

JASPER



JASPER
2013
ARTISTS
of the
YEAR

The Word On Columbia Arts | Nov / Dec 2013 | Vol. 003 No. 002

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CENTERFOLD | THE 2ND ACT FILM FESTIVAL



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W/ JONATHAN SHARPE

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WADE SELLERS WITH CINDI BOITER WHO HOLDS THE AUDIENCE AWARD SCULPTURE CREATED FOR THE 2ND ACT FILM FESTIVAL BY COLUMBIA ARTIST MATTHEW KRAMER

Wade Sellers, The 2nd Act Film Festival, presented by *Jasper Magazine*, resulted in more fun, better quality films, and a more generous reception than either Wade or I could have ever imagined. Congratulations to all ten filmmakers who shared their gifts with us last month, and especially to our Audience Award winners O. K. Keyes and Alexis Stratton. Read Wade's article about the festival on page 30.

Finally, in our efforts to recognize the art and design that surrounds us every day, even on unexpected stages and canvases, we've added a new department to the magazine - *The Art of the Meal with Jonathan Sharpe*. Yes, Jonathan is also one of our talented photographers, but as anyone who knows him can attest, he is also a foodie extraordinaire and an aficionado of mixology. Jonathan will be bringing you insightful information on dining-related topics ranging from taste to texture to technique. In the future, you'll see recipes for cocktails, unique approaches to food prep, and magnificent drool-worthy photographs of the best in local dining. Look for Jonathan's first piece on page 22.

Thanks for coming back to the pages of *Jasper* once again. On behalf of all of us from the *Jasper* Staff and Family, enjoy the holidays, enjoy the art, and enjoy one another.

Take Care,

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that we're already spending our third autumn together. Winter will be upon us before we get to visit again. Time dances on and the greater Columbia arts community flourishes along the way. It's an honor to be able to cover the process in our pages.

To start with, our cover story for this issue looks at the results of our second annual Jasper Artists of the Year competition. We were thrilled with the nominees, finalists, and winners and are

confident that their work is representative of much of the new and innovative work being accomplished out there. Do you know someone you'd like to see take part in this competition? (*Maybe that brilliant woman or attractive man in the mirror?*) Then next year, be sure to nominate them. For this year though, we're pleased to announce Terrance Henderson, Vicky Saye Henderson, Janna McMahan, Philip Mullen, and The Restoration as the Jasper 2013 Artists of the Year. For more on each of these artists and their fellow finalists, turn to page 11.

This issue also includes coverage of our first ever foray into throwing a film festival. Headed up by film editor

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

Erratum

The photograph of Bill Schmidt and Debbie McDaniel on page 19 of Jasper vol. 003, no. 001 was shot by Karla Turner. *Jasper* regrets this error.

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A WORLD WITHOUT VIOLENCE



Join us for the Imagine If project! *Jasper* is partnering with Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands (STSM) and other community organizations to launch a new arts and anti-violence initiative called "Imagine If: Envisioning a World without Violence." This project is a multi-media, multi-genre effort that asks artists to imagine a world without violence and then show us what that world might look like. Selected pieces will be displayed at the STSM's kickoff event for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), to be held at Tapp's Arts Center on April 3, 2013. At the kickoff, project participants and other local writers, artists, and musicians will be invited to speak out about violence and its prevention while sharing their creative work.

Additionally, leading up to the kickoff, STSM will host arts workshops twice a month at Tapp's Arts Center starting Saturday, November 23rd, facilitated by local artists and educators. Workshops will vary in medium (including visual, film, photography, creative writing, etc.), and STSM welcomes artists and creative types both as participants and as workshop facilitators.

For more information on the Imagine If project, please contact Alexis Stratton (pec@stsm.org, 803-790-8208) or visit the project's website (<http://www.stsm.org/ImagineIf>). - *Alexis Stratton*

PIRANHAS!

"We cast our blood on the waters the land blood easily passing
For sea blood and we sat in it for a moment with the stain spreading
Out from the boat sat in a new radiance in the pond of blood in the sea
Waiting for fins waiting to spill our guts also in the glowing water."
— "Shark's Parlor," James Dickey, *The New Yorker*, 1965

Once a month on a Friday evening in the back room of Delaney's in Five Points, a close-knit group of professors, graduate students, and interested others gather around a few small tables and perch on bar stools lining the wooden walls. Friendly chatter quiets down as a woman steps up to the microphone and the crowd turns their attention to the makeshift stage in the back corner.

Liz Countryman, Writer in Residence and MFA Coordinator at the University of South Carolina, smiles, greets the room, and, without further ado, introduces the first reader of Shark's Parlor. Shark's Parlor hosts roughly four graduate student readers from the USC Creative Writing MFA program who read a few poems or short pieces of fiction prose. Occasionally, the evening is finished with a special reading by a guest speaker, such as James Laughlin Award-winning poet or Jilian Weise of Clemson who read at the October event.

In November, the INK! Undergraduate English Association introduces a similar opportunity for undergraduates at USC with Piranha's Parlor. INK! is a student organization for English majors and those with literary interests. Their main event is the annual INK! Undergraduate Literary Conference each spring where students present literary research papers. This fall, INK! gives undergraduates a chance to present a different kind of work: original creative writing pieces.

Shark's Parlor inspired INK! officers to create Piranha's Parlor, but differs in several key aspects. First, the MFA program functions as a quasi-screening process for Shark's Parlor readers, whereas Piranha's Parlor is open to all undergraduate majors. Secondly, Piranha's Parlor features more readers, as many as fifteen, presenting for shorter periods of time, allowing more students to participate. The shortened time encourages increased selectivity in which poem, flash fiction, or prose excerpt readers choose to share. Lastly, Piranha's Parlor

lacks the sound of clinking bottles and Delaney's bar atmosphere. INK! aspires to follow in its predecessor's footsteps and host a Piranha's Parlor monthly, perhaps featuring a special Creative Theses Piranha's Parlor to end the academic year.

Shark's Parlor gives graduate students the chance to present their work before a captive audience. Piranha's Parlor similarly extends undergraduates the opportunity to gain experience as presenters and writers and expose their work to the world, offering up their darlings to the sharks in the audience.

Shark's Parlors are held the first Friday of each month at Delaney's Music Pub and Eatery, located at 741 Saluda Avenue, Columbia, SC. For more information, contact Countryman at lizcountryman@yahoo.com.

Piranha's Parlor was first held on Wednesday, November 6, at 6:00 pm. For more information about Piranha's Parlor or INK! Undergraduate English Association, email soink@mailbox.sc.edu. -*Jackie Mohan*

NOCHES LUNÁTICAS IN THE VISTA

Hispanic heritage and creativity are celebrated in the Congaree Vista with an array of performance events, as Palmetto & Luna presents Latino Mes (i.e. Latin Month) at the Trustus Side Door Theatre. For the last decade, the mission of Palmetto & Luna has been to promote understanding and foster awareness of Hispanic/Latino culture via artistic creation and opportunities for cultural expression, thus helping to integrate the rapidly growing Hispanic/Latino population into the mainstream Midlands arts community. As detailed in *Jasper v. 002 no. 001*, projects have included exhibitions of visual art, "Páginas" (a book club focusing on Hispanic/Latino authors), and providing bilingual docents for tours of the Columbia



NOCHE LUNÁTICA BY ALEJANDRO GARCIA-LEMOS

Museum of Art. Theatre has also become an integral part of the group's programming, thanks to La Tropa, Spanish for "The Troupe."

According to P&L board member Betsy Newman, "La Tropa is a group of people who live in Columbia and come from various countries in South America – Colombia, Ecuador and Peru." They work to "present original Spanish-language theatre here in the Midlands – a unique experience for all who live here, and a rare opportunity for Spanish speakers to attend theater in their native language." Newman has directed three live productions over the last three years; the 2012 installment featured plays by Peruvian poet/playwright Lucia Vega and by Colombian-born playwright Julia Vargas, and quickly sold out. A new play by Vargas, *El Diario de un Psiquiatra*, ran this year in mid-November, and featured English super-titles summarizing the action on stage. Newman describes the show as "a wild theatrical romp that skewers the church, the state and sexual mores," with a surprise ending. Included in the cast were Vargas herself, Jorge Cetina, Ysaúl Flores, José Luís Gallardo, Lucy Jaimes, Marco Marmolejo, Ivone Ramírez, Wendy Schneider, and Haydee Rieken, many of

whom appeared in last year's production as well. P&L board member Alejandro García-Lemos, whose painting "Noche de LUNA 2013" is featured in the Latino Mes poster, says that Vargas has lived here in Columbia for the last seven years, but "has been writing poetry for about 15 years; her passion for theatre started three years ago when she started writing and collaborating on plays for La Tropa."

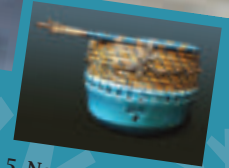
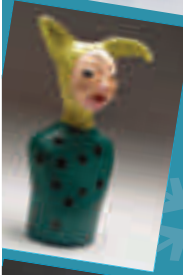
Additional events are scheduled for Thursday, November 21-Saturday, November 24, when theatre is joined by film and dance. Dubbed "Noches Lunáticas," the three-day weekend kicks off during Vista Lights with "Noche de Luces, Cámara y Acción." Colombian-born director/cinematographer and New York Film Academy graduate Gustavo Montaña will present several of his short films and music videos, followed by a talkback session in English and in Spanish. A local resident on and off for the last seven years, Montaña most often uses local musicians and actors, and his work frequently focuses on the many challenges of the growing Latino community throughout the state. In his artist statement, Montaña says that "in a deceptively calm city such as Colum-

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bia, South Carolina, there are thousands of stories and thousands of characters waiting to speak their hearts. I have been lucky to hear the cries of Latinos and artists in this city, and for brief moments I have been able to describe their battles and show a glimpse of their passions."

"Noche de Teatro," Friday, November 21, features *Asterión*, an original one-man show, written and performed in English by Bolivian performance artist Diego Mattos Vazualdo. Asterion is one of the names given to the mythological Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull creature «condemned to live his life in a labyrinth. But what would happen if the labyrinth became a waiting room, and the Minotaur an immigrant?" Vazualdo says that his work «speaks of existence in two places at once: past and present, dream and memory, happiness and fear. This performance explores the loneliness and frustration, the utopias and endless contradictions that form our personal stories and labyrinths." "Noche de Fiesta," Saturday, November 23, concludes Latino Mes with dance, as Erin Jaffe-Bolshakov and Orlando Farias from Vista Ballroom host a tango party, with demonstrations, performances, and music

by two DJ's. In one salon. DJ Bori and DJ Angel will cover Salsa, Merengue, and Bachata with mini-introductory classes and performances, while Farias will take on DJ duties in a second salon, leading Tango sessions, with Jaffe-Bolshakov leading Salsa. All events for Noches Lunáticas take place in the Trustus Side Door Theatre on Lady Street in the Vista; all start at 8:00 PM, and feature a cash bar. For more information, visit palmettoluna.org or trustus.org. -AK

SOUTH CAROLINA POETRY CHAPBOOKS

With the recent release of four new chapbooks, the South Carolina Poetry Initiative concludes an eight-year run of publishing poetry by South Carolina Writers. Since 2006, the Initiative has published 37 chapbooks under the apt imprimatur of Stepping Stones Press, most by authors from around the state, some by authors from elsewhere with South Carolina roots. (A chapbook is a small book, usually 30 pages and under.)

Though the series has published both established and emerging writers, for many the chapbook was a first publication, a “stepping stone” to something more. As series editor Kwame Dawes notes, “We have seen so many of these poets go on to publish one, two, three full-length collections of poetry.”

Launched this fall were: *Nesting Doll*, by Kathleen Nalley; *In the Cross Winds*, by Dawnn Robinson; *Girl at the Watershed*, by Nicola Waldron; and *Sleep Paralysis*, by William Wright. While three were first collections for these poets, Wright is an established writer, editor of the *Southern Poetry Anthology*. “This last set of chapbooks is remarkable and important for so many reasons,” says Dawes. “There are poets on that list who I have no doubt will do even greater work in the future.”

Some familiar names in the series include Gilbert Allen, who teaches at Furman University; Phebe Davidson, who taught at USC Aiken; Vera Gomez, a nationally recognized performance poet from Greenville; Summerville poet Mary Hutchins Harris; and Ray McManus.

Founded and directed by Kwame Dawes, the SC Poetry Initiative was a center for the promotion, celebration, and production of poetry in South Carolina, based at the University of South Carolina. During its heyday, not only did the Initiative publish SC writers, but it also hosted an annual Poetry Summit (with major visiting poets, such as Carolyn Forché, Terrance Hayes, and Li-Young Lee) and co-sponsored with USC Press the annual poetry first book prize.

“The South Carolina Chapbook Series,” says Dawes, “was an ambitious venture that



grew out of a very simple idea. It was clear to me that there were a lot of promising and gifted poets in South Carolina and very few places in the state that would publish their work. I felt that with careful planning, this problem could be fixed.” A publication series, based in an annual contest, was the answer. Dawes, who left USC in 2011 to become Chancellor’s Professor of English and editor of *Prairie Schooner* at the University of Nebraska, edited the chapbook series. He was assisted by Charlene Spearen, formerly the Initiative’s assistant director, now the Chair of Humanities at Allen University, and by editorial assistant Bhavin Tailor. Sara Thomas, now with The Half and Half design studio, designed the series book covers.

“In South Carolina, empty spaces demanded filling,” says Dawes, “and I could always depend on key people to welcome and encourage the filling of those empty spaces with something beautiful and valuable. Most of all, I am gratified by the quality and range of work we were able to publish over the years. I hope that the series continues.” Dawes has used this series as the model for an annual boxed set of chapbooks from African Poetry Book Series, which he started this year.

Waldron, who lives in Columbia and teaches at USC, describes herself as “grateful and delighted” to see the work in print. She adds, “The whole SC Poetry Initiative project spoke ultimately of hope—you could feel an amazing energy at each of the events Kwame and Charlene organized, a feeling of ‘oh, look—here are my people; I am not alone; the human voice matters.’ I look forward to someone taking up the mantle again.” -EM



TINY DOORS OF COLUMBIA

When author Janna McMahan got a call about the Tiny Doors of Columbia project, she immediately knew two things: she wanted to be involved and she wanted to work with Christian Thee. Tiny Doors of Columbia, inspired by the Urban Fairy Doors of Ann Arbor, pairs ten writers and ten artists: the artist creates a miniature door, the writer tells the story of what goes on behind it. Columbia’s version, produced by Pocket Productions under the guidance of executive director Sherry Warren, got under way in June. “Sherry contacted me and said she had an art project coming up that I’d be perfect for,” says McMahan. “Then she said, ‘You know who we’d really like to make a door? Christian Thee.’ I have known Christian for twenty years and written numerous magazine articles about him and his art. We met for lunch, and he said fine. Being inspired by his imagination was the best prompt I could possibly ask for.”

Funny thing about that. As a writer of novels and short stories, McMahan is used to going wherever her imagination takes her. A prompt, in the sense of writing about something fixed and specific, is the sort of thing she left behind years ago, when she quit the world of public relations and feature assignments. In 2012, that started to change. First, Hub City Press asked her to write a nonfiction story for an anthology called *Literary Dogs and their South Carolina Writers*, all proceeds from which benefit animal shelters. Then she was asked to



TINY DOOR BY CHRISTIAN THEE

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contribute to another nonfiction anthology with a piece about an artist or writer who had influenced her writing. A year later, poet Ray McManus asked her to contribute a short story to yet another anthology and base it on a photograph McMahan would select from the archives of the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina. "I went through and looked at all these pictures. Ray said there were no other parameters, so I wrote a Southern gothic story." USC Press will publish that book, tentatively titled *Found Anew*, in 2014.

Tiny Doors of Columbia is the latest in this cluster of prompts, and one that McMahan has especially enjoyed, in part because it is a true collaboration. "Christian asked me what I wanted the story to be about and he'd make the door to go with it, but I said no, you make the door and I'll figure out who lives behind it. At the beginning, we discussed a variety of options. He wanted the door to be able to open. But Sherry

said most of the doors stay closed. I thought that maybe you could do a door with a screen and we discussed that for a while. We thought about a restaurant door with a peephole for a *Ratatouille* type of story, all light and happy."

Thee came up with two doors: a black one with relatively little embellishment and a more elaborate one in keeping with his *informatés*—three-dimensional paintings that incorporate found objects. McMahan picked the more elaborate one. "The door is red and somewhat gnawed away in places so you can see a wall of cogs inside and a birdcage. It's maybe Georgian, a really dark door. And I thought, great, I can write something dark again. I enjoy writing dark, disturbing things." She characterizes the door as "Southern Gothic-looking. It screams tragedy."

She began writing in August and finished her story a few weeks before Halloween. As she worked, she kept the door in front of her. "The little birdcage. I was thinking for the longest time what am I going to do with the birdcage?"

She came up with a story called "The Word Eaters," and though it has elements that are dark and disturbing it gives them a suitable-for-all-ages gloss. "This has been the best prompt I've ever had," McMahan says, "trying to interpret Christian Thee's imagination. You get to use all these words to describe him that you can't use to describe anyone else. The adjectives are across the board. He's all about trickery and magic. He doesn't take things at face value but always looks for what's behind a thing"—which, after all, is the point of a Tiny Door.

The first Tiny Door of Columbia is set up at Frame of Mind, on Main Street. At press time, the Thee/McMahan Tiny Door has yet to find a home. For information on the project, see www.tinydoorsofcolumbia.com -SLW

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

PILGRIMAGE



Annie Oakley's heart target, private collection, Los Angeles, California, 2010. © Annie Leibovitz. From "Pilgrimage" (Random House, 2011)

October 4, 2013 – January 5, 2014



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Annie Leibovitz: *Pilgrimage* is organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The Bernie Stadiem Endowment Fund provided support for the exhibition. The C. F. Foundation of Atlanta supports the museum's traveling exhibition program, *Treasures to Go*.

JASPER 2013 ARTIST OF THE YEAR

A REALLY **GOOD** YEAR.

It doesn't come around that often.

You know the kind of year we're talking about. For mere mortals it usually can be characterized by losing weight, getting a raise or promotion, finally finishing that degree, or maybe falling in love.

For artists it's different.

For artists, a really good year is less about the accomplishments themselves and more about what the accomplishments represent. A breakthrough. Recognition. Mastery. Validation.

A really good year is not something that can be counted on or predicted. For some artists it comes early on in their careers indicating even greater things and many more good years to come. For some, a really good year comes after a period of dormancy or quiescence—the product of creative growth and focus. Others may be catapulted into a period of exceptional productivity by facing challenges, stresses, disappointments, even sorrow. A good year can be worked toward, but in all likelihood it'll just tap you on the shoulder when you least expect it.

There are any number of artists in the greater Columbia arts community who experienced a really good year from last September, when we started looking for our first class of Jasper Artists of the Year, until this September, when we sent out the call once again. We asked our readers to point them out to us via a nomination period that ran from September 1st through the 14th, and we were rewarded with a total of 55 nominees.

Our next step was to invite 20 local arts experts to gather into five different nomination committees in dance, music, literary arts, theatre, and visual arts, and work their way through the nominations, weighing the various strengths and accomplishments over the past 12 months. It was an arduous task requiring more than 15 hours of deliberation. Finally, when all the consideration and calculation and conversation was done, we were given a roster of 15 finalists—three in each of the disciplines above—for the designation of Jasper 2013 Artists of the Year.

That's where you came in. For a period of three and a half weeks we asked you to visit us at the *Jasper* website and cast your ballots for your choices in all five categories. Almost 4500 votes were registered. In some cases it was an incredibly close race with as little as a two percent difference between finalists. And in the end we have our second class of Jasper Artists of the Year. Congratulations to the nominees, the finalists, and the Artists of the Year. *Jasper* celebrates all the days that lead to good years for Columbia area artists—no matter how long it takes that *really good year* to arrive. —CB

ADRIAN RHODES
MOLLY HARRELL
DEAR BLANCA
AIDA ROGERS
MARSHALL BROWN
ERIN BOLSHAKOV
J. SPENCER SHULL
AMY WINDLAND
HARRY HANSEN
SEAN MCGUINESS
MICHAELA PILAR BROWN
WILLIAM STARRETT
KATIE BOATMAN
PATRICIA MILLER
BOBBY BLOOM
PHILIP MULLEN
CAROLINE LEWIS JONES
TERRANCE HENDERSON
JASON STROUD
VICKY SAYE HENDERSON
MIRIAM BARBOSA
THE RESTORATION
THOMAS CROUCH
WAYLAND ANDERSON
COMA CINEMA
DEWEY SCOTT WILEY
THE UNAWARES
KYLE WHITLOCK
MICA GANGWER
KATIE MIXON
BROCK HENDERSON
BERNARD KRUZEMAN
PHILLIP BUSH
ROBIN GOTTLIEB
KIRKLAND SMITH
CASSIE PREMO STEELE
TERRANCE HENDERSON
FRANK THOMPSON
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55 NOMINEES
ALMOST 20 HOURS OF DELIBERATION
4500 VOTES

ALL PHOTOS BY FORREST CLONTS

VICKY SAYE HENDERSON

JASPER 2013 ARTIST OF THE YEAR IN THEATRE > WINNER

BY ALEX SMITH



According to one local theatre artist, “It’s not just that Vicky Saye Henderson holds herself to such a high standard of professionalism that other performers are inspired to rise to her level. It’s not just that when she enters the stage, her beauty and magnetism and presence make it hard to divert your attention from her. It is that Henderson truly loves what it is she is doing. Off-stage, she shares that love for acting, whether talking about it or teaching it, with anyone who cares to hear. Her willingness to share her knowledge and love of her job are just like getting to watch one of her incredible performances: each, and all, is a gift.”

“My identity as a theatre artist is rooted in my work as both an actor and teaching artist,” Henderson says. The past year has seen her perform in productions of *Next to Normal* at Trustus Theatre in which she stunned audiences with her compelling honesty, as well as *Five Lesbians Eating a Quiche*, also at Trustus Theatre, in which she left audiences exhausted from laughter; *Songs for a New World* at Workshop Theatre and as the anarchist Emma Goldman in *Ragtime: The Musical* at Trustus; *Late Night Cabaret* at Town Theatre, Kevin Bush’s *Off the Top of My Head Cabaret* at Trustus, and *Women at Heart* (Palmetto Health’s 2012 Heart Health Forum and Exhibition) for which she co-wrote and performed a dramatic presentation educating women about the signs and symptoms of heart attack. In addition, Henderson became Trustus Theatre’s director of education in December 2012; initiated a new Trustus Summer Camp Series; renovated the Trustus Apprentice Company program, and created Night Owl Improv Series as well as the Actor Wellness Wheel Series.

Henderson says that she has “a new appreciation and respect for my craft. I am grateful that this community allows me to do what I love and makes me feel that what I do here matters.”

FINALIST

BOBBY BLOOM

Bobby Bloom hasn't stopped to catch his breath very much this year as his list of accomplishments demonstrates. Bloom took the stage in *Red*, which was part of the Trustus Theatre Off-Lady Series at The Columbia Art Museum; *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* with the SC Shakespeare Company; At Trustus he appeared in *Next Fall*, *Ragtime*, and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*. He also appeared in *The Christmas Doll*, *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *The Commedia Rapunzel*, and *The Commedia Pinocchio* at Columbia Children's Theater, as well as in *The Whipping Man*, as part of the Trustus Off-Lady Series in conjunction with the NiA Company at the Columbia Music Festival Association.

Bloom's attentiveness to his own craft as well as his willingness to give over his attention and the audience's to those he shares the stage with, his ability to show the thought and care inherent in all of his choices when portraying a character without seeming showy—all of these are the components which make him that rare performer whose presence onstage casually draws an audience in and heightens their awareness.

According to Bloom, "Being nominated and selected is more than an honor, it is validation. It gives me the courage to believe in my craft and to create and pursue more challenging projects."



FINALIST

TERRANCE HENDERSON

A finalist in both theatre and dance, Terrance Henderson, with his exceptional vocal talent, is the prototypical triple theatre threat. With a hand in just about every aspect of theatre possible, from teaching to directing to acting, Henderson is more than a skilled practitioner of an impressive variety of theatrical arts. Whatever title he holds (there are often more than one per production) for whatever he is working on, he gives over everything, mind, body and soul, in service of the show, his collaborators, and the audience. Henderson is the director of the theater after school program for AC Moore Elementary and has been the long term theatre artist in residence at Logan Elementary. In the past year, Henderson has portrayed the roles of Dr. Madden in Trustus Theatre's *Next to Normal* and appeared most recently in the leading role of Coalhouse Walker Jr. in *Ragtime*, also at Trustus. Henderson was also the co-creator and official emcee for the Henderson Brothers Burlesque Show as part of What's Love 2013 and his direction was seen in Trustus Theatre's *Ain't Misbehavin'* this summer.

Henderson says, "I chose to remain in Columbia instead of going to New York or Chicago ... I am both honored and thankful to know my community appreciates both me and my work."





PHILIP MULLEN

JASPER 2013 ARTIST OF THE YEAR IN VISUAL ARTS > WINNER

BY KARA GUNTER

Perhaps the most seasoned of the visual arts finalists, Philip Mullen has more than 200 solo exhibitions under his belt. A ubiquitous presence, Mullen's paintings at the Koger Center for the Arts have defined that space for almost 20 years. While Mullen has shown his work extensively in the national and international arenas, it was a rare treat for Columbia's visual arts patrons to see Mullen's work at a 2013 solo exhibition, featuring his work of the last four years, at the 701 Center for Contemporary Art earlier this year.

This year, Mullen was a part of four publications including *The Limelight- A Compendium of Contemporary Columbia Artists*; he's given a number of lectures around the state, and has shown in several local group and solo exhibitions. He acted as curator for the Cultural Council of Richland & Lexington Counties' *AHA!* exhibition, and worked with Riverbanks Zoo and Garden in arranging a long term installation of *Seasons & Koi*. This is just a smattering of what Mullen has been up to this year, but take it from us, he's been busy.

Mullen says that, "Thomas and Michaela are terrific artists so it is a pleasure to have them as co-nominees. My work has been included in the 1975 Whitney Biennial, 15 New York solo exhibits and sold to an international audience, but it is a really special feeling to be recognized in my hometown."

FINALIST

MICHAELA PILAR BROWN

The thing that sets our finalists apart from all others is their level of community involvement. Michaela Pilar Brown has dedicated a lot of time to the Columbia arts' community over the past year. She sits on the board of the Friends of African American Art and Culture as the Programming Committee Chair, and recently joined the One Columbia public arts selection committee.

In the fall of 2012, Brown's solo exhibition at Columbia College, *Whither Goes My Heart*—an installation about family and home—was received to much acclaim. Brown has since accepted invitations to show the exhibition in several other venues around the US, as well as in Colombia, South America. Brown says in response to her nomination as a finalist, "It's always an honor to be recognized for your work. I feel deeply humbled, and motivated to keep working. The competition itself is further evidence of *Jasper's* support of the arts in Columbia."

Over the past year, Brown has shown in the *South Carolina Biennial* at 701 Center for Contemporary Art; the *ONEx1* group exhibition at the Columbia Museum of Art; she's taken part in the South Carolina Arts Gala hosted by the South Carolina Arts Commission; and participated in 2013's *Artista Vista's Install It III*.

FINALIST

THOMAS CROUCH

Go just about anywhere in this town over the past year, and you've probably seen Thomas Crouch's work. A prolific painter, Crouch works in different styles and a variety of subject matter, but what he is most known for of late are his loose, painterly renderings of subjects ranging from crows to octopi to the human figure, which stand in contrast against the tight perfection of found blueprints.

Crouch is as busy in the local arts' community as he is as a painter. This year, he organized Art Bar Agora IV (a yearly event he created), participated in City Art's High Noon series, was honored by the Richland County Cultural Council as the featured artist for their Sponsor's Dinner, and won best drawing in the professional class at the State Fair. The writers at the *Free Times* crowned Crouch best artist in the Best of Columbia feature, and last year he was a finalist for *Jasper 2012* Visual Arts Artist of the Year. He has also exhibited extensively over the past year, showing work in Artfields in Lake City, and in at least a dozen other group and solo shows locally and in Charleston.

Crouch says, "I am very honored to be nominated for *Jasper* Artist of the Year, amongst so many talented artists. That in itself is a reward I am proud of."





JANNA MCMAHAN

JASPER 2013 ARTIST OF THE YEAR IN LITERARY ARTS > WINNER

BY ED MADDEN

In January, Janna McMahan published *Anonymity* (Koehler Books), her fifth novel. Gritty and based on extensive research, the novel tells the tale of a difficult friendship between a photographer and a homeless teenage girl in Austin. Author Silas House describes McMahan as “a natural voice who gracefully walks the tightrope of being both literary and commercial,” and novelist Ron Rash calls *Anonymity* McMahan’s best yet. *Real South* magazine praised the novel’s gritty realism and its exploration of a situation in which “there are no easy answers for anyone.” She also contributed “A Name You Can Yell” (yes, she’s talking about how you name a dog—or a kid?) in *Literary Dogs and their South Carolina Writers*, published by Hub City Press in Spartanburg just before Christmas 2012, and “Pat Conroy: Or How I Stalked My Prince of Tides,” in *The Lime-light: A Compendium of Contemporary Artists*, published by Muddy Ford Press earlier this year. *Anonymity* has led to speaking engagements in schools and community organizations throughout the Southeast. Some Richland Library book clubs read the novel this fall, and in November, the Main Street library hosted a community panel discussion on youth homelessness in Columbia. McMahan says, “This has been a story with social impact, and I’m most grateful for how people are interested in the topic and actually taking action.”

“I was delighted to learn that I was nominated as one of Jasper’s Artists of the Year,” says McMahan. She explains, “An author’s efforts often seem like a big question mark. Is what I’m doing good? Is it worthwhile? Will anyone be entertained? Will anyone even care? A writer’s life can be fraught with rejection, so a little encouragement is always welcome.”

McMahan adds, “*Jasper* does a compelling, insightful job of covering our exploding local arts scene. The writers are artists themselves and they report with an involved understanding of creative endeavors. To be selected as an Artist of the Year by *Jasper* would be lovely validation that I must be doing something right.”

FINALIST

JIM BARILLA

Using his own backyard as centerpiece and testing ground for thinking about urban wildlife, Jim Barilla put Columbia on the map for environmental writing this year. His nonfiction book, *My Backyard Jungle: The Adventures of an Urban Wildlife Lover Who Turned His Yard Into Habitat and Learned to Live With It*, was published by Yale University Press this spring. Barilla set out to turn his yard into a certified wildlife habitat, and the book documents that project. Combining his reflections on his backyard with a rich understanding of environmental issues, the book also includes stories about bears, monkeys, and honeybees in cities around the world, yet Barilla always returns to his own backyard in Columbia as a critical place for thinking about our coexistence with animals. The book was widely reviewed—*Publisher's Weekly*, *Nature*, *BBC Wildlife*, and elsewhere—with portions of the book published in *The Atlantic*, *Places*, and *National Geographic* online. The reviewer for *BBC Wildlife* said that Barilla “reminds us to ask what it will be like to engage with nature in a future in which most of us will live in cities.” Or as a nomination put it, “His work asks us to think about our place in the world around us.”

Barilla admits, “I’d be happy to win,” but he says that “being nominated is in many ways just as important.” He explains, “I think it’s meaningful to be recognized for your work in your own community. There’s a personal dimension to that. When you write a book about your backyard, it’s nice to be recognized in your own backyard—there’s a layer of appreciation there, I think, that’s the cultural side of the ecology of the place.”

“To me, what really matter is building a sense of a literary identity in the Midlands, and acknowledging what’s going on here,” Barilla says. “My book is really about creating a sense of what’s possible in our own backyard, and I like the idea of this award as doing something similar.”

FINALIST

AIDA ROGERS

This summer, Aida Rogers published what USC Press called a love letter to the state of South Carolina, her book *State of the Heart: South Carolina Writers on the Places They Love*. The book includes 36 nationally and regionally recognized writers on the places they cherish—including novelists Pat Conroy and Dori Sanders and SC poet laureate Marjory Wentworth. In the forward to the book, Conroy writes, “*State of the Heart* reminds us of what is best about South Carolina and her many gifted writers, the monumental power of this place to shape our memories into stories and then our stories into art.” According to Jonathan Haupt, director of USC Press, the book “quickly became a media sensation and one of our best-selling regional books.” Rogers herself said of the collection, “I think *State of the Heart* proved there’s plenty of literary talent in South Carolina ... If the anthology does nothing but introduce them to readers, it will have accomplished something valuable.” Rogers profiled Spartanburg nature writer John Lane for *South Carolina Wildlife* this fall. She wrote about late Columbia artist Gil

Petroff for *The Limelight: A Compendium of Contemporary Artists*. She says that essay, “Ballerina in White,” “allowed me to point out what’s marvelous but invisible because we see it every day. There is extraordinary talent all around us, and I think it’s important for a community to appreciate its own.”

Rogers says, “Winning would be wonderful,” but she says bringing attention to Petroff and other writers would be the real benefit. “I’d like to see Gil Petroff remembered and honored, and maybe the Jasper award would bring more readers to my ‘Ballerina in White’ essay.” She adds, wistfully, “Could it possibly help protect his hidden mural in Tapp’s?”

She says winning the award would also recognize the “36 generous, talented writers” who contributed to *State of the Heart*. “It might also give a nod,” she says, “to USC Press, which soon will be celebrating its 70th year.”

She confesses, “I was really surprised to get the email from Cindi [Boiter] about the nomination,” explaining, “It wasn’t on my radar at all to be nominated, although I knew about the awards because I read the magazine.” “Also,” she adds, “I’ve considered myself more in journalism than literature, although some people would look at my work and consider it literary journalism. Either way, it is an honor and very exciting.”





TERRANCE HENDERSON

JASPER 2013 ARTIST OF THE YEAR IN DANCE > WINNER

BY KATHERINE LAPRAD

Terrance Henderson considers his multiple areas of creative expression—dance, choreography, and education—as the building blocks that form his artistic identity. Henderson says, “As a dancer and choreographer it’s so awesome to finally be referred to as an artist.” For Henderson, being a JAY finalist signifies that “my community not only appreciates my work but accepts me as an artist in this community and that’s an achievement to me after years of being just a dancer or just a teacher or just a choreographer—but to see all of that work as my art. Because it is! It’s always been how I’ve seen it.” As a local artist Henderson commits large amounts of time to an array of creative endeavors. He serves on the dance faculty at Columbia Ballet School and Southeastern School of Ballet, and shares his love of dance through programs at AC Moore and Logan Elementary. In addition, his choreography proved to be an integral part of Trustus Mainstage productions, *Next to Normal*, *Ain’t Misbehavin*, *Ragtime*, and the *Henderson Brothers Burlesque Show*. Henderson is most proud of *Hole in My Bucket: A Perspective*, an evening of original choreography performed at the Rogue Festival in Fresno, California. “It just supports that whole notion of being a local artist who also is a part of the bigger world of dance. To be an ambassador for SC nationally and internationally means that I don’t have to *not* work in my own community or leave SC to be great at what I do and to be respected professionally,” Henderson says. As one of the JAY finalists, he proudly celebrates the community of artists that work tirelessly to support one another. He says, “We are more aware of one another’s art across multiple disciplines and that is creating a community of artists who really support one another and know more now how to support one another. There are conversations that happen now between artists that are important to pushing ourselves to the next level, and feeling like Columbia has our back gives us more courage to keep stepping out there and saying something with our work!”

FINALIST

WAYLAND ANDERSON

Wayland Anderson is a professional ballet dancer, teacher, and choreographer whose journey to Columbia, SC has taken him through Texas, Maryland, New York, and DC. "I have planted very rare and special seeds in Columbia, SC as an artist, and Columbia is not just another stop along the journey, it is the stop that has made my journey," he says. Anderson is in his fourth season with the Columbia City Ballet and has recently been promoted to Soloist performing in the spring 2013 productions of *Snow White* and *The Little Prince*. Anderson's guest performances include Ann Brodie's Carolina Ballet's production of *Cinderella*, Dance USC's production *Ballet Stars of New York*, Griffin Ballet's production of William Starrett's *Lion King*, and the South Carolina Philharmonic's presentation of *Carmen*. In addition to his many performance credits, Anderson also possesses a number of choreography credits including *Nina Simone Suite*, six works for Workshop Theatre's production of *Songs for a New World*, and *The River* performed in the *Artists for Africa Gala*. The most memorable and personal work is *Survivors*, performed as part of *Body and Movement Explored*. Anderson says, "The ballet was created to celebrate the life of my mother, Linda Anderson, who bravely fought breast cancer," and now "lives on in every *tendu* I execute and every ballet I create." Anderson's creative passion and personal experiences have all contributed to his artistry. Being a JAY finalist represents a collective recognition of this creative drive and dedication to the Columbia arts community. He says, "The City of Columbia appreciates and understands that being an artist is a full time job and requires the utmost dedication and determination" and this nomination, "tells me that the city welcomes me with open arms and embraces all that I have to offer."

FINALIST

ERIN BOLSHAKOV

Many might be shocked to know that Columbia, SC can claim a rich Latin dance community and this is due to the dedication and efforts of Erin Jaffe Bolshakov. Bolshakov's credits include the creation of VISTA Ballroom, which aims to enhance Columbia's Latin dance community and bolster Columbia's position in the national sphere. This past year Erin and her partner, internationally renowned Maestro Orlando Farias, performed at the Democratic National convention in Charlotte, NC. "That was a unique experience for me," says Bolshakov. She also performed in the *La Milonga Rosa* in New York City, performed and instructed during PASOS, *Steps for Pasos* gala, and choreographed an Argentine tango for Palmetto & Luna Theatre group La Tropa, which focuses on the arts in the Latino

community. She resides as the executive director of the *Mad Hot Tango Marathon*, now in its fourth year, produces the associated professional Tango show, and continues to host a monthly *Milonga* or Tango dance club. Erin says she loves "that our city is so rich in all the arts" and that "we are very lucky that in our little city our community has so many talented and passionate people committed to this expansion." She believes that local organizations such as *Jasper* are committed to recognizing the creative growth in our community and is ecstatic to be a JAY finalist. "It is a very huge and unexpected honor! Just to be nominated and recognized by *Jasper*, my peers, and have my name presented with the other two nominees is an honor for me personally and as an artist!"



THE RESTORATION

JASPER 2013 ARTIST OF THE YEAR IN MUSIC > WINNER

BY KYLE PETERSEN AND TOM DEMPSTER

Widely celebrated as one of Columbia's most innovative and exciting bands since its inception in 2007, The Restoration is a self-described "Faulknerian chamber-pop band" that has one foot firmly in the indie rock world and one firmly planted in the history of the American South. The November release of *Honor the Father* followed up their ambitious debut LP *Constance*, demonstrating the band's continued commitment to writing narrative concept albums that grapple with the history of the South both musically and lyrically. *Honor the Father* is "a narrative explora-

tion of religious fundamentalism dressed with Dixieland and early rock 'n' roll," according to leader Daniel Machado, and also functions as a murder mystery story with a revealing—and disturbing—conclusion. It's worth noting the extensive use of musical forms here, as well as the complex structure of the climactic track "The Trial," which features extensive Biblical references outlined in detail in the liner notes. The record also sees Machado and others donning multiple characters' hats over the course of the album, crafting a complex and nuanced collection of characters more in the spirit of a musical than a tra-

ditional concept album.

The record's favorable reception cemented the band's position as one of Columbia's best active bands, which led to prominent appearances at Columbia's River Rocks festival this spring and the Bel Chere Festival in Asheville this summer. Recently featured in regional and national publications like *Paste* and *Shuffle*, the group's work has also been featured in university literature and history courses at colleges throughout South Carolina. Band members include Daniel Machado, Adam Corbett, Steve Sancho, Sharon Gnanashekar, and Lauren Garner.



FINALIST

FATRAT DA CZAR

FatRat da Czar has long been one of the most prominent names in Columbia's hip-hop scene, with nearly 20 years under his belt as a local MC. Still, he's had an exceptionally busy year even for him. November saw the release of *Da Cold War 3*, completing the trilogy of solo albums that he began in 2008 in an effort to define himself as a rapper lyrically going against the grain and forging his own singular artistic identity. Perhaps even more importantly, his unofficial status as a mentor for the next generation of hip-hop talent in the city became official with a full-time engineer position at the Boom Room, the Studio B at Columbia's Jam Room Recording Studios. His position paved the way for the MC to work with everyone from the hip-hop crew Grand Royal to the Americana folk trio Prairie Willows over the past year.

In between, Johnson not only landed prestigious opening slots for the likes of Killer Mike and GZA, he also traveled to Atlanta to perform at AC3, one of the nation's biggest hip-hop festivals. He also played a pivotal role in *The Gamecock Mixtape* put together by Dinobrite Productions, and drops a powerful closing verse on the lead single "Ride with My Team," a song whose music video went viral upon its release earlier this year.

Perhaps more than anything though, FatRat is a hip-hop ambassador in a city and state still largely segregated musically as much as racially. Along with his musical partner Shekeese the Beast, FatRat's presence looms large in Columbia's music scene.

"Coming from a city that didn't initially roll out the red carpet for hip hop music and culture, I'm very proud to be nominated amongst the likes of some of Columbia's best and brightest artists," says FatRat in regard to his nomination. "I have fought hard for hip-hop to have a home in my city and I appreciate *Jasper* for recognizing my efforts and artistry."

-KP

FINALIST

PHILLIP BUSH

While Phillip Bush may have only recently begun teaching at the University of South Carolina, he is no stranger to Columbia's concert music world nor to South Carolina. During the 2012-2013 season, Bush performed with chamber musicians and as a soloist at the Columbia Museum of Art, at the Kershaw County Fine Arts Center, with the Southeastern Piano Festival, and, of course, innumerable times at USC. Bush also performed across the state, and served as the Music Director for the Bennington Chamber Music Conference in Vermont, performed at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, and beyond, including a residency and numerous performances at the Fayetteville Chamber Music Festival in Texas. Still, more than half of his year's performances took place in the Midlands, and his level of local engagement has spanned from directing student performances of Steve Reich's *Music for Eighteen Musicians* to co-directing February 2013's concerts for Arts

at Shandon. Bush's presence in Columbia is perhaps understated, but certainly felt here – and definitely known beyond our borders. Bush states that, "it's very flattering to be mentioned in the same breath as so many gifted creative people in a variety of artistic disciplines in our city." Speaking on the notion that artists and individuals in Columbia really make the city culturally thriving, Bush also feels that Columbia is an artistically and culturally rich city. "What all the nominees in every category signify is a creative diversity that makes me happy to live here and also makes it a great town in which to be a performing musician, whatever one's niche. I bet my fellow music nominees feel the same way." -TD



Every PLATING TELLS a STORY

PHOTO AND STORY BY JONATHAN SHARPE

Can a meal be a form of art? Ask an art professor and you might be told food is too functional to be considered art; or, that there's no art object left to study when the meal is over. But can there be elements of art in the way a meal is prepared and presented? Can the experience be more than the sum of its courses?

To explore those questions, *Jasper* spent an evening with Alex Suaudom du Monde, executive chef and partner in Baan Sawan Thai Bistro, and gained a window into the mind of an award-winning chef. Suaudom du Monde was recently listed in the 2013 edition of *Best Chefs America*, a national directory of outstanding chefs, nominated and interviewed by their peers.

Frequent diners at the Devine Street restaurant run by the Suaudom family will recognize the plating style of the Crispy Sawai pictured above, with its vertical and radial symmetry, and garnish of sculpted Romaine ribs and cilantro. The sawai, a Southeast Asian catfish, is dusted in coriander and

pepper, dredged in flour and fried crisp. The fish is formed by hand into a spiral, and then stood on its smallest edge when plated. Suaudom du Monde says this method provides minimal contact between the sauté of julienned ginger and vegetables, keeping the fish crispy as long as possible, and providing a contrast of textures. And in the center of the spiral, a sprig of cilantro releases aromatic oils as heat rises from the dish. The presentation is by design.

"I want the diner to look at it, and instantly, with all five senses, realize the time and intensity that went into the dish," says Suaudom du Monde. But it's not just about guiding the individual diner's experience; that's where the radial presentation comes in. By creating a symmetrical pattern on each plate, each person at a table will see the first plate that comes out from a visually pleasing angle, and every plate that comes after it, even if he or she isn't the first to be served.

For Suaudom du Monde, that's part of creating a group experience at each table; a performance, if you will, with the plate as center stage. "Everybody has to agree when that first plate hits the table, 'ah!'" says Suaudom du Monde. "I want to see it in their body language, if I'm lucky enough to witness it, a certain relaxation, leaning in to look at it more closely, and slightly adjusting it to look at it from different angles."

Talking with him, it's clear that Suaudom du Monde understands the transformative power of those moments. There's a spark and reverence in his eyes when he talks about diners' experience in his restaurant.

"If everyone is in a good mood, and they've had a good time, maybe that good time is because they're celebrating something; maybe it's a first, second or third date; or a business meeting went well. All of these things go together, and I don't kid myself that any one element of what I put on the plate is dispositive, or the key element in making that experience happen," says Suaudom du Monde, "but it's part of the overall experience."

When asked to name a visual artist he admires, Suaudom du Monde mentions the ornate boxes of Joseph Cornell, an example of which, *Untitled (Hotel de l'Etoile)*, he was pleasantly shocked to see at the Columbia Museum of Art.

"I love the notion that a seemingly random number of elements can be arranged in a certain way, to create a certain effect," he says, "and tell a story."





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COLUMBIA
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WILLIAM STARRETT
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

THE LURE AND LORE OF *THE NUTCRACKER* BALLET – TEN THINGS YOU MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN

BY BONNIE BOITER-JOLLEY

The Nutcracker ballet is arguably one of the most enduring and recognizable holiday traditions of the past two hundred years. With a young girl's fairytale-like dream of a trip to a magical land filled with sweets and treats and an enchanted Nutcracker doll that comes to life as a prince to guide her, all set to a whimsical and timelessly spirited score, why would it not?

But how much do we really know about this ballet, and how did it become such a staple in the holiday season? We did some digging to find out.



PHOTO COURTESY COLUMBIA CITY BALLET

1. *The Nutcracker* was originally staged in 1892 as a collaboration of Marius Petipa, Ballet Master of St. Petersburg Imperial Theatre, and assistant Lev Ivanov and was set to the music of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky. It is generally assumed that a large majority of the choreography was Ivanov's, considering Petipa's failing health at the time, although Petipa is known to have left strict guidelines for his protégé to follow.

2. The story of the ballet is based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's book, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, and was influenced by the lighter *The Nutcracker of Nuremberg* by Alexandre Dumas.

3. Originally, and in many productions since the ballet was first staged, the roles of the lead characters are danced by children of the same age as the characters.

4. Though first appearing in the United States in 1944 in William Christensen's production for the San Francisco Opera Ballet, *The Nutcracker's* popularity in the United States is attributed largely to George Balanchine's restaging of the production on the New York City Ballet in 1954. The production reimaged many details of choreography but in many cases paid homage to Petipa and Ivanov's original version and in some instances pulled straight from the primary

choreography.

5. Balanchine's production was filmed in 1993 starring Macaulay Culkin as the Nutcracker Prince and was released on video the following year.

6. In 2010, Alexei Ratmansky choreographed a new production of *The Nutcracker* for the American Ballet Theatre which put a new spin on the old tale. In a review for the Wall Street Journal, Robert Greskovic wrote, "his achievement stands to dramatically change the minds of those of us who thought we knew *The Nutcracker* through and through."

7. The *divertissements*, or short dance

performances, in the second act of the ballet depict dancers who represent treats and sweets from the Kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy—sometimes called the Land of Sweets. Traditionally, these *divertissements* include *Le Chocolat* from Spain, *Le Café* from Arabia, *Le The* (tea) from China, *Candy Canes* or *Trepak* from Russia, and from France, *Les Mirlitons* or *Marzipan*, with *Le Mere Gignon et les Polichinelles*, played typically by a man in drag and several little children. Some companies choose to reimagine these various *divertissements*, tweaking the treat and spicing up the story. Each dish generally remains in the same theme and place of origin of the original, however.

8. The celesta, an idiophonic musical instrument resembling a piano but with the power to transpose and thereby raise the written note by an octave, was used only

for the second time in a major orchestral piece in *The Nutcracker's* second act *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*. Tchaikovsky had also used the celesta the year before in his symphonic poem *The Voyevoda*.

9. It was Ivan Vsevolozhsky, director of the Imperial Theatres in Russia who should receive most of the credit for the creation of *The Nutcracker*, having commissioned Tchaikovsky to write *Iolanta*, the first act of a two performance bill originally intended to celebrate the choreography of Petipa who had to bow out due to illness. An artist, playwright, and essayist, Vsevolozhsky also designed the original costumes for the ballet.

10. The first performance of *The Nutcracker* was considered by critics to be an abysmal failure, but has since become one of the best attended and most loved ballets in the world.

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



PHOTO BY FORREST CLONTS

PETER Chametzky

by Susan Levi Wallach

There is no end to the surprises that Peter Chametzky is apt to spring upon you. No sooner are you introduced and find out that he is the new chair of the University of South Carolina art department but he lets drop that he is the son of the poet Anne Halley. Later, he adds that his father is author and editor Jules Chametzky. None of this slips out easily. Despite his position and pedigree, Chametzky also is modest, understated, someone who'd rather draw others out than be drawn out himself. Except when it comes to his academic specialty—mid-twentieth-century German art, in which case he becomes downright garrulous.

For Chametzky, art history is a vocation to which he received the call at a surprisingly young age. "I wanted to be an art historian since I was eight years old." Then he lived in Amherst, where he grew up. "I liked museums, archeological sites, looking at art. I never wanted to be a

creative artist. I wasn't that good at the things they had eight-year-olds doing in those days. I drew outside the lines too much. When I was little older, in fourth grade, my best friend, John Gibson, was an excellent artist and he still is. We'd spend a lot of time talking about art. We thought we were very sophisticated."

He got his PhD at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. When he got the letter from USC saying he'd been nominated to chair the art department, his first thought was, Why would I want to go there? He and his wife, Susan Felleman, were comfortably ensconced at the Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale, where they were full professors. But the more he learned about USC and Columbia, the more intrigued he became. "It looked like an interesting place, an interesting faculty, so I applied and interviewed and got more interested. It was a much bigger move to go from New York University to Carbondale. I'm used to living in America now."

Tossed in were summers and sabbatical semesters spent teaching and traveling in Europe. Such is the life of a peripatetic professor. All that exposure to different institutions gave Chametzky a desire to be part of a world-class art department. Better yet, it gave him a drive to help create one. In USC, he saw his chance.

"What's particularly interesting about this department of art is that it's more than a traditional department of art," he says, "in that it includes four areas: art education, art history, studio art, and media arts. It's unusual that an art department would also have a full program in media arts. Until the late 1990s, media arts was a different department, but the art department absorbed it. We have by far the biggest visual arts program in the state." One that is getting bigger: last year, the USC art department had twenty-six tenure track faculty and four full-time instructors. This year, that number is up. "Probably the most exciting thing is that we are hiring. We hired three more tenure-track faculty and another full-time instructor. We're up to thirty-four, full-time. We hired a historian of East Asian art. We have around six hundred undergraduate majors, about six times what Clemson has. And we have a graduate program. ... Here there's the potential to do something really special, because there are exciting things going on at university and in Columbia. I was impressed, as was my wife with Columbia when we visited in 2012."

Some of the challenges are obvious: McMaster, the art department's home, has become outdated and, for a growing department, cramped. "There's no place to expand," Chametzky says. "And we don't have the types of spaces we need to provide state-of-the-art training, whether it's open studio and lab spaces or the space to put in the new kinds of equipment needed—in particular, rapid prototyping machines. And though we are providing our grad students with space, it is compromised space."

Besides space, grad students need money, and the best of them get it—just not necessarily here. "We lose candidates every year because they get better financial packages elsewhere," Chametzky says. "That's what graduate students are all about. They apply to us because there are people here whom they want to work with. But they go where they think they can do the best work and accrue the least debt. The *U.S. News* list of best fine arts departments depends on the MFA programs. And that's one reason this one is pretty low in the ratings and why the one I came from is more highly rated."

Not that Chametzky has any complaints about the funding his department receives from the university. It is, he said, about where it should be and about twice what he's used to. But SIU's art-department raises six times as much in private funds—the sort generated by, say, alumni donations, grants, and a board—all areas high on his to-do list. He's already started an alumni newsletter, though he insists its purpose is more to build a community and awareness of the art department's achievements than to get alums to write the big checks. Nonetheless, "we would not sneeze at financial

support."

And Columbia is gaining a rep as an arts-friendly city, one where artists can even afford to live and ply their art. The growing community of artists is, in turn, enhancing the city's cultural profile, which in turn is attracting more artists. And on and on. As Chametzky knows, the cache of a dynamic and developing university art department—and theatre department and music department and dance department—will spill over the ivied walls and into the wider community, further bolstering its appeal.

"Most economists these days believe that economic development at any location is to a great extent culturally driven," says Chametzky. "Companies locate where talented people want to work and live. The arts are not simply entertainment. Since the beginning, human beings were creating visual art: in 60,000 BCE, people were probably painting on their bodies, that being the surface most readily available." And, of course, they still do. When Chametzky states that the arts are more than a way to pass the time, he means that, beyond museum displays and concert performances, they inform our environment.

"It's important that people not just see but see with insight and be able to analyze the world—and not just passively," Chametzky says. "You wouldn't have the type of architecture we had in much of the twentieth century if we hadn't had painters and print-makers like Picasso and Braque envisioning the world that could be." It's a widespread realization, one that has prompted many states, SC among them, to put in place visual-literacy standards for schools.

"That's what visual art does in the world. It helps us situate ourselves," says Chametzky. "We can't have world-class STEM programs without STEAM programs. Science, technology, engineering, arts, and math all go together. That's not mine. It's been out there. The arts in general are what people do in both their times of greatest joy and greatest grief—few people do equations. The mass of humanity sing, dance, create images. They pray, which is reciting poetry. They turn to art to console themselves, to come together, to establish their common humanity, to celebrate."

Chametzky has lived in Columbia for about a year now. Felleman and their two children joined him in June. Their daughter attends Dreher High School; their son is a sophomore at University of Chicago. Felleman, also an art historian, specializes in cinema and teaches in Chametzky's department. They've been together since graduate school, Chametzky says, and balance each other well as both colleagues and spouses.

Chametzky used his time alone here well, getting to know current faculty at USC and the area's other colleges, local artists, and Columbia's cultural scene in general. "The biggest positive is the feeling that things are improving culturally in all kinds of ways," Chametzky says. "There are more places to show art, see films, and see theatre. There is a growing core of supporters. The university is growing. There's an interest in the art department and in the development of a first-class art program here."

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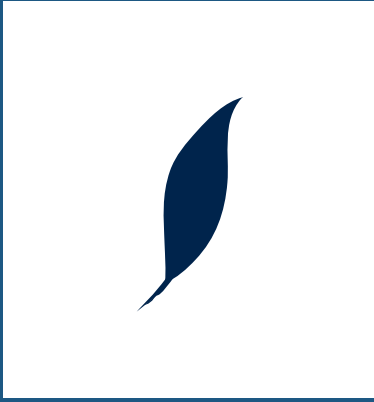
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JASPER FILM EDITOR AND 2ND ACT FILM FESTIVAL DIRECTOR WADE SELLERS



THE 2ND ACT FILM FESTIVAL

P r e s e n t e d b y J A S P E R M A G A Z I N E

BY WADE SELLERS | PHOTOS BY JONATHAN SHARPE

For almost four hours, the panel of judges who had been invited to choose the filmmakers for The 2nd Act Film Festival sat in the *Jasper Magazine* studios in the historic Equitable Arcade Building on Main Street. Starting with an entry pool of thirty filmmakers, the judges filtered through each entry, watching each filmmaker's selected works and reading why they wanted to participate in the festival. One by one, they discussed each entry, voted many ballots until, finally, sitting on the long wooden table in front of them, was a stack of fifteen names.

The idea for The 2nd Act Film Festival had begun many months earlier. The initial goal was to have a film-oriented event in the fall of 2013 as a way of helping to grow and publicize Columbia's community of local filmmakers. A few months prior, we threw around some concepts. Should it be a small film festival? Should we curate films? The idea of a film project resonated the most.

Film projects and festivals, for the most part, operate on a different set of selection criteria. Most film projects are open to anyone and there is usually a fee to participate.

Film festival selections are often juried, but the juror panels tend to look at works that already exist. The 2nd Act Film Festival was open to anyone who wanted to enter. It is *Jasper's* policy to never charge an artist to publish, exhibit, or participate in the showing of their work, so there was no entry fee and, in fact, no cost to the filmmakers at any point in the process.

The actual structure of the project didn't materialize until one night when a group of us were sitting at a long table inside local watering hole, The Whig, after a First Thurs-



PROJECTOR 101 BY MICHAEL KRAJEWSKI

Columbia artist Michael Krajewski was commissioned to create an original painting to serve as art for Jasper's 2nd Act Film Festival poster. Krajewski is a self-taught artist whose work is typically described as neo-expressionist and compared to that of Jean-Michel Basquiat. He is represented by Alice Perritt of HoFP Gallery in Columbia.

day event. What if filmmakers were given the first and third acts of a short screenplay and then asked to write their own second act and make the movie? An overwhelmingly positive response circled the table.

Film projects exist in various forms around the planet. The most recognizable is the 48 hour film projects that asks a team of filmmakers to write and complete a short film, based on an assigned genre, in 48 hours. Completing this type of film project is a challenge. There is a physical and mental drain that overwhelms teams as they work against a ticking clock. But, creatively, the ideas that can be sparked in situation like this can, at times, be downright magical. The 2nd Act concept was a new idea and a unique approach. Everyone was excited.

Jasper enlisted the aid of local writer and New York Times bestselling author Janna McMahan to work with us to create the first and third acts of the screenplay. It took much longer than we thought it would but the finished product was intriguing. No directions, settings, genders, or props were given—each filmmaker and/or their screenplay writer started at the same place—smack in the middle of an on-going activity described by

nothing but a dialogue between two nameless, faceless, genderless people.

Three primary criteria guided the selection of filmmakers from the entrants. They had to live in South Carolina; their enthusiasm for filmmaking had to be palpable; and, their previous work had to be impressive. At the end of the call for entry process, 30 filmmakers had thrown their names into the pool for selection by the jury panel which consisted of Janell Rohan, program director at the Nickelodeon Theater, Bradley Powell, director of P.O.V. Cineclub, Caletta Bailey, owner of Reel to Real productions, Simon Tarr, Media Arts professor at USC, and local filmmaker Lee Ann Kornegay made up the panel of jurors. Their direction was simple, choose the best filmmakers from the entries that can give The 2nd Act Film Festival the best quality of films and showcase diverse points of view.

The *Jasper* studio walls reverberated with the thrumming music from the Latin Festival taking place on Main Street and the temperature in the suite was increasing. On the conference table was a stack of fifteen names. This was half the entries submitted to the festival and in the minds of the jurors,

all were deserving of being included in the festival. It was obvious to everyone that the selection process was going to take longer than expected. There had been three rounds of voting, and jurors had begun to stand their ground on filmmakers that they felt should or shouldn't be included. Discussions across the table became heated. But in the end, ten filmmakers were selected. Exceptionally strong entries had been submitted from all areas of South Carolina. As the pages were examined, we noticed that all of the selected entries were from Columbia. This was unexpected and satisfying, especially to *Jasper* editor Cindi Boiter. "The whole purpose of this project was to offer Columbia area filmmakers the opportunity to come together and experience this event as a community," Boiter says. "Without knowing what the level of local enthusiasm would be we opted to open the call to the whole state to ensure a rich applicant field. It was incredibly gratifying to learn that the ten selected filmmakers were all from the greater Columbia arts area."

Scripts went out to the filmmakers the next morning. Their first step was to complete the screenplay and return an edited draft in one week. Once the screenplay was

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~~Q.A. Hub~~
Q.A. Hub



PRODUCTION **INTERSECTION**

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ROLL **1**

DIRECTOR **Paddy Spanton**

CAMERAMAN **O.K. Niles**

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approved, the filmmaking teams had two weeks to complete and submit a final version of their films. In designing the format of the film project portion of the festival, time given to the filmmakers was a critical component. There needed to be a sufficient amount of time given to not only create their work, but to let it rest, come back to it with a new set of eyes and mold the story the way the filmmakers originally conceived it.

The 2nd Act Film Festival is not meant to exist as a competitive film project where a starting gun is fired and teams of filmmakers huddle around each other and turn their backs on other participants. The intent is to bring filmmakers together, to seed the independent filmmaking community that has been attempting to bond in Columbia for decades.

After the filmmakers received their scripts, the teams were invited to come together at a happy hour hosted at the *Jasper* studios. While there were a few familiar faces among the group most artists were meeting each other for the first time. Filmmakers were also invited to talk about their films and introduce their casts and crews (for which the deadline was three days away) at *Jasper*'s September magazine release party. By then, there was a sense of family among everyone involved with helping hands being extended in all directions.

Conceptually, the festival continued to grow as days flew past. Room was given for change if new ideas came up. One word continued to hang over the festival concept—interdisciplinary. Even though the primary

goal of the festival was to grow the independent film community in Columbia, *Jasper* also wanted the event to act as an event that involved other artistic disciplines wherever possible. Author Janna McMahan had been enlisted to help co-write the initial script pages. A quick glance at an old Spoleto poster ignited the idea to have local artist create original works for the festival. Columbia artist Michael Krajewski enthusiastically responded to the *Jasper* request by creating an original work for the festival poster, and Columbia sculptor Matthew Kramer was enlisted to create an original piece to be presented to the audience favorite award winner.

When all ten films were submitted and viewed there was a sense that something special had taken place and now it was the audience's turn to be part of the process.

Two hundred chairs had been set out for seating at the Tapp's Arts Center. By the time the first film played, there were two hundred and thirty plus pairs of eyes turned to the screen. During intermission there was a genuine buzz around the room. The films, to that point, were a hit, but there was also something different taking place—people were meeting each other for the first time. Film enthusiasts were meeting the filmmakers, patrons and sponsors were able to talk to the actors they had just watched on screen. When the second half of the program began, no seat was empty and bodies lined the back walls of the room.

At the end of the program, filmmakers and their teams crowded the small stage and took questions from the audience. Audience

members were also asked to vote for one film they thought most deserved recognition above others. After votes were counted, *Crosswalk* a beautifully shot and acted relationship drama, directed and written by Alexis Stratton and filmed by O.K. Keyes was chosen as the Audience award winner.

Participant judge Lee Ann Kornegay was not surprised. "The strong storyline and production values that included good audio, dramatic lighting, great framing of shots, engaging actors and thoughtful direction made *Crosswalk* a clear winner to me and the audience. It stood out as a film with a production team that wanted to make something special happen."

The Nickelodeon's Janell Rohan agrees, saying, "I think *Crosswalk* was favored because it depended heavily on the emotional intelligence of the audience. It wasn't chatty or didactic, rather the communication was in the expression of the actors who were both very strong. It was certainly the film that had the biggest visceral effect on the audience. I cried unabashedly when it was ending. OK. Keyes made me care about the love story between these two girls and that in my opinion, is what makes the difference between good filmmaking and great cinema. OK Keyes has an extremely promising career in the movies ahead of her."

USC Media Arts professor Simon Tarr expressed a similar sentiment. "There were so many strong films in The 2nd Act Film Festival—it was thoroughly enjoyable end to end. In *Crosswalk*, Keyes and Stratton, along with their team, interpreted the cues in a wholly different way. The characters were so emotionally resonant, you could feel it affect the whole room."

The idea of asking for ten original films based on the same dialogue had certainly been a gamble. One by one as the completed films were submitted there was a buzz among *Jasper* staff that the event was going to present something new. No film resembled another, in genre, approach or style. Ten different voices presented their work. All filmmakers had taken ownership of The 2nd Act Festival concept and made it their own. Filmmakers with a long list of work were challenging themselves with something they had not tried before; younger filmmakers refused to use their age as an excuse to create anything less than excellent.

The decision to continue The 2nd Act Film Festival was an easy one to make as soon as *Jasper* first reviewed the completed films. The overwhelming community support for the festival gave confidence to the decision. *Jasper* is already looking forward to next year.

The 2nd Act Film Festival Filmmakers



Brian Cowley graduated from the University of South Carolina's Media Arts program, and then spent over ten years in the trenches of retail management honing his skills as a creative writer and accomplished doodler. In his film for The 2nd Act Film Festival, *Loophole*, Cowley traces the attempted escape of two men from mysterious captors.



Cecil Decker describes himself as an independent artist living in Columbia, SC; a performance artist, combining live audio and visual elements to create immersive experiences; a noise artist, working in the background, the raw data, the source code of the universe; and terrible at writing in the third person. His film, *Exploration #5*, depicts an experimental journey of striking sound and combating images through an urban landscape and home interiors.



Jeff Driggers spent his high school years making movies. He pursued this passion at the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in Radio, TV and Film. Since graduating, he launched his own videography business, Palmetto Pictures. He uses his business to fund his own personal films and hopes to make a feature in the future. In Driggers' film, *A Rousing Rise*, local stage actors Arik Bjorn and Scott Blanks star as a pair of janitorial workers who hop into an elevator to go about their work, but become alarmed as the elevator stops become stranger and stranger along the way.



Ron Hagell studied theater, art, and photography at the UNC and American University. Now an artist and lecturer, he has had careers in television (PBS and Lifetime) and as an Army officer in Vietnam. Most recently Ron has taught at Royal Holloway - University of London and at RISD. His film, *Quittin' Time*, shows what happens when two co-workers decide to spice up their lives by trading places for a night.



Chrystlin McAllister's interest in film began early in childhood, when she began creating films with her siblings. She is now pursuing a formal education in film production with the goal of becoming a professional cinematographer. Her film, which starred members of her family, is titled *Vigor Mortis* and provides an entirely different take on the walking dead.



Michael McClendon is a 2011 University of South Carolina graduate, who earned his BA in Media Arts. He has won various awards throughout his college career including the 2008 Indie Grits 'Young Grit' award for students. He also directed and edited the 2010 University of South Carolina PSA that aired nationally during USC Football games. In McClendon's film, *Two Men and a Gorilla*, two men are invited into a home by a gorilla and find that entertaining their host is more of a challenge than they expected.



Alex Smith's work in film has included acting in *Renaissance Man*, *A Sunny Day in the City*, *Exit Interview*, *Exposure*, *Lola's Prayer*, and *Pretty Pitiful God*. As a writer-director-editor of film, his credits include *Summer Knowledge*, *Inside*, *Me & The Devil*, *Charlot* and *Nocturn*. He recently published the screenplay for his third feature, *Swallows Light*. For The 2nd Act Film Festival Smith cast local artists Thomas Crouch, Philip Mullen, Lyon Hill, and Michael Krajewski to star in the film *COD ASCENT* about a pair of friends who travel an existential path that starts in the confined walls of an elevator.



Jason Stroud defines his style by taking chances with techniques that he is unfamiliar with, often resulting in an emotionally driven piece without a clear theme. His work is varied in tone and pacing, and at times is a highly structured minimalism with subtle but long lasting emotional influence, and at other times is a raw barrage of imagery and sounds that force you to pay attention and remember. Filmed before a green screen, *Classwork Dot Exe*, depicts competing pairs of contestants who play games of skill to avoid being deleted from a master program, with Stroud playing all the parts.



Ebony Wilson is the owner of Midnight Crow Productions, and has pursued acting in the southeast film industry for the last eight years. Born and raised in Columbia, SC, she progressively began writing, directing, and filmmaking to further express her creativity as well as to gain a broader understanding of the process of film production. In her film, *The Meeting*, a suspicious meeting in a back alley gives one man a transaction he wasn't expecting.

An Everywhere Player: Indie Rock Whirlwind

ADAM CULLUM

Around (MUSICALLY)

BY KYLE PETERSEN

It's the pauses that are telling.

Adam Cullum—actively the guitarist/singer in Can't Kids, multi-instrumentalist/singer in Magnetic Flowers, bassist in People Person, everything in his solo project Falling Off a Building, and drummer in Gold Light—is one of those endlessly creative people, with song lyrics and musical ideas spouting seemingly effortlessly from his fingertips over the course of nearly a decade of making music in Columbia. His prolific output makes him seem like the kind of person who should rarely be at a loss for words, but it actually happens quite a bit. He normally talks quickly, almost frantically, often using metaphors and pseudo-parables to explain his meaning, and then all of a sudden he freezes, and stares at you with an unnerving intensity as he searches for the right words to say. You can't see so much as feel the inner workings of his brain attempting to quickly unjam the cogs in his thought process.

As we sit down in early October of 2013, Cullum is having a bit of a moment. The long-awaited third LP from Magnetic Flowers, *Old, Cold, Losing It*, has just been released, with People Person's debut effort quickly following it. Can't Kids is set to have their second album mastered soon, with a release date sometime in the first few months of 2014. Gold Light, Cullum's newest project, recently finished up a short tour in the Midwest and is making plans for another run up the East Coast at the end of the year. Each project can loosely be described as indie rock, although there are abundant differences between each. First you have the highly literary and complex songcraft of the Magnetic Flowers, which falls more in Okkervil River and Wilco territory, than you have the alternatively

delicate and bombastic, Modest Mouse-inspired Can't Kids. People Person, fronted by Can't Kids drummer Jessica Oliver, trades in rollicking buzz-pop inspired by 1990s indie rock and 1960s girl groups.

All of which sounds kind of exhausting. Somehow, though, Cullum finds it all invigorating.

"I get to do all of it, and I get to do it all with different people, and I get to carry a different thing each time," he says excitedly, without a trace of exhaustion in his voice. "I'm at a place in my life where I get to do a different [musical] thing every night."

Cullum grew up as a piano player and singer performing in church, but he's always had the urge to try everything. "Every time I've achieved a goal [in learning a different instrument], all I can think about is what I haven't gotten to do yet," he admits. His urge to play so many different instruments, he believes, stems from his early experience at the piano.

"As a piano player, when I was growing up, I'd always imagine the entire ensemble at my fingertips," he explains. "I'd always think about what it would be like to be in a band with someone exactly like me, so I could play with somebody like me." Then he discovered multi-track recording, and his solo project Falling off a Building began. "[That] is a band that I've been in with myself since 2004. And it's really more of a duo than a solo project," he explains earnestly.

Falling off a Building recordings tend to be ramshackle affairs of varying sonic quality, borrowing from the emotional-yet-acerbic indie rock tradition of folks like Isaac Brock and Conor Oberst that seem to be the core of Cullum's musical ramblings. But, from the

beginning, it's hard to deny that Cullum's personality comes through full force, largely through the relentless addition of a stray banjo or accordion line here, a richly melodic keyboard part there. It also tends to be a space for the most personal and tentative of Cullum's songs, although the line between what project gets what songs (he contributes to Magnetic Flowers and does most of the writing in Can't Kids as well) is a little blurred.

"I think about who I'm speaking for. And when I'm writing for a particular band, it will express itself to that group of people" Cullum tries to explain.

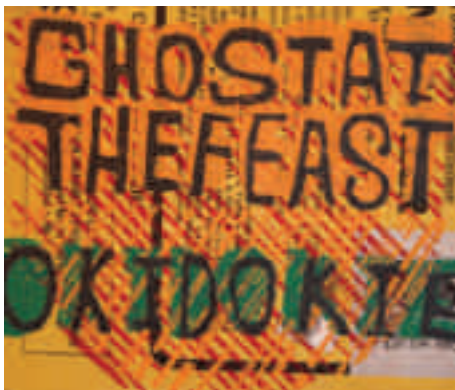
Of course, everything he does seems to constantly evolve. Whereas Falling off a Building still gets some of his attentions, Can't Kids and Magnetic Flowers are his two primary outlets. He only gradually became a songwriting force in the latter band, contributing mostly music to the other two songwriters' songs (Jared Pyritz and Patrick Funk) and then two of his own compositions on the new album. Can't Kids, which he calls a "child" of Magnetic Flowers, originally started as a collaboration with Oliver, although Cullum has since become the primary leader of the group.

But Cullum is okay with, and often welcomes, the ambiguity and flux of his musical projects. He loves word play and homophones, anything with the possibility of multiple meanings. When discussing a particularly enigmatic line in one of his songs, Cullum claims to "mean it every single way all at once." It's a fitting sentiment for a musician, who, most of the time, seems to be trying for, and succeeding, at almost everything.

lets



LOCAL RECORD REVIEWS



GHOST AT THE FEAT Okidokie

Some records are brought to us as sort of resume for the band—a showcase of all of its talents and abilities, presented en masse in the hope that something will stick. Others, like Ghost at the Feast's *Okidokie*, swagger into the room as if they already have the job. This is the kind of confidence you're likely only to find in a band that knows its strengths and how best to use them, and *Okidokie* is an effective document of the group's brand of downhome Peavey-pop.

It's difficult to imagine this record existing without Against Mel's *Reinventing Axl Rose* or the Mountain Goat's *Tallahassee* having paved the way, but as far as reference points go, an energetic folk-rock outfit could do a lot worse. Scrubby electric guitars and an economic rhythm section dominate the instrumentation, while vocalist Noah Brock is just as at home riding out his mid-range Caucasian croon as he is spewing a throaty, salivated, punk-rock bark. And these guys must be getting plenty at home because there's nary a trace of the musical masturbation from which most rock bands derive so much delight. Borrowing the Ramones' get-in-get-out approach to just about everything,

Okidokie clocks in at around twenty-two minutes in length, and two of the songs, the bro-hymn "Hookah Party" and the drunk-punk rock-out "Francine in the Horsemeat," last under forty seconds apiece and demonstrate that Ghost at the Feast understand an ethical principle most bands either forget or choose to ignore: Take the music seriously, but never yourself.

There's a grimy, lo-fi quality to the album, but that's completely by design. With excessive polish, an album having this much fun with itself could come off as overly precocious or smug, but Ghost at the Feast is a band that sounds the most comfortable playing bomb shelter pop tunes that can be performed in any chemical condition, and *Okidokie* is recorded proof of the merit in knowing where your talent lies and seeing it through before the half hour is up.

—Michael Spawn



DANIEL HAMMOND Peaks & Valleys

Peaks & Valleys is the latest from ambient electronica artist Daniel Hammond, an artist who makes the kind of quiet, introspective headphone music that can often get lost in the margins of local music scenes which rely so heavily on rock club gigs and local festivals to make their assets known. While Hammond will occasionally play a live set, his music needs the context of the home studio for it to fully make sense. Built on spare electronic drums and warm, wandering synth lines, Hammond tends to fill his songs with peaceful found sounds, electronic bleeps and blurps, and other inscrutable white noises to evoke a loud emptiness, an urban-organic compositional oxymoron that recalls the erstwhile chillwave movement tonally if not sonically. And while his compositions don't

stay uniformly sleepy—songs like "Hakone Skyline" and "Animals" veer near the steely rhythm work that Jim Tamborello worked into Postal Service—the overall effect is one that tends to offer calmness even as it pushes and pulls at your thoughts. It's a cool, remarkably rewarding album for late night introspection or finding some midday serenity, as Hammond makes music that asks you to slow down and find a sense of center in an increasingly hectic and overdriven world. —KP



MAGNETIC FLOWERS Old, Cold. Losing It.

Any record that opens by expertly twisting the lyrics of Carly Simon's "You're So Vain" and closes with stream-of-consciousness ramblings so dreamily self-indulgent they make amphetamine Kerouac look like on-the-wagon Hemingway is an effort worth paying attention to. *Old, Cold. Losing It*, the third long-player from Magnetic Flowers, is that very album and, according the band, the one they have always wanted to make. Employing a writing and recording strategy that would give Nancy Reagan the vapors, the quintet just says yes to every major whim, minor idea, and treeless acre of lyric paper, and in the process have produced an album that can boast something fewer and fewer records can—an honest-to-god character that is completely its own.

Exhibiting multiple personalities without descending into the mire of schizophrenia, *Old, Cold. Losing It* moves with ease from the stoner menace of "times-pentintheshadowofthewingofathingtoobigtoseerising (Losing It)" to the dancehall rock of "Dirty Grounds (Old, Cold)" to the barrel-house roll of "Fire of '09 (You're Going to be Okay)," and proves itself to be that rare pop animal that drills the argument home with-

out the benefit of lazy repetition, a quality that allows every song to have its own spirit while remaining undeniably true to that of Magnetic Flowers. Even on its most somber tracks, the record sparkles with the adventure of spontaneous experimentation.

Much has been made of the fact that *Old, Cold, Losing It's* gustatory ethos was inspired by the possibly apocryphal triumph of a man who dedicated himself to consuming a Boeing 747 piece by piece until, against all odds and medical wisdom, he did just that. But if this is the real-world parallel by which we should judge the record, larger questions remain: Is he okay now that he's finished? And could he ever recreate such a stunt for an audience? The answer to both is, presumably, "no," because he is probably dead. But Magnetic Flowers appear to be flourishing, and we can only wait with bated breath for what comes next. — Michael Spawn



PAN Meta Major EP

Over the last few years, the young post-rockers in Pan have earned the distinction of being the hardest-touring band out of Columbia, spending month after month on the road on a shoestring budget as they preach the gospel of their euphoric instrumental post-rock. Like Explosions in the Sky on Adderall, Pan loves big crescendos and anthemic moments, but they also rush into them with tight, propulsive arrangements rather than languidly building up to them. *Meta Major*, their third recording and follow-up to last year's full-length *These Are the Things I Love and I Want to Share Them With You*, continues to mine their trademark aesthetic, with fitting titles like "Aim High" and "The Best Day" making no bones about their interests. What makes Pan so fascinating as a post-

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rock band is that the emotional palette they draw from is so starkly different from much of their brethren, with songs that seem more about the giddy exuberance of a childhood race rather than the barren existential wanderings of more contemplative acts like Sigur Rós or Mogwai. Oftentimes the frantic up-tempo escalations betray themselves on *Meta Major* though, as it becomes clear that these are young adults dramatically reaching back to the brightest joys of youth, with the dark clouds of uncertainty creeping in. Guitarists Ian Flegas and Nathan Stewart's fluid, interlocking guitars are still mostly leading a

sunny charge, but when Kayla Breitwieser's violin swoons to the forefront (as it does on "Baton") or the band's giddy tunes come to a bittersweet end a la "Miracle Mile," the band elegantly captures their own nostalgic impulse as much as the exhilarating highs of the salad days of youth. It's a subtle but powerful nuance for a band that can be too-easily dismissed for its cartoonish adrenaline rush, as the band's increasingly nuanced arrangements can always pay greater dividends than such a caricature suggests. — KP

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SMALL SANCTIONS Feather Habits EP



A newly formed trio fronted by Grayson Venters, who previously led The Devil and the Lion and has done stints as a guitarist with Calculator and Latenights, Small Sanctions is rounded out by John Fowlers (of The Vices) and Latenights drummer Nate Puza, and together the group specializes in angular indie rock that is indebted to Interpol and Echo & the Bunnymen, but comes across less dreary and mopey than their sonic forbearers, replacing such downer affectations with an obvious swagger and poise. Venters twists his voice with jaunty authority on his

new material, sneaking in and out of falsetto with alacrity and half-barking his lyrical announcements with a boldness that obscures or blunts the downhearted nature of the four tunes here. Both Puza and Fowlers are more than happy to keep things tight and locked, pushing the songs forward while allowing Venters to take center stage.

Much of what makes this album tick is the thick, entangled guitar grooves Venters lays across these songs, a gnarly delight that is more than a little reminiscent of his work in Calculator, but it's worth noting that these songs also sound physical and crisp, and the engineering and production work by Stagbriar's Alex McCollum should not be taken lightly. McCollum balances his love of reverb and atmosphere so apparent in his own band's work with the knowledge that Small Sanctions swings with a heavier hammer, so the drums and bass stay powerfully in focus as the guitars and vocals slide in and out more tempestuously, giving the EP, and the band itself, a wonderfully assured identity as it starts making its mark on the Columbia music scene. -KP

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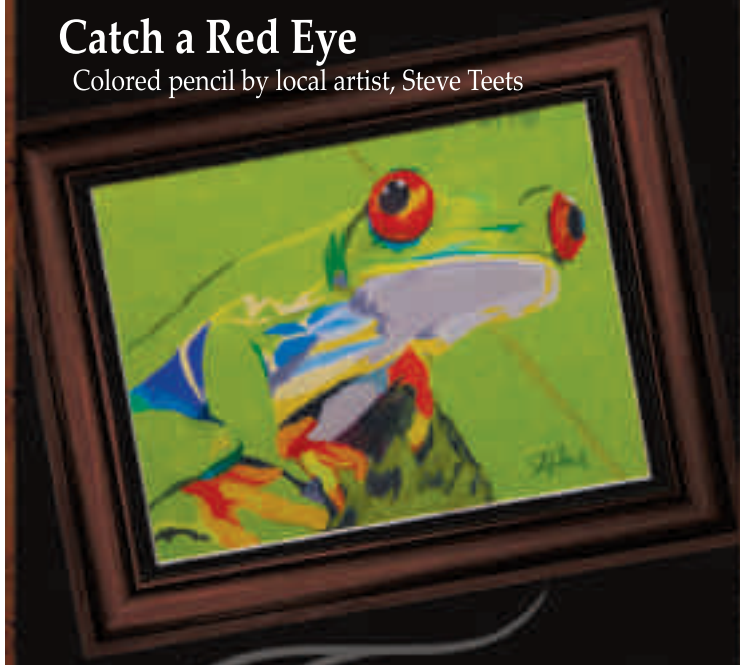
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FATHER AND SON – THE ARTS *of* LARRY AND BAKARI LEBBY

BY DEBORAH SWEARINGEN

N

ature vs. nurture—a debate formally introduced to most in a high school psychology class—is revisited but not resolved in the lives of renowned local artist Larry Leiby and his son, Bakari. Both are successful artists working in varying art forms. The father, an exceptionally talented visual artist, shaped and nurtured the son’s developing interests in music and theatrics. Undoubtedly, the pair is different, and both admit to having attempted the other’s artistic medium only to fully understand why it was not the right avenue for himself.

Larry Francis Leiby grew up in Dixiana, SC in the 1950s; a small town with few people where drawing in the sand was his main form of entertainment. As a young person, art was never a formality in his life, but an

appreciation for the arts and a knack for experimentation seemed to be innately part of him. Paints were extremely limited during the time, and thus Leiby realized the capabilities of a simple ballpoint pen. Paint sets may have been few and far between, but pens were an item present in every household. “It didn’t matter whether it was Bic or some other company’s pen,” says Leiby, “I had no particular interest ... I just happened to pick them up and see what I could do.”

As an African-American living in the South, many might assume that the integration of schools would have been difficult on Leiby. But with integration came his first legitimate art course, first art instructor, and first experience in an artistic environment. Few people were interested in art at the time, but

PHOTO BY FORREST CLONTS

the elder Leppy found a teacher who encouraged him and gave him the proper training to help him achieve at the next level.

And achieve he did. Perhaps most notable of his work done in ballpoint pen was a portrait of former President Jimmy Carter. Leppy was involved with several political people in the greater Columbia area and ended up gaining a connection to Carter, governor of Georgia at the time. After winning the presidential election, Carter invited Leppy to the White House and asked him to create the portrait. It hung in the West Wing for Carter's entire term.

The elder Leppy purchased Bakari his first guitar when his son was five. "I needed to appease the gods somehow," Larry Leppy says, laughing and remembering his failed attempts as a drummer in the high school band. But Bakari learned quickly and didn't need any push to attend his music lessons. His natural ability and willingness to learn made his father proud.

Music and theatre are the two artistic venues that Bakari demonstrated an aptitude for. Bakari's current band, Sandcastles, began as a solo project and has now grown into a multi-person group. The band plays shows in Greenville, Columbia, and Charlotte. For Bakari, music is fun.

Theatre, however, is the path Bakari would most like to follow. He began acting in plays at his elementary school and has since realized that while acting is enjoyable, directing is what he truly loves. Directing allows him to try new things and express his ideas. He graduated from the University of South Carolina this past year with a degree in theatre and hopes to eventually attend graduate school for directing.

Larry Leppy never pushed his children to produce artwork. He never wanted his kids to feel pressured, and he certainly wanted to avoid any comparisons in terms of quality between father and children. "I just wanted them to be able to appreciate art and have an eye for it," he says. The elder Leppy was more than willing to help out when his children wanted his counsel but was careful never to give any unsought help. The younger Leppy admitted that, as he was growing up, he would generally only ask for his father's help when he had questions specific to the visual arts. Likely because of their difference in interest, it was much more common for the two to share knowledge rather than give advice.

"Young people are like sponges – whatever they are around is what they soak up," says Larry Leppy. Bakari agrees noting, "I was running around in art galleries around the

country when I was four ... and I was introduced to artists like Andrew Wyeth when I was five."

David Stringer, editor-in-chief of local music website *Scene SC*, has known Bakari Leppy since Leppy was in high school. Stringer says Bakari is multi-faceted and incredibly passionate about local arts. When it comes to playing and promoting music, Stringer says Bakari can do it all. If he can't do something, he will figure it out. Stringer also says that Larry and Bakari are very different personality wise but have a close relationship. "I definitely think he (Larry) has been a huge influence on Bakari's nature, even though I don't think Bakari realizes it. He's very confident in his own unique style and is never afraid to put his art out there."

Currently, Larry Leppy is working on a massive painting of the Saluda River inspired by a love for fishing that is deeply rooted in his childhood. Bakari continues to play shows with his band while simultaneously searching for the most fitting graduate school and directing *Biloxi Blues* at the Workshop Theatre. Though their styles may be different, some things are for certain – the Leppys work hard to incorporate art into their lives and both are integral parts of the greater Columbia arts community.

Larry Francis Leppy attended Allen University and earned a BA from the University of SC in 1973 and a MFA in 1976. His work has been exhibited at the United States White House, the Smithsonian Institution, the United State Senate, the United Nations, the SC Statehouse, the High Museum, the Newark Museum, the Huntsville Museum of Art, the Ponder Fine Arts Gallery, the Gibbes Gallery, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts, Clemson University, the University of Maryland, McMaster Gallery, the SC State Museum, and the Vatican in Rome. His work is included in the private collections of James Earl Jones, Roberta Flack, Eddie Murphy, Gregory Peck, Andrew Young, and Strom Thurmond. Leppy was given the Living Legacy Award from the United Negro Women's Association.

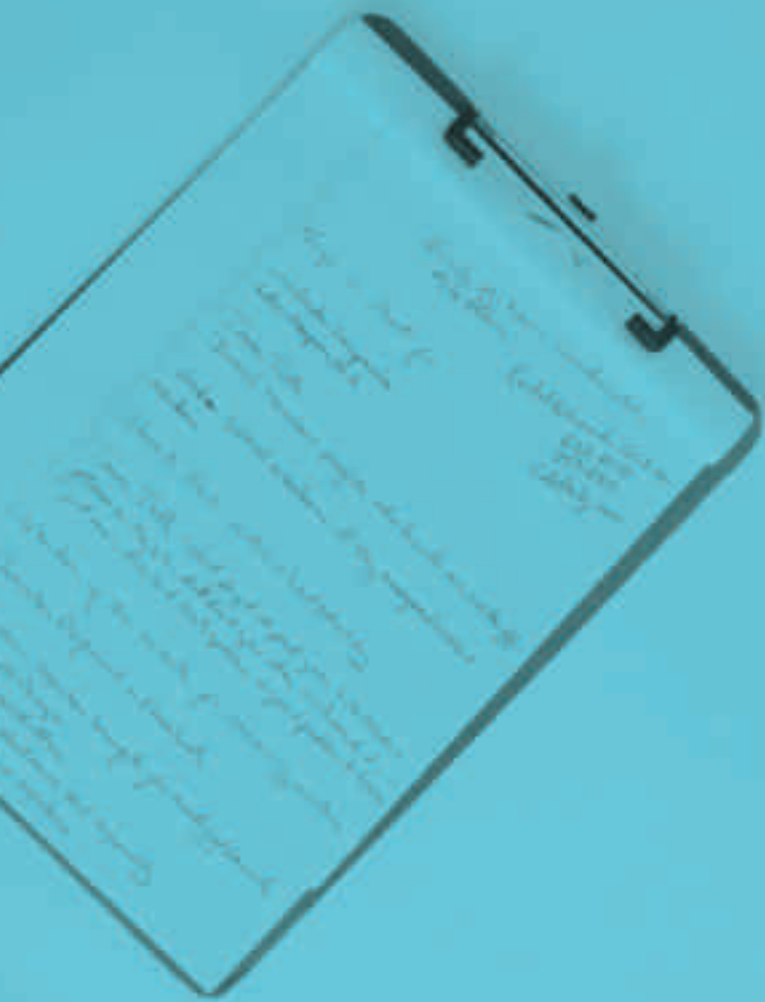
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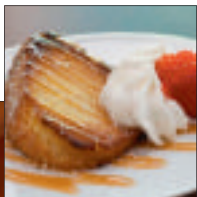
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First Thursday

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CURTAIN UP

w/ August Krickel

As you read this, there are just a few more nights to catch performances of works by titans of modern theatre like Shaffer and Chekhov, as well as revivals of popular crowd-pleasers. Then the holiday spirit is upon us, with plenty of seasonal stage treat. Don't forget - theatre tickets make for great last-minute stocking stuffers. Curtain Up!

Chapin Theatre Company enjoyed success last summer with *Mama Won't Fly*, a family-friendly account of a mother-daughter cross-country road trip from the playwrighting trio of Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, and Jamie Wooten. Director Jocelyn Sanders's production returns for one weekend only, Thursday November 21 - Sunday November 24, with the original cast, including Tiffany Dinsmore and Linda Durant. Performances are at the Old Chapin Firehouse; for information, call 803-240-8544, or visit chapin-theatre.org/.

USC's Theatre South Carolina presents Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, running through Saturday, November 23 at Longstreet Theatre. Director Steven Pearson promises a lighter tone than is often found with productions of Chekhov, as we follow a family caught between memories of a happy past, and challenges of an uncertain future. The cast includes Melissa Reed, Kate Dzvonik, and Laurie Roberts in the title roles, with special appearances by a couple of familiar and distinguished faces, Richard Jennings and Bob Hungerford. Then the USC Lab Theatre, located at 1400 Wheat St, will host *whose words all ears took captive* (a line from Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*), an original short play festival coordinated by faculty member Robyn Hunt. Inspired by similar events around the country, the festival will challenge students to create and produce original work in just 48 hours. No one will have scripts, nor any clue who will write, direct, design, or perform until November 20. Curtain is at 8 PM on Friday the 22nd. After which the process repeats, with new topics and assignments chosen at random, creating a second set of plays presented on Sunday the 24th. For information, call 803-777-2551.

Workshop Theatre's production of Anthony Shaffer's timeless, Tony Award-winning thriller *Sleuth* also continues through Saturday, November 23. Hunter Boyle and Jason Stokes engage in a deadly whodunit, until a pesky police inspector, played by Clyde Jenkins, complicates matters. Eric Bultman directs this reality-bending tale of cat-vs-mouse-vs-cat. Then director Jocelyn Sanders dives into the New Year with Beth Henley's *Crimes of the Heart*, a dark comedy of Southern Gothic family dysfunction (is there any other kind?) The cast includes Katie Mixon, Allison Allgood, Erin Huiett,

Denise Pearman, and George Dinsmore; the production runs January 10-25. For information, call 803-799-4876, or visit workshoptheatre.com.

The holidays can be murder, so why not embrace it? **Theatre Rowe's** Southeastern Theatrical Arts Bandits (S.T.A.B.) perform the interactive murder mystery *Murder Rides Again* aboard the "Spirit of Lake Murray" on Sunday, November 24, while *Die Claudius* concludes its run in their space at Richland Mall the preceding evening. James Daab's *Who Killed the Boss?* is their next comic thriller, as cubicle denizens of National Universal Technology Services prepare for a killer holiday party, when ... well, you see the title. Run dates are November 29 - January 12; for information, call 803-2002012, or visit scdinnertheatre.com.

Larry Shue's wildly popular farce *The Foreigner* ran for two years off-Broadway, winning two Obies and two Outer Critics Circle Awards; **Town Theatre** hasn't done the work in a number of years, however, and director Allison McNeeley has cast some new blood. Frank Thompson plays a shy Englishman adrift in rural Georgia, with Charlie Goodrich as the child-like local determined to help him assimilate. Patrick Dodds, Erika Bryant, Kathy Hartzog, Waldo Medlin, and Bill DeWitt round out the cast. The show continues through Sunday December 1; for information, call 803-799-2510, or visit towntheatre.com.

Thompson does double duty this month, directing the **Columbia Children's Theatre** production of *Ho Ho Ho*, which runs Friday November 29 - Sunday, December 8. Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus (Lee O. Smith and Christy Shealy Mills) prepare for the annual delivery of gifts, amid "comedic mayhem, singing and dancing wackiness, and tons of audience participation in the classic style of British pantomime." Aiding and abetting are Bill DeWitt, Will Moreau, and Elizabeth Stepp - with such a cast of veteran comic pros, one trusts the set will be reinforced to guard against excessive scenery chewing! For information, call 803-691-4548, or visit columbiachildrenstheatre.com.

Patrick Barlow, the mad genius behind the stage adaptation of *Hitchcock's The 39 Steps* as performed by a cast of four, has done it again, with a new, five-performer version of

A Christmas Carol, running December 6-21 at **Trustus Theatre** on the Thigpen Mainstage; for details, see pg. _____. The New Year then kicks off with *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*, running in the Richard and Debbie Cohn Side Door Theatre January 3-18, and directed by Larry Hembree. Nora and Delia Ephron's script follows five women (Jodie Cain Smith, Caroline Weidner, Amy Brower, Tiffany James, and Emily Harrill) through changing relationships and wardrobes, with the latter often reflecting the former. For more information, call 803-254-9732, or visit trustus.org/.

A special production of *Always ... Patsy Cline* is presented by the Lexington County Arts Association at the **Village Square Theatre**, as a fundraiser for cancer research. Becky Croft directs Eliza Caughman Spence as Patsy, and Debra Leopard as her fan and lifelong friend Louise. Running Friday, December 6 - Sunday, December 15, the musical promises "down home country humor, true emotion and even some audience participation," plus several dozen Cline hits, including "Crazy," "I Fall to Pieces," and "Sweet Dreams." For information, call 803-359-1436, or visit villagesquaretheatre.com.

West Columbia's **On Stage Productions** also opens with a family-friendly holiday musical on Friday, December 6th, but *Yes Virginia - The Musical* only runs through Sunday, December 8th. Based on the heartwarming story of the little girl who wrote to the newspaper to find out the truth about Christmas, this show features a large cast including Liberty Broussard as Virginia, and Emma Imholz as Miriam the Librarian. For information, visit onstagesc.com/.



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BECOMING S



Christmas Carol is coming to Trustus Theater this December, but it is no ordinary interpretation of the Dickens classic. Marionettes, conga drums, and a cast of only five actors will create the performance in this unique Patrick Barlow adaptation. Being able to show Barlow's version of the play is an incredible distinction for Trustus; only 12 theaters in the country will be hosting the adaptation this season. Director Chad Henderson gives the credit for this honor to New York playwright, Randall David Cook, who—originally hailing from SC—recommended Trustus to Daryl Roth Theatrical Licensing. The company offered several of their plays to Trustus for its upcoming season, and Barlow's *A Christmas Carol* fell into Henderson's lap.

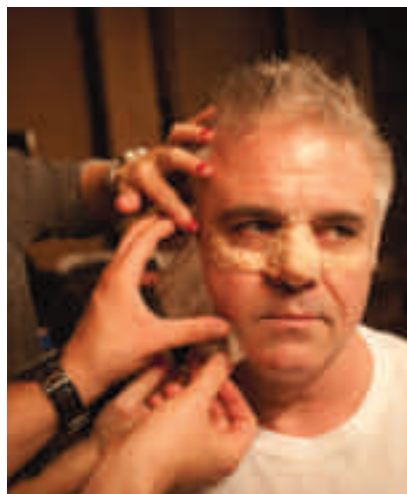
Henderson is excited to direct this reinvention of one of his favorite Christmas stories. Whether it was watching the *Muppets* movie throughout childhood, participating in Trustus Youth's Theater yearly production, or directing a different hour-long version of the play on two occasions, Henderson holds *A Christmas Carol* close to heart. However, this production will be a new experience for Henderson as well as Trustus' audience; Barlow's interpretation departs in multiple ways from standard productions of the play. For one, it calls for the actors to use musical instruments, bringing an interesting amalgam of noisemakers to the Trustus stage.

The actors' voices will, naturally, present the host of original songs. But a Line 6 Guitar Pedal – a new toy that Henderson is quite excited about – may also enable a “live mixology” on stage. Whether or not Bob Cratchit will be beatboxing remains to be seen. In addition to quirky music renditions, Barlow's play calls for non-living performers; marionettes – provided by local puppet maker and puppeteer Lyon Hill – will portray child characters such as Tiny Tim. Period costumes, spooky makeup, and a backdrop of crooked buildings complete the production's quirk. Henderson hopes the production will be lavish in a way that is creative and different, emphasizing that the goal is not spectacle but to showcase Barlow's unique work.

One of the more fantastic aspects of this lavishness comes in the form of putty, foundation, and clown paint. While Henderson doesn't usually pull out all the stops when it comes to his actors' cosmetics, makeup commands an integral role in this production of *A Christmas Carol*. Henderson describes his vision for makeup as the lovechild of Baz Luhrmann and Tim Burton: intensely detailed and dark. He hopes for a Sweeney Todd feel, with smoky eyes and grim features. “It is a ghost story,” he adds, a night of hauntings as well as holiday spirit. Characters such as Marley and the Ghost of Christmas to Come should be slightly frightening; Scrooge, cold

CROOGE

BY JOANNA SAVOLD
PHOTOS BY JONATHAN SHARPE



and heartless.

Trustus Company actor and beautician Robin Gottlieb is tasked with making Henderson's vision a reality. It's a challenge she attacks with enormous enthusiasm. Creating the character Scrooge presents a particular challenge, however, as the focal point of the play. The talented Stann Gwynn will be playing the miserly Ebenezer, but sans makeup Gwynn hardly looks the part. Gottlieb must turn the healthy, attractive younger Gwynn into a sick and unappealing old man, all while maintaining the gothic feel that carries through the production. Finding the right look for Gwynn is largely a process in trial and error, Gottlieb says. She has experience in stage makeup and natural cosmetics, but the kind of intense character makeup that this play necessitates is a new challenge for her.

With limited resources but plenty of creativity at her disposal, Gottlieb first experiments with different techniques to invent Scrooge, or – as she emphasizes – the illusion of Scrooge. Will modeling putty or 'synwax' best disfigure Gwynn's otherwise attractive nose? She ends up using a mixture of both to add texture and "grit" to Gwynn's face, giving him baggy eyes and a bulbous drunk's nose. While she's still not positive that the putty mixture will be the chosen material for opening night, she reiterates that ex-

perimenting is all a part of the process. Add hairspray and hair color, wild muttonchops, extreme aging makeup, and shocking bushy eyebrows courtesy of Gwynn's own freshly shaved facial hair, and the man sitting in the dressing room is suddenly a stranger with a striking resemblance to a Dickens character. "That's not Stann," Henderson declares, as Gwynn stalks through the dressing room practicing a classic Scrooge sneer.

Gottlieb proudly snaps a picture with her creation, but this is by no means the end of the road for the character's design. Gwynn, like the other four actors, will have to apply his own makeup before every performance, and Gottlieb stresses that she will definitely not be on call to recreate the character. Instead, Gwynn needs a method he can easily duplicate. She says their best bet will be creating a latex mask, something that Gwynn can easily apply and remove while maintaining the consistency and detail in Scrooge's appearance. Once she finalizes the look, latex mask or no, she will give him a step-by-step process to follow before each show. Designing a cohesive look beforehand guarantees that all the characters will fit one another as well as Henderson's concept.

Having a makeup artist at all – beyond the actors themselves – is unique in Columbia theaters, Gottlieb says, since smaller theaters tend to lack the budget for it. This real-

ity is unfortunate, when having professional input can enhance and help maintain the quality of a production. She hopes for more opportunities like this one in the future, from Trustus and other theaters, but for now is excited to play this role in the character design. It's rare to be able to combine both of her passions, theater and makeup, Trustus and Bombshell Beauty Studio, in one job. While she's eager to experiment with the character makeup and invent various means of application, she admits that her main goal is bringing Henderson's specific ideas to life, or in her words, "to do whatever he wants." He never fails to tell her his expectations for the makeup, and his specificity is a challenge she is readily equipped for and excited to face.

Though he is closely engaged in the process, Henderson stresses that the production is a group effort. In many previous projects, he controlled the majority of the performance and production directions, but in *A Christmas Carol*, he wants to rely more on his actors to determine how to portray the different characters. He calls this a production that is "full of play," one that involves his team on all levels, from music to makeup to marionettes. As its director, he is simply a navigator through the London of Barlow's creation.

JASPER GOES TO THE LIBRARY



CULLY SALEHI AND TODD MATHIS | PHOTO BY FORREST CLOVIS

Starting in December at the Richland Library and six of its branches, don't be surprised to smell turpentine in the circulation department or hear singing in the stacks because *Jasper* is going to the library!

Jasper Goes to the Library is a new outreach program presented in a partnership between *Jasper Magazine* and Richland Library. Once a month for six months and at six different library branches, artists from six different arts disciplines will present an hour long program of performance and demonstration. Disciplines include dance,

theatre, the literary arts, music, visual arts, and film.

It was a brainstorm that originated with Heather Green, manager of Richland Library Wheatley. "I had really begun thinking about how Richland Library could partner with our community artists to have the biggest impact on our community," Green says. "Although we are considered a metropolitan area, many of our residents do not have access and exposure to the many arts resources we have right here in Columbia. I decided to contact (*Jasper* editor) Cindi Boiter to get the ball rolling on a Richland Library/*Jasper* partnership. My initial ideas were small – that *Jasper* could come to Richland Library Wheatley, which is my location, and present something arts related. Cindi blew my small ideas wide open suggesting that *Jasper* and

the Library collaborate for a series of presentations – from performing arts to visual arts. So in one afternoon meeting, my little idea grew into a wonderful partnership."

Local visual artist Tim Floyd is one of the six selected artists and arts groups to participate in the inaugural program and is scheduled to present and demonstrate on January 7th in 2014 at the Ballentine branch of Richland Library. For Floyd, who will be talking about creative solutions and demonstrating how to make an encaustic painting, it makes perfect sense for an arts magazine like *Jasper* to design a series of arts events which will allow working artists to share their talents



VISUAL ARTIST TIM FLOYD | PHOTO BY RICK SMOAK

with their community in free and public spaces. “Libraries are the knowledge hub of a community. Showing original art and process is important for the encouragement of others,” Floyd says. “Maybe one person will get a spark and go out and create something.”

The programs will all take place on the first Tuesday of the month starting on December 3rd with visual artist and writer Laurie McIntosh who will be talking about and reading from her art book, *All the In Between – My Story of Agnes*, at the Wheatley Branch.

McIntosh’s book is an annotated catalogue of an art series she completed commemorating the life and death of her mother. Other presenters include the musical duo of Todd Mathis (guitar) and Cully Salehi (viola) who will perform at the North Main Branch on February 4th, films from The 2013 2nd Act Film Festival presented by *Jasper Magazine* on March 4th at Richland Library Northeast, Columbia City Ballet Company on April 1st at the Southeast branch, and the South Carolina Shakespeare Company on May 6th at the Co-

per branch.

“Columbia has so many wonderful resources. We should all be partnering more to maximize our message that all residents/communities deserve to have quality education and information—no matter their socioeconomic standing,” says Green. “I am so excited that Richland Library and *Jasper* are partnering up to further promote the arts in Columbia. Six months of *Jasper* artists in our libraries? That sounds pretty awesome to me!” - CB



The poems in Susan Laughter Meyers's *My Dear, Dear Stagger Grass*, winner of the 2012 Cider Press Review Editors Prize, marry clear imagery with an elegiac tone in a meditation on both the innumerable losses involved in life and the wealth each moment still offers. As in "Morning after the Hailstorm," these poems offer a sense of waking to a wounded world. It is a world in which there is still much beauty, but one in which we must acknowledge that sorrow and loss are part of the abundance that this world gives:

*For a few early hours the tender
pretense (forget
the havoc) that the heart is cheerful
as birdsong. Till the sun, searing
a different truth, climbs higher.*

Many of the poems focus on plants and animals, beings in which our own fragility is writ small. Through these figures, the poet explores the tensions between the kaleidoscopic abundance of life and the fragility of individual beings. In "Dear Atamasco Lily," the poem from which the book takes its title, Meyers writes:

*Nothing else in the swamp rises beyond
the surprise of you
and your sweet repetition*

As Meyers hints here and in other poems, this "sweet repetition" is that of generations. In the case of plants, animals, and people, the starting and end points of individual lives are mapped against this backdrop of species continuity.

While Meyers's poems often regard nature's creatures sympathetically, they also refuse to anthropomorphize or domesticate them: even the songbirds are foreign, ambassadors of a world that is a source of beauty and joy, but also incomprehensible and cruel. The irony is that we are natives to this foreign world, and that our interactions with its other beings often reveal us to be strangers to ourselves. This is particularly true in Meyers's snake poems, in which en-

counters with the reptiles are also often encounters with violent and usually invisible aspects of ourselves. "Two Friends Hiking at Old Santee Canal" describes a hike cut short after a surprise encounter with a snake, in which the hikers "backtrack in the safety of a path already taken," and in "Dear Snakeskin" even the shed trace of the snake's presence is enough to give the speaker pause:

*You who hold nothing
hold sway over me—
you, now nothing
but tatter.*

The speaker of Meyers's poems participates in the struggles of the various beings described instead of occupying a privileged place apart from them, and this gives the book a great sense of urgency. The first poem in the collection, "Why Does Rain Cast This Longsome Spell?" enacts this immersion of consciousness and feeling in the natural world, breaking down the distinction between witness and scene:

*My hummingbird's perch, that highest twig,
has no leaves. Today, no bird.
I call the vacancy sorrow.*

One of the wonders of *My Dear, Dear Stagger Grass* is that Meyers achieves these effects with such seemingly simple language. These poems are clear-eyed and elegiac, celebratory of life's wonders and mournful for the beings, places, feelings and things we lose along the way, including, eventually, ourselves. While nature promises a kind of eternal life in the Tennysonian "sweet repetition" of its forms, it also threatens death. Navigating this shifting ground is the poet's concern, and uncertain terrain—unsteady bridges, crumbling cliff faces, weather-lashed lowlands—is a recurring feature of the book's imagery. "I am no daredevil" Meyers writes in "Why I Am Not a Tightrope Walker," but the poems in *My Dear, Dear Stagger Grass* suggest that these shifting grounds make daredevils of us all.

"SWEET REPETITION"

A Review of Susan Meyers's *My Dear, Dear Stagger Grass*

BY JONATHAN BUTLER



KRAMPUSNACHT

(THE NIGHT OF KRAMPUS)

BY BRANDI L. PERRY

They've got it wrong, there is not one Krampus but many, we step, pick over the bones of last season gather *ruten*, birch branches, to switch the backsides of naughty children, making blood run in coppery waterfalls. We spend the year not in hell but in caves, places that smell of decay. We wait, allow soil to matt our hair, coat ourselves with mud and braid the long hair of our bodies.

On December 6th, we pour from the earth, boil into the cities, into the homes of the rotten, leave lumps of coal and birch bundles for parents to use throughout the year. Our method better than that of "Saint" Nicholas, who simply rewards. Near midnight Frau Perchta joins us, the bright one, the guardian of beasts Her gift to divine the naughty from the nice. We work for her, revel in discipline.

When she enters homes herself, she extends her right hand, cupping silver coins for the good, a revelation in white, the *Schönperchten*, she dazzles. She extends her left hand, grips a sickle to slit the bellies of the bad, removes intestines and fills the space with paper and straw, the child now scarecrow, Frau Perchta a fright with fangs, fur, and tusks, the *Schiachperchten*. We prefer her this way,

love her commands to hit harder with switches, to stuff children in wicker baskets to drag back to our caves. And in the night, we feast.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

AFTER AUGUST WILSON'S *GEM OF THE OCEAN*

By Kwame Dawes

1

There is a universe of history
caught in this nondescript
boarding house—such small
lives; the dispensability of migrants
counting pennies, imagining
dreams; a death with boots on,
a night with lamplight,
meat swimming in a pot;
a universe of race caught
in the reliable timber and plaster
of this boarding house.

2

Here in between centuries,
first trauma; the chaos
of dysfunction; before the shock
of mass bloodletting, these black
folk have long understood
the insanity of living, Jack
Johnson grinning over the flattened
body of a white man; Reverend
Dixon, that Shelby, North Carolina
gentleman, unearthing the demons
of a nation's waywardness,
and oh, the starched white
hoods, the thunder hoofs,
the snug efficiency of a noose;
a universe of understanding
in the flight to find order
in the promise of wages;
here at the edge of the abyss.

3

Old Mr. Smith sometimes dreams
to see his grandchildren, still
there in Georgia; dreams of collards
and fat-back, dreams of the way
the sin can grow over you like
a ball and make you say, "Jesus!"
But he won't go back, not ever.
Somebody is waiting at the border
because he knows he stole
himself and two hundred dollars
worth of debt from those Bowdens,
when he slipped out at night,
lied to his woman, lied to
himself, and walked for days,
his heart thumping in his chest,
until he could make it here;
so he can't go back—nobody
can go back. This is the way
of the world, he says,
this is the way of the world.

Kwame Dawes is the author of over 35 books, including 16 collections of poetry, most recently *Duppy Conqueror: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon, 2013). He is Glenna Luschei Editor of *Prairie Schooner* and Chancellor's Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and a faculty member of the Pacific MFA program in Oregon. His awards include the Forward Poetry Prize, an Emmy for his reporting on HIV AIDS in Jamaica, the Barnes and Nobles Writers for Writers Award, Pushcart Prizes, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He is Associate Poetry Editor of Peepal Tree Press and co-founder and Director of the Calabash International Literary Festival.

SLEEP

By Phebe Davidson

One night Clementi, Scarlatti the next—
each note hung round with silence, the sequence
of sound now the necessary prelude to sleep.
Even Mozart, that magnificent clarity suspended
in air, is reduced to this nightly performance
that precedes you into what passes for rest. It's no
great reach to Jimmy Yancey, the quiet ache
of *Yancey's Blues*, then to the question *How long,*
How long? 'til every night is a blues refrain
and you ride it into sleep, the sorrow made simple,
the company good, that evening train gone
far too long. But then, you already knew that.
You've always loved this song.

Phebe Dav0n is a recovering academic, the author of twenty-some published collections of poems, a contributing editor at *Tar River Poetry* and a staff writer for *The Asheville Poetry Review*. Her most recent book is *Waking to Light* (Main Street Rag Publishing Co., 2012).



REVIEW: Estill Curtis Pennington, *Romantic Spirits: Nineteenth Century Paintings of the South, The Johnson Collection*

By Lydia Mattice Brandt, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Art,
University of South Carolina

Romantic Spirits: Nineteenth Century Paintings of the South, The Johnson Collection by Estill Curtis Pennington (Cane Ridge Publishing House, 2012) clearly testifies to the strength of the Johnson family's collection of paintings of the American South. Based in Spartanburg, South Carolina, the collection defines "southern" broadly, allowing for an array of themes, artists, and perspectives that exemplify the diversity and complexity of the region. Acting as a catalog for a selected group of paintings from the collection dating between 1810 and 1896, *Romantic Spirits* brings a fascinating series of works and their artists to the foreground of nineteenth-century American art.

Featuring thirty-two pictures by as many different artists, *Romantic Spirits* offers an inclusive interpretation of southern painting span-

ning from portraits and landscapes, to genres and still-lives, to mourning images and monumental history scenes. While some feature southern subjects explicitly, others are by southern artists who chose not to paint their home region. Painters range from those who achieved national fame, such as Washington Allston, to lesser-known players on the nineteenth-century stage, such as Andrew W. Melrose, a Scottish immigrant with a penchant for painting North Carolina landscapes. The focus of the book is, in fact, on the artists themselves: their biographies, their artistic careers, their contributions to nineteenth-century American art, and their personal motivations for choosing certain themes and subjects. The catalog is, therefore, organized alphabetically by artist. Each entry begins by contextualizing a picture's painter, themes, style, and subject matter in order to locate the work in the artist's oeuvre as well as national trends; analysis and interpretation follows. The catalogue concludes with an encyclopedic series of biographies of the featured artists. Each includes a family history, an account of their artistic training and career, and a detailed bibliography. Pennington's clear organization and consistent treatment of each individual painting and artist ensure that this book may be enjoyed both as a reference volume and as a cover-to-cover read.

The variety of works, styles, and career paths featured in the book indicates the social turmoil and political upheaval faced by the South, and the nation at large, over the course of the nineteenth century. The soft brushstrokes, romantic lighting, cherubic babe, and reclining beauty in Thomas Sully's *Mother and Child* (after 1827) resonates with the optimism of the first quarter of the century, while the mournful look of a soldier in front of an abandoned log cabin in Gustave Henry Mosler's *The Lost Cause* (1868) clearly conveys the sorrow in defeat that white southerners faced after the Civil War. Other paintings speak to the national and even international ambitions of southern artists, such as the jewel-toned Italian landscapes of Virginian John Gadsby Chapman and his son, Conrad Wise Chapman. While some artists chose to face the South and its issues head on, others ignored it - a fact that suggests ways in which the region and its art could at once be both distinctly southern and national.

Even when absent, slavery is ever-present in the works. Scotsman John Adam Plimmer Houston's haunting *The Fugitive Slave* (1853) pictures a frightened runaway looking furtively through the swampy landscape he must travail to reach freedom. The dignified black salesman in Thomas Waterman Wood's *The Apple Vendor* (1858) makes direct eye-contact with the viewer, while enslaved African Americans with downcast glances stand dutifully on the sidelines of their masters' lives in William Dickinson Washington's *Burial of Latané* (1864) and Junius Brutus Stearns's *The Letter* (1865). All painted within a little more than a decade of each other, these pictures represent the range of nineteenth-century perspectives featured in the Johnson collection, and thus, the complex definition of southern art it offers.

Pennington's introductory essay, "Spirit of an Era" attempts to provide cohesion to the widely diverse selection of paintings included in the catalog and his brief analysis in individual entries seeks to connect each work to the essay's thesis. Using the theme of "romantic painting" derived from Edgar P. Richardson's 1944 book of the same title, Pennington identifies four themes or motivations for nineteenth-century southern art and painters: The Heroic Individual, The Idealized Chivalric Code of Personal Honor, The Sublime Quality of Nature, and the Inevitability of Change. The essay claims that the fierce political independence and hospitable gentility of white southerners dominated the era's intellectual history and its artistic production both before and after the Civil War. Although Pennington recognizes the self-conscious myth-making at work amongst the privileged planter class throughout the century, he seems to avoid questions of why this beautiful fiction was so important to the painters and patrons who supported it.

The catalogue's essay, therefore, underserves the collection and its goal to provide an inclusive definition of southern painting, leaving the South's ugly, racist undertones buried just beneath the surface of a mythical, pristine gentility. While the paintings themselves suggest the diversity of experience in the nineteenth-century South, Pennington's essay (and the brief interpretations he provides in the catalog entries) suggest a much more restricted definition dependent on the idea of the entire century as a "romantic" one. While his thematic frame works for the optimistic pre-war landscapes and portraits included in the catalog (such as Sully's dreamy *Mother and Child*) and successfully connects them to national movements such as the Hudson River School, the idea is not equally relevant for the turbulent decades after the war. In its attempt to unify the diverse selection of work included in the catalogue, the essay does little to recognize the post-war paintings' contexts of Reconstruction and Jim Crow.

Romantic Spirits is an important catalogue of works from an impressive collection of southern - and American - painting. It offers beautiful images, informative descriptions, and thorough biographies of artists and works that are often ignored or unknown in American art. The book's fault, however, lies in Pennington's essay's earnest attempts to emphasize similarities rather than differences amongst the diverse selection of pictures. It is, after all, the particular complexities and contradictions of southern life that made the region unique in the nineteenth century and gives these paintings their richest meanings.

Lydia Mattice Brandt, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art at the University of South Carolina.



LIBRARY ARTS

BY CLO CAMMARATA

i was one of those people who did not visit the library as a child. Until I became an adult, I thought a library was a cold building with books and people. I never knew that I could get movies from the library or that there were free programs that I could attend. Later, I discovered libraries are so much more—

places of discovery, information, and delight open to all people regardless of religion, race, or economic status. I found that the public library was exactly where I wanted to spend my time and to make my career. I am the Programs and Partnerships Manager of Richland Library overseeing public programs in the eleven locations of the library system. In my current position, I observe first-hand how libraries provide opportunities for people to encounter and participate in the arts as a delightful, social, informative, uplifting part of their lives.

When you think libraries, you think books, and the literary arts can certainly be found in libraries through author discussions, good reads in all genres, and book discussion groups. Surprisingly to some, libraries feature art in other ways and have for a long time. Years ago, libraries literally decorated patrons' lives. Libraries in Kentucky, North Carolina, New York, as well as in Richland County allowed customers to check out framed art prints with their library cards. The pictures could adorn the walls of your house or office for a period of time before they needed to be renewed or returned.

The modern library is a great place for audiences to experience an infusion of the arts in performances. Several artists embrace the literary arts while conveying themes in other art forms such as poetry, music, and theater. I love to bob my head to the jazz mixed with poetry from Richland Library Literary Resident Eboniramm. She mingles her jazz sounds with poetry, conducts poetry workshops, and leads the ongoing *Jazz Roundtable* series, where she teaches the elements and history of jazz with other local jazz artists. *Actors' Theatre of South Carolina*—founded by Richland Library Literary Residents, Chris Weatherhead and Clarence Felder—blends literature, history, and theater to create mesmerizing performances with elaborate stage productions of popular and less well-known stories. They perform annually at Piccolo Spoleto in Charleston, SC, and Richland Library is pleased to bring them to Columbia where they bedazzle audiences with some of the same Spoleto performances. I have experienced the life of Rebecca Brewton Motte in *Rebecca & The Fox*, a one-act performance about the adven-

tures of the famous American Revolutionary War heroine from South Carolina. Clarence Felder as Ludwig Van Beethoven exposes his emotions and imperfections in *Beethoven: His Women and his Music*. He shakes you with his loud gruff voice and then melts you as he gazes at his student at the piano, played by Irina Pevzner, concert pianist with Chamber Music Charleston. Theater and literary art come together to entertain and inform our library audiences, often enabling them to experience literature in new ways.

The arts nourish the soul, and the library brings art to people who may not have the opportunity to experience it otherwise. Libraries are a public service; all of our concerts and performances at Richland Library are free, open to the public and diverse to appeal to different audiences. Award-winning storyteller Connie Regan-Blake moved children and adults alike with her artistry of words and movement. Families who came to the outdoor concert of Grammy-winning band *The Okee Dokee Brothers* sang, danced, and hula-hooped on an Astro-Turf lawn laid over the back parking lot of Richland Library Main on Assembly Street. During an end-of-summer celebration, I watched children dancing in puddles of rain outside Richland Library Southeast to the music of local children's band *Lunch Money*. These events put the social nature of the arts on display as whole families come to delight in music, have fun, meet up with old friends, and make new ones.

The library is a natural destination for new experiences that inspire and support creativity, innovation, and learning. The library brings experiences to life and is the most accessible place for everyone to experience the arts. At the beginning of this year, members of the Columbia City Ballet elegantly performed excerpts from the ballet adaptation of *The Little Prince*. I saw a little girl dressed in a pink tutu dancing, twirling, and fluttering. She told me that she wanted to be a princess. As I looked at her with the music in the background and an audience next to her, I said "You are a princess today at the library."

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