

JASPER



TAPPS'S ARTS CENTER



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the Columbia Museum of ART

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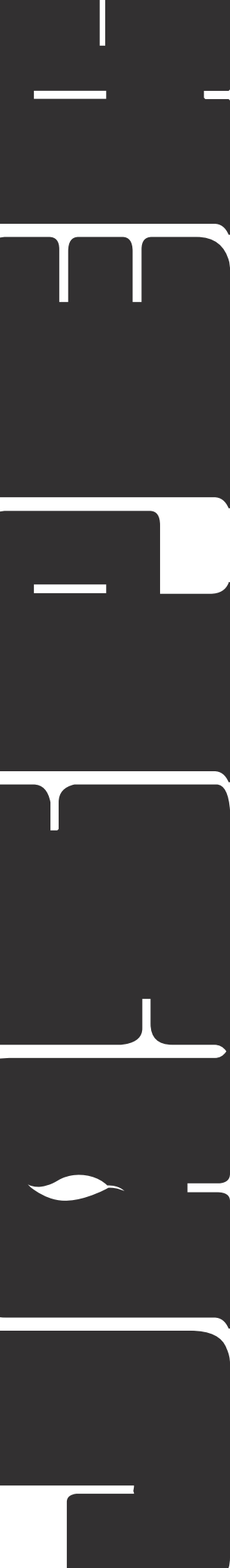


**Shades of Greene:
The Art of Sanford Greene**
Through June 23



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Van Gogh and His Inspirations
October 4, 2019 – January 12, 2020



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CENTERFOLD / GEORGE FETNER



08 ON THE COVER

GINNY MERETT

48 LISTENS

LES MERRY CHEVALIERS

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Dear Friends,

With three dozen magazines under our belts, it's been fun watching Jasper Magazine grow through the years.

We started with a 48-page publication with lots of white space and, under the art direction of Heyward Sims, transformed through infancy and adolescence into a fully realized, grown-ass, 64-page magazine. As the person who put the stories together and edited them, ultimately with the help of assistant editor Kyle Petersen, I've always anxiously anticipated (anxious in a thrilling way) seeing what photography editor Forrest Clonts came up with, and, even more so, what kind of magic Heyward Sims would make with the stories and photos we gave him.

It should be remembered that Jasper is not your typical magazine in that we aren't a money-making endeavor. Jasper started out as a vehicle for sharing news about accomplished and emerging artists in the SC Midlands and the organizations that offer artists structure, support, and opportunity. But what we realized, over time, was that when Heyward got through meticulously designing the way our readers would receive the content we had chosen for them, he had created a work of art in and of itself. That realization, and the acceptance of Jasper as the piece of art that it is, was part of the impetus for Jasper Magazine becoming just one part of the non-profit Jasper Project over three years ago. Jasper is not just about art; it is art sui generis. And Heyward is responsible for that.

It is with sadness, but still celebration, that we say goodbye to him as the founding art director for Jasper Magazine. We celebrate his vision, his talent, and the unique personality he brought to every issue he designed. Thank you, Heyward. Jas-

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

SPRING 2019 / VOLUME 008 / ISSUE 002

per would never have become Jasper without you and your dedication.

But, given the understanding of Jasper as an artistic creation, we now ask you to imagine yourself at the Jasper Museum of Art where, if you look around the corner, you'll see a new wing on the rise under the art direction of Brian Harmon. Brian Harmon has been involved in photography and media production for most of his life. He has exhibited photographs in SC, Taiwan, China, New Zealand, India, and Switzerland. Upon his return to South Carolina, he completed a Master of Media Arts at USC where he concentrated on documentary film ethics and production and he continues to work on a Ph.D. in Rhetoric & Composition while working as the marketing coordinator for Historic Columbia.

We are thrilled to welcome Brian Harmon as the new art director for Jasper Magazine, effective this issue, and invite you to enjoy watching Jasper continue to grow under his aesthetic vision.

As always, thank you for being here with us. Enjoy our pieces on Ginny, George, and everyone else. And please, take care of one another. We are all works of art.

Take care,



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THE
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FIND YOUR SUPER POWERS.

JASPER GUILD

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"You have a chance to become a part of something much bigger than yourself." --Charles Xavier

There is much joy in doing the work that Jasper does. Which is why we do it. Which is also why we quote people like the fictional character Charles Xavier. That, and we just don't take ourselves that seriously. How could we? We are surrounded by everyday superheroes and supersheroes who give their lives, or a portion of their lives, to making the world be more and mean more through their art.

If all the Jasper Project can do is offer a pat on the back or a dollar here or there to help buy supplies, or maybe organize a bare-bones event to help celebrate art – ART – the essence of our HUMANITY – then, yay. Our day just got better.

Make your day better by visiting JasperProject.org and joining the Jasper Guild like these everyday superhumans below. There is a super power in all of us. Let's help each other find it.

There's Good News for Jasper Guild Members!

New Guild Memberships and Renewals are Now

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE*

Please consider becoming a part of the Jasper Team at one of the following levels:

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

JOURNEYMAN

The above + your name in LARGE LETTERS - \$100

MASTER

The above + free admission to the January 2020 JAY ceremony - \$250

GRAND MASTER

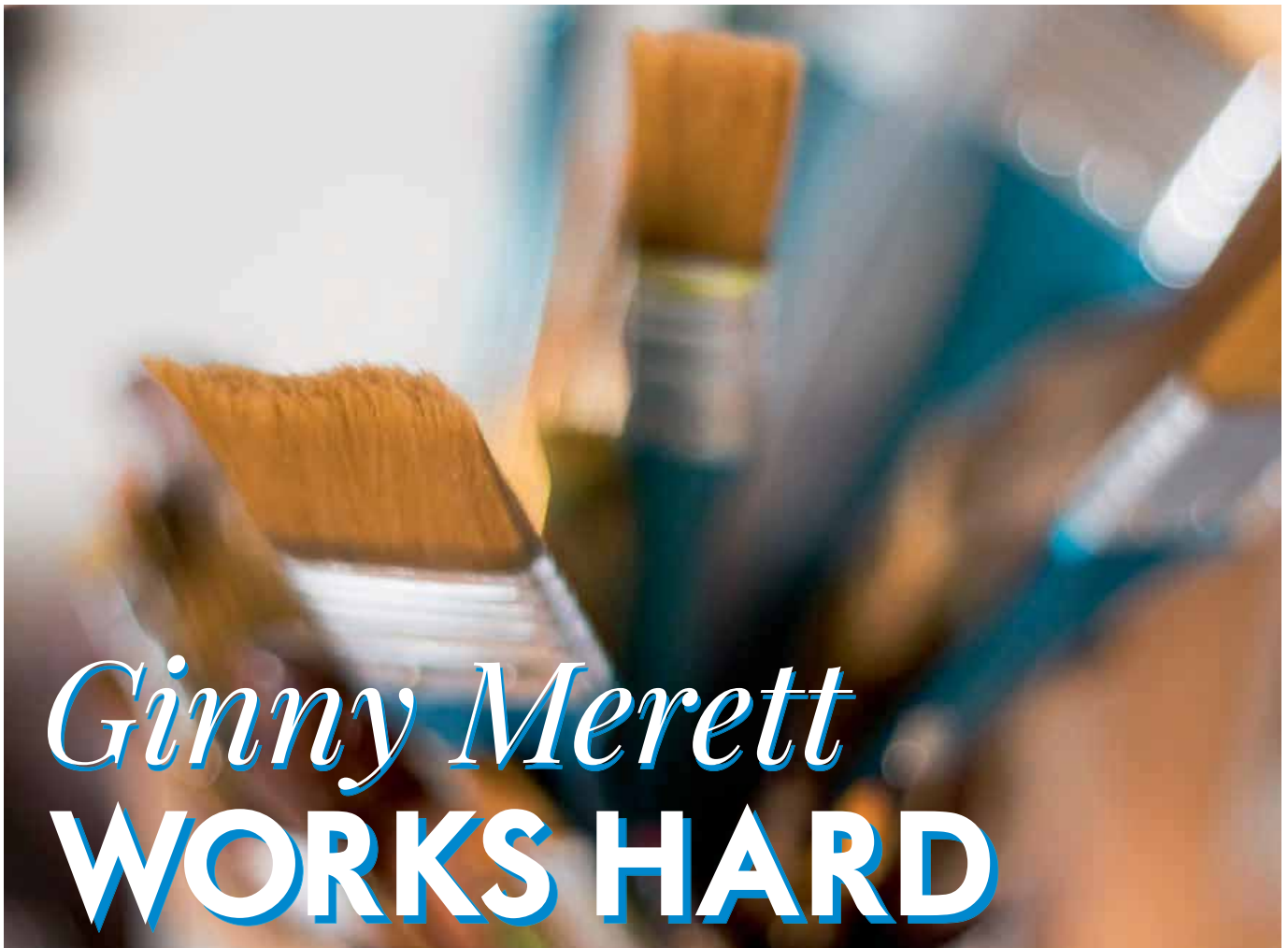
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The above + a Columbia Arts Scene Bonus Pack with tickets,
passes, books, & more! - \$1000

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Ginny Merett **WORKS HARD**

BY CINDI BOITER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAROLINE MOBLEY

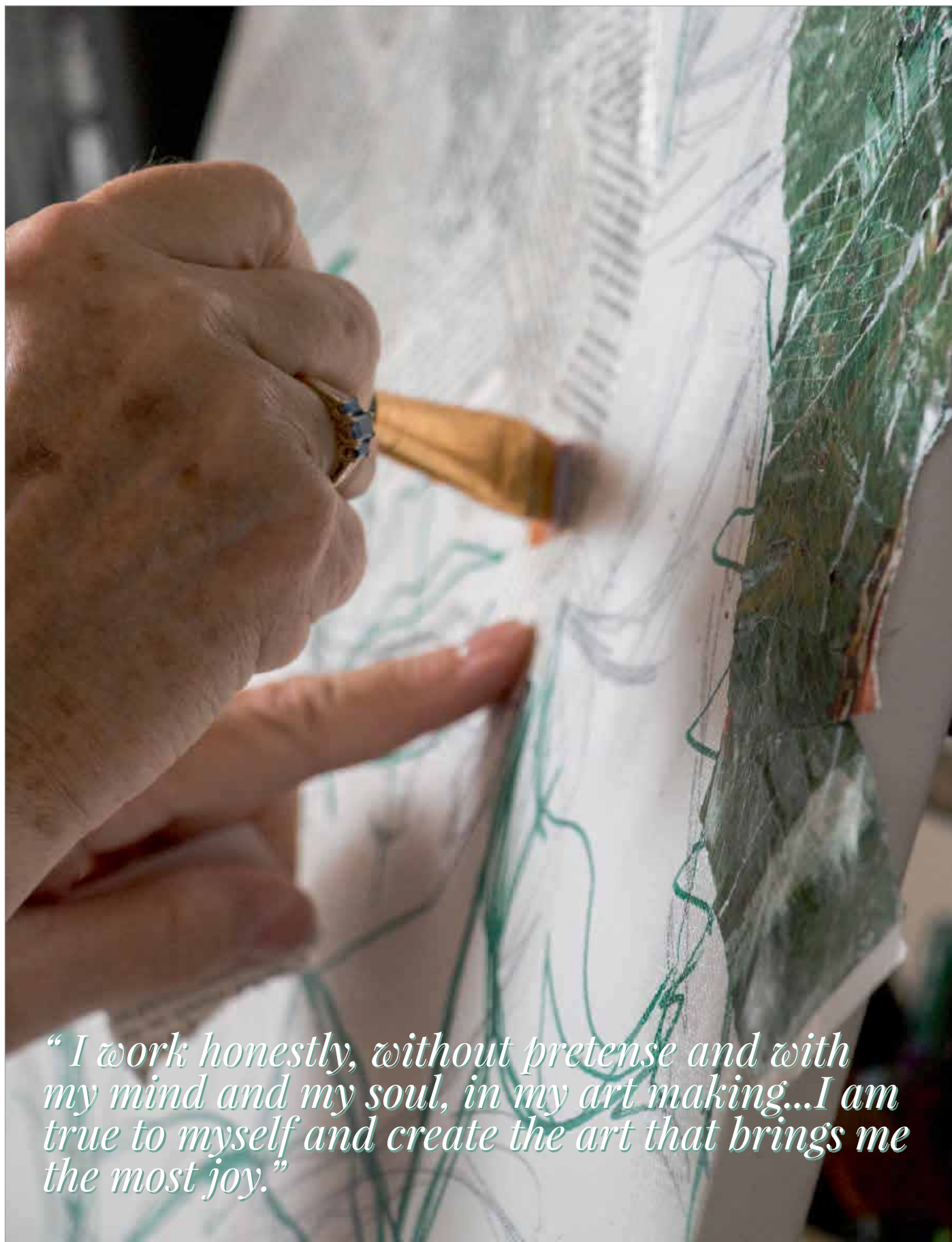
Finding the time to create art is rarely easy. Any number of obstacles and obligations can present themselves, and, by the time the artist has tended to her job, kids, home, and health, there is often little time or energy left to do the exact thing she feels she was put here to do – art. For Ginny Merett, this issue’s cover artist and the winner of the Jasper “Time for Art” competition presented in collaboration with Columbia Opportunity Resources at Columbia Museum of Art last December, the obstacles were plentiful. Not only was Merett a full-time educator, but she was also the single parent head of her family. Nevertheless, Merett placed a priority on maintaining an art studio of her own. And, after 30 years of teaching art to generations of students, the work has paid off. Merett has built an aesthetic that is unique, disciplined, and mesmerizing. In many ways, her career is at its peak.

Born in Denver to parents who moved through-

out the country for her father’s business, Merett ended up in Lexington, SC in 1987, where her marriage ended and she began a career teaching art at White Knoll Elementary School. A lifelong learner, Merett had studied art at the University of Georgia and earned two master’s degrees from the University of SC in 1990 and 2004, where she ultimately taught classes as an adjunct instructor herself. Despite the demands of single-handedly raising a daughter and son, Merett had stayed busy throughout her teaching career with commissioned pieces and has excelled in the painting of murals for schools, offices, and other public places. (Lexington residents may remember Merett’s mural in the Old Mill at 12-Mile Creek on East Main Street. While the mural has been painted over, the artist’s signature remains.)

“Being a single mom, educator, and artist was challenging,” Merett admits, “I was fortunate though that my work as an educator provided





“I work honestly, without pretense and with my mind and my soul, in my art making...I am true to myself and create the art that brings me the most joy.”

school hours where I could be home when my kids were home. I kept my work space in a central location in the house so I could be in the middle of the household action (and often had toys land on my drawing table)."

"The greatest challenge was having the energy to create after working all day and providing for my kids' needs and wants," she continues. "To manage this and to help run the household, I taught my kids how to cook simple meals and I asked that they take care of their spaces and belongings. I grabbed every waking moment to make art. I predominately took commissions during this time, so I was able to provide extra income for my family."

Her work, as an artist, a parent, and a working parent, paid off in ways Merett never expected. "From these years, my kids became fiercely independent. They are creative thinkers and problem solvers, and not afraid of hard work to reach their own dreams and goals."

Merett's years of juggling all the essentials have also helped create the artist that the 64-year-old is today. "My years as an educator prepared me not so much in content but in how I work," she says. "I don't waste anyone's time. Even a five-year-old's time is valuable. I work honestly, without pretense and with my mind and my soul, in my art making, just as I requested from my students. I am true to myself and create the art that brings me the most joy; and I appreciate my artistic development as a child and how that development made me the artist I am today."

Merett says she realized how important it is to share one's work with the community because that's how the community becomes comfortable with the arts, just like she did in the education community. "I learned how important it is to learn from each other," she says. "That art is a relationship between the artist and the viewer. I learned as an educator that art is a privilege and not to be taken for granted; to be organized even during artistic chaos; to be reliable; to be professional in representing all areas of my work; and I learned from being an educator that art is work. It's serious work."

After retiring from teaching in 2012 and raising her children to adulthood, Merett finally settled into a life that would allow her to pursue the cre-

ation of her own work full-time, and she embraced the opportunity with abandon. "I had always enjoyed pencil drawing and portraits, water colors, what have you... and even fabric work, some weaving and applique," she says, describing an affinity for both 2D and 3D mediums. "About eight years ago though, I started collage. I had tried collage when I was younger, and I found myself with a ton of old magazines and books at my disposal. So I took out my grandmother's old sketch book from the 1920s and, inspired by the colors and clothes, I first made a collage of my grandmother and grandfather sitting with their kids. I liked it."

Today, Merett's collage work has taken on a life of its own, displaying bright and sundry colors, featuring sometimes-outlandish interpretations of facial features that border on cubism, and a texture that comes from the use of various papers printed with anything from symphonic music to the words of famous authors to simple photography from popular magazines. Often inspired by photographs of her great aunt and grandmother who always were accessorized to the nines in gloves and hats and pearls and elaborate earrings, Merett's pieces suggest a sense of another time and colors that bring fabrics from the South of France and Africa to mind.

Inspired by David Hockney's joiner methodology and German Dada artist Hannah Hoch, who pioneered photomontage and the deconstruction of gender roles, Merett's work often features women, both individually and in groups, and has decidedly feminist undertones. Recent pieces include a portrait of British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst and a series of twelve women artists, for example. Other pieces depict women walking and laughing together, or standing as a group of friends or colleagues, often appearing to share some common confidence or secret observation.

For a while, Merett experimented with multiple eyes and mouths, in true Hannah Hoch fashion, but says she "didn't get a great response" from those pieces and has for the most part abandoned that technique. "I like to think my technique is more refined now," the artist says.

For the most, part Merett says she is "having the best time" now that she is able to devote herself primarily to her studio and her two rescue dogs

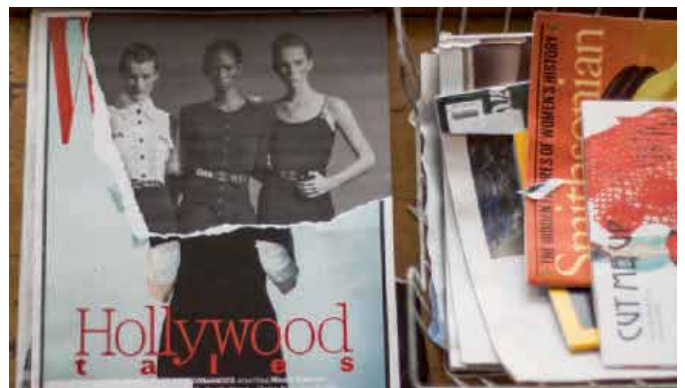
who keep her company. “I taught for so long and was really strict on foundational work, so this is different for me. I appreciate my time now not having to work at a day job, but being able to work on my art uninterrupted any time of day or night—even though I miss those days of having my kids close by. I’m thankful every day that I’m able to work on my art from home” she says. Merett also credits her mentor Cynthia Colbert, who she met as a student at USC. “I learned to be true to myself from Cynthia and she gave me the opportunity to teach,” Merett says.

To artists with day jobs and children and other demands, Merett recommends, “Do one small thing every day to extend your art making and art career. Do something in the studio every day even if it’s drawing with the kids. Get them used to seeing you at your drawing table so much so that it’s routine. Teach them as they age to depend on themselves. Make your art endeavors family events.”

For the artist struggling to find the time and energy to create, she says, “If you want to be an artist, you must do the work. Do your day job but leave it at work at the end of the day if possible. To succeed you must have effort, persistence, and perseverance.”

For now though, Merett admits that her greatest satisfaction is that “I mainly do my work for me and, if others like it, then that’s a bonus. It’s a joy,” she says.

A hard won joy she richly deserves.





“If you want to be an artist, you must do the work.”

JAYS

JASPER ARTIST OF THE YEAR



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MALLORY SHORTER

STORY BY CINDI BOITER & KYLE PETERSEN

Almost all artists of all disciplines can look at their careers and plot out the low and high points in their artistic lives—anything from times when the status quo seems intent on maintaining itself without exception to periods of draught and even dullness all the way up to watershed moments when skills and timing and opportunity just seem to click. Our yearly recognition of the Jasper Artists of the Year was created to make observation of the latter deviations in the flow of artistic life and celebrate those special memorable years.

Late last fall, Jasper asked our followers to nominate the artists who had enjoyed one of these special years during 2018 and, based on their nominations, our panels of experts narrowed down the nominees to three finalists in each of the categories of theatre, music, visual arts, and literature. Then the public had their turn at voting and the winners were announced at our annual Jasper Artist of the Year (JAY) celebration in January at the beautiful Seibels House and Gardens, a property lovingly maintained by Historic Columbia. We enjoyed our Jasper Artist of the Year Salon Celebration so much, including the shared music, poetry, oration, and visual arts offered by our finalists, that we decided to make the JAY Salon Celebration a tradition and observe it every year in January.

Theatre finalists: Christine Hellman, Michael Hazin, & Darion McCloud.

Literary Arts finalists: Tim Conroy, Libby Bernardine, & Monifa Lemons.

Visual Arts finalists: Flavia Lovatelli, Andy White, & Trahern Cook.

Music finalists: Marina Alexandra, Zach Seibert, & Marcum Core (aka MidiMARC).

For Darion McCloud, it's almost as if every year is a good year for this inordinately busy theatre artist. The founder of the NiA Theatre Company, McCloud sustains the company with new and exciting performance opportunities and 2018 was exceptionally productive. But the storytelling artist also stayed busy performing with the SC Shakespeare Company, as well as writing, co-writing, and directing, including his one person show, *Fireflies: A Dave Potter Story*, produced with an education grant from the SC Arts Commission, *The Gift That Ran Away/Carnival of the Animals* with the SC Philharmonic, and a new NiA production, *WHATCHAMACALLIT!!!* Performed at Edventure. McCloud directed a number of performances and staged readings, was busy with Augusta Baker's Storyfest, the Pigskin Poets, and he became an Indie Grits Fellow, co-writing and directing the community theatre project addressing gentrification called *Dissonance*. Clearly McCloud is not slowing down as he makes every year more and more exceptional.



Jasper theatre artist of the year - DARION McCLOUD



Jasper literary artist of the year - MONIFA LEMONS

As one of the founders of The Watering Hole, a Southern-based, word-centric organization that has charged itself with building “Harlem Renaissance-style spaces in the contemporary South” and inspiring “kinship between poets of color from all spoken and written traditions,” Lemons has her hands full with the likes of coordinating and hosting the Watering Hole Winter Retreat. But the constantly producing spoken word artist, who also goes by the name Selah the Poet, made time for magazine articles, an ETV feature, and *Typewriter Poetry* at the SC State House. She opened for MC Lyte at the Love, Peace, and Hip Hop festival and sat for a panel at Deckle Edge Literary Festival. She curated poetry, facilitated a retreat for teen girls, judged a poetry contest, and still managed to publish some poetry of her own in *Sinister Wisdom*. Selah gets it done.

You need to come out from under your rock if you haven't seen the affable Trahern Cook painting his way through every cultural happening in the SC Midlands and beyond. Cook, a plain air artist, has become a part of the local landscape by setting up his easel, popping on his porkpie hat, and painting the life of the city. "I have the privilege of getting up every day and painting," the artist says. "I paint in my hometown and all over the United States. Connecting with people where they are and sharing their stories through my paintings is what speaks to my soul right now. I endeavor to find and share sanctuary with as many of my fellow citizens as possible. In the last year the easel has been my old wooden vessel that's carried me to many different sanctuaries, but all tell a uniting story. That most of us are all looking for the same thing; love, friendship, family, and a place to chill for a bit to mend the soul."



Jasper visual artist of the year - TRAHERN COOK



Jasper music artist of the year - MARCUM CORE

Marcum Core, a hip-hop producer who creates under the name MidiMARC, released a series of instrument collections over 2018, including three entries in his Prolific series and the Bandcamp exclusive Dawgone Shame. Core was also the sole producer behind the beats for FatRat da Czar's 2018 album Ethx as well. He also participated in a variety of community events, serving as host and background music beatmaker for the Seuss Slam at Curiosity Coffeeshop and putting together a featured playlist for several gigs, including the First Annual Pigeon Party at The War Mouth. We love the vibe MidiMARC brings to Columbia and celebrate everything that is to come.

WHAT IS THE JASPER PROJECT?



The Jasper Project is a project-oriented, multidisciplinary arts facilitator serving the greater Columbia and South Carolina communities by providing collaborative arts engineering and community-wide arts communication.

The Jasper Project is committed to four integrated priorities:

PROCESS

illuminating the unique processes endemic to all art forms in order to provide a greater level of understanding and respect for that discipline.

COMMUNITY/COLLABORATION

nurturing community both within and between arts disciplines.

NARRATIVE

creating a more positive and progressive understanding of SC culture.

ECONOMY

being efficient stewards of arts funding committed to creating more with less.

Visit JasperProject.org to learn more.

LOCAL RECORDS

REVIEWS



KENJI THE WISE

REFLECTION

Kenji's The Wise's REFLECTION delivers conscious-raising hip-hop that deals with self-discovery, growth, and struggle. It's self-affirmational, without all that cheesy aspirational gloss. And at the center of this record is a vivid plea for peace in the chaos.

Kenji's characters are split between emotional extremes and life paths. Consider how the braggadocio of "SWEET" is in direct opposition to the desperate codependence on "SOLE" — these tensions are manifested in how Kenji can flip phrases and phases on their heads. Like on the jazz permutation-driven "LOVE ME NOT," where he declares "some people want to fly / but I'd rather skydive," or the roomy 90s throwback "HUSH," where Kenji states there's "A thousand ways to make it you just got to pay the bill" amid a washed out flurry of delayed horns.

REFLECTION deals with themes of community both inherited and created. It's no surprise given Kenji's declaration on "LIGHT" that if one "can't find a good vibe? Then create one / you want some better memories? Then let's make some," which suggests that, even though this record is intended as an exploration of the self, for Kenji, the self needs other people to realize its full

potential. Yes, it's a deeply personal record, but that personal touch is cemented by the need to connect with others.

Despite this, whatever's next for Kenji The Wise remains unclear. REFLECTION is a strong release, but it's anybody's guess what's next. Perhaps that's just how Kenji wants it, too. As he says on the modal walk-down of "SWEET," "Don't let 'em know your next move keep 'em guessing." —**Ethan Fogus**



JOHN WATKINS

John Watkins, the multi-instrumentalist and idiosyncratic crooner behind Jackson Spells and The Unawares, makes a big swing here as a solo artist. Gone is his bombastic piano and the drumming of Rob Cherry which defined Jackson Spells. But in its place, there's solo guitar and the same frenzied stream of consciousness that dominated earlier releases.

The record's barebones approach — it's a true solo record with only Watkins contributing vox, piano, and guitar — focuses the listener's attention on Watkins' surrealist images of isolation and alienation. There are no extended solos, and nary a song ventures over the four-minute mark, with most averaging roughly two and a quarter. The result is

less like traditional rock songs and more like classical etudes.

This format works best on songs that make a statement. Songs where Watkins' beat poetry is paired with his singular guitar style. The baroque tones of "Other Machine," a song that deals with themes of technophobia, seems a good pairing with only his deeply human voice and guitar.

Elsewhere on "Bird on a Wire," the sparseness of the record is to the detriment of the song. Can you imagine how Watkins' anguished plea of "Put the torch on the volume / to give it just enough bottom" would sound with bass and drum filling out the harmonic middle?

In some ways, this record seems like a natural progression for Watkins. His earlier band The Unawares was a trio, then Jackson Spells was also a trio that became a duo. Here Watkins is up front and center. What's next for Watkins? Whatever it is, I hope it's not silence. —**Ethan Fogus**



WHEN I SAY JUMP

Separation Anxiety EP

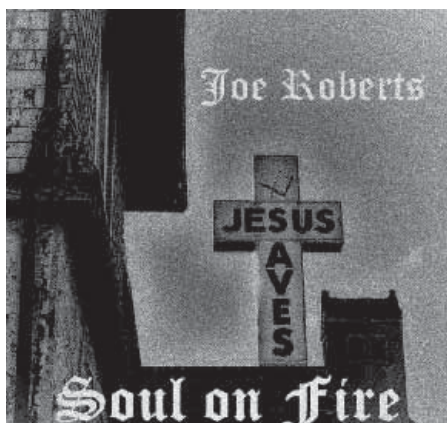
Separation Anxiety is a frenzied EP that chronicles the aftermath of a relationship. It's bristling with piss and vinegar attitude. It's the kind of post-punk that fans of Every Time I Die or From First to Last will dig. Singers John Davis and Brennan Monk weave twisted confessionals about toxic friendships and learning to let go. It's deeply personal stuff, like eavesdropping on a therapy session.

Musically the songs are streamlined and clipped down to essential components, with nimble guitars and tones that lean more towards Black Flag than black metal. Take the lead single "This Gun's a Conversation Piece," with its high-gain power chord riffs and relatively clean bassline. It's a good palette for WISJ's deeply violent lyrics about youth culture and technological disconnection: "Wanna see me do a swan dive off this building? / Pics or it never happened." The lyrics can be a bit hard to listen to—not for

their grotesque subject matter, but rather for their heavy-handedness.

But the core of this EP is a desire to fix the self. The characters go from wondering if they'll ever have a connection to anyone to acknowledging their involvement in toxic relationships. It moves through catharsis and learns how to accept, learn, and grow into adulthood. In the finale "Ego Es Visera" the characters embrace their sinister side declaring, "I am the dark spark, malevolent brilliance, and it is getting old." This last clause undercuts the tension developed throughout the record. The ultimate nihilistic impulse is weakened by the character's admission of their personal fatigue.

Even though the closing feels like a swing and a miss, it's important to remember WISJ is young. There's a lot of potential here. The band is scrappy in the best way. And Separation Anxiety is a marvelous whirlwind of post-punk energy and hormone-driven lyricism. - **Ethan Fogus**



JOE ROBERTS

Soul on Fire

On his Bandcamp page, Joe Buck Roberts is emphatic that the seven-track *Soul on Fire* is an unfinished album - "an abandoned project," he calls it. Obviously, this raises a few questions. To what extent is *Soul on Fire* unfinished, and how much of it aren't we getting? And if the record is the aborted mission it's purported to be, why give us access to it at all? Even if Roberts is sincere when he warns that what we're hearing when we hear *Soul on Fire* is far from the original intent, it's hard not to read this disclaimer as a sort of preemptive defense. If the record is no good, he seems to be saying, that's because it isn't done. It's as if he gave up on it before anyone else got the chance.

But this seems unlikely. Joe Roberts is an excellent guitarist and songwriter and there's no way he doesn't know it. He must believe, correctly, that *Soul on Fire* has merit, otherwise it would still be on a hard drive or reel-

to-reel somewhere, gathering dust or adware. So why all the fuss about it being unfinished? It's possible that Roberts is reluctant to certify *Soul on Fire* as an official, complete release because it lacks the cohesive fidelity typical of what we expect from a full-length album or even an EP. This record would be better described as a compilation, with its seven songs evidently released scattershot between 2009 and 2015 and produced amidst disparate contexts. "Pocketful of Silver," a traditional-style duet with his former Debbie and the Skanks bandmate Deborah Adedokun, was recorded in a live session at Papa Jazz, while "The World is Not My Home" first appeared on the soundtrack to David Axe and Chris Bickel's 2017 film *The Theta Girl* and has all the hallmarks of a dedicated CCR tribute.

The most likely reason for Roberts' seeming ambivalence toward *Soul on Fire* is the lyrical subject matter. Roberts' art and life are those of the pure-blooded rock and roller we've always known him to be, but this record is his attempt to grapple with loftier ideas. Calling these songs spiritual wouldn't be inaccurate, but such a broad term risks the implication that Roberts' concerns are likewise vague. Again, see *Bandcamp* for his take on the material: "MUSIC ABOUT GOD DOES NOT HAVE TO SUCK!"

No argument here - *Soul on Fire* stands as proof enough. Roberts' singular knack for injecting boogie and soul into everything he plays is more than accounted for here, but the approach is decidedly stripped-down, sometimes with nothing more than Joe and his guitar guiding the song from moment to moment. Like the nature of the record itself, these songs are more concerned with questions than answers, and Roberts reveals often gorgeous depth while adding something of real value to a conversation that likely has no end. -**Michael Spawn**

SONS OF YOUNG BLOOD

SONS OF YOUNG

Blood EP

Roughly a half decade after splitting up, Columbia punk band Sons of Young has re-emerged with a brand new three-song EP. This sort of move would typically herald a band's permanent or at least tentative return, but this record is and was always intended to be a one-off, as was the show promoting its release. Sons of Young called it quits back in 2013 with five years of active recording, touring, and local performances to its name, and there was every indication that the decision was final - which it was, with this one minor but notable exception. And as soon as their final statement was completed and available for public consumption, Travis Bland, Parker Goldsborough, and Brett Wider went right back to being ex-bandmates without any fuss or hard feelings, leaving us with *Blood*, officially delivered last December.

In spite of *Blood's* too-brief running time, fans of the Sons of Young's power chord-driven, fat-free punk rock will find plenty to appreciate on this nine-minute parting gift. Even with its penchant for the sort of loogie-blues licks Lars Frederiksen brought to Rancid, Sons of Young always had a traditionalist streak and the latest EP didn't come to break it. A punk band's intelligence tends to correlate to how unabashed it is about its influences, since trying to reinvent this particular wheel rarely yields results. In this regard, Sons of Young aced the honors program, never shy about its debt to Green Day, the Misfits, and - yep - Rancid. Given this, it's no surprise that the trio doesn't misuse the opportunity by attempting to retool itself or explore sonic roads left untraveled. Whether due to an awareness of its own strengths or just a stubborn refusal risk lower adrenaline levels, it's to Sons of Young's enormous credit that they're the same band going out as when they came charging in - a rarer legacy than it might seem. -**Michael Spawn**

**BUY
LOCAL
music**



DADE COUNTY RESISTANCE

Relative Distance

You used to be able to search for bands by zip code on Myspace. That's probably how I came across Dade County Resistance in the early 2000s. They were a punk band in Columbia that had a record out on an indie label. Their existence and music gave me, a stuck-in-the-suburbs teenage wanna-be punk band leader, hope. The feeling hasn't changed in the decade and a half between their last release and their latest, *Relative Distance*.

In the early 2000s punk was punk to me. If your aesthetic was painted leather jacket, mohawk and beer guzzling anti-social music or forlorn but bleeding optimism, it was all naively considered one punk. Dade County Resistance was and still is the latter on songs like "Bella in the Garden" with its speed-ball of condensed emotional melody and pogo-inducing tempo.

Since I became jaded by sub-gentrification as I've gotten older, I now recognized DCR is a pop-punk band with all the romance minus the sugar that invaded the genre in the mid-aughts. Tones of Green Day, The Descendants and others of the genre intertwine. But with "Your Faith," they take a new wave step in the vein of The Cars.

The record isn't without trappings. Nostalgia drives the five songs, consigning the collection to a bygone era rather than trying to break through a wall like the energy of that moment in punk used to do. None of that matters though for people who came of age with punk, no matter the particular limb of the genre. What the music sounds like to others was as meaningful as freezer burnt ground beef.

Punk was about finding yourself and your friends in the music to me, damn all the rest. More than a musical revolution, Dade County Resistance still rattles out that feeling with *Relative Distance*. So, thanks dudes for giving a teenager in the suburbs something to reach for back then and an energy to remember today. Even if that distance was pretty close it felt like the top of the world to me. **-David Travis Bland**



SPACE COKE

L'Appel du Vide

How has Space Coke progressed and how do you distinguish the band's latest release, "L'Appel du Vide," from Black Sabbath? Those are the two main questions when considering the quality of the most recent offering of the hard riffing, fuzzed out, psychedelic rock 'n' roll demigods.

To the first question, Space Coke honed in their distorted licks on *L'Appel du Vide*. Previous endeavors of the band hit the listener as songs arranged through drug frenzies and heavy jamming. On *L'Appel*'s trio of openers, the band is steering the trip more than freaking out at the kaleidoscope musical turns like they've done in the past, a technique that served them well but was put to the side for more muscular control of their songs on the newest collection.

To the second question and Sabbath comparison, Singer Reno Gooch is more reckless with his shouting than Ozzy ever thought to be and *L'Appel* can explode where the 1970s bands stayed loyal to the lick. On "Kall Ma" Space Coke smashes fretboards in blues grooving tempos and break on through to a nihilistic aural beating that conjures up The Stooges' *Raw Power*.

"Interlude" is an unnecessary injection of mind-swirling sounds in a twister set of songs. Their cover of The Velvet Underground's "Venus in Furs" is serviceable and might work live, but the key is out of balance for Gooch's vocal wheelhouse. Those are two minor flickers in a set of tunes that start burning again with "Lucid Dream," a dusty Camaro ride of a song which wails with some Lightning Hopkins on acid fretwork.

"Thelmatic Ritual" is the penultimate track and best embodies the psychedelic sludge Space Coke heralds. Something about the song makes you want to lick a poison toad, strip to the skin, steal a cop car, brick the accelerator and ride on the hood with the sirens blazing while pouring bottles of red wine over your naked body. **-David Travis Bland**



AUTOCORRECT

Well That Was Different

Autocorrect began as a group of sonic experimenters who were primarily interested in toying with the fundamental tenets of nerd-rap to see how much fuzz, noise, and other weirdness they could stuff into a given song. But the fact remained that, as a front man and emcee, Cecil Decker was their focal point, with his emo-maniac flow and millennial grad school existentialism the defining aspect of their music.

Which, as the title suggests, is why it's surprising that Decker's voice is mostly absent from the proceedings of this EP. While Decker has one verse at the beginning of the record, albeit distorted and buried beneath a glare of noise, and a gorgeously vulnerable one at the end, he's mostly behind the scenes here, allowing vocalists Chris Johnson, Sean Burns, and especially new member Alex Davis to shine.

There switch in emphasis also extends to these songs, easily the most accessible and pop-friendly the group has ever proffered, opener aside. The first proper tune here, "Flowers," rides a jaunty synth line and Beck-style junkyard pop-grunge aesthetic to make a song both quite weird but also keenly indebted to 90s alt-pop. From there, a trio of songs featuring Davis, formerly of the prog-leaning pop-rock outfits Miles to Go and Passing Worth, pair the singer's baroque chamber-pop style with a version of Autocorrect that tempers their restless electronic layering with organic, quasi-live band arrangements.

The net effect is startlingly engaging, as the serenity and shapeshifting poise of Davis' voice feels like a forceful foil to the band, knocking them into a new alignment without sacrificing their core identity. When Decker finally steps back to the microphone on the heartbreaking closer "Pastels," the band's finest achievement to date, there's a clear sense that the group has never sounded more assured of itself, while less assured than ever of where it's heading. We'll just have to wait for the next correction. **-KP**



FATRAT DE CZAR

Ethx

There's a scene in the first season of *The Wire*, the critically acclaimed HBO series that explored the Baltimore drug culture with depth and nuance, where D, a lieutenant in Avon Barksdale's crime ring, is explaining how to play chess to one of his underlings. It quickly evolves into an extended parable of the drug trade, noting the rapidly shifting fates and fatalism at the heart of the game. The scene closes with this haunting reminder: "the King stay the King."

While perhaps not as a bleak, it's somewhat fitting that in a Columbia rap scene that continues to rapidly shift and change over the years, it only takes one FatRat da Czar EP to remind you that the axiom from *The Wire* holds true. Building on the effortless baller mentality of 2016's *Railroad*, Ethx often feels a Columbia version of another record from last year, Pusha T's *Daytona*, a seven-song romp that cares for little other than bars and beats at their best. Like Pusha, FatRat's forte is simply reinvigorating his favorite thematic material and generally tough guy (even when it's sensitive tough guy) persona, and here he sticks to beats from longtime collaborator MidiMARC, much like *Daytona* benefits from a rare bit of focus from recent-era Kanye West.

As highlights go, it's tough to beat the shade-throwing opener "Wake Up," the smoky noir of "Warning Shot," and the slow-riding excellence of the sample-driven soul of "Cutlass Supreme," although the intrinsic appeal here is the uniform excellence across the set. It's also as much a showcase of producer and Jasper 2018 Music Artist of the Year MidiMARC, who across the seven songs demonstrated his trademark range by deploying everything from boom-bap purity to horn and synth-driven maximalism that are all anchored by the kind of sturdy drums necessary for the kind of technical performance that is FatRat's recent M.O. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better rap record of any kind to turn up loud on the car stereo, and on repeat. **-KP**



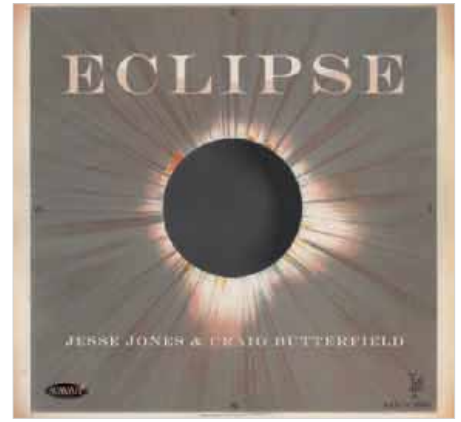
BLUE GIRL

See Through

Despite the different monikers and release structures, the core principles of the music made by Ahomari seem to remain the same. With a gorgeously lugubrious voice that splits the difference between indie R&B and baroque chamber-folk, their songs tend to feature downtempo beats and minimalist arrangements that leave plenty of space for breathy ruminations and loose hooks that delve deep into the emotional and psychic interiority of a queer, black, disabled, non-binary experience.

That being said, this incarnation of *Blue Girl* is easily the most collaborative full band effort yet from the enigmatic singer. Long-time collaborator guitarist and keyboardist Sean Jones is a big part of this evolution given his natural instincts to play the capable right-hand assister and allow Ahomari's vocals to carry the direction and melody of each tune, but it's Marcy Ray's slinky bass lines and the drum production from Kiwyon Rodriguez that really feel revelatory here, providing a newfound sense of movement and momentum that often was the biggest lack in Ahomari's earlier efforts.

Still, despite the fullness of the arrangements and level of polish, though, it's hard not to feel like this record drags a little. The blame is actually less on the long, meandering ballads like "Outside" and "Lungs" which are welcome vocal showcases, but rather the soft-focus nature of the would-be bangers like "Toxic" and "Not This Time," both of which suggest bigger grooves and pay-offs than they actually deliver. To call these moments dull is to ignore the clear promise and hypnotic quality that is intrinsic to the project in the first place, but it's tough to see just a bit more untapped possibilities in the unique alchemy produced in the world unto itself that is blue, girl. **-KP**



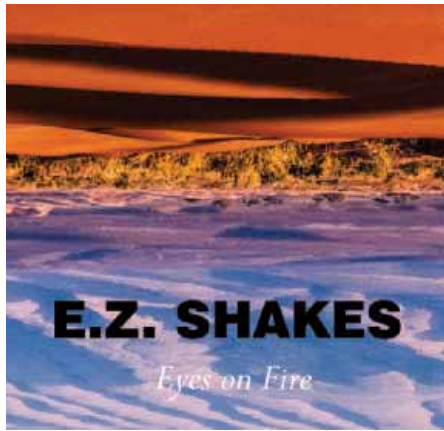
CRAIG BUTTERFIELD & JESSE JONES

Eclipse

Eclipse is the third album for bassist Craig Butterfield and multi-instrumentalist Jess Jones, and in many ways it feels like that.

The two bonded over roots music in the brief period where both were on faculty at the USC School of Music and forged a collaboration that took a studied, classical music approach to bluegrass-style string tunes, and it immediately payed dividends. Their debut collection *Stickerfoot* felt like their own distinctive take on the repertoire created by Punch Brothers mandolinist Chris Thile and bassist Edgar Meyer, rife with tradition but just as comfortable leaving it behind in a flight of harmonic fancy. While their sophomore LP *Pisces* seemed like it was stretching and pulling dramatically at the bounds of their relationship, something about *Eclipse* suggests comfort, even assuredness, in the alchemy of their approach.

This comes even as they seem to be ever-expanding their instrumental palette. Jones makes sure of octave mandolin, banjo, guitar and piano here more than ever, with Butterfield often high on the fret creating sweeping fiddle-esque melodic lines with ease. But the tunes themselves have a kind of serenity to them, from the seemingly casual picking of opener "Cease and Desist" to the ambling, almost ambient numbers like "Plunky's Waltz" and "Cold Joe Lark." Even on herky-jerky numbers like "Heavyweight," the sheer playfulness of the arrangement seems to overcome the feel of technical challenge, as if the two players, having taken the full measure of one another, is now volleying effortlessly on their rarefied playing field. It's a joy to listen to. **-KP**



E.Z. SHAKES

Eyes on Fire EP

Eyes on Fire, following as quickly as it does on the heels of E.Z. Shakes debut full-length *The Wolf*, should really feel more like a stop-gap than it does. Opener tune “Vacation in the North” fits humbly enough, feeling like a relaxed B-side despite its despondent lyric that might have been left on the cutting room floor to the original collection thanks to either its brevity of plaintiveness.

From there, though, this atmospheric alt-country outfit seems jolted and challenged to one-up themselves. “The Same Drugs” is a strum-along rocker that builds to ecstatic heights on an adrenaline rush of pedal steel as front-man Zach Seibert sounds positively giddy about being “so messed up on the same drugs.” The following tune, a sprawling, “Cortez the Killer”-type take on New Riders of the Purple Sage’s “Gypsy Cowboy” takes Seibert out of his drawling comfort zone to miraculous ends, pushing him to both chop notes and stretch syllables past the breaking point, filtering Gram Parsons through the dark noir of *Time Out of Mind*-era Dylan.

The set closes with “Mississippi Burning,” a barebones protest song that reckons with white complicity and oh-so-tentatively imagines the transition from passive indifference to racial allyship in a way that is distinctly Southern. It’s a wrenchingly vulnerable bit of political terrain, and Seibert acquits himself nicely, wisely forgoing a band arrangement to make the most of the wound-tight emotions of the song itself. **-KP**

go see



QUARK LEPTON

The Double

Quark Lepton, the songwriting vehicle of Steve Nuzum, is a country band in the most side-eyed sense of the word. The richly swirling twang of these elaborately arranged tunes on *The Double* has a sort of surreality about them that matches Nuzum’s lyrics, which can pivot from direct and cliché towards the nonsensical and fatalist from song to song or even line to line. It’s more Father John Misty than Merle Haggard, with a kick towards more cerebral, atmospheric indie bands like Phosphorescent and Bonnie “Prince” Billy.

“Magic Hour” is fine example of the general aesthetic, as it slides along a simple strum and pedal steel glissando as Nuzum makes a twisting indictment of consumerism with a healthy dose of non-sequiturs. “Who wants to worry themselves about nuclear missiles or God knows what else/ about melting ice or civil wars next week?,” he sings. “And who wants to feel alone? I want golden sunset when magic hour comes/ And to live in an ad for vacations or cars or beer.”

Whatever you might make of the lyrics, Nuzum’s singing goes down nice and easy, playing the jauntily heartbroken country singer with a smoothness and grace that can often feel forced or schlocky coming from his indie brethren. He has a natural way with melody and a keen sense of how his voice plays off Kristen Harris’ fiddle or the floating tangle of electric and pedal steel guitars provided by either him or his various sidemen.

While there’s occasionally a feeling as if this is merely an exceptional genre exercise, it’s hard to deny Nuzum’s obvious songwriting talents and the fully-realized nature of the recording aesthetic. Which is more than you can say for a lot of the ham-handedness of many Americana albums released on national labels. **-KP**

local



SLUSH

Parallel Basements

Whatever’s been in Columbia’s drinking water over the past decade (skip the political jokes), it apparently leads to exceptionally good shoegaze and post-punk bands emerging out of our high schools, a rather odd fact in 2019.

It’s hard not to be awed by the melodic gifts and sense of craft of Slush, a band of high school-age players who emerge on the scene in the wake of similar too-young-to-be-believed post-punk-related acts like the shoegazy dream-poppers Alarm Drum and the power-pop-turned-shoegaze duo My-Brother MySister. While the former group continues to evolve and the latter’s members have found new outlets for their creative efforts, it’s noteworthy that Slush seems even more self-assured than either of those groups early incarnations as they ply their jangly, searching guitar lines and calculatedly disaffected vocals on *Parallel Basements*, their second EP recorded Archer Avenue Studios.

The new recording announces itself with a slow-building six-minute burner of a tune in “Trigger,” with a gradual wind-up and sense of drama that feels like a chiller version of Interpol. The second cut, “Desert People,” thrashes with a bit more energy and stoner-rock rampage, but in general the instrumental workouts are mostly geared towards lush melodies with just brushes of post-punk angularity, leaving lead vocalist Ben Beier to bring the grit.

The disaffected delivery that is Beier’s bread-and-butter is tough to get right, particularly for a new or unsteady vocalist. Somehow, though, he’s utterly convincing, and never seems to quit on a melody or bite off a line too soon. While not all of the tunes feature sure-fire hooks, when it all comes together, as it does on the cathartic closer “Ripple,” it’s not difficult to imagine these young lads on much, much bigger stages soon. **-KP**

music

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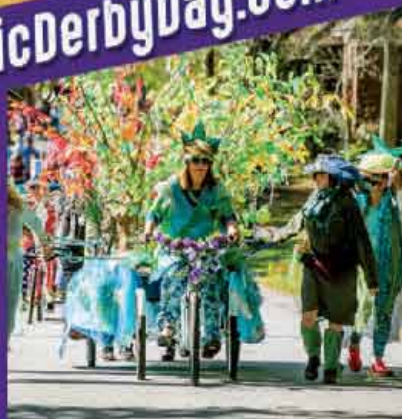
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THE NEW EXPERIENCE OF THE COLUMBIA MUSEUM OF ART

BY CHRISTINA XAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DREW BARON

For the past two years, the Columbia Museum of Art (CMA) has been renovating their space to cater to their growing and changing audience.

According to Joelle Ryan-Cook, the Deputy Director & Director of External Affairs, the museum wanted a “renovation of both the physical space and a transformation of the organization itself – to change the content, programs, and the way [they] welcome people.”

The museum itself has always been improving. It opened as an organization in 1950, where it operated out of the Taylor Family House. In 1998, it moved to the space we now know and love on Main Street. Back then, it was just an old Macy’s department store. The very first renovations of the building made the museum a museum; now these changes will make it an experience.

Fortunately, the CMA has been able to grow its audience quite significantly over the past decades through good programming and diverse exhibitions. “We always try to be better than not just our competitors but ourselves.” Ryan-Cook begins, “When you compete with yourself, though, you have to think about how to expand yourself.” This was the initiative for the growth.

In this, the strategic planning started. For years, the executives met and decided not just what they thought they should have, but what the people of Columbia needed. The CMA realized that they needed to expand non-profit opportunities, create more hands-on activities, and display more diverse art. “Our goal was to create a museum around our community,” Ryan-Cook continues, “instead of creating a museum and then offering it to people.”

The CMA was not just concerned about changing how they looked, though; they wanted to improve the entire experience. “We want to be welcoming, to be community centered, to be inspiring, to be vibrant, and to be playful,” says Ryan-Cook. “We want audiences to engage in what we’ve called the three C’s: Contemplate. Connect. Create.”

The museum knew that in order to achieve all they wanted for their organizational development, they needed an improved space where all these bright ideas could function. Now, after years of planning and action, 99% of the renovations are done, and the museum is ready to share its new space with us.

Here are just some of the new and updated features we can experience at the CMA now and in the coming months:



The Upstairs Gallery

The new upstairs gallery has finally been unveiled and is the most prominent and important change to the museum. Ryan-Cook says that the CMA recognized they needed to change the way their collection told a story about the Midlands community and about what we care about. “We were a modern, 21st century museum with a huge Renaissance collection,” Ryan-Cook says, “and we used to be organized by time, so all people saw was the Renaissance art, and it was much harder to see different art and voices represented.”

The CMA had a collection full of women, people of color, and non-American cultures, but it wasn’t easily on view because the collection used to be themed as a March through History. Now, the CMA has arranged the collection thematically

with the goal that these themes will highlight the diversity that is so special to the CMA’s heart.

In total, five galleries were added during the renovations, three of which were modern and contemporary galleries. They’ve added 6,000 square feet full of diverse art and voices.

Additionally, ease of interaction has been highlighted throughout the galleries, from something as simple as way-finding (done by putting gallery names on the floor of walkways) to interactive stations where visitors can decide what they think is art and take part in the conversation of what goes on the wall.

The Loft

The gallery isn’t the only upstairs change for the CMA. They’ve added a brand-new event space. It starts with a new hallway to the left of the main gallery. When walking up to the glass doors of the main gallery and looking left, one would typically come face to face with a blank wall. Now you are greeted by another pair of glass doors. These doors lead to a hallway and an alcove that both functions as additional entrances into the galleries and as a connector to the event space itself.

Even these glass doors were a thoughtful renovation, created so that even if the galleries must close down during an event, when people traverse the path to the event space, they are still surrounded by visible art. Additionally, the hallway itself is lined with art of various mediums that are to be changed out regularly.



The event space itself will be used for several of CMA's events, such as their popular Arts and Draughts, but they also hope to rent it out to people for concerts, celebrations, and even weddings. The room was created with both visual and aural senses in mind. The new lighting system was created with frames that can handle weight; they're completely tracked, and with an acoustic tile in the middle, anyone using the space can hang or arrange any lighting or sound system they desire.

The Studios

The studios have always been important to the CMA. According to Ryan-Cook, the studio classes, particularly their adult classes, have been "barn-burners" for them. However, they realized that the studios they had could be even better. Studios used to be for school programs, so the spaces were designed for kids. The furniture was low to the ground, and the equipment was small. Additionally, there were originally only two studios, and while these studios were sufficient for their summer camps, they wanted more.

By adding a new studio, they've increased studio space by 33%. They also recognized quickly that adults want to play and be inspired just as much as kids do, so all new furniture has been purchased and designed for multiple ages. They've even purchased tall tables for people who may prefer to do their work standing, and most importantly, they've focused on how access to physical spaces serves different people's physical needs. They have transformed the studios to be completely



wheelchair friendly – desks, sinks, and stations are all wheelchair accessible, so that everyone can create art.

The Cross Hatch



One of the most exciting new changes the CMA has made is the interactive studio downstairs. Glenna Barlow, the Senior Manager of Education and Interpretation, introduces this space, which she has been working on for 2 years. Perhaps better than any other renovation, this area shows best the mission of ensuring everyone has access to connecting with the art at the museum.

The Cross Hatch is a room full of interactive art-related experiences for all ages and for anyone who wants to participate. The different stations include both technological and analog interactions. One of their technology related experiences is a stop motion animation video creation station. There are various hands-on activities as well. There are design block challenges on a table in the center of the room. Two Buddha boards stand on the left wall next to two scroll paintings. For those who don't know, Buddha boards allow you to "paint" black lines on a board that fade over the course of a few minutes. People can use these boards to imitate the scrolls or create their own art, and small boards are available for purchase in the gift shop.

Part of the CMA's engagement promises are to appeal not just to all people but to all of people's senses. The station on the right wall of the Cross Hatch displays several pieces from the permanent collection that are centered on the theme of place.

Below these art pieces are magnetic objects that relate to the pieces and activate non-visual senses. For example, you may be able to touch a piece of grass while looking at a painting of a field or smell salt and shells while looking at a photograph of the ocean.

The Gift Shop

The CMA has renovated their gift shop to provide an easier and more enjoyable browsing experience for customers. Brantley Cox, who manages the shop, says that they were aiming for a clean, contemporary look. Instead of huge over-filled cases, visitors of the museum will now see well-organized shelving units laid out with various items for purchase.

In the shop, you will find fun collectible items related to famous art works, gifts related to the art in the museum, art and jewelry from local Columbia artists, and more. Continuing their goal of accessibility, they have lowered price points in the shop. They even have designed makers kits so that people can go home and create art if they've been inspired by what they've seen at the museum. The shop will soon be offering a tea and coffee service. While it won't be a full-blown café, there will be tea, coffee, as well as several snacks, so that if you get hungry mid-tour of the museum, you can grab a snack, sit in the new lobby, and keep going!

The Lobby

Even the lobby itself has changed. The CMA has added stone work to the front area and is in the process of updating their murals as well. These three murals will be installed and created by their exhibition designers who must each create a piece out of 10,000 straight lines. They've even updated their columns, installing new lighting systems, so they can choose any color to light up the lobby. "We could, for example, light each column up a different color in the rainbow for Pride Week," Ryan-Cook says.

The front lobby will soon have all new furniture, couches, and tables as well, so if you come with a friend and they get tired, they have a place they can relax, hook up to the Wi-Fi, and even do some work while you finish touring. Also, after a trip

around the museum yourself, you can get a tea or coffee from the gift shop, take it over to a couch, and contemplate your experience.

These updates are not the end to the CMA's plans, though. "We're always changing," Ryan-Cook says, "Always thinking of the ways we can be bigger, better, and bolder for the community."

What's for sure is that the new updates at the CMA shouldn't be missed. There's a fun and important experience for everyone to have there, so go ahead over and have it!

The CMA is open Tuesday – Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., and tickets start at only \$5.



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KICKING OUT ALL THE JAMS

GUITARIST AND COMPOSER GEORGE FETNER BRIDGES MUSICAL

BY KYLE PETERSEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HAMMOND



WORLDS IN COLUMBIA

Like so many things in a city like ours, the town and gown divide can often feel like it creates two different, and disparate, worlds in our music scene. On one side there are rigorously trained musicians spending hours a day in practice rooms and traveling the world giving concerts in plush recital halls; on the other, punk rockers and Soundcloud rappers alike grinding it out in clubs and on the internet while stringing together day gigs to keep making art and making ends meet at the same time.

Then there's George Fetner, who somehow is a little bit of both.

A fierce guitarist and accomplished songwriter who has made a name in town fronting jam band-adjacent groups like Pinna and George Fetner & the Strays, he's also a new music composer and classically-trained guitarist with undergrad and master's degrees in composition from the USC. Now he works a 9-5 as the Assistant Director of Admissions of Business Administration at the University and maintains a balancing act of sorts. He fronts a rock band and runs open mics, but also continues to compose classically-minded work on commission while co-directing Wired Music, a booking and promotions project that brings classical and new music performances to non-traditional spaces around town.

Why this kind of unlikely dual identity? Fetner says it was that way from the start.

"Even when I was a kid, I was doing both, like classical stuff and pop stuff," he explains. "Even before I could even play anything, I was getting into music from like Looney Tunes and also singing back Roy Orbison on the radio."

His first contact with formal music training was around 7 or 8 when he began piano lessons. "I remember really early on, my piano teacher was like 'hey, how is practice going?' and I would be like 'oh, I didn't really do anything, but I wrote a new song this week,'" he recalls. "She was actually really encouraging though and would let me play it."

Fetner says he was also a performer from the start and relished getting up on stage and making a show of his early music skills. But it was music, above all, that hooked him. He added guitar to his toolkit in high school, taking classical guitar lessons but also teaching himself Dave Matthews Band tunes at the same time.

"I basically taught myself these songs in my room [one summer], and they were weird enough that I was just so into it," he says. "Learning [Matthews'] guitar-playing stuff is kind of quirky and weird, so it was a fun challenge during the summertime."

From there he got into Phish, which funneled him into a host of classic rock touchpoints that also piqued his interest in improvisation.

“When you first get into rock ‘n’ roll, you listen to The Beatles and Led Zeppelin and Hendrix, but they all sort of have these blues structures and space for improvising,” he notes. “So rock improvising, in particular, was something I was really excited about.”

Fetner was soon in his first rock band, an experience he recalls with real fondness and credits with teaching him the creative joy of improvising with other people.

“We were all just really interested in a lot of jamming stuff early on, so we just went for it,” he says with relish. “Anytime you have a group of people who aren’t afraid to make mistakes in front of each other, you can cover so much ground.”

At the same time, he’s also still taking his classical training seriously. His high school, Bishop England, doesn’t have a music program, but he began studying composition with Professor Ed Hart at the College of Charleston. Then he was off to USC, studying composition and playing in Pinna, a band that would prove popular in the jam band scene with its funky, jazzy approach to rock ‘n’ roll boogie.

“I was writing classical pieces and playing in the rock band, and it’s always been that way,” he says almost with a shrug. “There’s been times when one takes precedence over the other, but most of the time I’m doing both.”

That’s not to say these two threads were not at times in competition. Fetner recognized that an academic path in the music world often eschews things like rock bands as distractions, and a part of him did long to be taken seriously as a composer. When Pinna disbanded after college, Fetner elected to go back to get his master’s degree and leave the rock band stuff behind.

“I really latched on to the model of Zappa. He wanted to be known as a serious composer, and as he got older, he really wanted people to take him seriously. I kind of wanted that too,” he says now of that time. “It’s easy to go down this slope of, I want to be serious, and I’m taking myself so seriously I’m shooting myself in the foot. I got very heavily into a comparison phase--what are other composers my age doing? And because they were doing it full time and not playing in rock bands, they were obviously doing it faster, and churning out more sophisticated pieces. For a long time I struggled with that, because I really wanted to be a serious composer and I wanted to play in a rock band too.”



“I was writing classical pieces and playing in the rock band, and it’s always been that way,” he says almost with a shrug. “There’s been times when one takes precedence over the other, but most of the time I’m doing both.”



He says he went roughly a year as merely a composer before the itch to do the rock band thing struck. Of course, true to form, he also diligently worked on putting together a recorded compilation of his compositions played by USC students and faculty entitled *Beneath the Ice*, which appeared in 2015, and a solo acoustic album in the vein of Nick Drake and Elliott Smith, *Some Things We'll Change*, in 2017.

His current project, George Fetner & the Strays, which he affectionately refers to as GFATS, finds him back in rock band mode, competently tackling a variety of styles with a renewed emphasis on songwriting while applying a composer lens to crafting individual roles for each player.

"I think now I'm content playing both of those roles and really melding those two roles. With

GFATS, we're working on an album, and I'm allowing myself the possibility that I might write chamber music-type to go in there," he explains. "Something like yMusic or Dirty Projectors or Sufjan Stevens or something like that. Even if it's not for the full song, just a couple of measures, what's wrong with that?"

I used to try and keep them very separate and make my classical music not as influenced by the rock stuff and vice-versa," he continues. "But even when I try to do that, people would come up [after a classical music show] and say 'I really love that piece you wrote, especially some of the sections that sounded kind of poppy before it devolved into chamber new music kind of stuff.' So even when I was trying to do that, it was still coming in."

So just as he's letting his composition side into







the GFATS material, he's also allowing for more funk and soul into a saxophone quartet he's been commissioned to write. It's different for him, but he finds himself more at ease with the dual impulses.

He's also become more at ease with his role booking for bands like Dead Swells and the Wired Music series, the latter of which in particular he sees as a form of service to the community.

"We had enough friends our age who wanted to play classical music, but didn't have an outlet," he says of how Wired Music started. "They didn't want to play a full recital. They are teaching, they have an orchestra gig, but they don't have the opportunity to play what they really want to or don't have a venue for it."

He and fellow music school grad Philip Snyder created Wired Music to promote these kinds of shows in

informal spaces like Curiosity CoffeeShop and Tapp's Art Center that allowed for a different kind of classical music show. "It's not really anything unique, but it's not super-usual here either. It's just one of many little sparkles that make this city different, something a little quirky and cool. It does take some work, but it's worth it."

That attitude, more than anything, defines the serenity Fetner seems to have found bridging the classical and pop worlds, as well as the town and gown worlds, while working a non-musician day gig.

"I've mellowed a bit," he admits. "I'm still principled and I still get really agitated about certain things, but I think the reality of the situation is that--I do know people who are full-time musicians, which means they teach a lot, do a lot of gigs, and do a lot of work. And that's awesome. ...[But]



I look at the day job as a luxury that allows me to pick and do the kind of music I want to do.”

And, just as how he started out as kid, it’s performing that still drives him.

“We were playing at the Art Bar a couple of weeks ago, and we got into this tune--and this tune did have this big sort of improv section that was very open-ended,” he tells at one point. “So we calmed down and started, and I sort of closed my eyes and thought to myself, “Alright, you’re here right now. You are not at work. People are watching you play. There is nothing else like this on the planet, and you’re right in the middle of it. Just be in, live in it. Because you’re not going to be in it in an hour. Stay in that complete bliss.”

“Why whine if you’re going be in that every couple of weeks?”



Ouch! Oops!

Trustus Theatre becomes Proactive About Issues of Intimacy and Company Member Christine Hellman Leads the Way

by Frank Thompson with Chad Henderson

In the fall of 2018, Trustus Company member Christine Hellman approached artistic director Chad Henderson with excitement about her experience at the all-female Statera International Conference in Milwaukee, WI. Statera, deriving its name from the Latin word for balance, works to expand employment options, improve salary, and remove barriers to growth and achievement through mentorship, research, engagement, education, networking, and support and their mission is to “[take] positive action to bring women into full and equal participation in the arts.” Upon her return from the conference, Hellman was keen to share what she had learned and possibly integrate it into the protocol at Trustus.

“It’s all about communication and consent,” says Hellman. “With safety and structure, boundaries are set and we have a ‘sturdy playground’ to create a believable scene.” Her goal was to establish a standard of practicing consent throughout the rehearsal period, having been inspired by a class at the conference. Hellman was particularly motivated by discussions on the Chicago Theatre Standards (CTS), a cultural document created by actors, stage managers, artistic directors, fight/combat choreographers, and others within the arts community. After a year’s testing with approximately twenty theatres nationwide, it was critiqued and fine-tuned into the finalized set of standards.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRAD MARTIN

Henderson, too, was inspired by the possibilities that could lay ahead for the company, so they immediately got to work. Hellman took on the role of Intimacy Liaison and to that end she has applied what she describes as her “passion project” to choreographing specific moments when cast members have to physically interact in character. Based on the “Pillars of Intimacy” method as taught by Intimacy Directors International, Hellman’s work provides guidelines and promotes trust between performers in scenes requiring romantic or sexually charged touching, as well as those involving stage combat or violence.

Some history. According to Henderson, “In 2010, a production of Tracy Letts’ *Killer Joe* at Profiles Theatre in Chicago was getting high marks from critics and audiences. The artistic director of Profiles was also playing the title character, and the motto of Profiles was ‘whatever the truth required.’ The play was being recognized for being incredibly vicious and real. Unfortunately, the reason why the savage violence and sexual abuse seemed so real was because it was. Fight choreography and intimacy blocking was being ignored, and actors were being abused on stage in front of audiences. Once the actors came forward,

a two-decade history of abuse was revealed as over 30 Profiles cast and crew members came forward about their experiences at the storefront theatre.”

“In response to the abuse at Profiles,” he continues, “a group of theatre professionals at various levels in the Chicago area created The Chicago Theatre Standards (CTS). They worked together with the goal of creating a cultural paradigm shift away from turning a blind eye to sexual harassment, discrimination, violence, intimidation and bullying in theatres and towards mentoring, prevention, and accountability.”

The standards are now available for any theatre or performance art group to adopt anywhere in the country.

Hellman describes the implementation of CTS as “a beautiful process,” explaining that one of the specific methods CTS utilizes is the “Oops/Ouch” policy, in which an actor uncomfortable with being touched in a certain way simply says “ouch” to indicate to his/her scene partner(s) that a personal boundary has been crossed. The response to “ouch” is “oops,” which communicates understanding and apology. “It creates a language for addressing the problem in the moment,” says Hellman, adding that artists in such situations often feel more at ease expressing themselves with a specific two-word exchange, as opposed to a full conversation. When put into practice, “Oops/Ouch” eliminates (or at least minimizes) embarrassment, while providing a concrete set of guidelines that establish a baseline of professionalism and collective respect. Receptive to the idea, Henderson began implementation of CTS with Trustus’ recent production of *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time* which, according to Hellman, lent itself particularly well to the standards, not only from a physical perspective, but an emotional and psychological perspective as well. “One of our actors was on the autism spectrum,” says Hellman, “and we were able to use the standards to make sure his sensory needs were respected and accommodated. We established a routine of checking in with him before and during the show, making sure everything was okay.”

“From the very start of this process, we presented the CTS to the staff, company, and Board of Directors at Trustus,” Henderson says. “This instilled the ability for our resident artists and extended Trustus family to become ambassadors for this work.”

“Every show at Trustus begins its first rehearsal with an information session regarding the CTS,” he continues. “Hellman talks to the cast and crew about the policies of consent during rehearsals, basic safety information about the theatre spaces, expectations regarding intimacy, nudity, or violence in the production, and concern resolution paths. There is first rehearsal language that casts and crews read as a team regarding the definition of harassment and a pledge is made by the entire team to honor the standards for a safe space.”

Another powerful tool in regards to creating a safe and open environment comes from the Concern Resolution Path, or CRP, Henderson explains. “Should a concern arise during a process, we hope to have created a culture of respect and openness which therefore allows parties to address each other directly. However, if more facilitation is needed to address a concern, the CRP dictates who should be contacted on a tier-based system.”

“We’re three shows in with the process,” Henderson says. “Thus far we have seen positive cultural shifts. We’re open in our rehearsal processes about the work we’re doing, we won’t go forward unless consent has been [established], and we’re finding that this work is putting everyone on a level playing field – no matter what sort of history the artists in the room may have with each other.”

“Should something go off the tracks, there’s always a healthy lesson to be learned and how to do it better the next time. It’s the responsible thing to do, and it’s the right thing to do. Perhaps some of the other performance groups in town will want to join us in this work? It could be a great way to put a wonderful stamp on the arts scene in the Capital City.”

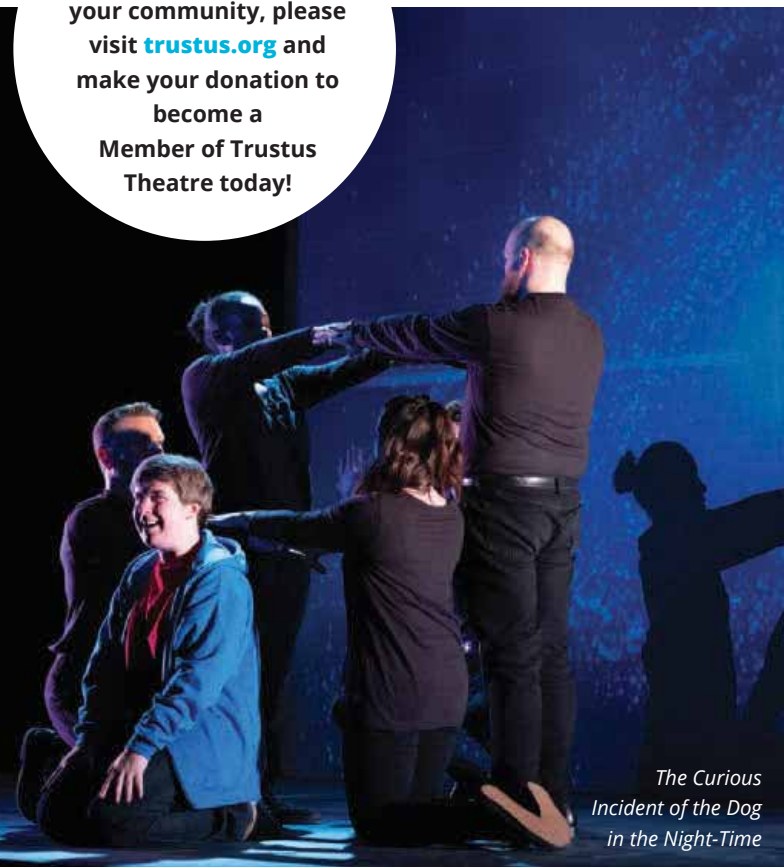


5 Lesbians
Eating a Quiche



The Cost of Living

If you'd like support award-winning theatre in your community, please visit trustus.org and make your donation to become a Member of Trustus Theatre today!



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

THANK YOU

Trustus Theatre has been the Midlands' first choice for contemporary theatre for 34 seasons. We continue to be the home of some of the most talented theatre artists in the area, and we remain dedicated to our mission of producing work on our stages that speak to the conversations in our community and our nation. As one of the most awarded theatres in South Carolina, our artists often receive the praise for elevating the arts in our state – but we know we couldn't do it without the countless audiences and supporters who have made Trustus a thriving nonprofit arts organization in Columbia, SC.

This season, you have supported work that explores the goodness of the human spirit, productions that examine the limitless possibilities that lie ahead of us when we make brave choices, and three off-site productions that help us share our work more deeply with our community.

We can't thank you enough for making all of these things possible. We can't wait to keep telling you engaging stories for the next 34 years.



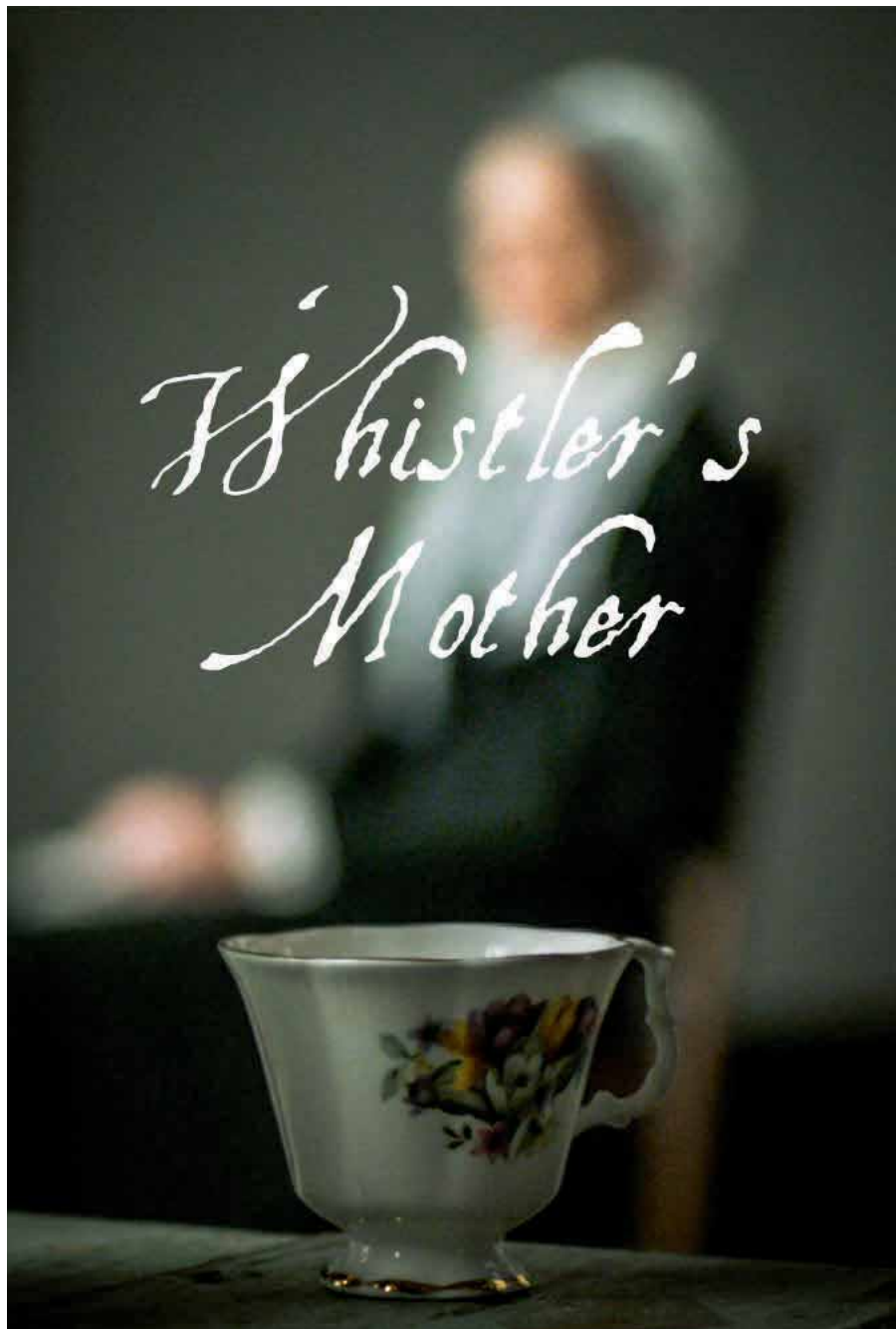


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LONDON & LACE
BRIDAL BOUTIQUE



One of the priorities of the Jasper Project is to demystify the various processes of art and, in so doing, hopefully, make art more accessible to everyone. In a new series conceptualized by film editor Wade Sellers, Wade invites a panel of artists to sit before a camera and microphone and share their experiences. For the first in this series, Wade invited accomplished screenwriter, but first-time film director, Robbie Robertson to join him at the roundtable along with some of the crew from Robbie's award-winning new film, *Whistler's Mother*. The edited transcript of the interview follows.

Wade: The theme of this, the Jasper Project's first Live Interview Roundtable is also firsts. What really struck me, Robbie, was even though you have a lot of experience in media in many different forms, was that the idea was attractive to you to direct a film.

Robbie: Yeah. I felt like I was at this point with my writing that... I need to step into the shoes of the director to see what it's really like. As a writer you're always directing in your mind when you're writing something, but of course, the process is so much more when you're actually on set with real people and deadlines and money. So I felt like I needed that extra layer of challenge.

Wade: Was the Indie Grants program the whole motivation for that?

Robbie: You can actually enter Indie Grants just as a writer and then you can bring a director ... as a team. It's a funny story. ... Originally I was gonna co-direct with Lorie Gardner at Mad Monkey and way early in the pre-production process she's like, "My whole calendar is just gonna blow up." She goes, "I think you gotta do this on your own. This is

your story and I'm just like helping it as a producer." Which, if you know Lorie, just helping, she's one of the most awesome collaborators you'll ever have, but I'm really glad it worked out that way because it made me stretch a muscle up here that I never have before.

Wade: Well, talk about assembling the people we have here.

Robbie: This is my favorite part about living in a small town because you know people, people who know people. Being in Columbia we've got so many wonderful, really, really, topnotch talented people that could work in any market. I was immediately after Alexis (Doktor). I'm like "How can I get her? How can I get her?" I was stalking her a little bit and she finally called me back and I'm like, "Hey."

Alexis Doktor: It wasn't that bad.

Robbie: She's just so busy. She does costuming with the ballet, the opera, and other short films. All kind of things. And then Tyler. How did we first meet Tyler?





Tyler Matthews: Shanna

Robbie: Yeah, this is a funny story. This is that story of living in a small town. A friend of mine, Shanna said, “I know you’re working on a movie and I know you probably got your crew set up, but there’s this guy who goes to my church.” And I’m like, “Oh. Yeah.” And I don’t mean that to be a snob, but that just sounds like, oh yeah, I’ve got somebody that can...” So I had my little prejudice about that and then I said, “Let’s go to coffee.” And within five minutes, I’m like, this dude’s brilliant. I could see his wheels turning and then within a week, maybe three days, he sent back a sample and I told him what my vision was, I don’t know music, but I know what I like and I told him some things I like and he’s like mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. This is the first, Alexis, this is your first ...

Alexis: Film.

Wade: Your background is theater and ballet?

Alexis: My background was ballet and I got into costumes because I liked sewing growing up and I sort of fell into costuming for Columbia City Ballet and some of the local theater and opera companies, But never a film.

Wade: So what was your draw then? Did you want to work on a film? Had you been waiting to or was it just Robbie, or what?

Alexis: I had heard of Robbie a lot through mutual friends and people in the industry, but I never actually met Robbie before this. I’ve always had that wonder [of] what it would be like to work on a film set.

Robbie: So all of us do so many different things, but I wanted this to be a really fun experience. I was like, well, if this is the only time I ever shoot something I want us to all have fun. I think that we did. We really did. I have to talk about this guy sitting right here.

[Motioning to Jimmy Wall.] Talk about firsts. I was having a hard time finding a place I could build the set because ... I wanted it to have an old timey ...Dark Shadows feel to it.... So it's a little hyper reality. Little surreal quality. Free Times had an article haunted houses. There was one that turned out to be Jimmy's that was called the Hall of Horrors.

So I just called him out of the blue and I said, "I know this is really weird. You don't know me, but have you ever thought about doing a film before?"

Jimmy: [I said I'd] done a couple of sets for theater before. The haunted house that was about my fourth year doing it. ... I said, you know what? I feel like the one thread that ties through everything is storytelling ... I just need to find a way to get in film.

Robbie: I was sold right away and then I saw the haunt[ed house] in person and it's ... so complex. ...We actually shot on his set and we used it as a sound stage.

Wade: That's great. So the enthusiasm you had about wanting to be involved in production design for a film somehow was there, but then there was the reality of the actual set and the day. [To Tyler Matthews} Then from your end... you didn't have any on set time, right? You were all post.

Tyler: No. No. All post production. I think everything had been shot by the time you got in touch with me.

Robbie: Yeah.

Tyler: I was at work one day when he called and ... he said 1800s Russia, witches ... that sounded awesome. I started thinking about Tchaikovsky immediately which got sprinkled into the soundtrack, but it was really when you mentioned that you're working with Lorie Gardner because I had been trying to get on her calendar for a year just so I could meet her and see what it was all about. I was very inspired and it was so fun to work with you for the rest of it.

Wade: Tell me about the Indie Grants process post getting the word that you were funded.

Robbie: Most short films especially for Indie Grants, they're one location, maybe two, minimal cast. So I think the parameters of what we were going into, it was pretty challenging. Our AD, Jeff Rogers, was like, "Let's see what we can cut out of this. Are you sure we need the witches hut?" I'm like, "Yeah. I'm sure." I knew we could do this.

Wade: That's usually the big battle, just hanging on for dear life to every creative bit that you can get when you have a producer and the AD going no.

Robbie: Oh yeah.

Wade:[To Jimmy] Was that difficult for you with design?

Jimmy: There were many come to Jesus [and] back to the drawing board moments when you start running numbers and saying, "Not an option." It was that way a couple times, but the bulk of the set was actually Styrofoam. It was three pallets worth from Tractor Supply, free.

Wade: Oh. That's great.

Jimmy: Robbie got his hands very dirty.

Robbie: Which I loved. It was so cool to be able to do things on this that I've never done before. Jimmy taught me how to shave Styrofoam into little thin pieces and use a heat gun to make it look distressed and then you paint it gray. That was the stone. The wall in the witch's house. All that was Styrofoam.

Wade: Well, for you, Alexis, it seems like a pretty smooth transition. ... You had your concept. You had your budget.

Alexis: I'm very used to working with budgets. It's just the cold, hard facts of anything. So working within a budget was not difficult and one of things that does make me feel very lucky is I've made a



lot of really good connections with the heads of a lot of local theaters, so I was able to call in a couple favors. Some of the pieces that we used on film I built and some of the pieces were borrowed from places.

Wade: Was there a time where somebody just came to you and said, okay Robbie, you can't do it all. You have to focus on directing this film, staying within that vision.

Robbie: Yeah. ... I worked with Jimmy so much in the week before. I really had no idea I loved building a set so much. That was cool, but the night before our first day of shooting our executive producer Brad Jayne who's with the Indie Grants Program, he's like, "you gotta go home. You can't be building a set the night before we start shooting. You gotta get home and get some rest."

Wade: You touched on one of the really behind the scenes things that people don't get to see a lot of in

that it's a constant cycle of decisions. Things that you may have to take out or keep in or readjust as you go and I think as a first time director that can get a little frustrating. You were completely new to this. The further in the day that a production went you must have been saying, "Good God. What is happening here?"

Jimmy: I just remember coming out bleary eyed and had been working really all through the night and came out and saw the trucks in the parking lot. Shit. This is real. Up until that point it's not real, at least for me. I had never seen it from that perspective. I've done extra work before. To actually be there when the crew gets there, that was new and that was where it was, "oh my God, this is happening."

Robbie: In addition to these people we had crew from Atlanta and New York. ... It was intimidating that first day. Wow, these people are real professionals. I think it worked out great. It was such a blend of the old and new and first timers and pros

and everybody worked together so well.

Wade: One of my favorite film anecdotes is when a director was asking another director what the most stressful part of making a film was and he said, arriving in the car to set in the morning because I had to look out the window and realize all those people were depending on me.

Robbie: Yeah.

Wade: At what point did you feel that?

Robbie: I had that trepidation up until the day before and then I slept like a baby the night before we shot. I remember getting up that morning, taking a shower and I felt like a kid excited about going to school. I was so excited. I get chills thinking about how excited I was. I loved it. It's the first time, but I probably will wanna do it again.

Wade: [To Tyler] Talk about your role with sound design a little bit.

Tyler: Musically there were a few moments where before you've even seen a frame of the shot you could get some ideas of what you want to do to enhance the scene. What feeling you're going for. ...I think there may have been seven or eight tracks in the entire album, maybe six of them had to write to the edit. If you take the scene where they're in the cave, when Baba's just healed Kirkie, that was a tough scene 'cause you go through these emotions of Kirkie's sick, scary witch, sit Kirkie down, witch is doing something with a bowl and some chains, Kirkie's better, mom's happy, they're leaving and then, holy cow, witch just threw up the hanky and she's sucking it down and scared. It's this roller coaster. Lining up the timing. When you write a song you choose a tempo. I can't recall what I did there. It's hard to write something to a metronome when you have emotions changing.

Robbie: I love what you did with that

Tyler: Pull that theme that you hear there from the bells. That you hear again from the strings at the end. The more that you can write on the front

end, it's surprising how much they'll just line up. Like the scene where Kirkie falls out of the chair, that was written before I saw a frame and ... that gave us a theme for the rest of the film.

Robbie: Oh. I think its melancholy. Bittersweet. The end of the story.

Wade: Robbie, I think what you did by not going strictly by the film resume but basically finding people that were passionate about what they do was probably one of your smartest moves as a first time director.

Robbie: Thanks.

Wade: It was a great job. Thanks everybody for joining us for this first Jasper Live Interview Roundtable and I look forward to seeing the success of your film as it moves on.

The Indie Grants Program is a collaborative effort of the SC Film Commission and Trident Technical College. **IndieGrants.org**.



Pictured -- Lori Gardner, Robbie Robertson, Samuel Moody, Bryce Harper, and Jared Carter

JASPER SCREENS SIDEBAR: GEORGE HETHERINGTON

An economist for most of his life, George Hetherington left the 9-to-5 world in 2012 to focus on painting. He earned an MFA in 2017 and has shown at Artfields, McMaster Gallery, and in group shows at City Art. According to Hetherington, “A finished work is both a reduction to essence of the beginning vision and a record of the observed, the experienced, the remembered, the searched for, and the imagined residing in its composition.”



Hetherington's portraits are featured in *Whistler's Mother* by Robbie Robertson.
Photo credit - Wade Sellers.

2019 CALL for SUBMISSIONS

Fall Lines – a literary convergence is a literary journal presented by The Jasper Project in partnership with Richland Library and One Columbia for Arts and History. Fall Lines will accept submissions of previously unpublished poetry, essays, short fiction, and flash fiction from January 31, 2019 through April 30, 2019. While the editors of Fall Lines hope to attract the work of writers and poets from the Carolinas and the South-eastern US, acceptance of work is not dependent upon residence.

Publication in Fall Lines will be determined by a panel of judges and accepted authors (ONLY) will be notified by June 30, 2019, with a publication date in August 2019. Two \$250 cash prizes, sponsored by the Richland Library Friends, will be awarded: The Saluda River Prize for Poetry and the Broad River Prize for Prose.

There is no fee to enter, but submissions that fail to follow the above instructions will be disqualified without review. Please limit short fiction to 2000 words or less; flash fiction to 350 – 500 words per submission; essays to 1200 words; and poetry to three pages (standard font.) Please submit no more than a total of 5 single entries. One entry per email. For more information, visit JasperProject.org.

The Columbia Fall Line is a natural junction, along which the Congaree River falls and rapids form, running parallel to the east coast of the country between the resilient rocks of the Appalachians and the softer, more gentle coastal plain.



LES MERRY CHEVALIERS

A strange, aborted interview with Les Merry Chevaliers – hardly worth mentioning, really

We met at the Social Pig on Devine at 3:33 a.m. The streetlamps were mere halos due to a monstrous fog. A man, sumptuously dressed in the style of an 18th century French nobleman, stepped from the shadows. He was Garrigue Le Freaque, drummer of the band I was tasked to interview: Les Merry Chevaliers.

Monsieur Le Freaque bowed. “May we take your car? I came on the bus,” he said in a low voice. “Of course,” I replied. I sat behind the steering wheel, and he removed a flowered scarf. He asked me to blindfold myself. “We have to keep our secret beat laboratory hidden. Just follow the scent of rock and roll as you drive,” he said mellifluously. My car twisted slowly through the sleeping streets, knocking aside cats and trashcans until we crunched to a stop somewhere in Five Points. Soon, I was standing in cold water. “Am I in a fountain?” I asked. A bell rang and I was flushed down a roaring stream.

“I apologize for the cloak and dagger, but we can’t have people knowing the location of our underground lair,” said Pierre Balz, rhythm guitar. He smiled as I dried myself with a scented towel.

“Should you have told me that?” I asked. I was in a cavernous chamber with a roaring fireplace. The remaining three band members lounged around me, dressed in fine wigs, stockings, and puffy shirts: Guillaume Guillotine, lead guitar; Count de Monet, lead vocals; and Menage O’Shea, bass guitar. Their fine clothes violated several sumptuary laws and possibly the Geneva Convention. Monsieur Monet handed me a glass of claret and gestured at exquisite cheeses set before me.

“We are at your disposal. Please try the mimolette,” said Monsieur Guillotine.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN KYZER & THOMAS HAMMOND







The wall next to me was glass. On the other side a scaly monster swam languidly in dark water.

“Is that a plesiosaur?” I asked nervously.

“Her? Don’t mind Albertine. The glass is 15 inches thick,” answered Monsieur Monet. He smiled enigmatically. “Did you notice I just smiled enigmatically?”

Albertine waved a flipper at me. “Aren’t plesiosaurs extinct?” I asked.

“Enough about the possibility that we are millions of years old – those are questions for The Rolling Stones!” exclaimed Monsieur O’Shea. “What would you really like to know?”

“I find myself at a loss at the moment,” I said. The claret, the plesiosaur, and the smell of hyacinth and sandalwood was going to my head.

“Of course, you can’t ask us the location of our beat laboratory,” said Monsieur Balz.

“However, if we were to describe ourselves, we play our own original music, which we call ‘punque roc’—similar to The Buzzcocks and The Replacements, although our real influences are the poets Rimbaud and Verlaine.

“Now, I am grievously sorry, but our time together is up.” He snapped his manicured fingers.

Before I could utter a word, I was once again standing in front of the Social Pig. The rising sun washed away the fog, burning almost as brightly as Les Merry Chevaliers.

Music from Les Merry Chevaliers is available on Spotify, Soundcloud, and other major streaming services.

book review

A VIEW FROM THE SOUTH: THE NARRATIVE ART OF BOYD SAUNDERS

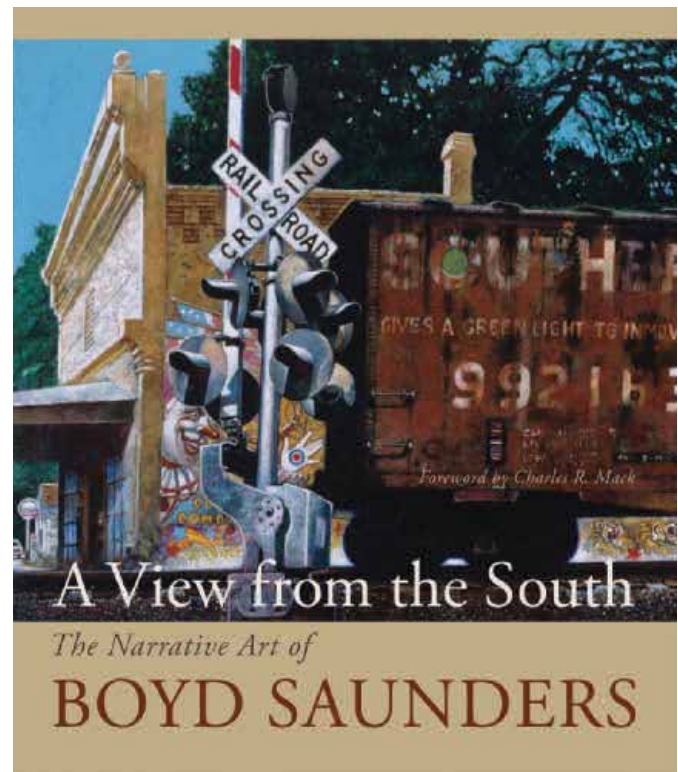
BY KYLE PETERSEN

They don't make them like Boyd Saunders anymore. That's a bit of a cliché, really. A bit of good-ole-days nostalgia mixed with disgruntlement over modernity. But in Saunders' case, there really is a sense of historical character, as if he and his art walk out of another time and place, with all the weight and story that implies.

Fittingly, *A View from the South: The Narrative Art of Boyd Saunders*, often feels more like a couple of old friends trading stories and reminiscing of days past, even as it serves as a grand homage to the master printmaker, illustrator, painter, teacher, raconteur, and horseman. Author Thomas Dewey II foregrounds his long history with Saunders as a way to delve richly into his work while also paying tribute to the man himself, frequently pivoting from pages of critical biography to capture the inimitable blend of college professor and Southern renaissance statesmen at his best. As Dewey carefully tracks Saunders biography, training and professional and creative progressions, he's also wise to never lose sight of subject's own glorious voice and storytelling prowess. So in between the more straightforward details here, there's also long passages of unfettered Saunders as he regales you with everything from childhood tall tales from his eastern Tennessee farmhouse upbringing and the story of how he met Faulkner stumbling around the woods outside of Oxford, Mississippi to the studious details of how he crafted prints and illustrations as varied as the Southwest Native American histories of the Bosque Territory to his own distinctive Southern

gothicisms in his Southern Cross trilogy.

But even if the book was absent the career-spanning perspective that Dewey brings or the fountain of stories that Saunders can drawl with the best of them, you would still have the revelatory glory of these glossy full-page images of the art itself. Famed for his repeated projects illustrating Faulkner's fiction, it's still hard to comprehend the full range even within these efforts without something like this book. The minimalist, deeply symbolic rendering of "The Bear," begun while the author was still alive can be seen on one page, then the poetic layering of his





The Wedding Party, 1976-84, etching, 16 x 22 in.

“Spotted Horses” lithograph a few pages later, then the tightly-composed, collage-like explorations of the main characters of *The Sound & the Fury* as well.

But the book also makes it quite how much more Saunders was than his famed Faulkner connections. While agrarian and small-town Southern landscapes often served as his primary subject matter, he was far from a contented chronicler of these worlds. His compositions are always elegantly constructed statements of purpose and well-earn the “narrative art” tag of the title. His *Southern Cross* trilogy in particular stands out for this, with a keen sense of temporality dotting the works. There’s a marked sense of present and past, of faded advertisements and walking ghosts living together in a world that never changes and never remains the same. Lat-

er collections like *The Return of the Wanderer* and *Railroad Muses* do similar work, layering mystery and meaning onto relatively rustic landscapes with a quality that unreservedly qualifies as literary.

That this book arrives in 2019 with Saunders as an Emeritus Professor at the University of South Carolina feels almost surprising, given the weight of his output and the undeniable power and richness that comes from tracing the narrative arc of his career. But in some sense, maybe it is inevitable that we had to wait until now to even attempt to take the full measure of what the artist has achieved.

And maybe, hopefully, there’s still more chapters to write.



Mustangs Bolt Out of the Barn, lithograph



Caroline Morning Workout, 1989, stone lithograph with three stones and hand-applied color, 26 x 40 in.

PLAYWRIGHT JON TUTTLE'S NEW COLLECTION OF STAGE PLAYS ALSO CELEBRATES COLUMBIA'S TRUSTUS THEATRE

BY CINDI BOITER

In this newly released collection of six plays written by Jon Tuttle and first performed at Columbia, SC's cutting edge Trustus Theatre over a 14-year period, we trace not just the evolution of a playwright, but that of a theatre and a culture, as well. The Trustus Collection celebrates what happens when a world class playwright is true to the community that supports their work and never forgets from whence they came—a classic town and gown story that South Carolina could use more of.

In his introduction, Thorne Compton writes that “In Jon Tuttle’s world life is a confusing pile of colorful chips from a kaleidoscope that has long been smashed,” and that “the fact that life is absurd and usually ends badly does not make it any less valuable ...” From *The Hammerstone*, which won the Trustus Playwright’s Festival in 1994 before it went on to be performed in 17 states, to 2018’s evocative *Boy About Ten*, Tuttle allows us to peek into the miracles and mundaneness of his characters, many of whose lack of adherence to normalcy is the most normal thing about them.

The Trustus Collection, published by Muddy Ford Press, brings together in one volume the six of Tuttle’s plays first performed at Trustus Theatre in Columbia, SC, going back to 1994’s *The Hammerstone* and *Drift* from 1998. Both were directed by the late Trustus co-founder Jim Thigpen. Also included in the collection are *Holy Ghost* (2005), *The Sweet Abyss* (2009), *The Palace of the Moorish Kings* (2012), and *Boy about Ten* which premiered last August at the Trustus Side Door Theatre, was directed by Pat-

rick Michael Kelly and starred Paul Kaufmann and Jennifer Hill. The collection also includes an introduction by the University of South Carolina’s Thorne Compton and is annotated with notes on the cast and crew of the premiere productions. (Full disclosure – Muddy Ford Press is owned and operated by Jasper editor Cindi Boiter’s husband, Bob Jolley, and Boiter is the associate publisher.)

According to David Lindsay-Abaire, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, “Jon Tuttle is a writer of great humor, compassion, and humanity. He writes about people in the midst of discovering each other and, in turn, themselves. What he finds in them are stories rife with bracing complexity and an aching sadness.”

Chad Henderson, Trustus Theatre artistic director says, “This volume is not only a complete collection of Jon Tuttle’s work that premiered at Trustus Theatre in Columbia, SC, but a testament to the rare connection of a playwright to a theatre and its community. While we often tout Tuttle as a great Southern playwright, he is, in fact, one of the finest contemporary writers in America.”

A native of Salt Lake City, Tuttle received his Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico in 1989 before joining the English Department at Francis Marion University in 1990. He became playwright-in-residence at Trustus Theatre in 1998 and from 1999 until 2009 served as the literary manager for Trustus, previewing scripts. A full professor, Tuttle has been the director of FMU’s honor’s program since 2013.



Coryphée

A Snapshot of Columbia City Ballet's
Jordan Hawkins

BY HALLIE HAYES

For Columbia City Ballet corps de ballet member Jordan Hawkins, dance is everything, and Columbia City Ballet is where she wants to be.

Since the age of three, Hawkins has trained under the direction of Mariclare Miranda and William Starrett at the Columbia Conservatory of Dance, the school which feeds its most excellent students into the professional company, the Columbia City Ballet. It was her dream to one day dance with the company and, in 2008, her dream came true when she joined its membership as a trainee. Proving herself to be dedicated, hard-working, intelligent, attentive, and well-respected by other company members, artistic and executive director William Starrett wanted to offer Hawkins rightful recognition of her importance to both him and the company at large. So, for the first time in the company's history, Starrett promoted Hawkins to the position of coryphée, a position of both honor and responsibility.

"Jordan was appointed coryphée because she has a long history with the company," explains Starrett. "She not only clearly understands the company style and artistic standards, but is an amazing example as the consummate model employee, understanding fully the professional demands in terms of personal presentation and as a community leader."

Coryphée essentially means "leader," and is a highly desired rank in many large ballet companies.

"When given my new title, William described it to me as the 'dance captain,'" the



28-year-old Hawkins explains. "I personally like to think of it as the 'keeper of details.'"

Hawkins well understands the responsibilities that come with the new title. "I feel because of my longevity with the company and having literally grown up in and around the company, I have a reference from both past and present," the coryphée says. "That allows me to offer a strong foundation of preservation."

"Hawkins is also a very multitalented dancer," Starrett says. "She is incredibly versatile with a strong background in tap, jazz, contemporary and ballet."

Hawkins not only dances for the company, but she also holds additional positions. "Along with dancing with the company," Hawkins proudly says, "I am also the Ballet Mistress of CBII and I rehearse all of the local Sumter children for all of the productions we tour there."

Even before being appointed as coryphée, Hawkins was a member of the Columbia City Ballet who was looked to for many different needs. She has always been a "go-to" person when it comes to artistic direction, making her the ideal candidate for her new position.

Starrett simply says, "We're delighted to have Jordan Hawkins as Coryphée!"



“I personally like to think of it as the ‘keeper of details.’”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN KYZER



MARTHA & MARY

POEM BY SCOTT CHALUPA

Yes, ginger and cardamom, a couple | other notes—wood
and spice—perhaps | some amber. This, Bethany knows,

is spikenard from her savior's | anti-fungal cream, sublimed
in her hair | when she clasped his feet between her hands

days before his death. Many Marys gather | in the studio,
audition to pantomime | what will become a masterwork.

Bethany, fervent believer in the method | school of modeling,
offers some spikenard | to Magdalene, whom Caravaggio

wrongly casts with Martha. Everyone | knows that
Magdalene is the wrong Mary. | Truth is often staged.

Yet one kernel of the real story is | preserved: Martha's
mid-preach mouth | when Magdalene realizes how many

martyrs have yet to die. Martha | and the wrong Mary
break character, | gaze off-frame to locate Bethany,

to plead *Caravaggio correct this narrative.* | Bethany?
Already withdrawn | from the studio stench with cattle

tallow spotlights. Withdrawn to smash | more bottles
of nard, to perfume | the sterilized feet of her dying

brothers laid end-to-end in the glass | monolith
of [name-your-] hospital | turned reluctant lazaret.

Scott Chalupa writes and teaches in Columbia, SC, where he earned an MFA at the University of South Carolina.

His work has appeared in *Nimrod*, *PANK*, *pacificREVIEW*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and other venues.

His debut collection of poems, *Quarantine*, from which this poem is taken, is forthcoming from PANK Books in spring 2019.



MY SON THE MAN

POEM BY BETSY THORNE

After Sharon Olds

I cannot imagine him no longer a child.
It seems no time since he delayed his entrance
into the world the way Houdini – bound and
submerged – would hold out beyond reason
before he'd snap the padlocks and break the surface.
It seems no time since I would bathe him,
zip him up in his sleeper, lay him in his crib.
Too soon he would escape. Then I'd hear
the swish of his diaper as he made his way
down the hall to my room. By what trick
does he appear to grow before my eyes? Now
he smiles at me the way Houdini smiled
then swirled his cape and vanished into thin air.

Betsy Thorne is a South Carolina artist and poet whose publications include Family Reunion, Squaw Valley Review, Yemassee, Kakalak, Fall Lines, and Columbia poetry projects: Poems on Busses, Rain Poetry, and House Box Poems

HIP TAGS: A COLUMBIA SYMPHONY

BY CHRISTINA XAN



Discovered by an intern at the University of South Carolina Libraries' Moving Image Research Collections (MIRC), *Hip Tags* is an intriguing orphan film mystery with 1970s Columbia, S.C. as its main character. Without any provenance and defying description, this hypnotic film was passed from MIRC to Historic Columbia where staff and volunteers began to sift through it in search of clues.

The reel contains unique footage of what appears to be early 1970s Columbia, featuring the Robert Mills House, the Hampton-Preston Mansion, Main Street, the Vista, Ward One and other interesting sites. Simply marked *Hip Tags*, the film was found among other poorly marked film cans with no date, no copyright, and no producer or editor. The first frames of the film show a sign

that says, *Hip Tags*, but otherwise, it is a 40-minute, non-narrative glimpse into early Columbia with very few clues or logic.

With help from volunteer Paul Armstrong, Historic Columbia staff began piecing some of the story together. The initial assessment is the film is a student project or experimental film using several disparate films as source material.

Armstrong was able to identify several frames that showed famed Greek city planner Constantinos Doxiadis. This led to the surprising revelation that Columbia had hired Doxiadis in the late 1960s to develop a new city plan. Doxiadis, famous for international planning projects in Europe and the Middle East, visited Columbia several times and appears to have developed a promotional film to help explain his vision for downtown Columbia.



While Historic Columbia continues to identify more specifics about Hip Tags and its relation to the city planning project, we began thinking about how best to share this interesting slice of Columbia history, and importantly, how to elicit input from the community.

“We know we can glean a wealth of historical information from this film to use in our web-based tours of Columbia and elsewhere,” says Brian Harmon, Historic Columbia marketing coordinator, “but we wanted to share some of the feeling of the whole Hip Tags, too.”

What emerged from these initial conversations is a short documentary that follows a long tradition of city symphony films by combining these historic Columbia cityscapes with a soundtrack to give viewers a poetic look at the capital city nearly 50 years ago.

Harmon began editing Hip Tags to pick the most interesting views of Columbia. He then worked with Dan Cook (A Spot on the Hill), who is a former Free Times editor, bassist, composer, and now a content strategist at USC, to create an original score for the film.

When Harmon first approached Cook, the musician wasn’t sure his music would be a good fit for a film set in the 70s but quickly changed his perspective: “Soon, I realized that there was no need to be so literal in thinking about what music could accompany this footage—and, in fact, the abstract nature of the footage could lend itself to meditative, introspective music.”

Cook was inspired by the minimal sounds already presented in the film in order to create the

score. “There’s a recurring beeping sound that sounds like a truck backing up, and I took the rhythm and the pitch of that beep—a B— as my starting point,” Cook says. “I kept the soundtrack very minimal, writing a handful of electric bass parts, layering those and adding some violins along with edited sound elements from the original footage and some spoken word.”

The 18-minute film premiered at the Indie Grits Festival on Saturday, March 30 as part of the Fist and Spoon Fair at the Columbia Music of Art. This standing room only screening during the popular local festival was only the beginning for the project.

Harmon is already preparing larger events surrounding the film itself for later in the year. “Indie Grits is the tip of the iceberg; a teaser that will set the stage for a larger exploration of this interesting film sometime later in the year,” Harmon says.

Excited now? You can get involved by following the project on Instagram @hiptags_columbiasc to see stills from the film and even help work through some of the mystique.



The Jasper Project's Most Ambitious Endeavor Yet

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PRESENTS



*More than 50 SC Women Artists are Setting a Table for 12 SC Women Who
Devoted Their Lives to Making Places at the Table for Us All*

The Women at the Table

*Mary McCleod Bethune - Alice Childress - Septima Clark - Mathilda Evans - Althea Gibson
Angelina and Sarah Grimke - Eartha Kitt - Sarah Leverette - Julia Peterkin - Eliza Lucas
Pinckney - Modjeska Monteith Simkins - Elizabeth Evelyn Wright*

The Artists

*Bohumila Augustinova - Eileen Blyth - Tonya Gregg - Mana Hewitt - B. A. Hohman
Heidi Darr-Hope - Lori Isom - Flavia Lovatelli - Laurie Brownell McIntosh
Michaela Pilar Brown - Renee Roullier - Olga Yukhno - Jennifer Bartell
Carla Damron - Joyce Rose Harris - Kristine Hartvigsen - Meeghan Kane
Monifa Lemons - Eva Moore - Marjory Wentworth - Qiana Whitted - Candace Wiley
Christina Xan - Claudia Smith Brinson - Kirkland Smith - Jordan Morris
Betsy Newman - Mahkia Greene - Vicky Saye Henderson - Lee Ann Kornegay
Brenda Oliver - Kathryn Van Aernum - Cindi Boiter*

The Venues

*Trustus Theatre - September 6, 2019
Harbison Theatre - September 8, 2019*

Visit JasperProject.Org for more information

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Central Carolina Community Foundation.*