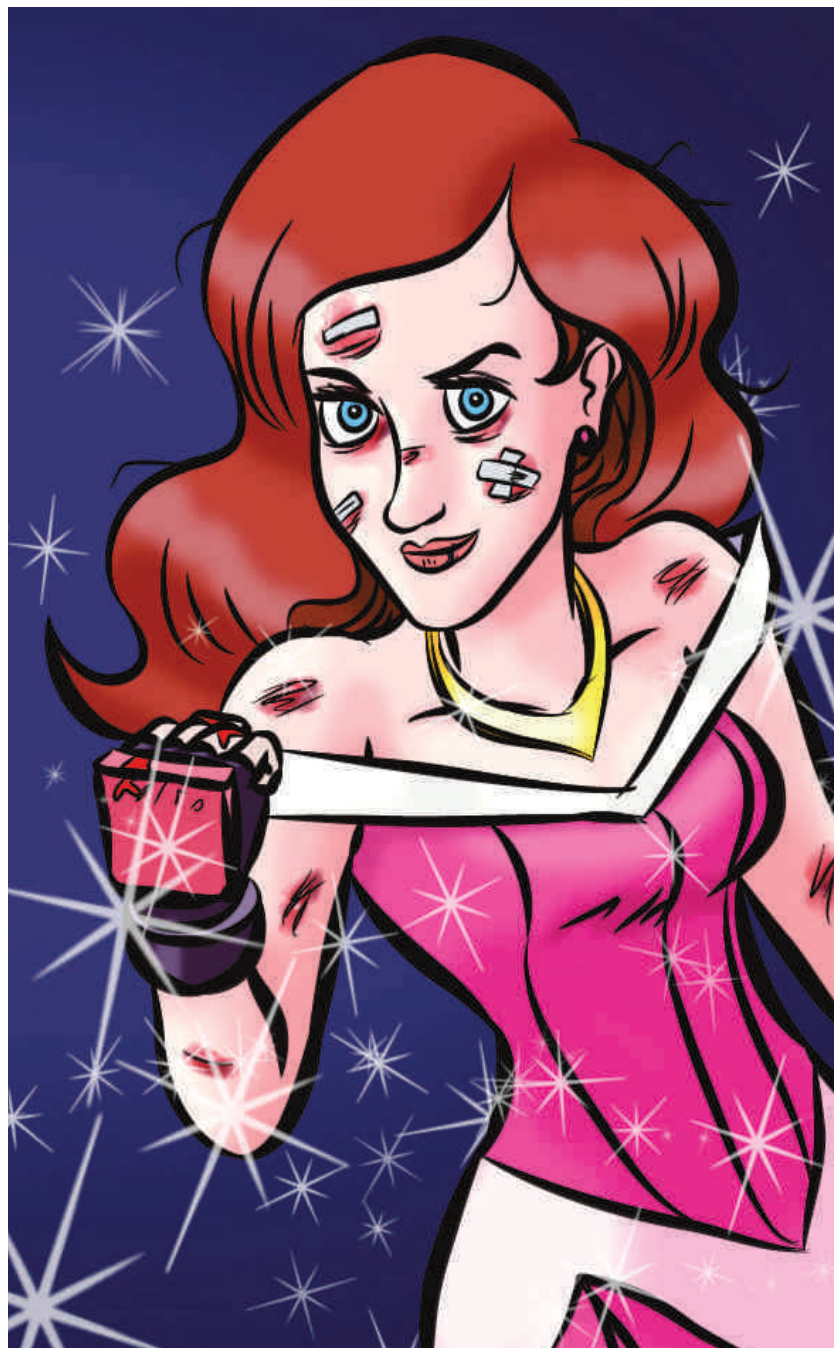
"We launched the fundraising project around midnight," Kobayashi says, "hoping to raise \$500 to print the book and give the backers some decent reward incentives. Within twelve hours we'd met our goal. Within 24 hours, we'd nearly doubled it." By the time the 30 day campaign was over, they had raised nearly ten times their original goal, with backers from around the world. They got help spreading the word about *Calabretta* from some impressive names in the comics world.

"[SC native] Chris Sims, who writes for [the widely read and acclaimed comics blog], comic-salliance.com, reviewed the book, which helped a lot." Kobayashi says. If that weren't enough, Bryan Lee O'Malley, the creator of "Scott Pilgrim" (adapted into the major motion picture, *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* in 2010 by Universal), Tweeted the following with a link to their Kickstarter page: "Support these Asian Southerners and their god damn silly comic book!"

The Kingdom of Columbia was on the map.

Such major acclaim and attention for a home-grown, self-published comic would have most artists bragging. But talking with Kobayashi about the experience, he seems far more interested in discussing the creative process or the videos he and Pading posted on the *Princess Calabretta* Kickstarter page (one of which, hilariously, depicts the nine year old daughter of one of their friends as being an executive at Frank Comics trying to come up with "stretch goals" for the already funded project), none of which is disingenuous or falsely modest.

"Our best ideas," Kobayashi says, "start out as jokes. 'What if we mixed a Disney-style princess story with M.M.A.?' The idea, presented so succinctly, does, indeed, evoke laughter. It follows that if the joke holds up for a week or two and is still funny, he and Pading start developing the idea into a plot, fleshing out a story and characters, looking



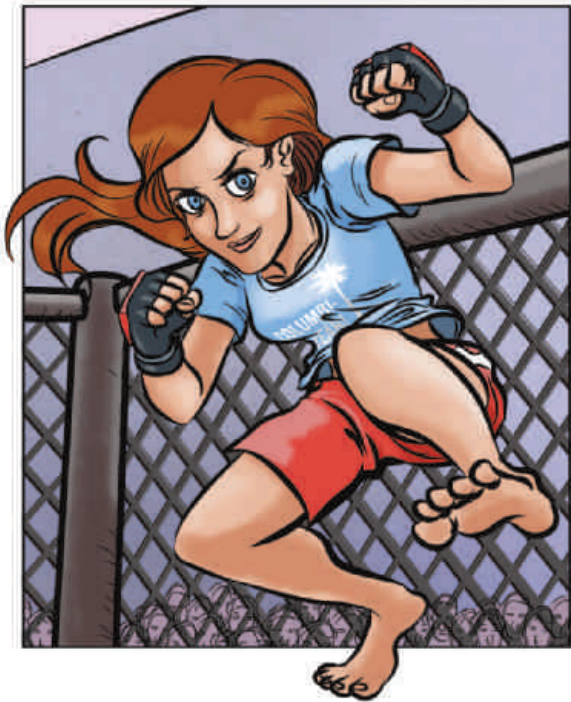
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## DRAMATURGS

There it was, in the program for the USC production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which ran October 5-13 at Longstreet Theatre. An essay! About the history of the play! By a dramaturg! There was of course a cast list, a note about the season from department chair Jim Hunter, and a nice little introduction by Robert Richmond explaining, briefly, his decision to adapt the 1895 play to 1960s England. But it was the essay by comparative literature professor and "production dramaturg" Yvonne Ivory that was such a delight: "A Trivial Comedy for Serious People," a breezy-but-somewhat-scholarly summary of the play's history and the contexts of the 1895 production.

While theatre programs in most major U.S. venues are generally thick sheaves of advertising and theatrical schedules, *Jasper* particularly loves going to plays in Ireland, where every major production at most of the major theatres includes one or two essays—something by a noted historian, or something by a critic or a renowned writer. *Jasper* remembers lingering over a glass of wine during intermission at a production of Brian Friel's *Translations* at Dublin's Abbey Theatre, reading a short essay about the British mapping survey of Ireland that is the play's context, and another incisive essay about the historical and cultural impact of that survey, which Friel's play represents.

Trustus frequently posts historical or cultural information (or relevant *Far Side* comics) in the restrooms, but it's rare for a theatre here to include an essay that helps us to understand the importance—historical or current—of a play. Let's admit that *Jasper* can sometimes be a bit of an arts nerd. But let's admit, too, that knowing the history of a work of art invariably enriches both our understanding and our experience of the play. And that's the role of a dramaturg.

*Dramaturg* is a vague and Germanic term that can mean a lot of different things in a lot of different theatres, but usually it refers to a resident expert of some kind, someone who can explain the play and its historical and social contexts. According to Bert Cardullo's *What is Dramaturgy?* (2005), a dramaturg can assist with various parts of a play's production, but most importantly they can help director, cast, and audience to understand a play's history and its importance. This might include essays like Ivory's in the program distributed to the Longstreet audience. Or it might include discussions with cast or audience about the work, before or after performance. Sometimes, too, a dramaturg might help a director incorporate historical research or the history of the play's criticism into his or her understanding and production.

A dramaturg is the link between art and scholarship. And *Jasper* loves that. // *EM*

for ways to make the narrative work within the confines of the original idea, the joke. Finally, if neither story nor joke is diminished as a result of the other, they turn it into a comic.

The formula works beautifully. With *Princess Calabretta*, Pading and Kobayashi have wound a plot that unfolds effortlessly and peopled it with characters, human and otherwise, who readers will genuinely care for (a rarity in any storytelling medium these days) while remaining true to the humor of the original idea and letting that humor find its way into the story so consistently and flawlessly that it very nearly tempers the story's violence. This violence, which would be merely outrageous and gory were it not for the care they have taken to develop their characters so fully, is fraught with all of the conflicted and conflicting emotions which real violence engenders. Whether a character is a victim or perpetrator, the violence portrayed is felt by the reader, an even rarer feat in contemporary storytelling, and utterly refreshing.

It's hard not to enjoy a story where the ruler of a kingdom whose name is Frank bursts into a hospital room wearing knee high boots, stretch-pants, a sleeveless t-shirt, a long red cape and a headband with a Palmetto tree embossed gold medallion on the front of it and sternly states, "I'm so disappointed in you, Princess. Hiding the Prince of Cayce for two weeks is not cool." It's just the sort of earthy, easy realism that makes *Princess Calabretta* such great storytelling. Kobayashi says that, while they are busy working on a new project, neither he nor John Pading have quit their day jobs to work on comics full time. If these two 'Asian Southerners' keep turning out such great stories and getting as much attention and praise as they are now, their day jobs are easily in as much peril as anybody who steps into the cage with *Princess Calabretta*.

// *AS*



# 2012

## JASPER

### ARTISTS OF THE YEAR

**E**arlier this autumn, *Jasper* asked Columbia arts patrons to nominate Columbia-based artists who had enjoyed particularly good years in one of five arts disciplines—dance, literature, music, theatre, and the visual arts—and we were rewarded with dozens of nominations. Some of you nominated artists who, throughout their lifetimes, have enjoyed great success, even if the past year gave them the opportunity to rest proudly on their laurels. Unfortunately, we couldn't include these artists despite the tremendous contributions they may have made to our community. What we wanted was the opportunity to recognize the artists whose efforts garnered accolades specifically from September 2011 to September 2012, and add our kudos to that acclaim. Thus we would begin the annual celebration of Jasper Artists of the Year.

Once we had gathered all your nominations together, a panel of experts weighed out the various accomplishments you told us about and, based on the information you provided, arrived at the top three nominated artists in each discipline. Then we put it to you for the vote. The next few pages celebrate the artists you chose.

Congratulations to the 2012 Jasper Artists of the Year and Finalists.

# 2012

JASPER  
ARTIST OF THE YEAR  
IN DANCE

REGINA  
WILLOUGHBY



**B**allerina with Columbia City Ballet, Regina Willoughby danced starring roles with the company between September 2011 and 2012 including Lucy West-  
erra in *Dracula*, Sugar Plum Fairy and Snow Queen in *The Nutcracker*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, (a role she says she dreamed of dancing for 20 years!), and Princess Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* (a role she

says she felt she needed to conquer before she retires). She also appeared with Ballet Spartanburg's *Dance Synergy III* and earned the American Ballet Theater Teacher Training Curriculum certification in New York City. When Willoughby is not dancing with Columbia City Ballet she is teaching at her own dance school, The Academy Center for Dance Education in Lexington, where she is school director. // CB

Photo Courtesy of Columbia City Ballet



## 2012 FINALIST IN DANCE // BROOKLYN MACK

Highlighted in the January 2012 issue of *Dance Magazine* as “One to Watch for 2012,” Elgin native Brooklyn Mack has more than proven this prediction true this year. The first African American to earn the gold medal at the world’s oldest and most renowned ballet competition, the Varna International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria in July, Mack won the dance world’s Triple Crown by also winning the gold medal at the Boston International Ballet Competition and the Grand Prix Istanbul International Ballet Competition in June. The fact that he had earlier won the silver medal at the Korean International Dance Competition seems almost minor in the shadow of these accomplishments. In August, Mack was interviewed on National Public Radio and in September he was the guest artist for the Indianapolis Gala of the Stars. Despite the fact that Mack, as a principal dancer with DC’s Washington Ballet, still calls Columbia home and returns here whenever he gets a break from performing, the young man knows he will not be able to put his feet up and relax there on November 27<sup>th</sup>—because he’ll be answering an invitation to perform at Moscow’s Kremlin Palace where he’ll also receive the Marius Liepa Award. Humble, kind, devoted to his art and devoted to his family, Columbia is proud to call Mack one of our own. // CB

Top Left | Photo by Jonathan Sharpe

Top Right | Photo by Christie Nelson-Sala



## 2012 FINALIST IN DANCE // MARCY JO YONKEY-CLAYTON

Marcy Jo Yonkey-Clayton is a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and fanatic – she’s fanatic about studying and incorporating all three of these bodies of knowledge to capitalize on how each can impact and enhance the other. An assistant professor in dance at Columbia College, Yonkey-Clayton performs with and choreographs for the Power Company dance company as well as facilitating CCdanceLAB & friends, a dance improvisation group she founded three years ago. In addition to teaching master classes throughout the area this year, Yonkey-Clayton also taught at the American College Dance Festival in Albany, Georgia, the SC alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance annual conference in Myrtle Beach, and the Greenville Fine Arts Center, not to mention at local high schools and the Columbia College Summer Camp Series. Last October she was commissioned to choreograph the dance “The More We Get Together,” which she later performed in Columbia and Georgia. Other performances include “Wonderful Peace” at the Koger Center, as well as “Kitchen Sink Waltz” by Martha Brim, “Good Fences Make Good Neighbors,” “Cow Beans & Cool Water,” also by Brim, and “Angel Train” by Stephanie Wilkins with Special Olympics Athletes as special guests. Yonkey-Clayton’s current choreographic focus includes presenting dance in unconventional performance sites intended to honor and enliven public spaces with movement and artistic collaborations. She is the recipient of the 2012 SC Arts Commission Fellowship Award for Dance Choreography. // CB

# 2012

## JASPER

### ARTIST OF THE YEAR

#### IN LITERATURE

KWAME  
DAWES



Photo by Don J. Usner

**E**arlier this year, Kwame Dawes joined the ranks of Ansel Adams, Langston Hughes, Henry Kissinger, Derek Walcott, and Eudora Welty, as winner of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. Dawes was one of 181 scholars, artists, and scientists selected from nearly 3000 applicants. In March he received the *Poets & Writers* magazine Barnes and Noble Writers for Writers Award, which recognizes writers who have given generously to other writers. Even though Dawes moved to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln last year to become the editor of the renowned literary magazine *Prairie Schooner*, the Ghanaian-born Jamaican poet says he still thinks of

himself as a South Carolinian. "Columbia in particular and South Carolina more broadly has had a profound influence on my growth as a poet and as a human being," he says. "It will always be home and a place that has come to define me in significant ways." Much of Dawes' recent work has been about getting South Carolina writers in print. Within the past year, Dawes published *Home Is Where: An Anthology of African American Poetry from the Carolinas*, an essential collection of contemporary African-American writers from South and North Carolina. Published by Hub City Press in Spartanburg, *Home Is Where* was launched last fall at Bookin' It On Main, a celebration of black writers at the Columbia Museum of Art. Two books forthcoming this fall

also suggest his continuing commitment to South Carolina voices: *Seeking: South Carolina Poets Responding to the Art of Jonathan Green* (USC Press, fall 2012), and *Seven Strong: South Carolina Poetry Prize Winners* (also USC Press, fall 2012), selections from the state poetry prize series founded by Dawes in 2005. Last year Dawes also published *Jubilation: An Anthology of Poetry Celebrating Fifty Years of Jamaican Independence*, and his groundbreaking poetry and journalism project, *Voices of Haiti*, which won the National Press Club's 2011 Joan Friedenberg Award for Online Journalism, is now available as an I-book from the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Recording. // EM



## 2012 FINALIST IN LITERATURE // JULIA ELLIOTT

"Totally original" is what the awards committee for the Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer's Award said of Cayce writer Julia Elliott. Or more precisely, "incredibly imaginative, sharply observed, and totally original." Elliott was one of six women writers selected this fall for the \$30,000 award, which is given annually to writers who demonstrate unusual talent and promise early in their writing careers. It's been a good year for Elliot. She published two short stories this spring in *Conjunctions* and in *Tin House*, prestigious journals known for experimental literary fiction. Another story, "Regeneration at Mukti," which was originally published in *Conjunctions*, received a Pushcart Prize and will appear in the 2013 anthology later this year. An assistant professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at USC, Elliott is currently finishing *The New and Improved Romie Futch*, a "macho novel" about a SC taxidermist dealing with a failed marriage after undergoing brain downloads of "complex humanities disciplines in a strange research study. She is also working on a second novel about primatologists and baboons, which she herself studied in depth at the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro in 2011 as recipient of a creative arts grant from USC. She describes her recent work as "examining emerging technologies and the production of scientific knowledge through the lens of experimental fiction." Or as she told a local interviewer this fall, her writing is always "teetering between the grotesque and the absurd." A graduate of USC, Elliott received her M.F.A. from Pennsylvania State University and her Ph.D. in English from the University of Georgia. Elliott says, "I feel honored to be included with Kwame Dawes and Dianne Johnson," and she says she wishes the Columbia arts scene was more aware of USC writers like Elise Blackwell and David Bajo. "I'm excited that *Jasper* is making people more aware of the literary scene in general," she says, "which is more obscure, it seems, than some of the other arts." // EM

Top Left | Photo by Alexis Schwallier  
Top Right | Photo by Jonathan Sharpe



## 2012 FINALIST IN LITERATURE // DIANNE JOHNSON

Last year, Columbia city officials chose Dianne Johnson's *All Around Town: The Photographs of Richard Samuel Roberts*, originally published in 1998, for the city reading initiative Together We Can. As the program's featured writer, Johnson gave 45 presentations in six weeks, working in partnership with the Columbia Museum of Art and Richland County Public Library, and interacting with over 2000 third graders from Richland District One. Wearing her signature red "FREEDOM" shirt, she talked with children about the kinds of freedom they can have if they master reading. She told them to always remember what Frederick Douglas said: "Once you learn to read you will be forever free." Every student received a copy of the book, which brings Columbia history to life with Roberts' photographs of Columbia's African-American communities from the 1920s and 1930s. As "Dianne", Johnson is a professor of English at USC, where she teaches children's and young adult literature, African American literature and film, and creative writing. She has edited a collection of Langston Hughes's poems and stories for children, as well as *The Best of The Brownies' Book*, an anthology of writings from an early 20th-century journal for African-American children. But as "Dinah" Johnson, she is the author of several children's books, including *Quinnie Blue* (about her grandmother), *Hair Dance!*, *Sitting Pretty: A Celebration of Black Dolls*, and *Black Magic*, a picture book that rejects negative meanings of blackness in a celebration of black as the color of "the magical, fascinating, and fun." This year Johnson was featured at the Upcountry Literary Festival at USC-Union and the South Carolina Book Festival, and she served as a judge for the SC State Library Letters about Literature Program and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators New Writers Contest. One of the nominations *Jasper* received for Johnson specifically lauded her work with the Together We Can reading initiative, praising "her contribution to the lives and futures of these 2000 children," but the nomination also praised "her tireless enthusiasm and respect for all children." // EM

# 2012

## JASPER

### ARTIST OF THE YEAR

# IN MUSIC

## MORHIKO NAKAHARA

**In 2011-2012, Morihiko Nakahara** completed his fourth year as Music Director and Conductor of the South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra. He also serves as Resident Conductor for the Spokane Symphony in Spokane, Washington. Acclaimed as a versatile artist and a passionate believer in music education for all ages, Nakahara leads a series of successful educational and community access concerts every season. In addition, to being a popular clinician, guest conductor, and speaker at various educational institutions, Nakahara serves as a personable ambassador for classical music, making frequent appearances on local media outlets as well as at local businesses, and service



clubs. Named by the *Free Times* as one of the 50 most influential people in the Midlands, Nakahara participated in the SC Read-In in April, reading to children on the State House steps, and conducted an ensemble of SC Philharmonic musicians accompanying the premiere of four short films at Indie Grits' special performance of "Cinemovements." Nakahara was born in Kagoshima, Japan and came to the US to attend private school in Michigan at the age of 15. He studied at Andrews University in Michigan where he

earned a degree in music education and got his master's degree from the Cincinnati College – Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. // CB

Above and Page Right | Photos by Thomas Hammond





## 2012 FINALIST IN MUSIC // JOSH ROBERTS

While Josh Roberts can, year in and year out, arguably lay claim to being the finest and most fiery live guitarist to call Columbia home, this year has been a special one. He rang in the New Year in front of a massive crowd on Main Street as an opener for George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic; changed up rhythm guitar players; and, most importantly, released his long-awaited follow-up to 2007's *My War Cry is Amor* in the recently released full-length *Mighty Old Distance and Murky Old Time*. Rather than being a continuation of the classic rock sprawl and extended jams that marked his previous recording efforts though, Roberts and his merry backing band turned things inside out, laboring on half as many songs for an extended period of time with the help of engineer/producer Alan Moon. The payoff is a musical document that for the first time really translates the sense of surprise, wonder, and inventiveness of his band's legendary live shows with a subtly inventive exploration of the possibilities of studio recording. This is clear from the moment the opening cut "Cobweb" rips into an extended coda with soaring background vocals, a bruising guitar solo, and Roberts' anxiety-ridden refrain. Lyrically and vocally, Roberts has always had a penchant for Neil Young-style wandering on the verses and stadium-size choruses, and his efforts on his latest only seem more tightened and honed than in the past. *MODMOT* seems, in so many ways, to be the kind of artistic statement that the bandleader has needed and wanted for so long, and with the help of his new label CEO Records, one can only hope that Roberts breaks out of his regional success and on to the national stage. // KP



## 2012 FINALIST IN MUSIC // AARON GRAVES

Graves came up in the Columbia music scene behind the drum kit as part of the instrumental outfit No Way Jose! (you can still catch him on the skins as part of Coma Cinema), and behind the scenes as a co-founder of Fork & Spoon Records, and despite a number of smaller releases under the moniker Those Lavender Whales, really didn't fully emerge into the spotlight until the January release of *Tomahawk of Praise*. Packing the house at Conundrum Music Hall, Graves got on stage with a small collection of bandmates (including the two full-time members of Those Lavender Whales, Jessica Bornick and Chris Gardner, and new full-time member Pat Wall) and delivered some of the most arresting and heart-felt songs to be released all year. While quirky and often whimsical, the songs on this release dealt nobly and honestly with the questions of faith, family, and growing up while maintaining a triumph sense of joy and love in the world. Listen to the insistent guitar strums and soaring guitar leads of "Exist" as Graves packs a song about self-doubt while steadfastly proclaiming that "if there is one thing that I insist, it's that the group of us not exist without the helping hands we lend to one another," or to quiet, affecting tunes like "Having Haves and Halving Halves" or "Family Trees Share Their Leaves" that celebrates family roots while facing images of self-doubt about his ability to live up to that legacy. The record won plenty of notable coverage on indie blogs across the web and a variety of opening slots for regional and national acts in the wake of its release, and the group completed several regional tours, including a stint up the East Coast in support of the album, all of which have begun to spread their name far and wide. // KP

# 2012

## JASPER

### ARTIST OF THE YEAR

## IN THEATRE

## CHAD HENDERSON



Photo by Jonathan Sharpe

**D**irector **Chad Henderson** has helmed six shows, all coincidentally musicals, in the past year at three of Columbia's major theatrical venues: *John and Jen* at Workshop Theatre, *Pinkalicious - The Musical* (which was revived later in the season after selling out 100% of its performances) at Columbia Children's Theatre, and *Spring Awakening*, *Passing Strange*, *Avenue Q*, and *Next to Normal*, all at Trustus Theatre. Additionally, he represented the Midlands via a residency at The Studios of Key West in Florida, where he directed a 10-minute play

chosen as audience favorite in the 24-hour theatre festival "One Night Stand." As an actor, he was seen in *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* at Trustus, as well as in training scenarios for law enforcement and counseling professionals in SC, Montana, and New Mexico. With a degree in advertising (his minor was theatre) Henderson holds the position of Marketing and PR Director at Trustus theatre. He says his "mission as a director is to reward audiences for attending a theatre production. I attempt to stage productions in a way that asks audiences to become part of the creative process - engaging their imagination.

Theatrical productions should be 'experiences' - something you can carry away with you. It should allow you to engage with others who experienced it as well." Henderson describes theatre as "my passion and my heartbeat. Audiences appreciate the attention given to details, and enjoy creative solutions to storytelling challenges. I like to think I direct shows that are worthy of larger markets, but I'm proud and pleased that I can find the talent and support to work in Columbia, SC. It's becoming an even greater arts town daily, and I'm honored to be a part of its advancement." // AK



Photo courtesy Vicky Saye Henderson

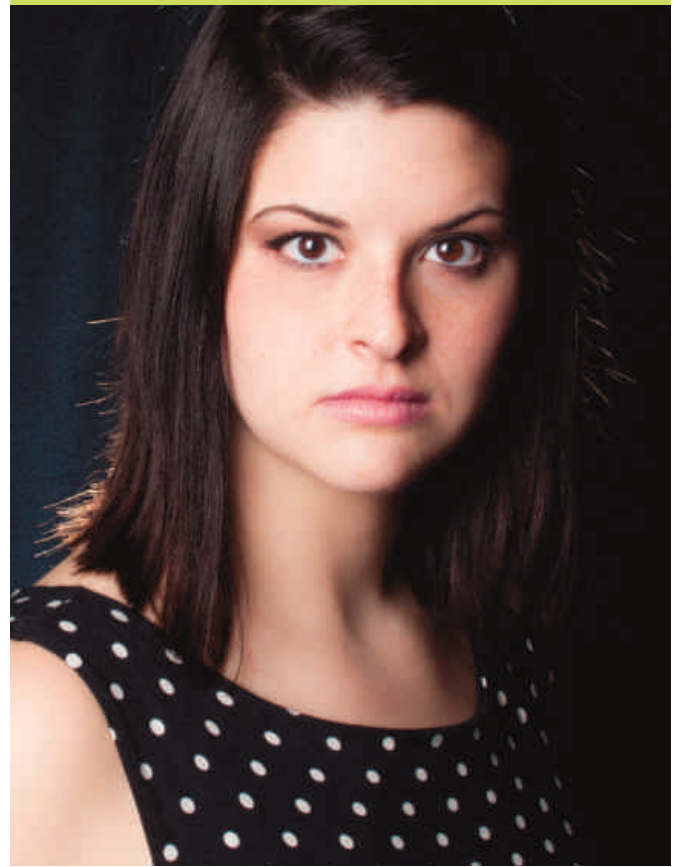


Photo by Sarah Kobos

## 2012 FINALIST IN THEATRE // VICKY SAYE HENDERSON

Vicky Saye Henderson is that rarest of creatures, a working actress and was profiled in *Jasper 003* as one of "Columbia's Leading Ladies," Featured prominently in the season promotional material for two of downtown's three main theatres, Henderson has been seen in five stage productions in the last year alone: *Andrew Lippa's Wild Party* (as Queenie, the tortured showgirl) at Workshop Theatre, and at Trustus Theatre *Next to Normal* (as Diana, the bipolar wife and mom) *Spring Awakening*, *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*, and *Almost an Evening*. Additionally she acted in two staged readings of plays at Trustus: *Southern Discomfort* and *Satan in High Heels*. A SC Arts Commission-approved teaching artist, Henderson works with schools, colleges, churches, businesses and individuals, offering customized instruction, workshops on auditioning skills, monologues, text analysis, and a refresher course called "The Actor's Tune-Up." Recent partners in professional development sessions include the Saluda Shoals Foundation Board, the Richland Co. Public Library staff, and the Lexington Medical Center Foundation. Her improv/sketch comedy training program for youth, ReWired, is in its sixth year at Workshop Theatre, and she is director for drama ministries at St. Andrews Lutheran Church. She also appeared in two film projects this year, *Lola's Prayer* and *Taken In*, which were screened at three film festivals, including Columbia's Indie Grits Festival. Catherine Hunsinger, one of the young performers profiled on pg. \_\_\_\_\_, says that "on behalf of all actresses - and, perhaps, actors too - in Columbia, we want to be Vicky when we grow up. Adults included!" Having played Henderson's daughter in *Spring Awakening*, Hunsinger has "never met a person so incredibly committed to their art-form and passionate about an accurate, yet personal portrayal of all roles taken on. The measures she takes in her preparation are so incredibly thorough, and are simply astounding. I can't think of a single person who has inspired me more, theatrically. Columbia is so very fortunate to have held onto her!" // AK

## 2012 FINALIST IN THEATRE // SHELBY SESSLER

In the last year, Sessler has taken on diverse roles at four of Columbia's major theatres: the naive Pickles in *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* at Trustus Theatre, Vivienne the snooty antagonist in *Legally Blonde* at Workshop Theatre, all three female roles (a German femme fatale, a forlorn Scottish farm wife, and a proper British lady) in *Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps* at Town Theatre, and the titular tyke in Columbia Children's Theatre's production of *Pinkalicious - The Musical*, performing this last show on weekends while rehearsing *39 Steps* during the week. Additionally she teaches voice in Workshop Theatre's Broadway Bound Program, and has been featured in cabaret performances at Villa Tronco. Behind the scenes, Sessler worked as Assistant Director for Town Theatre's *The Complete History of America (Abridged)* and as Assistant Stage Manager for the SC Shakespeare Company's *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged.)* She plans to direct an all-female version of the latter show, featuring herself and two friends, and has already designed and created the entire wardrobe. December will mark her debut as Music Director, when *A Charlie Brown Christmas* opens at Columbia Children's Theatre. In July, when the Governor vetoed funding for the Arts Commission, Sessler joined fellow artists for a photo shoot on the steps of the State House, depicting the "massacre" of the arts; a visual statement was made, but the shot went viral after Sessler tweeted it to Kristin Chenoweth, who then re-tweeted the image to her 650,000 followers. // AK

# 2012

## JASPER

### ARTIST OF THE YEAR

#### IN VISUAL ARTS

## SUSAN LENZ

Photo by Heather Bauer

**T**rying to list Susan Lenz's accomplishments over the past year would take up more space than is allotted for this article. A prolific fiber and installation artist, Lenz has the kind of drive, determination, and dedication to her art that is both enviable and exhausting. Completing three juried artist residences in the past year, at Midwest Studios in Galesburg, Illinois, The Studios at Key West in Florida, and the Hot Springs National Park Artist Residency in Hot Springs, Arizona, Lenz was also the Best of Show winner of the South Carolina Palmetto Hands Juried Fine Craft Exhibition in North Charleston as well as the Decorative Category winner of the *Niche Magazine*, Niche Awards 2011

in fibers. Of the 29 exhibitions Lenz gave during the 2011 – 2012 time period—and that's not a typo, she gave an impressive 29 exhibitions in a twelve month period of time—seven were invitational shows and four were solo shows. The invitational shows saw Lenz exhibiting in the likes of Chapel Hill, Greensboro, and Cary, North Carolina, as well as at The Textile Museum in Washington, DC and the International Quilt Show in Houston, Texas. She gave solo shows in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Chandler, Arizona, and Columbia. Other notable exhibitions include shows in Lowell, Massachusetts, La Grange, Georgia, Wichita, Kansas, Lorton, Virginia, Mesa, Arizona, at The National Heritage Quilt Show in Athens, Tennessee, and in Brooklyn and

Yonkers, New York. Her installation, "Two Hours at the Beach," displayed in a showcase window at the Tapp's Arts Center in November and December of 2011. Known for generosity of spirit and talent, local artist Toni Marcus Elkins says Lenz "brings to mind not only talent, but also the desire to contribute to the betterment of our community as a whole." Artist Eileen Blyth agrees noting that Lenz "truly has an artist's spirit. She has an inexhaustible passion and drive for her work...I am always impressed and inspired by her stamina." Lenz also owns and operates Mouse House, an elite frame shop, with her husband Steve Dingman, and maintains several active international blogs, the most popular being "Art in Stitches" located at [artbysusanlenz.blogspot.com/](http://artbysusanlenz.blogspot.com/). // CB





## 2012 FINALIST IN VISUAL ARTS // THOMAS CROUCH

Known for his deft hand and rich composition, visual artist Thomas Crouch is a classically trained painter who brings a decidedly old world style to the postmodern world he inhabits literally and, sometimes, aesthetically. The past year has seen this part-time musician/part-time cook dedicate himself to the advancement of his art on a more full-time basis. The founder of the Art Bar Agora, a grass roots art show that Crouch organized around fellow artists at beloved local watering hole, the Art Bar, Crouch planned and implemented his third agora this summer. His work has shown in Columbia at the Tapp's Arts Center, Artista Vista, Mingle and Jingle and, in Charleston at the Old City Jail. He also exhibited three shows at the 701 Whaley Street facility including a solo show called "No Man's Land," the Bullets for Band-Aids Veteran's Benefit, and a solo hallway gallery show at the 2012 What's Love Festival. His work has shown up at Charleston's Middleton Gardens International Film Festival and as part of a collaborative effort with Trustus Theatre's acclaimed musical, *Passing Strange*. Crouch has supported the greater Columbia community by giving generously of his work to such places as the Ronald McDonald House and the Pretty Girls Feminist Art exhibition. He recently gave a presentation on his creative process for the High Noon City Art Gallery art series. // CB

Top Left | Photo by Scott Bilby

Top Right | Photo by Forrest Clonts



## 2012 FINALIST IN VISUAL ARTS // LYON HILL

The unique quality of Lyon Hill's artistic endeavors and his unusually high level of expertise at the implementation of his art make Hill, simply, one of Columbia's artistic treasures. A puppet maker and puppeteer with the Columbia Marionette Theatre since 1997, Hill lends an exquisite quality to the puppet shows in which he performs and creates. In addition, Hill is an esteemed video and filmmaker, innovatively incorporating puppetry into his films. Hill received a 2012 UNIMA Citation of Excellence in the Recorded Media Category for his film, *Junk Palace*. He directed and performed a preview of the *Hansel and Gretel* marionette show, as well as collaborating with local filmmaker Wade Sellers and performing at Pocket Production's *Playing After Dark* series, and he currently directs the full version of *Hansel and Gretel* for the CMT stage. In addition to performing for the National Puppet Slam at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, Hill, along with Kimi Maeda, hosted Columbia's Spork in Hand Puppet Slam at the Indie Grits Festival, where he also performed. His local performances over the past year include showings of original works *Supine* and *An Evening with Mr. Crow* as well as new creations of the *Bremontown Musicians*, *Brave Tin Soldier*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and *Pinocchio*. Local artist Payton Frawley says that Hill "has pushed his puppetry so far that he is helping to redefine what a puppet can be, do, and how it can tell a story." In addition to his puppetry, which we have categorized a visual art given Hill's unique level of immersion in the creation of the puppets themselves, he was also an award recipient at the What's Love Festival in February 2012. // CB

# GERALD FLOYD

BY AUGUST KRICKEL

and experience writing for the student paper, Floyd hoped to land a job as a writer at some magazine or newspaper, "because they were drafting everyone." But as weeks grew into months, he decided to accept the inevitable, and volunteer for service, as that might offer him more options and choice. Driving from his parents' home in Lake City to the county seat of Florence, Floyd discovered that the local draft board, like many offices in the rural South of the day, was closed on Wednesday afternoons. Intending to return the next morning, the young man stopped off to visit relatives, where his uncle asked if he realized that teachers were given automatic deferments from the draft, due to a tremendous need for teachers in the state. Floyd promptly drove to Columbia, visited the campus placement office, and applied for a job with Richland School District One. A day after his interview at A.C. Flora, he was hired, and found himself a high school English teacher before he even turned 21. "And that has made all the difference," Floyd says, quoting Robert Frost. He marvels at how differently his life might have turned out, what career paths he might have chosen, and what cities or even countries he might have settled in, "if it hadn't been a Wednesday."

Instead, Floyd discovered a gift for teaching, spending five years at Flora, 25 at Dreher, and another 13 part-time after retiring. He usually taught Senior English, AP and college prep, but has also done vocational and remedial; he later earned a Master's in English Education at USC. Acting, like teaching, came almost acciden-



Photo courtesy Gerald Floyd

tally, although he appeared in several plays in high school and college, with titles like *You'll Die Laughing*, and *The Butler Did It*. Growing up in Lake City on his father's 25-acre tobacco farm, Floyd helped with everything: planting, harvest, taking the crop to market, yet never smoked. In school, he actually excelled in mathematics, but displayed hints of his future career as he helped other students through difficult math problems before class and at lunch. His classmates voted him "Most Dependable" and "Most Likely to Succeed," honors which he recalls "were very special to me at the time." In college, he became more interested in English and the humanities; a favorite professor was Dr. Charles Coolidge, who taught history, but "was so in-

**ad it not been a Wednesday, life for actor, educator, singer and entertainer Gerald Floyd might have taken a very different turn. Graduating from USC in the 1960's with a degree in English**



Photo by Jonathan Sharpe



teresting, entertaining, and dramatic in the classroom." Floyd's greatest love at the time was singing. He performed elementary, middle and high school choruses, as well his church choir, where he often sang solos for the morning services, and where his music director always encouraged him to continue singing. This led to the Concert Choir at USC, as well as a position as a paid tenor and soloist at Washington Street Methodist Church, where "I was hired on my very first Sunday in Columbia." Floyd sang there for some ten years, then moved on to other churches around town, and in recent years is back as a soloist at Washington Street. Singing led

in turn to acting; Sidney Palmer was directing *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and recruited Floyd to played Kaspar, a role he has reprised on a number of occasions. Decades later, Floyd beams as he recalls his first review from *State* newspaper paper critic Adger Brown, and recites from memory that "the antic portrayal of Kaspar by Gerald Floyd was outstanding." Palmer was a tremendous influence on Floyd, "particularly in the area of performing. Somehow he saw potential in my abilities as an actor/singer/comedian more than anyone else. He was the person who encouraged me, promoted me, and cast me often in any production he was directing. Especially if he needed a character actor of any sort, young or old. He often praised me for my 'incomparable timing' in comical roles," many of which were in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas performed at Columbia College. Floyd excelled in tricky "patter songs," and he launches into "I am the very model of a modern major general," from *Pirates of Penzance*, in case there is any doubt as to the nature of a patter song, or his proficiency.

When asked about roles he has enjoyed, Floyd instantly replies "Mr. Cellophane, at Workshop," i.e. Amos Hart in *Chicago*. His one-man show at Trustus, *Mr. Charles, Currently of Palm Beach*, is another that he'd like to reprise. People still remember him as the Narrator in *The Rocky Horror Show* at Trustus, where he took a relatively straight, stereotypical role and stole the show by constantly nipping on brandy, and progressively becoming more incoherent with each successive scene. Other favorites include the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Skimbleshanks the railway cat in *Cats*, at Town Theatre, although he laughs that his much younger castmates in that production were annoyed that he could run around the stage with such great energy and agility. Another favorite at Town was Sancho Panza in *Man of La Mancha*, yet when asked if he might now tackle Quixote, Floyd seems surprised, and genuinely flattered. It's not a stretch, but Floyd says

he never even considered that; he has always thought of himself as the sidekick, doing the schtick, and getting the laughs. Even when he played the lead in *La Cage aux Folles* at Workshop, he still got the lion's share of the laughs as the outrageous cabaret performer Albin.

He's done exactly 63 shows since college, and directed high school shows at Dreher and Flora, as well as many Key Club variety shows and Miss Blue Devil pageants. Not surprisingly, Floyd admits that "I was acting in the classroom," wanting to enable his students to relate to characters. When teaching a play, Floyd often acted out all the roles, creating an *ad hoc*, one-man show. Former students point to him as having had a significant impact on their educational and professional success. Like many great teachers, Floyd feels he simply showed his students the way, giving them the tools they needed to grow. "Although they give me credit," he acknowledges. Just don't think that being beloved implies that he was a pushover. Dreher alumnus Moffatt Bradford proudly recounts being one of the "Floyd Seven," ousted from class and sent to the office for being disruptive in 1970. The notorious incident stemmed from seven students making "bird tweets and monkey hoots" when Floyd wore a fashionable khaki suit that the seven somehow thought resembled safari attire. "Of course, with an appropriate apology we were all allowed back into the class," Bradford explains. Later that year as he recovered from a bout with mono, Bradford was shocked to find Floyd at his front door. "I thought I had been caught doing something wrong, but Mr. Floyd was aware of my medical situation, and was bringing me my assignments from all of my classes so that I wouldn't fall behind. I made it to my senior year thanks to his efforts." Without Floyd, Bradford knows he would not have graduated, and is sure that he is only one of many now grateful to their teacher for "helping a student fulfill his or her educational goals. Thank you Gerald!"



# MARK ROTHKO

## THE DECISIVE DECADE 1940 - 1950



“The works in this exhibition are the key to everything about my father’s artistic development. Everything.”

- Christopher Rothko

On View through January 6

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Mark Rothko, American (born Russia), 1903–1970, *No. 8*, 1949, oil and mixed media on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington.  
Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc. 1986.43.147. © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

This exhibition is organized by the Arkansas Art Center, the Columbia Museum of Art, the Columbus Museum of Art and the Denver Art Museum, in conjunction with the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

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# ALEXANDER WILDS – SCULPTOR

BY CYNTHIA BOITER

Pulling into Alexander Wilds' driveway in a modest Irmo neighborhood, there is little to alert the uninformed visitor that a truly international sculptor lives within the walls of the ranch-style house and, along with his wife Yukiko—also an artist in her own right—raises a family that is as much Japanese as it is American. Then you start to look around. Nestled in the shrubberies and trees are bits of sculptures—there's a beautifully crafted, disembodied leg mounted against the brick façade of the house here; an exquisitely hewn torso hiding among clay pots there. Wilds has created a suburban sculpture garden on the corner lot where he, Yukiko, and their two young sons live. And the art only grows more abundant as you enter the front door of their home.

Born in Aiken, SC, Wilds studied at Rhodes College, the San Francisco Art Institute, and Tulane, where he got his MFA, before earning his PhD from the University of Minnesota. Then in 1985, soon after completing his studies, the young adventurer left the US for Japan where he ultimately settled in a tiny Japanese village of 500 people called Iwami Ginzan. About a hundred miles north of Hiroshima, Wilds says that Iwami Ginzan, which was the site of a pre-Modern Asia silver mine, is one of the least developed and least populated places in Japan. Now, on the UNESCO World Heritage list, the rural isolation proved to be a perfect place for Wilds to make a new home.



"It was very good for me artistically," he says. "I was very good at what I was doing in the US when I left, and I went to Japan where none of that mattered. I was all by myself in the forest making sculpture. I made what I wanted to make and I wasn't influenced by anyone."

After settling in Iwami Ginzan, Wilds built a small gallery there and,

one day, a young woman walked in with photographs to show him. "That was that," Wilds says, explaining that in the process of perusing and critiquing Yukiko's photographs, he fell in love with her. "At first we developed a working relationship," he says. "And then she started sharing designs for some buildings I was working on." The couple eventually began design-



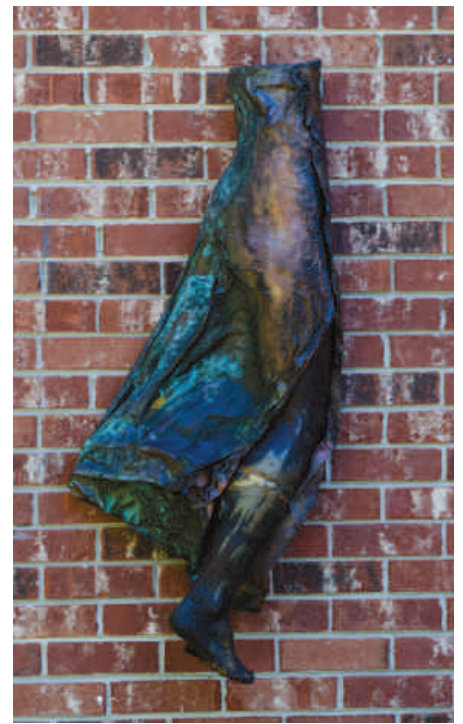


ing and hand building artistic homes and businesses for their neighbors together. Seven years after meeting they were married.

Happy, productive, and very much attached to their Japanese home and culture, Wilds says the only reason he came back to the US in 2007 was to be close to his aging mother who lives in Aiken. When the family returned, he worked briefly in New Mexico before joining the faculty of Benedict College as an associate professor. Every sum-

mer, as soon as the semester ends, he, Yukiko, and their children travel back to Iwami Ginzan where they stay until the semester starts again.

Wilds describes his art as "not avant garde, not particularly strange; it's just what I like to do," and he recognizes how, as he "approaches 60," he sees a similarity in the work he produces now and what he produced when he was a younger man. "The stuff I made at the beginning reflects the impetus that made me want to



make art in the first place," he says. "Ultimately we return back to what originally inspired us."

Wilds works in several different mediums, from wood carving to welding, depending primarily on what he can obtain for free and what the weather is like on the day he creates. "When it's warm and there's a light breeze, I open the doors and work with wood and let the breeze blow the saw dust away," he says. "When it's cooler, I go outside and weld, and in the winter when it's really cold, that's when I make bronze castings and warm myself up."

Much of Wilds' art depicts women. "A beautiful format in itself, it's really just a form that I hang the art on," he says. "I like women," he continues, "but I don't mean that in a macho way. I like the way women look and I'm always interested in the many different ways I can make the figure of a woman in mixed media, ... bolts, fiberglass, wood, bronze. I use the figure because I want my work to be content-free. If I make a figure then that answers the questions of 'what is it?' and it leaves us to answer the more important question of 'do you like it?' and 'why do you like it?' It's not about how well I can carve a



Page Left + Page Right | Photos by Thomas Hammond

buttock or a breast, it's about the material. I don't want the content to detract from the form."

In addition to seeing his work in his studio and throughout his home in Irmo, Wilds is planning a new exhibit with local artist Colin Dodd at Columbia's Vista Studios Gallery 80808 in March. Wilds and Dodd share several similarities—both are married to ex-patriate women, both collect and work on old British cars, and both are reaching an age in life that calls for reflection. "We're working on a show

of middle-aged, white men strutting their stuff," he laughs good-naturedly.

Though a contemplative man, Wilds still seems to have a little trouble reconciling the passage of time, and rightfully so. With an elderly mother, two small children and two adult children from his younger life, the evidence of time's passage is an ironic constant. "It's not important to be famous," he nods and reminds himself. "It's important to be worthy. ... I don't need to be rich and famous. I just need to keep on doing it."

See More Images of Wilds on Page 56 + 57

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# COLUMBIA'S THEATRE BRAT PACK

BY AUGUST KRICKEL



uddenly, they were everywhere. Fresh, new faces lighting up every stage across the Midlands. There's an undeniable explosion of young talent, and local audiences are reaping the benefits. Age-appropriate casting chal-

lenges community theatres, yet local venues have been packing houses and garnering critical praise with any number of youth-themed shows, from *High School Musical* to *Camp Rock*, *Grease* to *Spring Awakening* to that original ode to summer lovin' gone wrong, *Romeo and Juliet*. *Jasper* takes a look at ten of the brightest young performers around, who have given stand-out performances at multiple venues in lead or featured roles.

Elisabeth Baker, the eldest (by a few months) started first, recruited into the ensemble of a 1989 Bette Herring production of *Annie* at five, when her mother played Miss Hannigan. A decade later, she portrayed *Annie* herself, at Town Theatre. Hunter Bolton and Catherine Hunsinger were the first to work together, in 1999's *Peter Pan* at Town; Bolton played John Darling, with Hunsinger as "a wee little Indian brave!" Charlie Goodrich points out that technically he and Baker go back further, having sung in elementary school chorus together in 1994. Goodrich has made the strongest attempt at a professional career, performing in North Carolina's *Lost Colony*, and in a short film from the co-writers of *Valentine's Day*. Like any aspiring pro, he's currently waiting tables. Lindsay Brasington, with a master's in Mass Communication, works in marketing, and sees theatre as an outlet. She enjoys playing someone entirely different from herself, and thrives on the chance to escape. "No matter what happens during the day at work or at home, I can come to the theatre in the evenings. That's when I feel like no matter what is happening

in my life, everything can just be fine for a little while." Shelby Sessler (profiled on pg. 19 of this issue) echoes this sentiment: "I used to perform solely because I liked the attention and the challenge of a new character. It was only recently that I realized the true magic of a live performance."

Much like the fabled Brat Pack of 80's cinema, nearly everyone has worked with everyone else. Bolton, Brasington, and Goodrich have done shows with eight of the others, but if you play "Six Degrees," Sirena Dib is the link, having worked with all nine of her peers, although she didn't get to perform on stage with *Hairspray* cast mate Katie Leitner, who had to drop out for an internship at Spoleto. Leitner feels that "being on the stage dancing, singing, and moving an audience is truly an intoxicating, addicting feeling. It gives you an awesome community of people to be a part of. It feels like a family." Kendrick Marion, Prince Charming opposite Dib's Cinderella at Workshop two summers ago (and profiled in the September issue of *Jasper*) agrees: "Theatre is like my therapy. Whether I'm onstage and transcending to another place, or working backstage and just being around other arts lovers, I can forget about whatever's going on in my life, and do something that I really love." Dib notes that "theatre not only provides a creative outlet for me to learn more about myself and people in general, it also gives me the freedom to let my imagination temporarily exist in another life, and take me to other places."

Singing is a common thread: Sessler, Marion and Leitner are all mu-



Photo by Sarah Kobos // From Left to Right | Hunter Bolton, Shelby Sessler, Charlie Goodrich, Catherine Hunsinger, Patrick Dodds, Katie Leitner, Elisabeth Baker, Kendrick Marion, Lindsay Brasington, Sirena Dib

sic majors at USC, while Hunsinger completed her degree in vocal performance at Winthrop. Now working as a law firm receptionist, she laughs: "I'm still trying to convince the partners to let me sing a jingle instead of just answering the phone!" Goodrich has degrees in theatre and art history, Baker and Dib chose theatre as a minor, and Bolton plans to teach English. Patrick Dodds, the youngest at 20, is the newest to acting, landing the role of Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables* in senior year at Dreher High, a time when most performers are happy to be the third cowboy from the left in *Oklahoma*. With only seven shows under his belt, he has already worked with seven of the other nine. "Even though I've only been part of the theatre community for about a year," he says, "I have

never been more proud of myself for something, I have never been more confident in myself about anything I've ever done." All have done shows at Town, while eight have performed at Workshop, seven at USC, six at Trustus, and many points beyond. Bolton takes the prize for most theatres locally (seven) while Hunsinger possibly has done the most shows (32) with Sessler and Goodrich right behind (31.) Although Sessler has crewed 16 or 17 more, and not everyone counted their credits the same way. Combined they have already worked on over 200 productions, not even counting backstage work, at an average age of just over 23.

Most were attracted to performance early on, often encouraged by inspirational teachers. Goodrich recalls packing a bag at three, "telling

my parents I was off to New York to be in *Cats*." He feels that theatre "moves me like nothing else ever has or ever will." Leitner remembers donning "an enormous fur coat" to portray Cruella DeVille in a 5th grade talent show. Hunsinger tells of "a mean, bullying third-grader [who] challenged me by saying I would never make it in theatre, because I didn't 'have what it takes,' so, naturally, I auditioned for the very first show I could: *Bye Bye Birdie*. After that, theatre became more than just an accepted challenge, and I was officially bitten by the bug."

Professionalism is the norm. Bolton, Hunsinger, and Marion have bared some or all for their art. Dib stepped into the demanding role of Marthe in *Spring Awakening*, after a call at 10 PM the night before open-







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Photo by Sarah Kobos

ing. With friend Sessler's aid, "I learned the part that night, and rehearsed all day the next day; our opening performance was the first run through I had with the cast." Many have already taken on some of the great stage roles: Goodrich has done Albee, Williams, and played Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure*. Leitner was seen as Mimi in *RENT* and Kate Monster in *Avenue Q*. Hunsinger appeared as Wendla in *Spring Awakening* (with Dodds, Marion, and Baker) the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Magic Flute*, and Sandy in *Grease* (Bolton, Dodds, Goodrich were all T-Birds, with Brasington in the ensemble, and Dib as Marty.) Brasington recently played *The Music Man's* Marion the Librarian, and Bolton

has portrayed Shakespeare's Romeo and Lysander. Baker, proficient over several decades at youthful roles like Dainty June in *Gypsy*, has recently blossomed into playing complex characters, including Natalie in *Next to Normal*.

Serious about their craft, all possess the looks and charisma for leading roles, but the versatility to excel in character parts. Still credible as teens, they have available virtually the entire theatrical repertoire, and somewhere in there are the next Higgins and Eliza, the next Oscar and Felix, the next Macbeth and his Lady. Jasper is delighted to make their acquaintance, and looks forward to all they have to offer on stages.



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# CURTAIN UP

WITH AUGUST KRICKEL



Photo by Sarah Kobos



here's time before Thanksgiving to catch a handful of classic and contemporary dramas, but then grab hold of your candy canes and make sure your stockings are hung by the chimney with care: Christmas shows for youngsters of all ages will rule December. Just remember - these are how children often experience live theatre for the first time, while parents and older siblings can enjoy some of the area's best performers who turn up in lighter holiday fare. Curtain Up!

Jeffrey Hatcher's *Compleat Female Stage Beauty* runs through this Saturday, November 17th at **Longstreet Theatre** on the USC campus, and explores issues of gender and identity in Restoration England, when women were first replacing men in playing female roles on stage. Meanwhile, a few blocks away in the USC Lab Theatre on Wheat Street, there's an earthy beauty of a certain age, her nubile daughter, the sultry heat of Louisiana, and a rascal eager to capitalize on all of the preceding. Yep, it's Tennessee Williams territory for sure, as Rocco Thompson directs the Tony-winning *The Rose Tattoo*, running through Sunday, November 18th. Information on both shows is available at <http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/thea/2013/Season12-13.html>, or call 803-777-2551.

There are two more weekends to see Edward Albee's acclaimed *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* running through Saturday, November 24th at **Workshop Theatre**. Cynthia Gilliam (one of the young rebels who help found the theatre 45 years ago) directs Stann Gwynn, Elena Martinez-Vidal, and Giulia Dalbec-Matthews, as they skewer love, marriage, academics, literature, perception, and reality in the apocalyptic faculty cocktail party from hell. More info can be found by calling 803-799-4876, or visit Workshop online at <http://www.workshoptheatre.com>.

**Town Theatre** presents *The Winter Wonderettes*, an affectionate spoof/homage of the girl groups of the 50's, and a holiday-themed sequel to the popular *Marvelous Wonderettes* from two years ago. Shannon Willis Scruggs, Lou Warth, and Abigail Ludwig return with new cast member Alexa Cotran. Allison McNeely directs, while Scruggs and Warth double as choreographer and musical director respectively. The fun kicks off Friday, November 23rd, and runs through Saturday, December 8th. Then Jamie Carr Harrington directs children from Town's Youth Theatre Program in *Bah, Humbug - Scrooge's Christmas Musical*; show dates are December 14<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>. For ticket information, contact the box office at 803-799-2510, or go to <http://www.towntheatre.com>.

**Columbia Children's Theatre** is producing a musical adaptation of Elvira Woodruff's book *The Christmas Doll*. Set in Victorian London, it's described as "Annie meets *Oliver* in *A Christmas Carol*," and features Paul Lindley, Lee O. Smith, Kim Harne, and Elizabeth Stepp Cauthen, along with two young actors from their YouTheatre group, Maddie Rae Fram and Ashlyn Combs, who will play the two leads, young orphan sisters. Performance dates are Friday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> through December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Then Dedra

Daniels Mount will direct a YouTheatre production (i.e. the cast is all students) of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, with musical direction by Shelby Sessler (one of Jasper's Artist of the Year nominees.) The show is presented as a fundraiser for Pets Incorporated and Epworth Children's Home; also featured are performances by the Greater Columbia Children's Choir, Mount's Broadway Bound group, and the Workshop Theatre Flappers (a company of tap dancers that recently took first place in a national dance competition.) This will run December 6<sup>th</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup>; just call 803-691-4548 for more information, or go to <http://columbiachildrenstheatre.com>.

**Theatre Rowe** (performing in the Fine Arts Center of Forest Acres, above Barnes & Noble in Richland Mall) presents Lee Blessing's gritty hostage drama *Two Rooms*, Satur-

day, November 24<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Then things lighten up with *Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some!)* which runs Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. "Three actors decide to perform every Christmas story ever told -- plus Christmas traditions from around the world, seasonal icons from ancient times to topical pop-culture, and every carol ever sung" in a "romp through the holiday season." Check out their website at <http://www.theatrerowe.com>, or call 803-728-1678.

The Lexington County Arts Association presents *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, based on the popular book by Barbara Robinson, and directed by Debra Leopard. Running December 6<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>, at the **Village Square Theatre**, the play follows the misadventures of the six delinquent Herdman kids, who accidentally are cast

in a church holiday pageant, and then proceed to retell the Christmas story in a decidedly unconventional fashion. Call 803-359-1436, or visit their site at <http://www.villagesquaretheatre.com>.

**Trustus Theatre**, never one to follow trends, provides some alternative entertainment with *[title of show]*, Jeff Bowen and Hunter Bell's Obie-winning, Tony-nominated musical about nothing, or rather about the challenges of the creative process, as struggling writers craft a musical about themselves, trying to craft a musical. Dewey Scott-Wiley directs Matthew DeGuire, Laurel Posey, Kevin Bush, and Robin Gottlieb; Randy Moore is musical director, and the show runs December 7<sup>th</sup> through January 12<sup>th</sup>. Call 803-254-9732 for details, or visit <http://trustus.org/>.

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# WILL GOINS AND NATIVE AMERICAN ART HERITAGE

BY KRISTINE HARTVIGSEN

**J**ohnny Depp as Tonto? Will the long-anticipated *Lone Ranger* remake bring forth a slickly patented Jack Sparrow in red face or respectfully (and accurately) depict a Native American character? There's already a lot of buzz about the movie due out next summer. Depp's name on a marquee practically guarantees box office. But how will Native American Indians feel about it?

"I am glad he is bringing money to make it happen," says Dr. Will Moreau Goins, CEO of the Cherokee Indian Tribe of South Carolina and longtime advocate for Native American causes. "It is unfortunate that we still have to pander to idiots." An Indian woman actually adopted Depp as a Comanche so his role could be politically correct; supporters claim that the remake actually makes Tonto the clever hero and the "white guy" his simple associate.

An actor since childhood and multi-disciplinary artist in his own right, Goins has seen casting oddities throughout his performing career, some filled with irony. "I have always played ethnic roles," he explains. "As a young person, you just get cast in stuff. I didn't notice it then. But in college, I started getting the backlash, being told 'You are too distinct' and 'you don't have a crossover look.' I have done Latino a zillion times. But one time (while auditioning for an Indian role), they looked at my head shot and said, 'You look too Puerto Rican to be an Indian.'"

Well, a part is a part, and no one wants to be typecast. "I was Italian

first," he says. "For my first show in South Carolina, I played Bernardo in *West Side Story*. I can't help but love Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim."

So – after having played memorable Indian roles, including Black Elk and Sequoyah in Greenville and Asheville and Chief Sitting Bull in *Annie Get Your Gun* at Town Theatre – what would Goins consider the role of a lifetime? According to Goins, that would have to be a biopic of Iron Eyes Cody, the famous "Crying Indian" from the environmental commercials in the early 1970s. "He actually was an Italian by birth but worked as an Indian. It would be so perfect for me – an Indian playing an Italian playing an Indian. Talk about a farce." In truth, Iron Eyes Cody was born Espera DeCorti to immigrants from Sicily who arrived in the United States in 1902. And even though he wasn't actually Indian, he is said to have embraced Indian culture and causes throughout his life.

---

I am not real to them  
All of my people are gone  
My presence is ghostly  
But my appearance alone  
Invites the everyday question  
"Are you a real Indian?"  
I say, "Yes" and smile for my people  
Who once were, who are, and will be again.

-excerpted from poem "Are You a Real Indian?" by S. Michelle Pounds in *The People Speak*, an anthology of SC Native American writings (Phoenix Publishers, 2002)

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A lyric baritone bass, Goins studied voice at George Washington Uni-

versity and adores musical theater. While his family lived in the Washington, DC, area, his father was the music director and teacher at a theater company. His mother, Cherokee artist Elsie Taylor Goins, had a day job working for the federal government. Later, Goins, too, would become a self-described "fedskin" (a Native American working in federal government). His first job, after double-majoring in anthropology and communications at GWU, was as a media specialist for the Indian Health Service. He later would earn a doctorate from Pennsylvania State University. While studying at GWU, Goins started a theater company, and most of the actors, like him, were "fedskins" as well. It was about this time, in the politically charged DC environment, when Goins began to advocate for Native American causes. "I was quiet until college, he explains. "There was an absolute transformation then."

Since returning to South Carolina, Goins finds that politics consumes more of his time, but he is passionate about his tribe-based mission. Goins's tireless efforts have resulted in November being declared Native American Heritage Month in South Carolina. He personally lobbies for it every year, right down to getting the governor's signature on a formal proclamation. This year, Mayor Steve Benjamin also signed a parallel City of Columbia proclamation.

Goins's Cherokee ancestors were based in Oconee County in the Upstate. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was designed to usher Indians west so the white establishment could

take over their desirable eastern tribal lands. "They tried to remove our political prowess in South Carolina," Goins says. "The Cherokee Nation was supposed to get out, but the people didn't all leave."

---

We have always been adaptable people  
That is how we have survived  
We will continue to survive, change and adapt  
That is our strength  
Like the tall grasses on the plains, we bend to the wind  
We are not uprooted, not demolished

-excerpted from poem "Hope of the Seventh Generation" by Will Moreau Goins in *The People Speak*, an anthology of SC Native American writings (Phoenix Publishers, 2002)

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Though as people of color, they could not legally purchase land, many obtained property through sympathetic whites, some of them Scots-Irish. Goins is descended from these people. In fact, he wears a Claddagh ring side-by-side and in striking contrast to his Native American turquoise jewelry. Goins' artist mother practiced quilting and fiber arts. His great aunt, Corrie Allen Sisney, was a master bead artist of the Cherokee tribe. "She didn't just teach me; she engaged all kids of my generation in doing it," he says. "I am one of the few who continued to do it."

A fan of independent cinema, Goins in the mid-1990s noticed that the region offered very little in the way of films about indigenous people in general and Native Americans in particular. So he requested a meeting with Anne Raman, the first director of Nickelodeon Theatre, and persuaded the Columbia Film Society in 1997 to join the Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois, and United Tribes of South Carolina (ECSIUT) in sponsoring the first Native American Indian Film & Video Festival of the Southeast, which has become an annual affair now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year.

"It's important that we are involved with running our own programs and telling our own stories to ensure an authentic vision, voice,

and representation of who we are to the world at large," Goins says. With regard to the film festival at the Nickelodeon, "it's not much different than the earliest form of Native American storytelling and theater, telling tales around a campfire in the dark where all of one's attention is focused upon the story. The contemporary fire is the Nickelodeon screen in a darkened theater."

Among the first films featured at the festival was the immensely popular *Smoke Signals* (1998).

Since then, Goins says, the festival has hosted world premieres for such notable films as *Big Eden* (2000) and *Dreamkeeper* (2003). "These are Native actors that this area will never see unless I bring them here," Goins says. "We have 27,000 Natives who self-identify in this state. Many are artists." This year's festival at the new Nickelodeon Theatre on Main Street concluded on November 6.

With his dramatic bone structure and Native American features, Goins is recognizable to many in the South Carolina arts scene, but it's probable that very few know he is Chief of the Cherokee Indian Tribe of South Carolina.

"I am the bona fide chief of the tribe here, but I don't use 'chief.' I use 'CEO.' Chief is a term of endearment," Goins explains. "The term is devalued by its use in colloquial speech. It can be patronizing and even derogatory."

Goins takes every opportunity he can to promote the work and achievements of other Native artists in the state and dropped many names for this story, though time and space prevent more than a small sampling.

Lakota poet **Ron Colombe** (pronounced "ko-lōwm") of Salley near Aiken grew up hundreds of miles away from South Carolina, but he carries the DNA of oppression that connects many of Native blood. Born Ronald



Moreau as Sitting Bull in *Annie Get Your Gun*

Keith Eagle Feather on South Dakota's Rosebud Reservation, he was the son of Vernon Eagle Feather and Betty Thin Elk. When he was just two years old, the government forcibly removed Colombe from his loving home and placed him in foster care as part of an unofficial program seeking basically to erase Indian culture by mainstreaming Native children into white society.

"My grandmother was helping my parents raise me," he recalls. "That is very common in Native American culture. She was very traditional, and when they came get me, she fought." Despite his grandmother's efforts, the toddler was taken away. "She died without ever seeing me again. It took a long time for me to get back with the family."

John and Sarah Colombe were 65 when young Ron came into their home. "They were wonderful people," he says. "They were half Indian." The couple encouraged Colombe's curios-

ity about the world and his budding creativity but did not try to teach him about his native culture. "They were so afraid," he says. "They came out of the Indian boarding school system when parents were told by the government that their children had to go to boarding school. As soon as the children were out of sight, officials took their clothes and cut their hair and stripped them of any trace of Native American culture." Colombe graduated from the University of South Dakota and turned to writing to expose the injustices he saw all around and heal from the wrongdoing involved in his own life story. His first book of poetry, *Silent Shouting, Quiet War*, was published in 2004. He is working on a second book, *The Adoption Papers*, which he hopes to publish next year.

Even today, strong anti-Indian sentiment persists in some states. "In South Dakota, if you were Indian, it didn't matter whether you accepted white man's culture or not; they did not like you," Colombe says. "It goes beyond callousness. It's pretty bad out there, but when I was growing up, it was worse."

Colombe remembers during his childhood when government providers with the Indian Health Service performed dental procedures on him without anesthesia. "I remember being held down," he says. Writing is therapy and helps educate. "Native people in general are very internalized, and that kind of stuff is kept inside."

---

He died of smallpox when he was ten. He caught it from the blankets the black-robed priest gave to his village. I tell you this in case you have managed to distance yourself from the reality of history. I tell you this in case you have forgotten that the words in the history books wouldn't tell you of this boy. I tell you this because he was innocent and free. I tell you this because there is no justice for him except the justice of memory and outrage that a people could do such a thing and then forget.

-excerpted from the poem "There Was a Little Boy" by Ron Colombe

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Eagle Dancer Beadwork by Will Moreau

Midlands choreographer and ballet teacher **Anita Ashley** always felt she was a little bit different. "I grew up being told that I could be mistaken for a Native American," she says. "It was because I was very dark-skinned and had long dark hair." But after doing some research, it turned out that Ashley indeed was a direct descendant of Hannah Ward, the daughter of Cherokee Chief Nettle Carrier, also known as Taladanegiski (Red Paint Clan) of Tennessee.

Ashley met Goins through local productions that she either choreographed or acted in, mostly musicals. "Will did a very thorough research of it and came up with this wonderful sto-

ry," she says. Goins found that Ashley also is a descendent of Cherokee Chief Amadoya Moytoy. "I always liked Will; he is so dedicated and committed. ... He later presented me with the Maria Tallchief Award, named after the first Native American prima ballerina with the New York City Ballet." Tallchief danced with the New York City Ballet from 1947 to 1960 and actually was married for several years to the famous choreographer George Balanchine.

After retiring from professional dance with the Charleston Ballet and the Moving South modern dance company, Ashley taught at the North Carolina School for the Arts, at Columbia College, and at the Governor's School





Sacred Thunderbird Beadwork by Will Moreau

for the Arts. She founded her own Columbia Ballet School in 1980. "I had a pretty good background as a dancer, so it seemed to fit that I would teach when I was no longer performing," she says. "Being Native American doesn't really change what I do or how I see myself, although I am certainly very proud of my heritage."

Through the local theater community, both Goins and Ashley met fellow Natives Tom Beard and Scott Blanks. Beard teaches at the University of South Carolina and serves as music director for myriad local productions, many of them at Trustus Theatre. Blanks, chairman of the Fine Arts

Department at Benedict College, professional actor, and managing director of the South Carolina Shakespeare Company, is a Lumbee-Cheraw Indian from Pembroke, North Carolina. He has performed professionally in major productions all over the country and was in the national touring company of *Evita*. Blanks serves as an arts consultant for the United Tribes of North Carolina and often lectures on Native American culture and the arts.

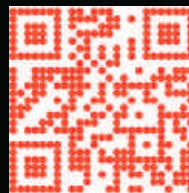
"Scott and I have talked many times about doing a project about Native American traditions with the Lumbees," Ashley says. "Maybe someday we will."



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# A WORD FROM OUR NEW FILM EDITOR

BY SHANE SLATTERY-QUINTANILLA



“A NECESSARY CAUTION: THE ‘DEMOCRATIZATION OF TOOLS’ GETS RID OF MANY FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS BUT DOES NOT SAVE US FROM THE CONSTRAINT OF WORKING. OWNING A DV CAMERA DOES NOT MAGICALLY CONFER TALENT ON SOMEONE WHO DOESN’T HAVE ANY OR WHO IS TOO LAZY TO EVEN ASK HIMSELF IF HE DOES. YOU CAN MINIATURIZE AS MUCH AS YOU WANT, BUT A FILM WILL ALWAYS REQUIRE A GREAT, GREAT DEAL OF WORK—AND AN INCENTIVE.”

—CHRIS MARKER, *LIBÉRATION*, MARCH 5, 2003

# W

e lost Chris Marker—that powerful, playful genius of the essay film—earlier this year. In these comments he wasn’t even talking yet of the world in which we find ourselves today, where the smartphone camera in many people’s pockets is capable of shooting and sharing, via the web, extraordinarily high-quality footage. And yet his essential point remains: no new or social media technology can manufacture the work or incentive necessary to make a great film. Another thing that technology can’t manufacture is the interest of an audience. There still need to be viewers willing to engage new and sometimes difficult subject matter in the face of so many stimulating options. We’ve heard the argument that new and social media only sedates its audience, that it oversaturates our brains with super-sweet bits of entertainment and keeps us away from anything that isn’t immediately amusing or gripping. Most of us can relate at least in part to such a feeling while surfing YouTube or browsing BuzzFeed (both things I enjoy doing regularly).

Despite these hazards, one of the best things that can happen in this new media landscape is that people stop seeing such a stark division between “content consumers” and “content creators.” There is perhaps no better way to steel one’s mind against the onslaught of visual information than to produce some of it. I have seen my students finish a video project and then find themselves so much savvier in their subsequent critiques of films and commercials. And yet creating video not only reveals technical and ethical issues that would otherwise remain hidden to a more passive viewer, it also has the potential to help keep a person awake to the world itself—the world beyond and away from the screens we spend so much time in front of.

Being a creator (writing, producing video, making music, or any other art) makes one a better student to the world because one begins to feel that she is in a livelier dialogue with the people and ideas and circumstances around her. This is the essence of aesthetic experience. The word aesthetic comes from the Greek for «perceive» (as the word anaesthetic or anaesthesia reminds us). To live a wide-awake life, as opposed to a sleepwalking, anaesthetized life, we must keep in touch with our ability to create and share. In a time when media and entertainment are more immersive than ever, working to become an active participant rather than a passive consumer becomes a greater and more crucial challenge. I try to remind my video students whenever possible that what we’re learning are not only professional skills but survival skills.

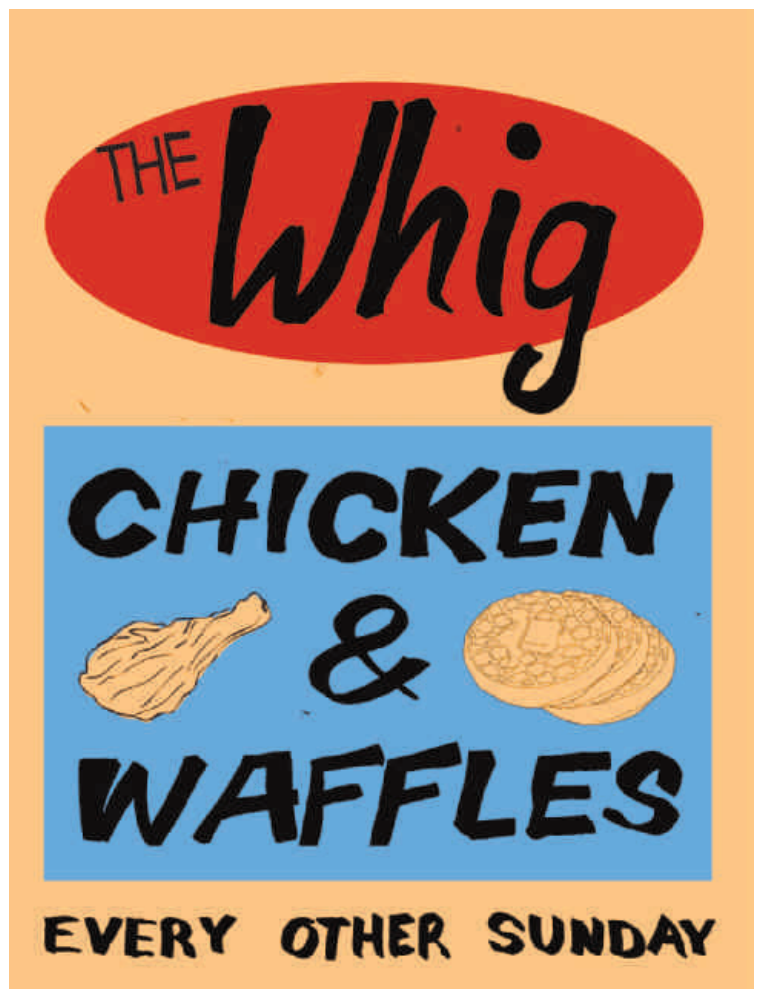
One of the hallowed traditions in documentary filmmaking is known as “direct cinema”: the notion that one is best serving one’s subject and audience by being an invisible eye on the world. It is a production ethic that has

led to some stunning works of art and journalism. But I also like to remind my students that some of the best things happen in film because the camera *does* influence the storytelling, and not just for the audience but for the filmmaker herself. Marker is right to temper our excitement about technology, but having a camera, knowing that one has the tools to shape and share a story does—in time and with discipline—help to inspire the incentive to create. The camera is not only an eye, it is a catalyst and a key: when we have a camera and we commit to a documentary project we often feel that we now have a license to explore the world in ways we wouldn't otherwise. Yes, the camera can disrupt a scene you want to document when people become shy, strange, or performative in front of it. At the same time we find, turning the camera on a friend or a stranger, that we might ask a question that we would never ask in everyday conversation, often because it is too bold or even too simple.

The camera at times seems to give us permission to ask these questions. More and more it feels like my role as educator is to help students give themselves this permission, to invite them to discover their own incentives. What you find with a little bit of prodding and encouragement is that *everyone* has questions they want to ask and stories they want to tell or share. Too often they've given up on the idea that they have the capacity to do so.

With this in mind my students and I began a project last year to help people in the Columbia community tell stories that they think should be told. We think of ourselves as a sort of Visual StoryCorps, a team of filmmakers that will go out and help people take advantage of the unique position we all find ourselves in today, where it is possible to both create and widely share powerful video projects using the tools most of us already have at our disposal. We urge you to tell friends and family that we are seeking ideas for short documentaries and we hope that you'll submit your own ideas on our website, [ccfilmfest.com](http://ccfilmfest.com). Is there a person in the community who should be celebrated with a video profile? A local issue that needs our urgent attention? Something beautiful or stirring or strange going on that people would benefit from knowing more about? We're open to any ideas, and we'll be writing about some of the ongoing projects on our website and on the *Jasper* blog. Some of the finished work will be showcased at an event this spring and the content will be made accessible on the web.

I'm still fairly new to Columbia and to the film community here. I'm happy to have the chance, as *Jasper's* new film editor, to learn more about our local filmmakers and the film events going on around



town. But as much as I hope to celebrate this professional work I never want to lose sight of the opportunity for everyone in the community to become involved in filmmaking. If we start thinking that the arts are something to be left to the pros and experts then we are missing out on their truly transformative potential. ,

*Shane Slattery-Quintanilla wrote, co-produced, and edited The Ballad of Esequiel Hernández, an Emmy-nominated documentary about the killing of an 18-year-old American high-school student by U.S. Marines. The film, narrated by Tommy Lee Jones, was broadcast nationwide by PBS in 2008 and nominated for a 2009 Emmy Award in the category of "Outstanding Investigative Journalism." He is currently shooting and co-producing The Seventh Fire, a documentary film about the rise of violent gang culture on Native American reservations in Minnesota. Shane is a professor in the Writing for Print and Digital Media program at Columbia College. The website for submitting documentary project ideas is [ccfilmfest.com](http://ccfilmfest.com)*

# FESTIVAL FOUNDATIONS IN COLUMBIA

BY KYLE PETERSEN



native rock acts that were popular in the 90s (see The Famously Hot Music Festival, Rosewood Crawfish Festival, and the recent announcement that The Wallflowers will be headlining our New Years' festivities), country music (also The Famously Hot Music Festival, as well as packed concerts at Colonial Life Arena), and classic rock acts (George Clinton at New Years', an occasional booking at Colonial Life Arena).

While these conversations obviously have some validity, blaming the lack of a big, top-notch festival on simply poor taste strikes me as a bit shortsighted. Other arguments that center on the premise that Columbia is a city more interested in drinking than anything else, whether its music or football, also seem to be more snarky than insightful. I've been thinking a lot about this question since I attended Hopscotch Music Festival in Raleigh this past year, which is an expansive, independent music celebration that feels like a mini-South by Southwest, and I think the community's relationship with music festivals is a little bit more complicated.

The first thing you notice about Hopscotch is that the club-centered schedule easily sprawls across 14 venues within walking distance of each other which also run the gamut in terms of seating capacity. The second is that the city is littered with independently-owned restaurants, coffee shops, art galleries, and independent bookstores. The third is that there are, quite simply, more people there.

The festival itself is an amazing experience as well, with day parties that kick off around noon, outdoor headliners that straddle the line between edgy and accessible (The Roots, Built to Spill, and The Jesus & Mary Chain, for the record), and a cutting-edge mix of indie rock, folk, hip-hop, R&B, jazz, electronica, and experimental acts sprinkled throughout the schedule. And it is mainly that exten-

sive lineup that draws visitors from outside Raleigh to the festival.

But still, a festival's success doesn't happen in a vacuum, and the city simply giving promoters the money to launch another risky endeavor doesn't really capture all of the complexity of building a sustainable success. We need a careful guarding of venues and small independent businesses, and a thriving downtown that allows their habitation in tight proximity.

In some ways, both the Jam Room Music Festival and the Free Times Music Crawl are taking the right approach and suffer our current limitations. The former did an excellent job of curating their line-up and promoting, but more than that they placed the festival on Main Street amidst a burgeoning arts and small business renaissance. The latter makes use of the only area of town which currently has the requisite proximity of stages and restaurants to make an expansive, multi-stage undertaking to work. On the other hand, The Jam Room's efforts were hampered by competing draws to the more-established Fall for Greenville festival and the still-nascent return of activity and traffic to the area. And the Free Times Music Crawl still struggles with a could-be-better set of venues that lack capacity and variety, as well as frequent sound difficulties due to makeshift staging.

The bottom line? Columbia's music festivals have a lot going for them, and are doing a lot of the right things, but diffuse support from city government, business owners, and individuals is needed for us to reach that next level. It's not a problem that exists in isolation. ♪

**T**he past few months has seen quite a bit of talk about music festivals in Columbia, and about what the city can, or should, aspire to. While the Free Times Music Crawl repeatedly draws big crowds into smaller venues around the Vista for local acts and the new Jam Room Music Festival had a largely successful first year, most of the conversation inevitably turns critical on what our city's residents will actually turn out for. Most say alter-



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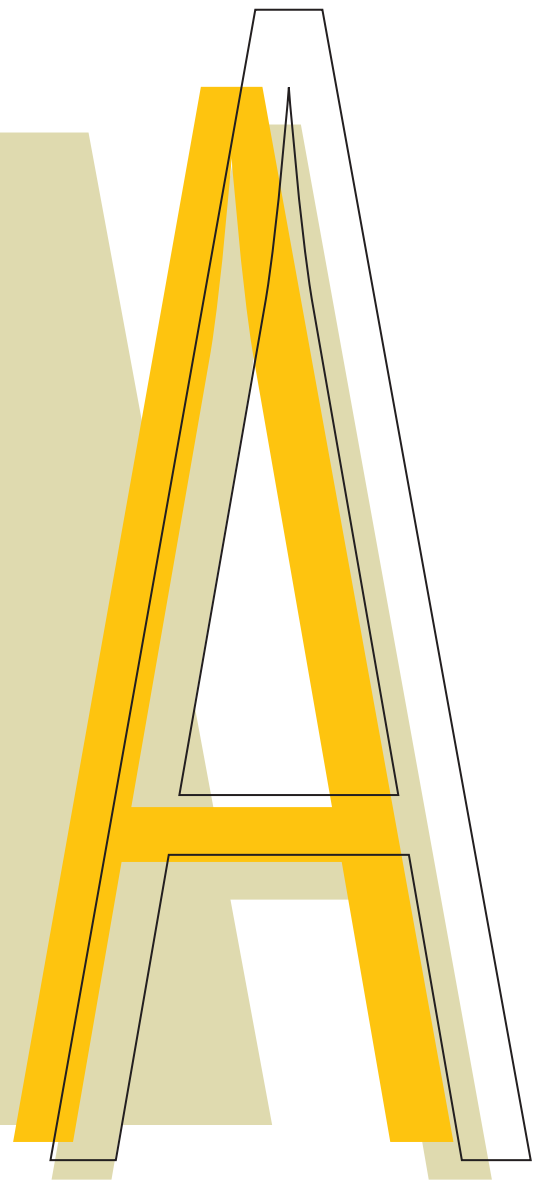
# FATRAT DA CZAR & COLUMBIA HIP-HOP

BY KYLE PETERSEN

“...TIRED OF THE HARD KNOCKS THAT THE PAVEMENT GIVES  
SO CLOSE, DOG, I’M SO CLOSE, I’M ONE HIT AWAY FROM A CHAMPAGNE TOAST  
THAT’S PLAQUES ON THE WALL, THAT STRETCHIN’ DOWN THE HALL,  
THAT’S MORE BREAD TO GO IMBIBE THEM ALL I  
SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD OR IN JAIL  
A FEDERAL CELL WHERE YOU SETTLE FOR MAIL  
SOMEHOW I SURVIVED, MADE IT PAST 25, AND  
I’M ALIVE, BUT I HAVEN’T ARRIVED  
FOR ALL THE TIMES THAT MY BABY MAMMA CRIED  
I AT LEAST WANT TO SAY I DID SOMETHING BEFORE I DIED  
FOR ALL THE TIMES THAT I LIED, THIS TIME IS THE TRUTH BABY GIRL, I TRIED...

TO MAKE IT. (UH HUH, UH HUH)  
AND I CAN STILL HEAR MY DADDY SAY (MAKE IT)”

—FROM “TRYIN’ TO MAKE IT”



At 35, FatRat da Czar is older than your average MC still in the hip-hop game, but he’s still just trying to make it.

Sitting back inside the Jam Room Recording Studio, where he works

during the day as a recording engineer, FatRat has just returned from his first appearance at the A3C (All 3 Coasts) Festival in Atlanta, a huge and influential hip-hop festival headlined by Big Boi, Raekwon, Tech N9ne, and Killer Mike, among others. It's clear that, for all of the laidback humility and friendly demeanor of the man, there's still a hunger there, a persisting desire to prove something both for himself and his community, that South Carolina deserves a lasting presence in the world of rap music.

FatRat, née Darius Johnson, is a literal and figurative towering figure in Columbia's hip-hop scene, having risen up as one of the top players in the late 1990s and early 2000s in the group Railroad Underground and later as part of the Streetside group. The latter set of rappers received major label attention and almost joined the pantheon of national-tier artists before the label folded into BMG and Streetside decided to take time off. Returning to the game in 2006 as a solo artist, FatRat, along with manager and DJ companion Sherard "Shekeese" Duvall, has been pushing hard over the last half-dozen years to mark out his own path, and in the process has lifted himself and Columbia's growing hip-hop community to the point they are at today.

It is this re-emergence which seems to have cemented the public's understanding of FatRat across his South Carolina fanbase. A tall, sturdily built man loaded down with tattoos and heavy dreadlocks, the MC is really a gentle giant, something that comes across both in conversation and in his songs. He has a warm friendliness and humility that sits comfortably alongside a steely confidence in his own abilities and approach to making music. On record, his gruff delivery is bold and direct, relying less on pop confections and a slick flow than his prowess as a writer and mastery of the technical aspects of rapping.

Starting with *Da Cold War* in 2008, FatRat set out to establish a very particular vision of what hip-hop should



Image Courtesy FatRat Da Czar

be. "It was actually always a part of what we did, man," he explains. "The guys I started out with [in Underground Railroad]—mainly Misfit, I think was the one who brought it to the table—we just had an idea that we would talk about our *whole* lives." When he embarked on the solo career, he realized he wanted his music to be a response to the contemporary landscape. "I was just at odds with the way hip-hop music was being played...I'm not even sure if that's the right word. Just the way it was portrayed and handled in general. By promoters, by DJs, we were just in a bad place," he explains. With *The Cold War* series, of which the rapper intended to have at least a sequel, although he admits that he wasn't sure there would be a third installment, he wrote with just one principle: "no rules," as FatRat recalls putting it to Shekeese. "I don't want the idea that we need this many hooks, this many verses [to govern the

music]. It had just gotten too rigid. I can't live in that world."

So on every record the rapper has made since, including this year's pre-*Da Cold War 3* mixtape *Inglorious Basterd*, FatRat has made versatility his hallmark, tackling issues of romance, aging parents, and trying to be a good father to a son who lives a thousand miles away, alongside more traditional hip-hop subject matter like the hustle of the game, his own personal mythology, and the ills often associated with poor African-American neighborhoods. Songs like "Be Strong" and "Need Someone" feature soulful singing and neo-soul templates, and yet alongside more pounding, propulsive tunes like "Tryin' to Make It" and "Meet da Basterd." Yet all of the songs feel like they are part of a piece, never striking the wrong note, because the MC is so committed to presenting himself in the most honest way possible.



Photo by Thomas Hammond



"My son is gonna be picking up these records, and I want him to get that balance," he explains. "[And] I don't feel like I'm any less of a man for talking about these sorts of things. Everybody deals with these types of issues. If you live for a while, these types of issues will come!"

Musically, FatRat relies chiefly on a cadre of local producers, including

MIDIMarc, Jah Freedom, M-, Frank Hustle,

Juice, among others,

to create an equally expansive production vision. The musical back-

drop is rarely overblown, and tends to fit the rapper's larger

goals of working above many of the prevailing trends.

"I don't listen to a whole lot of the new stuff as much. I do

have a few new artists I love to death because

I think they are talking it further, and of course I listen to the new local artists

because that's my job. But commercial radio, not so much."

The rapper will cop to his style as largely growing out of the late 1990s, early 2000s music he came up in, but still contends that he is "inspired by lots of different types of music." As he figures it, even though he is "influenced by lots of different music, I [will] always express it through hip-hop. It's always gonna come out in the hip-hop format, because that's the music I do."

The process of picking the music is relatively simple. As one of

the key established players in South Carolina's hip-hop scene, FatRat constantly has producers pitching him beats. "I usually pick some beats that somebody has given to me and ride to them in my car. I try not to go in the studio with the idea that I'm gonna turn on this music and write a song. I don't think I get a good record out of that process, and it's just not my style."

And making good records is something FatRat takes very seriously. In the 3 and a half years since *Cold War 2*, he's recorded well over a 100 songs in preparation for *Cold War 3*, which he just released on November 6 (Election Day). "I'm just not motivated unless I'm making something new or fresh that I feel good about. If I don't feel good about it, I just set it aside." His benchmark are the Run-DMC and The Fat Boys groups he was listening to at 7 years old and "still move me today."

The other notable aspect of his records is the lengthy list of younger contributors and features that populate his records, which are otherwise exercises in a rather singular artistic vision. This is not only because the up-and-comers see FatRat as a wealth of knowledge and as an inspiration for how to do things, but because where the scene is, and where it's going, is something that is never far from FatRat's thoughts. "I have an agenda, a job here in Columbia, to make sure that hip-hop doesn't go away again," he says seriously. "That means improving the quality of it, working hard enough that when people see it coming, they welcome it, and that people believe we have the artists to compete."

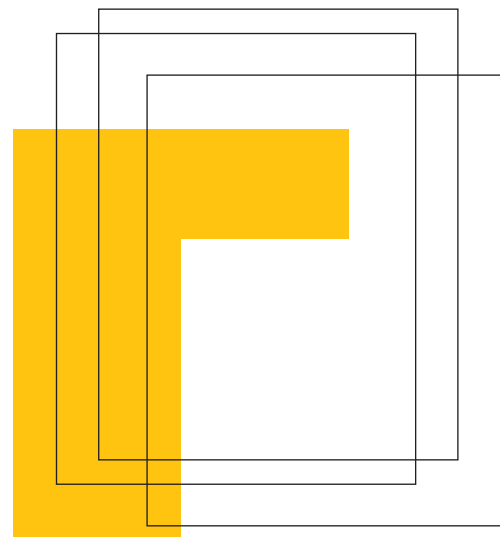
Another part of this, as his manager Shekeese is quick to point out, is also working on how to make it as an independent artist. As a longtime promoter of hip-hop in Columbia (as co-founder of the NonStopHipHop Live series), the multi-faceted partner of the MC argues that hip-hop artists need to take DIY cues from hustling

rockers on simple things like bill-sharing, making t-shirts, and getting their names out there. "I really want to see artists not just hang out at the radio station trying to get their record on the air. That's just not the way to do things," he explains.

Shekeese sees FatRat as a great example of a "fan-based" artist who can benefit from such an approach, and, with the release of *Cold War 3*, wants to push his talent on national stages like the CMJ Music Festival and South by Southwest, where he can benefit from exposure without major label assistance. It also means taking advantage of things like A3C, which came about through a connection to Columbia-raised producer Will.power, and his recent opening slot for Killer Mike at the Music Farm in Charleston. "He's fanbase-oriented, so the best thing we do is to get him in the place where he can get more fans as an independent artist, where the fanbase is self-sustaining," Shekeese argues. "That's where he's gotten his strength here [anyway], so why change the formula?"

For FatRat, though, the process of making music itself is what keeps driving him more than anything else. "Even when my professional career is over, I'm almost positive I will have a recording studio wherever I'm living. Because I just need to say it somewhere. That's the place I'm most comfortable talking about [everything]."

Luckily for Columbia, FatRat says it here and, hopefully soon, everywhere else. ♪



# ERIN JAFFE BOLSHAKOV AND BALLROOM DANCE

BY BONNIE BOITER-JOLLEY

**E**rin Jaffe Bolshakov started out at the age of three, as many children do, taking ballet at Columbia's famed Calvert Brodie Dance School. Bolshakov, then Jaffe, studied with Ann Brodie and later followed William Starrett to join the Columbia City Ballet. Strongly supported by her parents, and described by Starrett to this day as his "protégé" Bolshakov originated numerous roles in the early days of City Ballet. Around the age of fifteen, Bolshakov began expanding her view of dance. Broadening her horizons she travelled to competitions outside of Columbia and, following the lead of her mentor, Starrett, studied for a time at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in Canada. Upon her return to Columbia, Bolshakov describes her younger self as "disenchanted" with the idea of dancing in a ballet company and chose instead to attend the University of South Carolina to study Political Science. While at the university, Bolshakov met and began dancing with Stanislav Issaev, at the time the director of the USC Dance Conservatory. Bolshakov continued to pursue ballet and, coached by Issaev, attended International Ballet Competitions in Varna and Jackson, Mississippi. After Issaev left Columbia, Bolshakov, still uninterested in company life, danced "here and there" around town. It was during her college years, however, that she discovered her new passion – ballroom dance.

Photo by Alexis Schwallier





Photo by Alexis Schwallier

Bolshakov's petite frame, she explains, is more suited to the rhythms of Latin Dance, as opposed to Standard Ballroom which lends itself to taller, longer dancers. The five rhythms that comprise the Latin category, Cha Cha, Samba, Rhumba, Paso Doble, and Jive, certainly seem to suit Bolshakov's fiery and energetic personality. The Tango, Salsa, and Bachata are her favorite styles and she says she is most happy when she is dancing. It is in Latin dance and ballroom that Bolshakov has found her true calling.

At 22, Erin Jaffe married Andrei Bolshakov, who she credits as her biggest supporter and number one fan. After her marriage, the birth of her son, Andrei, and a final attempt at fulfillment through ballet, Bolshakov realized the need "to do something on [her] own." Her heart set on a ballroom studio, she reached out to her former

dance partner, the more experienced Valery Ganiev, for help hiring instructors, planning classes, and general studio setup. Erin Jaffe Bolshakov is now the director of the, soon to be seven year old, Vista Ballroom. Like any dance studio, the purpose of the facility is a space to teach and learn the varied forms of ballroom dance. The Vista Ballroom, however, differs from your average studio in that it also acts as a venue for social events and festivals. The Mad Hot Tango Marathon, for example, is a four day Tango festival packed with classes and demonstrations from visiting Argentine Tango Artists. Next year's festival is scheduled to take place in June and will mark the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the event.

Ballroom dance has given Bolshakov a number of unique performance opportunities throughout the years.

She recently had the pleasure to give performances at the 2012 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, as well as with the chamber group Quin Tango at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, and in New York City at a milonga, or tango event, called La Milonga Rosa. Over the years she has also performed in Columbia with the South Carolina Philharmonic.

Though always scheming, Bolshakov has no plans to leave Columbia, and her own future is intertwined with that of the ballroom studio. She hopes to grow the studio and has irons in the fire to do just that. Bolshakov is bringing in new high ranking professionals as instructors at the studio. Sergei Samynchskyy and Yulia Besarab recently took 7<sup>th</sup> in the World Ten Dance Championship in Montreal, a competition in which dancers must perform all five Latin and Standard rhythms. The couple was one of two selected to represent the United States at this year's World Championships and they have decided move to Columbia to be part of the Vista Ballroom. Also drawn to Columbia by Vista Ballroom is native Argentinean Orlando Farias. Maestro Farias will be both teaching at the ballroom studio and acting as Bolshakov's new dance partner.

Bolshakov's great aunt, Sylvia Stern, was a ballet dancer and one of the originators of the Lindy style "Big Apple Dance" in Columbia in the 1930s, so it is no wonder that her niece has big plans herself. Bolshakov talks of collaborating with a restaurateur and developer to create a space where patrons can dine, be entertained, and take part in a class if they choose. Collaboration is not far away as local artists make up a substantial portion of her student base. Competition and artistry can go hand in hand. "In Columbia we have everything," Bolshakov says. "What I want is to be a dancer."

# SUZY SCARBOROUGH'S *PERSISTENT ILLUSIONS: A FIGURE RETROSPECTIVE*

BY KARA GUNTER



"Releasing the Butterflies"



walking into Suzy Scarborough's exhibition at Tapp's Arts Center, the exhibition of "Persistent Illusions: A Figure Retrospective," is a little akin to walking into the nave of an intimate cathedral of a personal religion. Instead of seeing icons of saints and angels, the Pantocrator Christ, or the Virgin Mary, we instead find the transcendent images of Scarborough's daughter constructed out of layers of collaged book pages, various drawing media and paints, and gold-leaf. These paintings come to life in rich jewel tones, under cracking lustrous surfaces. Scarborough's mark-making is at once contained, steady and practiced, while remaining spontaneous and organic upon closer inspection. These paintings are both larger than life with a modern graphic, illustrative quality, yet they all contain a soulful intimacy which conjures a devotional sensibility.

Scarborough's art exists solidly in and for this current age; however, influences from much earlier periods are keenly visible. Immediately, the Byzantine style of iconographic paintings with the still portraits of saints with simple, geometric nimbus and



"Hummingbird Dreams"

heavy gold leaf comes to mind. While some of Scarborough's works contain more depth of field than those traditional icons, in many cases she still chooses to flatten the composition by adding intricate, interwoven geometric lines and shapes. These designs harken back to those ancient, serpentine Celtic knots—the same ones we see painstakingly drawn by monks from the 9<sup>th</sup> century illuminated text of the *Book of Kells*. With Scarborough's use of collaged book pages, this con-

nection to illuminated manuscripts becomes even more tangible. Her approach to her mixed-media paintings is still less heavy handed than these ancient examples and we come away with a lighter, more modern, and less-decorative-more-design sensibility.

It is also difficult to ignore hints of Gustav Klimt bubbling under the surface of Scarborough's work. Klimt, who was also inspired by his own encounter with Byzantine art (specifically mosaic works), utilized collage

and gold-leaf to enshrine his elongated and twisting figures in a designed, modern splendor of golden busyness. Scarborough comes to her work in a quieter state of mind though, and the results are much more quiescent and meditative, as seen in *Releasing the Butterflies*. Here we see an example of those Byzantine nimbi, but we also see allusions to Klimt in Scarborough's tile-like treatment of book pages in the background, and in her use of pattern throughout the piece. The figures in

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"River Orchard in 5D"

her work (in her artist's statement, she identifies the woman we see in most of her paintings as her daughter) are still, unaffected, and a bit surreal. Scarborough's subject seems to exist in equal parts on two different planes—a dream-like place in sublime composure, and this more corporeal world.

This brings us to the artist's conceptual intent. Scarborough writes that she wants to "...explore this dichotomy between the natural world and the conceptual world" and we do find that subtle juxtaposition everywhere. She doesn't spell it out for us, but instead we see it in small gestures and expressions (especially in the heavy-lidded gaze of her subject that we also see in art depicting the Buddha and even Christ) that suggests an ease of being and a peaceful knowing of a higher state of mind. In *Hummingbird Dreams* we see our enlightened subject with a gaze that suggests inner contemplation, her hand raised in a mudra at her solar plexus while she also lightly holds one end of a string held in the beak of a petite hummingbird. This string, perhaps bridges the gap between those two states of existence. In *River Orchard in 5D*, we see a similar use of symbolism with two

birds perched upon the right and left hand of our subject. Again, her expression suggests gentle wisdom. She stands in a hilly, tranquil landscape with a river flowing behind her. Space becomes shallow and unreal with Scarborough's use of collaged book pages and geometric lines that weave together behind the figure. The symmetry of the pose of the subject and the rosette-type design elicit a sense of balance. Perhaps, this is one of those rare instances where Scarborough has found that harmony she seeks between those dichotomous conditions of human existence?

She calls herself a seeker for "a more natural way of life." Like Scarborough, most of us desire to remain "free from the anxieties and frustrations of this modern industrialized, technology drunk world." Some of us desire to reconnect with a more natural way of living. We try different ways to attain that momentary distance between the anxieties of this modern life and a more pure, real and perhaps sacred way of existing. Some of us pray or meditate to achieve this state, but if you happen to be Suzy Scarborough, you make art.



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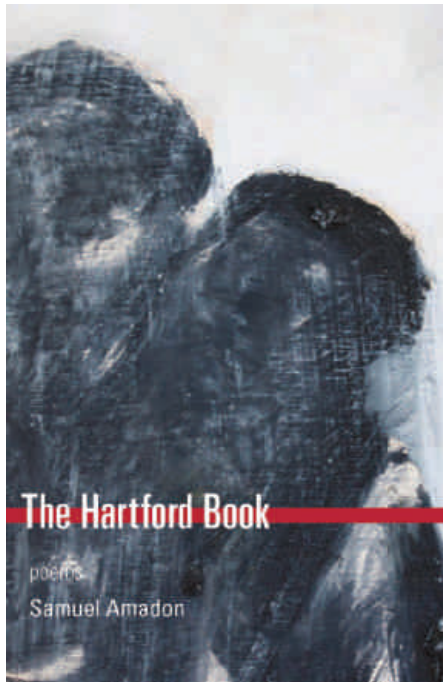
Photo by Thomas Hammond





# REVIEW - *THE HARTFORD BOOK* BY SAMUEL AMADON

BY ZACH MUELLER



This fall brings poet Samuel Amadon to the USC English department with the newest collection of his work, *The Hartford Book*, published by the Cleveland State University Poetry Center. While *The Hartford Book* may echo every stagnant town you've ever known, it is uniquely Amadon's own wintery hometown about which he writes. *The Hartford Book* is Amadon's second book, following his debut, *Like a Sea*, which was the winner of the Iowa Poetry Prize. A narrative built around a central speaker, *The Hartford Book* grippingly renders a Hartford, Connecticut, where "none of us

read very much/& no one anywhere else thinks/very much of us & anyway I don't/know anyone with/a car that could make it over a hill." Stuck at traffic lights, drinking in the living room with destitute friends, exchanging dating advice with a lonely roommate, the narrator, along with his lineup of familiar faces, stagnates in the routine of trying to get by in a place that refuses to budge.

Amadon's narrative neither reveals an indifference to tragedy nor revels in it. Instead the speaker manufactures indifference as a way to cope, hoping to survive with his spirit intact. In *Hartford*, friends are often too close for comfort, like Ray Rose from "Barbour Street," who "had a tear/tattooed by his eye & somebody had/told me what that meant/so I never said no to him." Tension is consistently turned in on itself, as in "The Shit We're Born Into," a teenage friend breaks curfew, and his father makes him dig a hole in the backyard only to fill it up again. When the narrator goes to the funeral of a friend in "The One Person Who Said I Love You That Winter," he meets a new friend, Jesse, in the process. But the real tragic irony surfaces later in "Vanity, Vanity," as the narrator confesses, "I didn't really know that many/dead people until Jesse/killed himself & you know there/was no way I was going to a funeral/for someone I met/at a funeral."

Confessional but not indulgent, *The Hartford Book* provides little opportunity for nursing regret. In modest three-line stanzas or running lines with indentation, the poems give the staggered look of interlocked fingers on the page. Even chaos is measured and poignant though at times as strung-out as some of the char-

acters. The single-sentence "Vanity, Vanity" stretches across a dozen pages, glossing the Hartford disillusionment—dreams of making it out and bitterness for what clouds the way—in one fluid, maximalist reflection. The portrait is not a pretty one, but the narrator's willingness to see emptiness in detail renders it real and striking. In the displaced fish-market where he bought weed in high school, broken motel rooms where dealers and users make a sickly living, and self-destructive pro-athlete dropouts who show up on the doorstep threatening to break windows, Hartford reels by at eye level. Through the window of a car, "Homestead Avenue" looks frankly at 'bulletproof liquor stores or boarded-up/warehouses or crackheads on bicycles." This is landscape poetry for a post-industrial modernity, after progress has picked up and gone elsewhere, leaving once-flourishing cities like Hartford to deal with the abandoned that remain. Like so many of the characters in his collection, Amadon is not afraid to step over skeletons, and you get the impression there's no other way out.

*Zach Mueller received his MFA in poetry from the University of South Carolina earlier this year. He writes poetry, short fiction, and is working on his first novel. He lives and teaches composition in Columbia, SC.*

# THE ONE PERSON THAT WINTER WHO SAID I LOVE YOU

BY SAMUEL AMADON

When our landlords bought the building,  
Kenny said, our apartment had a crackhead  
hiding in it & as they walked in he was lighting

a cigarette off the flame of a gas space-heater.  
Also, he said our apartment had had dead bodies.  
When I was in college I lived in the hotel

where Eugene O'Neil died, on the floor  
where Eugene O'Neil died & when  
I lived with my parents & my dog died

I slept next to the cardboard box  
full of her ashes for fourteen months before I  
noticed & when my father poured my

great-grandmother in the bay part of her flew  
back toward me in the wind  
& I accidentally swallowed her & when

my grandfather was dying I held his hand  
& he thought I was my father  
& it smelled like a hospital though it

wasn't & the other Alzheimer patients kept coming  
in the room & watching us & when  
my friend Jack died (car/tree) I met this guy Jesse

at the funeral & when Jesse  
died I thought I don't much care if I live  
in a house full of dead crack-heads & when

Kenny told me he loved me I told him to hold still  
because I had to dab a napkin at  
the cut in his scalp where our friend

Sully had stabbed him minutes before.

From *The Hartford Book*  
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# ONE BOOK, ONE POEM WINNERS

BY ED MADDEN

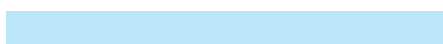
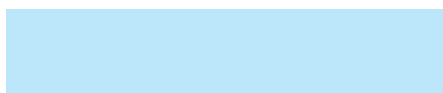
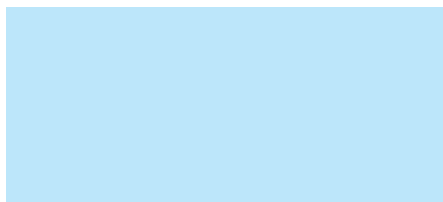


**oet and novelist Ron Rash had a hard** time picking the winner of the One Book, One Poem contest, and in the end, he decided it was a tie. Will Garland and Debra Daniels are the winners of the contest, for their poems "Swimming Out by the Dam" and "Inside the Silvered Breath."

Jasper sponsored the One Book, One Poem contest in conjunction with the second annual One Book, One Columbia program, sponsored by Richland County Public Library, which featured Ron Rash's *Saints at the River*. Rash also agreed to judge Jasper's One Book, One Poem contest, which invited poets from the greater Columbia area to submit poems inspired by Rash's novel.

Five additional poems were named finalists: "corduroy road" by Lauren Allen, "Muddied Bottoms" also by Will Garland, "Waters Remember (Keowee No. 1)" and "Three Things One Moment Before Summer" by Rieppe Moore, and "Elegy" by Dianne Turgeon Richardson. The finalists are published online at the Jasper blog.

Of the two winning poems, Rash wrote, "These two poems remind us that the best poetry is written for the ear as much as the eye. I am gratified to have had the opportunity to experience them."





# INSIDE THE SILVERED BREATH

BY DEBRA A. DANIEL

She died a little more with each nuanced  
bend of twig or branch or sun-washed leaf  
her fluid fingers could not clasp.

Hear the water of her words rise  
from the tomb of lung, the liquid larynx,  
the scrape against her throat. Hear

how she calls to her mother from under  
the silent heart of rock, from inside  
the silvered breath of swirling fish.

See that her father fights the current,  
tries to hold aloft his longing as he steps  
into the slippery ooze that sucks him down.

He hurls his circled net into the shallows  
but catches only air and sorrow,  
air and sorrow, the empty air of sorrow.

Beneath the blue night river, this endless  
dying swallows her again, again, again  
until she is no more, until she never was.

Debra A. Daniel - *The Downward Turn of August* (Finishing Line Press) and *As Is* (Main Street Rag) - was twice named SC Arts Commission's Poetry Fellow. She won the Guy Owen Prize and was a Pushcart nominee. Her work has appeared in journals including: the *Los Angeles Review*, *Inkwell*, *Southern Poetry*, *Tar River*, *pequin.org*, and *Kakalak*.



## MCKISSICK MOVES FORWARD

BY JANE PRZYBYSZ, PH.D.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
MCKISSICK MUSEUM

In 1993, close to wrapping up my doctoral work in the Department of Performance Studies at NYU, I moved from New York City to Columbia, SC, to take a temporary, grant-funded research position at McKissick Museum. My job was to study the networks of individuals and institutions that fostered the revival of craft in the southeastern United States from 1880 to 1940.

Almost twenty years later, I've returned to McKissick as executive director, only to find that I've become one of the people I used to study. I've accepted a leadership role at an institution where the study and interpretation of southeastern material culture energized a regional craft and folk arts revival in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and shaped how generations of students

aspiring to careers as museum professionals were trained and oriented to the field of museum studies at the University of South Carolina. So where do we go from here?

McKissick continues to advocate on behalf of formerly marginalized forms of cultural production often representing the art in everyday life that we take for granted. This fall we invited the Columbia Museum of Art to co-host a landmark exhibit developed by the Milwaukee Art Museum featuring objects from McKissick's collection. *Face Jugs: African-American Art and Ritual in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century South Carolina* is currently on view at CMA and will be the occasion for a symposium, *Unmasking the Mysteries of Face Jugs*, at CMA on Saturday, December 8, 2012. The symposium program juxtaposes the emerging scholarship of African-American scholars of the African diaspora with the perspectives of Museum decorative arts curators and long-time southern pottery collectors to propose new possible meanings and uses of these relatively rare and regionally distinctive face vessels.

We'll launch 2013 by bringing a folklore frame to the fine art of South Carolina artist Rebecca Davenport in *Step Right Up! Sideshows in American Culture*. Davenport's life-size, mixed-media *Carnival* series anchors an exhibit that brokers a broader conversation about how people with disabilities historically have created subcultures of their own, as well as about how Americans understand and manage the increasingly wide range of people in their midst with physical and cognitive differences.

Continuing its tradition of leveraging student, faculty and staff research to originate exhibitions, McKissick will present *Dawn of Freedom: Freeman and the Making of Mitchelville, Hilton Head Island, SC, 2861-1865* to coincide with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipa-

tion Proclamation. Developed from the master's thesis of recent USC Public History Program graduate JoAnn Zeise, now Curator of History at the South Carolina State Museum, *Dawn of Freedom* tells the remarkable story of what was arguably the first town in the United States to be built and self-governed by formerly enslaved African Americans.

In the fall of 2013, the Museum will inaugurate a dedicated folk life gallery to showcase and reflect on the research, fieldwork and collections McKissick forged within the context of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century craft and folk art revival, as well as spotlight continuing efforts to document and interpret regional vernacular culture. The first of what has been conceived of as an ongoing series of folk life-focused exhibits will highlight the work of South Carolina Folk Heritage Award winners and be accompanied by an ambitious, year-long public program series featuring a wide range of performances and hands-on workshops.

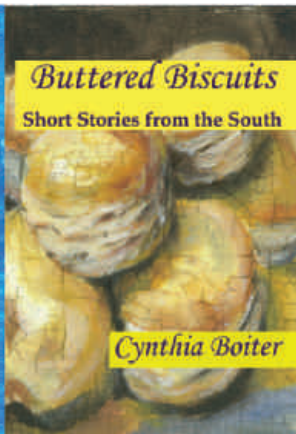
Considering that, in 2010, the prestigious Turner Award recognizing innovation in contemporary art went to Glasgow-born, sound installation artist Susan Philipsz for her a cappella vocal performance of three versions of a 16<sup>th</sup> century traditional Scottish lament played over a public address system installed under three bridges, the time seems ripe for McKissick Museum to explore the dynamic relationship between folk and fine art in the multiple art-making communities where traditional music, craft, and other folk practices have become resonant. Stay tuned to see where this exploration will lead and how it might figure in McKissick reimagining its role as a 21<sup>st</sup> century university museum. ♪

Photo by Forrest Clonts

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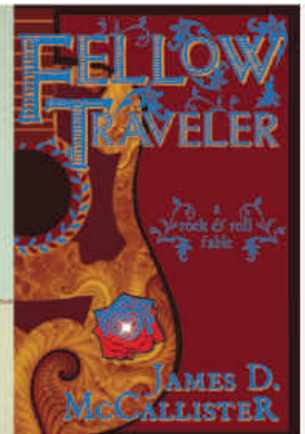
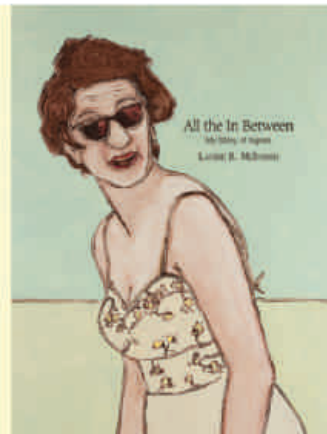


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