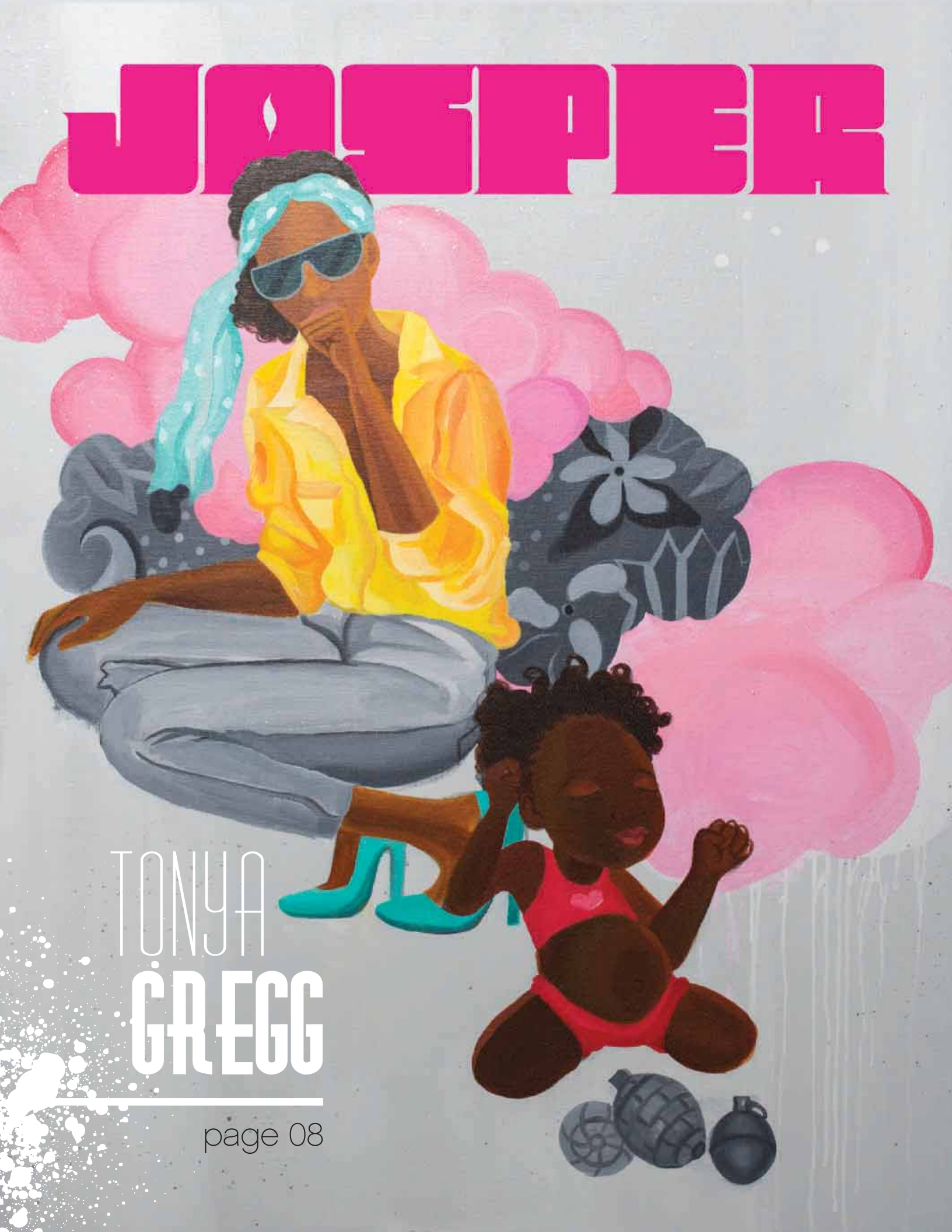
# JASPER



## TONYA GREGG

page 08

ART FILM

# INDIE GRITS

MUSIC TECH

COLUMBIA, SC

04. 15-19. 2015

"THIS YEAR WE ARE LAUNCHING OUR FIRST EVER FULL FLEDGED ART PROGRAM. WITH MANY VENUES ACROSS COLUMBIA HOSTING EXHIBITS, THERE WILL BE A LOT OF OPPORTUNITY FOR VISUAL EXPERIMENTATION AND SPATIAL EXPLORATION WITH VARIOUS ART INSTALLATIONS. FURTHERMORE, WE WANTED SOMETHING THAT WOULD PUSH OUR ARTISTS, FILMMAKERS, DESIGNERS, AND PROGRAMMERS TO THINK BEYOND THE CONFINES OF THE 'ART WORLD' AND START DREAMING ABOUT OUR CITY. WITH THAT IN MIND WE CAME UP WITH THE FESTIVAL THEME *FUTURE PERFECT*." *- SETH GADSDEN, FESTIVAL CO-DIRECTOR*

## ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

GABRIELLE DUGGAN - ATLANTA, GA

HOLLIS HAMMONDS - AUSTIN, TX

INSTITUTE FOR WISHFUL THINKING - NYC

PAPERHAND PUPPET INTERVENTION - SAXAPAHAW, NC

TREK MATTHEWS - ATLANTA, GA

SLEEPER - MIAMI, FL

MEG STEIN - DURHAM, NC

ANTOINE WILLIAMS - CHAPEL HILL, NC

OVER 74 FILMS

"AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTIST, I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE MULTIFACETED EXPERIENCE OF INDIE GRITS. PEOPLE IN COLUMBIA WERE REALLY SUPPORTIVE OF ME." *- AMANDA CASSINGHAM-BARDWELL, 2014 INDIE GRITS ARTIST IN RESIDENCE*

## EXHIBITING ARTISTS

SETH CURCIO - SAN FRANCISCO, CA

STEPHANIE DOWDA - ATLANTA, GA

RON HAGELL - COLUMBIA, SC

RONI NICOLE HENDERSON - COLUMBIA, SC

JULIE HENSON - SAN FRANCISCO, CA

EVAN MEANEY - COLUMBIA, SC

BEN TIVEN - BROOKLYN, NY

CEDRIC UMOJA - COLUMBIA, SC

BARRY WHEELER - COLUMBIA, SC

THE FUTURE IS PERFECT

FUTURE PERFECT

FIG. 1

# GET AN INDIE GRITS FESTIVAL PASS
# $100 // $75 FOR NICK MEMBERS

## INDIE BITS

INDIE BITS IS A CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENT GAMING AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA. THE SHOWCASE OF GAMES FROM ACROSS THE SOUTHEAST WITH ADDITIONAL VIDEO GAME INSTALLATIONS SPRINKLED AMONGST YOUR FAVORITE INDIE GRITS EVENTS ARE ALL OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED ON THE PIXELATED FRONT. AS IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH, THEY ARE RUNNING A LIFE-SIZED PACMAN INSPIRED GAME CALLED GRITMAN AT OUR OPENING PARTY!

## FEATURING 37 FILMS MADE BY WOMEN

## SC BASED FILMMAKERS IN COMPETITION

*THE ART HOUSE* - LAURA VALTORTA

*BOULDERS* - FRANKLIN JONES

*CLOSER* - SEAN SHOPPELL

*COTTON ROAD* - LAURA KISSEL

*DO NOT DISTURB* - ANIL DHOKAI

*FLOR* - TAYLOR DEAS

*THE GOSPEL OF HIP BONES* - MICAH TROUBLEFIELD

*PLAZE TOYS* - BRITTANY PAUL

*STAY AWHILE* - PATRICK JEFFORDS

*WILLY JAMES THE PUPPETEER* - CHAP FOWLER

*WORSE THAN CATHOLIC* - JAMIE CLARK

## MUSIC LINEUP

*BELLOWS*

*BOMBADIL*

*CAN'T KIDS*

*ELVIS DEPRESSEDLY*

*ET ANDERSON*

*HECTORINA*

*HELADO NEGRO*

*INFINITIKISS*

*JASON ISBELL*

*MECHANICAL RIVER*

*MICHAEL PARALLAX*

*PRAIRIE WILLOWS*

*SAY BROTHER*

*SOUTHERN FEMISPHERE*

*VALLEY MAKER*

*WILLIAM STARR BUSBEE*

## OVERSOUND

JOIN US FOR A LIVE POETRY READING DURING OUR ART OPENING, HOSTED BY *OVERSOUND*, AN ANNUAL POETRY JOURNAL EDITED BY COLUMBIA'S LIZ COUNTRYMAN AND SAMUEL AMADON.

HEAD OVER TO
INDIEGRITS.COM
FOR A FULL SCHEDULE OF INFO

CENTERFOLD / MOLLY LEDFORD




## JASPER IS

Cynthia Boiter Editor-in-Chief · Kyle Petersen Assistant Editor
W. Heyward Sims Art Director · Forrest Clonts Photography Editor
Ed Madden Literary Arts Editor
Chris Robinson Visual Arts Editor Emeritus
Kara Gunter Visual Arts Editor · Tom Dempster Assistant Music Editor
David Ligon Dance Editor · Bonnie Boiter-Jolley Contributing Dance Editor
Perrin Hall Brunson New Media Editor
Julia Elliott Contributing Editor · Wade Sellers Film Editor
Rachel Haynie Staff Writer · Jonathan Butler Staff Writer
Elizabeth Breen Staff Writer · Jonathan Sharpe Staff Photographer
Thomas Hammond Staff Photographer
Alexis Schwallier Staff Photographer
Annie Boiter-Jolley Operations Manager
Robert B. Jolley, Jr., MD Publisher

## CONTRIBUTORS

Caitlin Bright · Abby Davis · Kristine Hartvigsen · Lee Lawson
Robbie Robertson · Joyce Rose-Harris · Michael Spawn
Haley Sprankle · David Stringer · Susan Tekulve

## JASPER ONLINE

jaspercolumbia.com jaspercolumbia.net/blog
facebook.com/jaspercolumbia twitter.com/jasperadvises

# Dear Friends,

Welcome to the March-April issue of Jasper where, for the fourth year in a row, we highlight Columbia area artists who happen to be women. Springtime in South Carolina signals the onset of festivals and galas including perennial Jasper favorite, the Indie Grits Film Festival. Under the direction of Seth Gadsden and Andy Smith, this year's program has pulled the ripcord on multi-disciplinary arts coverage by adding multiple platforms for visual arts exhibitions to the fest's already ambitious offerings of music, murals, and, of course, film arts. Jasper sat down with Gadsden, Smith, and marketing guru Kristin Morris to talk about how Indie Grits got to where it is now as well as where the three leaders see it going in the future. Have a look on page 24.

We're particularly excited this issue to feature centerfold Molly Ledford, a fixture on the Columbia music scene for quite a while, as well as the leader of the innovative children's band, Lunch Money. We had a lot of fun on Molly's photo shoot at the new Pura Wellness Spa in the Vista. With Thomas Hammond behind the camera and Pura esthetician Mandy Applegate primping our centerfold, we got some gorgeous shots of the beautiful, smart, and talented Molly.

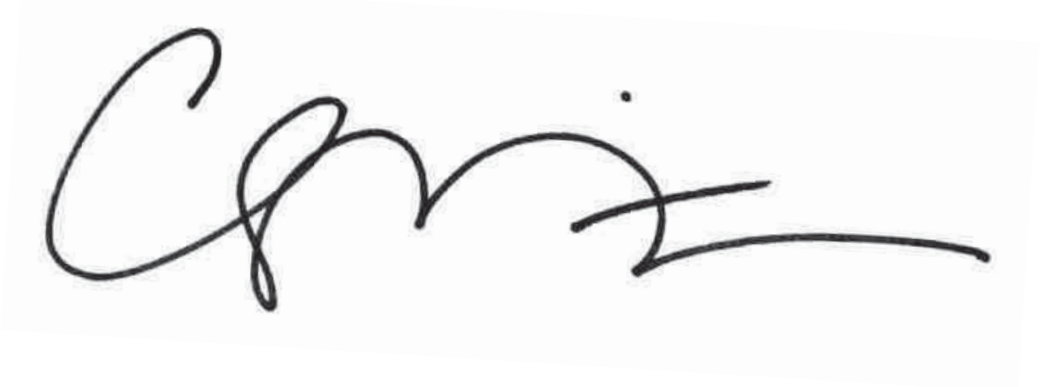
We're also excited to feature visual artist Tonya Gregg whose painting *Shook* graces the cover of Jasper after it was censored from last autumn's *Body and Soul* exhibition at the Fine Arts Center of Kershaw County.

Finally, you may notice a few changes coming up on the Jasper masthead as we say goodbye to theatre editor August Krickel and welcome Kyle Petersen to the new position of assistant editor. We send August off with tremendous appreciation for all the insight he shared with us over the years and look forward to seeing the Kyle's impact on upcoming issues of Jasper Magazine.

PHOTO BY THOMAS HAMMOND

Pura Wellness Spa esthetician Mandy Applegate is responsible for centerfold Molly Ledford's glamourous look on page 31.

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

MAR/ APR 2015 / VOLUME 004 / ISSUE 004

# The JASPER GUILD

## *Master*

CORALEE HARRIS · CINDY PATTERSON · FORBES PATTERSON
HOWARD HUNT · WILLIAM SCHMIDT · SARA JUNE GOLDSTEIN
SUSAN FELLEMAN & PETER CHAMETZKY · MIMS & RON RUST
GALLERY WEST · SUSAN LENZ & STEVE DINGMAN · KARL L. LARSEN

## *Journeyman*

TONI ELKINS · LEE SIPE · KATIE FOX · DIANE HARE · WILLIAM FICK · LOCALHAPPINESS.NET · MARJORIE RUSS TRIFON
CEILLE BAIRD WELCH · PHILIP MULLEN · KAY & JIM THIGPEN · KIRKLAND SMITH · AMY OVERSTREET · ALEX SMITH
SUSAN CARTER · BILLY GUESS · EASTER ANTIQUES · ATTICUS FINCH · CRAIG BUTTERFIELD · SHANI GILCHRIST
RANDY HANNA · BONNIE GOLDBERG · KAY REARDON · PILATES OF FOREST ACRES · NANCY MARINE
LEMUEL & GERARD ERLEY-WATSON · NANCY MILLER CHAMBERS

## *Apprentice*

ALVIN NEAL · CHARLES LESSER · RUSS & JEANNIE EIDSON · LAURIE & DUNCAN MCINTOSH · JOSEPH COUNTS
TRACIE BROOM · WILLIAM STARRETT · JANNA MCMAHAN · DICK MOONS · MARGEY BOLEN · MELINDA COTTON
ROBERT COFFEE · C. HOPE CLARK · WENTWORTH TRADD · WATERMARK HYPNOSIS · HEATHER GREEN
BOB WAITES · CATHERINE J. PETERSEN · TODD MATHIS & CULLY SALEHI · HARRIET MCMASTER · THEODORE M. TSOLOVOS
DOREEN TUOHY & LEE SNELGROVE · EILEEN BLYTH · LAUREN MICHALSKI · SHIRLEY SMITH · JEANNE FAITH D'ORLEANS
NANCY BROCK · BOHUMILA AUGUSTINOVA · ROSALIND GRAVERSON · DAN COVELL

## *Artist Peer*

ERIN BOLSHAKOV · NANCY KAUFFMAN · GIGI WOODS ADDAHOUMI · WILD BLUE SKY · ROBIN GOTTLIEB
LIZZIE GILLIAM WRENN · LADYBUG ART STUDIOS · RON HAGELL · HARRIET SHOWMAN · ANTHONY S. IMPERIAL, M.D.
TRINESSA DUBAS · GLENDA KEYES · TRACE BALLOU · JONATHAN SHARPE · DEBRA A. DANIEL · ALEXIS STRATTON
ANN HAGAN · ROBBIE PRUITT · NANCY WASHINGTON · ELENA MARTINEZ-VIDAL · DARIEN CAVANAUGH · RAIA JANE SULLIVAN HIRSCH

The Jasper Guild is a group of supporting artists and arts lovers who appreciate not only the vital Columbia, SC arts scene, but the magazine devoted to promoting it. Members of the Jasper Guild recognize the labor-of-love that is Jasper and work to do their parts to ensure that Jasper continues to publish a 100% LOCAL & artist-produced magazine. You're invited to join us in our mission to make Columbia, SC the Southeast arts capitol by becoming a member of the Jasper Guild. And the next time you open a copy of Jasper you'll be able to say,

***"I helped make this happen and here's my name to prove it!"***

ISN'T IT TIME THAT YOU JOIN THE

# JASPER GUILD

- ***APPRENTICE***

1 year delivery of Jasper Magazine to your home & **your name listed in Jasper Magazine for 1 year** - ***$50***

- ***JOURNEYMAN***

All the above + your name in print in **LARGE LETTERS** - ***$100***

- ***MASTER***

All the above + a non-transferable **Econobar PASS** for 1 year - ***$250***

- ***CENTERFOLD SPONSORSHIP***

All the above + your name/dedication **printed on the centerfold** - ***$500***

- ***PUBLISHER***

All the above + your choice of **3 books from the Muddy Ford Press catalogue** - ***$1000***

*"But I'm just a starving artist myself," you say?*

- ***ARTIST PEER***

Practicing artists in dance, theatre, music, visual arts, film, & literary arts are invited to join **The Jasper Guild** at a reduced rate & see your name in **Jasper Magazine for 1 year** - ***$25***

# HAND GRENADES & CHERUBS

## The Art of Tonya Gregg

BY KARA GUNTER

Working as a full-time painter, Tonya Gregg has steadily made a name for herself. The Darlington native studied at the University of Chicago, and the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, where she became the first student painter ever to be featured in *New American Paintings.* She's shown in England, Canada, Germany, Nicaragua, and across the United States, but we in South Carolina get to claim her as one of our accomplished own.

PHOTOS BY FORREST CLONTS

A Tonya Gregg painting marries together the reductive style of an ancient Chinese ink drawing and the object symbolism of a Renaissance allegorical painting with the bubblegum palette of pop culture. Contemplative women ensconced in an *Alice In Wonderland*-type dreamscape of clouds, flowers, babies—a medley and a melee of symbolic images—Gregg's paintings are easy to spot in a gallery line-up.

Conceptually, Gregg is inspired by issues of "race, class, sexuality, gender, consumption, and hidden aspects of female emotion and thought," but visually, we see traces of her inspiration from such varied sources as Chinese genre painting, contemporary glamour magazines, comic books, and perhaps most strongly, paintings of the Renaissance era. Where, typically, we are used to seeing the passive nude white female body lounging among opulence or fecundity, surrounded by objects that contain a myriad variety of symbolic significance, Gregg has replaced the white female body with the black one to tell a different side of the same story, albeit with it a more active feminist engagement. The story being told is one of womanhood that can cross the boundaries of race, but it's a point-of-view not often depicted in the history of Western art.

"It really comes down to perception, culture and audience," Gregg says. "In Western art, the white body has been a standard that has influenced artistic notions of what proper subject matter is for centuries. As such, the white, not the black body became identified as the worthy subject matter and aesthetic and artistic standard. The black body, whether male or female, is more vulnerable to misidentification which carries over to other areas, not just in art. As an African-American woman artist, I specifically aim to liberate the subjects in my work from any real or imagined restrictions to find new standards and more possibilities for

human connections. There are many complex threads of the human experience that are not limited to race and gender solely, and I am always eager to incorporate what those experiences are and might be. "

Gregg's paintings are refreshingly modern, honest, and without pretention. While she does acknowledge her works can be "subtle and open-ended," leaving room for interpretations not necessarily intended, the work does not feel mired in unachievable comprehension. Armed with the knowledge, for instance, that the recurrent hand grenade is a symbol of "hostile scenarios" the women in the paintings face, we then begin to view the works as situational vignettes of a sort, exploring the particular perils presented to our heroine.

Renaissance *putti* are replaced with allegorical baby girls in Gregg's paintings. "Wide-eyed cherub-like fairies with Afro hair float through the scenes seeking to capture the attention of the women and the viewer. They serve as celestial messengers, and at times, impish pests with an omniscient view of the women's situations as well as a pragmatic plan aimed at reinforcing the subject's authenticity. The cherubs' wisdom suggests that the women can both integrate and transcend the material and social trappings," explains Gregg.

The cherubs in Gregg's paintings usher the viewer through a series of scenarios, in which our heroine—perhaps, here we see the artist's influence of the comic book—faces trial and tribulation (or temptation). Our superheroes' quest is personal in nature, however, as she seeks "...to find a balance in life between sensual pleasures and intellectual and spiritual pursuits."

Gregg's paintings remain relatively pared down, despite being chocked

full of symbolism and narrative. The backgrounds are sparse, and space is relatively shallow. Brightly colored tight layers are contrasted against expansive and empty tones, hearkening back to the simplicity of Chinese genre paintings, in which the negative space plays just as an important role as the subject matter at hand. This device serves to frame the action and the intentionality of each object within the picture plane.

Intentionality is everything in a Gregg painting with all in its place and with purpose. "My canvases feature women dressed in carefully coordinated fashions lounging in alluring and iconic poses while presenting themselves in a manner that is hyper-aware of the gaze of the world that is focused upon them. They are often surrounded by objects of desire that represent their eclectic tastes and interests."

In *High Tea Acquaintance* for instance, our attention is called to the carefully placed teacup to the left of the fashionably astute woman's feet, and make-up scattered to the right. Gregg lived in the United Kingdom for six months while a resident artist in London, and came to appreciate the occasion of having "High Tea." Coming back to the US on a bit of high, she wanted to capture that romantic, dreamy feel of her experiences in England and the disconnect of returning home. One wonders if the darker, greyer cloud in the painting, which obscures the more colorful, "dreamier" cloud, might be the banality of home life impeding upon the artist's fond memories about her experiences of travel and with another culture.

Recently, Gregg found herself and one of her paintings, *Shook*, on the

receiving end of a bit of controversy. The work was part of a group showing entitled *Body and Soul: An Exhibition featuring the work of Michaela Pilar Brown, Tonya Gregg and Leo Twiggs*, when it was removed from the exhibition by organizers who felt the work was offensive. Gregg says of the incident, "... I was surprised when it was censored from a recent exhibition at the Fine Arts Center of Kershaw County. The hand grenades in front of the cherub raised concerns. The adult figure ... appears composed and fashion conscious, the grenades represent the presence of trouble and issues that are lurking around both figures. The cherub in the painting is full of wisdom and can be provocative or protective towards the adult figure which is a reversal of roles ... The painting is actually depicting one of my cherub-like girls possessing a certain power over the hand grenades which represent danger, but I understand the different interpretations."

Misinterpretations aside, it's clear Gregg's work is overall well-received, as she continues to develop her career within her home state and beyond. In April, the artist will be the artist-in-residence at the Millay Colony of the Arts in Austerlitz, New York. In the summer of this year, be sure to visit Joe's Barbershop for the annual ArtFields celebration in Lake City, SC to see one of Gregg's paintings on display; and the Columbia Museum of Art will host an exhibition entitled *Independent Spirits: Women Artists in South Carolina* in which Gregg will be included, showing October of this year through part of January 2016. To see more of Tonya Gregg's work, visit her website www.tonyagregg.com.

# Curtain Down

BY AUGUST KRICKEL

This is the 51st article I've written for the print *Jasper*. Add 86 reviews, essays, and interviews for the magazine's blog site, plus another 87 reviews, guest blogs and assorted articles from other folks which I've edited, and I need a break. The time has come to step aside as theatre editor, and tag someone else into the ring. Where am I going? Nowhere - I'll still be reviewing and covering theatre and other arts in the Midlands as I have on and off since 1987. Reflecting on all those years, however, the big unanswered question in theatre circles has always been: do we even *need* critics?

One might as well ask do we need art? Perhaps in the sense of food and water, no. Yet explorers lost in a desert might sing a song or tell a story to lift their spirits while searching for food and water, and in doing so… they create art. Somewhere a grizzled Cro-Magnon told youngsters in his tribe how one particular cave painting resembled a sabretooth most closely - and he (or she) became the archetypal critic. A teacher, yes, and a judge of the work of others, but ultimately using the same tools as today's critic, impartially assessing what works best, what doesn't, and trying to pass that knowledge along, for the overall betterment of the art. Fast forward a few millennia, when a literate society wanted to read more than just announcements that a play had been performed, and theatre reviews became a standard part of journalism. How does one become a critic? At the few large newspapers that still employ an arts staff, the critic is usually simply a journalist who has an interest in the arts. Locally, we're all actors and/or drama majors who have been around a few years, and don't mind volunteering our time to support live theatre in print.

BUT - isn't it all just opinion? Sure. Ideally a critic tries to suppress any bias, and draws on experience and training, but if I think a play is well-done and you think it's stupid, ultimately, both are just personal opinions. In all likelihood, it actually *was* well-done, but you didn't happen to enjoy it. And those aren't mutually exclusive. Just as your child's 4th grade recital or pageant might seem amateurish to me, but *you* still enjoyed it. As a critic, I always try to define who the intended target audience may be, and how well that goal is attained. People mistakenly think I enjoy everything, or am "too nice," but you just need to read more closely. I famously once wrote that ironic hipsters too cool for school or for G-rated entertainment would likely pour gasoline over their heads and look for a match rather than sit through a certain musical revue of holiday songs from the 60's, but that the performers did a great job. The cast was convinced they got a good review. And actually they did. They couldn't re-write the material, and several thousand appreciative ticket-purchasers - most over 60 - loved the show. My job was to critique how well the performance went, to warn off one demographic while attracting another, and hopefully to get a laugh from both.

As a teen I realized one film critic would praise any movie with subtitles, murky cinematography, and a murkier plot, yet pan anything with Eastwood, McQueen, Redford, or Newman; the joke was that if she hated a movie, it must be good, and that's a death sentence for a critic if no one believes you. I could easily wax eloquent over last week's incredible revival at the Township of *My Fair Lady* with Sirena Dib as Eliza, and Roy Mitchell reprising his famous role as Alfie... except Sirena is living in Washington, Roy is performing on the great stage in the sky, and the rights to *My Fair Lady* aren't even available. The danger now is that anyone can say something is good, or bad, and conceivably get thousands of views via social media. Those six dozen Tweets about an incredible opening night may come from the cast, the crew, and/or their families. For that reason a critic has to bend over backwards to build credibility. You don't have to be mean, but you do have to be honest. So read what anyone writes with a grain of salt, and if you like or agree with what they say, then perhaps they will turn you on to something enjoyable.

That's one opportunity I'm grateful to have had with *Jasper*: highlighting artists who are deserving of attention or acclaim, including fledgling groups, young performers on the verge of their most creative years, and titans of Columbia theatre who are still vital and active. I hope I've been able to make some actors and directors aware of each other's work to facilitate casting, and I think I may have caused a few performers to take their own talent more seriously. I try always to give feedback to designers and stage technicians, unsung heroes whose work too often goes unrecognized or ignored. Yet should a critic be a cheerleader? Maybe not, but who else is going to? There's serious talent in Columbia, and audiences need to know they don't have to jet up to NYC to see a good show.

Where do I see the greatest need in local theatre? Play selection. I fear season choices are not always made with marketability in mind, and I question how familiar decision-makers are with available options. Columbia has an educated potential audience base in the tens of thousands, with the means to buy tickets, yet shows often play to half-houses. That's where a critic's experience can help, and possibly answer questions like "Why is no one coming to see our shows?" Where do I see the greatest potential? Touring. A highlight of my college years was visiting troupes from cities no larger than Columbia, presenting small-cast plays by the greats. Sure, not every local actor can leave their day job to tour the state or the region, but I know a hundred toiling in temp jobs and the service industry who could be available tomorrow, and plenty of Columbia productions are worth sharing with other communities.

Live theatre comprises multiple disciplines: the script is literature, the design is visual art, and the acting is often accompanied by music and dance. My fervent wish is for all of us to have the chance to see more plays, read more plays, learn more about plays, form more opinions about plays, and then discuss plays together over a cold one more frequently. In doing so we become a more aware audience, and a more aware society. Which is why I'm looking forward to seeing you at the theatre soon.

And..... Curtain.



PHOTO BY THOMAS HAMMOND

# *Learn the Language of Flowers...*
# *...and Make Your Own Statement*

## ArtBreak: The Victorian Language of Flowers with Horticulturalist Amanda McNulty

Tuesday, May 12
10:30 a.m. - Noon

ArtBreak looks at art through a different lens. Each session features a speaker, typically from outside the art world, who shares their thoughts on art at the CMA.

This month, begin the morning at the museum with pastries and coffee sold at a pop-up café by Drip before Amanda McNulty, Clemson University horticulturist and host of ETV's award-winning "Making It Grow" program, discusses the Victorian lexicon and meanings of flowers in relation to the *Charles Courtney Curran: Seeking the Ideal* exhibition. Free with membership or admission.

## Days of Wine and Peonies

Thursday, April 16
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Explore the exhibition *Charles Courtney Curran: Seeking the Ideal* and the art of flower arranging with Columbia's own Cricket Newman.

Use your inspiration from the beautiful paintings to create an arrangement while enjoying wine and hors d'oeuvres. $60 / $50 for members.

**Columbia Museum of Art**

1515 Main Street in the heart of downtown Columbia, SC | 803-799-2810 | columbiamuseum.org

# A Feast of Balanchine and Wheeldon Dance Treats at USC Dance

BY DAVID LIGON

The University of South Carolina has the distinction of being the only school in the country that presents as high caliber of a dance performance as the "Stars of New York City" concert. This year marks the 10th year of the show, with seven principal dancers from the New York City Ballet sharing the Koger Center stage with USC students. The April 17th program will be an evening of works by George Balanchine and Christopher Wheeldon, consisting of *Mozartiana,* the pas de deux from *Rubies, Liturgy,* and, once again, *Western Symphony*—fitting ballets to celebrate a decade of collaboration, especially since these pieces were also some of the first the two groups performed together in 2005. The gala's ostensible purpose is to help raise funds for scholarships, but the performance also has the added bonus of showcasing ballets not often available to Midlands audiences, making it a truly unique event for Columbia's art season. NYC Ballet dancers this year include returning principal dancers Sara Mearns, Tyler Angle, Rebecca Krohn, Ask la Cour, and Daniel Ulbricht as well as new faces Sterling Hyltin and Andrew Veyette.

Balanchine had a great love of food and nicknamed ballets that opened a program "appetizer ballets." Opening the program for the evening will be *Mozartiana*, one of the last ballets Balanchine choreographed, danced by Mearns along with four young students from USC's Conservatory and CMFA's Carolina Ballet.

Known for putting an American twist on Russian technique, Balanchine made ballet more expansive and avant-garde. Instead of focusing on stories, he concentrated on the marriage of music and the steps he created. There is no such thing as Balanchine technique, but rather a style or aesthetic, which came from the pieces he choreographed. In many of his ballets he uniquely Americanized standard ballet positions and expanded on them. His ballets are known for making the dancers use long, expansive arms and move at super-quick tempos. For a pirouette, dancers take off from a long straight-back-leg fourth position rather than two bent legs, and, once the dancer takes off, they change their spot to the front, and over-cross their arms to make a flower shape. Balanchine was known for pushing his dancers to their limits, focusing on their strengths in his choreography. For example, in *Ballo Della Regina,* created for Merrill Ashley, he gave her hops and jumps onto point because she was such a strong and dynamic ballerina.

*Rubies* pas de deux will open the second part of the evening, danced by Hyltin and Veyette, two new faces to the Koger stage. *Rubies* is part of the full-length ballet, *Jewels*, choreographed in 1967. It is said that the piece was inspired by visiting the showroom of famed jewelers, Van Cleef and Arpels, looking for a piece of jewelry for his beloved muse, Suzanne Farrell. *Jewels* is considered to be the first plotless three-act ballet, with each act distinct in style and in the music of the composers: Fauré for *Emeralds*, Stravinsky for *Rubies*, and Tchaikovsky for *Diamonds*.

Christopher Wheeldon's *Liturgy* will follow *Rubies* and will be danced by Rebecca Krohn and Ask la Cour. *Liturgy* was choreographed in 2003 for Wheeldon's muse, Wendy Whelan, and her partner, Jock Soto. For eleven minutes, a single couple invites the audience into their ethereal world, taking them on a spiritual journey. Wheeldon created a meditative yet modern masterpiece, set to Arvo Part's hauntingly beautiful *Fratres for Violin, Strings, and Percussion*. He has said that he wanted to explore the relationship of a couple, and would just be playing around with Whelan in the studio before setting anything. You can see this in the choreography when the dancers come together for seamless shapes and lifts with a playful quality, like when the female dancer uses the male as a jungle gym.

Balanchine always considered himself an American, and wanted to pay tribute to the nation that adopted him. His fascination for American themes is present in ballets like *Who Cares, Stars and Stripes,* and *Western Symphony*, which closes out this year's program. Dancing the principal roles will be Krohn and Finlay, Hyltin and Angle, and finally, Mearns and Veyette. Balanchine infused classical ballet vocabulary with formations and gestures commonly associated with the Old West, cowboys, and dance hall girls. It is

a rousing ballet with Hershy Kay's orchestrations of classic American folk songs, including "Red River Valley," "Good Night Ladies," and "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers." The cheers usually begin erupting even before the curtain has closed.

What more can be said about Columbia native Sara Mearns that hasn't already been said? *The New York Times* dance critic Alastair Macaulay has called her "the most authoritative, romantically dramatic and glamorous ballerina in the United States." She is, of course, a hometown girl who grew up in Columbia, South Carolina. Just like how Columbia Classical Ballet brings back Brooklyn Mack for their *Lifechance* gala, Miss Mearns comes back to South Carolina each year to perform with USC and share her celebrated talent. One of the most talked about ballerinas in the world right now due to her flawless technique and mesmerizing stage presence, Mearns gives 100% when she is on stage and makes no apologies about it, although she will often joke about her exertions on social media. Mearns got where she is today not only because of her technique, but also her perseverance and hard work.

Following the April 17th performance is a gala after-party, held across the street at the brand new Darla Moore School of Business in the Sonoco Pavilion. That the performance and gala raise money for USC dance scholarships is reason enough to support it -- that the evening also provides an opportunity to see some of the most talented dancers in the world makes it a can't-miss event.

PHOTO BY JASON AYERS // COLUMBIA NATIVE AND NEW YORK CITY BALLET PRINCIPAL DANCER SARA MEARNS

# Memoria – Violenta at The Friday Cottage

BY HALEY SPRANKLE

Confused. Hurt. Alone.

These three words are a small sampling of the many emotions and reactions faced by victims of violence today.

Seventy-seven percent of students in public schools are verbally bullied daily. Approximately one in four women will experience some form of domestic violence at some point in her life. One in six women and one in 33 men will experience attempted or completed rape. About 15 percent of sexual assault victims are 12 years old or younger. Early studies from the 1980s show how violence in the media effects human behaviors. L. Rowell Huesmann and Leonard Eron observed children from as young as eight-years-old and found that those who watched the most violent television were not only more likely to express aggression in school, but were also more likely to grow up and face criminal charges. By constantly praising violent behavior in pop culture, through movies such as *American Sniper* and *50 Shades of Grey*, it can be argued that the media belittles and desensitizes society to violence and abusive behavior, leading to a lack of repercussions for offenders, as well as victim blaming in real-world scenarios. In their collaborative essay "Language, gender and 'reality': Violence against women," Patricia Easteal, Lorana Bartels, and Sally Bradford write, "There seems to be a tendency, too, by some police and magistrates, in using the civil domestic violence legislation, to shift the blame to the victim and/or infer that there was mutuality in the abuse. By way of example, some police ask a victim witness questions like: 'What did you do to provoke this?"

So how does one address these issues in the media publicly and raise awareness for the victims?

Michaela Pilar Brown, Diana Farfan, and Eliana Perez present their solution in their new exhibition, "Memoria – Violenta." This uncensored tribute and exploration of the victims of abuse is hosted and curated by Garcia Lemos, and premiers Thursday, March 26 at Friday Cottage Art Space at Henderson and Blanding Streets in Columbia.

"She was asking for it," has often been a common cry amongst the perpetrators of sexual assault and harassment, too. If a woman is dressed in a certain way or intoxicated and experiences some type of sexual trauma, she is more likely to be held accountable for what happened to her. In a case in Southern Australia, Mathew Sloan escaped rape charges while the judge held the victim accountable for decisions she may or may not have made while intoxicated. Judge Smith J said, "...I would put this offence at the lower end of the scale because the (sex act) began as a consensual one before the victim passed out and became incapable of consenting. There is an inference that she might have consented (to more sex) had she been awake. The issue I have to resolve is whether I should even impose a suspended sentence here, that's my problem."

The exhibition will address issues such as rape, abuse, and bullying through the eyes of each artist. "I choose to make work that deals with issues of social justice. I think an artist's job is to make work, to fulfill their own curiosity without obligation," Brown explains.

"The curatorial concept for the show "Memoria - Violenta" came to me as a result of a collaboration with the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the University of South Carolina, when the Spanish and Portuguese Program announced its 2015 Conference on Transatlantic Studies: Intersections of Memory and Violence in the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World, which will take place during March 26, 27 & 28 at the university," Garcia Lemos says.

Brown plans to "specifically address the history of violence against black women that began with the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the reverberations that continue," she says. "Media has been complicit in the continuation of damaging images of black women directly effecting their treatment and expectations of justice today. This work will speak to the ongoing climate of violence that runs seamlessly under the surface and makes violence against women of color occur unchecked. It will include a consideration of the sexual violence that began with the rape of enslaved black women and how that unmitigated violence informs attitudes about black women today."

While depicting these issues in direct and metaphorical ways through different mediums of art may seem new to some, according to Brown, violence and its aftermath is nothing new.

"Violence is as old as humans."

DRAWING #1 FROM THE SERIES "HUNTED" BY ELIANA PÉREZ

Jasper Sits Down with

# INDIE GRITS

In the past twenty years, the film festival has increasingly served as the primary screening outlet for the vast majority of the films created by independent filmmakers. Each festival has its own mission, focus, and theme. Some, like Sundance and South by Southwest, have become integral to our pop culture dialogue. Other, lesser known festivals focus passionately on a specific theme. The struggle to remain relevant and viable, though, is shared by all.

Barreling full force into its ninth year, Columbia's Indie Grits Film Festival has no interest in remaining stagnant; instead, festival leaders are constantly challenging our sense of what a film festival is while staying true to their fiercely independent and DIY roots. And their success is evident—the festival has won accolades and rave reviews in recent years, including being named one of the 20 top film festivals in the world by *Moviemaker Magazine* and being awarded a prestigious Our Town NEA grant. Each year has seen dramatic increases in funding, submissions, events, and attendance, and Indie Grits has grown into one of the most popular annual events in Columbia.

To get a sense of where the festival is and how it sees itself going forward, Jasper's Wade Sellers and Kyle Petersen sat down with the Indie Grits co-directors Andy Smith and Seth Gadsden and marketing director Kristin Morris to gather their thoughts about organizing, planning, and curating their particular film festival in today's broader media arts landscape.

**Jasper: Every city seems to have a film festival and this is Indie Grits' 9th year. What does it take, in today's indie climate, for a film festival to survive, grow, and establish a name for itself as Indie Grits has?**

PHOTOS BY JONATHAN SHARPE // FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: ANDY SMITH, KRISTIN MORRIS, WADE SELLERS, SETH GADSDEN, KYLE PETERSEN

**Smith:** I knew with the budget size we had that we weren't going to be Sundance or Tribeca or Toronto or anything thing like that. So instead I thought back to what I would be most interested in personally, in a very selfish way, and I've always been up front about that. When I curate for the Nick I'm not always curating to my taste, but when I curate Indie Grits I do curate to my taste. So I wanted to create something that wasn't like other festivals.

We tried to come up with a unique mission that we thought we could be successful at, and that was focusing on low-budget, DIY films from the southeast. It [the concept] was definable, it seemed graspable, and it also felt like something that needed attention.

There are a lot of talented filmmakers in the area who don't make the kinds of films we show at Indie Grits, and I know that's sort of a downside to the festival. But keeping true to that mission, keeping true to that focus has helped us to grow and to prosper.

**Gadsden:** Andy's exactly right that it's the inherent mission itself that makes us relevant. If you look at other film festivals in cities like ours, they are niche festivals and that's what makes them so popular, so relevant. Early on when you make a film and it doesn't get in anywhere sometimes that can be crushing, it can be debilitating. But because we are a film festival that focuses on the Southeast and focuses on DIY stuff, we will accept films that other festivals don't.

**Smith:** And we're still nimble within that mission. A number of years ago we decided to broaden the mission by doing a bigger investment in music and food and puppetry, and this year in [visual] art, in the first really substantial way. And I think that's what has allowed us to explore Southern culture and those interesting aspects of it…

**Morris:** …and maintain accessibility. We have so many returning filmmakers and that, I think, keeps it relevant, because they are our networks and they are our ambassadors whenever they go back to wherever they are from.

**Jasper: Do you think the digital age changes how people engage with the festival now? Does the DIY style make it much easier for people to start filming?**

**Smith:** I hope so. One of things that I've always said, and it goes back to sort of punk rock roots, right, is the difference between going to see a punk band play and going to see U2 play, is when you see that punk band play you think "Oh I could do that" and hopefully you pick up a guitar and you start your own band and you start writing music. Hopefully Indie Grits films don't seem out of reach. Hopefully they're totally fascinating and engaging, but not out of reach.

**Gadsden:** Even the big features we decide to bring in, that are really exciting, have that in them. You watch them and you feel like "oh, that's attainable- that makes me want to go make a film."

**Jasper: Does Indie Grits have a ceiling? The stature of the festival has grown along with its ticket. What kind of balance do you want to draw between community-centered and being one of the top film festivals in the US?**

**Morris:** One of the audiences we really focused on last year was the students… and we are definitely focusing on them again, this year, too. Especially with the new student housing developments opening a block from the theater. And then there's a lot of free stuff

to go to as well—all of the art installations, and there's a bunch of free parties.

**Smith:** A couple years ago… we sort of dipped our toe in some higher ticket prices and, ultimately, I personally got really uncomfortable with that. I felt like it was against the nature of the festival and ever since we've been redoubling our efforts towards democratizing things as much as possible.

**Morris:** This year the festival passes are down to $100 and $75 for members and there are even more events than last year. We have pushed all of our events, and then some, into five days. So what we would love for people to do is take Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday off work and spend the weekend in Columbia.

**Jasper: As Indie Grits grows, what responsibility does it have to the local indie filmmaking community?**

**Gadsden:** It's a huge responsibility that our organization, not just Indie Grits, but the Nickelodeon, has decided in the past year or two to really pick that mantle up. We're launching a filmmaker residency that's going to be a year-long residency that comes with funding and a place to stay with the expectation with a film that will premiere at next year's Indie Grits. And they [the filmmaker] could come from within the state, they could come from out of the state, but part of that funding stipulates that they have to use filmmakers and crew from the local area and around the state. So we hope to nurture that.

**Morris:** And it's been really, really fun doing our marketing for our developing projects and all of our series and working with local filmmakers and creating original content that plays in our trailer or content, so you'll see *Grand Budapest Hotel* and then a trailer for [Columbia filmmaker] O.K. Keyes.

**Smith:** What I would say to sort of echo this is that Indie Grits has a very specific mission, and a specific aesthetic, and that doesn't fit the work of a lot of local filmmakers. I don't think we should compromise that. I think it's, again, time for us to flex our curatorial muscles a little bit. I do very much see it as the responsibility of the Nickelodeon Theater to be responsive to the local filmmaker community. All of these things that we're talking about are ways of doing that.

**Jasper: Can I get you to elaborate more on what aesthetic you're looking for?**

**Smith:** I have always focused back on the Grits part of the name, and saying that we have a bit of a gritty aesthetic. And whether that's in a literal sense of a sort of unpolished, non-Hollywood, type of filmmaking, but also gritty in terms of subject matter. So, if you're going to make a traditional boy-meets-girl narrative, you can do that really well and that's great if it's what you're passionate about but we're probably not the right festival for you. We're looking for sort of edgier, quirkier elements of southern culture. We're looking for voices that aren't always typically heard from, when one thinks of Southern culture.

**Morris:** I also would argue that we're interested in showing more progressive Southern culture because that's what the Nickelodeon embodies as well. When we're screening Indie Grits films there are a few items that, if there are depictions of violence towards women, racial humor, or derogatory depictions of Southern people, if films include those, we're not going to include them in the festival.

**Jasper: Describe the theme of this year's festival, Future Perfect, and how it will guide the festival.**

**Smith:** With admitted naiveté and utopian drive, we are trying to explore how art and technology will inform the Southern city of the future. So that's the task that we've given these visiting artists to explore through their artwork. Not just the artists, we're wrapping in some of the work the Nickelodeon is already doing in terms of assisting in the redevelopment of Columbia's downtown and trying to create a more vibrant community here.

**Jasper: One of the things the theme seems to be doing is addressing what I want to call the additive model of festivals— adding food, music, film, visual art, tech, or whatever. This sort of became a problem or a criticism of South by Southwest—that people were only there for one thing, not for the festival as a whole.**

**Smith:** Artistically I think the line between film, visual art, gaming, and programming is becoming more and more blurred. And one of the conversations we've had over the years is not wanting to miss out on that, right? Making sure our festival has a way of presenting that kind of work that, in my opinion, is probably the future of media arts.

**Morris:** This year in particular the opening night party is something that is almost a mini-Indie Grits. We have aspects of everything with the four pillars of the festival—film, music, art, and tech. You're going to be able to experience all of that in the opening night of the festival on April 15th. People may come for only one reason, but hopefully we're programming events that are interesting and compelling enough that they will want to come to more.

**Jasper: When you look back after the festival this year, what do you hope you have accomplished?**

**Smith:** I hope we continue to grow our audience, and I hope people see our city in a different way. But I say that every year, and I don't mean to make it sound like it's unrealistic. But I hope it is good enough that people want to come back next year, and that there's something new and totally unexpected.

**Gadsden:** I'm hoping that I stand around at any given point in the festival and I see artists, filmmakers, musicians, gamers, Nickelodeon patrons, Columbia people, and I'm just like 'wow, I'm completely absorbed by endorphins and dopamine because of all the different people you see in one place.'

**Morris:** I know one of the things that I want to feel after the festival is that condensing it to five days really encouraged people to take a break and really focus on Indie Grits instead of it being something you do after work and a couple of weekends in the middle of April, which is something which a few years ago before I was working with the organization is how I did it. But now I want it to be unavoidable, that from Wednesday to Saturday I'm taking off work and doing Indie Grits.


# WATCH THIS SPACE

The mural space at the corner of Main and Taylor is a joint project of Indie Grits, Tapp's Arts Center, and One Columbia for Arts and History. Starting in April 2015 and every year after, a new artist will paint a new mural within the theme of Indie Grits. The first iteration was designed and painted by artist Seth Gadsden and is associated in theme with the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the burning of Columbia.

PHOTO BY JONATHAN SHARPE

# Molly Ledford Leads Lunch Money, a "Kindie" Rock Band That Demands to be Taken Seriously

By Kyle Petersen

**Molly Ledford has a bone to pick with you.**

Yeah, you. The guy who just smirked at the idea of listening to her band, Lunch Money, because they play for kids.

"That's one of the things that bothers me a lot," she says. "I'm not in any way trying to say like, 'Maurice Sendak and I,' but I know from reading about him that he had a lot of frustration with people who didn't see he was trying to do something real and artistic."

"Of course there's a lot of horrible music being made for children, but there's a lot of horrible music being made for adults," she continues, "and I really don't take myself that seriously, but I take what I do very seriously and it makes me sad that I give a CD to a peer and they're like, 'uh, cool, I think my neighbor has a nephew or something' and they won't even open it to listen to it! They think there's some mental security gate that comes clattering down between what I'm doing and anybody who doesn't get it."

While that may read a little whiney, Ledford is far from it. She's an ebullient, infectious presence in person, and it is clear that she is a natural fit for the kind of energetic music and engaging performances that the kind of music she makes requires. Funnily enough, though, she started out on the scene

PHOTOS BY THOMAS HAMMOND

We were playing for like 400 and so
up and down or whatever. It gets a lit
were the best people of all to have
uninhibited, open, ready for whatever

in the early 1990s playing fairly subdued music, first as part of the wistful folk-pop act Atchafalaya and then later fronting The Verna Cannon, a group which grew out of a collaboration with violinist (and current *Free Times* editor) Dan Cook.

Both groups had their share of local success—Atchafalaya scored a spot on the infamous 1992 Please No Profanity compilation which also featured seminal Columbia acts like Lay Quiet Awhile, In/Humanity, Blightobody, and Hootie & the Blowfish, while Verna Cannon made critically revered slowcore that bridged the gap between chamber music and indie rock—but Ledford really came into her own with Lunch Money. Since starting the band in 2004, Ledford and her bandmates Jay Barry and JP Stephens have been creating quality folk- and pop-tinged indie rock songs that are as smart, quirky, and surprising as you're favorite K Records artist, but with lyrics that children as well as adults can fall in love with. The group has four full-lengths to their credit, each of which stretches in tone from gritty pop-punk rave-ups to lushly orchestrated and tenderly delivered folk-pop ballads. Throughout, Ledford's warm, enveloping vocals and inviting lyricism remain remarkably consistent, to the point where each record feels like you're getting to hang out with her for the day.

"Most articles written about us—and there are people like Lunch Money throughout the country—most of them are pitched as 'hey everybody, this makes you not want to commit hari kari while you're listening to it,'" Ledford points out with bemused chagrin. "It's all about how it doesn't suck. It's all about how you don't want to die. I think people just hate the idea that you're keeping a particular audience in mind, but I don't think that's how I really go about it."

To be fair, Ledford has definitely gotten some love for her excellent work—NPR's All Things Considered praised their 2009 LP *Dizzy*, and the band has played prestigious

omething kids, and they're all hopping
ttle borderline dangerous, even! They
a punk rock moment with. The most
er type of people. **No qualms, just fun!"**

festivals like Austin City Limits and Lollapalooza—but there's always an underlying sense of condescension that doesn't sit well with her.

"We have better arrangements than I think Verna Cannon ever did," she says of the band's catalog. "We're working on our craft, we've had more practice, we've recorded more leisurely and we bring in more people [to record]."

She also takes more joy in this music than she ever did in those earlier "adult" groups. "It was always the most painfully awkward thing [playing in those bands]," she confesses. "I never felt, like, cool in any kind of way. It was just kind of miserable. There was a lot I loved about it, but there was a lot I was confused about."

Lunch Money started informally when Joelle Ryan-Cook at the Columbia Museum of Art asked Ledford to play some songs for their summer arts program. "So I started writing some songs about painting, then I started of thinking of some things to write about," she recalls. "I was having a lot of fun doing that and it made me see the songs that exist everywhere. I've never stopped thinking about my childhood. I'm constantly thinking about all of the things that played a part of making me who I am right now. There's so much that's interesting about the world that's not confined to the couple of subjects that people associate with rock and roll."

This quickly rolled into Lunch Money, and Ledford found that she was far more comfortable and excited to be playing for kids.

"Now things can get pretty wild when we play," she says. "We just played at this elementary school and we had permission to let the kids get up and dance, and every kid in the entire elementary school was in front of us. We were playing for like 400 and something kids, and they're all hopping up and down or whatever. It gets a little borderline dangerous, even! They were the best people of all to have a punk rock moment with. The most uninhibited, open, ready for whatever type of people. No qualms, just fun!"

And while it's been awhile since we last got a record from Lunch Money—their fourth LP *Spicy Kid* was released in the summer of 2012—it's still been difficult to keep up with Ledford. She has a new duo record coming out with Pennsylvania singer/songwriter Billy Kelly that tackles the theme of trees with her characteristic sense of thoughtfulness and wonder, and she also wrote songs and scores for two Belle et Bete puppet productions, *Planet Hopping* in 2013 and *Frog Princess*, currently playing through May 2015 at the Columbia Marionette Theater.

If that wasn't enough, Ledford has also been integral to the success of Girls Rock Columbia, a weeklong summer camp to empower girls 8-to-17 through music education. Lately, she's been lending her living room to shoot short tutorial videos for this summer's students as well as their future instructors, who are often coming in without any musical training themselves.

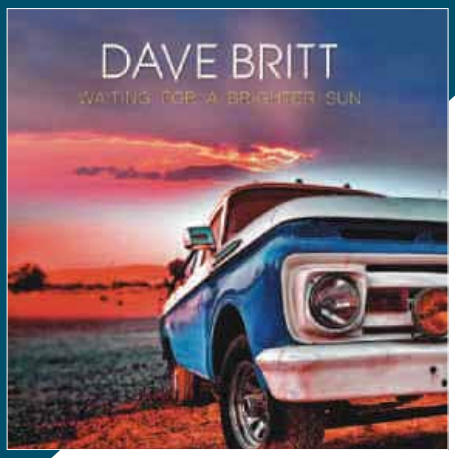
"And we've got the set of *Planet Hopping* in there [too]," she adds. "My kids are 11 and 8 and this is what they're used to, stepping over guitar cases and whatever. I look around and think, this is alright. This is cool. Let's keep it like this. I'd rather it look like a place where fun things are happening than for it to look perfectly organized and ready for company."

With all of this going on, though, Ledford is also itching to get back into the game of "adult" rock too.

"I like the idea of coming back and doing something for adults that isn't attempting to be 'young,' that's right where I'm at right now," she says. "Something that will resonate with my follower Gen Xers."

If she writes about middle age with even a fraction of the insight as she does about childhood, it will be well-worth listening to.

# Local Record REVIEWS



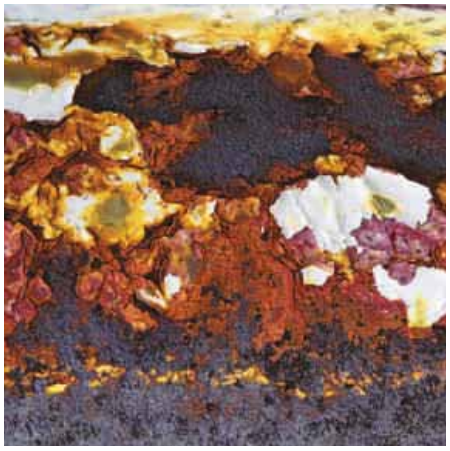

## DAVE BRITT

### WAITING FOR A BRIGHTER SUN

Dave Britt, a scene veteran who has a long history of writing and performing his own tunes as well as serving as a talented keyboard/guitarist sideman, is these days more prominent as a promoter and organizer of various concerts around town, including annual mainstays like the Rosewood Crawfish and River Rocks festivals.

Still, *Waiting for a Brighter Sun* is a welcome return for Britt as a singer/songwriter and frontman. He's always had a knack for insistent, melodic pop-rock with touches of root-rock sturdiness and U2-style alt-rock uplift, and working for the first time in his own studio gives him a chance to tweak the production and polish of these arrangements into something that goes down easy and affably. That's not to say there's not ambition and experimentation here—opener "Open My Shoulder" mixes a metronomic reggae-rhythm with some funky, Daft Punk-style vocoders and horn-like synth work, something which also pops up on the driving "Nothing Better." There's also the swirling guitar magnetism of "10,000 Miles Away" and "Don't Wake Me," both of which feature tremolo guitar solos that take a page out of former Rival Brothers lead guitarist Philippe Herndon's playbook. And throughout, Britt tries out various vocal filters, reverb, and other kinds of knob twisting that lend an air of weightlessness to the proceedings.

Ultimately, though, the real appeal here is that Britt can write the hell out of a big, memorable chorus, and knows how to play to that strength, almost to a fault. The six songs here demonstrate that well, with nary a one among them that doesn't feel like you've heard it before. ***-KP***



## WATSON VILLAGE

### WATSON VILLAGE EP

Although this group is relatively new to the Columbia scene, their use of nimble djembe picking quickly sets them apart sonically, de-

spite the fact that they share a strong sonic resemblance to The White Stripes in both their quieter and more raucous moments. Frontman Tyler Watson's vocals, while not as high-pitched and unhinged as Mr. White's, do warble with the same kind of energetic and occasionally shaky abandon, and he's got the cryptic, by-turns casually biting and emotionally earnest lyricism to match. When he's at his best though, like on the opening meditation on mortality, "Put That On Everything," his emotionally cathartic songwriting is the band's defining asset.

That's not to say that his bandmates are unimportant—they fill out these four tunes nicely, imbuing the rockers with an assured heft and the kind of comfortable low-end that was missing from the Stripes and fleshing out the spare acoustic numbers with just the right touches. They shine brightest when they hit upon the simple pleasure of crashing down together on a good guitar riff or finding the blunt beauty of a garage rock backbeat. Ultimately, though, it's the quality of the songs that's going to define this promising quartet. ***-KP***


## PRETTIER THAN MATT

SELF-TITLED

Prettier Than Matt tends to play more marathon cover band bar gigs than their originals in quiet listening rooms, but that doesn't mean the duo isn't worth your time. Their stripped down 2013 LP *Play Pretty*, largely performed on just acoustic guitar and ukulele, showcased their warm, cozy sound and Jessica Skinner's impossibly pretty vo-

cals. But while they excelled at tunes with a low-key twang, blending the angelic bluegrass-pop of Alison Krauss with the soulful twang of Tift Merritt, some traces of their work in the hard rock band Deleveled and a hesitant glint of their cover band background still remained.

That hesitancy is gone from this, their self-titled EP, which sees the duo showcasing a condensed set of five songs that are also among their best. The centerpiece, "Jim & Pim," is their ode to the television show The Office's great love story, utilizing a plaintive call-and-response structure that captures the shy nervous of the character's romance while gentle strums and an elegantly fragile piano part accents the melody. Elsewhere, Skinner's powerful blues-soul delivery gets a workout on "Play Dead," a rollicking full band effort that charts out new territory for the group, and also delivers a memorable, jaunty advice tune on the closing "Parental Advisory." Not to be outdone, Skinner's partner Jeff Pitts takes a fine solo turn on "I Spilled My Drink," an Avett Brothers-style country ballad that captures a genuine pathos offset by a startlingly pretty accordion solo in the middle eight.

Here's hoping that the group builds upon this impressive outing with a full-length that makes good on the level of detail and craft they delivered here. ***–KP***


## MOLLY LEDFORD & BILL KELLY

### TREES

For those paying attention, Molly Ledford's band Lunch Money has already proven how richly rewarding and engaging "kindie"


## Catch Spring Fever at HC!

**Moonlight Cemetery & Secrets from the Grave Tours**
April 9, May 14, June 11

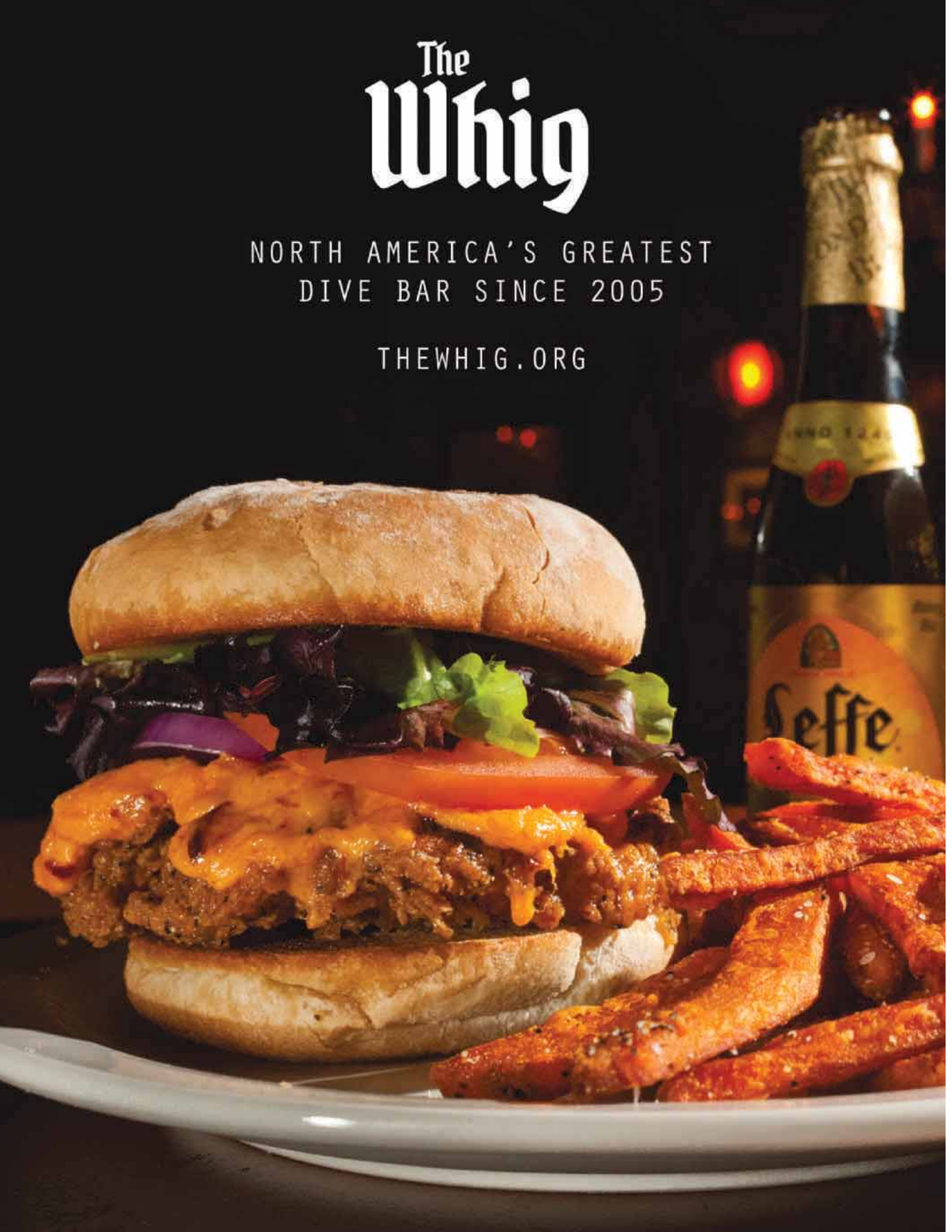
**Happy Hour History Tours | Five Points**
Fridays, April 17 – May 8

**2015 Gardening Symposium | Heirloom Plants in Southern Landscapes**
April 23 and 24

Visit **historiccolumbia.org** for details and the full list of spring events!

HISTORIC COLUMBIA

1616 Blanding Street, Columbia, SC 29201
Tues – Sat: 10 am – 4 pm  Sun: 1 pm – 5 pm
historiccolumbia.org | 803.252.1770


The Whig
NORTH AMERICA'S GREATEST
DIVE BAR SINCE 2005
THEWHIG.ORG
Leffe

music can be for people of all ages. On this LP, a collaboration with Bill Kelly, another singer/songwriter making kids' music with the same kind of endearing oddball humor, pop smarts, and DIY passion as Ledford, the two musicians prove able foils for each other as they tackle the theme of trees over the course of these 14 tunes. While their distinct personalities do come out—Kelly can be a bit goofier and more education-oriented, while Ledford leans a bit more towards the pensive indie-folk mode than she does in Lunch Money—the two did a fabulous job arranging these tunes and dovetailing each other, and great songs abound. Kelly's rockabilly delivery wins you over on "(It's Just a Dumb Ole) Stick" and "Coniferous Tree," and the martial lock-time arrangement on "The National Tree of England" is hilarious, while Ledford delivers a trio of plaintive odes to trees ("Acorns," "Angel Oak," and "Two Trees, Old Friends") that resonate emotionally with children and adults alike. The best tunes here, though, are when the two are truly joining forces, like on the jolting punk rock anthem "To the Woods" and the swerving organ-driven rocker "The Dichotomous Key." At their best here, these two are writing songs a hell of a lot better than your average "adult band" dotting club dates around town. ***- KP***

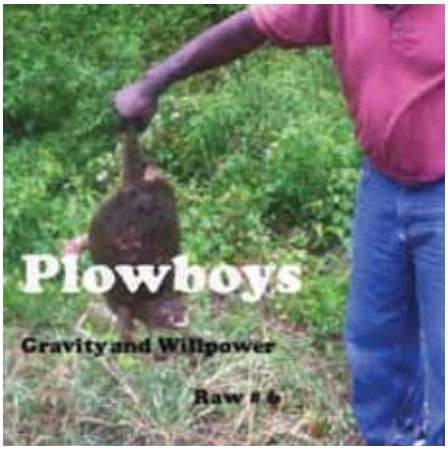
## BLOCKD MUSIC

### LATE NIGHT EP

Trap music technically has its roots in 1990s Southern hip-hop, but the recent fusing of trap and EDM has led to a massive second wave of popularity for this aggressive production style that utilizes a variety of synthesizers and 808 sub-bass kick drums and bass parts along with other elements to produce a dark, gritty beat that tends towards fast beats and double- and triple-time parts. If that didn't make any sense, just imagine the inescapable party anthem "Turn Down for What" and you're pretty much there.

Blockd Music's Late Night EP, which is being released on the Moas Collective label, tends a bit toward the traditional trappings of trap, mixing bleak brass parts and squalling synths to create the requisite atmosphere, and his fundamentals are quite good—"Pulpit" grows and evolves gradually as guest MC Wuzabi locks in comfortably over the beat, while "Slaps" uses similar tools as well as deft dynamics and sharp arrangement shifts with choice samples to carry the song.

Although this set is unlikely to win new converts to this specialized subgenre, the high skill level operating here marks this young producer as one to keep your eye on in the increasingly fast-moving game of regional electronic and hip-hop music. ***–KP***




## TOM HALL & THE PLOWBOYS

### GRAVITY & WILLPOWER

On any given night, Tom Hall & the Plowboys are the best band in Columbia. Sometimes, though, they are one of the worst. And, far more often than you might think possible, they are both at the same time.

Hall is nobody's idea of a great singer, but force of personality can make up for any number of sins. He bursts through these songs with wild, half-cocked abandon, brazenly wailing these tunes in the rough and rugged style in the only way he knows how.

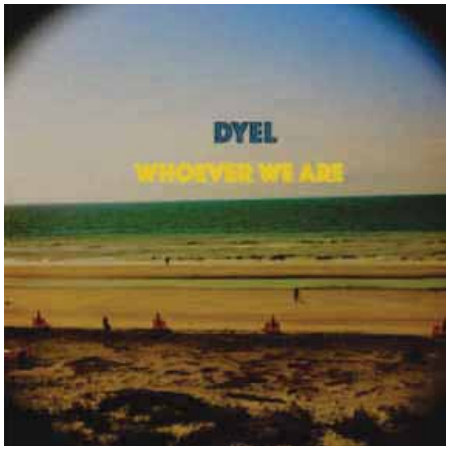
At-times you almost wish he would settle in and not swing for the fences vocally so often. But at those moments you've lost sight of the whole point anyhow.

It's hard to deny that Hall comes across as soaked deeply in many things, not the least of which are the deep wells of blues, zydeco, and Celtic folk that provide the bedrock of the Plowboys sound, along with a heavy dose of Blue Mountain-style roots-rock that he frequently pays homage to. Songs like the stately rolling opener "Drunken Angel" and the ribald "Any Old Time" feel like they might have always existed in folk canon and prove once again that Hall is a more serious—and talented—songwriter than the offhanded nature of Plowboys live performances might suggest.

All 14 of these tracks were reportedly knocked in four hours with zero rehearsal beforehand, something which manages to showcase the pick-up spirit of many of the band's prior work. Hall has always been surrounded by talented players who can roll with his punches, and the current group has been plowing with him for a long time. The band has a whole host of lead players, with fiddler Phil Hurd, guitarist Dave Michelson, trumpeter Bert Cutts, and banjo player Chris Lawther often balling up in a cartoon tornado of notes and mayhem as much as they take turns on 16-bar solos. Adding to the melee this time around is Can't Kids leader Adam Cullum, who sat in on the session on accordion and piano, and some of his parts steal the show on a few of these tunes. The longtime rhythm section of bassist Bill Stephens and drummer Andrew Hoose is once again tasked with keeping the ramshackle boat afloat, a task with which they are well-versed in.

It is, as the Deadheads say, a long, strange trip—one that often overstays its welcome as these tunes drag on and Hall's full-throated delivery starts to grate. Still, it has its moments, some of them great, all of them better than they have any right to be. Sounds pretty rock and roll to me. ***-KP***

MORE REVIEWS




# DYEL

## WHOEVER WE ARE

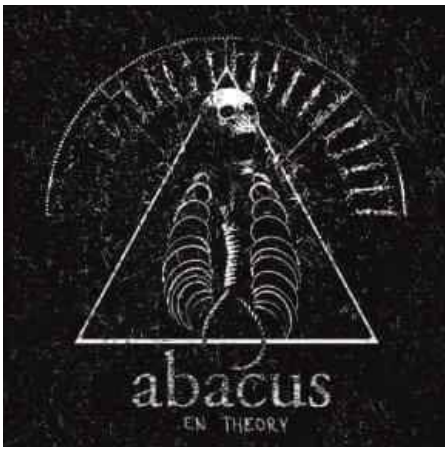
Formed in late 2013 when guitarist and chief songwriter Ryan Alexander left The Lion in Winter, DYEL came out swinging in their first full year releasing two excellent EPs. The latest *Whoever We Are* features five indie rock songs that explore Alexander's personal relationships and his coming of age in his twenties.

Opening the album is a trio of songs titled "Friends," "Family," and "Lovers." "Friends" is a true dynamic rocker, as palm muted guitar chugs ever louder with drums following the ascent, the song then spins a guitar riff into a full band groove that pounds on and off through the song. Alexander shows off three different vocal styles in this song alone, from the delicate falsetto in the verses to his standard register in the chorus before letting a full-on scream out when the song hits the breaks. The formula sounds like something out of Foo Fighters playbook, but DYEL does it their own way, without sounding too derivative. "Family" follows the opener and is easily the most pop-sounding song on the EP, with bouncing guitars and happy "da da da" vocals which work in stark contrast to the seriousness of the vocals. "Apart from her daddy apart from me/Apart from daddy is this what you call family" Alexander confesses, later disguising the "dadadas" and the "bababas" as the stuttering beginnings of Daddy and Baby.

Throughout the album Alexander asks questions and although the story is never clear or is left up to interpretation, he's clearly grappling with his relationships with lovers, offspring, and how to deal with adulthood. The final two tracks up the ante with vividly descriptive lyrics even as the tunes themselves become instrumentally more ambient with haunting intros on keys and piano. DYEL end the album begging for explanations and assurances, driving home the emotional drama that binds these songs together.

As a whole, *Whoever We Are* firmly establishes DYEL in the South Carolina indie rock community as it drums up anticipation for a full-length album that has the potential to further push the band beyond state borders.

***– David Stringer***




# ABACUS

## EN THEORY

As a live act, local four-piece Abacus has a well-earned reputation for unbridled intensity and precise execution. Seeing the band perform is like seeing some long-caged jungle cat released into the wild after years of captivity; Alex Strickland (vocals), Kevin Scruggs (bass), Josh Bumgarner (guitar), and Paul Huff (drums) are consummate pros at the transfer of energy between audience and performer that is so crucial to the catharsis that heavy metal promises. This isn't an easy thing to capture on tape, but with Kylesa's Phillip Cope at the engineering helm, Abacus has released *En Theory*, an explosive howl of manic punk rock energy and heavy metal tornado chasing.

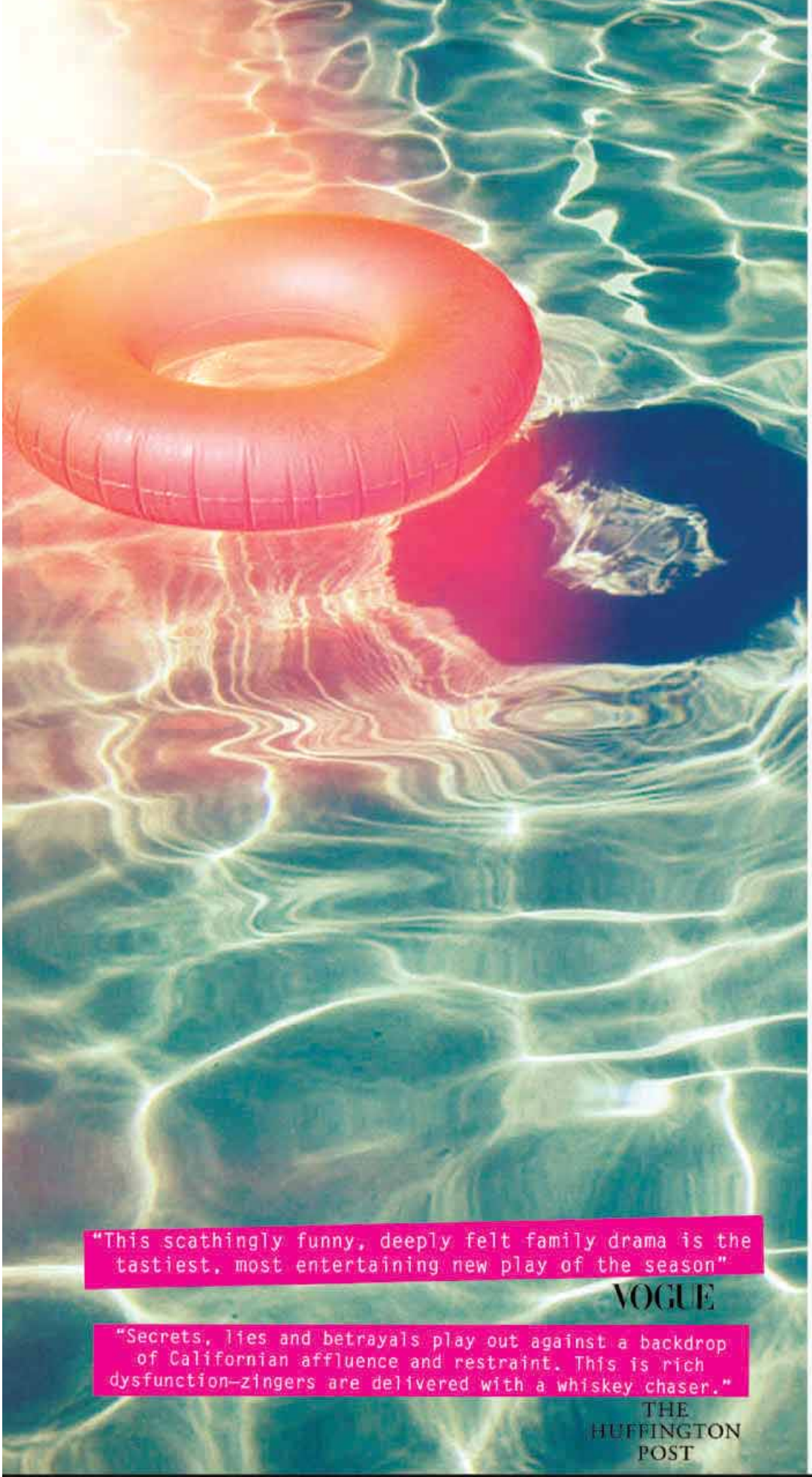
Aside from moments of ominous tension building (the aptly named intro track "Culling Strength") and creeping psychadelia ("A Figment"), *En Theory* is relentless in its hardcore assault. Listening to it in its entirety is like agreeing to a half-hour game of bloody knuckles with someone who can't feel pain. The ten tracks here rarely give in to the doom-metal plod; instead, the overall sensation is that of a coked-up banshee with a penchant for down-tuning and nowhere else to be. It sounds at times like Bumgarner's guitar and Strickland's yowl are one piercing instrument, while Huff and Scruggs are the best kind of rhythm section—proficient, tightly tuned in to one another, and content to hold down the fort while the other guys get weird. With an average song length of 2 ½ minutes and hardly a whiff of masturbatory musical excess, this is a record that thinks like metal but acts like punk. Listening to it alone, your eyes start wandering the room, searching for something you could afford to destroy.

In typical hardcore fashion, the lyrics border on indecipherable, so for a listener who doesn't quite speak that language or feel like reading along, it can cloud the message of a given song. But to call that a deficiency is more a misunderstanding of the style than a fault of the band. Even allowing that, though, it doesn't take much away from the product as a whole, which is a rock record of enormous accomplishment from a band that has taken a strong foothold in Columbia's music community and more than delivered on its early promise. ***–Michael Spawn***

## WANT TO SNAG A REVIEW? SEND US YOUR RECORD.

KPETERSEN@JASPERCOLUMBIA.COM

[Not all submissions will be considered. Selection for review is determined by quality, space, and relation to the Columbia area.]



"This scathingly funny, deeply felt family drama is the tastiest, most entertaining new play of the season"
VOGUE

"Secrets, lies and betrayals play out against a backdrop of Californian affluence and restraint. This is rich dysfunction—zingers are delivered with a whiskey chaser."
THE HUFFINGTON POST

TRUSTUS THEATRE

presents

# OTHER DESERT CITIES

a play by
JON ROBIN BAITZ

directed by
JIM THIGPEN

## MAY 1-16
2015

TICKETS:
WWW.TRUSTUS.ORG

sponsored by
JCC You belong here.

south carolina arts commission · COLUMBIA SC FAMOUSLY HOT

BOX OFFICE/INFO:
(803) 254-9732

Celebrating 30

520 LADY ST.
(IN THE VISTA)

# Ode to the Oboe

BY ABBY DAVIS

Appearing in its modern form in mid-17th century France, the oboe has since become an integral part of the orchestra. While the oboe may not be the most ubiquitous instrument around, it could arguably be considered the most interesting. Rebecca Nagel, principal oboist with the South Carolina Philharmonic, helps explain why.

One of the things that make oboes and oboists exceedingly unique is the fact that oboists have to craft their own reeds for their instruments. Nagel explains, "Professional oboists make their own reeds because individual preferences and local conditions vary. Some preferences include how open or closed the reed is, how much resistance a reed has, and the exact pitch level of the reed. Reeds are highly influenced by variations in humidity and temperature. Think about what happens to your screen door on a humid summer day. The oboe reed, which is much smaller (only about ½ inch wide), expands and contracts in a similar fashion. Most oboe players spend time every day on their reeds. I generally start with three to five reeds per week. They don't all turn out to be usable. Reeds are made from cane from the plant Arundo donax (giant reed). It looks like bamboo but is from a different family of plants. Traditionally, Southern France has been the source for cane. The same cane is used by bassoon, clarinet, and saxophone players, depending on the diameter of the cane. The cane is processed to the right thickness and length, and then the obo-

PHOTOS BY THOMAS HAMMOND

ist shapes the cane, ties it to a metal shape that connects the reed to the oboe, and then scrapes the reed. We need specialized knives and other tools for the process."

"The oboe is one of the most expressive and one of the most challenging instruments, Nagel continues. "The constantly changing reeds bring a lot of anxiety to playing the oboe and are the basis of the oboe players' reputation for being difficult and neurotic. It *is* enough to drive you crazy!"

Typical training for oboists is very similar to an apprenticeship and includes studying with a good oboist who teaches lessons in both oboe playing and reed making.

The oboe was especially important during the Baroque period and was favored by composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Philipp Telemann, and Antonio Vivaldi. Vivaldi, in fact, wrote at least fifteen oboe concertos. Since the Baroque period, however, the primary role of the oboe has been in the orchestra, where it provides the tuning note A.

Nagel says, "While not as well known, the oboe does play in a few jazz groups. Paul McCandless is a wonderful oboist who has performed with Bela Fleck, Paul Winter Consort, and Oregon…One of the most beautiful orchestral solos for the oboe is the slow movement of the Brahms Violin Concerto."

# A Primer to Attending an Orchestral Performance

BY HALEY SPRANKLE

It's an exciting evening—you're about to go out to see an orchestral performance for the first time! You only have one problem: you have no idea what to expect. Luckily for you, Rhonda Hunsinger, Executive Director of the South Carolina Philharmonic, has gathered some helpful tips to better prepare you!

Here are Hunsinger's Top 5 Tips on attending an orchestral performance.

TIP 1

## Research

"Research is not necessary, but if you go to our website, we do provide program notes for each concert, complete with soundbites to help you learn more about the pieces. There is also a 'Classical Conversation' prior to each concert in the Koger Center auditorium, where Morihiko [Nakahara, SCP conductor] gives us fun insight into what he will be performing that night."

TIP 2

## Dress Code

"We encourage our patrons to dress as they wish. Blue jeans are fine, or they might want to dress formally to make it a very special night on the town. As long as they have shoes and a shirt, just about anything goes!"

TIP 3

## Arrival

"Plan to arrive early since downtown Columbia can sometimes have unexpected parking surprises and you want to make sure you get to the performance on time. If you happen to be late, don't stress. The ushers will let you in during an appropriate break in the program."

TIP 4

## Cell Phones

"We ask our patrons to tell everyone they are the SC Phil through social media - share the experience! Just not during the performance, please. The light from phones can be very distracting during the performance, so we hope people will be courteous and not use their phones when the music is playing."

TIP 5

## Applause

"While a patron might clap anytime they like, they may feel a bit awkward if they are the only ones to do it. If there is a symphony with movements, it is best to not clap until all the movements have been played." You'll also notice the audience clapping twice before the music even starts. The first time is when the concertmaster enters the stage and proceeds to tune the orchestra; the next is when the conductor enters, signaling that the concert will soon be underway.

You have done your research, dressed appropriately, arrived in good time, and turned off your cell phone. Now, all that's left is to let the music wash over you, applaud, and enjoy your evening.

# PURA

## WELLNESS SPA

# Reserve Your Experience

Show your beauty to the world with confidence.
Beauty that is *You. Refreshed.*

### SERVICES

- Hydrotherapy
- Laser Treatments
- Face & Body Rejuvenation
- Chemical Peels
- Botox & Fillers
- Anti-Aging Treatments
- Facials
- Microdermabrasion
- Skin Care
- Massage
- IV Nutrient Therapy

***Now Open! Reserve your experience today!*** BePura.com

/bepurasc @bepurasc bepurasc

TEL 803 661 7740 FAX 803 661 7749 | *hello@bepura.com*

807 GERVAIS STREET · SUITE 101 · COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29201

# Volunteering for Excellence

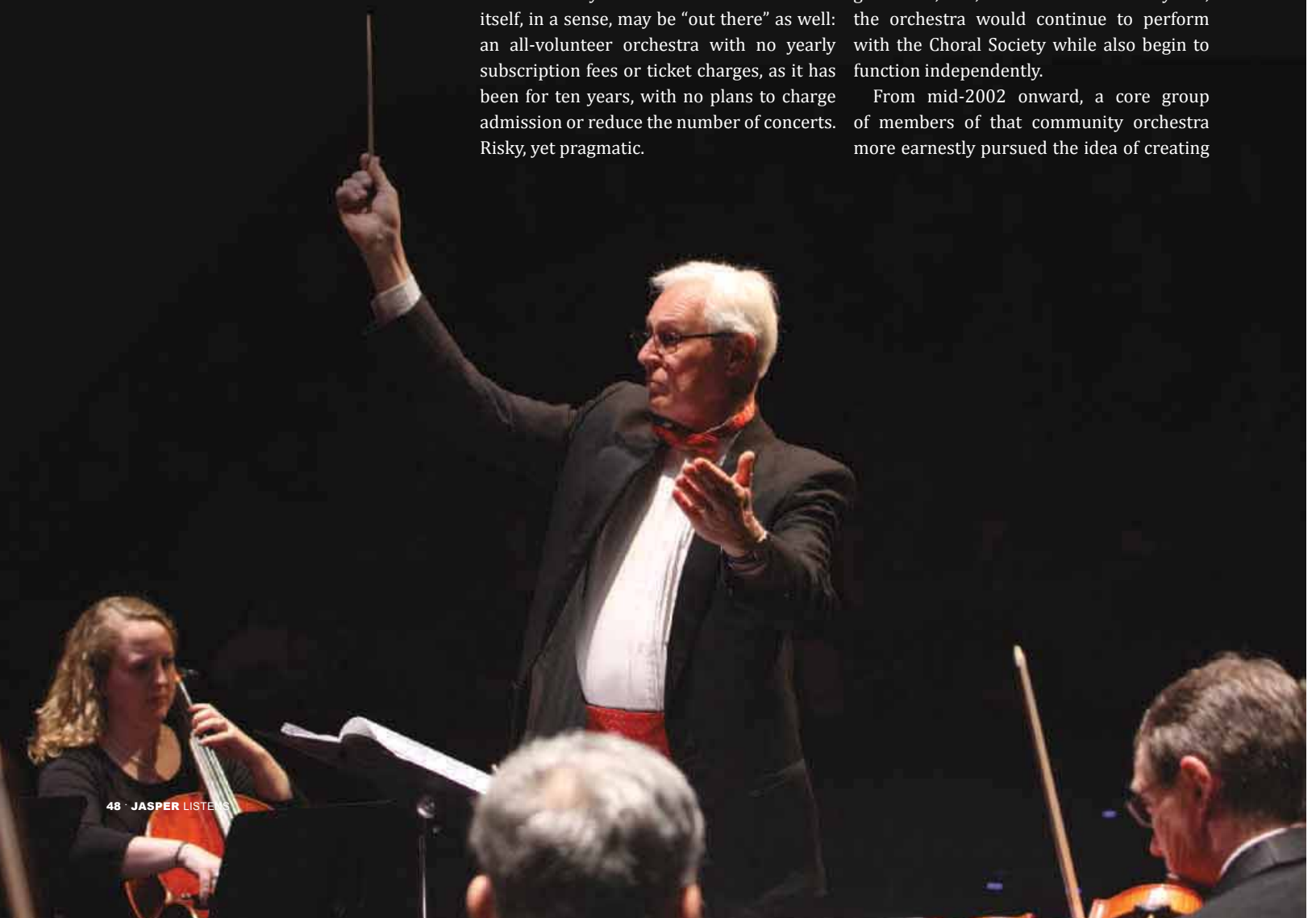
## Over a Decade In, Lake Murray Symphony Orchestra Keeps On Rolling

BY TOM DEMPSTER

One hundred years ago, there was no Lake Murray. Fifteen years ago, there was no Lake Murray Symphony Orchestra. Much as the waters of the Saluda River took time to build up, so too has the talent slowly gathered presence, volume, and viability as the Columbia region has grown and developed. The resources and demand have gathered enough such that the Lake Murray Symphony Orchestra is enjoying its tenth season, with concerts ranging from pops to light classical to an occasional "out there" piece – which is the way LMSO conductor Einar Andersons categorizes most orchestral works that audiences may not know. The LMSO venture itself, in a sense, may be "out there" as well: an all-volunteer orchestra with no yearly subscription fees or ticket charges, as it has been for ten years, with no plans to charge admission or reduce the number of concerts. Risky, yet pragmatic.

The story begins with Harold MacIntosh, the longtime director of the Lexington County Choral Society (LCCS). MacIntosh and other orchestral players in the area wanted to have an orchestra with the LCCS. With a performance venue and funding already at its disposal, the LCCS's vision was instrumental in sowing the seeds of what would become the Lake Murray Symphony Orchestra. The debut of the then Lexington County Community Orchestra occurred alongside the Choral Society's February 2002 concert, where they jointly performing Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*. The seeds began to germinate, and, over the next several years, the orchestra would continue to perform with the Choral Society while also begin to function independently.

From mid-2002 onward, a core group of members of that community orchestra more earnestly pursued the idea of creating



an entirely separate performing ensemble. An exploratory committee was formed, and from late 2002 to 2004, the committee located sponsors, obtained a non-profit status, recruited more performers, and began its marketing operations. One of the key developments was soliciting Einar Anderson to take the podium as the orchestra's conductor after a decade of retirement.

Longtime Midlands residents should know that name: from 1982 to 1993, Anderson was the artistic director and conductor of what would eventually become the South Carolina Philharmonic, the outgrowth and combination of the former Columbia Philharmonic Orchestra and the SC Chamber Orchestra. Anderson is credited with having raised the profile and stature of the SC Phil, which now flourishes with its present roster of musicians. Anderson is a bit of a polymath: with music studies degrees from the University of Southern California and the Vienna Music Academy, Anderson is also a Harvard-trained medical doctor with an established practice in Columbia. He's got a tossle of white hair now, but maintains his clear, deliberate voice with a trace of Upper-Midwestern lilt and still has an uncanny ability to recall an anecdote from thirty years ago. He's equal parts blunt, warm, quirky, and dedicated. But the question remains: how is an all-volunteer community orchestra not just surviving, but thriving? *How?*

This was but the first question. Sitting down with Anderson and Regina Trojanowsky, LMSO's librarian and personnel manager, in November at Anderson's home, more of the story unfolded. "When I came here in 1982, the concept of competition between community orchestras was unthinkable. Just, unknown," Anderson over white wine and hors d'oeuvres. The region has grown considerably since then though, and with it, however quietly, the demand for more arts organizations and more opportunities for performances. The LMSO now juggles scheduling against several community bands, ensembles at USC, events in the larger community and at the other academic institutions, and, of course, the SC Philharmonic. Trojanowsky – a retired electrical engineer – is not just the librarian and personnel manager for the LMSO, but the President of its Board of Directors as well. More importantly, she also is a violinist in the ensemble. "Our motto is 'For the Love of Music,' and we believe we show that with every concert," she tells me. And love the music they do. The LMSO draws its musicians from a variety of wells: high school and college students, retired physicians and engineers, teachers (of music and otherwise), ministers, accountants – the list of occupations goes on. "There are more than sixty regular musicians in the LMSO," says Trojanowksy, "with about a dozen or so playing with us from the very beginning. Players rotate in and out as they need to." Many of the players in the LMSO have, at some point, performed with the South Carolina Philharmonic, Anderson adds.

For several weeks before each concert, the musicians of the LMSO gather each Tuesday night for a three-hour rehearsal under Anderson's baton. This equates to maybe twenty or so hours of prep time before a concert, but then there's the all-important practicing away from the rehearsal hall. There has to be some difficulty in ensuring quality with this arrangement, particularly as the majority of these musicians have day jobs, most of them not in the realm of music or musicianship. When asked about the quality of the orchestra and the potential hazards of an all-volunteer force, Anderson is uniquely Scandinavian in his forthrightness. "When I came here in 1982, the Columbia Philharmonic did not sound as good and was not as dependable as the Lake Murray Symphony is now," Anderson said,

emphasizing that I should quote him on that to anyone. Question answered, categorically

But then, there's still the question of "How" – from a financial perspective. Creeping out toward the light at the end of the most damning economic downturn in decades, numerous orchestras across the country – paid or volunteer – have folded or run afoul of their actuaries. Major orchestras in Detroit, Philadelphia, Minnesota, and Atlanta all came within heartbeats of permanent termination during the Great Recession, while various other presenting organizations closed their books and folded. Anderson brings up the Buffalo Philharmonic during the 1970s and 1980s. "The [Buffalo] Symphony was spending nearly two dollars for every resident of the metropolitan area," he says with dismay, noting that excessive spending does not always translate into good results, let alone sustainability. "There wasn't that kind of demand there. We're trying to be very careful here." Anderson and Trojanowsky have rather fluent knowledge of what it costs to put on one concert. "We do three concerts a year at Harbison Theater and we do various summer and outdoor programming," explains Trojanowsky, adding, "We operate on donations and we've been doing very well." They jointly explain that they do fundraise, putting on occasional galas at the start of a concert season, and that donations are welcome at concerts. "Someone might slip in a $1 bill, someone else may put in a $20; it all works out," Anderson says. With the majority of costs in the orchestra covering music rental, music purchase, and leasing performance venues, the overhead is comparatively low.

What of the audiences? "We routinely get audiences numbering 400 or more, and we have some very dedicated patrons," notes Trojanowsky, with a subtle hint of accomplishment in her voice. "We also put on some great concerts every year." As a means to balance the varied backgrounds and resources of the performers and to keep audiences enticed, the LMSO programming has consisted primarily of lighter works from the Classical and Romantic periods. Discussing these choices with Anderson, he notes, with some amount of amusement, that some of the most successful programming he has done with orchestras, especially the LMSO, has been to dish out single movements of pieces. "And we're taught this idea, in music school, that you should *never* do that – you should perform the entire piece!" Yet, he and Trojanowsky state, LMSO audiences – while perfectly accepting of full pieces – are just as happy to hear individual movements. Anderson's precedent? The storied radio station KFAC in Los Angeles: during the morning and late evenings, the station would program full classical works; during the afternoon and remainder of the day? Individual movements. "We discovered on one of our last concerts – and I went into it kicking and screaming just a little – that if we did shorter pieces, or just the first movement from *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, it's fine!" Trojanowksy jumps in: "We did light classics for our Celebrate Ten! concert, and it was highly successful. The audience loved it." Asked about contemporary composers, Anderson says that there are occasional chances he takes with the LMSO, but admits the expectations and issues are the same as with any orchestra. "The conductor knows Beethoven's Ninth. The audience knows Beethoven's Ninth. But the audience doesn't know Vera Kistler," recalled Anderson about a particular kerfuffle in programming 25 years ago with the South Carolina Philharmonic. "And that's what every contemporary composer is up against."

The LMSO has, as one of its missions, an educational aspect focusing on young adults and children, with a young artist competition (their third) slated for April. Dozens of high-school aged students perform their solo with the orchestra, with an adjudication panel selecting the best performers. There are cash prizes and performance opportunities for the top players, with the top two overall performers invited to perform on the final LMSO concert of the year. And what of those young performers? Says Anderson, clearly and forcefully: "Pretty. Darn. Good. They weren't here twenty years ago. At all."

The LMSO is celebrating their tenth full concert season during the 2014-2015 year, with their next concerts on February 15 and April 26, 2015. With a respectable five concerts for the 2014-2015 year, the Lake Murray Symphony Orchestra is very much a force in the region. "We're ten years old, but we're just getting rolling," states Trojanowsky. That momentum, like the waters of Lake Murray, is indeed powerful, and the LMSO, as a presence in the Midlands, is not to be missed or overlooked.

*For more information about the LMSO, to donate, or to become a member, please visit lmso.org or contact the LMSO at concerts@LMSO.org.*

PHOTOS COURTESY LAKE MURRAY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

# Saluda Shoals music fest

*Featuring*

The Woggles

The Capital City Playboys

Los Perdidos

Sinners & Saints

Wurst Wagen and Belgian Waffle food Trucks will be selling a variety of local fare.
Kona and Redhook beer will be available for purchase.
Art from Jasper Magazine's featured artists will be on display.

Rain or Shine $10 per person Saluda Shoals Park

**SATURDAY MAY 16th**

**GATES OPEN AT NOON**
Bands start at 1:00 P.M.

Please leave coolers and pets at home! Chairs and picnic blankets are suggested!

Saluda Shoals PARK

803-213-2025 or www.icrc.net

# still Twit



PHOTO BY JONATHAN SHARPE

# ty After All These Years

## Robbie Robertson Writes about Three Loves of his Life

"NOBODY SHOULD PLAY COMEDY UNLESS THEY HAVE A CIRCUS GOING ON INSIDE." -- ERNEST LUBITSCH

The great film director Ernest Lubitsch never met the three women who play the fictional singing sister act—"The Twitty Triplets"—but his idea of the prerequisite for great comedy most certainly applies to Len Marini, Libby Cambell, and Leigh Stephenson. For nearly 25 years these Columbia-based actors have not only let their inner circuses run amok, they have turned them into a three-ring spectacle as the fictional Aynor, Monetta, and Cayce Twitty.

As the creator of The Twitty Triplets I have had the privilege of knowing these talented women as both artists and arts advocates; three best friends who share an authentic sisterly bond that transcends their comedic counterparts. For those who only know the musically challenged women in the red fright wigs, take a deeper look and you'll discover three remarkable performers with personal and professional achievements both on and off the stage.

**Len Marini** is an actor, writer, former director of the Joint Legislative Committee on Cultural Affairs and the recipient of the Order of the Palmetto from Governor Dick Riley. But for me, Len played a much larger role in life because she is the single reason I started my creative writing career.

On our first meeting in the early 1990s, I was instantly taken with Len's intellect, razor sharp wit, and the wildly outrageous prank phone calls that she still denies to this day. I had never encountered anyone so confidently off kilter and she always inspired me to celebrate the quirky and bizarre.

It was Len's celebration of oddity that guided my very first attempt at playwriting a work called *Mina Tonight!,* a surreal comedy about the small town host of a public access talk show whose guests were lifted from the pages of the Weekly World News. I envisioned Len as the lead, and although we've yet to mount a local production, *Mina* went on to be published by Samuel French, Inc. and has been produced in over 30 regional theatres across the nation—a testament to Len's ability to find extraordinary humor in the most ordinary parts of life.

Our first theatrical collaboration came soon after when I worked with Len on a staged version of *Gilligan's Island* at Trustus Theatre. As the perfect Ginger character, Len oozed comedic sex appeal and the show sold out both runs with standing room only performances.

From there, we partnered on a fundraiser for the Columbia Animal Shelter, a comedic showcase for Neil Shulman, MD, a stand up comedian and physician whose book, *Doc Hollywood*, had been made into a feature film. Shulman's act was short so Len inspired me yet again to create an act to open for him called *The Twitty Triplets*, an extended skit about musically-challenged sisters from Triangle City, SC. It was the great W.C. Fields who once said you should never work with children or animals for fear of being upstaged. But Dr. Shulman would probably say the same of *The Twitty Triplets*, who literally stole the show, ran down the street with it, and haven't stopped since.

Besides her work on stage and as my own personal comedic muse, Len is a tireless arts advocate and has served as a board member for the Richland County Library, Arts in Basic Curriculum Steering Committee, Trustus Theatre, Workshop Theatre, the SC Humanities Council, the SC Shakespeare Company and as the Chair of the Arts and Tourism Committee of National Conference of State Legislatures. As Aynor Twitty, the unofficial leader of the fictional *Twitty Triplets*, Len brings joy and boundless enthusiasm to the part; qualities that have helped lift a one night only performance into a crowd pleasing theatrical tradition for nearly 25 years.

It takes brains to play dumb and no one can testify to this better than **Leigh Stevenson**. As conceived in the original version of The Twitty Triplets, Leigh's character—the sweet but dim-witted Cayce—was hired as a "replacement Twitty" when one of the original triplets, Swansea, left the group on her own quest for stardom.

Known for her malapropisms ("Every clown has a silver lining") and an innocently naughty undercurrent, Cayce is also one of the more authentically accomplished singers in the group, a real crowd pleaser known for belting out everything from The Pointer Sister's "I'm So Excited" to the classic blues ballad "Since I Fell."

In real life, Leigh is an accomplished author, a leading lady, and a longtime supporter, actor, and board member for the SC Shakespeare Company. How does an

Trustus will present the return of The Twitty Triplets—with a very special surprise guest star—at a cabaret show at Pearlz Upstairz, located in the Vista at 936 Gervais Street, August 17-19.

actor transition so easily from playing Shakespeare to being a bad nightclub singer? Leigh says the key is to "never take yourself too seriously. I have absolutely no internal barometer regarding how funny we [The Twitty Triplets] are," she says. "But I laugh longer and harder with these people than at any other time."

Along with Cayce Twitty, some of Leigh's other favorite roles include Claudia in *Nuts*, Meg in *Crimes of the Heart* and Shirley in *Ladies at the Alamo*—roles that speak to Leigh's pattern of playing strong-willed, formidable characters who always leave a lasting impression on audiences. Leigh is also the first of the trio to throw all theatrical pretenses aside. "We have all done 'serious work' in the past but the Twittys are pure fun. I can't tell you how many times that people have told us that you can go to one of our shows and totally forget your troubles for a few hours. It doesn't get any better than that."

The one word I would use to describe **Libby Campbell**? Gravitas. Not that she's always serious, but Libby is someone to always take seriously. Her talent is worn like a proud armor and she is a formidable presence that commands respect both on and off the stage.

When *The Twitty Triplets* began, I asked Libby to play the part of Monetta, the sardonic, disgruntled triplet—a "Jan Brady" type who openly grouses about not receiving equal treatment or recognition from her siblings or the audience. Since that first show, Libby has devoured the role in every performance and her brilliant improvisational skills always keep her co-stars and the audience engaged.

"What I adore about the Twitty women is their convoluted honesty, devotion to each other, and to their craft,'" Libby says. Because of the broad comedy of the show, Libby admits there have been "detractors" over the years—maybe from people who didn't relate to the decidedly over the top nature of the show—along with some "imitators." (Hint: Never mention the local chapter of Sweet Potato Queens to Len, Libby, or Leigh unless

you want a rumble). But after two decades of sold out houses at every run, Libby says, "The Twittys have reigned supreme."

Libby's extended theatrical resume includes theatrical stints around the southeast playing such nuanced roles as Violet in *August, Osage County,* Sister Aloysius in *Doubt*, Alexa in *As Bees in Honey Drown*, Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* Marjorie in *Extremeties*, Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, and The Succubus in *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom.* Not to mention her own performance as Claudia in *Nuts*, just like Twitty co-star Leigh Stephenson. Libby says a highlight of her Twitty sister career was performing at the Koger Center for the Artists Against AIDS fundraiser where she came face to face with guest emcee and Broadway star Brenda Pressley. Brenda wasn't in on the joke and thought the Twittys were an authentic act. As she passed Pressley backstage, Libby, in her best Monetta drawl, exclaimed, "*Sugar!* I covet that frock!!!"

Working with the Twittys was my first lesson in the value of collaboration. In the past, I always thought of writing as a solo art form but of course it's always so much more. I've become much less precious about exact words or lines. Because I'm working with people who can make suggestions on enhancing the script, writing becomes a truly collaborative effort.

Every time I work with these women, it's like going home. They have become extended members of my family and it is sheer joy at every read through, rehearsal or performance. The fact that a one night benefit has gone on for over two decades is pretty unusual and Columbia audiences have supported us at every single show. I think there's room for broad comedy (figuratively and literally!) in this city and it's so cool that we pack the house at every event.

None of us are getting any younger but I think we've definitely gotten better. The Twittys just seem like that one special time in life that none of us ever want to let go. Luckily, we are still here and able to be together. Age has only added a new layer to the tragic comedic element of the Twitty legacy—it has made us all a little bit bolder in creating something that's really off the wall and surreal.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CATERING COMPANY

# SCOTT HALL

CATERING AND EVENT DESIGN

Phone: 803.957.1818

Website: scotthallcatering.com

Email: info@scotthallcatering.com

"Let That Page Come Out of You"

# THE ALLEN UNIVERSITY LANGSTON HUGHES POETRY CENTER

BY KRISTINE HARTVIGSEN

When he was a college student living in a featureless room at the Harlem YMCA, Langston Hughes filled countless pages with handwritten lines of poetry. His room's utilitarian décor likely reflected the modest means to which Hughes and so many of his contemporaries were accustomed at the time. Imagine if they had a place to go, a haven for readers and writers of poetry, a place filled with stimulating books and creative people.

Today, more than eight decades later, young writers similarly fill pages with thoughtful words from modest residence halls at Allen University as well as other seemingly remote locations throughout the state. These artists have a new and nurturing place to go, and it's a free resource open to anyone interested in poetry.

The Allen University Langston Hughes Poetry Center held a grand opening on January 31 with a full day of workshops and readings led by literary trailblazers Kwame Dawes and Nikky Finney, winner of the 2011 National Book Award winner for poetry. She now teaches at the University of South Carolina. Center Director Charlene Spearen, Humanities Chair and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs at Allen, is a longtime colleague of Dawes, a former USC professor who now teaches at the University of Nebraska, where he is editor-in-chief of the *Prairie Schooner*. Spearen has wanted to create a center, modeled after Poets House in New York City, for many years since learning that Langston Hughes gave a reading at Allen University's Chapelle Auditorium in November of 1937.

"*The State* newspaper published an article calling him a 'new Negro voice,'" Spearen says. "This article was presented to me years and years ago, and I never forgot it." Hughes already was an established voice, having famously penned a compellingly truthful essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," in *The Nation* in 1926 at the age of 24. Shunned by some for not writing "pretty" poetry relatable to whites, Hughes wrote: "No great poet has ever been afraid of being himself." His poems made white, and many middle-class blacks, uncomfortable. "Be stereotyped," he wrote, "don't go too far, don't shatter our illusions about you, don't amuse us too seriously." In other words, don't be "too Negro."

With over 2,000 volumes of poetry, related writings, and research, the Center is both a library, study hall, and meeting place for the community. It is not a lending library, but people are welcome to access all works on site. "This is a Center where poetry events can take place," Spearen says. "We can easily house 50 participants for a poetry-based event. … The uniqueness about this particular center is that there is no other HBCU (Historically Black College or University) that has a concentrated poetry center, especially for poets of color."

Plans for the Center include a series of poetry events along the theme "Conversations With." The first, appropriately, will focus on Langston Hughes. There also is a poetry festival in the works for later this year, including workshops led by members of The Watering Hole, an online community for poets of color created by fellows of Cave Canem, a Brooklyn-based, non-profit organization dedicated to support and promote African-American poets. No dates have yet been confirmed.

Spearen established the Center's core inventory by contributing her entire personal poetry library. Notices soliciting donated works for the Center went out, and the response was overwhelming.

"I am seeing the work of phenomenal poets who I have never even heard of," she exclaims. "It's like Christmas presents arrive every couple of weeks. I can't wait to open them and see what's in the next box!" Nikki Giovanni donated 20 autographed books, and Amiri Baraka donated works before he passed away last year, "so those works mean a lot to me."

Spearen's favorite Hughes poem is the well-known "Theme for English B," an autobiographical piece whose narrator is the only black student in an all-white writing class. Hughes explores the longing for truth in writing, noting that everyone views the world from a different perspective, and we learn from one another.

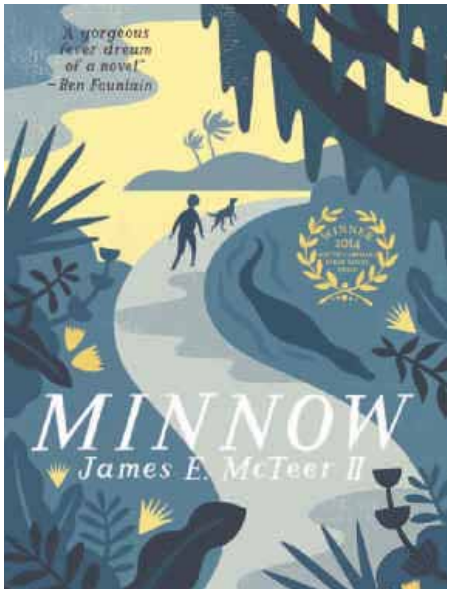
"Every student comes in with their personal history, and that history is different from my history," Spearen explains. "What you present is very much a part of your identity. You are brought into the personal space of that writer, and it opens up doors of dialogue."

*The Allen University Langston Hughes Poetry Center is located at 1329 Pine Street in Columbia. A website is under construction with full details on hours, events, and booking. It will be launched in the coming weeks. Charlene Spearen can be reached at cspearen@allenuniversity.edu.*

# A History of Storms

## A Portion of an Interview with James McTeer, Winner of the SC First Novel Prize

BY SUSAN TEKULVE




James McTeer grew up in the shadow of legendary storms. A native of Beaufort, he was six when Hurricane Hugo hit, and ten when the Storm of the Century blew through. He grew up deep in the coastal South, where winds could peel the roof off his family's house in September, and it sometimes snowed in March. He grew up among a swirling mix of Lowcountry culture—Southern culture, Gullah culture, military culture. He grew up breathing pungent salt air and river breezes, bogging the muddy marshlands and barrier beaches.

Perhaps this is why his debut novel, *Minnow*, (Hub City Press, April 2015), is a perfect storm of a novel, its protagonist and plot shaped by the exotic beauty and danger inherent in McTeer's native landscape. Set in the imaginary coastal town of Newfort, *Minnow* is a quest novel and coming-of-age tale about a boy named Minnow who must journey into the interior of the ancient Sea Islands to find a mysterious medicine to cure his ailing father.

Heralded as "a gorgeous fever dream of a novel," by Ben Fountain, and as "stark and wild as the fairy tale deep in its bones," by Lauren Groff, this novel delivers a tale that is both mystical and earthy.

James lives in Columbia, where he works as the media specialist at Polo Road Elementary. *Minnow* is the winner of the S.C. First Novel Prize from the S.C. Arts Commission.

**ST:** I have read that your grandfather, J.E. McTeer, was the High Sheriff of the Lowcountry for 37 years and a local witch doctor, and that he was the inspiration for *Minnow*. What story, or stories, about him served as the "germ" for this novel?

**JM:** The core of Minnow's journey is unique, entirely imagined, but every step of his journey is informed by my grandfather's legend, and by the stories of his life: the culture of the islands, the politics of witch doctors, the natural world of the Lowcountry, the voodoo. He embraced the Lowcountry. That passion for the Lowcountry is a family tradition. It's something we celebrate, and I wanted to capture that tradition on the page.

**ST:** Your sense of place is one of the most striking elements of this book. Minnow doesn't just live in this setting; it's as if he has sprung from the marshes and coastlines he navigates throughout the book. How did you capture the native intelligence of this boy?

**JM:** Like any Lowcountry kid, I experienced a unique geography that I don't think you can find anywhere else in the world. I called on places from my entire life to create *Minnow*: the pine forests out in the Grays Hill country, Hunting Island's barrier beach, the old homes and cemeteries downtown, the marshes that surround, the creeks that intertwine. I wanted Newfort to be Beaufort, of course, and some of it is very direct. Bay Street, Frogmore, Port Royal, the Island. These are all real places, but I made them my own for the story. The cemetery near the end of the book is St. Helena's Episcopal, from downtown, but I moved it out to the islands. Frogmore's farther out, in real life, but I wanted it on the first island, so there it is.

**ST:** I have noticed that a few of your early readers have called your setting "dreamlike," and I agree that the book has an "otherworldly" quality. How did you learn so much about the Gullah, the inner workings of their villages, and how they might react to a little boy—a stranger—who shows up in their midst?

**JM:** Growing up in Beaufort means growing up in a swirling mix of cultures. Southern culture, Gullah culture, culture informed by the occupation of Beaufort by the Union, culture flavored by the military bases in town. Exploring the Gullah world was natural for me, having seen its legacy firsthand, having studied it throughout my life. Not many places have such a mix of cultures, even in a country as diverse as America. The way Minnow interacts with the Gullah in the story was my attempt to shed light on the mixing of those cultures. There are differences between us, wide divides of culture and language and customs, but we find ways to bridge those divides. Outsiders are welcomed in, nurtured, cared for, sometimes under the strangest circumstances. I also wanted to explore the way that we can understand people based on how they interact with children. If Minnow had been a grown man, the story would have been much different. What sort of person takes advantage of a child, what sort of person is ambivalent, and what sort of person aids them unconditionally? We can learn a lot about people, and our culture, by asking those questions.

*For the full interview go to www.JasperColumbia.net.*

# Workshop Theatre of South Carolina

## 2014 - 2015 SEASON

**Five Guys Named Moe**
*September 18-21*

**The Dining Room**
*November 6-9*

**Broadway Bound**
*January 16-25*

**Stick Fly**
*March 27- April 4*

**Lend Me a Tenor**
*May 8-17*

**All performances will be held at 701 Whaley Market Space**

**803-799-6551**

CULTURAL COUNCIL | south carolina arts commission | COLUMBIA SC

**workshoptheatre.com**

# MR. HAYNESWORTH'S DINNER PLATE

Poem by Joyce M. Rose-Harris

Southern small town tradition
feeds grief with cakes,
pies baked from scratch.

No surprise, when mama died
to hear the doorbell ring and see
standing on the stoop, Mr. Haynesworth
with pound cake in hand atop a dinner plate,
stopping by to pay his respects.

He visited for a little while
then tipped his fedora
and was gone down the road.

A kind gentle man
who drove the aged and sick
from deep in the low-country
to the Midlands, to be checked over
by big city doctors.
Today, I learned he died.

I rummaged through the kitchen
pulling out flour, eggs, butter
and sugar; blending together
with milk and a splash of vanilla extract.
Three hours later, a cooled pound cake
sat atop Mr. Haynesworth's dinner plate.

---

Joyce M. Rose-Harris is an activist, blogger, and poet in Columbia. Her poetry is included in the anthology *Home Is Where*, published by Hub City Press. Joyce writes observational poetry meant to inform and inspire. When not writing poetry she is sharing opinions and ideas via her blog, PaisleyPerspective.

# HOMELESS EX-CON AT COLUMBIA MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Poem by Len Lawson

Just got out the belly
Cold bus station seats
Warmer than a prison bed

Corner of Sumter and Laurel
Brighter than dingy prison walls and jumpsuits
Three squares and an hour in the yard

Don't compare to watching people be free
Sniffing unlocked unchained air
Breathing in the lady singing

~I am free / Praise the Lord I'm free~
To the crying baby she bounces on her knee
Desk honey in tight navy slacks and navy sweater

Hair pulled back in a bun
Dreaming of Payday and days off
Watching three young poets hug and dap

Hungry for fresh inspiration
This black security guard don't understand
Can't go home / This is home

For other homeless people too
But he single out big loud ones
Who threaten his ego

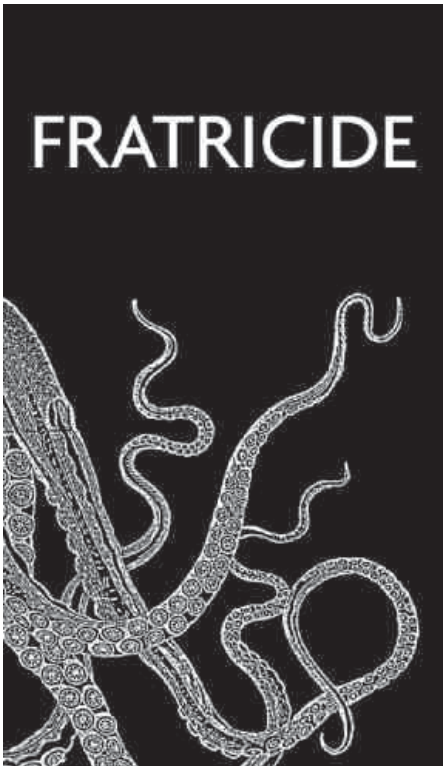
Three days in the hole and he'd crack
He just don't know he one felony
Away from being me

---

Len Lawson is a Berfrois Poetry Prize finalist. He has an M.A. in English from National University near San Diego, CA, and teaches writing at Morris College in Sumter, SC. Len is a member of The Watering Hole Collective (twhpoetry.org), and he is a blogger for the South Carolina Writers Workshop (myscww.org). His poems have appeared or will appear in Rolling Thunder, The Southern Tablet, Control, NYSAI Press, and Pamplemousse.

# Review: Alexis Stratton's *Fratricide*

BY KYLE PETERSEN




"*Fratricide* employs its fractured narration for an evident and deeply emotional reason: in the frantic search for self, the story asks, where do we turn?"

So says Manuel Munoz, who selected Alexis Stratton's short story for Bloom Books' 2012 chapbook fiction prize. And there is little doubt that Melanie, the story's protagonist, is psychologically as well as geographically adrift. A photographer living in South Korea, she doesn't have plans to ever move back to the United States, although she returns in part two of the story for her brother's wedding before returning to Korea, at least in Melanie's memory, for the final section. While this might sound like a story of homecoming, Stratton's fractured telling of events and her character's indecisiveness—about things as mundane as trying new foods and quitting smoking, or as important as family or romantic love—subvert those expectations. The story begins with Melanie furtively taking pictures of strangers, and the sense of distance and remove in those brief moments carries through in each of the subsequent scenes with friends, family, and lovers. These discrete experiences and memories, told in an intimate and perceptive third-person limited voice, build to something that nonetheless manages to feel melancholic and achingly hollow, as if grasping for some larger truth about identity that can't quite be reached. There's a painterly abstraction to Stratton's vignettes, a recognition of beauty on the edges of these fragments she can't quite piece together.

The story concludes at the DMZ between North and South Korea, as Melanie reflects on the vast divide created by the splitting of the two countries. She also thinks about her dead father's grave, and the stories her brother made up about them, one of them about fratricide. If she comes to any conclusions, they are oblique ones, but that's hardly the point. Her brother's insistence that families know one another ("*It's in our blood*," he insists in Melanie's memory), rings false. Birds fly upward, in between.

# SEVEN YEARS AWAY, ONE YEAR BACK

## A Celebration of the Changes in the Cultural Landscape of Columbia, SC

BY CAITLIN BRIGHT

PHOTO BY FORREST CLONTS

I returned to Columbia March 11, 2014, after surviving what I thought was the worst winter that had ever existed (yes, I understand that is an extremely subjective statement). I lived in New York, and after getting my master's in arts administration, worked in a variety of capacities in the cultural sector, from running a small nonprofit gallery, to freelance grant-writing and project management. I was immersed in many aspects of the cultural ecosystem of New York City and grew accustomed to the scale of production, ease of support (relative statement), and demand for cultural content.

It is easy to get caught up in the momentum of that city—you're surrounded by driven people who want to realize their dreams, which are vocalized, and accomplished at exponential rates. This trajectory passes time like a strange dream sequence, and before you know it, a decade has passed. As I was approaching the 7 year marker, I started to evaluate my long term plans in New York and investigated whether I was going to commit to this eternally transient way of life, or plant roots and grow something permanently somewhere else. The idea of returning home was a whisper that had echoed within me since my arrival in 2007. My parents and I lost my sister one month before I left for graduate school, and navigating that grief, the transformation of our family's shape, and all the stresses associated, happened remotely. Though the excitement of the city and the electric talent pulsating through each distinct neighborhood was intoxicating, in the end, my desire to be closer to my family and a strong community of support was greater.

I left Columbia through the same conclusion that many of our creative class have—if I'm going to pursue my dream, it's best done somewhere else. When I left in 2007, there was a small arts community, but not much in the way of cultural access for the general public. There were many art exhibitions in coffee shops and restaurants, a few galleries dedicated to more traditional artistic content, small pop-up shows (which are still some of the best musical experiences I have ever witnessed), and a surprisingly established theater scene, given the nascent development phase of the other fields. Columbia has also always been very supportive of craft, home-grown artisanship, and the aesthetic ingenuity of utilitarian objects. (i.e. beautiful cutting boards and lamps/furniture crafted from re-purposed material). I left knowing that the main entertainment sources were, and would always be, sports and bars, and that cultural experiences were on the periphery.

I returned expecting that dynamic, to immediately start lamenting the lack of cultural stimulation, but I was proven so wrong. I've returned to such positive change. I am amazed at the energy that's been infused into this city. The museum's public programs and events, the formation of One Columbia, Gallery 701, all of the arts programming on Main Street, the Nickelodeon, Indie Grits, Crafty Feast, Jasper Magazine, Girls Rock, and now the Music Farm, Conundrum and the Richland County Public Library, as well as murmurs of new exciting projects on the horizon! This is exciting because I've been given the opportunity to not only participate as a community member, but also help strengthen our creative class through programming at the Tapp's Arts Center. Our vision is to foster a meeting place for creative exchange. Whether commercial, academic, or social, it will boost Columbia's capacity for understanding the creative process.

In the year I've been back, I've learned that Columbia's cultural voice sings support for the local artisan. This is excellent for fostering community morale, but I'd like us to now reach further, expand our concept of artistic practice and challenge each other to explore uncharted territories. We are the pioneers of our new creative ecology and we can make Columbia a cultural destination. We should invite national and international artists to share and explore our regional identity, commission more public art, design public space to promote a walking community, and create accessible conduits to all of our developing cultural nodes. We need to foster stronger public/private partnerships and develop a sustainable support culture for the arts, this is through individual support, corporate sponsorships and most importantly, sustained municipal and state funding. I would love to see more university recruitment of established national and international artists to encourage diversity and maintain a charged, dynamic academic environment.

Building a creative place is a perpetual process, but one that is exciting to engage. Encouraging opportunity and growth for our creative class will stimulate imagination, curiosity and talent retention in South Carolina. Constructing this sustainable model takes a strong plan, and an eager community, and one year later, I feel I have met that community. We are not New York, or any other metropolis, we are distinctly Columbia, South Carolina, with our own unique voice, and we should let our voice carry far.

# Preview Party!

**Thursday, April 9, 7-9 PM**
**Olympia Room at 701 Whaley**

$5 for members, $10 for non-members

Enjoy cash bar, complimentary hors d'oeuvres, music by DJ Irv and a pop-up exhibition of #ColaOpenStudios artists

701 cca

701 CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

*presents*

# COLUMBIA OPEN STUDIOS

## APRIL 11-12, 2015

## TOUR ARTISTS' STUDIOS

SATURDAY 10AM - 6PM | SUNDAY 12PM - 6PM

www.columbiaopenstudios.org • @701cca • #ColaOpenStudios

COLUMBIA SC
FAMOUSLY HOT

CITY of COLUMBIA, S.C.
JUSTITIA VIRTUTUM REGINA

South Carolina

south carolina arts commission