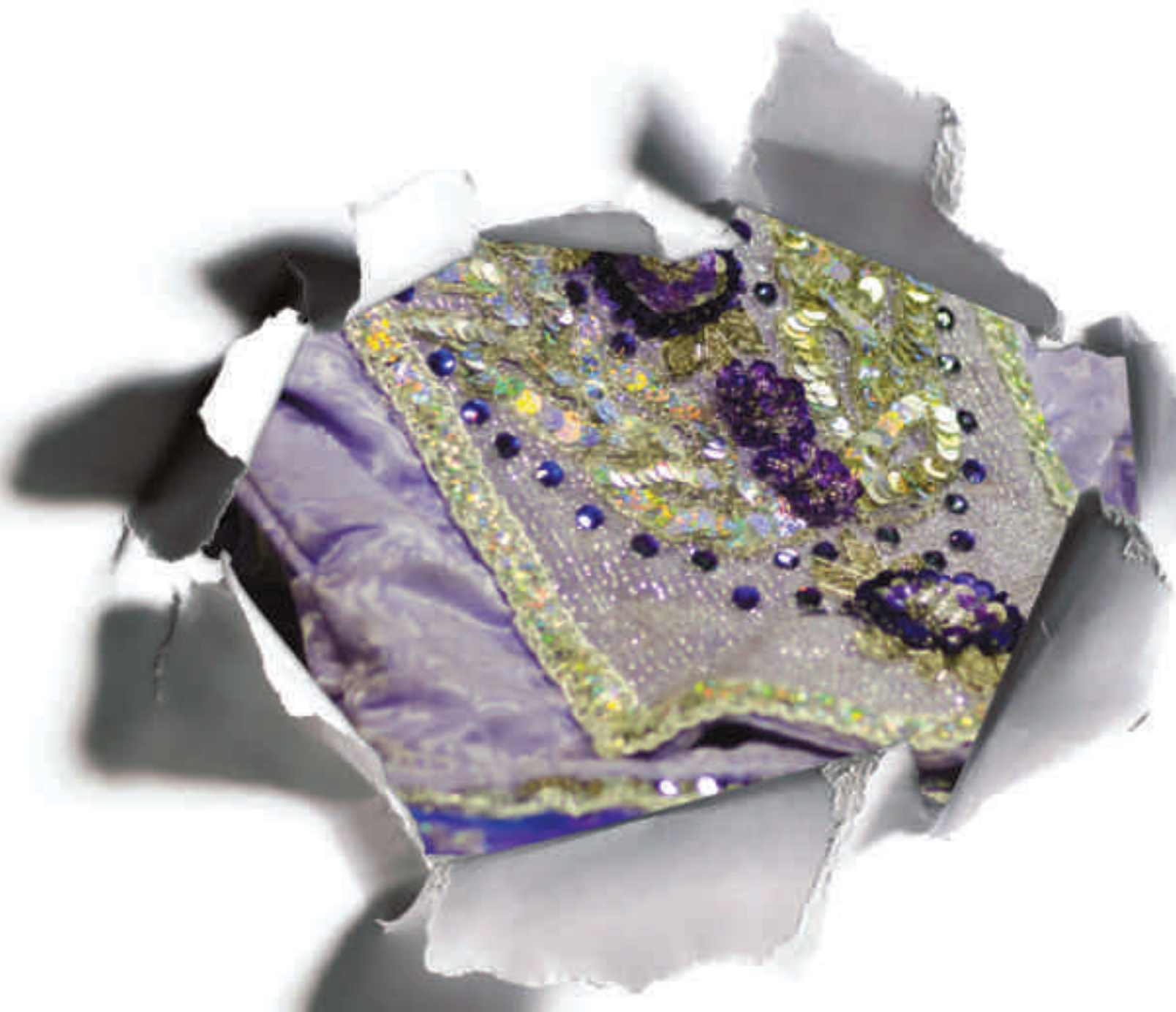


# jasper

THE WORD ON COLUMBIA ARTS

JUL // AUG 2012

VOL. 001 NO. 006





# ERGONOMICS, VICTORIAN STYLE.

The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design presents the history, innovation and construction of American chair design from the 1800s to the present, curated from a private collection.

Columbia Museum of Art | [columbiamuseum.org](http://columbiamuseum.org) | 803.799.2810  
1515 Main Street in the heart of downtown Columbia, SC

the ART of SEATING

200 YEARS  
OF AMERICAN DESIGN

APRIL 28 -  
AUGUST 26



Designed by Thomas E. Warren | Manufactured by the American Chair Company | *Centripetal Spring Arm Chair*, c. 1850 | Photo credit: Michael Koryta. *The Art of Seating* is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville in collaboration with the Jacobsen Collection of American Art and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.

INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS & ARTISTS

PRESENTED BY:



EDUCATION SPONSOR:





005

**A MESSAGE FROM JASPER**

006

**JASPER FANCIES**

014

**JASPER PREVIEWS**

Curtain Up! with August Krickel.

014

**JASPER TAKES NOTICE**

Young poet Candace Wiley is a promising wordsmith.

016

**JASPER GAZES**

Former ballet dancer Alexis Doktor is also an artist of costumes.

020

**JASPER DANCES**

- John Whitehead is a much beloved fixture in the Columbia dance community – find out why.

- Lee Lumpkin and Coralee Harris stay on their toes for their ballet companies.

026

**JASPER WATCHES**

Filmmaker Wade Sellers still gets his friends together when it's time to make a film.

030

**CENTERFOLD**

Clark Ellefson works and lives in a world of his own design.

036

**SPECIAL**August Krickel spotlights Danny Harrington, Albert Little, and Randy Strange. For more go to [www.Jaspercolumbia.com](http://www.Jaspercolumbia.com).

038

**JASPER WATCHES**

Lighting designer Aaron Pelzek is a master of his art.

040

**JASPER GAZES**

Matthew Kramer is the 2011 Change for Change winning artist and a brilliant sculptor.

043

**JASPER LISTENS**

- Presenter and venue owner Tom Law made his own wish come true.
- For South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra concert master Mary Lee Taylor-Kinosian, music is part of her heritage.
- Alex Smith takes us behind-the-sounds with music director, Tom Beard.

052

**JASPER READS**

- Poet Susan Laughter Meyers reviews fellow poet, Julia Koets' *Hold Like Owls*.
- Brandi Ballard reviews Cassie Premo Steele's new book, *The Pomegranate Papers*.
- *Jasper* editor Cindi Boiter reviews Michel Stone's new novel, *The Iguana Tree*.

060

**DAY JOBS**

Rhodes Bailey is an attorney by day and a musician by dark.

061

**GUEST EDITORIAL**

Former SC Arts Commission stalwart, Kate Fox writes about her new job running the Midlands Technical College Harbison Theatre.

063

**JASPER LIKES MIKE**

jasper

CENTERFOLD // Clark Ellefson

016 ON THE COVER  
Alexis Doktor014 JASPER TAKES NOTICE  
Zero in on this month's blossoming young artist**JASPER IS**

Cynthia Boiter // editor  
 W. Heyward Sims // design editor  
 Kristine Hartvigsen // associate editor  
 Michael Miller // associate editor  
 August Krickel // theatre editor  
 Ed Madden // literary editor  
 Kyle Petersen // music editor  
 Forrest Clonts // photography editor  
 Lenza Jolley // technology maven  
 Bonnie Boiter-Jolley // staff writer  
 Alex Smith // staff writer  
 Susan Levi Wallach // staff writer  
 Thomas Hammond // staff photographer  
 Jonathan Sharpe // staff photographer  
 Christopher Rosa // intern  
 Austin Blaze // intern  
 Annie Boiter-Jolley // operations manager

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Brandi Ballard  
 Susan Laughter Meyers  
 Cassie Premo Steele  
 Julia Koets  
 C. Barker  
 Eric Kocher  
 Jennifer Bartell  
 Alexis Doktor  
 Kate Fox  
 Annie Boiter-Jolley  
 Candace Wiley

JASPER  
 ON THE WEB

[jaspercolumbia.com](http://jaspercolumbia.com)  
[facebook.com/jaspercolumbia](https://facebook.com/jaspercolumbia)  
[twitter.com/jasperadvises](https://twitter.com/jasperadvises)  
[jaspercolumbia.net/blog](http://jaspercolumbia.net/blog)

# A MESSAGE FROM JASPER

## Dear Friends,

It's no secret that devoting one's life's work to the arts is more a labor of love than an intelligent financial investment. But for every dollar not banked there are hundreds more moments of intense personal satisfaction, often arriving on the wings of applause or favorable reviews. It's unfortunate that, when delivering these accolades, most of us in the audience are assessing the final product being seen – the dance, the play, or the concert. Rarely do we consider the great number of individuals whose work is integral to the end result, but who seldom get to take a bow – lighting, set, sound, and costume designers, for example; choreographers, composers, and carpenters, not to mention volunteers, board members, and the folks who carefully fold the programs or sweep up backstage.

This issue of *Jasper* tries to right that wrong.

In the following pages you'll read about some of the pillars who hold up the stars that shine on the Columbia arts scene. Many of these essential individuals – like lighting designer Aaron Pelzek, music director Tom Beard, and filmmaker Wade Sellers – are both artists and technicians. Others, like Clark Ellefson, Matthew Kramer, Jillian Owens, and Alexis Doktor create their magic through design. And many more, like Tom Law, John Whitehead, Lee Lumpkin, Coralee Harris, and the guys at the Greater Columbia Society for the Preservation of Soul, just don't seem to be able to help themselves – they do what they do because they love doing it.

In this month of patriotic abandon, Jasper salutes the army of artists whose contributions add texture, critical thought, beauty, and moments of introspection and, sometimes, sheer joy to our lives here in Columbia. In our hearts we're giving you all a spirited standing ovation and a rousing round of applause!

And as we celebrate these important individuals in our sixth issue, completing our first year of publishing the magazine we said we would, when we said we would, I'd like to take a few lines to offer my immense appreciation to all the talented writers, photographers, salespeople, and support staff who have labored lovingly behind the scenes this year to bring you *Jasper – The World on Columbia Arts*. From Day One, this magazine couldn't have happened without You.

Heyward Sims  
Jonathan Sharpe  
Thomas Hammond  
Jeffrey Day  
Mark Green  
August Krickel  
Kaitlin Ohlinger  
Worthy Evans  
Lenza Jolley  
Teresa Haskew  
Bonnie Boiter-Jolley  
Ivan Young  
Kristine Hartvigsen  
Karina Salehi  
Kyle Petersen  
Ron Aiken  
Michael Miller  
Forrest Clonts  
Ed Madden  
Terri McCord  
Margey Bolen  
Lindsay Green McManus  
Kirkland Smith  
Bob Jolley  
Michaela Pilar Brown  
Lynn Braham  
Randy Spencer  
Alex Smith  
Ron Rash  
Fred Dings  
Tonya Russ Price  
Candace Wiley  
Evelyn Morales  
Ray McManus  
Preach Jacobs  
Belinda Gergel  
Kristin Freestate

Ken May  
Celeste Doaks  
Howard L. Craft  
Annie Boiter-Jolley  
Nikky Finney  
Mayor Steve Benjamin  
Becka Bralts  
Bert Easter  
Susan Levi Wallach  
Alisha Hime  
Max Kitchell  
Jennifer Bartell  
Bruce Nellsmith  
Alexis Stratton  
Laurel Blossom  
Virginia Scotchie  
John Temple Ligon  
William Garland  
Jamie Ridenhour  
Amy Reeves  
Julia Koets  
Carol Peters  
Charlene Spearen  
Zach Mueller  
Cassie Premo Steele  
Lisa Hammond  
Chris Robinson  
Kate Fox  
Austin Blaze  
Christopher Rosa  
Rob Derrick  
Lauren Beard  
Susan Laughter Meyers  
Brandi Ballard  
C. Barker  
Eric Kocher

And from the entire Jasper family, thank you to our advertisers, advisers, supporters, families, and especially, our readers and our artists. We're already at work on next year and we look forward to bringing it to you.

Take Care,



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

**Jasper Magazine** – [www.jaspercolumbia.com](http://www.jaspercolumbia.com) – is dedicated to the promotion and support of Columbia, SC artists and arts lovers. Jasper Magazine is copyrighted and may not be reproduced in any manner without the publisher's written consent. Jasper Magazine is a division of Muddy Ford Press, 1009 Muddy Ford Road, Chapin, SC 29036.

## Great Design a lá the Columbia Design League

Considering that its title sounds more like an alliance of chic superheroes than a museum program, it's only fitting that the Columbia Design League has embarked on such a valiant mission for the past fifteen years. Founded by Adrienne Montare and Tom Savory as an incubator project of the Cultural Council in 1997 and incorporated into the Columbia Museum of Art in 2000, this philanthropic organization continues to champion the complex and omnipresent influence of design.

The CDL's multifaceted involvement in the design community serves as an enticing demonstration of design's pervasive cultural relevance. Concerned with all aspects of form (everything from the pillar design fields of fashion and architecture to the burgeoning videogame industry), this organization interacts with a broad network of aesthetically-oriented individuals and institutions to raise both funding for design and awareness of its value. By hosting over 40 speakers from around the country and collaborating with prestigious professionals including Yale's Dean of Architecture, a MoMA curator, and MTV's top creative, the CDL has encouraged interdisciplinary dialogue between numerous design fields.

While the CDL promotes design on a national level, it dedicates much of its effort to exposing Columbia's already vibrant design community. Through "Meet the Designer" studio visits and field trips to regional sites such as Pearl Fryar's topiary garden and Jenks Farmer's Moore Farms, members are provided the opportunity to experience the work of South Carolina's own inspirational designers.

In order to ensure that our region's design community continues to thrive, the CDL has founded multiple public design competitions, the most notable being Runaway Runway. In this annual fundraising event, participants engage in a unique design competition with one simple rule: they must fashion post-consumer materials (e.g. bicycle sprockets, potato chip bags, vinyl records, basketballs, etc.) into recycled runway vogue. This yearly spectacle encourages public participation in the design process, emphasizing the value of creativity and craftsmanship while promoting green thinking.

Similarly demonstrative of the CDL's comprehensive approach to design was 2010's Copyright Smackdown, which explored the ethical, legal, and artistic ramifications of copyright laws. In this event, the CDL teamed up



with the Nickelodeon Theater, SC Film Commission, and multiple USC programs to explore the controversial intersection between intellectual property and creative license. DJs, film pundits, and copyright lawyers engaged in a spirited panel discussion, grappling with the ins and outs of this artistic and legal grey area.

In addition to contemporary projects like Runaway Runway and Copyright Smackdown, the organization also researches and pays homage to designs of the past that have given rise to those of the present. Recently, the CDL assembled an exhibit titled "The Art of Seating," which chronicled 200 years of American chair design (and can be viewed at the Columbia Museum of Art until July 29).

In a state whose vibrant arts culture is chronically underappreciated and financially threatened by elected officials, the CDL performs a pivotal function in not merely the preservation, but the growth of Columbia's design-minded community. It simultaneously plays the roles of scholar, activist, and philanthropist. But most importantly, it helps shatter the false dichotomy of form versus function, reminding us that form serves its own autonomous and invaluable social function.

As CDL President Anna Redwine so aptly states, "good design affects every facet of our lives." Visit [columbiadesignleague.org](http://columbiadesignleague.org), become a member, and discover just how influential good design can be.  
*// Austin Blaze*

## Neil Scott and Uncommon Tunes

The music Neil Scott has made over the last 20 years defies categorization. This is not hyperbole. Scott's music is free, brash, sometimes confrontational, often very loud, and comes from a place of pure expression and little technical training, neither in music nor with his instrument of choice.

Besides a six-month stint in the school band, it wasn't until after high school that Scott began playing music. He started coming to Columbia to visit a friend, Mike Cook, who worked at Papa Jazz Record Store in the Five Points area of Columbia, around 1991.

"Every time it seemed like I was at some band's practice space ... there was always a jam session. One night we were at this guy's house. He sat down at his drums, looked at me and he said, 'Who are you?' I said, 'I'm friends with Mike.' He said, 'Well ... you need to do something, 'cause you're making me *really* nervous.' I saw this saxophone and picked it up ... I'd never held a saxophone before ... I figured out how to make, like, two sounds on it, and I played those two sounds all night.

"I visited a few more times, and I was like, 'Man! Everybody's always playing this crazy music. I love this town!'" Cook called him in December of 1993 and told him that if he moved to Columbia he could get him a place to live and a job at Papa Jazz. The deal was sealed. "I lived in a mill house in Olympia where I could play as loud as I wanted ... we'd get together there, or go down to Five Points and play out in the street."

Scott continued to play music with his friends and co-workers for several years, taping their performances. He also had a dual tape recorder attached to his answering machine at home. "The greetings were audio clips from movies," he says. Callers' reactions to being greeted by anyone from Rudy Ray Moore to Bela Lugosi were sometimes quite lengthy and often surprisingly playful. "To a phone, to an answering machine, [even the most uptight] people let it go, especially when they're greeted with, like, Bela Lugosi going, 'Eehhh ... Velcome!'"

These tapes comprise a 2005 CD which Scott released called "GONGFUJAZZ: Lo-fi Field Recordings & Answering Machine Messages, 1990-2001." The collection is a fine sampler of Scott's work as a musician and a document of a magical time in Columbia when there might be half a dozen people making music on the corner on a weekend night simply for the love of playing. But it was also a time that was coming to an end. "People grew up and grew out. I started working a lot." The pull to play was still there for Scott, but there was something missing. "I wanted to play ... but I was afraid to go down to Five Points and play by myself."

Scott found himself at a crossroads. "I'd kept my sax in the trunk of my car ... I was feeling all alone in the world, so I went down to Five Points and I started to play. I just wanted to feel alive and make some sound ... this dude rolls down his window and yells, 'MAN, YOU SUCK! YOU NEED LESSONS!' It was like someone had just sucker punched me. I thought, 'That's it. I'm gonna play a few more minutes and pack it up.' I start playing again, and this woman starts bee lining toward me. I'm thinking, 'Great. Somebody else is going to tell me to stop playing, or I suck, or both.' She puts a twenty dollar bill

in my sax case and says, 'Thank you. I'm from New York. I heard your music, and it reminds me of being home. You've made my day.'"

Returning to the street, he found a spot in the Vista at the corner of Park and Gervais. Before playing, he approached the owner of a restaurant across the street, to make sure they would tell him if their patrons complained. The owner told him that, to the contrary, many of his patrons asked to sit outside so they could better hear him. Scott's commitment to the music continues to deepen and grow. He's learning to read music. Lately he's been putting down the sax and playing the bass clarinet. He and drummer/ethnomusicologist Matt Falter have played recently at The Art Bar and Conundrum, after practicing together for some time. "For the past year I've been getting together with Matt on Tuesdays. We don't talk about what we're going to play, we just play. We have a really good, unspoken rapport."

While his and Falter's plans include playing venues in Columbia and regionally, plus adding bassist Joey Byron to the mix later this year, Scott insists he wants to stay true to the simplicity and purity he started with. "I'm still doing the same thing," he says, "I've just gotten better at being more chaotic." // A.S.

## Jillian Owens – The Refashionista

Who are you wearing tonight? There could be as many as 365 women around the Midlands, all sporting a unique Jillian Owens original. Better known as the Refashionista, Owens has spent the last year taking orphaned dresses, skirts, blouses, smocks, muumuus, and others exiles from the Island of Misfit Clothes, and "refashioning" them into chic casual and party attire. After which, she blogs about her new creations at her sassy and informative website, Refashionista.net. "In 365 days, I'll change the way you think about fashion," her banner both proclaims and warns, but along the way Owens has become something of a local celebrity, and an international sensation, followed daily by countless sewing-conscious web-surfers and alterations-enthusiasts from around the globe.

"I didn't start sewing until a couple of years ago," Owens admits. "I basically got a couple of books and just taught myself. Lots of trial and error. I originally planned to start making all of my own clothes from scratch, but quickly discovered that the cost of buying fabric to make something was more expensive than buying something that was already made ... which makes no sense." Instead, she turned to that venerable source that has filled many a hipster's closet: the numerous thrift stores and



Jillian Owens / Photo Courtesy Jillian Owens

consignment shops in the area, discovering bright colors and brilliant patterns hidden deep within the fifty bargain bins. These castaway duds then become stylish “new” creations, often with only a few snips and a lot of creativity.

Wanting to share her new hobby with the world, Owens began the Refashionista blog. Each entry opens with a “before” image, a photo of Owens modeling what she started with. Often the petite seamstress is swallowed by some huge granny dress or housecoat, or overwhelmed by a garish 70’s print, her hapless expression speaking volumes. A series of photographs follow, documenting step-by-step how something stylish and altogether new is created from the original. A nip here, a tuck there ... sometimes no more than a raised hemline, the removal of lapels or shoulder pads, and a simple dye job are all that is necessary to make the recycling mission a success. Owens, now beaming with pride and joy, models the refashioned item, often following with details and pictures of where, when, and with whom she wore her new creation.

“I had my blog for a year and would post intermittently, but I really wanted to give myself a new challenge,” she recalls. The challenge? To refashion one item each day for the next year, wear them, then donate them to Revente’s Last Call, a resale shop on Millwood where all profits benefit The Women’s Shelter. Store owner Debbie McDaniel provides the abandoned apparel and Owens does the rest.

**jam room**  
**MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
**10.13.2012** Main Street  
 Columbia, SC

**Have you ever recorded at the Jam Room?  
 Want to be a part of the festival?**

We're creating a documentary and historical time line as part of this great event! Help us out by submitting photos, videos and/or recordings of your time at the Jam Room. We want to feature you!

**Get in touch!** | **Or just stop by!**  
 803.787.6908 | 201 S. Prospect St.  
 jamroomstudio@gmail.com | Columbia, SC 29205

jamroommusicfestival.com  
 facebook.com/jamroommusicfestival

Owens’ creative and artistic side dates back to her childhood in rural Kentucky. She moved with her family to South Carolina when her father took a job with Lockheed Martin in Greenville, and headed to USC in the fall as a theatre major. USC’s theatre program is diverse, and so Owens worked in a number of areas, eventually concentrating on stage management. After graduation, she remembers “panicking, crying, and drinking a lot. I was worried that college had been a complete waste of time.” She worked as a barista for a year, “while having a most impressive quarter-life crisis,” she notes, and then “thankfully landed a job with the South Carolina Arts Commission,” convincing them that her background in stage management included many transferable skills.

Now that the 365 days are complete, Owens plans to continue her blog, although not in the same one-design-per-day format. “I’ve been really inspired by everything that has happened this year ... I’m about to start doing a bit of costuming for Trustus,” and she hopes to explore more forms of writing, including theatre reviews for *Onstage Columbia* and *What Jasper Said*. In the meantime, look for Owens at assorted cultural events around town – she will almost certainly be the one wearing something you have never seen before – or at least not in its current state.

// A.K.





From the Vogel Collection

## The Vogels

The Columbia Museum of Art now has over 700 pieces of legendary contemporary works within its halls, courtesy of iconic art collectors Herbert and Dorothy Vogel. The new additions started when the couple chose the CMA to receive fifty pieces of their art in conjunction with their *Fifty Works for Fifty States* project in 2008. "The permanent collection of the Columbia Museum of Art is greatly enhanced by the *Fifty* project art from the Vogels. It is a treasure trove of artistic exploration," Will South, Chief Curator for the CMA, says.

Legendary collectors of notably conceptual and minimalist art, Herbert and Dorothy met in New York in 1960. As their romance grew, so did their knowledge of the art world – the two frequently attended museums on dates and Herb himself was quite the connoisseur. "The Vogels are quiet and unassuming, but their commitment to art has been passionate. The art world could use many more collectors like them," South said.

Over the course of decades, the Vogels acquired an expansive collection of art, with their catalogue eventually moving to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Once their collection surpassed 4,000 pieces, it became too much for the NGA to hold. Thus, the *Fifty* project began. The Vogels chose to share their works nationwide with one art museum being chosen per state and that museum received fifty pieces from the Vogel's collection. The Columbia Museum of Art represents South Carolina. "We are thrilled the CMA is receiving many works from our collection, as we so much wished to keep large parts of it together. We know the art has found a good home, will be appreciated, and enrich the lives of others, as it did for Herb and me" Dorothy Vogel says.

After the *Fifty* project and the NGA exhibit, there was still a grandiose amount of Vogel art that needed donating. Karen Brosius, Executive Director for the CMA, visited the Vogels and expressed interest in further donations from the collection should there be additional pieces. The Vogels, responsive to Brosius's enthusiasm, decided to donate an additional 594 pieces to the CMA in



From the Vogel Collection

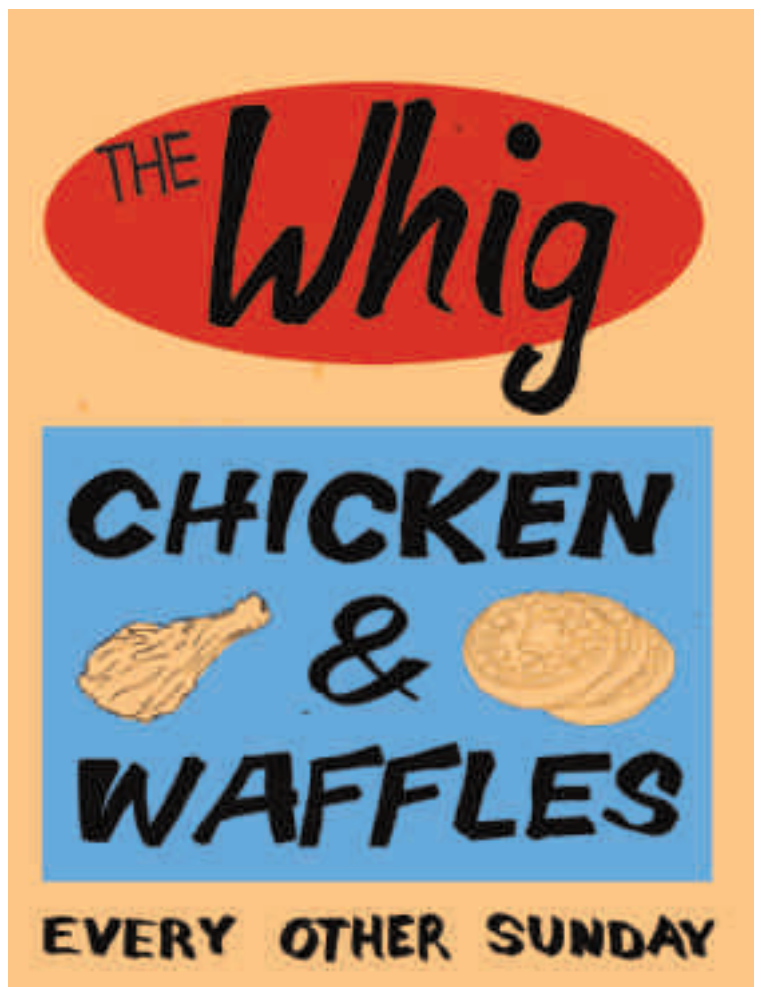
2010. "I was absolutely stunned when I found out we'd be receiving the additional works from the Vogel collection. I felt so honored that the CMA was chosen for the *Fifty* project and this just made me even more thrilled," Brosius says.

Brosius has been an admirer of the Vogels and their contributions to the art community for many years. She is excited about the newest additions to the CMA, which include a great deal of work from Daryl Trivieri and Lucio Pozzi, feeling that they will modernize the collection at the CMA. "We are excited about these pieces because they enrich our modern and contemporary collection. These works come from the 60s, 70s, and present day, which is great because we get to showcase new artists," Brosius says.

For Brosius, receiving such a splendid array of art is a dream come true. Her relationship with the Vogels changed from one of admiration to friendship. "I had met the Vogels a couple of times before I approached them about the collection and they are so sincere and down to Earth. I was not nervous asking them about the collection since we had developed a lovely friendship by that time," Brosius says.

The Columbia Museum of Art is now enriched with a cornucopia of eclectic contemporary works from two of the most prominent collectors in art history. According to Brosius, "The Vogel's gift to the CMA has been transformative for our reputation and our museum as a whole."

// Christopher Rosa



# Greater Columbia Society for the Preservation of Soul

DJs. The acronym usually draws up images of guys like Skrillex and Deadmaus5 manipulating (some might say destroying) previously recorded music, or you think of those old white dudes who talk too much on the radio when, you know, you'd like to hear some music. Greater Columbia Society for the Preservation of Soul, however, is a different beast entirely.

Founded by local vinyl record hounds Matt Bradley, Tommy Bishop, Adam Cox, and Byron Chitty in 2006, the GCSPS (as they are often known) began as a bi-weekly Sunday meeting in the cozy basement confines of The Whig of likeminded music fans who wanted to share their awesome, frequently obscure, and often bizarre additions and favorites in their record collections. It was meant to be not only about throwing down great DJ sets, but sharing a love for the warm sounds of vinyl, the delirious hunt for the next great obscure recording, and the beauty of forgotten gems tucked away in a thrift store rather than combing the Internet for mp3s. What it has evolved into is part-music code, part-DJs for hire, and part-quasi religion. They do meet on Sundays, after all.

The group also loves the additional layers of mystique around what is essentially a group of dudes in love with their (admittedly great) record collections. Jokes about being a "patriotic service organization" and creating a New World Order abound, and the collective comes with a suitably cryptic insignia that has been applied to banners, flags, and stickers.



Above: Adam Cox Top Left : Byron Chitty Photos by Thomas Hammond

Membership in the GCSPS is a bit subjective – anyone is invited to come down to their meetings and spin what they have, but the group takes (somewhat) seriously its curated idea of what "soul" is, and what it's trying to preserve. Bradley calls their approach "no rules-consensus fascism." While they obviously include a fair amount of Stax and Motown rarities, the group expands the definition to 60s garage rock, funk, old-school country, crazy Tropicalia recordings, French Pop, and whatever else fits. Or doesn't.

The group's mission statement explains it thusly: "Soul is not, shall not, and must not be confined to a genre, stereotype or characteristic. All things possess Soul intrinsically. Soul cannot be quantified or hoarded (like pieces of gold to be cashed in for some trinket or favor). However, it can be squandered and even lost." Hence the preservation part.

The ineffability of the group's musical taste and connoisseur's approach to old school recordings have put them in high demand for the hipper happenings in the capital city. Their meetings have also drawn likeminded collectors and DJs from the tri-state area to Columbia, and at least one offshoot chapter already exists ("The Greater Carolina Chapter of GCSPS"). // K. P.

## Curtain *UP*

with August Krickel



# T

hink live theatre takes the summer off, and heads for the mountains, the lake, or the beach? Guess again, as each of Columbia's major theatres presents one or more full-scale summer productions. *Curtain Up!*

There are still two more weekends to catch the Tony Award-winning *Avenue Q*, running through July 21st at **Trustus Theatre**. The Broadway smash from author Jeff Whitty, composer Robert Lopez, and lyricist Jeff Marx ran for over six years, and still thrives off-Broadway today. *Avenue Q* is a bouncy, witty, naughty, coming-of-age story, depicting the rites of passage of Gen X and the Millennials via music, satire, and puppets. Yes, puppets! A collaboration between Trustus and the Columbia Marionette Theatre, the show features local favorites like Kevin Bush (seen in shows like *John and Jen* and *The Producers* at Workshop), Katie Leitner (the lyrical ingénue in Workshop's *Anything Goes* last fall), Elisabeth Smith Baker (a comic stand-out in the recent *Behanding in Spokane* at Trustus), and Brien Hollingsworth, who bring to life and give voice to the diminutive felt leads, aided and abetted by director Chad Henderson and musical director Randy Moore. A few weeks later, Trustus continues its proud tradition of premiering at least one new, original drama each season, when *The Palace of the Moorish Kings*, by Jon Tuttle, opens on August 10th, running through the 18th. Based on the short story by Evan S. Connell (the chronicler of mid-life, middle-class malaise in novels like *Mr. Bridge* and *Mrs. Bridge*) and directed by Dewey Scott-Wiley, *Kings* focuses on men of a certain age, coming to terms with

the consequences of life choices made and paths not taken. For information on both shows, contact the box office at 803-254-9732, or visit <http://trustus.org/>.

A collective "OMG! OMG! OMG!" will be exclaimed by tweens of all ages when *Disney's Camp Rock: The Musical* opens July 13th at **Workshop Theatre**, running through the 28th. Based on the wildly popular Disney Channel movie from 2008 (and a sequel) that starred the Jonas Brothers and Demi Lovato, *Camp Rock* is a Cinderella story by way of *High School Musical*, as we follow the misadventures of Mitchie, an aspiring pop singer who attends a posh summer music camp. Hijinks and summer lovin' are likely to ensue, and you know there will be a Sharpay-esque diva to spice up the proceedings. Katie Foshee, Hunter Bolton, Jason Gray, and Avery Herndon take on the leads, with support from Kathryn Reddic and George Dinsmore. E. G. Heard directs, with choreography by Katie Hilliger and musical direction by Daniel Gainey; call the box office at 803-799-4876, or just go to <http://www.workshoptheatre.com/> for details.

It's probably the world's first riches-to-rags-to-riches-again story. *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* also opens at **Town Theatre** on July 13th, and runs through the 29th. If you played hooky from Sunday school, Joseph was the Biblical shepherd boy whose coat of many colors aroused the ire of his many brothers, who sell him into slavery in Egypt. Creators Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice play with musical styles and theatrical conventions to re-imagine this inspirational tale of redemption via faith as a family-friendly musical. Expect everything from calypso to ragtime jazz, disco to country/western, and even a little rock-and-roll from the King... err, make that the Pharaoh. Scott Vaughan (a serenely surreal Willie Wonka at Workshop two summers ago) plays Joseph, Frank Thompson is Pharaoh, Charlie Goodrich and Patrick Dodds (Sonny and Doody in Town's recent *Grease*) are among the many brothers, and musical director Lou Warth alternates as the Narrator with Jenny Morse. Shannon Willis Scruggs directs and choreographs the cast of more than 60 local performers; ticket information can be found by calling 803-799-2510, or go to <http://www.towntheatre.com>.

**The Chapin Theatre Company** (aka Chapin Community Theatre) is now staging their shows in the Harbison Theatre at Midlands Technical College. Up next from director Debra Leopard is the timeless

children's classic *Little Princess*, adapted from the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and still recalled fondly for the Shirley Temple film version. Running July 19th through July 29th, the play recounts the story of an irrepressible little girl (Molly Corbett) seemingly all alone in a dreary boarding school, who discovers how every little girl is a little princess inside. Call 803-240-8544 for information, or go to <http://www.chapintheatre.org/>.

**Columbia Children's Theatre** continues its popular series of "YouTheatre" productions with *Willie Wonka, Jr.*, opening August 3rd, and running through August 12th. YouTheatre shows are scaled-down versions of name-brand Broadway musicals, adapted for performance by a cast of youngsters, but with the basic plot and famous songs intact. CCT alumnus Sam LaFrage, now a company member of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, directs, with choreography by Leighton Mount, and musical direction by Dianne Palmer-Quay. And yes, we feel confident that Charlie will find a golden ticket, Violet will turn violet, and Veruca Salt will demand an Oompa-Loompa NOW! Ticket information can be found at 803-691-4548, or online at <http://columbiachildrenstheatre.com>.

Specializing in antiquarian prints, custom mirrors, and the fiber arts of Susan Lenz



susanlenz.com **Mouse House** inc.

**Frames & Antiquarian Prints**

2123 Park Street • Columbia, SC • 803 254 0842

**PARADISE ICE**

Hand Scooped  
Italian ice



Organic Frozen  
Custard

1627 Main Street Columbia, SC 29201 803.251.3311  
[www.paradiseice.webs.com](http://www.paradiseice.webs.com)

## Candace Wiley

By Ed Madden

Candace Wiley is just back from Pencil Shout, a small workshop in Kentucky with National Book Award poet Nikky Finney, and later this summer she leaves for Colombia, South America, as the recipient of a Fulbright creative writing fellowship. *Jasper* first noticed Wiley at last fall's Bookin' It on Main, a celebration of black writers at the Columbia Museum of Art. Wiley read poems included in *Home Is Where*, an anthology of African-American poets from the Carolinas (reviewed in *Jasper 003*). One of the last writers to take the stage that day, and one of the youngest, she had a confidence and poise that belied her age, and when she read her poem "White Girl," a stunningly smart performance piece about skin color hierarchies among African Americans, *Jasper* knew: Candace Wiley is someone to watch.

Born and raised in York, South Carolina, Wiley graduated from Bowie State University in Maryland, a historically black university, and then completed an MA in American literature at Clemson. This summer, she graduates from USC's MFA program in creative writing, her thesis a historical novel about African-American experience in the South. While at USC, she also used



Photo by Jonathan Sharpe

extensive historical research on the lives of African Americans to create a series of dialogues and poetry for a prototype of Ghosts of South Carolina College, an I-phone app that will document the lives of the enslaved African Americans who built and maintained antebellum USC.

Wiley was awarded a Fulbright to pursue a similar historical and creative project in San Basilio de Palenque, Colombia, a town founded in the 1600s by escaped slaves from the nearby port of Cartagena. The people of Palenque have their own language as well as customs that trace back to West Africa, so Wiley will not only have to brush up on her Spanish, but will be learning the Palenque language as well. Wiley says she will collect narratives and use these as the basis of a creative prose and poetry project. During the nine-month fellowship, she will also be working in the local school system, helping students to retell the histories and stories of the area. "It's a way to pass on a story orally," she says, "and to have them recreate, rearticulate the story in their own way."

Wiley wrote a lot as a young girl, but it wasn't until she was at Clemson that she began to think seriously about her writing. In a workshop there, she says she felt "like people didn't understand what I was trying to do ... I was serious about my work before but I started grappling with what my aesthetic should be." Most of her poetry had been grounded in the spoken word, and "I was trying to define myself against the workshop." Now she says, "My goal is to find a balance between the two," – between spoken word and the workshop aesthetic of the written word. Still, she says, "My primary goal is to write so that my mom could pick it up and read it, my best friend, the bus driver. I want regular folk to be able to read my work and appreciate it as something that is speaking to their experience."

Her recent experience in the Pencil Shout workshop reaffirmed that sense of responsibility – to what language can do and for whom. Pencil Shout was a project initiated by Columbia native Nikky Finney, now a professor of creative writing at the University of Kentucky, and her colleague, Melynda J. Price. Finney and Price brought together a small group of African-American women from Kentucky and South Carolina, who, says Finney, "were passionate about writing and storytelling."

"Candace Wiley is like those multi-talented athletes who could excel in any sport she sets her mind to, and you spend all your time hoping she picks your team," says Kwame Dawes, who taught Wiley in the USC MFA program before moving to the University of Nebraska last year. "Like those brilliant, skilled students who could choose law, nuclear physics, history, or music and be amazing, and you hope she will choose your discipline ... My team is Poetry United. I hope she will play on our team. We could use her."

## Three-Flag State

*South Carolina has three flags:  
Nation, State, and Confederacy.*

It's just a flag  
like memory is just a story  
like family is just kin  
like this just skin.

## Michael 1992

Aside from Jesus, I want to look like  
Michael Jackson. His always-flowing hair,  
wet-shiny black. Skipping through the prayer  
of fainting fans. Long, lean, lithe, movements strike  
perfect angles. Pure skin: not black or white.  
He is beautiful. Rose-lipped and doe-eyed.  
Scream, scat, coo, create first magic moon glide  
and pop. Multitudes quickly fall for Mike.  
Performing for the couch and T.V. set  
I hang a t-shirt by the stretched neckline  
on my shrubby, bush hair, feel it swing down  
my back and dream it is silky Mike-wet,  
I am angular, perfectly divine.  
I am pure-skinned and praised, not tree-bark brown.

MY PRIMARY GOAL IS TO WRITE SO THAT  
**MY MOM**  
COULD PICK IT UP AND READ IT;  
**MY BEST FRIEND,**  
**THE BUS DRIVER.**

# Off Pointe and Into the World – Costume Designer Alexis Doktor

By Susan Levi Wallach

**T**welve weeks after dancing the role of Carabosse in *Sleeping Beauty*, the Columbia City Ballet's season finale – which also is twelve weeks into her retirement as a ballet dancer – Alexis Doktor is thinking that the only thing better than being a dancer is not being a dancer. "I never liked ballet class," she says over midmorning coffee. "I never liked the rehearsal process or anything in the studio. I'm not going to be one of those dancers who take class forever and ever. The only fulfillment in my dance career was actual performance. When you're onstage, it's your moment as an artist. That's the only part that appealed to me."

That and the costumes. Which is why the New York native, who for most of her years in Columbia lived a life split between onstage corps member and backstage costume designer/wardrobe mistress, is happily out of pointe shoes: from now on, she's dealing with the dresses. Depending on how you look at it, Doktor either nearly didn't become a ballet dancer or nearly didn't become a costume designer. She was a student at the School of American Ballet when, at 16, a stress fracture forced her to sit out the school's summer program in Chautauqua. "I always plowed through and ignored pain," Doktor recalls. "That was the first summer I had to stop. It was frustrating." Because she knew how to sew, Doktor asked the resident costume designer, A. Christina Giannini, if she could volunteer in the costume shop. As these things go, a pastime became a passion: Doktor went back to dance and in 1999 came to South Carolina to join the Columbia City Ballet, but four years later she went back to New York and enrolled at the Fashion Institute of Technology. She got her degree in fashion design in 2005. In 2008, she went up to Chautauqua to work a full summer as Giannini's assistant designer. "It taught me for the future," Doktor says. "Christina is an amazing designer. If I were to claim a mentor, she'd be it."

Still, she wasn't ready to commit to one or the other. "While I was in school I really missed dancing," Doktor recalls. "And I realized a dancer's life is a short one – you can dance for only so many years. I came back to company in 2005, danced one season just as a dancer. In the season of 2006 I took over the costume shop and did both."

If it stings to have gone through a *creme de la creme* program such as SAB's only to never make it out of the corps in a small-town ballet troupe, Doktor isn't saying. Even when she points out that "William [Starrett, the Columbia City Ballet's artistic director] said he never promoted me to soloist because he thought it would be too much pressure to do soloist roles and be costume designer. Not at all. The thing that doesn't make sense to me about the situation was he never said to me I think it would be too much, what do you think? I was doing soloist roles. I've been paired a lot with one of my good friends in the company, and she's been soloist for going on four years. I don't know what William had going on inside his head. But I am ready to be done. The fact that I got to do this role made it all work out for the best."

The role was Carabosse. "Merrill Ashley was the reason I wanted to dance Carabosse," she says. "I associated 'Sleeping Beauty' with her. She captured me, created another level to that role. If I were to pick a dream role, Carabosse would be the only one. Part of it was knowing it was going to be my last show. Maybe a piece of it was wanting to revamp the Familiars and how they looked." The Familiars are animal-like characters who Doktor described as the "evil minions" and that presented an immediate design problem. She called on Giannini for help. "I had to make a horned headpiece. Creating a headpiece for women is easy – women have long hair to pin a headpiece to. For a man it's different. We have a couple of men with very short hair. We had to figure out how to fit the headpiece to a skullcap."

If Doktor credits Giannini as being "very good at figuring things out on the fly," she also credits the New York City Ballet's legendary designer Barbara Karinska, known simply as Karinska, for her sense of theatrical style. "Every time us kids performed with the New York City Ballet we got to wear the Karinska costumes," she says. "In one sense it's a blessing that I got to see how amazing the costumes are. In another sense, it's a curse, because they are so amazing. I try to do as much as I can on the budget I'm given. It's been a slow process. You only have a certain number of dollars you can spend per show. I try to give the costumes a little new life and update them, spruce them up, as well as maintain them, which is a constant struggle."





Photo by Thomas Hammond



Photo by Thomas Hammond

For its spring 2013 season, the Columbia City Ballet plans to premiere a new Starrett ballet based on the children's story *The Little Prince* – which means that instead of revamping, Doktor will be designing costumes from scratch. "I'll create everything. I believe we're getting the rights to use the illustrations from the book and recreate them so it looks just like it was intended."

The look will be a little different from the one Starrett prefers, which Doktor describes as "showing off skin and making his dancers appear sexy. He takes a lot of pride in having easy-to-look at dancers. He feels when people go out they want to escape their reality a little bit. He's into the sex-sells approach when appropriate." In keeping with the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry illustrations, presumably the look of *The Little Prince* ballet will be on the modest side.

And perhaps a little simpler than another one of her favorite productions: *Willy Wonka* two years ago at the Workshop Theatre, the first of a number of shows she's designed in Columbia outside the ballet and probably the most technically challenging.

As with the role of Carabosse, *Willy Wonka* was a show she'd wanted to do for a long time. "I'm blessed to have a very good friend who has a mechanical mind," says

Doktor. "He owns an auto-repair shop called Automotive Techniques, and whenever I have nontypical costume queries, he is the person I go to." For *Willy Wonka*, the friend, Ken Oswald Jr., helped Doktor build a suit for the character Violet, who transforms into a big blueberry – a change that most live theatre productions accomplish by having Violet sneak behind a piece of scenery or offstage and re-emerge in a big pouf of blue.

"Ken helped me build a suit that allowed Violet to blow up into the blueberry onstage. It was one of those moments when I said, 'Would it be possible. . . ?' and he said, 'Anything is possible – I just need to figure it out.' And he did and it was pretty amazing."

The two came up with a suit in two layers. The inner layer was just a straight sheath dress. Attached to it was an outer layer in the shape of a beach ball, made with an airtight fabric that is used for parachutes. "The outside had holes for her head, arms, and legs," Doktor explained. "The character wore a backpack that had one little nozzle to shoot air in from a CO2 [carbon dioxide] tank, which is used in paintball guns."

But a paintball gun needs to shoot only in quick bursts, quite different from inflating a costume in front of an audience. "We had to figure out how to get

a steady stream of air in to the suit," Doktor says. The solution was similar to the technology used in race cars that lets the driver shoot a stream of nitric oxide into the engine for additional speed. "The button the character had hidden in her hand was similar to the one you'd find in a car," says Doktor. "As long as she held down the button, the air kept flowing."

Fantasy and period productions are Doktor's favorites, in part because she enjoys meshing the research with the creative. And, she points out, "Fantasy is period to come. You can create in your mind whatever you want it to be." With historic shows, "I try to be historically accurate. I research what other people have done, though I don't copy. I do a lot of research on the period itself. I already have a lot of knowledge, but I research the specifics. I just did a show set in the Victorian Era – *In the Next Room*, at Trustus. You can approach the Victorian Era in a number of ways. That one was very specific, because there was a specific year the vibrator was invented. Belle Epoque is what people who don't know costume design associate with the Victorians. This was later, almost verging on Edwardian. As a costume designer, you have to know where it's OK to blur lines and where you have to be exact."

One place a costume designer has to be exact is fit, especially when the costume is going on a dancer. "Fit is most important, 100 percent all the way. If the costume doesn't fit well and you're being partnered or even if you're sweating, it's going to move around and hang wrong. It's not always going to be a perfect fit. I try my damndest with all the dancers in the major roles. Most of the time, they're probably performing in a one-of-a-kind costume that was built on someone else with a different physique. I want to make sure the principals have as perfect a fit as possible. I am a team of one. It would be wonderful to be able to twitch my nose and everything fall into place."

It's beginning to sound like she hasn't given dancing much thought lately. "I figured I'd be really upset," she said. "I was actually more emotional at the end of *The Nutcracker*. For now, Doktor is reveling in the freedom. Barely 31, she already has one career behind her and another under way. Doubts? None that she cares to voice. "I have a goal and I'm going to reach it, no matter who I have to crush along the way. I know that sounds horrible, but that's life. If you're not going to do anything to reach the goal you've set out to achieve, you're not going to go anywhere. I have no patience for stupidity."

# HOW TO MAKE A TUTU

By Alexis Doktor

A tutu can weigh 10 pounds or more, depending on how much embellishment it has. Different characters call for more detail than others. For example, the tutu for a peasant can weigh as little as five pounds. As soon as you put on rhinestones, it starts getting heavy. A lot of the trim also is heavyweight. The more tulle, the more layers, the more fabric. When it's on your body though, it feels like it belongs there.

There are two parts to a tutu. The tutu itself is attached to what is called a **basque** – the skirt that sits on the hips and around the waist. That's where the weight of the tutu is. If it doesn't fit properly, the whole thing will feel wrong. The **bodice** is made separately and attached to the basque.

**Building a romantic tutu** – The first thing I do is cut the fabric for the bodice and basque. It is best to make them out of the same fabric, because this gives the illusion to the audience that it is one continuous piece, and that makes the dancer look taller. I usually use a heavyweight preshrunk cotton to line these pieces to give the tutu a more rigid shape. A flimsy bodice won't last very long.

**Cutting the skirt** – If I am making the tutu for a particular dancer, I will mark the basque with her hip and waist measurements. This is how long the final length of skirt gathering will be. To make the skirt I need up to six yards per layer of fabric. The more the fabric is gathered, the puffier it will be at the hip. The more layers there are, the more important skirt length becomes. All the layers are cut to different lengths. The outside layer will be the longest, because it gets attached highest at the hip; each consecutive layer is just a bit shorter and attached that much lower on the basque. When done correctly, you will end up with five or more layers of fabric that finish at the exact same length. I typically use tulle for the skirt, though organza and chiffon are options. For a heavier, stiffer look, I use a silk shantung look-alike or even a textured cotton or light brocade depending on the dancer and the character she will be playing.

**The fun part** – Once the skirt is finished, it's time to finish the bodice (boning and seam edges) before I measure it to the dancer. Now that all the technical work is complete, I focus on embellishing. I use the machine for everything except the embellishments. The artistic part is done by hand and can require days of work. But it's what gives life to the tutu. And it's where I can be creative. So much of the story is told through the costume, and I love that I get to create that for the audience.



Photo by Jonathan Sharpe

## **John Whitehead – The Man Behind the Columbia Music Festival Association**

**By Bonnie Boiter-Jolley**

Jack of all trades, John Whitehead, known as Mr. John to hundreds of young actors, artists, and dancers who have passed through the Columbia Music Festival Association's doors on Pulaski Street in the Columbia Vista, is truly a renaissance man. Born in Brooklyn in 1944, under the influence of his grandmother, Whitehead had the opportunity to attend all forms of the performing arts from a young age. For the young Whitehead, however, orchestra concerts, ballets, and Broadway shows all paled in comparison to the opera. Enthralled with the richness and intricacy of the art, Whitehead's love of opera continues to this day, and may be a key to his original attraction to the city of Columbia. Whitehead left the entertainment mecca of New York City while still a child to attend a private boarding school in Canada. From there he followed what he felt was his calling to the church and enrolled in a Junior Seminary where he

stayed for nine years. Whitehead left the seminary when he was drafted into the military in 1965 and stationed for two years at South Carolina's Fort Jackson. Looking back, he acknowledges that had he been involved in the conflict, he would not have survived. When asked what convinced him to stay in Columbia after his two years at Fort Jackson were up, Whitehead replies, "the people." Though he was 21 at the time of his arrival, Whitehead credits Columbia and the arts with raising him. "I feel that I grew up in the arts in Columbia," he says. Now in his late sixties, he knows he is still evolving.

Influential in Whitehead's personal evolution was Dr. John Richard Craft, the first director of the Columbia Museum of Art. Whitehead recounts Dr. Craft urging the young man to make a contribution. "If one fails, we all fail," he coaxed, espousing the belief that all artists must have one another's back. In 1965 there were many

opportunities to become involved in the Columbia arts community. Whitehead spent some time writing arts reviews for the State Newspaper, working from the Horry-Guignard building on Senate Street, surrounded on all sides by artists and arts groups. Working in the building with him was Catherine Rembert, teacher of South Carolina's own artist, Jasper Johns. When Gian Carlo Menotti formed the committee for Spoleto South Carolina to expand the Charleston festival to the midlands and the upstate, the artists shared the same space on their way through town. Also in 1965, Whitehead met dancer, choreographer, and teacher Ann Brodie, known for training many successful dancers with friend and business partner, Naomi Calvert at the Calvert Brodie School of Dance, as well as for founding the Columbia City Ballet. Brodie asked Whitehead to costume her first full-length ballet, *Cinderella*, another skill for which he soon became well known. Whitehead speaks highly of Columbia's godmother of dance, noting that she was "talented, chic, elegant" and well-connected and respected on a national level. Throughout their friendship, in times of illness, Brodie would hand over the reins of the ballet company to Whitehead, a vote of confidence taken to heart. "I felt honored that she trusted me," he says.

The same year Whitehead arrived in Columbia, he became involved with the Columbia Music Festival Association, an organization founded in 1897 as a collaboration between local government and the community to develop, educate, and promote local up-and-coming artists. Whitehead describes the organization as an "incubator for the arts" that provides opportunities for new and emerging arts groups to grow and receive direction. In 1967, Whitehead wrote and applied for a grant from the newly formed South Carolina Arts Commission for \$2,500 a year to be the publicity and promotions director at CMFA. He found himself managing the Lyric Opera, Choral Society, Philharmonic, and any other new group receiving support from the organization. In 1982, Whitehead became the director of CMFA and the executive and artistic director of the Carolina Ballet. That same

whats your flavor..

ORANGE-APPLE-MANGO-MINT-LEMONLIME-VANILLA  
PINEAPPLE-CITRUS-MELLOW-COTTONCANDY

**LEBANESE BISTRO & HOOKAH LOUNGE**  
COLUMBIA S.C/VIISTA: (803) 708-0236

MON-FRI: 11a to 12a • SAT: 12p to 11:30p

year, the South Carolina Philharmonic was born from the collaboration of the Columbia Philharmonic, and the SC Chamber Orchestra, both organizations nurtured in their early years by CMFA. Intimately acquainted with the history of CMFA, Whitehead reflects on what he calls both the darkest and lightest time for the organization. When the Cultural Council of Richland County took a new direction, focusing on using businesses to raise money for the arts, the organization became problematic, causing the breakup of CMFA as a consortium. Groups that had previously shared resources were now separate entities, attempting to stand on their own. In 1988, when the Columbia City Ballet became a professional company, other, smaller groups organized by Ann Brodie, Anita Ashley, and Donna Lewis were able to come together to take its place by forming a classical and civic collaborative. This shift made more space for newer, struggling groups. Until the construction of the Art Space on Pulaski Street 20 years ago, the artists of CMFA were constantly searching for studio and performance space, a task that became increasingly difficult as private studios began using their space exclusively. The 100 seat black box theatre at the facility provides a home for these artists and groups and is in use nearly every weekend.

# Amy's Fine Art Appraisal, LLC

Appraisals for insurance,  
selling and estate planning

phone:

803.250.1278

e-mail:

champmana3@gmail.com

web:

amysfineartappraisal.weebly.com

paintings

prints

sculpture

and more



Amy's Fine Art Appraisal, LLC

Though the organization has gone through many changes, the mantra remains the same. In recent years, the association has housed and supported groups such as Vibrations Dance Company, Unbound Dance, and Pocket Productions. There will always be competition for the dollar, Whitehead says, and we must continue not only to build and retain our audiences, but to develop younger audiences and arts tourists. When questioned about what some have termed a recent arts renaissance in Columbia, Whitehead refutes the idea by insisting that there was never a dénouement. He insists instead that the arts have enjoyed a continued vibrancy but are just now being recognized for their collaborative efforts and financial impact. Whitehead also praises younger crossover audiences. He asserts that those artists coming back to Columbia have made the community more homogenized, creating audiences who follow specific individuals, rather than specific theatres or companies.

John Whitehead has accomplished many things in his life in Columbia, from directing at Workshop Theatre, to curating a two part one-man costume retrospective at the Columbia Museum of Art, to working with Ellen Douglas Schlaefer at the University of South Carolina Opera. He has served on numerous boards and committees including the first advisory board for the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, the

committee for the Papal visit, a *Seventeen Magazine Back to School* fashion show at the Township Auditorium, and numerous presidential receptions. The walls of his office are covered in commemorative plaques from awards and commendations including the Order of the Palmetto, The Verner Award, Outstanding Fundraising Executive, the 2011 Jewel Award, The Columbia Museum of Art's 2011 Arlen Cotter Volunteer of the Year Award, and the Presidential Volunteer Action Award given in 1990 by President Bush. With so much under his belt, one might think Whitehead would be ready to retire, but while he is very open to the idea of taking on an apprentice, he has no intention of quitting just yet. "The hours are long and the rewards are interpersonal," he says, but there is still much he wants to accomplish. A capital campaign, a new roof, a 500 seat performance space, and other maintenance and up-keep of the Pulaski Street facility are at the top of the list.

Whitehead wishes for Columbia continued collaboration in the arts, more facilities for performance, as much importance to be placed on the arts as sports, and for schools to desire debate teams and orchestras as much as a winning football team. More than anything, Whitehead wishes for artists to be recognized "intrinsically as artists, and extrinsically as economic development catalysts." These things, he says, are easily within reach. We just have to make them happen.

John Whitehead sits at his desk, framed by his wall of awards, wearing his characteristic all black (a style choice he says, "simplified my life,") and rattles off anecdotes. He talks about picking up Margot Fonteyn and her Louis Vuitton bag to move them to a nicer hotel, phoning a friend to have a private plane fly a young violinist in to make curtain only thirty minutes late, and perhaps most importantly, of advising numerous parents that "everyone has a singer's voice or a dancer's body...if it's in your heart, you will find a place to do it."

## Grande Dames of the Ballet Boards – 10 Questions with the Ladies Lumpkin and Harris

By Cynthia Boiter

The adage that behind every great man is a great woman has never been truer than when peering over the shoulders of the artistic directors of Columbia's two top ballet companies, William Starrett of Columbia City Ballet and Radenko Pavlovich of Columbia Classical Ballet. Respectively, Coralee Harris and Lee Lumpkin have served for years as the backbones of the ballet companies they love, support, sponsor, and fight for. Sometimes against one another.

In the world of arts organizations, the boards of directors play parts that, though not on the stage, in many ways equal those of the artists and administrations involved. Jasper pulls back the ballet curtains to query steadfast ballet board members Lumpkin and Harris on how they arrived at their authoritative positions, how they handle the gentlemen at the helms of their organizations, and what they think of the other dance company.

### What is the first ballet performance you remember seeing?

**Harris:** Of course I have early memories of *Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Coppelia*, but the most vivid memory of my youth is seeing Dame Margot Fonteyn and Rudolph Nureyev perform together – the *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake*. It was 1971 or 1972 and they were touring in Miami. I cried. She retired in 1979.

**Lumpkin:** My father was a great adventurer and we were in Russia in the early 70s. I had the great privilege of my first ballet being the Bolshoi. I can't remember anything except its utter magnificence. I was so greatly impacted by the knowledge of its vast government support and so affected by seeing all socio-economic groups in attendance.

### How long have you been involved in your ballet company and in what capacities?

**Harris:** I moved to Columbia in 1990 and began going to an occasional [Columbia City Ballet] performance. I think it was in the mid-90s that I actually bought a

membership (and still am a member). I would see Marvin Chernoff in the lobby and he would say, "You should be on the board." In 2000, I was asked to join the board as President and ended up serving two terms in that capacity. I've been on the board ever since; sat on the Executive Committee for a number of years, and am currently completing a second term as Vice President.

**Lumpkin:** I joined the board of Columbia Classical Ballet on December 27, 1996. I was clueless as to what lay ahead! I came on board to chair the second LifeChance auction and became the board chair in April. My primary job was to help with the transition from a civic company into a professional company. That was why I was brought on. Some of the board members wanted to stay civic so it was not an easy transition but, without question, [it was] what was meant to be. Within a few months I became the government grant writer (not without a few mishaps) and to this day it remains my very favorite part of what I do.

### What inspired you to become involved in your ballet company?

**Harris:** I came from Miami. My experience with ballet had been in Miami, New York City, Washington, DC, and Boston. The company I worked for in Miami was a big supporter of ballet and the CEO served on the Miami Ballet board. I saw the importance of committed board members to the success of an arts organization.

**Lumpkin:** I was completely inspired by my daughter, Leigh Morgan, who was a beautiful dancer. She says it brings her great joy that I found my passion through her.

### What is the best thing about working with your ballet company's artistic director?

**Harris:** William Starrett's energy is contagious and his vision is grand. He is always working and creating and striving to improve the Company. On a personal note,



Coralee Harris



Lee Lumpkin

William can always make me laugh. He has a genuine warmth about him that many people don't see.

**Lumpkin:** It's the amazing personal relationship that's created when you believe in the same things, like Radenko Pavlovich and I do – the great friendship that evolved. I have known for some time that he is a genius in his field and to be surrounded by that is indescribable.

### What is the greatest challenge about working with him?

**Harris:** You know the saying that sometimes our greatest strength is also our greatest weakness? Because William has such a grand vision and commitment, he often becomes frustrated; and that frustration has a trickle down effect. That's when a reality check is in order.

**Lumpkin:** The greatest challenge is created by Radenko's genius – the demand for perfection. He is a visionary so he always wants more and better. All he sees is the art – that's it. For it not to be superb and accessible to all is not an option. Thus it is the job of the board to make that happen. What's so hard about it is that we know whatever he puts on that stage will be his best, so he is deserving of our best. Consequently, the demand for our excellence to support his is a constant challenge – but worth it.

### What is the most important asset of a successful board of directors?

**Harris:** All not for profit boards need a good mix of donors, doers and door-openers. An effective board must have a mix of talents and acknowledge the role each person plays; it is hard work to keep that balance in place.

**Lumpkin:** I believe that the greatest asset of a successful board of directors is to be there for each other and a common goal.

### What one thing can make a board of directors ineffective?

**Harris:** Sometimes the boards, particularly in an arts organization, get caught up in the art and forget that they are there to do administer to the business. Without recognizing the duties and responsibilities of board membership, it's easy to slip into the blue sky perspective. One of my personal business mantras is "all unhappiness is due to unrealized expectations." The board needs to set realistic expectations, the art should motivate them, but their focus should be on the P&L (profit and loss).

**Lumpkin:** If you are not on the same page as a board member and there is inner conflict, it can absolutely de-energize everything positive. There has got to be good positive energy for good positive outcome. It's not enough to be with someone – you must be for them to make it work as a whole.

### Years ago, there was a great deal of discussion about the possibility of Columbia City Ballet and Columbia Classical Ballet merging into one glorious ballet company. What do you think the state of ballet in Columbia would be today had this happened?

**Harris:** I'm going to answer this as a business woman having been involved in bank mergers for many years (and these are my opinions and not that of the Board or CCB); there is the business of the ballet and the art of the ballet. In the business environment the art translates to the culture of the organization.



From the business perspective, a merger would have brought some efficiencies of scale on the expense side, perhaps allowing for more dancers, a longer season. A combined company may have improved ticket sales but it wouldn't have doubled since both companies have cross over audiences. Public and private funding wouldn't have doubled either, but would have been proportionately combined. While there may have been some financial benefits, it would not have been significant if you consider what happened to the economy since those talks began and the overall state of arts funding in this country.

As for the culture or art of the ballet, I believe it would have been a difficult evolution for the combined company. As in a business merger, you have to have one CEO for the new group; embracing one culture. And over time a single, hopefully combined theme and vision emerges. William and Radenko brought different cultures to the table. Both are very talented and passionate about their art and vision for dance in this community. We would have lost one of them and that would not have produced a "glorious ballet company", but would have left us with the perception of a surviving ballet company. There will always be comparisons.

Columbia boasts a number of dance companies, not just Columbia City and Columbia Classical and I rarely hear about any move to merge any of the other groups. Competition is good; it keeps us all on our toes.

**Lumpkin:** Interestingly enough, I think the state of ballet would have been just as the question implied – glorious. It would have taken extraordinary patience, discipline, skill, etc., but I will always believe that it could have been grand. But again, everyone has to be on the same page and timing is almost everything! And as life would have it, the state of ballet in Columbia in 2012 is none the less – glorious. City Ballet has just celebrated 50 years and Classical Ballet has just celebrated 20 years. They are both proud companies who found, created, and sustained their niches.

### Throughout the years, you've seen many excellent dancers come and go – who was, or is, your Favorite and why?

**Harris:** In my first year as president, I went to the studio to introduce myself to the dancers. I told them then, and believe it now, that each one of them are someone's favorite dancer. At each performance someone in the audience is looking for them on stage and watching their every movement. I have been amazed by the talent

that has performed as part of the Company. When I invite people from out of town to a performance, they are amazed that we have this level of talent in Columbia, South Carolina.

There is one dancer that I have been able to watch grow over the last twelve years, personally and professionally. Her lines are exquisite, her technique is reaching perfection, and her stage presence can be mesmerizing: that would be Regina Willoughby – my adopted dancer daughter.

**Lumpkin:** My favorite international ballet dancer is Misha Ronnikov. He was from the Bolshoi and quite superb. He asked me to help him get his green card and I began a journey with him I would wish on no one, but one I would never have missed. When it was over and he had his freedom, I thought he would stay with our company. But he wanted something else for himself. It was at that moment when you realize you don't help someone fight for their freedom and then be mad that they don't choose what you wanted. That's why we are the greatest country on earth and it's no wonder everyone wants to be here. I was greatly humbled by the experience and feel like I made a difference in his life as he made in mine.

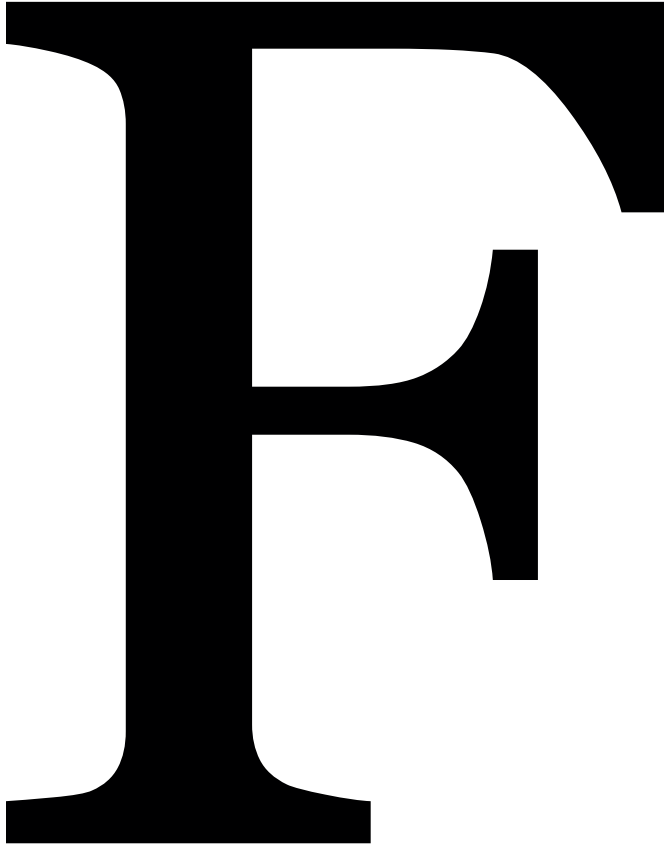
### What do you admire most about the Other ballet company?

**Harris:** Fortitude.

**Lumpkin:** Without question I most admire the tenacity of William Starrett and, in turn, the tenacity of City Ballet.

## Wade Sellers – Is Sometimes Still a Kid with a Camera

By Cynthia Boiter



filmmaker Wade Sellers is no spring chicken as the saying goes, but he's still pretty youthful in appearance and manner, and he has a mischievous look about him that communicates the kind of curiosity that can either mean trouble or brilliance. Or both. It's not hard to imagine him 30 years younger, rummaging around West Columbia with his father's Super 8 camera, making movies and enlisting his friends to star in them and create the sets. "I would buy film every Friday at Kmart and I'd call some friends and say I wanted to do a horror movie and we'd put it all together on the spot," Sellers remembers. "Or someone would be burning off a field and my brother and cousins and I would get my dad's old Air Force uniforms and we'd make a war movie with the fire and the smoke of a burning field," he says. "It was so much fun." That sense of playfulness and excitement about the act and all the elements of making a film are still evident today, both in Sellers' work and in the artist himself.

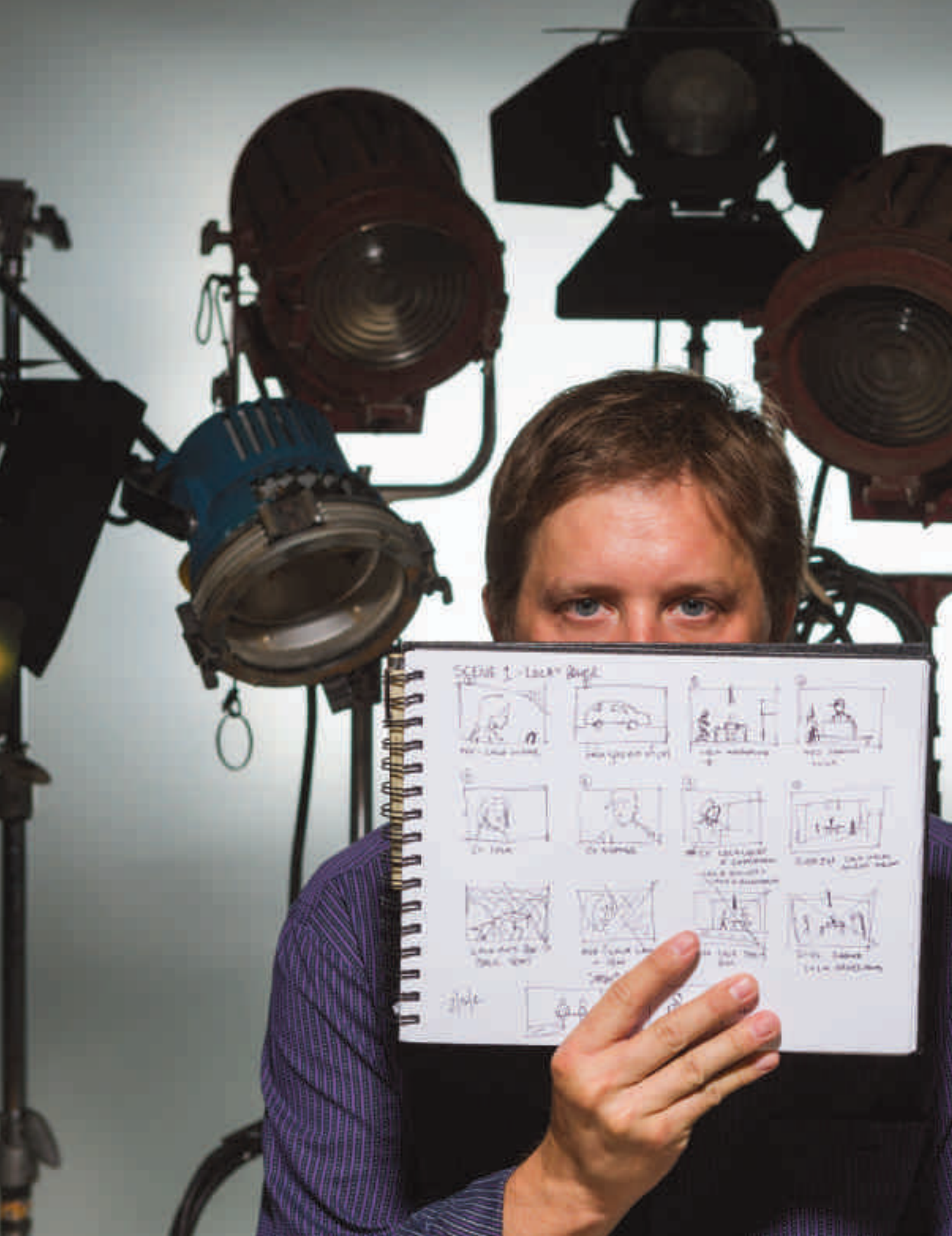
Sellers' interest in filmmaking only slightly waned in his teen years when he spent more time making music than films. Along with now-famous drummer, Derek Roddy, Sellers, Robert Peterson, and James Watson formed the band, The Deboning Method. "There was a circle of three bands including, The Deboning Method, Sovereign, and Crossfade," Sellers says. "We were pretty good and we made a little money."

Eventually Sellers moved to Atlanta to study music at the Atlanta Institute of Music. It was while working one of two jobs in Atlanta – delivering office supplies by day and making pizzas at Mellow Mushroom at night – that Sellers found himself in the position of entering the filmmaking profession literally on the ground floor. "If you deliver office supplies you can get in anywhere," he says, remembering the day he saw the lights of a filmmaking crew, threw a box of ostensible office supplies together, and was instantly directed onto the set. "I asked someone, 'How do I get a job on this movie?' They said, 'What do you do?' and I said, 'Anything.' So they had me doing total gopher stuff. That made me understand that you could actually make movies for a living."

Sellers found his way back to Columbia and got his degree from USC in Media Arts in 1996. He credits his classmates and professors – and the experience itself – with influencing his ideas about what quality filmmaking is all about. "We had a very good class and we had good professors who really challenged us. They didn't put up with average," he says naming fellow classmates like local filmmaker Steve Daniels and the well-known media production group of Tim and Tony Cargioli who have worked on such films as *Dear John* and *The Notebook*.

It was while working with Chernoff Silver that Sellers was introduced to the role of production, though he continued to work on his own independent films. A 1998 video titled *Gordon's Ride*, about a reclusive and obsessive compulsive man who built a robot girlfriend, only to have to leave his apartment to obtain a part that he needed, was sold and shown at the Angelika Film Center, New York City's famed art house theater, before going to television. Sellers, himself, moved to New York in his late twenties and got a job his first week there working on a film for Columbia University, eventually becoming the gaffer for Michael McDonough, cinematographer of late of the films, *Winter's Bone* and *Albert Nobbs*. (Sellers

Photo by Forrest Clonts



SCENE 1 - LOCK\* Day



1. CAR INTERIOR



2. CAR EXTERIOR



3. DESK



4. FACE



5. FACE



6. FACE



7. FACE



8. FACE



9. FACE



10. FACE



11. FACE



12. FACE

1/16



explains that a gaffer is the “chief electrician on the set, primarily working with the cinematographer to carry out his vision with the lighting of a scene. For example the cinematographer will say, ‘I want an earlier morning sunrise look,’ and the gaffer takes lights and makes it look like a sunrise.”)

“For a while I kind of worked on some bizarre stuff,” Sellers says, including an Indian soap opera and a number of independent films. After a year and a half in New York, Sellers came home temporarily to work on a regional film with every intention of going back when it was over. But in the interim, the World Trade Center was attacked and, somehow, he ended up never making it back to the big city. Having been a gaffer for a while had made him happy, but he felt that he could do more. “I wanted to have my own projects,” he says. A job at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control allowed Sellers to do what he was trained for and what he wanted to do – “I had creative input and I treated PSAs (public service announcements) the same way I’d treat the movies I’d make” – but it also provided a lot of on-the-job training which allowed him to get better and better at what he was doing. All the while, Sellers wanted more.

“I wanted to start my own production company that would involve projects where people were passionate about what they were doing,” he says. “And I wanted to be able to produce my own work.” So, in 2008, after having saved the money that would help him get his company off the ground, he did just that. One of the first projects for the newly minted Coal Powered Filmworks was a collaboration with local cabaret singer Lorrie Rivers, puppet-masters Lyon Hill and Kimi Maeda, and the musicians from Rivers’ band, Maya’s Big Vermillion, on a dozen some odd music videos for a grand performance at 701 Whaley titled, *Maya’s Wonderland*. Sellers created twelve music videos over a four month period on top of making commercials for local clients like Palmetto Health. Other projects followed including, in 2009, a collaboration with local actor and director Chad Henderson on the short, *Two Guys on a Roof*, and frequent projects with local filmmaker Lee Ann Kornegay on South Carolina’s role in World War II.

But by far, the project Sellers is most proud of is his most recent independent film, *Lola’s Prayer*, completed in 2012. “*Lola’s Prayer* changed – and challenged – me in so many ways,” Sellers says. *Lola’s Prayer* was made in response to a call from Spartanburg’s Hub City Press for

# gallery

contemporary art  
& finecraft



**Opening Receptions: Third Thursdays 5-8pm**  
**REFRESHMENTS + MEET THE ARTIST**  
*Join us for a SUMMER of exciting new work!*



**GALLERY / STORE HOURS:**  
Mon-Sat 10-6 & Sundays 12-5

GALLERY V is located in the loft above GOOD FOR THE SOLE SHOES @ 111-D Harden Street - in the heart of 5Points - Columbia, South Carolina

July 19th - August 11th  
Reception: July 19th 5-8pm

## A LONG WAY HOME by Kristina Stafford

Kristina uses clay and cut paper to create installations focused on color, pattern and personal narrative.



www.kristinastafford.com

August 16th - September 15th  
Reception: August 16th 5-8pm

## EXTRACTED by Bri Kinard

Bri's work includes the use of multiples, mixed media, and addresses environmental consumption through installation.



www.brikinard.weebly.com

the Expecting Goodness Film Festival, a festival centered around the adaptation by South Carolina filmmakers of short stories from C. Michael Curtis's (ed.) collection, *Expecting Goodness and Other Stories*. The story Sellers chose to adapt, *Lola's Prayer* by Lou Dischler, tells the tale of a young woman, Lola, recently estranged from the man in her life, who on impulse purchases a chinchilla from a farmer on the side of the road, played by Columbia attorney and professional character, Tom Hall. When the chinchilla goes missing before she has the opportunity to remove it from her car, Lola obsesses about its loss and the loss of other things in her life until, in the end, she finds her own kind of reconciliation. The story resonated with Sellers as soon as he read it and he was hooked on making the adaptation.

Having always funded his personal projects himself, however, this time Sellers went to his friends and supporters via the online fundraising program, Kickstarter, to procure the funds needed to make the film. "I was overwhelmed with the support I got for this project," Sellers says. Even more exciting for the filmmaker was the cast he had the opportunity to work with on the project. "There are really amazing actors in Columbia," he says. "And hopefully they know where I'm coming

from and how much I respect what they have to offer." Among the cast of *Lola's Prayer* was Lorrie Rivers, Vicky Saye Henderson, Steve Harley, and Kim Harné. "Everyone I wanted to work with as a group was there. It was my Columbia dream." The film debuted at Spartanburg's Hub-Bub arts center on March 24, 2012. "The whole process invigorated me and inspired me to produce more," Sellers says. "This was validating for me - a lot due, I think, to the process of communication with the actors."

It is clearly the sense of community that feeds Sellers' independent filmmaking desires, in some ways taking the 'independence' out of the process, but happily so. "I like to encourage the actors to have fun and do what they do best," he says, harkening back to the days of aiming an 8mm camera at a bunch of buddies and making a movie on a Saturday afternoon. "When we all do what we do best, then it's like being a kid again," he says. "It's just fun."

Page Left: Photo by Forrest Clonts



## **Design and Process with Clark Ellefson**

**By Kristine Hartvigsen**

Clark Ellefson has an idea – but instead of the figurative light bulb hovering over his head, imagine one of the artist’s glowing tin perforated Incredible Hulk lunchboxes instead. Or how about a charming postmodern “Mini Mojo” lamp with an artisanal paper shade. Ellefson is full of ideas, in fact, and you can bet there’s a unique fixture shedding light on every one of them.

It’s not unusual to spot Ellefson making elaborate architectural-style “doodles” on a cocktail napkin while perched at the otherworldly, textured steel island that anchors the Art Bar, a popular Vista nightspot he opened in 1992. The bar’s distinctive furniture and eclectic fixtures

are of Ellefson’s design and likewise could have been conceived on a paper napkin. Even when he’s relaxing, his mind is always engaged. “I like to think about stuff a lot,” he says. “If I only have a piece of paper and a pencil, I can entertain myself for hours designing and redesigning things. I am not idle.”

A longtime Columbian, Ellefson earned a BFA, with an emphasis in sculpture, ceramics, and film, from the University of South Carolina in 1974. Early on, he did carpentry work to support his budding sculpture career. This skill set quite naturally led to designing and making furniture. “I got into furniture-making because the post-modern movement was hitting,” he says, adding



Page Left and Above: Photos by Forrest Clonts

that he was particularly taken with the work coming out of the Memphis Design Group, a school of Italian designers and architects that produced pop art-inspired, modern art furniture that literally broke the mold in the mid-1980s. A hallmark of Memphis design is the use of unconventional materials, including sheet metal or plastic, and unexpected colors, such as Candyland pink or Miami aqua. Brand consultant Bertrand Pellegrin, in a January 15, 2012, *San Francisco Chronicle* article, aptly described the Memphis design movement, which is experiencing a resurgence in popularity, as “a shotgun wedding between Bauhaus and Fischer-Price.” It’s about breaking the rules to stunning effect. Like Ellefson himself.

Yet Ellefson’s design vision far transcends the original home décor and lighting products he crafts today as owner and principal designer of Lewis+Clark Gallery. For decades, he has envisioned transformative growth in Columbia. He is widely recognized as a pioneer who, along with his business partner, the late Jim Lewis, set up shop in the mostly abandoned, run-down area west of Assembly Street in 1983, long before the Vista was a cool place to be. “At that time, it was a big risk,” Ellefson recalls. “We signed a five-year lease. We were both self-employed and living hand-to-mouth.”

The partners forged a name for themselves for several years creating contemporary, Memphis-inspired and avant garde furniture, including a signature Japanese kimono-shaped cabinet that helped put Lewis+Clark on the map. The kimono cabinet is a collector’s item now. One resides in the State Art Collection. One sits in the office of Columbia Development Corporation Executive Director Fred Delk, a good friend of Ellefson’s. And there’s even one in the upscale European headquarters of a company that invited Ellefson to attend its grand opening – in Switzerland. “I was so broke at the time,” he says. “I couldn’t go to the reception. That was a lost opportunity there.”

Fast-forward 24 years or so, after Ellefson had successfully operated a workshop in one Lincoln Street storefront and a separate gallery space down the sidewalk at the corner of Lincoln and Lady Streets, and Ellefson’s story takes a dramatic turn. Over those years, the Vista attracted businesses from upscale eateries, hotels, and bars to design firms and more art galleries, making the district a chic destination for the Midlands. Ellefson led much of that growth, masterminding the twice annual gallery

crawl in the Vista, known as Artista Vista in the spring and Vista Lights in the fall. But all that prosperity came at a cost. While he owned his workshop space, the gallery was leased, and the owner had big money-making plans that didn’t include beatnik artists. He raised the rent far beyond what was affordable for Ellefson, who was forced out in 2007, just as the recession was taking hold.

“It was a huge tragedy for me,” Ellefson says. “He was a douche bag developer. ... But I have always suffered the woes of leasing space and being turned out. I have always felt that if you can own your space, it is really better for your career. Artists often go into derelict neighborhoods, improve the place, create demand for it, improve property values, and then get pushed out.”

Ellefson may have been down, but he was far from out. He got together with Harriett Green, visual arts director for the SC Arts Commission, and the two brainstormed the idea of finding empty old warehouses and putting studio spaces in them. They found, however, that Columbia doesn’t actually have that many old buildings available. The two conducted a survey of what artists wanted, and most respondents overwhelmingly wanted to be in the city and, particularly, in the Vista. When Ellefson tried to interest enough artists to go in together to purchase a building, it did not work out. Enter Fred Delk, the above-mentioned proud keeper of Ellefson’s kimono cabinet. Delk wanted to help and was in a position to do just that.

“Fred said to me, ‘I have an idea,’” Ellefson recalled.









The city had acquired a property that backs up near the Congaree River on the 1000 block of Huger Street as a possible location for the new Columbia Museum of Art. The museum, however, ended up locating downtown at the corner of Main and Hampton streets, so the Huger Street property was just sitting there. It had a building on it that once housed an appliance parts company, and it was available. "I talked to the owners of One-Eared Cow (an art glass blowing studio also on Huger), and we formed a corporation that we called 'Appliance Arts Company.'"

Ellefson and One-Eared Cow owners Mark Woodham and Tommy Lockart (as Appliance Arts Company) purchased part of the property, with One-Eared Cow moving into the existing street-front building. "We agreed early on that they could have the front of the building because their business depends so much on retail," Ellefson says. "Most of my sales are out of state."

Ellefson built onto the original building, adding 6,000 square feet that includes meeting space to receive visitors and help pitch a new idea – the Columbia Art Studio Project, or CASP (also dubbed "Stormwater Studios"). CASP is a pocket art colony envisioned for the approximately 1.5 acres next to the Appliance Art Company property. The land is overgrown with weeds and doesn't look like much right now, but Ellefson and others can see its potential. The Columbia Development Corporation, along with the Columbia Design League, the SC Arts Commission, and the City of Columbia organized a two-day design charrette in the summer of 2007 to gather input from members of the local arts community regarding the planning, design, and ownership

structure of art studios and live/work units being proposed for the tract. Their intent remains for the project eventually to operate sustainably, without ongoing public subsidies.

Charrette participants heard a series of reports, including the Innovista Master Plan, which conceivably could connect with CASP and the State Museum via common outdoor, pedestrian-friendly areas along the riverfront, including parks and public art spaces. Participants overwhelmingly supported use of environmentally sensitive design methods

in what they conceived to be a complex of three two-story buildings with living spaces above and studio bays below. Sketches included the possibility of dramatic structural overhangs to provide shade and accommodate indoor/outdoor areas for artists to create and display their work.

"The focus is on a pure studio building first, then split it up into bays, and artists can purchase a bay," Ellefson explains. "Each bay would be 600-800 square feet. For a lot of people, that is a lot of space. There would be covenants to ensure that the space is always used as an art space."

Progress has been slow since then, primarily, Ellefson says, because it's self-funded. He hopes to organize an event, perhaps a cookout, on the site and invite interested artists to discuss affordable pricing schemes for the units and what needs to happen to move CASP forward. Because the Columbia Development Corporation owns the land, it has the ability to persuade the bank to "write down," or reduce, the land value to its true market value, which also would reduce the taxable net income of the project. That still would leave a gap in funding, but foundation grants and donations are also possible. Overall, there is strong desire for CASP units to be owned by artists rather than rented.

Ellefson, in the meantime, is taking the live/work concept to heart. He's single-handedly



Above: Plans for Columbia Art Studios Project, aka Stormwater Studios Page Left and Above: Photos by Forrest Clonts

building an unobtrusive one-bedroom, loft-style residence just across from the entrance to his Huger Street studio. When completed, it promises to be a showplace of sexy postmodern craftsmanship, from its hand-hewn kitchen cabinets to its inlaid wood floors stained in multiple contrasting colors and the slanting staircase with decorative accents hand-cut into the wood. He cleverly installed a roll-top glass garage door so his living room can open directly to the outdoors. It will be classic Ellefson. "I have a lot of artwork stowed away. The house will be full of art, that is for sure," he says. "It will be bohemian, modern, and deliberately eclectic."

With all these projects operating in a perpetual state of flux, Ellefson also contemplates new directions for his professional career, which has been relegated somewhat to the back-burner. Like clockwork, the proverbial light bulb continues to appear. "I am anxious to get back to my career full-time," he says. "There are some really interesting opportunities in lighting now. When I think about what I want to make or design, it is related to lighting. It's a product that is a little easier to market than furniture."

Ellefson's high-end art lamps crafted with specialty art paper shades, steel, and hand-finished wood bases (see [lewisandclarklamps.com](http://lewisandclarklamps.com) and [artfulhome.com](http://artfulhome.com)), already are steady sellers. And the funky robot-inspired lamps and re-crafted metal objets d'art on display at Ellefson's Lincoln Street workshop always draw an appreciative crowd. "I'm just having some fun with that," he insists. "It's not big money for me." But he would like to expand his lighting products to much larger markets.

In fact, Ellefson wants to move away from pricey custom work. He still enjoys making things, but he says he would like to explore designing for a manufacturer that could accommodate broad production of decent quality, artistically edgy items attainable by average consumers. "Everyone wants a certain look," he says. "Very few of us can afford what we truly want." With luck, Ellefson will narrow that affordability margin – both for artists and those who purchase their work. ♪

## Behind the Scenes

By August Krickel

"Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain," Oz told Dorothy. Yet through smoke, mirrors, rigging and a little moxie, that wonderful Wizard managed to rule an entire land, keep wicked witches at bay, and hoodwink an entire population. If acting is believing, stagecraft might well be deception, and a well-designed set with effective lighting makes all the difference in the world. Jasper talked with three of those men behind the curtain, to find out how it all comes together.

# D

anny Harrington, technical director for Town Theatre, the nation's longest-running community theatre organization, thinks people would be amazed if they saw "how backstage is way more complicated...or way simpler than they realized," noting that it's all about illusion, and that amazing effects can be accomplished solely by inventive lighting. Harrington has also designed sets for Trustus, Columbia Children's Theatre, and the Chapin Theatre Company.





Page Left: Danny Harrington Above: Randy Strange left, Albert Little right  
Photos by Jonathan Sharpe

# W

orkshop Theatre's Technical Director, Randy Strange suspects that viewers may have no idea how tiny the available space may be. "I think we pull miracles off quite often," he says. He sees theatre, and volunteering, as "something that can hook you, and that you develop a passion for." Strange can round up 4 to 6 volunteers in a pinch, but often it's just him and one or two of the "hard core," he says. "Thank God we have the Alberts of the world." For longtime Workshop volunteer Albert Little, volunteering backstage has become a calling. "We are blessed to have so many people, who are willing to give so much time," and he offers a possible explanation: in countless little rural towns in the state, there are a few artistic types who have greater aspirations. "Smaller

communities may place a stigma on creativity - you know, 'that child just ain't right,'" he jokes. So kids move here, to a bigger town, and explore different possibilities with regard to the arts .... They may not want to move to New York or even Atlanta, so they will come to Columbia, to see what works out for them." It becomes quite clear that Little isn't talking about just theatre volunteers or even artists in general, but also about himself, and about finding oneself in ways beyond just a hobby. It's an unexpectedly moving and profound moment, as he describes that yearning that so many young people in creative fields experience. ,

*Arthur O'Shaughnessy wrote "we are the dreamers of dreams...we are the movers and shakers of the world for ever, it seems." These men behind the curtains of local theatre in Columbia make the magic, helping us to dream those dreams.*

# Aaron Pelzek – Lighting Designer

By Alex Smith

One of the least visible, yet most integral positions in the theatre is that of the lighting designer. The theatre is an artistic medium that requires, in its fruition, the ability to both see and hear what is happening on the stage in order to fully comprehend what the playwright has written without looking at the page. Quite simply, without the work of the lighting designer, fully half of the theatrical experience would be missing.

Not yet thirty years old, Aaron Pelzek has designed lighting for some of Columbia's most memorable local productions since he arrived to get his Masters' Degree at USC almost seven years ago, productions that include *The Illusion*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Buried Child*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac* at USC; and, *Rent*, *Hair*, *Reasons to be Pretty*, and *Passing Strange* at Trustus. Pelzek was born and raised in Milwaukee. He attended the Milwaukee High School of The Arts and began a paid career as a lighting designer while still an undergrad at age 19. After he received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, he auditioned for grad school at the University/Resident Theatre Association's unified auditions in Chicago, a process which, for designers, involves setting up a table with a resume and representative photos of one's work to be perused by faculty from member institutions, who then decide whether or not to interview the designer for their graduate program. Of the fourteen schools Pelzek got interviews with, he was most impressed with USC's theatre chair.

"I remember when Jim Hunter came to interview me in front of my set-up; he was the only one who didn't blow smoke up my ass. He tore apart my set-up, in fact. He didn't try to tell me what I could have done. He said, 'this is terrible because...'" This quantification of technical shortcomings as opposed to subjective conjecture in regard to artistic choices was, Pelzek says, what ultimately drew him to study here.

"Some of the most important things I've learned came out of Jim's and [design professor and head of USC's Design MFA program] Nic Ularu's mouths," Pelzek says. "Nic always used to say, 'You've got to go back to the beginning.' At the time, that didn't mean shit to me. 'Go back to the beginning of what? The project? I don't know what you mean!' It took a long time, but now I know exactly what he meant. If you can't discover the essence

of what it is you're doing, everything else is incorrect moving forward."

The combination of stringent technical education and equal weight on introspection and core values and goals in regard to each project changed Pelzek's view of how he defined his job as a designer. "Six years ago, I would have called myself a technician," he says. "Now, I know I'm an artist. As long as you've developed a style and honed your skills so that you're as good as your last show, then you're an artist."

In terms of process, he says, "The script is always the number one thing ... although more often, now, I find myself more intrigued by [hearing] a director's thoughts before I read a script. Too many times I've read the script first and ended up with a preconceived notion of a show that is not the show that the director winds up putting on the stage." He laughs, "I'd rather hear a director's interpretation of the script before I read it so I can picture the world they're trying to create in my mind. The root of the system is: you are enhancing a director's vision [for a show]."

Beyond the conceptualization phase of staging a show, the job of the lighting designer is working with the theatre's master electrician to get the lamps hung from the theatre's lighting grid, covered in sheets of colored gelatin, and focused on the stage. Depending on the size of the space, there may be anywhere from 48 to 250 individual instruments to physically adjust for each show. The instruments are then run through dimmer packs, which allow them to be programmed into a control board, which has sliding switches that determine each lighting instrument's brightness or dimness individually. Most boards allow the designer to use computer controls to create groups of lights that fade up and down together at the push of a button, and which are referred to as cues. Some shows have hundreds of these cues. These precisely controlled combinations of lights comprise the lighting design for a show, and they are constantly taking place directly over an audience's head during the two hours they are watching a production.

The shape and form these cues take are best borne of a symbiosis between director and designer. "The lighting designer focuses the lights in these very specific patterns," Pelzek says, thereby directing the audience's focus and the action onstage. "The director's job allows



# LIGHTING DESIGN IS THE LAST BLITZ

Aaron Pelzek / Photo by Forrest Clonts

them to say to the lighting designer, 'I want it brighter here, or more color here, so that in a sense they turn into the lighting designer. If you can't switch roles that way with a director, it isn't a collaboration.'

As complicated a process as lighting design is, amazingly, it is (along with the implementation of sound design) the final component to be added in rehearsals, usually days before a show opens. "There's a huge responsibility. The lighting design is the last blitz." The art of the lighting designer is preceded by, and built upon,

the time and effort of every other person working on the show. It is a responsibility which Pelzek takes very seriously, and which he allows to require more of him than mere artistic choice when designing lights.

"To me, it's not about process per show; it's about the process of becoming a designer. I'm not saying you have to go get your MFA before you can be a lighting designer, but you've got to know the rules before you can break them."



## Matthew Kramer

By Kristine Hartvigsen

Metal sculptor Matthew Kramer, 36, looks every bit the stereotypical blacksmith – burly, strong, and, well, kinda hairy. But look again. When the work gloves come off, those man-hands are sporting some pretty serious nail polish. Some days he goes with a glittery green or dark blue. He also likes lilac and the old stand-by, black. And though he looks somewhat like a bouncer in a biker bar, his buddies back in Milwaukee just call him “Bunny.”

“They thought it would be funny to call a 6-foot, 200-pound guy ‘Bunny,’” Kramer explains. “It just kind of stuck.” So the Columbia artist, who in his day job is a fabrication foreman (a.k.a. “shop overlord”) at Stuyck Company, eventually named his art studio Psycho Bunny Forge. “I was looking for something memorable,” he says.

Good fortune led Kramer and his wife, Vicki, to Columbia from Austin, Texas, in 2006 so she could attend graduate school at the University of South Carolina. The two met online through Internet Relay Chat (IRC) some 12 years earlier, just before the rest of the planet got logged into the World Wide Web. Kramer was still living in his native Milwaukee, and after a long-distance relationship

lasting more than two years, he followed Vicki to Austin and married her. The central Texas town has become known as an emerging center for high-tech companies but also as a diverse arts and culture hub that plays host to such world-famous events as Austin City Limits Music Festival and the South by Southwest music and film festival. “That is one of the reasons we like Columbia,” Kramer says. “Columbia feels very much like Austin did 15 or 20 years ago. It’s right on the cusp of greatness.”

Though he studied fine art at Pennsylvania State University, Kramer remains just six credits shy of taking home his degree. That put him at a disadvantage arriving in a schizophrenic Midlands job market as the economy began to tank. “I could weld. My dad’s an architect, and I have been around the building industry most of my life,” Kramer explains. “But I was under-qualified for many jobs and over-qualified for others. For two years, I couldn’t find a job. So I started my own business.” That business was crafting high-end furniture. “I didn’t really make any money at it, but I made contacts.”

One of those contacts was Christopher Stuyck, owner of Stuyck Company, a creative metal fabrication business on Shop Road. The two hit it off right from the start. “Chris has an art background, so he understands that just because I don’t have the formal training doesn’t mean I can’t do the job,” Kramer says. “I started here as a grunt. I was bottom-rung and have worked my way up.”

In fact, Kramer and Stuyck soon collaborated on a monumental art project – the impressive 15-foot-tall steel sculpture in Five Points honoring Columbia’s own Hootie and the Blowfish. The privately funded public art project was a commission from the Five Points Association. “After we did the Hootie monument,” Kramer says, “we were approached to do Change for Change.”

Launched in 2010, Change for Change has become an annual community event in which local artists transform decommissioned parking meters into public art to generate awareness about sustainable practices and raise money for the Climate Protection Action Campaign. That year, Kramer created a Blue Heron out of a recycled meter, and folks around town began to take notice of the reclusive artisan’s talent.

Kramer’s entry in the 2011 program, “Lovely Rita, the Meter Maid,” caught the attention of City Center Partnership officials, who purchased it and, in conjunction with the City of Columbia, installed “Lovely Rita” at 1136 Washington Street in front of the city’s Parking Payment Center. Before that could happen, however, Kramer had to fatten Rita up, so to speak, to prepare her for her public.

“To install Rita, the whole structure had to be beefed up. The way I weld and do metal is very much the same





Page Left: Photo by Kristine Hartvigsen Above: "Blue Heron" Photo by Forrest Clonts

way that I draw," he explains. "I like open spaces with loose definitions. I like the idea of how it will be, but I want the viewer to fill it in." So Rita was powder-coated, which is a process by which polyester vinyl or urethane plastic is very finely ground and given an electrical charge. Applied to a metal object that's been oppositely charged, the powder clings to the piece, which is then heated. The powder melts and re-fuses with the piece to add color and rust protection. We see it all the time in playground equipment and bicycle racks around the city. Appropriately fortified, Rita was bolted to a granite block to remind art lovers and others to remember to feed their meters.

This spring, Kramer wowed people again with his entry in the annual "Painted Violins" fund-raiser for the South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra. Each participating artist is given a single violin to decorate or repurpose in any way they please. Kramer fabulously created "The Grasshopper and the Ants," a three-piece sculpture with a giant grasshopper standing over two ants, each ant crafted from half of a violin, oriented on its side, and given legs and antennae. It was a natural choice for Kramer, who gets his strongest inspiration from nature. "Before I went into art, I actually was considering a degree in natural resources management," the artist says. "I love the outdoors and being out in nature."

That works out well, because Kramer and his wife found a house near rural Eastover and have plenty of room for cast-off sculptures, their two dogs, and three cats. "Sculpture is noisy," he quips. "Moving out to the country made sense." Fortunately, the Kramers' neighbors don't seem to mind at all. "When they learned that I could do something useful, I became pretty popular," Kramer says. "I was raised to be helpful, and I wouldn't take their money. So they started paying me in vegetables from their garden."

When you're a metal sculptor, though, it can be a pretty expensive proposition to submit a piece of art, even for a good cause, again and again. There's the cost of materials and, of course, a considerable labor commitment. Kramer entered the local art scene through the non-profit door, but even he had to consider ways to keep his costs in check when donating sculptures for charity.

One of the benefits of working for his good friend is receiving access to affordable materials. "Chris finds deals on semi-torn-up materials that people don't want, but we can throw them on our plasma table and cut them up," Kramer says. "Chris only charged me \$50 for the metal I used for the Grasshopper," which alone weighed about 80 pounds. Even so, that's a respectable out-of-pocket expense to consider, on top of talent and, perhaps most remarkably, time.

"After Rita, I re-evaluated how I was doing things," he says. "When I did the Blue Heron for Change for Change, it was only about a three- to five-hour piece for me. Rita took, on and off, about 80 hours over two weeks. ... It can get expensive, but it is exposure. I am starting to make a name for myself in Columbia. I didn't know the art scene here when I got here. Right now, I feel like I am paying my dues. I have to show what I can do and prove myself. The charity stuff helps with that."

"Matt is one of the most philanthropic artists I know in this community and consistently contributes an incomparable amount of his time and talent to charitable causes," says Anastasia Chernoff, curator of Anastasia & Friends Gallery on Main Street in Columbia. "His work never ceases to surprise and surpass. He's intelligent, original, inspiring, and a true giver."

Being invited to exhibit at Anastasia & Friends gallery was pivotal. "Anastasia Chernoff invited me to one of her First Thursday shows, and I have been showing there ever since," Kramer says. "That was my first non-charity show in Columbia." In fact, Kramer is gearing up for a solo show at Anastasia & Friends in September.

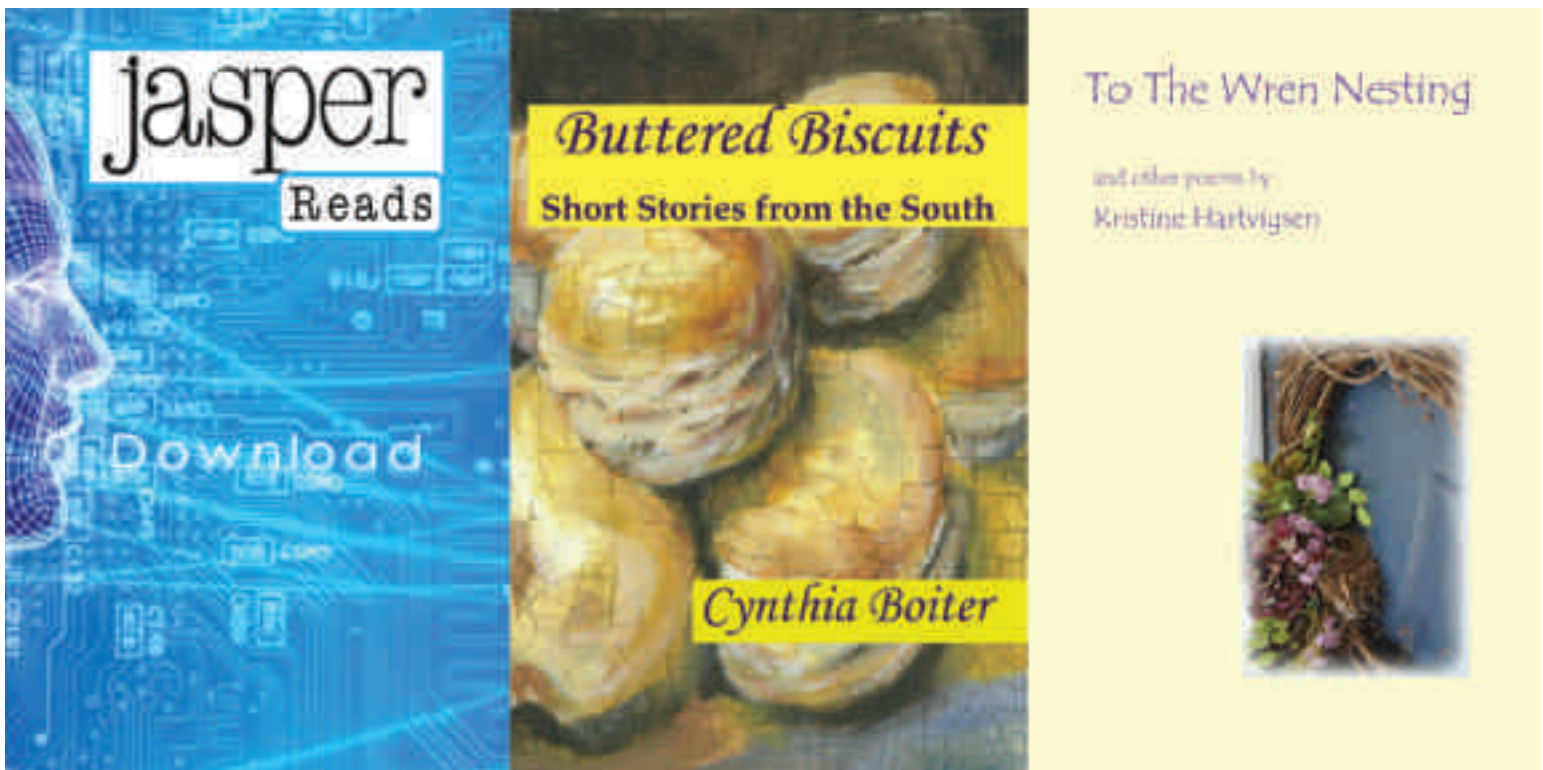
"I don't believe there's a single cell of mediocrity in Matthew Kramer. Over the last couple of years, he has participated in numerous shows at the gallery and become a good friend," Chernoff says. "He's artistically dynamic in every conceivable way – a perfectionist.

Although he's best known for his work with metal, I've seen some of his work in other mediums, and don't think there's a single material that he couldn't cleverly master and fashion into something meaningful – he's a true virtuoso."

As his work continues to develop a following, Kramer hopes before long to create some large art installations, something he hasn't really done since college. Of course, that means he'll have to get out and schmooze, because such projects need sponsorship. "I am a hermit by nature," he says, "so networking has never been my strong suit." He is aware that he may have to step farther afield from his comfort zone for the sake of his art. "I wouldn't say I'm coming out of my shell so much as feeling the need to put myself out there if I want to push the art side of my life forward," he says.

Kramer is sure to make an impression at Anastasia & Friends in September. "I've settled on a theme of updated mythologies, along the lines of the satyrs using tools as symbols of modern masculinity to make statues of Greek symbols of masculinity and fertility," he says. "And I will probably be remaking a centaur out of motorcycle and bicycle parts."

"When I think of Matt, a word that instantly comes to mind is 'wholehearted,'" Chernoff adds. "Matthew Kramer is an artist's artist."



MuddyFordPress.com  
803-760-4455



Photo by Thomas Hammond

## Tom Law's Conundrum

By Kyle Petersen

We all have one. That one musical artist that, even though they might not be the best, the most popular, or even your personal favorite, changed everything for you. For Conundrum Music Hall proprietor and avant-garde music promoter Tom Law, that band was Sleepytime Gorilla Museum.

"It was about 10 years ago that I started going to shows again," Law says, when seeing the heavily experimental rock band play a sparsely attended set at New Brookland Tavern "got [him] out of a stupor." Accustomed to going to see big name acts playing out-of-town venues in the likes of Atlanta and Charlotte, Law recalls "all of a sudden realizing I could hear amazing music in a little club, [too]."

Despite getting a degree in music composition during college, Law had been relatively inactive in the music world most of his life before this. He never

pursued music professionally, and instead went to work in the family business as an IT technician. He wrote some music for various groups at Columbia College and USC over the years, but never considered jumping into the music world with both feet.

The Sleepytime show changed all of that. Law quickly became friends with the group and became an independent music promoter as he worked to bring various affiliated acts of the group back to Columbia. His dedication to bringing the music he wanted to hear quickly had him helping out other avant-garde acts book shows in town as well, even groups Law had never heard of. He also became steeped in the shows put on by USC's Southern Exposure Music Series and the various jazz happenings organized by fellow promoters Ross Taylor and Kevin Green.

# *The Southern Baked Candle Company*

*Have Your Cake and BURN it too!*



*2718 Devine Street Columbia Sc 29205 (803)456-3011*

*www.TheSouthernBakedCandleCompany.com*

*Like us on Facebook & Follow us on twitter*

*Mention this Add for 20% off*

*THE GIFT FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS EVERYTHING!*

Even as he started doing all of this work in the scene, it was never a dream of Law's to start his own venue. "It never dawned on me until about five years ago (that I might want to do this)," he says. In fact, the original idea came a few years back when he was driving home from seeing Sleepytime at a show in Savannah. "I started thinking, 'Dammit, I'm gonna convince my wife to move to Oakland (where the band is based). Everything is happening in Oakland!'" he recalls. After getting home, Law listed out his reasons for moving with his wife. "She said 'No,'" he laughs. His next idea, of course, was to bring what was "happening" to Columbia. "If I can't go to where the stuff is, I have to bring the stuff here," he quips. "I was forced into it!"

Part of his inspiration, of course, came from what he felt was a need for the city's scene. Even though the local venues around town were supportive of his promotion efforts, Law would often get frustrated when he had a band and a date, but couldn't get a show booked. "That's part of the reason I decided Columbia needed another place," he says, although there were other considerations as well.

Even in the most supportive of venues, Law would often be irritated by patrons that were there more for the bar than the music. "I wanted a place dedicated to live music, that could work as a listening room and have the bar be separate," he explains, noting such a model works well for the Nickelodeon and Trustus. "People come for the art, not for a full bar" in those kinds of places, and that's exactly the spirit he wants for Conundrum.

Law also hopes that his venue will “get a lot more people out who enjoy this kind of stuff, but who are used to going out [in the Columbia scene],” he says. “People just aren’t used to thinking of Columbia as a place for this kind of music.”

“I thought it would be a lot simpler than it turned out to be,” Law admits. Thinking he could find a place and open in just a few months, Law quickly ran into a whole host of issues that are difficult to imagine beforehand.

The first: finding the space. Law spent a lot of time looking at Main Street locations (including what is now S&S Art Supply) before turning his attention across the river. “I can’t believe I spent so long looking at that place,” he laughs. “It’s only 12 feet wide! It makes a great art supply place, but a music venue, not so much.”

Law checked out a couple of places downtown, but ran into some difficulty given his unusual goals for the venue. “The city was very suspicious of me,” he says. “They thought I was trying to get around them on everything.” Law was told that he would have to open a restaurant along with the venue if he wanted a bar, and also got conflicting rules on an old law that prohibits the sale of alcohol within 600 feet of a church in Columbia.

Eventually, Law turned to the more hospitable environs of West Columbia, where a small former landscape nursery was in disuse. Formerly the Corley Nursery, a family-owned operation that went out of business about ten years ago, the land and building had been briefly leased by another business owner, but was sitting vacant when Law approached the family about leasing and renovating the small building as a music venue.

Even though the space was a little small and needed a lot of work, Law decided that this was the place. The owners agreed to a two year lease, with an option for five, and Law went for it. Using the advice of University of South Carolina School of Music engineer Jeff Francis, Law went about turning the old building into a first-class listening room. His extensive renovations to the empty building included using sound panels to dampen the echo effect of the cinderblock walls and curtaining off the bathroom and minimal bar in the back, in addition to adding a stage and rigging up a soundboard and PA system. Even with a capacity just under 100 people, the promoter-turned-venue-owner ended up building one of the best rooms in Columbia for live music.

Although it was widely assumed at its inception that Conundrum would be strongly focused on bringing in avant-garde acts, Law also surprised many with his range of billing. Conundrum caters as much to the DIY indie rock crowd as it does to experimentalists, and everything from singer/songwriter and alt. country to hip-hop and metal have graced the stage in the just over a year the venue has been active. That’s in addition to the high-quality indie classical, experimental, and avant-garde acts that still make up a large portion of his calendar.



Photo by Thomas Hammond

“We want to be the home of avant-garde [in Columbia], but not exclusively avant-garde,” he insists. “About half the shows we book are indie rock, but that’s about half the audience in this town [too].” Indeed, Law has taken the role of venue owner and manager quite seriously. He insists that the venue isn’t non-profit, but rather “anti-profit,” but he’s determined to change that.

One of the things he’s still learning is what he calls “the art of putting together.” “It’s not enough to bring a great band in who is on tour, largely because nobody has ever heard of them,” he says, a bit in disbelief. The importance of having a local band open up to draw a crowd led Law to start booking more and more local shows, often with the help of a network of informal advisors who have plugged him into the local indie rock scene.

Now, acts like Fork & Spoon’s Those Lavender Whales or Coma Cinema are just as likely to appear at Conundrum as Tim Daisy. But Law gets most excited talking about the experimental acts he’s brought in over the last year – wild groups like Secret Chiefs 3 and Egyptian Windmill Operators as well as (relatively) big names like John Butcher and Ken Vandermark.

Still, Hall only wants to see more of that diversity – more than once during our interview, he confessed to feeling as if he didn’t yet know enough running a venue, or about music in general. This is coming from one of Columbia’s most valuable assets in bringing new, innovative, and offbeat music to our humble town.

But don’t worry – he’s gonna keep working on it. ♪



Photo by Forrest Clonts

## Mary Lee Taylor Kinosian – Concert Master, South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra

By Annie Boiter-Jolley

Mary Lee Taylor Kinosian plays many parts in Columbia music: violinist, pianist, orchestra member, chamber musician, composer, teacher, advocate, ambassador, leader. And as Concertmaster for the South Carolina Philharmonic, she assumes even more roles: soloist, section leader, committee-member, and, perhaps most importantly, the conductor's second-in-command. Much of what she does – aside from performing, of course – her various audiences neither witness nor know about. While obviously passionate about playing, it is these unseen (and unheard) aspects of Taylor Kinosian's musical roles that seem to truly motivate her.

Surrounded by music for most of her life, Taylor Kinosian has been a part of Columbia's classical music community for decades. Her parents, Alan and Mary Alcorn Taylor (cellist and violinist, respectively), were part of the cohort that, in the 1960s, founded the orchestra that would eventually become the South Carolina Philharmonic. Living above Alan Taylor Music Co., the music store her parents owned, Taylor Kinosian had easy access to potential inspiration. When her mother, Mary, began teaching her daughter to play the violin, the five-year-old Mary Lee's heart was really after the piano music she heard wafting up the stairs from the studios on the

second floor. After a summer of proving her commitment with diligent violin practice, Mary Lee was allowed to take piano lessons as well.

The practicing paid off, as Taylor Kinoshian soon began playing with the University of South Carolina orchestra, which admitted non-college students at the time. When the rules changed in the late 1970s, she simply joined the Columbia Philharmonic Orchestra (today's South Carolina Philharmonic) – when she was only fourteen years old. Taylor Kinoshian continued to play with the Philharmonic throughout high school and college – even driving home from Decatur, Georgia for rehearsals and concerts during the two years she attended Agnes Scott College. Eventually earning her B.A. in music performance from USC, Taylor Kinoshian left Columbia for the west coast in the 1980s, playing with the San Jose Symphony, the Midsummer Mozart Festival, and the Redwood Symphony. She got a little closer to home when she joined the Nashville Symphony Orchestra in the early 1990s, and finally returned to Columbia in 1996, seeking the roots and grounding of home. Of course, she rejoined the Philharmonic shortly thereafter.

Taylor Kinoshian quickly moved up the ranks of the violin section, becoming Concertmaster in 2006. She also serves as the Assistant Concertmaster for the Greenville Symphony Orchestra. As concertmaster, many of Taylor Kinoshian's duties take place off stage and in the rehearsal hall. While she serves as the de facto section leader of the first violin section, playing solos and providing signals that, together with the conductor's actions, keep the section together, unlike other section leaders, she also provides direction and coordination for the entire string section, choosing bowing settings; demonstrating how different parts of the piece should be played; and working with wind, brass, and percussion leaders to create balance in the ensemble and to help each part of the orchestra "interlock beautifully." She works very closely with the conductor, and, in a pinch, can work to get the orchestra back together should the conductor's attention wander (Taylor Kinoshian is quick to point out, however, that this service has never been called upon under the direction of current Philharmonic conductor Morihiko Nakahara, but was useful during the recent year-long conductor search).

Taylor Kinoshian takes her job very seriously, calling it a "tremendous honor" and noting her



appreciation for "being able to help the orchestra in the best way [she] can." "As long as I'm doing my job right," she says, "everyone behind me can relax."

In her composer capacity – not directly tied to her Concertmaster responsibilities – Taylor Kinoshian contributes even more to the life of the Philharmonic behind the scenes. She is currently working on two composition projects for the ensemble: a string piece for the orchestra's upcoming 50th anniversary, and a choral piece for which the orchestra will partner with Colla Voce, a Columbia choral ensemble. Taylor Kinoshian is particularly excited about this piece, as it represents a bit of new terrain for her and will be her first choral composition to be performed.

Taylor Kinoshian's compositional contributions are by no means limited to the SC Philharmonic, however. In fact, she writes much of her music for the Upton Trio, of which she has been a member since 1997. Among many others, Taylor Kinoshian has written a series of boundary-crossing science suites for the piano trio over the past several years, beginning with "Fundamental Forces: The Music of Science," followed by "Four Elements," and most recently, "Journey to Mars," a tone poem inspired by NASA videos detailing the process of sending a probe to the red planet from conception to landing.



# MUSIC

*supports everybody.*

*Everybody*

WINS

The trio uses these pieces, along with the history/social studies suite, “The American Story,” and an in-the-works piece based on traditional American literary arts, as components of their educational outreach program – primarily within Kershaw County schools – which is designed to teach and reinforce traditional school subjects with music. Taylor Kinosian is adamant that “music is not a luxury – it is an absolute necessity” that serves as a “positive enforcement of education itself.” This “multipronged” approach to education is designed to appeal to students who are interested in the arts but may be less enthused by science or history, as well as to students who are academically minded but think classical music is unattainable. And it works – pre- and post-test data show dramatic improvements in knowledge and comprehension after the Trio has visited. “Music supports everybody,” says Taylor Kinosian. “Everybody wins.”



Taylor Kinosian's compositions have been aired on NPR's show Theme and Variations, and she has performed them with the Upton Trio at Carnegie Hall's Weill Auditorium.

Perhaps the greatest unseen – but crucial – element of Taylor Kinosian's musical identity is the role it plays in her family. Not only did her mother Mary teach young Mary Lee for the first two years she played violin, she also taught Taylor Kinosian's daughters Jessie and Christina for the first two years they played the instrument (starting at ages four and five), and, at 87 is still an active violinist today. Mary Lee frequently plays music with her sister Jacqueline Taylor, principle cellist with the Asheville Symphony and former Upton Trio member, and cites these collaborations and this relationship – both familial and musical – as among the most important in her life. Even Taylor Kinosian's late father, well known cellist Alan Taylor, has a presence when Jacqueline plays the cello he was once given by the principle cellist of the National Symphony Orchestra. When talking about these important family influences, Taylor Kinosian also makes a point to include "Miss Nell" and "Miss B." – Nell V. Mellichamp, who ran Mellichamp Music Studios above her parents' music store and taught Mary Lee how to play the piano; and Beatrice Horsbrugh, her primary violin teacher (and another founding member of the original Philharmonic). These women, who Taylor Kinosian describes as "surrogate grandmothers," served not only as musical role models, but also as examples of the kind of person Mary Lee strives to be.

Taylor Kinosian refuses to name a favorite piece of music – glibly saying that it's whatever she's going to play next (she's eyeing Piazzola's Four Seasons). "I am in love with whatever piece of music that I am playing at the time," she says, proceeding to list off recent performances, collectively describing the pieces – spanning composer, style, and century – as "heart wrenchingly beautiful." A composer herself, she is intimately familiar with what it means to write a piece of music and offer it up for others to play. "It's all about the human heart," she says, then asks, "How can you say that one heart is better than another?"

The passion with which she asks this is what links together the many roles she plays – the ones her audiences see, like when she plays a solo backed by the entire orchestra, or when she uses music to get school children excited about science; as well as the ones they don't, like when she listens to a rehearsal close enough to realize that a certain piece will sound better if all the second violins play a section at a different part of the bow, or when she watches videos of a Mars rover and somehow turns it into a 21 minute suite for violin, piano, and cello. Taylor Kinosian doesn't take on these countless roles for the praise, glory, or recognition – she does it because she's in love. ♪

## **Eat Local, Eat Great, Eat With Us!**



*Columbia's First  
Wine Shop by Day,  
Wine Bar by Night!*

2001 D Greene St.  
803.343.3303  
cellarongreene.com

*and right next door...*

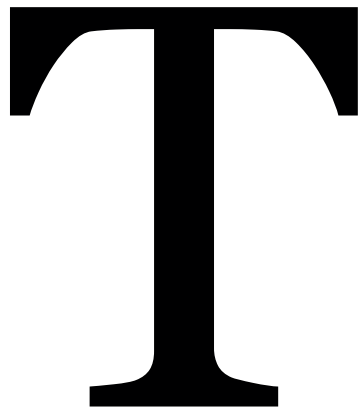


*Continuously Voted  
Best Restaurant  
in Columbia!*

2001 A Greene St.  
803.254.7828  
mrfriendlys.com

# Music Director Tom Beard

By Alex Smith



he music director in regional repertory theatre wears many hats, and is directly involved in a theatrical production longer than just about anybody aside from the producers and the director. It is a rigorous position for even the most talented musician to hold.

Tom Beard, one of Columbia's great musicians and music directors, came to the job the hard way. "I started out as a theatre undergraduate at USC, but I switched to philosophy after my first semester," says Beard. "I still love philosophy and read it. It's probably the only discipline that allows you to question everything - including the legitimacy of doing philosophy itself."

Born in Asheville in 1958 and raised in Columbia, Beard looks younger than his 53 years, and betrays no trace of his Southern roots either in his speech or his music, although, he says, "...I have sometimes thought of writing a concerto for banjo and orchestra." He met his wife, Carol, during his first semester at USC in a class taught by Ann Dreher. They married in 1980, by which time Tom had developed an impressive resume as a performer, which included a season's stint as a riverboat honky-tonk pianist at Carowinds, along with memorable onstage roles in Columbia's theatre community.

His career as a music director began with a false start. "I was first hired and then fired by [Columbia theatre legend, the late] Bette Herring on one of her innumerable *Wizard of Oz* productions. I was cocky and artistically flighty, and I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted. It was entirely my fault." It took several more years, but he was later able to begin music directing with an offer ... from Bette Herring. "I grew up a little more and she asked me to do *Annie* in 1989." Beard's and Herring's working and personal relationship was much better the second time around. "Bette was a fun person and a born impresario," he says. "I remember her with much love."

Since then, Beard has built a resume as music director of which any theatre artist would be envious. He has worked on classics such as *Big River*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Fantasticks*, *Sweeny Todd*, and *Assassins*, as well as cutting edge and contemporary works like *Hello Again*, *The Full Monty*, *Bat Boy*, *Spring Awakening*, and *Passing Strange*. (Full disclosure - the author has happily worked twice with Beard as music director in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.) As varied a musical array as this presents, Beard's process is consistent, and his description of it eloquently sheds light on the job of the music director.

"First," he says, "there are all the hours spent alone interpreting the score and its orchestration. You have to learn the instrumental and vocal parts of the show, and you also need to decide what will be the most effective instruments to use in the show that will help convey its intended feel. You have to keep the number of musicians impossibly small most of the time, and like any artistic community, there are occasional politics in getting and working with good musicians. I am lucky to have so many colleagues who are not only great players, but who also find the live theater experience a satisfying creative and artistic outlet.

"Then there's casting the show. During auditions, the music director's job is to advise the director on the actor's potential success in singing a certain role in the show, and in determining the actor's vocal type (baritone, soprano, tenor, etc.). After that comes the month or so of rehearsing with the cast to help them learn the musical parts and sculpt their individual and group sound to something that we all like. During this part, I try to put myself in their shoes and understand the kinds of problems they're facing in performing the score.

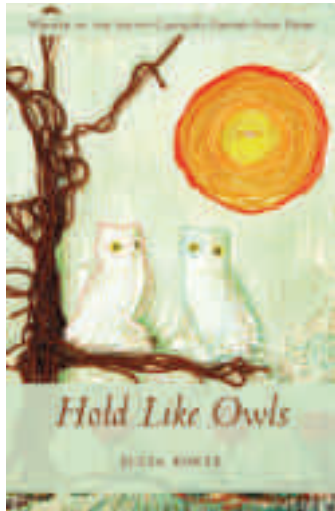
"Finally comes the fun part, opening the show and watching the audience's response to each moment of the performance. This is the magical part of theater that satisfies me the most - telling a great story to a group of people sitting in the dark, focused on the lighted stage. Something beautiful, fragile, and unrepeatable emerges from those two hours where everyone is focused on this same unfolding, living event."



WURLITZER

## Review – *Hold Like Owls* by Julia Koets

By Susan Laughter Meyers



Julia Koets's first collection of poetry, *Hold Like Owls* (University of South Carolina Press, 2012), was chosen for the South Carolina Poetry Book Prize by National Book Award winner Nikky Finney. Koets' book is the latest winner of the prize, which was established by the SC Poetry Initiative and the USC Press in 2005. *Jasper* poetry editor Ed

Madden and I are each pleased to have a book in the series, as do four other SC poets – all four, like Koets, with a Columbia connection: Ray McManus, Délana R. A. Dameron, Worthy Evans, and Jennifer Pournelle. A graduate of the USC MFA program, Koets is a young poet on the rise. To read her first collection is to discover why.

Koets draws from a multitude of sources for her poems in *Hold Like Owls*: memory; place; nature; the body; writing advice; lines of famous poets, including Emily Dickinson and Wallace Stevens; and, always, her imagination. These are love poems looking back on childhood and forward to the uncertainty, exploration, everyday lessons, and sensuality/sexuality that accompany adulthood. The poems come from a keen eye and a strong sense of the feminine – motherly and grandmotherly influences – with a penchant for whatever is nurturing and beautiful. Sometimes they come from a desire to retreat to comfort and safety.

The poem titles are mostly short and definitive: "Paper Birds," "Moth and Moon," "Calico Street," "Ruin," to name a few. Following the path of this spare style, the poems themselves are typically short, too – often brief contemplations full of mystery. Spare in length, but not in concrete details. Koets is a poet of things, things of

this world that lead to musings and, in the best poems, to discovery – however small. The first line casts out into the world, taking the reader into the unknown. In other words, this poet knows how to begin a poem. These are the initiating moves in a few of the poems:

What are we doing with all this writing . . .  
The night's thatched with black . . .  
Magnolias make a mess of the stars . . .  
You wear your hair like curtains, drawn down . . .  
Praise the wind heavy with frying onion and dust . . .

In four sections of quiet, sometimes-surreal, dreamlike poems, the book builds on repetition. At least six of the poems are modified villanelles, a traditional rhymed form that depends on repeated lines, or variations of those lines, for its obsessive, cyclical effect. Koets takes bold liberties with the form, which ultimately becomes her tour de force in the book. Her looseness with both the rhymes and the repetition results in subtleties not possible when adhering strictly to the form. In "Paper Birds," for example, the collection's opening poem excerpted here, Koets repeats only a part of lines typically repeated in full, and the rhyme is often slant:

Moths must tire of sleeping near the ceiling.  
All that waiting for their wings to match  
color that changes where wall folds to eave.

This afternoon I found her at the table, asleep  
amongst paper, delicate as dreams, elaborate  
birds made of folding, made for our ceiling.

I try unfolding one, tail and beak of pleats,  
green and yellow flowers on a patch  
of wing. No cuts or glue to hold evening,

## Boxes of Old Photographs

Don't write about what you know; write what will  
take your mother's boxes  
full of photographs and bobbypins. Questions

are children lifting their hands: why does she wear  
stockings to her knees? Why do some men sing  
like curtains; why did my mother marry

in a sailor suit? It's how we started asking:  
raising our hands into other people's arms.  
My father bathed me minutes after I was born

two weeks late. Warm water in a yellow plastic tub.  
It was then, my mother tells me, that I was quiet  
enough for her to see the eyes we share.

The rhyme is remarkably sophisticated: ceiling/eave, asleep/ceiling, pleats/evening, and match/elaborate/patch. The first and last lines of the first stanza are repeated throughout the poem with such wild variation that their reincarnations are echoes wonderfully faint. Recurring imagery contributes to the dreamlike quality of the poems. Birds, moths, stars, foods, string/fabric, and hair are just a few of the images that keep reappearing. Yet for all the lovely echoes of imagery, one of the greatest strengths of Koets's poetry is surprise – brought about by her fresh use of language and her ability to find the strange in the familiar. Plus, she has an ear for sound play: "Moonflowers open / white on the fence, and moths try to make sense / of porch lights with their wings" ("White on the Fence"). One needs to read the poems in their entirety to fully enjoy the layers of artfulness and emotion. Here is the short poem "Even Haystacks":

We must learn to laugh at ourselves. To gather  
into our bellies and shake loose in the snow.  
We sled on our stomachs down a road blocked off  
for the season; a mountain path too steep to plow.

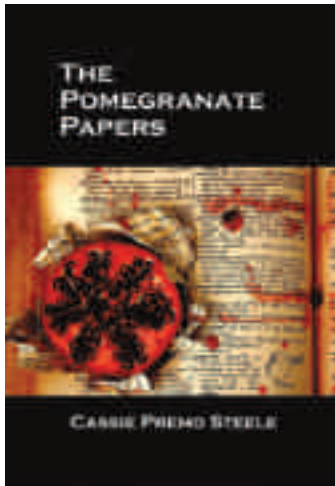
Here, even haystacks get covered with winter  
and dogs grow beards in the snow. We eat  
dinner with the oven open, the car packed  
into the driveway all day with nowhere to go.

*Hold Like Owls* charms with its cohesiveness. As in all good volumes of poetry, the poems talk to each other. Despite their quietness, they are rich with purpose. All the questions to ask, non sequiturs to deliver, colors to ponder. All the ways of holding and holding on.

Susan Laughter Meyers is the author of *Keep and Give Away* (University of South Carolina Press) and the chapbook *Lessons in Leaving* (Persephone Press). Her poems have also appeared in *The Southern Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and other journals.

## Review – *The Pomegranate Papers* by Cassie Premo Steele

By Brandi Ballard



The cover of Cassie Premo Steele's latest collection of poetry, *The Pomegranate Papers*, (Unbound Content, 2012) depicts an opened pomegranate bursting through the pages of a dictionary. The pomegranate is symbolic of the volume itself as it reveals the complicated, interior world of woman, artist,

wife, and mother. A local writer, Steele is a creativity coach and writes a monthly column, "Birthing the Mother Writer," for the site Literary Mama. Motherhood and creativity are also the interwoven themes of *The Pomegranate Papers*, which focuses on the beauty and complications of conception, birth, and mothering.

The opening poem, "Here is the woman awakening," is the only one that occurs pre-conception. She writes, "Here is the woman waiting . . . the dirt she tills at daybreak/where something sleeping wants to start." Natural imagery suffuses the work—dirt, seas, oceans—imagery that is transformed into the elemental and mythic as Steele weaves mythological and metaphorical births with literal births. After the opening, the poems come chronologically, following the pregnancy, birth, and the mother's life after the birth of her child. Throughout the volume, her repeated return to the myth of Demeter and Persephone questions familial allegiances, especially how mothers handle daughters leaving home to create their own new families. We see the pain of separation from child or other loved ones, yet this pain and the related fear is always countered by hope. In "Uncoupling from my husband" she writes, "I . . . slide/like a small boat/into the great sea,/not knowing what wave/or weather will be/there to greet me, but happy/to taste the tears and salt/with my own tongue."

Steele's form varies from short, staccato lines of very few syllables in poems like "Stretch" to prose poems that push her fears out in one long breath as in "I looked through the window." The contrast between the compact and those that occupy the page suggests a range of emotional experience. At times, the poet's inner voice trembles and is almost silent. At others, that voice pushes and expels words rapidly. It is in the short lines, where the reader is given little to hold on to, that her words sometimes lose their power. There were also times that I felt less connection with the language, particularly in the more overt descriptions of birth. Pregnancy and birth appear as the catalysts for emotional clarity, enabling a sympathy with mothers and an understanding of "all the things that women writers say." Throughout the volume reproduction is inextricably linked with womanhood in a way that reinforces the stereotype that to be a "real" woman, one must be fertile. Such implications may limit the potential audience for the work.

Overall, though, I found myself drawn into this substantial volume. The image of the pomegranate and its links to the Demeter myth create a sense of cyclical matrilineal relations, and the variations on this and the book's other central themes, and the blending of personal and mythic elements sustained my interest. I was particularly struck by Steele's vivid descriptions of the body and of inhabiting the body. In "Nine months" she writes about still feeling the sensations of pregnancy after birth and about the body's continuing capacity to nurture: "I breathe/into my belly to see how far/my skin can still expand./I could still take you into me,/if you need it, could shelter/your whole body." The infant is a "ribbon of skin" connecting the speaker to the husband. The collection is peppered with rich physical and multivalent metaphors like this one – metaphors like pomegranate seeds, rich and gritty images of female wisdom, fertility, and heritage.

Brandi Ballard is currently pursuing an MFA in Creative Nonfiction at the University of South Carolina where she is a James Dickey fellow. Her work has previously appeared in *Riverrun*, *Poetry While You Wait*, and is forthcoming in *The New Sound*.

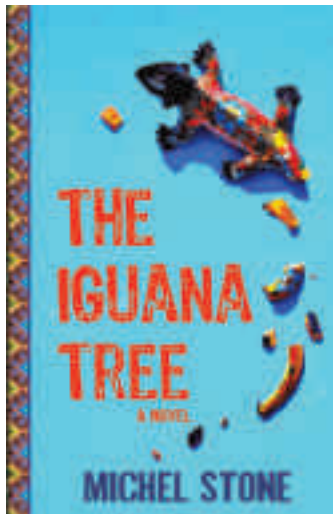
## Weaned

My nipples are shell pink again,  
not the dirt red clay you lived  
upon, the first sign that heralded  
your arrival in me, the change  
in color of a woman holding  
a woman inside herself.

And now you move from my shore  
once again, hold your bottle like a trumpet  
announcing your departure away from me,  
as my breasts recede and your vision  
sharpens and you sail out,  
far from the edge of my body's horizon,  
leaving me feeling the chill of the coming  
winter's season, for the first time in three years.

## Review – *The Iguana Tree* by Michel Stone

By Cynthia Boiter



Michel Stone's new novel, *The Iguana Tree*, published by Spartanburg's Hub City Press, is a hard book to put down – and sometimes just as difficult to read. This engaging story about a young family intent on moving their home from the beautiful, but stagnant Puerto Isadore, Mexico to a potentially more prosperous future on

the South Carolina coast does not sugarcoat the travails of illegally crossing the U.S. – Mexico border. What it does though is humanize the living people behind the nameless numbers and underscore the commonalities between so many of us, particularly in South Carolina: love of the land, the priority of family, and the internal desire to become more than our life's lot may have predicted.

While Lilia, the new mother and wife of Hector, disagrees with her husband's insistence that their family relocate, she supports his decision to hire a coyote who will smuggle him across the border with the plan that, once he has saved enough money, Hector will send for his family. But in a plot twist that realistically portrays the conflict between traditional and contemporary sex role power dynamics, Lilia defies her husband and makes arrangements of her own to cross the border with her infant daughter, Alejandra.

If the gruesome agony of the story of illegally entering the U.S. via a money hungry coyote team begins with Hector's crossing, (and it does when he, along with many more men, are layered beneath the bed of a truck that is welded shut in a scene reminiscent of the horrors of the Middle Passage), the heartbreak of the story begins when Lilia entrusts a coyote of her own.

Lilia wished he'd stop smiling. The discolored teeth did not unsettle her as much as the man's slick demeanor. No one should smile so much as this, not when the purpose of their meeting was serious, and life-changing, and dangerous.

"He continued, "Do you have questions for me, Lilia?" He stared as if he were looking through her, as if he were thinking thoughts that didn't match his words, thoughts better suited to his ridiculous smile.

"My daughter?" Lilia said. "I wonder how we will cross with her?"

"I do not cross with babies, but I have a woman who manages such affairs for me. You will meet Matilde. She will handle that job."

Like viewing a horror movie and mentally warning an actor not to enter an almost certainly haunted house, readers follow the independently told stories of Lilia and Hector and hope against hope that the characters will not make the wrong decisions, only to be disappointed time after time. But the strength of Stone's telling of their stories is found in the reader's ability to identify with these well-meaning, naïve, and pure characters who, at the book's beginning, staunchly believe in the integrity of humanity.

Stone's use of the iguana tree reference as a metaphor for the comfort Lilia takes from the familiar and steadfast icons of nature, both when safe in Mexico and when enduring the rape by her coyote, is just one of the ways the author fully invests the organic culture of the land in her telling of the story.

Alejandra's crying continued in the corner, and Lilia envisioned the iguana amid radiant, green leaves up above her in the courtyard. When Carlos moved hands like foraging beasts across Lilia's body, her mind reached up, up, over her head, out of herself toward the iguana who sunned each day on the limb outside Lilia's bedroom window.



Like Lilia, Hector, too, is intent in his need to ground himself in South Carolina's natural environment and continuously compares and contrasts the flora and fauna of his new home on Edisto Island with his old home in coastal Puerto Isadore.

The jungle surrounding the field on three sides stood thick and dark, and Hector considered what strange animals lurked within that place. The back end of the field was bordered not by jungle but by a river, wide and fringed with marsh. Hector hoped he could one day fish that water. This lush place reminded him of home, so very different than the dry terrain he'd crossed in Texas. Lilia and Alexandra would like life here.

Stone refuses to pass judgment on the actions of her characters, and she evenhandedly introduces us to both the best and the worst that humanity has to offer in the lesser characters in the story. The Iguana Tree is not a happily-ever-after tale that placates the reader with an unrealistic ending, opting instead for honesty and, despite the bitter pill of reality, hopefulness. It is as compelling as a story unfolding in the nightly news, but told with the sensitivity of a writer who clearly loves and respects the characters about whom she writes.

Cynthia Boiter is the editor of *Jasper Magazine* and the author of *Buttered Biscuits – Short Stories from the South*



2012/13  
SEASON

SIGNATURE

series

ALL HANDS ON DECK!

September 29, 2012

PILOBOLUS

October 12 & 13, 2012

COMEDIAN JAMES GREGORY

November 16, 2012

SC PHILHARMONIC:  
HOLIDAY POPS

December 2, 2012

CASABLANCA

February 14, 2013

SQUONK OPERA

March 2 & 3, 2013

SC PHILHARMONIC: VIVALDI

April 6, 2013

FAMILY

series

STORY SQUAD

September 22, 2012

POLYGRAPH LOUNGE

February 23, 2013

SOUTHEAST FAMILY  
PUPPET SLAM

May 11, 2013

7300 College Street, Irmo, SC

For tickets and information  
visit [HarbisonTheatre.org](http://HarbisonTheatre.org)

## **Your Wolves Came Looking for Me**

**By Eric Kocher**

Your wolves came looking for me like ninja wolves practicing the kata of my absence  
And to think back then I was made from only two straw-huts

Now no one remembers the statue of my crane  
Squall of no winds

Don't you see how you out-there so well  
Don't even know from which window a piano is going to fall on your head

Eric Kocher received his MFA from the University of Houston and is currently the writer-in-residence at Hub-Bub in Spartanburg, SC. His poem "Everyone hooking up with everyone" appeared in the Jasper Reads chapbook *Download*, published in conjunction with the 2012 *What's Love* art and performance event in Columbia.

# Black Boys

By Jennifer Bartell

Black mothers feared what would become of black boys.  
Feared they would grow into strange fruit on a poplar tree.  
In 1916—the binge of black blood flowing—even in the forest:  
Shot. Hung. Consumed with fire. 15,000 looking on:  
Hundreds seething for charred souvenirs.

Black mothers feared what would become of black boys.  
Feared that they would get too close to a blonde.  
In 1955—the stain of youth upon him—backwoods country store:  
Chicago boy stuttered, sometimes whistled to coax words.  
Shot. Eye gouged, body bloated, floated in Tallahatchie.

Black mothers feared what would become of black boys.  
Feared, searched for what would become of one man's dream.  
In 1998—the worst ride to hitch—backwoods Texas:  
Brown body dragged by a pick up truck. Decapitating culvert.  
Torso tossed in front of church, tossed like cleaned chicken bones.

Black mothers feared what would become of their black boys.  
Feared the power of the shield. A penchant for brutality.  
In 2009—the worst ride to hitch—on the West Coast:  
After train ride, subdued with knee rammed into neck.  
Unarmed. Shot in the back. Cameras as witnesses.

Black mothers fear what will become of their black boys.  
Fear they would text too much or get suspended from school.  
In 2012—black blood in the white house—in Florida:  
One shot to the chest. Seventeen years oozes out of his body.  
He stood his ground. Armed with a hoodie, Skittles, iced tea.

The recursive bow of history, rehearsing for the next act.  
Black mothers fearing what becomes of their black boys.

*\* The first five stanzas represent, respectively, the deaths of Jesse Washington, Emmett Till, James Byrd, Jr., Oscar Grant, and Trayvon Martin.*

Jennifer Bartell is a native of Johnsonville, South Carolina. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of South Carolina.

# DAY JOBS

If Berlioz or Nijinsky were alive today and living in Columbia, South Carolina, would either of these artistic geniuses be able to buy their bread and beer based on the sale or performance of their art alone? Wishful thinking, but sadly – probably not. Like most painters and poets, musicians, sculptors, dancers, actors, and other individuals who make art their lives, a modern-day Michelangelo would likely have to wash dishes to buy his marble; Oscar Wilde might sell shoes during the day then write plays about his customers come dark.

**Day jobs. It's rare to find the artist who doesn't have one.**

The reality is that most South Carolina artists make multiple contributions to their communities in addition to their arts. They work, vote, pay taxes, raise families, and grumble about the government like the rest of us mere mortals

In this regular feature, Day Jobs, Jasper Magazine – The Word on Columbia Arts salutes our local artists and the myriad ways they work to sustain our community at the same time that they create our culture.



Photo by C. Barker



HERE'S TO ALL  
**24**  
HOURS  
— IN AN —  
ARTIST'S  
**DAY**

**RHODES BAILEY** // Songwriter, guitar, and pedal steel player  
for Whiskey Tango Revue (Bailey also plays pedal steel for Buck Stanley)  
**DAY JOB** // trial attorney with Grier, Cox & Cranshaw, LLC

## Catching Up with Katie Fox



Photo by Forrest Clonts

# A

year and a half ago, after a fifteen-year professional career in the arts, I was given the opportunity to open a new performing arts center for Midlands Technical College –

a tremendous opportunity for me, personally, and for our community. Beginning in September, Harbison Theatre will present world premier productions by Columbia-based artists as well as touring productions by internationally-recognized companies. We will host performances by student groups of all ages; welcome innovative speakers and intellectual leaders to events like TEDxColumbiaSC; offer workshops in stagecraft to high school students and community members; and serve as a performing home to community groups such as the Palmetto Mastersingers and the Chapin Community Theatre. Some of these events have already experienced a successful run this year at the theatre. But believe me; we have so much more in store.

A couple of months ago I had lunch with the editor of *Jasper*, who asked, “What are you doing? We never see you anymore!” This new job keeps me busy, especially given that, currently, I am working with a staff of one – Me. She and I discussed the responsibilities of being a presenter and producer at a new venue, and I’m pretty sure the discussion led to my invitation to write this guest column. After all, very few people know exactly what it is that a presenter or producer does. I hope I can clear this up.

Essentially, the role of the presenter/producer is to provide talented, competent artists with the resources they need, trust them to create something remarkable, and provide them an audience with whom they will complete the experience.

On a daily basis, this is what it looks like for me:

**8:00 AM** – Oh, who am I kidding? I’m not at work yet, but I might be at the gas station scoring some Dunkin’ Donuts coffee.

**8:45 AM** – Check email.

**9:15 AM** – Make reminder phone calls to arts organizations that have rental events at the theatre the next week. None have sent in their event insurance documentation, which is mandatory for every event on campus. They assure me that the rider will be in my inbox tomorrow morning. Mark calendar to call and have this same conversation in two days.

**9:30 AM** – Check on the progress of the new website. It must fulfill our needs for online ticketing, marketing, volunteer recruitment, and rental requests, yet be user-friendly for both the audience and the webmaster, which means me.

**10:00 AM** – Phone call with the booking agent for a fantastic, internationally-renowned dance company we’re presenting next season. I have an 18-page technical rider to approve before we can go to contract. I would rather not approve it until I have a technical director on staff, which won’t be for a few more weeks. After some discussion of the rider’s primary tenets, the agent agrees that we can hold off on the final contract but may begin marketing the show. Excellent! Now I can tell *Jasper* readers that *Pilobolus* will be performing at the theatre on October 12th and 13th.

**11:00 AM** – The cast of our Family Series Workshop production of *UNTITLED* arrive for rehearsal. A few months ago I met with local actor and storyteller Darion McCloud and asked, “What would you perform for family audiences if you had all of the technical support you needed?” *UNTITLED* was his answer. It combines traditional storytelling with singing, musical instruments, costumes, acting, and video. The collaborative creation of the piece by its ensemble is beautiful to watch, and fills me with the energy I need to....

# RAMCO

framing & designs



custom framing at  
competitive rates

fine art originals

residential &  
commercial design by  
CACY Designs



7581 St. Andrews Rd • Irmo, SC  
803 781 4439 • ramcoframing.com

**12:00 PM** – ...wrestle with the State of South Carolina's procurement code. In case you don't know, the word "procurement" means "buying stuff." We're buying some new stage lights.

**1:00 PM** – Delivery of our new scene shop equipment. It's like Christmas! The once empty shop is now filled with saws, drills, pneumatic staplers, sanders, and more.

**2:00 PM** – Drop-in guests. Today it's a local theatre company who would like to tour the facility and talk about rental opportunities.

**2:30 PM** – Phone call with the college's director of development. He is recruiting sponsors for both the Family and the Signature Series. Like all non-profit arts organizations, Harbison Theatre looks for sponsorships and grants to fill the gap between production costs and ticket revenue.

**3:00 PM** – Program light cues for this weekend's performance of a local community band, which is my responsibility until the aforementioned new technical director comes on board.

**4:15 PM** – Phone the theatre's architect. We are preparing to buy either a fog machine or a haze machine, and need to know if the fire alarm and sprinkler system are triggered by heat or by particles. The architect explains that they are heat activated. I'm still too nervous to order either machine.

**4:30 PM** – Quick dinner at the desk, and then I'm off to class. This summer I am enrolled in an American Sign Language course at MTC. In January, Harbison Theatre will produce Sign Me Alice, a play about the founding of Gallaudet University which will be performed both in ASL and English simultaneously. The director only uses ASL, so I need to learn. I love the class.

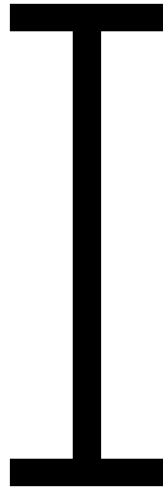
**8:00 PM** – Stop back at the theatre to check in with our part-time production assistant before heading home. Rehearsal is still going strong for a youth production that opens in two weeks. The young actors are focused – the parents are beaming.

I am tired, satisfied, happy, and (almost) ready to do it all again tomorrow. ♪

## Musing About the Meaning of a Muse

By Michael Miller

*"Nobody really knows or understands and nobody has ever said the secret. The secret is that it is poetry written into prose and it is the hardest of all things to do ..."* Mary Welsh Hemingway.



came across this quote recently while flipping through a book about Ernest Hemingway's writing life, and it rekindled the curious fascination I've had for decades with the creative process. Hemingway's fourth wife was talking about the secret to writing great fiction, but I've always marveled at the mystery that surrounds any great work of art, be it a novel by Charles Dickens, a song by Neil Young or a painting by Marc Chagall. From where did this inspiration come? Did it arrive gradually or was it a bolt out of the blue?

That whole bolt-out-of-the-blue question has intrigued me the most. During my years as a newspaper writer, I had the pleasure of interviewing quite a few artists, from novelists such as Minette Walters and William Gibson to songwriters such as John Hiatt and Joe Henry, and I always tried to work in a question about the source of their creativity. Answers were often similar, and the word "muse" popped up a lot. It all seemed to revolve around some indefinable power (a.k.a. Mary Hemingway's unknown "secret") that triggers the subconscious that creates a spark that ignites an idea that propels the artist into action. Of course, the hard work of actually creating something comes next.

During a conversation back in 1991 with Joe Henry, he admitted that an artist must be disciplined about the work. "But the actual spark of it is not something you

can really pin down," he added. "It's not like if I have two hours today, I can sit down and write a song. It doesn't really work that way for me."

Recently on NPR's Weekend Edition, I heard the Irish singer/songwriter Glen Hansard say, "Oftentimes -- and the best times -- it comes as a gift. I've always been a fan of those who work more in the inspired area -- meaning that they sort of let it come and don't edit too much."

The tricky part of this equation is: What if it doesn't come? What if the spark doesn't spark? "You just can't create those moments, those ideas," Henry said. "You just wait until they happen, then wrestle with them for awhile."

So the sculptor stares at a big chunk of granite, the painter at a blank canvas, the writer at an empty computer screen, and they all wait for an inspirational bolt out of the blue. It is during these times of waiting that self-doubt can creep into an artist's mind.

"What if I've done all I can do?" the artist might fret. "Should I just toss in the towel?"

To that I say, "Ne crains pas, Mesdames et messieurs!" A muse can be a tangible means of inspiration as well as a mystical one. Just think of Man Ray's Lee Miller, or Bob Dylan's Sara Lowndes. And even if you don't have an intimate human muse to spark your creativity, it doesn't mean you have to sit and fret while waiting for the subconscious one to speak.

I've just finished two cool little books that play down the whole concept of artistic muses and instead offer valuable tips on how to get to work. One is called "The War of Art" by Stephen Pressfield, which outlines ways to break through mental blocks and fire up your creativity. The other is "Steal Like an Artist" by Austin Kleon, in which creative types are advised to study the artists they admire and then create art of their own. After all, it was Pablo Picasso who said, "Art is theft."

Seems to me it's a combination of the two, mystical inspiration and hard work, and the main thing is to just get down to it. Or as Kleon so succinctly puts it, "Do good work and share it with people." Follow these simple words of advice, and both you and your muse will be happy. ♪

# conundrum

music hall

- Mon 7/16 Lost Wages / Ghosts of the Great Highway (w/ 10 Car Pile Up)  
Wed 7/18 Tres Hongos (Jacob Wick, Marc Riordan, Frank Rosaly)  
Thu 7/19 Stan Little, Tony Mann, Dale Jordan (progressive acoustic guitar)  
Fri 7/20 Remnant / Thought Criminals / cecilnick (NOCORE / rap / gamenaise)  
Sat 7/21 FatRat Da Czar & Lion in Winter (benefit for Children's Trust)  
Sun 7/22 Dead Kenny G's (ass-shaking jazz punk)  
Thu 7/26 Sinners and Saints / Just Married (folk / alt.country / indie)  
Fri 7/27 Marlee Scott (pop/country)  
Sat 7/28 Joy Kills, Jurassic Heat, Sons of Young (dirty blues and proto punk)  
Sun 7/29 Prehistoric Horse (NYC based free improv trio)
- Wed 8/1 Dr. Sketchy's Anti-Art School (drinks! dames! drawing!)  
Thu 8/2 The Parlor Soldiers (alt-country/americana)  
Thu 8/9 Kिलlick! (appalachian trance metal)  
Sat 8/11 Kevin Gordon (southern poet/rocker/guitarist)  
Thu 8/16 Modern Man & Cement Stars (post/indie rock)  
Fri 8/17 Jacob Johnson (neo-acoustic folk/funk)  
Sat 8/18 Adam Klein & The Wild Fires (traditional Americana Music with West African influence)  
Tue 8/21 Ninja Hymnbook Remarks (fans & motors/cassette tapes/speaker cones, lots of batteries)  
Wed 8/22 Weston Minnisalli / Oh Ginger (performance art / vocals / dance, Lindsay Holler)  
Fri 8/24 Duel for Theremin & Laptop Steel (space exploration)  
Thu 8/30 Keith Bates / Jeanne Borque (singer/songwriter/live-painting)
- Sat 9/1 Wasted Wine (gypsy rock)  
Wed 9/5 Dr. Sketchy's Anti-Art School (drinks! dames! drawing!)  
Fri 9/7 David Olney (country folk)  
Sat 9/8 DooMSlang / The Diaphone (indie rock)  
Wed 9/12 Jesse Dangerously, Mikal kHill, and Tribe One (nerdcore)  
Fri 9/14 Unchained (storytelling & music & circus acts, @ 7pm)  
Fri 9/14 Faun Fables (shapeshifting & songtelling, @ 10pm)

626 Meeting St  
[www.conundrum.us](http://www.conundrum.us)