

Mason Gross SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

SPRING 2014 MAGAZINE

FIELD of DREAMS

Rutgers University Marching Band
plays Super Bowl XLVIII

RUTGERS

Mason Gross School
of the Arts



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

I'm sure many of you swelled with pride to see the Rutgers University Marching Band on national television in February as part of Super Bowl XLVIII.

Under the direction of Tim Smith, the Mason Gross ensemble appeared on FOX's *Good Day New York* and many other media outlets. During the pregame show on February 2, the band formed the "NJ" for New Jersey, the "R" for Rutgers, and played alongside the Syracuse University Marching Band in a buoyant musical tribute to New York and New Jersey. Band members even heard the RU chant as they stepped onto the field. See photos from the Super Bowl and read all about game day on page 4 of the magazine.

The experience was an ideal warm-up for the band's upcoming centennial celebration, which takes place on September 26, 2015, right here on campus. During Professor Smith's tenure the band has grown from 135 members to more than 200. It is our hope to expand the band even further as Rutgers joins the Big Ten Conference and, by extension, big-time national TV coverage.

Also noteworthy this semester is the MFA *Jersey Fresh* exhibit in Brooklyn in April, another in the now long line of visual arts shows in New York City, and the production of *Our Town* at the George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick during April and May. This landmark event will unite Mason Gross students with seasoned professionals under the direction of Theater chair David Esbjornson. This long-awaited collaboration is one of many examples of Mason Gross reaching out to the community to join forces with local professional organizations.

I also note with sadness the passing of Regina Heldrich, a great lover of music and the arts. We are indebted to Regina for the lovely courtyard outside the new Mortensen Hall as well as student scholarships in the Music Department. Regina and her husband, John, were among my initial contacts in New Brunswick when I arrived in 2000, and Mason Gross is a better place thanks to their ongoing commitment and encouragement.

— George B. Stauffer, Dean



A scene from Rutgers Theater Company's production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, November 2013.

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“Opera came and gave me a life, purpose, and most importantly, self-worth, because there is nothing worse than feeling worthless.”
— *Vocal student Clayton Mathews. Turn to page 22 to learn more about Mathews’s journey from baseball player to opera singer.*

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NICK ROMANENKO

FIELD OF DREAMS

Rutgers University Marching Band plays Super Bowl XLVIII.



THE ROMANTICS

These couples found love (and sometimes, marriage) at Mason Gross.



KEITH MUCCILLI

MAKING MERRY

Outtakes from the Alumni Holiday Reception 2013.

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ON THE COVER

The Rutgers University Marching Band plays the Super Bowl pregame show at MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, NJ, February 2, 2014. Photo by Nick Romanenko



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FIELD of DREAMS

Rutgers University Marching Band performs at Super Bowl XLVIII

BY LAURIE GRANIERI

New York and New Jersey played nice—for a little while, at least—when the Rutgers University Marching Band pumped up the crowd and performed the Super Bowl XLVIII pregame show alongside Syracuse University. The two bands, approximately 400 students in all, performed before more than 80,000 fans at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ, on February 2.



PHOTOS BY NICK ROMANENKO

Clockwise from above: Students wait outside MetLife stadium before the performance; the band mid-performance, with field major Christiian Credle in a split; band director Tim Smith and his wife, Michelle LaRoche, en route to the performance.

"We're used to going into sold-out stadiums, but I didn't expect it to be so overwhelming," says Rutgers University Marching Band drum major **Lindsey Malko**. "It was so loud. It hit me right then: We are performing for all these people. It was breathtaking. That first note was so loud and so powerful."

Baritone section leader **Keith Lalley** says of the stadium crowd: "It just looked like a several-stories-tall wall of bodies."

"YOU COULD SEE THE STUDENTS' EYES—THEY WERE AS BIG AS SAUCERS."

— Band director Tim Smith

The game tanked early for the Denver Broncos, who lost to the Seattle Seahawks 43-8. But band director Tim Smith says taking the field was spectacular for the Rutgers musicians.

"You could see the students' eyes—they were as big as saucers," Smith says.

Lalley admits that he was "freaking out. I was star-struck once we stepped out onto the field. But once we were in place...I immediately fell back into my comfort zone of knowing exactly what was going on, knowing exactly what to do."

The crowd even gave the students some Rutgers love. As the Marching Scarlet Knights took the field, Smith says, "The RU chant started. It was this gigantic, adrenaline-filled homecoming for everyone."



Lalley adds: "Thousands of people cheering for your band/school in unison? So cool!"

The university marching bands Jerseyfied the pregame show from the get-go by kicking off the performance with Freehold-born Bruce Springsteen's pounding *Born in the U.S.A.*, then segueing into *Born to Run*. The bi-state medley featured *Livin' on a Prayer*, by Sayreville's Bon Jovi, and New York, New York, made famous by Hoboken-native Frank Sinatra. They wrapped up with Brooklyn-born Jay-Z's *Empire State of Mind*.

Smith says students put in five two-hour rehearsals during the first two weeks of the spring semester to prepare for the Super Bowl. They performed at a Super Bowl media day at Newark's Prudential Center and appeared in Times Square as part of FOX's *Good Day New York* television show.

Smith says on game day elated band members departed the field arm-in-arm.

"Usually, they have fierce, serious faces on game day," Smith says. "This was different: There was a sense of joy on all their faces."

"It was like magic," he adds. "We couldn't have scripted it any better."

100 YEARS

Save the Date to Celebrate!

The Rutgers Marching Band's 100th anniversary celebration will take place

September 26, 2015

during the Rutgers-Kansas football game at High Point Solutions Stadium.

For more information, contact Sharon Cocuzza, associate director of Development and Alumni Relations, at 848-932-5197 or at scocuzza@masongross.rutgers.edu.

DRUMMERS ROCK OUT ALONGSIDE U2 ON THE TONIGHT SHOW STARRING JIMMY FALLON

Rutgers University Marching Band drummer **Patrick McHale** has one word to describe hanging out 70 stories above Manhattan, perched on the roof of Rockefeller Center at sunset, beating his drum alongside legendary Irish rockers U2.

"Insane," says McHale, who recounts seeing Mariah Carey and Joan Rivers and working with U2 for two days as he prepped for his appearance on the premiere of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. The show, which featured eight Marching Scarlet Knights, aired on February 17.

"We were like rock stars up there," McHale adds. "They treated us like celebrities."

Drummer **Brittany Chan** still seems star-struck.

"U2 is a huge band, and everyone loves them, and you would think they wouldn't have time for a little band onstage with them," she says. "You don't get a huge celebrity thanking you [every day]. It was cool."

McHale says the Rutgers drummers spent two days with U2 rehearsing the band's new song, "Invisible." They had just 90 minutes to learn the music and make it onstage. McHale says they were warned that use of the footage was not even a given.

Luckily, U2 liked what they saw.



"We killed it," McHale says. "We played so well with them. They loved it. They looked at the footage that night, and the next day they said, 'You guys are excellent.' These guys are praising us. It was amazing."

The production was a major spectacle: band members in uniform, flanking U2 for the entire song, backed by a vivid sunset and the Empire State Building.

Not a bad gig for a Monday night.

Chan says U2 drummer Larry Mullen Jr. reminded them to shed their militaristic game faces.

"Larry came up to us and introduced himself, listened to us play, and gave us tips," she says. "He said, 'Let loose, rock out, make it look like you're having a lot of fun.'"

Those orders were a cinch to follow: McHale says the experience was a blast, from start to finish, and he credits band director Tim Smith with landing the group such high-profile work.

"I wouldn't have had any of these experiences without him," McHale says.

Participating drummers were: **Jake Althuler, Brittany Chan, Emily Hartranft, Patrick McHale, Joe Moussa, Dominick Orlando, Pauline Suan, and Lauren Upadhyay.**



Drumline plays Victoria's Secret fashion show

BY ALEXANDRA KLAASSEN

The Rutgers University Marching Band drumline knows how to march down a football field, but they had to step into some new shoes recently when they climbed onto the Victoria's Secret catwalk.

"It's a 'Will you please pinch me?' moment," Rutgers University Marching Band director Tim Smith says of the performance by the 15 drumline members, who were dressed to the nines as Buckingham Palace guards for the lingerie and clothing brand's annual televised fashion show. "Fall Out Boy is performing with our drumline onstage... I'm pretty blown away."

The performance aired December 10 on CBS. Drumline member and music arranger **Paul Nalesnik** calls the experience "mind-blowing."

"We were treated as talent, not as a marching band at a football game," Nalesnik says. "We got to hang out with everybody—Fall Out Boy, Taylor Swift, Lenny Kravitz [to name a few]." He proclaims Kravitz to be "really nice."

They also met their share of scantily clad models.

"I was a little nervous," snare drummer **Carlos Vazquez** says. "How do you approach a model?" Nalesnik agrees.

"It was a little daunting at first," he says, "but they were very friendly."

Field major **Christiaan Credle** adds: "They even wished us luck. You realize that they're real people."

Smith says experiences like this one are invaluable because they prep musicians for life after the drumline.

"The reason I took this for our students was to expose them to a high-level production," he says. "It's great exposure for them—they're getting out in front of New York City's A-list."

Participating drummers included **Josiah Arp, Geoff Clark, Christiaan Credle, Jeremy Giles, Kelvin Gomez, Kristin Lawton, Mark Managhan, Michael Mariano, Patrick McHale, Christopher Mottes, Paul Nalesnik, Christian Negri, Galen Norwood, and Carlos Vazquez.**



Above, drummers on the roof of Rockefeller Center alongside the members of U2. Above left, the drummers gather at the studio before the show.

All the Right Moves

Pianist and dance student is a competitive gymnast

BY ALEXANDRA KLAASSEN

Charly Santagado can't stay still. With her packed schedule, who *could* stay still?

Santagado is a member of the Rutgers gymnastics team. She attends the Mason Gross School on academic and athletic scholarships, with a planned double major in philosophy and music performance, as well as a minor in dance.

Music, dance, and gymnastics—all are essential to Santagado.

"I could not give up one," she says. "If I have free time I have to fill it with something."

The 19-year-old won the gold for the uneven bars at Israel's 19th Maccabiah Games in 2013 and founded a charity, Give Kids The Gold, during her gap year. Give Kids The Gold provides trophies for Give Kids

The World, a weekly talent show featuring terminally ill children. Santagado and her sister continue to collect old dance trophies and disassemble them to create new ones.

Artistry and performance have been integral to Santagado's life since an early age. She started competing in gymnastics when she was 5 years old.

"Gymnastics can be scary," Santagado says. "When I was younger I had to talk myself into going [on the apparatuses]. Some people still get scared but I got over it [because] I switched to a gym that doesn't allow for mental games... You can focus on doing it the right way if you're not scared."

Mental games and intense pressure are common in the sport, especially during a gymnast's peak years. When Santagado was 12 years old she was on track for the Olympics. Then her parents pulled her out.

"They told me: 'You are miserable,'" Santagado says. "I was really upset about it."

Two years later, she decided to return to the sport.

"I went to an open gym and I was messing around," Santagado recalls. "I kept going back to it a few days a week. I eventually [asked] my mom: 'Can I go back to competing in gymnastics?'... I wasn't trying to do the whole elite thing, so it was much more fun."

"That doesn't happen often," Santagado adds. "Normally you stop [competing] and you're done."

ART AND CRAFT

Now Santagado has fun and combines her passions by injecting music and dance into her gymnastics routines.

"For the past five years I've played my floor music on the piano and recorded it," she says. "My coaches would sometimes stand behind the judges... talking [about it] to another coach. They would say it loudly so the judges could hear."

Dance also impacts her floor routine choreography.

"My dance is why [I place]," Santagado says. "[Dance] is making my floor routine easier—easier for me, because some people can't do the dance that I do."

Santagado's modern-dance instructor, Aaron Ramos, acknowledges Santagado's work ethic: "Charly is particular with movement and posi-



tions." When it comes to technique, he says, Santagado is "a perfectionist."

Ramos adds with a laugh: "She has to do everything well."

In recent years, gymnastics has transformed into a power sport. Some contend that Olympic gymnasts seem to be forgoing artistry for complex tumbling moves. This puts Santagado in a unique position.

"I think the stuff they do is mind-blowing but not artistic... So many people ignore that now just to get good tumbling in," Santagado says. "I have [fewer] tumbling skills than some people, but I still beat them because the judges have an appreciation for artistry."

NEVER GIVE UP

Santagado has danced since the age of 3 and has played the piano since she was 9 years old.

"I couldn't not do dance," she says. "The feeling I get when I dance is better than anything else." But with a full schedule, Santagado had to settle on a minor in dance.

Besides, for Santagado, a major in music is far more important, possibly because it presents such a challenge.

She describes herself as "somewhat of an underdog in music, especially in comparison to other areas. I don't have as strong of a [foundation] in it, and I think that's what I like about it."

Ultimately, she says, "I want to improve, not just keep playing."

Music professor Timothy Urban says she's doing just that.

"Charly has made almost unprecedented improvement. She has gone from not even noticing her mistakes, to not only recognizing them immediately, but also being able to immediately correct them."

For Santagado, music is a challenge she's ready to face.

"Gymnastics taught me how to not give up on something," she says. "I'm not afraid to put myself out there."

PHOTOS COURTESY CHARLY SANTAGADO

On the wall

FACULTY MEMBER CREATES MURAL FOR MORTENSEN HALL

BY RISA BARISCH

Painter Stephen Westfall knows that where there's a wall, there's a way. For his geometric, Technicolor patterns, a large, blank wall provides a canvas that "presents a thrilling level of architectural scale," he says.

And so when Westfall was commissioned by George B. Stauffer, dean of the Mason Gross School, to paint a mural for the new Mortensen Hall, he knew as soon as he viewed the building plans that he had found a perfect home for his work, even though the space was a bit unconventional.



Professor Stephen Westfall's mural *Ardor* hangs above the Class of '59 Grand Staircase, where "the slight incline of the walls animates the pattern in a really interesting way," he says.

Extending over the Class of '59 Grand Staircase, Westfall's *Ardor* is 14 feet high and 12 feet, 6 inches wide. Its bold, angled pattern is based on earlier works by Westfall that were inspired by the mosaic-tiled floors of churches in Rome, the city where he spent a year as Fellow of the American Academy from 2009 to 2010.

Fitting the work into the architecture of Mortensen Hall came naturally and in a way that "works beautifully," Westfall says.

"The slight incline of the walls animates the pattern in a really interesting way," says Westfall, who teaches painting in the Visual Arts Department. Even the surrounding earth tones proved to be a harmonious companion.

"I knew the colors would pop," Westfall says. "I welcomed the warmth of the red in that corner."

Westfall chose two of his former graduate students, **Erika Hickle** and **Alan Prazniak**, to work on the mural. Using Westfall's design as a kind of paint-by-numbers guide, Hickle and Prazniak enlarged the drawing onto the wall by creating a basic grid, "a lot like a giant connect-the-dots," says Hickle, a 2012 MFA graduate.

The unique space did present challenges for the painters, who spent "four grueling, 12-hour days" working on the project over winter break, says Prazniak, who graduated in 2011.

"There were some architectural details that we had to take into account while making the painting, such as handrails and adjoining walls," Hickle says. "Also, it was interesting working on a 20-foot scaffolding that was set on a staircase."



PHOTOS BY ANDREA KANE

That scaffolding didn't always reach to where Hickle and Prazniak needed to work, so they found themselves crafting makeshift tools to get their painter's tape where it needed to go.

Westfall oversaw the first application of color, a palette of flat acrylic Benjamin Moore house paint, and then left Hickle and Prazniak to their work. Murals often involve a team of painters—"otherwise, you'll never get it done," Westfall says.

"There's a level of trust involved," adds Prazniak. "Stephen knew he was in good hands."

With juxtapositions of colors and angles, the completed painting displays Westfall's studies of the "tension between symmetry and asymmetry"—and is just fun to look at, he hopes.

"The whole culture of geometry is in this simple design," Westfall says. "But there's beauty, joy, and mirth in it, too."

Why We Give: **MARIAN BROVERO**

Raymond J. Brovero graduated from Rutgers College in 1982 with a degree in communications, but photography was his true love. He was passionate about the photography classes he took at Mason Gross and dreamt of becoming a fashion photographer in New York City.

Shortly after graduation, Brovero became ill with Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer of lymphatic tissue. He died on April 13, 1984. As a tribute to Brovero, his college roommate, John T. Morrison, a BFA graduate of the Mason Gross School, compiled more than 60 of Brovero's photographs and sketches for an exhibit at Rutgers called *A Retrospective of the Work of Raymond J. Brovero*.

Brovero's mother, Marian Brovero, and her family have been loyal annual donors since the mid-1980s.

"My husband, Raymond, and I wanted to create a fund in Ray's memory," Brovero says, principally because "I remember Ray always needing money for film."

Thirty years later, The Brovero Photography Purchase Prize still assists a deserving photography student with the purchase of photography supplies.

Brovero says: "It is our pleasure to give back to Mason Gross, a place that made our son so happy."

**"WE WANTED TO CREATE A FUND
IN RAY'S MEMORY. I REMEMBER RAY ALWAYS
NEEDING MONEY FOR FILM."**

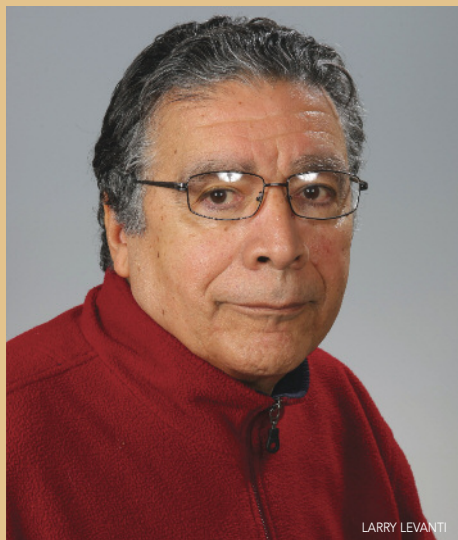
Faculty & Staff NEWS

Visual Arts faculty member **Richard Baker's** installation of work was featured in The Arthur Roger Gallery (New Orleans) booth at Art Basel Miami in December. His fifth exhibition with the Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York, *Richard Baker: Holiday*, ran January 16–February 22.

Music faculty member **Rebecca Cypess** presented a paper called *Listening to Sara Levy: Time, History, and Music in a Late 18th-Century German Jewish Salon* at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies. In January, Cypess was notified that she received a William H. Scheide Research Grant from the American Bach Society for her work on music in Levy's salon. Also in January, Cypess recorded the *Apollo's Muse* program with Julianne Baird and Christa Patton, due for release this spring.

Theater Department chair **David Esbjornson** directed *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, which ran November 29 through January 5 at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., and starred *The Cosby Show's* Malcolm-Jamal Warner. On November 4, Esbjornson directed a reading of Moira Buffini's play *Dinner* for Red Bull Theater's Obie-winning Revelation Reading series in New York City.

Music Department director **Robert Aldridge's** Grammy Award-winning opera, *Elmer Gantry*, was performed at the Tulsa Opera in Oklahoma February 28 and March 2.



Raphael Montañez Ortiz's work is on view in Washington, D.C., at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.



Malcolm-Jamal Warner and Bethany Anne Lind starred in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. Theater chair David Esbjornson directed the production.

Theater faculty member **David P. Gordon** designed the set for Arden Theatre Company's production of *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*. The play opened on December 4 in Philadelphia and was extended to February 15.

Visual Arts faculty member **Raphael Montañez Ortiz's** work is on display in Washington, D.C., at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. His work is part of the exhibit *Damage Control: Art and Destruction Since 1950*, on view through May 26. On October 25, Ortiz performed one of his historic Piano Destruction Concerts on the Hirshhorn's outdoor plaza as part of the opening-night festivities. Other featured artists include Yoko Ono, Ed Ruscha, Ai Weiwei, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol.

Dance faculty member **Doug Elkins's** *MO(OR)TOWN/REDUX* was named one of the top 10 dance pieces of 2013 by Alastair Macaulay of *The New York Times*.

Music faculty member **Maureen Hurd** performed in Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium on December 17 with the New York Choral Society. Performers included musicians from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, among others.

On September 24, Theater faculty member **F. Mitchell Dana** was honored at the Broadway Salutes ceremony in Times Square for his 45 years of work on and around Broadway. Meanwhile, the Royal Opera House in London's production of Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot*, with lighting design by Dana, was simulcast in more than 500 movie theaters in the United States on October 24 and 27. Dana created this design for the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, and it has been used in many revivals over the last three decades.

Visual Arts faculty member **Stephen Westfall's** latest solo exhibition, *Jesus and Bossa Nova*, was on view November 7–January 4 at Lennon, Weinberg, Inc. in New York City. The show garnered notable reviews in *The New Yorker* and *Brooklyn Rail*.

Dance faculty member **Jeff Friedman** was named the Allen Smith Visiting Scholar at Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science in Boston. Friedman's *The Eros of Oral History* lecture and performance was featured at Simmons College in partnership with the Boston Conservatory on January 31.

Bass professor **Timothy Cobb** has been appointed principal bass for the New York Philharmonic.

Keeping the faith

ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING
FILMMAKER AND PROFESSOR SAYS
HIS WORK REQUIRES TENACITY

BY LAURIE GRANIERI

Everyone has heard stories about the *wunderkind*—you know, the third-grader who trots out the Super 8 to recreate Marlon Brando's tomato-garden death scene in *The Godfather*.

Ross Kauffman wasn't that kid.

Growing up in Mahopac, NY, in the 1970s and '80s, Kauffman never figured he'd end up filming documentaries in Syria and Libya, let alone earning an Academy Award or hanging out at the Sundance Film Festival. No one in his family was an artist, filmmaker, or activist.

"I had no clue what I wanted to do in high school and college," says Kauffman, 46, a professor at the Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking. His latest documentary, codirected with Katy Chevigny, is *The E-Team*, about a group of Human Rights Watch activists inves-



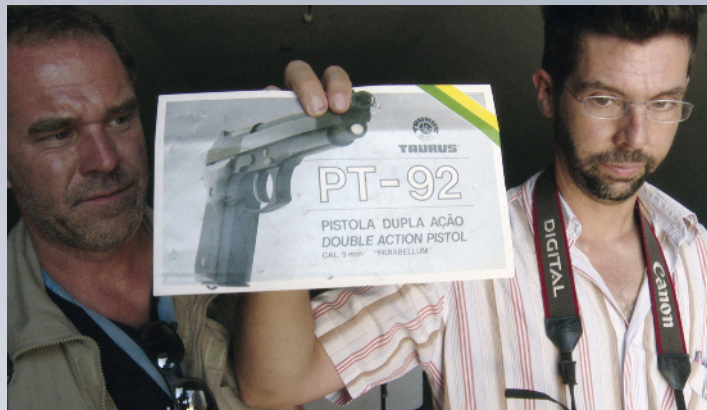
tigating atrocities around the globe. The *E-Team* was screened at Sundance in January 2014, where it won the cinematography award for U.S. documentary.

Kauffman earned a marketing degree from the University of Rhode Island. He says he may have taken a single film course; he can't really recall. A neighbor introduced him to the classics—Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*.

One day, the summer between Kauffman's junior and senior year of college, he wandered into a secondhand bookstore and picked up a copy of Lee R. Bobker's *Elements of Film*.

"I read it in one night," Kauffman says. "I was mesmerized. I kept reading books."

And when Kauffman decided to give filmmaking a go, he simply followed the advice proffered in one of his how-to books: He spent a decade as a film editor, working for HBO, WNET/Thirteen, National Geographic, and The Discovery Channel, among others.



Peter Bouckaert and Fred Abrahams, two Human Rights Watch emergency team members, in Libya, 2011, from the new documentary *The E-Team*. ©Ross Kauffman

One Academy Award—for 2004's *Born into Brothels*, about the children of Calcutta prostitutes—and a slew of other major film awards later, Kauffman says he is still unsure if his projects will amount to anything.

"You don't know if you're wasting your time," he says. "On good days I have faith, and on bad days I don't. I tell my students that: You will probably always feel that contradiction. It's normal to feel that way jumping into the unknown."

Kauffman's two most high-profile works are undeniably gritty. Still, he says he's determined to infuse his films with light.

"There are a lot of depressing documentaries out there," he says. "I try to bring joy and humor to these. In great times of sadness, there's also joy. There's humor, even in the darkest places."

Sure, Kauffman says he hopes that people will think hard about human rights abuses when they view *The E-Team*, but he also just wants perhaps what any other filmmaker might want: to transport his audience.

"I don't expect people to go out and be activists," Kauffman says. "I want to connect people with other people around the world. Hopefully, they will care enough about the characters to care about what the characters care about."

"Frank Capra once said something like, 'If you want to send a message, try Western Union,'" Kauffman continues. "We're storytellers. If a message is to be had, hopefully people will latch on."



Kauffman at a refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya, 2012, shooting the documentary *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, broadcast on PBS.



Kauffman in Libya, 2011.

FRED ABRAHAMS

news

Student & Alumni



Alum Amy Feldman's *Spiritual Grey*, 2013, was on view in Paris earlier this year. Acrylic on canvas. 20 inches by 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Blackston.

Visual Arts alum **Caetlynn Booth** is the recipient of a grant from the Queens Council on the Arts, supporting work that will draw from the urban landscape of Queens, NY, in the coming year.

Throughout the fall Theater alum **Melanie Aponte** served as a production assistant on Julie Taymor's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Theatre for a New Audience in New York City. The show ran from October 19 through January 2.

Music alum **Garry Ianco** is concertmaster for Cameron Mackintosh's new production of *The Phantom of the Opera*, which is touring the United States.

This winter, Theater alum **Michael Warner** filmed two more episodes of the award-winning Netflix series *House of Cards*.

Warner also appears in Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal*, which opened in January and closed on March 2 at Roundabout Theatre Company in New York City.

Paul De Muro and **Amy Feldman**, both Visual Arts alums, exhibited at Galerie Zürcher in Paris January 18 through March 8. Feldman also had a solo exhibition, *Grey Area*, at the Sorry We're Closed gallery in Brussels from January 16 through March 16.

Theater alum **Paul Kite** appeared in Lincoln Center's production of *Macbeth*. The show, which ran October 24 through January 12, starred Ethan Hawke.

Music alum **Andy Megill** has accepted a position as full professor and director of choral activities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Mason Gross alums pull a Banksy on New York City

PRINTS 'SIGNED' BY FAMOUS STREET ARTIST SELL OUT IN 60 MINUTES

BY ALEXANDRA KLAASSEN

British artist Banksy is known for his satirical commentary on modern society, which he makes through graffiti and other forms of street art. The artist was in residence in New York City late last year as part of his "Better Out Than In" art series. In October 2013, Banksy set up shop near Central Park and offered his work for only \$60. He only sold six pieces in seven hours.

Then Rutgers alums Lance Pilgrim and Dave Cicirelli, both Banksy fans, decided to run with his idea. In mid-October, in the same spot and for the same price, they sold faux Banksy pieces and caught it all on video. All 40 pieces were fakes and came with a "certificate of inauthenticity." Pilgrim and Cicirelli sold out in an hour. They even sold the sign that proclaimed "Fake Banksy."

Below is an edited and condensed Q&A with the Rutgers alums.

How did you come up with the idea?

Cicirelli: We were just sort of joking around, and it occurred to me that it was actually something we could do, and from there we came up with the idea for the certificate and sort of rolled from there.

Were you surprised that it worked so well?

Pilgrim: We did have a feeling of the potential of how successful it was going to be, but we definitely didn't anticipate the immediacy of that as far as how fast everything sold out.

Cicirelli: Even before we set [up] the stand we were selling canvases.

Why was the hoax so successful?

Pilgrim: Well, a lot of that obviously has to do with the media hype around Banksy right now. And a big thing that has to do with it is just the commentary



The purported Banksy himself: Passersby snapped photos of alum Lance Pilgrim's father, Eustace Michael Pilgrim. They were convinced that he was the famed (and reclusive) London street artist Banksy.

Visual Arts alumna **Judith Larzelere** (formerly Halpern) has been awarded The Fellowship for Craft 2014 from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts.

Theater alum **Bryan Dykstra** played the lead role of Johnny Rooster in *Jerusalem* at the San Francisco Playhouse. The *San Francisco Examiner* praised his portrayal for being “enthralled” and “complex.” The play ran from January 21 through March 8.

Dance alums **Kyle Georgina Marsh**, **Elizabeth Rose Zwierzynski**, and **Meagan Woods** presented work on December 28 and 29 in New Brunswick as part of *Motion: New Dance Works* at George Street Playhouse. The concert wrapped up a three-month residency sponsored by the city’s Lustig Dance Theatre and coLAB Arts.

In February, two Music Department undergrads took first and third prize at the annual Percussive Arts Society Snare Drum Competition at New York University. **Paul Nalesnik** took first place, **Tom O’Hara** placed third. O’Hara performed an original composition.

Three Rutgers acting alumnae appeared in the Goodman Theatre production of *Luna Gale*, a new play by Rebecca Gilman. **Reyna**

de Courcy, **Mary Beth Fisher**, and **Jordan Baker** were in the cast of the world premiere, which ran January 18 through February 23 in Chicago.

Dance alum **Hillary Pearson** has joined Compagnie Stefanie Batten Bland. Pearson will perform in the new work *PATIENT(CE)*.

Music student **Angelique Mouyis** attended the Modern Greek Studies Association Conference in Bloomington, IN, November 14 to 17 as a representative of Rutgers. She presented a paper titled *Mikis Theodorakis: Reimagining Greece through the Popular Art Song*. Also, a song Mouyis composed was featured at the MuSE Sounds of the Arts Festival 2013 in November.

Theater alum **Stefanie Genda** served as assistant to the costume supervisor for John Patrick Shanley’s *Outside Mullingar* at Manhattan Theatre Club, which opened on Broadway January 23 and ran through March 16.

Visual Arts alumnae **Amy Feldman**, **Heather Hart**, and **Jennie C. Jones** were all 2013 recipients of Painters and Sculptors Grants awarded by the Joan Mitchell Foundation. These grants of \$25,000 acknowledge

painters and sculptors creating work of exceptional quality.

Theater alumna **Sadie Alexandru** continued her recurring role as Scarlett during last fall’s season of AMC’s award-winning TV series *Mad Men*. Alexandru also appeared in an episode of the ABC Family series *The Fosters*, in the role of Colleen.

Theater alum **Bryan Fenkart** starred in the new Billie Joe Armstrong musical *These Paper Bullets!*, directed by Jackson Gay at Yale Rep March 14 through April 5. *These Paper Bullets!* is billed as “a modish rip-off of William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*.”

Theater alum **Jim Ortlieb** is in the Broadway production of John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*. The production began previews March 19 and runs through July 27, with James Franco and Chris O’Dowd in the lead roles.

Visual arts alumnae **Rachel Malin** and **Martha Clippinger** were selected to participate in the American Academy of Arts and Letters’, *Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts*, which ran from March 6 through April 12 in New York City.

as far as Banksy purposefully [selling his work on the street at low prices]. This exposes how people are so influenced by hype and the media, where no matter how many times we said something was a fake, they still wanted it, and it seems like they wanted it even more.

Did most people think that these were real Banksys?

Pilgrim: Absolutely. Some people felt that this was still a Banksy ploy. Some people even thought that my father was Banksy. They were trying to take pictures of him.

Cicirelli: Yeah, my favorite was the cab driver that pulled over with passengers still in the cab and the meter still running and tried to get [Lance’s] father to admit that he was Banksy.

What else did you want to do or communicate besides the fact that you were pranking a bunch of people?

Cicirelli: Humor was always a part of the statement, but it wasn’t meant to just simply be for some laughs—it was meant to create a lens to view how hype was creating this value and was making people attracted to this art.

Pilgrim: We also wanted to expose how full of hot air New Yorkers are. We claim that we have our fingers on the pulse and we’re in the know about everything that’s hot and not and everything that’s in pop culture, and yet Banksy sets this up, and people just walk by. I consider myself a relatively savvy New Yorker and a person

who is in the know not only as far as things in pop culture but also art-wise, and I know that if I saw these pieces, I would have bought one.

“[THE HOAX] WAS MEANT TO CREATE A LENS TO VIEW HOW HYPE WAS CREATING THIS VALUE AND WAS MAKING PEOPLE ATTRACTED TO THIS ART.”

— Alum Dave Cicirelli

Cicirelli: What I always admired about Banksy was the way he announced his residency to New York City. It was almost like a super-villain announcing a crime wave, and the mayor speaks out, and then the citizens all go crazy and are treating New York City like it’s a giant treasure hunt. That is what’s really compelling—it’s what Banksy is able to do, [putting] people so on edge that they’re willing to buy something that explicitly is told to people in three different ways has no value.

Has anyone contacted you to request a refund or to complain?

Cicirelli: I’m waiting, but no.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LANCE PILGRIM AND DAVE CICIRELLI

The hoaxers pose in front of their sold-out stand. Eustace Michael Pilgrim, from left, and Visual Arts alumni Lance Pilgrim and Dave Cicirelli.

Susan Dazzo, Graphic Designer

Mason Gross School of the Arts
Bachelor of Fine Arts '86



I admit Rutgers was not my first choice when deciding where I wanted to go to college. I chose Rutgers over a New York City art school because it was within my budget. I graduated with a BFA in graphic design and photography.

But as I look back at the education I received at Mason Gross and my career as a graphic designer, I am very grateful for my Rutgers experience. As I moved through my career and worked with and/or got to know some of the best art directors and editors in my field—I worked at *Men's Journal*, *GQ* magazine, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Runner's World*, and then spent more than five years as the art director at *Parenting* magazine—I realized that Mason Gross had served me well. Giving to the annual fund is one way to express my gratitude.

I have fond memories of working with my classmates and professors in the small visual arts program. Two of my closest friends today were my classmates at Mason Gross. Additionally, I benefited from the larger and broader course offerings afforded by the university, including art history and political science.

After my third child was born, I gave up my full-time career in New York City to spend more time with my children. Following my time as the art director at *Parenting*, I wrote and designed a book for moms called *Mom's Guide To Being a Superhero*.

I continued to do freelance work, and for the past five years I have worked part time as the consulting creative director at *ADDitude Magazine*, a magazine for families living with attention deficit disorder and learning disabilities.

I have given to the annual fund since graduation because my years at Mason Gross were rewarding both personally and professionally. I'd like to help give others the opportunity to attend the school. Small as my contributions may be, I'd like to think they help Mason Gross grow in prestige as a quality school for the arts.

I like the idea of supporting education in general, but specifically affordable arts education. I hope you will join me by supporting Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Susan Dazzo

RUTGERS

Mason Gross School
of the Arts

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To make a gift to the Mason Gross School of the Arts, please contact the Office of Development at 848-932-5237, or use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation to the Office of Development, Mason Gross School of the Arts, 33 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Please make checks payable to the *Rutgers University Foundation*.

Pilates teacher-training launches

BY RISA BARISCH

Breathe deep and focus: This is not your local gym's Pilates program. Last August, the Mason Gross Extension Division and the Department of Dance launched the Polestar Comprehensive Pilates Teacher Training program.

The five-semester series is taught by Kim Gibilisco, a lecturer in the Department of Dance and an alum, who says she had wanted to implement the Polestar program at Mason Gross "for a long, long time." She worked with Polestar cofounder Brent Anderson to bring the program to Rutgers—the first time it has been offered in a university setting.

"This program trains professionals to keep their bodies healthy and strong" as they learn over 200 exercises on Pilates equipment with names like the Reformer, Cadillac, and Spine Corrector, says Gibilisco. The courses also teach assessment and problem-solving skills that, according to



PHOTOS BY KEITH MUCCILLI

Polestar training program classes take place in the Soma Center in Nicholas Music Center. Kim Gibilisco, above, teaches the five-class series.

value to their educational degrees or established careers, says Gibilisco.

And those careers need not be confined to the dance studio or stage: Pilates professionals have gone on to careers at medical facilities, performing arts conservatories, and fitness centers throughout the world.

Although the training program and equipment may be more serious than at the local gym, interested students shouldn't be intimidated by the Reformer.

"The workout is surprisingly relaxing and revitalizing," Anderson says. "It's a program that works for everyone, regardless of age or condition."



Anderson, "will increase students' preparedness to teach the full repertoire with precision and sensitivity to the individual or class they are teaching."

The 453-hour program is open to the public and is geared toward movement professionals with prior Pilates training or experience in kinesiology, yoga, or dance. Classes take place in the Soma Center, a studio on the lower level of the Nicholas Music Center that focuses on motion-specific training and rehabilitation for dancers.

After completion of a studio-based internship this fall, students will sit for the Pilates Method Alliance Board Certification Exam to become credentialed teachers of the practice, adding substantial professional



SAY HELLO TO HOLLYWOOD



And the winner is...Rutgers Center For Digital Filmmaking student **Jeanpaul Isaacs**, who was one of six student filmmakers out of 1,000 (!) chosen by actor Channing Tatum to be part of "Team Oscar."

Besides spending a week in Hollywood to attend industry events and meet-and-greets with filmmakers, Isaacs delivered Oscar statuettes to celebrity presenters at the Academy Awards on March 2 and got plenty of face time on the broadcast, seen by an estimated 43.7 million viewers.

"To walk on the red carpet and be onstage with the presenters is to be part of cinematic history," says Isaacs, who is set to head to the Cannes Film Festival in May to screen his short film, *The Youth*. "I am completely grateful and blessed."



Dean's Choice

Visual Arts students Amanda Innis and Patrick Skolsky pose with Dean George B. Stauffer in his office at Civic Square. As part of the Dean's Choice initiative, Stauffer is displaying Innis and Skolsky's paintings for the year.



The Romantics

These couples found love (and sometimes, marriage) at Mason Gross

*College—what's love got to do with it?
Plenty, where these couples are concerned.*

Below are the stories of four couples who met at Mason Gross and went on to build a life together beyond Rutgers.

Tim & Elisa

ACTING THE PART

Sometimes you audition for a role to be close to the girl. **Tim DeKay**? He didn't even need to try out. He met his wife, **Elisa Taylor**, on the first day of class in Mason Gross's MFA Theater program. They were paired up as scene partners.

"I looked over, I'll never forget, her hair was in a ponytail. I thought, 'Oh, man,'" DeKay says. "[After], we would meet together and work on scenes together."

For DeKay, connecting with Taylor as an actor was the first step in their relationship.

"When it comes to artistic work, you must be open and raw," he says. "You really get to know these people in a strong way and must trust that you can be vulnerable with them. You're constantly together all day."

The necessary trust and vulnerability allowed DeKay and Taylor to become closer.

"We were friends for the longest time," DeKay remembers, "[but] second semester, we got serious."

The pair married in May 1991 in Phoenix, a year after graduation. Since then they've moved to California and have had two children. DeKay now stars on TV in USA's acclaimed series *White Collar*.

In 2010, DeKay and Taylor returned to Mason Gross with their kids. On Douglass Campus, they played Whiffle Ball by the pond also known as the Passion Puddle. It is said that if a couple walks around the pond twice, they are going to marry.

"We made sure we walked around it two times," DeKay says with a laugh.

Going strong: Tim DeKay and Elisa Taylor on the last day of school; on break from filming *White Collar*, DeKay enjoys a ride with Taylor in 2010.



The Passion Puddle on Douglass Campus figured into Tim DeKay and Elisa Taylor's love story.

Chris & Cheryl

CASTING A SPELL

From the beginning, **Chris Chevins** and **Cheryl Peterka** shared many passions. First, there was the mutual attraction.

"One night, a number of performance-art pieces were staged at Douglass; I was engaged by the work, but enraptured by Cheryl," Chevins recalls. "It was the night I first remember falling totally under her spell."

The couple met as Visual Arts MFA students in 1981. Peterka's initial impression of Chevins: "funny, charming, and enormously talented." Chevins recalls her "warm brown eyes," her keen intellect, and "her highly creative art work."

Although Peterka was a sculptor and Chevins was a painter, Peterka notes that even before they met their "artwork was very similar, in an odd way."

"[It] made us feel very connected," she adds. Chevins agrees: "I think it was one reason we really 'got' each other from the beginning."

The couple got married in 1991 at City Hall in New York City. Now their taste for new ventures has got the couple into designing, renovating, and managing apartments in New York City. After 33 years together, art and exploration are still the keystone of their relationship.

"In the beginning it was pure passion," Chevins says, "but we never stopped being





Cheryl Peterka and Chris Chevins immediately connected at Mason Gross in the '80s, at right. The apartment renovators continue to challenge each other today.



surprised and challenged by each other over the years. We appreciate each other's sense of humor, and we learned how to be helpful and good listeners... I think we were extremely lucky to meet each other."

Myles & Lorraine

IN HARMONY

Myles Weinstein first saw Lorraine Kelley singing in a production of *Candide* at the Nicholas Music Center.

But he had a problem: Kelley was onstage, while Weinstein, a percussionist, was stuck in the pit.

"I was sitting in that pit looking up at her, and I thought she was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen," Weinstein remembers.

The then-head of the Music Department, Valerie Goodall, rectified things. She took them both by the hand and introduced them at the opening-night party.

"That was the perfect in for me," Weinstein says. "My heart was racing, [and] for the rest of the



Lorraine Kelley and Myles Weinstein now and (below) during their Rutgers days.



run I had the pleasure of watching her perform."

The couple married in October of 1987, after Weinstein completed his master's of music degree. In 2001, Weinstein left his job to start his own booking agency for jazz artists: Unlimited Myles. The couple's collaboration began when Kelley took over the travel arrangements in 2003.

"[My former boss] asked me: 'Who are you going to have work with you?' " Weinstein recalls. "I told him Lorraine. He said it would never work. But it has—we have moments where we snip at each other, but that's normal."

Kelley agrees: "For me to get on the phone and make the hard sell is not good."

"And my main thing is booking gigs," Weinstein adds. "Anything that takes me away from that is a frustration."

One of the first artists they signed was Kenny Barron, who was a music professor at Rutgers when they attended.

"It was difficult to call him 'Kenny,' " Kelley admits with a laugh.

Amy & Chris

NEIGHBORS, PARTNERS, FAMILY

Amy DiGennaro and Chris Willcox met, had a family, and did live happily ever after—down the street from one another. They met in 1996 at a meet-and-greet reception for Visual Arts MFA students and soon became romantically involved. They moved to Minneapolis in 2000 and had their sons, Jasper and Emmett, in 2004 and 2006 respectively.

In 2007, after 11 years together, Willcox and DiGennaro split up.

"When we broke up I thought: 'Oh, that was a failure,' " Willcox admits.

"It isn't what we planned for—no one says, 'Let's have kids and break up,' " DiGennaro agrees, "but it's just a plot twist."

For Willcox and DiGennaro, breaking up did not mean that they needed to break apart their family—only rearrange it. Two summers ago, DiGennaro moved into a house two blocks away from Willcox. Jasper and Emmett now jump between the houses throughout the week.

Both artists are frank about how the separation and the close quarters can be challenging: "I've never been so angry at someone sometimes," DiGennaro admits, "but [I] always go back to the idea that we love each other and we love our kids."

"It's like any other relationship where we negotiate things and compromise," Willcox says. "We don't want to romanticize [this]—it's a hard road."

Sometimes, stereotypes of separation and divorce complicate Willcox and DiGennaro's relationship.

"People want to say, 'What are you? Partners? Exes?' I call her my kids' other mom," DiGennaro says.

For DiGennaro, this confusion has a larger impact on how she thinks of her family.

"The story of romance in our culture is a monolith. The reality of building a life together is something entirely different," she points out. "We've built a life together, and that building changes... Part of me wants to build a mythology that combats the myth of a 'forever marriage.' "

"We're endorsing divorce now," Willcox jokes. Willcox and DiGennaro credit their role as artists for giving them the tools to reject a conventional separation. As Willcox points out, there is "no book for us."

"For our MFA theses we [both] talked about liminal space—an ambiguous space between things," she adds. "We've created that space now [so] we have to keep negotiating."

"One of the reasons we're able to keep going is because we care about meaning as artists," DiGennaro points out. "Even when it's hard, we don't stick with the meanings we know. We make alternatives."

Inset below, Amy DiGennaro and Chris Willcox in DiGennaro's studio in 1997; below, the family celebrates together in 2006.



If you would like to share your own Mason Gross love story, please send it to andianniv@masongross.rutgers.edu.

2013 ALUMNI HOLIDAY RECEPTION

Sure, the weather outside was frightful, but Mason Gross revelers reveled, big time, on December 17 at the Alumni Holiday Reception in New York City. Nearly 200 alums from all four departments braved the cold and the wet to nibble on empanadas, dive into the guacamole, raise a glass (or three), and reconnect at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Here are some out-takes from the merry occasion.



PHOTOS BY KEITH MUCCILLI



SPARKED

Mason Gross School artists discuss the elements that fuel their work

Composer, instrument designer, and professor of music technology Steven Kemper works with sensors, machines, and computers to create new forms of electronic music. He has collaborated on projects ranging from interactive belly dance to bicycle-powered music to musical robotics. In addition to these projects, Kemper composes music for acoustic instruments, dance, video, and networked systems.

Here, Kemper discusses the sources of his inspiration:

COLLABORATION

Many of my projects are collaborations with composers, performers, dancers, artists, and technologists. **The highlights of collaborative projects are the creative results that emerge, reflecting each contributor's unique voice.**

PHYSICAL INTERACTION

Playing an acoustic instrument, there is a one-to-one relationship between a physical gesture and sound production. For example, plucking an open guitar string will produce a specific pitch, and fretting that string will produce a higher pitch. Computer-generated music can obscure this relationship, as computers don't need input to make sound. **Using sensors, we can bridge the physical and virtual worlds of sound, collecting data from actions in the physical world and mapping them to music in a variety of ways.** By sensing how fast a dancer is moving, we can use that data to control tempo, so that faster movements create a faster tempo.

MYTH

Myths are collective expressions of human imagination. They can be serious, fantastical, or profane, but typically touch upon themes of the

utmost importance to human existence, such as where we came from, and how we should act. Myths also typically occur in a timeless past—it is this prehistoric time that I often attempt to evoke in my own music.



PLAY

My creative process typically consists of playing with an idea or technology and seeing what crystallizes from that experience. **I don't often know what a piece of music will sound like until I have tried many different approaches.**

DIY

Learning how to "Do It Yourself" is empowering. Designing circuits, programming, building, and soldering are skills anyone can pick up. **Understanding how to hack and build reveals how technology works at a deep level.** This knowledge is useful for both practical purposes (building and fixing things) as well as looking critically at the role of technology in society.

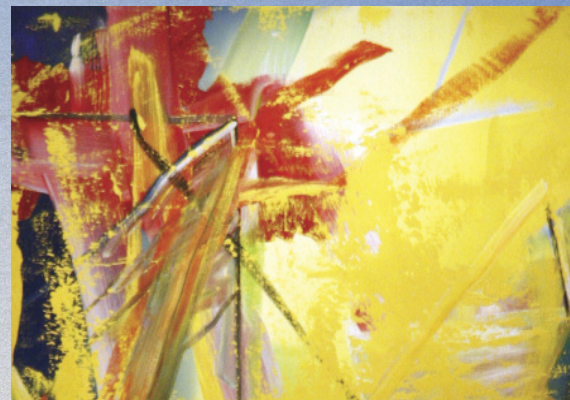
STARS

Stars are permanent fixtures in the night sky. The stars that I can see are the same ones seen by all humans who have ever lived in the Northern Hemisphere. **When I look at stars I feel connected to the generations who have lived before me.**



ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

The paintings of Rothko, Pollock, de Kooning, and Richter have been extremely important to me. Their work has shown me how **basic elements of art—color, texture, and shape—can be beautiful without reference to figure or narrative.** These ideas translate easily into the realm of music, which is inherently abstract.



STUDENTS

The enthusiasm and imagination of my students is a constant source of inspiration. Though I may have listened to a piece of music hundreds of times, **my students will always find interpretations that are new to me.** Helping students work on a new composition or develop a new technology enables me to continually reexamine my own process.



SUMMER'S HOT

at Mason Gross



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FREE MUSIC AND DANCE July 16 to August 6

Boston Brass

Quintet performing jazz and classical music with their own brand of brassy humor
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Nicholas Music Center

7.16

Rutgers Jazz Faculty

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July 23, 7 p.m.
Nicholas Music Center

7.23

Summer Airs

Original choreography by Mason Gross faculty
July 24, 7 p.m.
Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater

7.24

Douglas Dunn and Dancers

Eclectic program by a leader in contemporary dance
July 30, 7 p.m.
Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater

7.30

JACK Quartet

Innovative string ensemble, winner of
New Music USA's 2013 Trailblazer Award
August 6, 7 p.m.
Nicholas Music Center

8.06

Venues are in the Mason Gross Performing Arts Center,
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Admission is free; no tickets are required.

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JODY SOMERS

Be here now

DANCE STUDENTS TRAIN IN REMAINING PRESENT

BY RISA BARISCH



JODY SOMERS

For many students, winter break means extra sleep, seeing old friends, and home-cooked meals. For **Shelley White**, it meant learning to be a statue.

In January, during a two-week winter intensive with Shen Wei Dance Arts, White and 20 other Mason Gross dance students learned a style of movement that challenged their minds as much as their bodies.



Kate Jewett, above, rehearsal director for Shen Wei Dance Arts, led a group of Mason Gross dance students during a winter intensive. Students will perform Shen Wei's "Behind Resonance" at DancePlus Spring.

"All a statue can do is be present," says White, a fourth-year dancer. "Trying to depict that, all you can think about is presence and concentrated, precise movement. It's a lot of mental work."

The Shen Wei technique, with roots in classical Chinese opera and visual art, focuses on conscious choice in movement, requiring intense concentration.

"The focus is on presence over choreography," says **Shawn Brush**, a third-year dance student. "It's a challenge to always be thinking."

Leading the dancers on this cerebral journey was Kate Jewett, rehearsal director for Shen Wei Dance Arts who joined the company in 2005. The rigorous schedule included morning technique classes followed by solid five-hour blocks of afternoon rehearsals for "Behind Resonance," a piece created by Wei that students will perform at the DancePlus Spring concert, running April 25 through May 4. The work was inspired by the sculptures of Antony Gormley and is a meditation on mindfulness through slow, deliberate motions.

Students draped in dark-gray velvet costumes (designed by dance alumna **Meagan**

Woods) rolled across the Loree Dance Studio floor in slow motion as Jewett instructed in a calm but firm voice—"Feel the detail. It's not set in stone. It's the easiest thing you ever did."

Although these directives may sound like they could be part of a relaxing evening yoga class, this was no end-of-day wind-down.

"The speed and the specific way that they're being asked to use their bodies makes this an incredibly challenging technique," says Julia Ritter, chair and artistic director of the Dance Department, as well as a Mason Gross alum. "Slow is much harder than fast."

Wei, who founded his company in 2000 and became internationally known after choreographing the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, does not usually share his work with students, says Ritter.

Jewett demands the highest-quality output from her students and stresses the serious professionalism of the New York City dance world, where, she says, "there is little room for

laziness or excuses."

"This is a day in the life of a professional dancer," adds Kim Gibilisco, a choreographer and lecturer in the Dance Department and a Mason Gross alum. "Kate does not lower the bar for students."

And the dancers certainly didn't shy away from the challenge, as Gibilisco observed.

"I think the students really end up surprising each other and themselves with how far they take it in a week," she says.

Students got to see the payoff of such professionalism when Shen Wei Dance Arts performed at the State Theatre in New Brunswick in early February—with Jewett getting an extra burst of hoots and hollers during the rounds of applause.

For Brush, working with Jewett was a highlight of his Mason Gross dance education.

"I learned more than I ever thought I would," he says. "This experience has been the time of my life."

FORGING TIES

The Mason Gross School of the Arts and the State Theatre share more than just a block in the heart of New Brunswick. A valuable partnership has been growing between the organizations since 2008, when the Stephen Petronio Dance Company came to the city through the Mason Gross Presents series, performing at the historic 1,800-seat arts center and leading an on-campus residency for dance students.

By sharing resources, the two organizations are able to bring to New Brunswick international artists who might not otherwise consider performing in the city.

Mark W. Jones, president and CEO of the State Theatre, has said that Mason Gross is an "essential partner with the State Theatre in the arts renaissance that anchors New Brunswick's community renewal."

The collaboration has proved to be "very fruitful" for the Dance Department, says its chair and artistic director, Julia Ritter. Ritter has worked with Jones to bring the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and the Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak Dance Company to the city and to Mason Gross for residencies and performances.

The partnership also benefits Mason Gross musicians: Rutgers Symphony Band performed at the theater with the Boston Brass in mid-March; the Rutgers Symphony Orchestra and Rutgers Jazz Ensemble both performed at the State Theatre in the fall.

"The excitement was palpable in our musicians, who felt part of something professional," says Kynan Johns, director of orchestras at the school. "The audience reaction to the quality of our orchestra gave all of our students great satisfaction—and introduced the orchestra to a new public."

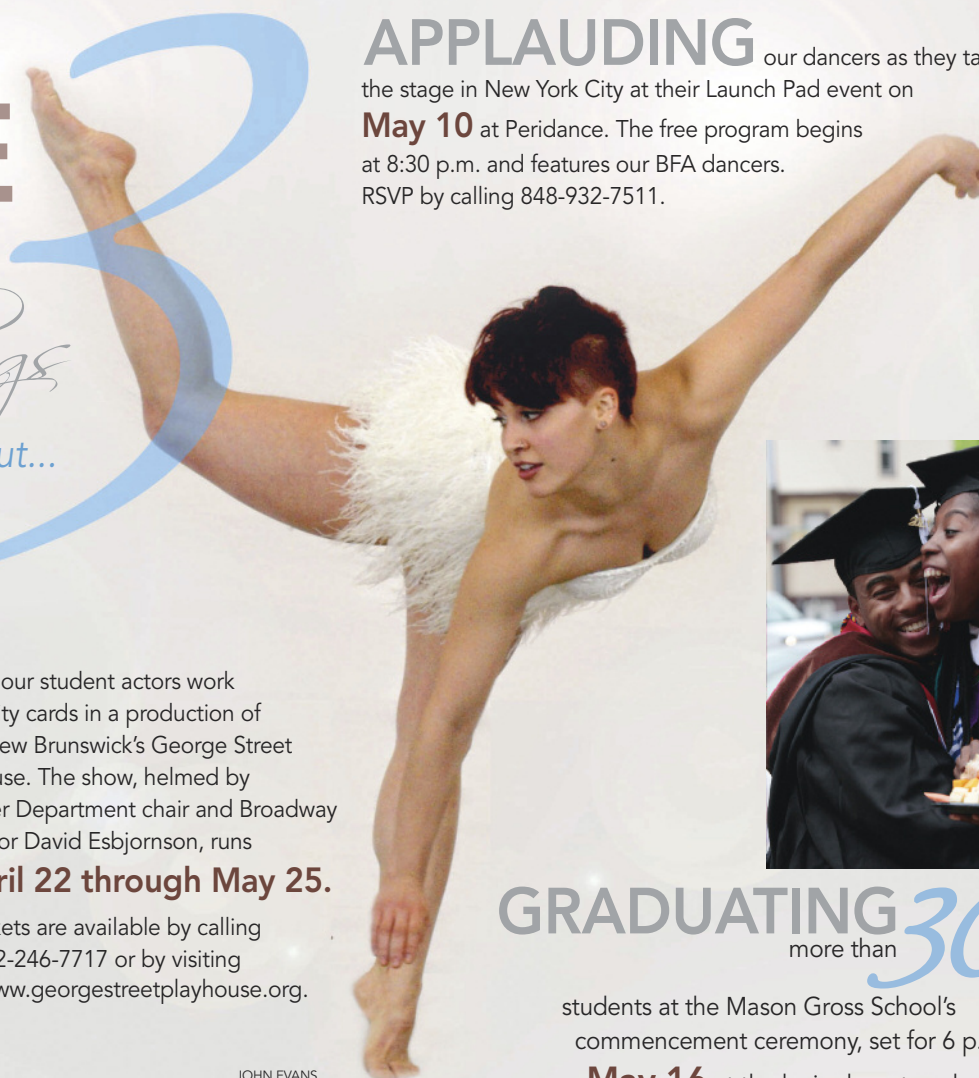
"Mark understands educational quality," Ritter says. "Together, we're able to expose students to world-class artists."

TAKE

Three things
we're all
jazzed up about...

APPLAUDING

our dancers as they take the stage in New York City at their Launch Pad event on **May 10** at Peridance. The free program begins at 8:30 p.m. and features our BFA dancers. RSVP by calling 848-932-7511.



WATCHING

our student actors work alongside the pros and earn Equity cards in a production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* at New Brunswick's George Street Playhouse. The show, helmed by Theater Department chair and Broadway director David Esbjornson, runs **April 22 through May 25.**



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JOHN EVANS



JODY SOMERS

GRADUATING

more than **300**

students at the Mason Gross School's commencement ceremony, set for 6 p.m. on **May 16** at the lovingly restored State Theatre in New Brunswick.

Why we came to Mason Gross

BY ALEXANDRA KLAASSEN

Some may dismiss the idea that dance could be an intellectual pursuit. Not Julia Ritter: Ritter, chair and artistic director of the Dance Department, has said that she wants to make thoughtful, global citizens out of her students.

For siblings and Mason Gross dance students **Kiana** and **Elias Rosa**, this approach is ideal.

Mason Gross is part of "a university, not just a performing arts college," Kiana points out. "You get a mix of academics and physical engagement."

She says the program's emphasis on mind-body engagement is appealing.

"[In dance] we work on our bodies, but we also

have improvisational classes on creativity and our personal style," Kiana says. "Sometimes we even sit down and talk about dance and culture. [As a dancer] you need to be in tune with what is going on with the world."

Elias is in his second semester at Mason Gross, but he already has a favorite class: improvisation.

"It is a time to create and let loose, to find yourself in organic movement," Elias says. "Improvisation is a time to view yourself as an artist."

In the beginning, Kiana says, Mason Gross seemed "intimidating. There are all these dancers, and it can be competitive."

However, she soon got over those nerves. "Everyone has been very encouraging here," she says.

And for Elias, Kiana's presence at Mason Gross is a bonus.

"We look out for each other," he says.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN

MYTH #1

**RUTGERS IS
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NEED MY
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FACT: Nationwide, state budget shortfalls have led to a decline in public funding for higher education. New Jersey is no exception. In 1990, state appropriations covered 67 percent of the cost of a Rutgers education; today, they cover only 32 percent.

For more common myths about giving to Rutgers—and the facts that debunk them, please scan this QR code or visit support.rutgers.edu/myths.



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Clayton Mathews performs *The Rape of Lucretia* at Le Poisson Rouge in New York City with Sahoko Sato in the title role, November 2013.

KEITH MUCCILLI

STUDENT VOICES: Clayton Mathews

Bass-baritone Clayton Mathews started out as a baseball player and hoped to make it to the major leagues. But when an injury in rookie camp curtailed his dreams of turning pro, he enrolled at Barry University in Florida. The history major joined the choir on a whim and ultimately graduated with a degree in voice performance. Mathews, who is earning an Artist Diploma here at Mason Gross, shares his story below.

It is coming up on 10 years since I sang my first note. At that time opera was never a field that I was ambitious about. The only thing that I knew about opera at that point was hearing Elmer Fudd singing "Kill the Wabbit" about the cartoon character Bugs Bunny, and it turns out he's singing Wagner.

To this day I still don't believe that this is the reality of my life. Being a baseball player for as long as I could breathe, you can only imagine the difficulty of transitioning to the life of an opera singer. It's like transitioning from being an apple to being a steak—especially growing up in poverty on the North Side of St. Louis, where being anything positive bordered on the unrealistic.

The most frequent question that I get asked is how in the world did I get into opera? In all the honesty in my heart the answer is: I don't know. It really just happened, but I'm glad it did because it saved my life.

I didn't know what to do after I was injured and my dreams of being a professional baseball player were ripped out of my heart. Opera came and gave me a life, purpose, and most

importantly, self-worth, because there is nothing worse than feeling worthless.

Before I came to Mason Gross, just like any other student I applied to and auditioned for other schools. One thing that I learned about a lot of these conservatories and programs from friends and colleagues and my own general experience is that a lot of these programs

want you to already have the necessary tools to function in the professional world. It just seems as if a lot of these schools want you to be perfect in order for them to teach you.

Personally, I think the definition of a prestigious school is a school that sees the beauty in your imperfections; a school that has teachers

whom students aren't afraid to make a mistake in front of; a school that doesn't just see you for what you are, but what you could be. Someone asked me some time ago where they could find a program like that, and I told that person to look into Mason Gross School of the Arts, because that's the exact school I was talking about.

The experience that I'm having at this school



GEOFFREY BOLTE

BEING A BASEBALL PLAYER FOR AS LONG AS I COULD BREATHE, YOU CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE DIFFICULTY OF TRANSITIONING TO THE LIFE OF AN OPERA SINGER. IT'S LIKE TRANSITIONING FROM BEING AN APPLE TO BEING A STEAK."

has been phenomenal. They accept my transition to opera from a baseball background, and they push me to my potential. They made me see something that I never saw in myself, and they do that that with everyone. This was the best decision of my operatic life, because I actually feel like I've grown as an artist.

IN MEMORIAM: Regina B. Heldrich

On Tuesday, February 4, 2014, the Mason Gross School of the Arts lost one of its most generous patrons and donors when Regina B. Heldrich passed away at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick at the age of 92.

Heldrich's generosity to our school and our students is felt by each of us every day. In addition to establishing a \$500,000 endowed scholarship for classical musicians, Heldrich funded the lovely courtyard named in her honor that is adjacent to the new Mortensen Hall. This gift, in particular, was a wonderful example of two of Regina's passions in life—the arts and gardening. Although she was not well enough to attend the dedication of the new building in September, Heldrich was able to make it the Mortensen Hall groundbreaking event in March 2012. She was also actively engaged in picking a number of the plantings for the Regina B. Heldrich Courtyard during the construction phase of the project.

A trailblazer, Heldrich studied chemistry at Douglass College, then known as the New Jersey College for Women, and had successful careers in both chemical laboratories and administration. Throughout



The new Regina B. Heldrich Courtyard at Mortensen Hall.

the decades after her graduation, Heldrich remained a loyal supporter of Douglass and supported women in science.

Her work did not end there. Heldrich served as chapter president for Meals on Wheels in the greater New Brunswick area for a number of years and even worked as a delivery service volunteer. Throughout her life, she served the following organizations, among others: Saint Peter's Foundation, Parent Teacher Association, and the university's Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum. Heldrich was even recognized across several regional flower shows for her exceptional gardening skills.

A mother, grandmother, wife, pioneering female scientist, philanthropist, and community leader; Heldrich was so many things to so many people and she will be profoundly missed.

In Memoriam

THE MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
COMMUNITY REPORTS WITH GREAT SADNESS
THE LOSS OF ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE
SCHOOL. WE EXTEND OUR CONDOLENCES
TO THEIR FAMILIES AND CLASSMATES.

All death notifications included in this issue of our magazine were submitted to the university after our last issue in the fall of 2013 and before going to press on this issue. We apologize for any omissions and ask that loved ones of deceased alumni, friends, donors to the school, faculty, and staff notify us by emailing records@winants.rutgers.edu. Please be sure to include the full name of the deceased (and name as a student, if it was different), death date, class year, and major. Thank you.

-
- Vincent J. Blundo**, Art, 1970, BA, September 1, 2013
-
- Nina Gromack Chmura**, Music Education, 1948, BA, February 7, 2011
-
- Leonora E. (Steever) Cole**, Music, 1940, BA, November 24, 2008
-
- Adam R. Greene**, Art, 1994, MFA, December 22, 2013
-
- Miriam Yaskin Heins**, Music, 1935, BA, September 3, 2013
-
- Virginia Mastenbrook Jackson**, Music, 1952, BA, August 17, 2013
-
- Martha (Lafferty) James**, Music, 1944, BA, October 24, 2013
-
- Georgette Winchester Pettit**, Music, 1944, BA, September 16, 2011
-
- Kathleen Marie Smith**, Art, 1982, BA, October 18, 2010
-
- Alice (Denny) Stehlik**, Music, 1936, BA, December 7, 2012
-
- Aimee Meier Weaver**, Art, 1935, BA, September 22, 2002
-

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JungHwa Park helps Alexander Lee get ready for their performance in Leonard Bernstein's operetta *Candide*, January 2014, at Nicholas Music Center.

