

# JAZZPAPER

THE WORD ON COLUMBIA ARTS | SEPT / OCT 2013 VOL. 003 NO. 001



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PATRON PROFILE:  
**RICHARD BURTS**

BY DAY:

Developer of "adaptive use" projects.

BY NIGHT:

Richard enjoys the "Trustus Experience"

HOBBIES:

Dreaming and Visualizing

PETS:

A golden retriever named Joe & a cat named Meowzer

Richard Burtis sees Columbia through a creative lens. His passion for architecture and quality materials from the private sector makes him a man constantly on a mission. Where other people see an abandoned and overgrown edifice, Burtis sees an opportunity to create a modern event space or performance venue with an historical over-tone. In other words, he takes a building that nobody wants and develops it into a place that everybody wants to experience. If you've ever been to 701 Whaley, then you're already familiar with one of Burtis' greatest successes.

On occasion, when Richard finally takes a break from imagineering, he comes to Trustus Theatre to enjoy the Trustus experience. He comes with his wife Janet or his development colleagues. He enjoys the new beer selections at the Trustus bar, especially the tall cans of Guinness, another historic institution that has stood the test of time. He's seen a lot of shows at Trustus, but one of his favorites was last season's *Vista Queen Pagan* because he experienced it from the stage as a contestant!

"While Trustus brings the best modern theatre to Columbia, it maintains a rich history. I can remember going to shows at Trustus way back when the Vista we know today was just starting to get its momentum. Co-founders Jim and Kay Thigpen were true pioneers going into a funky and eclectic area of old warehouses and industrial buildings that was becoming a village of creative and artistic people. When Trustus opened, they took what some called 'cutting edge' to a whole new level. I felt like I was getting a world view right here in Columbia! Trustus is still doing that for its patrons today! All I can say is 'WOW!' - RICHARD BURTS

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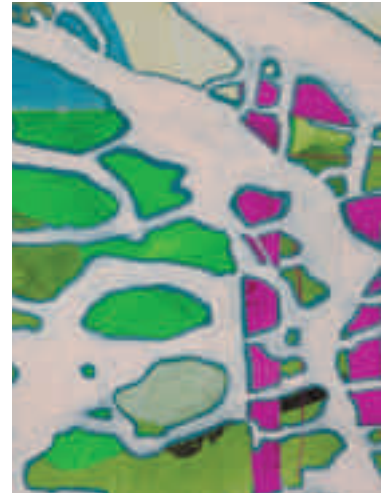
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## JASPER IS

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 Forrest Clonts *PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR* • Ed Madden *LITERARY ARTS EDITOR*  
 Chris Robinson *VISUAL ARTS EDITOR* • August Krickel *THEATRE EDITOR*  
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 Tom Dempster • Christian Baker • Katie Turner

## JASPER ONLINE

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**A**midst the sticky second skin that is a July's humidity in the Soda City, Cindi Boiter cryptically approached me in 2011 about a "fantasy project" she was crafting. Intrigued, I allowed her to coax me into the Gourmet Shop whereupon she unraveled her then-private plan to create a magazine devoted to the coverage of the arts in Columbia.

The magazine would be called *Jasper*. She wanted me to be its designer.

After a luncheon-length Q and A, I sheepishly signed on. For me, it's quite common to get approached by people with plans and ideas. It's entirely less

common to get approached by people who actually end up seeing their machinations through. Thus, I wasn't entirely sure how this *Jasper* would pan out.

As early as the following August, though, as my inbox started bursting with incoming copy, images, art, and a masthead for this new publication, it was quite clear this magazine was indeed going to be a thing. I was now expected to hold up my end of the agreement, which was to design the magazine on time, every time, so that each issue of *Jasper* would be released on a reliable and consistent schedule.

Shit.

I was in no way a foreigner to print design, but I had only visited the land of a document numbering double digits two times during my eight years as a designer, and those two times were years ago. Additionally, I hadn't even scrutinized an actual magazine since maybe 1999 when I'd read *TIME* on the toilet. With this convenient maelstrom afoot, I panicked about my magazine game because I knew these rodeos were going to be public. It was like *Urban Cowboy* all over again.

To tighten this craft I put a wrench around it and got reacquainted with the paper river I was unwittingly already splashing about in. Wherever I've been over the past two years, I scan all the magazines displayed about, gleaning fresh and sweet ideas that I can twist and shout and apply to *Jasper*. Even if this is over bourbon, neat, in a bar in Punta Gorda, Florida, on Thanksgiving, with my sister, at 1:00 AM, conversing

with a self-proclaimed octogenarian wearing a teal-ish suit.

While I have no spawn, I liken this process to pruning a baby; battening down said child's cowlicks and tying their shoes. You know, sprucing the darling up to impress the village folk.

Although a tad circuitously, here we arrive at why I was assigned to script this message. This issue marks *Jasper's* second year as a magazine and the inception of its third volume. I felt this anniversary demanded a renewal of the magazine's brand, one that would symmetrically align its masthead's attitude with the aesthetic progressions I've sought to nail within the publication over the past two years.

In detail, I have discarded the previous typeface and its faux distressed motif. The result is a bolder iteration, one that enforces the attitude of being "the word" on our local arts scene. The typeface's corners allude to the original whispers of the Jasper quill, but also entertain my own penchant for bold, geometric fonts that are born of a Constructivist's aesthetic. My end goal was to achieve a style that was both strong and abstract, but retained a hint of tasteful and approachable whimsy that was married to a cryptic fellow dressed in a modern jumpsuit.

Did I get it right? None of us will ever really know—for now, the child's only two. But to quote the immortal words of Biggie Smalls, "Federal agents, mad 'cause I'm flagrant."

**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

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## BLOOD!



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS COOK

Chris Cook fell under the spell of *Dracula* when he played Renfield, the Count's mad, insect-eating minion, in an A.C. Flora High School production, with a young Kristin Davis as heroine Lucy. The lifelong fan of the horror genre and founder of High Voltage Theatre is now collaborating with Dacre Stoker, great-grandnephew of *Dracula* author Bram Stoker, to bring the world premiere of the *Bram Stoker Estate's Dracula* to the West Columbia Riverwalk Amphitheatre, just in time for Halloween.

After studying playwriting with Pulitzer-winner Beth Henley and earning an MFA in Directing at Chicago's Roosevelt University, Cook felt ready in 2002 to lead his own professional company, emulating the itinerant structure of the SC Shakespeare Company where he had both acted and directed. The name High Voltage would signify a more aggressive, gritty, in-your-face style of performance, often incorporating Cook's skills as stage magician and fight choreographer. Early productions at assorted venues included edgy fare like *Reservoir Dogs* and *Cowboy Mouth*, but Cook's original adaptation of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* was a perennial crowd-pleaser, and the group's mission evolved to focus on horror and the

macabre. Recent shows have included *Night of the Living Dead* at Tapp's, *Phantom of the Opera* at the Riverwalk Amphitheater, and *Frankenstein*, performed live at the Civil War-era historical dock at Granby Locks in 2009, with future mayoral candidate Aaron Johnson in the title role and Cook as the Creature. Cook directs his own adaptations of these classic stories, and a number of his scripts are now available in book form; in addition to its seven incarnations locally, *Sleepy Hollow* is performed several times a year by professional and amateur groups across the country.

While planning for *Dracula* earlier this year, Cook discovered that Dacre Stoker, co-author of *Dracula: The Undead*, an "official" 2009 sequel to the original 1897 novel, lived in Aiken, SC. "I'd be a fool not to try to reach out to him," Cook recalls, hoping to enlist Stoker's help as a creative consultant, or at least receive his blessing. What started as an informal chat over coffee quickly developed into a full-fledged collaboration between High Voltage and the Bram Stoker Estate. Dacre Stoker, a native of Montreal and a Pentathlon champion who coached the Canadian Pentathlon team in the 1988 Summer Olympics, currently works as a tennis professional, and has become the Stoker family historian. In addition to his first novel, he has developed a multi-media lecture show, "Stoker on Stoker," produced a documentary about his ancestor, and co-authored the non-fiction *Bram Stoker's Lost Journal*.

Kindred spirits, he and Cook shared a desire to return the story to its roots in the theatre. For nearly 30 years, Bram Stoker's day job was business manager of Sir Henry Irving's Lyceum Theatre in London. Irving's commanding presence may have influenced Stoker's depiction of Dracula's hold over Renfield, while Irving's portrayal of Iachimo in *Cymbeline*, a villain who lies concealed in a coffin-like chest before emerging to menace the sleeping heroine by night, has more than a few echoes of Stoker's novel, published the very next year. Stoker wrote a stage version, which received a reading at the Lyceum, but Irving never played the lead in an actual production. Decades later Hamilton Deane wrote a new adaptation which

was significantly re-written by John L. Balderston for Broadway, where Bela Lugosi found fame in the lead. That variation, drastically different from the novel, is the source of most modern versions. Cook and Dacre Stoker have added a framing device, based on "the Icelandic Preface," a later introduction penned by Bram Stoker in which he declares the events detailed herein are all true. While clearly the literary equivalent of "names have been changed to protect the innocent," Cook feels that Stoker was also drawing on contemporary fears in a London where women and children regularly went missing, and the Jack the Ripper murders were a recent memory.

"Dacre and I have a creative synergy," Cook says, "bouncing ideas off each other. I'm the one with my fingers on the keyboard, while he's the one pacing the room." Cook is also fond of the British comedies of manners of Noel Coward and Oscar Wilde, and promises a few laughs amidst the mayhem. He signs off in correspondence with "Bloody Best," and early press material for the production is sent with the title "Scary Stuff!" He notes that this is the first stage adaptation since the 1927 Deane-Balderston treatment to receive official authorization and endorsement by the Bram Stoker Estate. The title role will be played by Alfred Kern, recently seen as Mr. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice* at Finlay Park, while Cook will play Renfield. *Bram Stoker Estate's Dracula* opens Thursday, October 17, and runs through Halloween at the West Columbia Riverwalk Amphitheater. A website, [draculaplay.com](http://draculaplay.com), will soon go live, while information on High Voltage Theatre can be found via Facebook. -AK

## BASSOON CONCERTOS, JOAN TOWER, AND PETER KOLKAY

Bassoonists and new music lovers, rejoice—the bassoon concerto is alive and well in Columbia.

On October 4, 2013, the Grawemeyer, Pulitzer, and nearly-every-other-award-winning composer Joan Tower will be present at the Koger Center for



the premiere of her new Bassoon Concerto. Known for her works *Sequoia*, *Petrouchkates*, and *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman*, Tower's angular, soaring music will be brought to life by Peter Kolkay and the SC Philharmonic, under the direction of Morihiko Nakahara. Kolkay, until recently the principal bassoonist at the SC Phil (he was appointed to a position at Vanderbilt University in 2012), and Nakahara, a champion of new concert music, decided several years ago to commission Tower to compose a work for bassoon and orchestra. This was, of course, not an arbitrary decision.

Nakahara, when he held a previous conducting post in Michigan, led an orchestra that was part of a consortium of smaller orchestras (that is to say, local and regional with smaller budgets) that commissioned Tower's *Made in America*. This was a win-win for everyone involved, especially Tower, who received a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition thanks to Leonard Slatkin and the Nashville Symphony's performance. Like most preeminent contemporary composers, Nakahara's connection to Tower extends back further: undergrad. A rite of passage for clarinet players, Tower's *Wings* is a challenging, virtuosic work for solo clarinet at once crystalline and fluid, both jarring and lucid, a work that explores practically every nuance of a clarinetist's prowess. It would me a

mistake not to expect the same degree of technicality in a work for a renowned performer like Peter Kolkay.

Kolkay—no stranger to fame, especially around these parts—has also long been a supporter of new music, premiering works by composers from the late Elliot Carter to USC's own John Fitz Rogers. Numerous grants and honors bestow his vita, and he is an artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. About to write his latest professional chapter in Nashville, premiering Tower's work in October may serve as a final farewell to Columbia, while fulfilling Nakahara's tacit pledge to bring more new music and exciting artistry to the SC Philharmonic. Kolkay leaves SC, but leaves it musically richer—and Nashville is quite lucky to have him. And, in an odd way, the circle completes, and the dots connect: Kolkay moves from Columbia to Nashville; Nashville hosts a Grammy for a Nakahara-and-company commission of a work by Joan Tower; Joan Tower comes to Columbia.

There should be no mistake that this premiere is incredibly important. It may even be acceptable to say, in the words of one particular Vice President, that this is a "big (expletive deleted) deal." And it truly is. Despite the eye-popping premiere-filled seasons for, say, the L.A. Philharmonic and the Brooklyn Philharmonic over the past few years, symphonic premieres—never mind new concertos—are nearly as rare as California condors. Most orchestras across the country continue to remain in favor of exhibiting the preserved specimens of Haydn, Beethoven, and the other Great Romantics (and that's perfectly fine). They may throw a bone or two at the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> Century to appease a small yet vocal minority that would like the symphony hall to function as it once did: to premiere challenging new works and further the career of composers—all composers, not just the established. But living on scraps is no cause for celebration.

Further, the bassoon receives very little love—especially as part of a sweeping new work by a major composer. The mere fact that Joan Tower's bassoon concerto is being debuted here in Columbia should make us proud. Go through the seasons of the NC Sympho-

ny, the Greensboro Symphony, or even the Atlanta Symphony, and be ready for disappointment when it comes to representation of living composers or 20<sup>th</sup>-Century music in general. This premiere should give us continued hope that Nakahara and the SC Philharmonic are truly on the forefront among orchestras in the Southeast, and willing to bet big, and bet boldly, on new music.

Reasons to rejoice, indeed.

**-Tom Dempster**

## NATHAN HALVERSON AND BORDER LANDSCAPE



IMAGES COURTESY NATHAN HALVERSON

A solitary tractor trundles through an arid, monochrome landscape. This image sequence is one of many slow, empty spaces among the US-Mexican border depicted in Nathan Halverson's *Border Landscape*, calling to mind the Talking Heads lyric "heaven is a place where nothing ever happens." For digital artist Nathan Halverson, seeking out the imbroglio of activity rather than stasis has been his lifelong pursuit.

Halverson grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, and earned a degree in Journalism from the University of Wisconsin and worked for several years as a journalist, chasing stories and maintaining his self-described news-junkie habit. Before, during, and after this chapter of his life, Halverson was involved



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with the Madison rock scene, playing guitar in bands, expanding his musical vocabulary, and driving to Chicago to catch the fringes of the digital art and new music scenes there. Slowly, he began producing sound designs, improvised electrified works, and occasional digital videos. Halverson came to a crossroads: always something of an artist, always something of a musician, he considered returning to college. Concerned that music departments may be more reactive than proactive regarding digital art and intersections between music, visual art, and technology, he opted for a visual arts degree. Art training seemed a better way to fit his interest in the concept of subject and the overlap of media in addition to craft. He moved to Columbia in 2008, and in 2009 decided to pursue an MFA in Kinetic Imaging from Virginia Commonwealth University (granted in 2011). Since August, 2011 has been teaching in the Media Arts department at the University of South Carolina.

But, the news-junkie, politics-hound, information-seeking Halverson remained. There is often a political element to how Halverson views the world through his work, he states, but he doesn't jump into a piece with an ideology as a guiding principle. The flood of digital source material and data to be mined, especially thanks to YouTube, allows Halverson to truly experiment, organically creating works that reflect a richness of cultural and societal trends, including the seemingly unending morass of Internet-provided information itself. Starting with field recordings and sound design, Halverson then attaches video, tweaking and manipulating it as a visual reflection of the auditory subject.

While he has created sound design and music for films beyond his own work, one of his standout pieces is *Border Landscape*. Staying true to his roots, Halverson sought out – and found – an unusual story: webcams set up along the US-Mexi-

co border that can be monitored by anyone, anywhere, with the option for “virtual patrollers” to contact The Authorities if they saw something awry. Intrigued, Halverson captured hours upon hours of this footage, only to find a whole lot of nothing. “Landscape art in motion,” as he puts it. “I was fascinated with the idea that I could create a landscape simultaneously real and virtual.” And indeed, *Border Landscape* is study in slowness, stillness Teshigahara or Takemitsu would envy, couched within the highly politicized narrative of illegal immigration and the polarized, ugly rhetoric of undocumented workers. A fitting irony to the talking-heads debate on the issue: *Border Landscape* is a silent work, with only manipulated video of a slow, fluid world more reminiscent of John Ford western than of heated discussions on the Hill; more concerned with kineticizing a still life than injecting a narrative into the subject.

This fascination with spaces, real and virtual, continues with Halverson. Taking an experimental geography course and considering GPS, exactitude, location, and place as sculptural objects (both sonically and visually), Halverson is slowly developing a larger work based on mapping through numerous smaller studies. Sound art, like kinetic video art, is thinking about space, putting the listener/observer in a specific space, and putting that space in motion; so, what then of surveillance and public spheres and finding oneself in the physical domain – never mind the virtual? Halverson seems poised to collapse these ideas and objects together, but admits he's just at the beginning of this particular journey. In addition to creating art, maintaining his guitar chops, seeking out the unusual, and teaching keep Halverson quite busy, out of the clutches of places where nothing ever happens. Some of his works can be found at [www.nathan-halverson.com](http://www.nathan-halverson.com).

-Tom Dempster





## CONTEMPORARY SHOWCASES

Back in the day, local contemporary arts aficionados and the artists they followed could look forward to a large-scale, comprehensive exhibition in Columbia only once every three years—the TRIENNIAL project sponsored by the SC State Museum and the SC Arts Commission. And then, in 2004, it was over. Thankfully, the 701 Center for Contemporary Art filled the void in 2011 and even upped the ante with its first Biennial.

Follow through is everything.

The Biennial is back once again for a second survey exhibition of work by contemporary SC artists which will be held, in two parts, at the 701 CCA on the second floor of 701 Whaley Street in Columbia. Part I opened on September 5<sup>th</sup> and runs through October 20<sup>th</sup>, and Part II opens on November 7<sup>th</sup> with an opening reception that evening from 7 – 9 pm and runs through December 22<sup>nd</sup>. New executive director Sheldon Paschal is excited. “This is our way of making contemporary arts a staple in Columbia’s and South Carolina’s arts culture,” she says.

Columbia artists are well represented in this year’s Biennial. Part I will exhibit the work of Peter Lenzo, Robert Lyon, Mary Robinson (who is also profiled later in this issue of *Jasper*), David Yaghjian (who was *Jasper’s* first cover artist in September 2011), and Susan Lenz (*Jasper’s* 2012 Visual Artist of the Year.) During Part II we’ll also see the work of Michaela Pilar Brown (featured in *Jasper* vol. 001, no. 003) and Sara Schneckloth (cover artist and guest editorial writer for *Jasper* vol. 002, no. 004.)

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# MR. HAMMOND GOES TO SYRIA

By Alex Smith



PHOTO BY FORREST CLONTS

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dward Albee wrote, “Sometimes a person has to go a very long distance out of his way to come back a short distance correctly.” It is this particular ‘sometimes’ which, for generations, has befallen young people everywhere, inspiring them to do things which some would consider crazy, or unnecessary, in order to complete the simplest of tasks. It is a ‘sometimes’ which has existed in the young the world over throughout recorded history, but which has been romanticized and even encouraged in America, this need to explore beyond what is already mapped in order to discover the truth of what actually exists in those spots where the cartographers have written, “Here there be tygers.”

Thomas Hammond, staff photographer here at *Jasper*, has arrived at the crossroads of his own Albeean ‘sometimes’. As this issue goes to print, Thomas will be in Southern Turkey with journalist David Axe. They will be based just a few miles from the Syrian border, and, for about a month, will travel into the city of Aleppo to observe and report on the ongoing conflict there.



Talking with Thomas and David on a recent Saturday afternoon about their impending journey, it's not hard to see why they are working together. Their easy rapport makes the claim that they have always known each other entirely credible. They met in a bar here in Columbia, where Thomas was having a "contest" with a lady friend to see who had travelled the weirdest places in the world.

**Axe:** "That was the night I stole your girlfriend, right?"

They both laugh, something they do a lot throughout the conversation. Thomas continues by talking about how David horned in on the contest and won. The two men started talking about the nature of David's work as a reporter covering conflicts around the world to places like Nicaragua, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Lebanon, and Kenya, among many others. Thomas expressed his own interest in travelling and covering conflicts as a photographer, and the two became fast friends.

David's travels and war coverage continued, and Thomas became increasingly in-demand as a photographer in Columbia. When David was hired as National Security Editor at medium.com, a news site created by Twitter co-founder Ev Williams, and the opportunity for him to cover the conflict in Syria came up, he saw an opportunity to work with Thomas.

**Axe:** "I knew, in covering Syria, I could and should bring a photographer to cover it, and that it should be Thomas. The logistics were commercial as opposed to governmental, so it was just a matter of getting the money together."

For Thomas, this opportunity promises to be more than just a new turn on the path of his career as a photographer. His family has roots in Syria and Lebanon. While he knows that the current situation in the region is not one in which he will be able to discover much, if any, tangible evidence of his family's history, he is just as interested in the experience of being in the places where his ancestors once lived.

**Hammond:** "I don't know anything further back than my maternal great-grandfather Lutfallah Jarjoura. He immigrated to America in 1906 from

a village somewhere near Beirut. I've been told it was a town in the mountains. At that time, the Ottomans controlled the region. He was a Maronite Christian, and it is believed that he left to avoid religious persecution. His was the typical immigrant story. He came to America to find a better life. When he arrived, his name was Anglicized into 'George'. He met a Lebanese woman. They got married, had lots of kids, and settled in a town called Selma, in Eastern North Carolina. He opened a grocery store there and became a successful businessman. My grandfather was one of the oldest of Letvala's children. We believe he must have misunderstood the forms that had to be filled out for a child's birth certificate, and that he must have just written his own last name when filling out my grandfather's birth record, because my grandfather's name was George George. He went on to become a chemist and helped to develop nylon for the U.S. military. My grandmother, Lydia, was his secretary. It makes for a compelling story when you're trying to raise money ... ultimately, I'm hoping that this will be a starting point for future trips to the region."

Thomas refers to the fact that he used the fundraising site kickstarter.com to collect the funds necessary to make the trip and do the work safely. There is a floor of funding below which engaging in this kind of journalism is not safe, and both Thomas and David agreed that they needed to be fully funded before they made the trip.

**David:** "I've been blown up three times, kidnapped twice, shot at a whole bunch. The scariest situations, though, are mobs. It's like drowning in a sea full of sharks."

With such serious risk a certainty, the obvious question is, why take the risk?

**Hammond:** "At this point, here in Columbia, I'm challenged as a photographer by the consistency of the work, but not so much artistically. Maybe that's my problem, and I need to find new ways to challenge myself here, but right now, I'd rather go overseas and have an adventure."

Their broad journalistic mandate is to cover "THE WAR IN SYRIA", writ bold, because everything there is changing at

such a rate that they won't know what's happening on the ground until they arrive. The end product of their trip will be a series of long feature articles for medium.com which David will write and Thomas will illustrate. They will also shoot video for the broadcast news client they are working with (as of this writing they were negotiating with several candidates), which they will also edit into a short documentary. Thomas has a gallery show in mind, as well.

The plan is to be in Turkey for about a month, and they hope to travel over the border into Aleppo at least five times. On those days they will connect with Free Syrian Army rebels, interview them, along with some civilians, and, with luck, be taken near the front lines to observe the fighting. Their proximity to the violence, however, is determined by practicality in relation to the job they are doing.

**Axe:** "What kind of news am I going to be able to report if I'm cowering behind a wall, dodging bullets? I want to be slightly removed so I can actually see what's happening"

Thomas sees more value in the potential for intimacy in the photographs he'll be taking.

**Hammond:** "...the texture of their skin...weariness...we're going to be talking to them outside the conflict. I want to try to convey their stories with the pictures I take of them."

David concurs.

**Axe:** "I think you're onto something. I think the best photos to come out of this assignment are going to be portraits. Those faces will tell you so much more than an explosion or a puff of smoke will."

And Thomas sums it up.

**Hammond:** "Yeah. Putting a human face on the story. Ideally, I'd like to get portraits of individuals from every faction, Assad's forces, the F.S.A., the militant Islamists, civilians, all of them ... because, you know, I might have my own personal ideas of who I think is right, whatever that means, but the most important thing is that this is a story about human beings relating to each other and trying, because of or in spite of each other, to figure out how to exist on this earth."

# THE JASPER GUILD

## *M A S T E R*

WADE SELLERS · CORALEE HARRIS · CINDY PATTERSON  
FORBES PATTERSON · WILLIAM SCHMIDT

## *J O U R N E Y M A N*

JENNIFER PHELPS · WILLIAM FICK · KATIE FOX · DIANE HARE · TONI ELKINS  
LAUREN & ROBERT MICHALSKI · DONI JORDAN · MANITA & CHARLES CRAFT  
LOCALHAPPINESS.NET · CEILLE BAIRD WELCH · PHILIP MULLEN · KAY AND JIM THIGPEN  
KIRKLAND SMITH · AMY OVERSTREET

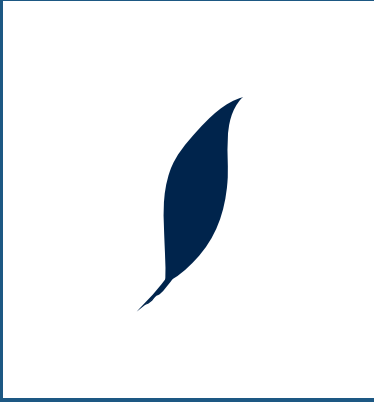
## *A P P R E N T I C E*

RUSS & JEANNIE EIDSON ▪ NANCY POPE & JOHN WATKINS ▪ MARCIA WATKINS ▪ LAURIE & DUNCAN MCINTOSH  
WILLIAM STARRETT ▪ SHEILA MORRIS ▪ CHARLES H. LESSER ▪ JOSEPH COUNTS ▪ TRACIE BROOM ▪ ALVIN NEAL  
TRACE BALLOU ▪ JANNA MCMAHAN ▪ DICK MOONS ▪ EASTER ANTIQUES ▪ MARGEY BOLEN ▪ MELINDA COTTON  
ROBERT COFFEE ▪ C. HOPE CLARK ▪ WENTWORTH TRADD ▪ WATERMARK HYPNOSIS ▪ HEATHER GREEN

## *A R T I S T P E E R*

NANCY KAUFFMAN ▪ TODD MATHIS ▪ GISELLE WOOD ▪ ELENA MARTINEZ-VIDAL ▪ ERIN BOLSHAKOV ▪ ANNA SHAW LEGARE  
CINDY RODDEYSEAN "THAT GODZILLA GUY" MCGUINNESS ▪ B. A. HOHMAN ▪ JOE MORALES ▪ RAIA JANE HIRSCH ▪ GRACE AGUILA  
WILD BLUE SKY ▪ ROBIN GOTTLIEB ▪ LIZZIE GILLIAM WRENN ▪ NANCY MARINE ▪ LADYBUG ART STUDIOS  
RON HAGELL ▪ HARRIET SHOWMAN





YOU'RE INVITED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF

# THE JASPER **GUILD**

The Jasper Guild is a group of artists and arts patrons who share Jasper's mission of bringing artists from different disciplines together for inspiration and community growth; making artists more visible to one another and the community at large; and making art a more integral part of the lives of people in the Columbia Midlands.

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PERFORMANCE

# INCUBATOR

## HATCHING GREAT EXPERIENCES

*By Kristine Hartvigsen*

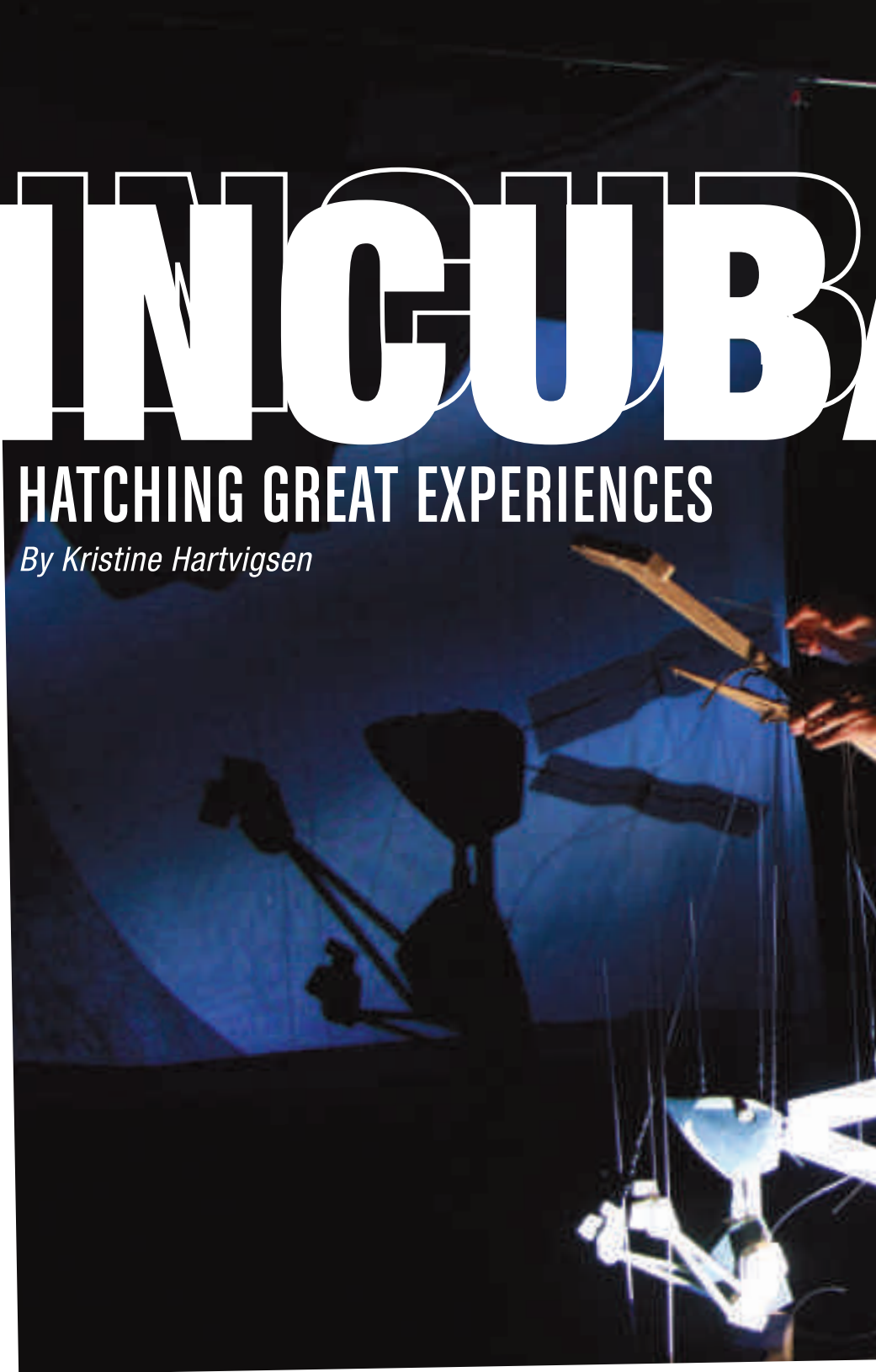
Katie Fox knows talent, and she casts a wide, eclectic net to bring it to the stage at Midlands Technical College's Harbison Theatre. An innovator who embraces experimental ideas, the director of theatre operations channels her own alter-identities as performer, director, and writer into her work while never losing sight of the college's mission of achieving sustainable employment for everyone, including professional artists.

"In my former job with the SC Arts Commission," Fox explains, "one of my roles was running Artists' Ventures, which is designed to support sustainable careers in various art forms. We would ask the question, is this helping the artist create a career?" That is very much the impetus behind the theatre's two-year-old Performance Incubator, established to invite professional artists to create new works that will be introduced on the Harbison stage before going on tour to a variety of traditional and non-traditional venues.

The Incubator puts up \$5,000 for one show per season. "That is not a ton, but it helps," Fox says. In the Incubator's

first year, she approached master storyteller Darion McCloud. A solo draw in his own right, as well as creative director of NiA Theatre Company and a member of Trustus Theatre and the South Carolina Shakespeare Company, McCloud possesses a keen talent for bringing together multidisciplinary artists on inventive collaborations. Fox was confident he could create and

deliver a compelling, high-quality production, and he did with "Story Squad," a celebration of the stories people tell through spoken word, song, music, and movement. It was a hit in the fall of 2012, and Fox brought "Story Squad" back in May for a "sensory-friendly" encore designed especially for audiences living along the autism spectrum. The sensory-friendly production was





# ATOR



PICTURED: KIMI MAEDA | PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATIE FOX, HARBISON THEATRE - MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

funded in part by the Cultural Council of Richland and Lexington Counties.

In looking back on his Incubator experience, McCloud was stunned by the level of support and involvement he received. "I didn't realize how much the theatre was actually committed to the success of the project. I probably under-utilized their resources because I am so accustomed to doing things on

my own," he says. "And Katie really understands the process. She can anticipate needs and ask the right questions. She has a good eye and good ear. During the whole process, both of us were on the same page about making the show as good as we could possibly make it."

As Incubator shows are designed to do, "Story Squad" has gone on to be performed at such venues as Olympia Fest

and the SC Book Festival. It will soon make another appearance at the Richland Library on Saturday, September 21, at 10:30 a.m. in the Children's Room on Assembly Street.

For the Incubator's second year, Fox has lined up an extraordinary, original rock-and-roll puppet musical called "Planet Hopping," the collaboration of two of Columbia's finest puppeteers,



Kimi Maeda and Lyon Hill of Belle et Bête, and the popular children's rock band, Lunch Money. "Planet Hopping," which will run November 15-16 at Harbison Theatre, will take young and old alike on a voyage through space exploring the mysteries of the planets and solar systems while reinforcing the meaning of family.

Maeda and Hill worked together for three years at the Columbia Marionette Theatre before forming Belle et Bête in 2011 to organize the Spork in Hand Puppet Slam Series.

"We've really enjoyed bringing talented puppeteers from across the Southeast to Columbia, but we also wanted to create our own full-length perfor-

mance," Maeda explains. "Winning the Artists' Ventures Initiatives Grant from the SC Arts Commission, as well as support from Harbison Theatre's Performance Incubator, has changed this vague dream into a real plan."

Maeda had contacted Fox the previous year in the hopes that Harbison Theatre might be a production partner on a grant she was applying for at the time. Maeda didn't win that particular grant but shared with Fox details about "Planet Hopping." Intrigued, Fox ended up participating in the application process with Maeda for the Arts Commission grant.

"Our money is serving as match for the grant," Fox says. "It meant she didn't

have to put up pocket cash. So the project has a \$10,000 total budget. The Arts Commission is playing a big part in the Incubator even though the grant was not directly to the Incubator."

"From the beginning, we knew we wanted to incorporate live music into our puppet show," Maeda says. "We approached Molly Ledford from Lunch Money and were thrilled to find that she was just as excited about the idea of a partnership as we were."

Maeda says Fox has been a real asset as work progresses on the show: "She has been helping us stay on track by holding us to a production schedule. It's always easier to work towards real deadlines. ... I really consider this project an experiment where we're all really pushing ourselves as working artists. Not only have Belle et Bête and Lunch Money never collaborated on a full-length show with live audio before, we've never created a show of this scale that was meant to tour. For this reason,



Katie Fox's professional experience as a presenter has been just as important as the financial support from the Performance Incubator. Her advice has been instrumental in the development of our business plan and also certain creative aspects of the show."

Those interested in pitching to the Performance Incubator need to understand that projects considered must be of the highest professional quality. "We are looking for people who have more than amateur experience, who have been recognized for excellence in their field," Fox explains. "The first two years have been just family shows, but we are not limited to that." However, insofar as touring shows are concerned, there is greater demand for family shows. "When parents take their kids to something, and they are all moved, that is really important. That is when they go home and have important conversations with each other. I think 'Story Squad' was that way, and I think 'Planet Hopping' will be that way."

# ART GRANTS AT WORK: AMANDA LADYMON AND THE LADYBUG STUDIOS

BY KATHERINE LAPRAD

Most readers are familiar with the archetypical story of the lone artist searching for new invigorating life experiences to influence the productive spirit. The quest often relies on deep introspection resulting from a prolonged period of solitude. Reality resides somewhere in the middle.

Amanda Ladymon moved to Columbia in 2006 to attend the University of South Carolina's MFA program, where she began experimenting with biomorphic forms and materials. She began mingling fiber, plastics, plaster, wire, paper, wax, found objects, and pigment to investigate local history, biological forms, and woman's connection to nature. "In grad school, I was making something every day and I knew that would continue, but I didn't know how," says Ladymon.

Following graduation, she worked at a shelter for special needs animals, began organizing children's art workshops for the 701 Center for Contemporary Art, met her future husband Eric Stockard, and taught. Her first experience working with kids was during grad school as an intern for the Columbia Museum of Art. "It wasn't anything at the time that I thought I would do professionally," she says. Later while doing outreach at the Boys and Girls Club, the idea to explore art education for kids came to fruition.



PHOTO BY JONATHAN SHARPE

In April 2012, while eight months pregnant, the couple moved into an old Victorian home across the Gervais Street Bridge in West Columbia. "Within the first month of living here I thought, this house would be so cool to do something with business wise," she says. Although the thought of juggling a newborn and a new business seemed challenging, a seminar held in November by the SC Arts Commission convinced her otherwise when she learned of the Artist Venture Initiative Grant. The grant is intended to help SC artists cultivate business acumen so they can develop sustainable careers and contribute to the community by funding the creation of arts-based businesses. "I was thinking that grants were so ridiculously complicated and it really wasn't," Ladymon says. Soon after, she created Ladybug Art Studios and the first grant proposal was submitted in December 2012. In January, Ladymon learned her proposal was accepted to apply for the full grant funding. After approximately 20 hours of work, the final submission was completed in March and the grant of \$5000 was awarded in May.

The deep red door of her home now opens into a home-based business that consists of a family residence, a person-

al art space, and an art education studio. Ladybug Art Studios emerged from a practical dilemma that many parents face: the complexities of juggling personal endeavors, childcare responsibilities, and work. The studio also conducts children's art camps focused on painting and recycled crafts.

The first children's art workshops at Ladybug Studios were well-attended, despite a lack of mailers and paid advertising. She says the grant money will help improve the foundation she has built and a portion will help her produce more of her own work. A portion of the grant will be used to build a safe and navigable staircase to the detached art studio. Another portion will go to promoting the business and paying for a full-time assistant.

Ladymon has since dedicated herself to working with children as much as possible. She says the grant is not going to pay for her time, but now that the early years of parenting are past, combined with the AVI grant award, the small bit of chaos that she thrives on will result in more personal art production, community involvement, and art education through Ladybug Art Studios.



# SUPER PATRONS

BY CYNTHIA BOITER

*They do it not for the glory, not for the praise, and not even for the thanks. They do it simply to be a part of the magic of the arts.*

They aren't hard to find, but they are hard to catch. They're the ones who are always in motion—they rarely sit still and chances are you'll find them with a tool of some sort in their hands; a hammer, glue gun, a needle or broom. They aren't typically the biggest donors to an arts organization and they often shy away from high profile posts like sitting on boards of directors or chairing fancy committees. But the folks who run arts organizations, whether they deal with dance, theatre, music, or the visual arts, know that these important people bring something to the table without which the arts community would likely collapse—a spirit of volunteerism backed by dedication, an inexhaustible work ethic, and a pure love for the art form they support that makes them indispensable. We're calling them Super Patrons—and we asked some of our local arts organizations to tell us who from their families they can't live without.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA BAKER

## David Phillips

“David Phillips is the anchor, heart and soul of the About Face drawing group at the Columbia Museum of Art,” says Leslie Pierce, associate director of public programs and community relations. “He is the one who got me involved when they met at the old CMA’s weekend studio in the early 1990s and he is the one who is here every week, Monday mornings and Tuesday nights to make sure the sessions run smoothly. About Face has been meeting at the CMA for over a decade and David has been my right hand man to make sure everything goes according to plan. He greets the models, makes sure they are paid, and answers any questions for newbies. If a light bulb burns out he makes sure it is replaced.”



PHOTO BY FOREST CLONTS

## Cydney Berry & Charles Stern

When John Whitehead, executive director of the Columbia Music Festival Association, was asked to nominate his most valued supporters and volunteers, two people came instantly to mind—Cydney Berry and Charles Stern. Using the words “knowledgeable” and “hands-on” to describe them, Whitehead credits the two with pulling off CMFA’s annual Pub Night Benefit with ease. “As a team they are as exceptional as they are individually,” Whitehead says.



PHOTO BY AKTIE TURNER

## Bill Schmidt & Debbie McDaniel

Larry Hembree, executive director of Trustus Theatre can't say enough about Bill Schmidt and Debbie McDaniel. "Bill comes to all our shows at least once. He keeps us informed of things he reads that might be of interest to us, is a proactive supporter not only of us but of all the arts in Columbia, and he is always really deeply interested in our work, regardless of whether it is light or heavy."

Hembree calls Debbie McDaniel "a tireless supporter of ours, always willing to donate costumes and props, and Debbie was instrumental in making our Vista Queen Pageant come back alive. We love it when she comes in our theatre because she lights it up!"

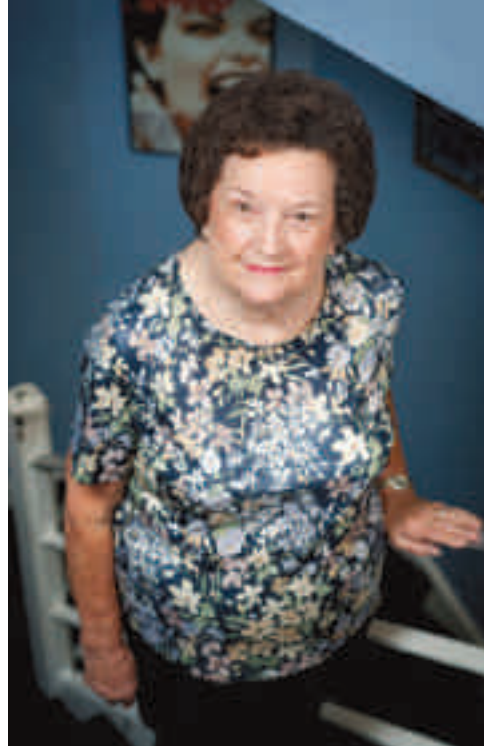


PHOTO BY JONATHAN SHARPE

## Shirley Horton

According to William Starrett, artistic director of Columbia City Ballet, "The multiple years and literally thousands of hours that Shirley Horton has volunteered for the company is priceless. As a dresser on tour, doing laundry and washing literally hundreds of costumes ... and then there is her amazing artistic talent at creating every headpiece that every CCB dancer for the last 25 years has worn. It is beyond remarkable. It is a volunteer like Shirley, with her boundless selflessness, that is the true backbone of a successful arts organization."



# Mary Robinson and the Artist's Nature

BY KARA GUNTER

**M**ary Robinson is gearing up to return to her position as head of the printmaking department at the University of South Carolina and teaching classes after a yearlong sabbatical. How'd it go, I asked her? "Amazing," she replied, and I could sense the artists' excitement in her when one is allowed to focus solely on her own work. Her year's goal was to spend as much time outside in nature and in her studio as possible—to develop a "well-rounded" existence during her year off from teaching. Turns out the year was filled with two residencies, a lot of studio time, and a little bit of gardening. Though maybe not as balanced as she'd hoped, it's certainly been a productive year for the artist.

We perused her work from the year: large mixed-media pieces we unfurled into her uncluttered living space and tacked down with sacks of dried beans and grains; and small, bright explorations of dreamlike color combinations which we leafed through in her studio. Layers upon layers of charcoal, ink, paint, and graphite create a dense forest of twisting, twining lines and drippy obfuscations. Robinson was raised on the side of Signal Mountain in Chattanooga, TN and often wandered the woods around her home. She first noted the simultaneous beauty and fearsomeness of nature there, and this is reflected in those layers of scratchy lines and drips of almost anxious color. Are we being



sheltered or ensnared? Should we be at peace, or a little scared?

An artist who's come fully into her own, it wasn't the path Robinson set out for herself. She majored in art history and studio art as an undergraduate at the University of Colorado. It was while earning her masters of art history at the University of Wisconsin that her class paid a fortuitous visit to Tandem Press which changed her course significantly. Robinson describes being captivated by the printmaking studio and the smell of the ink. She was so enamored, at the end of the tour she approached the master printer, Andrew Rubin, ask-

ing him if she could work there. Robinson had only a pedestrian exposure to printmaking at the time, but she worked at Tandem Press for a year; and under Rubin's tutelage she became well-versed in methods of printmaking and was thoroughly hooked. She finished up her degree at UW, and began a 3 year masters program at Indiana University in printmaking.

As a graduate student she began developing a body of work which continues to evolve today. Aesthetically, Robinson is most interested in creating depth (hence the layers) and movement (with incredible variety of strong,



PHOTOS BY FORREST CLONTS

directional line), and in becoming more adept at using color (something she admits to be a little intimidated by). Generally, she works large, as she would like the viewer to feel as if they are part of an environment--that maybe they could walk into the drawing. Robinson has no interest in portraying pretty landscapes. Conceptually, she's driven to explore the duality of nature. While always awe-inspiring, sometimes nature isn't lovely. Sometimes it seems cruel in its violence and death. And sometimes it's even downright "gross" with its drippy decay. But as human animals we are part of it all. Even with our ten-

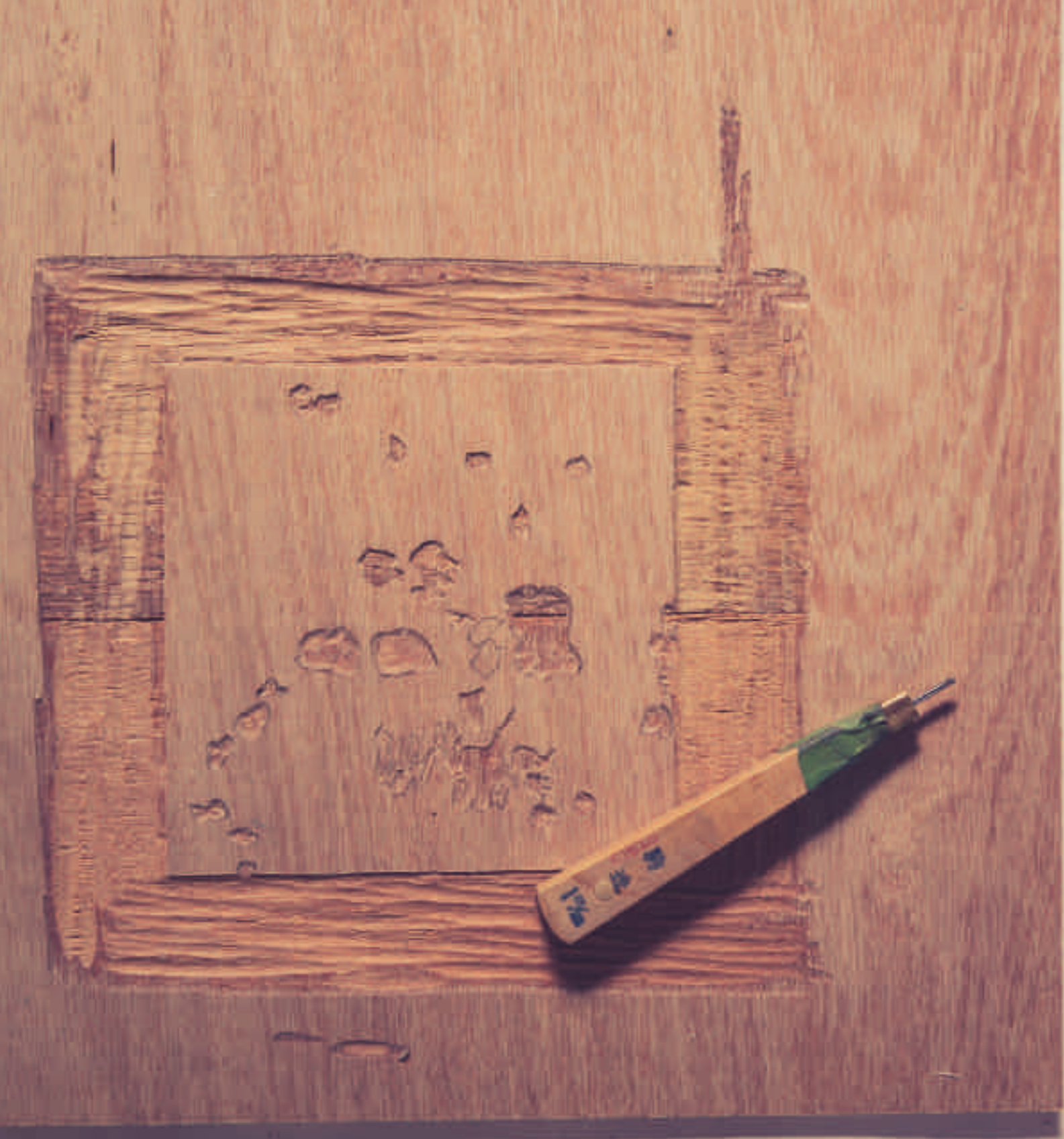
dencies to live apart from nature and to believe the fallacy that we are separate from it, we are engaged in a complex entanglement and dependency impossible to escape.

From traipsing through the woods as a child on the side of Signal Mountain, to watching volunteer plants spring out of decay in her garden's compost, to walks through the Congaree swamp, Robinson draws on her experiences with nature for inspiration. One of her sabbatical's residencies had her nestled in the wooded mountains of Georgia at Hambidge, and another sent her into an old growth forest in Finland. With

the help from a provost grant from USC, Robinson spent a month in Finland visiting woodcut artists and at Mustarinda, an art and nature center located on the edge of a nature reserve. Because of its northern local, the light remains surreal and otherworldly. Robinson spent much of her time photographing her surroundings, dazzled by the light and color. She brought this experience back to the studio with her, and since then has taken to creating small color investigations, pairing vibrant hues. It's hard to believe the artist doesn't feel completely at ease with color. Her explorations are confident and unapologetic, hypnagogic and mystical. I asked her the most embarrassing question I've ever asked in an interview. Stumbling over my words, I asked if she'd like to admit to using hallucinogenic drugs. I realize this might sound insulting, but in these pieces I found such a primal, archetypal presence which only resides in the unconscious that I truly wondered how she was able to access it so freely. These works tickle the innermost corners of the mind, and something about them feels incredibly ancient. Robinson was gracious with my question and reminded me of her 12 years of intense yoga practice—a practice that has taken her to India—which keeps her mind limber and provides easy access to those mysterious parts of human consciousness.

Most of the work we looked at that day weren't prints at all. Robinson remarked that she doesn't feel like a "printmaker's printmaker" as her modes of creating are wide and varied. There is a definite printmaker's sensibility, however, in the way she builds up distinct layers from the ground up. In most methods of printmaking, the artist will print one layer, alter the plate, block or screen and then print another layer on top of that layer, and so on. The strata are especially visible in Robinson's multi-media color works where we can see individual layers sitting right on top of each other. I mistakenly thought that some of these works were, indeed, monotypes or collagraphs. While the layers are unified, there is still a clear distinction between them, and we have the delight of looking through loose honey-comb shapes





and translucent colors to discover what's beneath.

Robinson doesn't want her work to feel too precious or unchangeable. Because of this, and the satisfaction of recycling not only her art but her art supplies, about two thirds of her pieces end

up being reclaimed and reworked back under or into new works. This practice provides her compositions with mystery and depth, and imbues them with a transformative quality. Much like the volunteer plants that flourish in the compost bin in Robinson's backyard, it

also provides a tangible reminder of the interconnectedness and the cycle of all things.

After a year of creating her own work, is she ready to head back to the university's halls and back to teaching? Yes, she is. It will take a moment



to adjust to time not necessarily being all her own, but Robinson truly enjoys teaching. She's had students go on to be successful printmakers, but mostly she wants her students to lead "happy, creative lives" no matter the journeys they embark upon. She instructs students in various printmaking techniques including woodblock, intaglio, lithography, and etching. When she first arrived at USC, there were no facilities for screenprinting, but she was able to find the room and tools (lots of space and large equipment is required in screenprinting) to add the classes. She also occasionally offers classes in papermaking. Over the summer and purely by coincidence, I happened upon Robinson teaching a fellow artist how to make paper from blue jean fiber in the printmaking studio. It's a loud process (the incredible noise is what drew me in) and requires special machinery and a bit of space.

Having access to these kinds of tools and large presses has Robinson looking forward to seeing what's in store for her work as the school year begins. Printmaking, by nature, is rarely a spontaneous process and can be quite methodical; but Robinson hopes to integrate her year of experimentation and looseness in the studio, as well as her year gathering inspiration from the natural world, into her printmaking. Can the two be integrated, or will it be akin to throwing up a fence to try to contain a kudzu vine? In less skillful hands, perhaps that would be the case. But I have full confidence in Robinson's abilities to finesse the procedural aspects of printmaking while allowing creation full reign, and know there will be beauty in the balance.

This coming spring, Robinson's work will part of an exhibition in San Francisco organized by the Southern Graphics Council International Conference; and from now until October 20<sup>th</sup>, you can view Robinson's work in person at the CCA SC Biennial at the 701 Center of Contemporary Art. Mark your calendars because on November 7<sup>th</sup>, along with artist Marius Valdes, Robinson will print woodblock posters for visitors to the 701 CCA 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.





PHOTO BY ALEXIS SCHWALLIER

CATCHING UP w/

## MICHAEL KRAJEWSKI

**Jasper:** Michael, you were Jasper's first ever centerfold back when we started in September 2011. Two years in the life of a young artist are a long time. Has time been good to you?

**Krajewski:** Time has been good to me. I've moved into a studio in the Arcade with the support of sponsors and having that home has been a change for me and a good one. Being around other artists, having a place where I can just walk in and start creating ... it makes it easy for me to paint even more than I had been. I'm creating art for my upcoming solo exhibition at the HoFP Gallery. It's been two years since my last solo show there and in that time, I've collaborated not just with other painters but with dancers, writers, videographers, etc. It's been great, but I guess you can also say that collaboration has given me an insatiable desire now to work on just my own individual work.

**Jasper:** How has your work both changed and stayed the same?

**Krajewski:** My work has stayed the same in that it always, to me, has the common thread of my stroke and stylization. As for my work changing, in this upcoming show, I think you will see an evolved style. I'm working tighter, adding more detail, more layers, which in a way is going back to a style I liked when I was younger. At the same time, I'm trying to keep it loose. I'm working on multiple

sizes of canvases but more on a larger scale in comparison to my last exhibit at the HoFP. My themes and concepts are coming from on-the-spot inspiration to ideas I've had for a long time that needed the right moment to come out.

**Jasper:** Can you talk about any lessons you've learned over the past 24 months?

**Krajewski:** One lesson is that you never know what will influence you, so be open to it. For example, I taught a session last summer at the S.C. Governor's School for the Arts and that made me realize how much I enjoy teaching, something I hadn't thought about a lot. This summer, I taught art at Timmerman School, and I'd like to do more teaching.

**Jasper:** What is the best thing that has happened to you as an artist over the past two years?

**Krajewski:** Two things. First, as I mentioned, teaching has turned out to be an unexpected sucker punch of joy. The second is a commission that came out of teaching at the Governor's School. I got the chance to paint a mural for The Children's Museum in Greenville with Justice LittleJohn. It's 9 x 53 feet of figures from the Upstate from our seventh president John C. Calhoun to Jesse Jackson and influential people in between. I always enjoy working with Justice, and the scale of the project was a beautiful challenge I embraced. The museum was very receptive to our ideas for it, as well as the finished project.

**Jasper:** Any bad habits (as an artist) that you've gotten rid of or obstacles you've overcome?

**Krajewski:** No ... though I think I may have accidentally stopped smoking. We'll see how that works out. -CB





## ART, METHOD, MEDIUM, AND SKILL

BY CHRIS ROBINSON

**P**ainting has dominated most of the history of art, with other areas often listed as lesser arts—printmaking, photography, ceramics, etc. In printmaking, you can be a skilled master printer without ever attempting to make art. A production ceramicist becomes as interested in the function or mastering and repeatedly duplicating the shape versus the original design.

Art must contain a level of skill or craft, but the exercise of skill doesn't necessarily require art, rather it is how

well you do something. And it can be applied to anything; a skilled gardener can grow great flowers, a skilled cook can make a great hamburger. Hand skill, especially in the face of overwhelming technological progress, is valuable and respected, and the distinction is not meant in any way to diminish its value, rather distinguish what drives the work and is most important.

We concentrate, perhaps too much, on skill these days; when one states that they are or want to be an artist; they express a desire to master a skill. For centuries, the important skill was rendering or mimicking what the eye saw—the more accurate and believable the image the better. This concept persisted all the way up to super or photorealism, where it became hard to distinguish the image from the mechanical rendering of the camera, or the visual reality.

The camera brought into question the need of rendering as a skill. There are plenty of arguments about things that an artist can illuminate versus the functions of a camera or computer, oil paint versus acrylic, but these are usually born out of the absence of experience or exposure. Medium and skill are so pervasive that they dominate most instructional programs; you get a degree in art with a concentration in a medium, and the medium is what is taught. Mediums and skills are more objective, therefore easier to teach; thinking, innovation, and content are more complex.

A tangent to rendering began with the invention of the camera. Most of it was about the stylization of an identifiable image. More recently, content and innovation have been recognized as precursors of beauty. True non-objective painting was later pursued as a sincere characterization of reality versus the illusion of representation. Process can often stand in for the absence of meaning. We have become so caught up in medium, process, and skill that we have

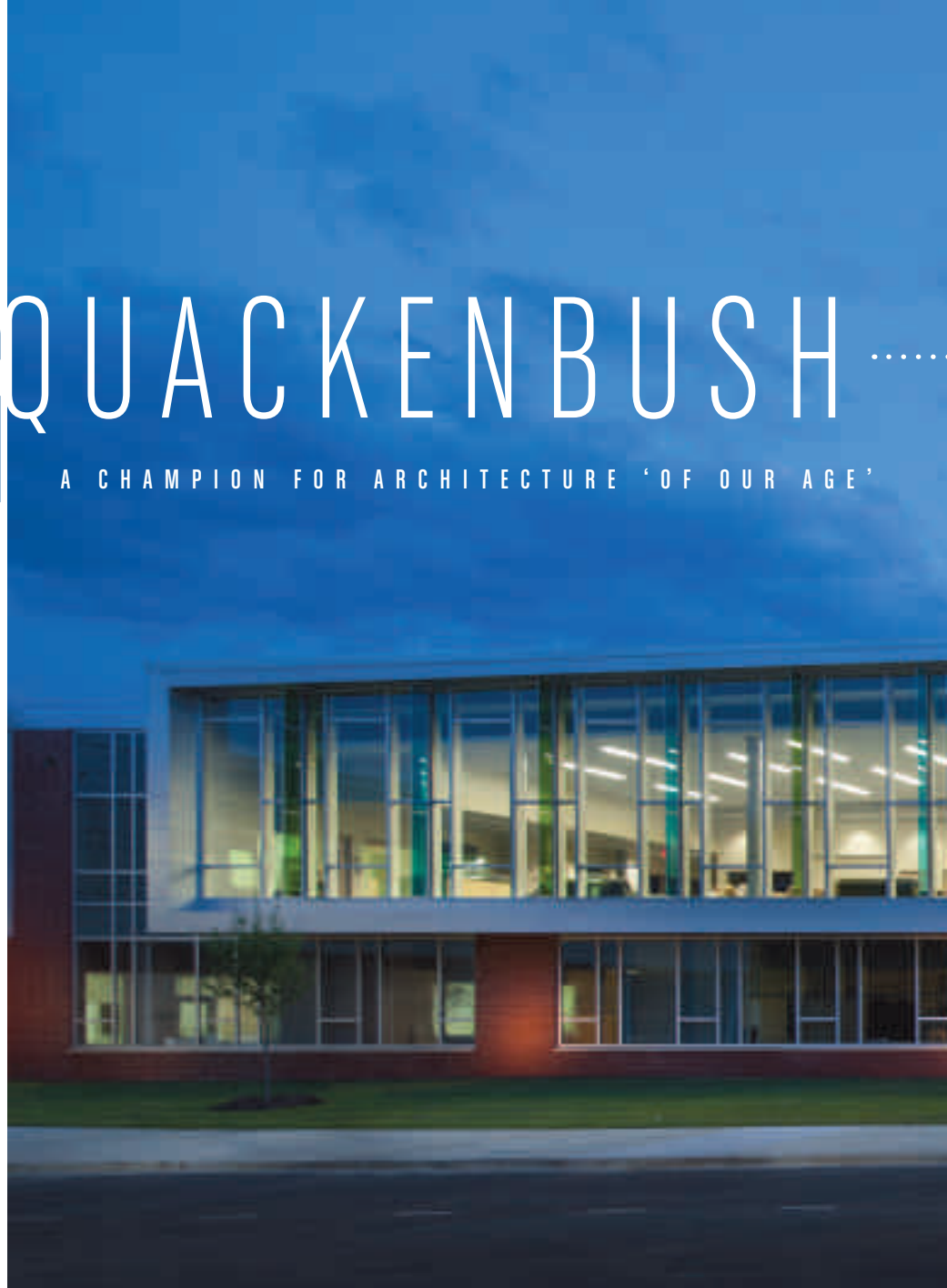
lost the value of *seeing* in the visual arts; or, what the image looks like, visually says, or means. Ask yourself if you would be content to see a reproduction of the Mona Lisa that not even the best and most sensitive critics could distinguish from the original. Would you be content to see the reproduction, or still have a desire to see the original? If the latter, you are probably more interested in the cultural versus the visual consequence of the painting. That certainly contributes to our current social environment about the arts; people have lost their interest in and ability to look and see, both literally and metaphorically.

These are complicated issues and there are repeated examples of individual artists coming to this realization. (See John de Andrea, a sculptor who was simply interested in the beauty and mimicking of the human body, versus Duane Hansen who was interested not only in representational skill, but also the characterization of the cultural cliché of people caught in life's circumstance.) For those deeply involved in the discipline, there is a realization that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny; in science that means the development of the individual mimics the development of the species. In the visual arts, the development of the artist mimics the development of the discipline.

No act is exclusive and a good work of art has medium, craft, and idea, but what is the driving force when these parts are in conflict? Beauty is everywhere. Fortunately, the people being featured in these pages are aware of and dealing with the issues. It is not easy and interest waxes and wanes, but the issues will always emerge. It is part of the purpose of formal educational to make aspiring artists aware of these ideas so they can be better informed, make their own choices, and ultimately stand on the shoulders of the creative giants of the past and make meaningful art today.

# DOUG QUACKENBUSH .....

A CHAMPION FOR ARCHITECTURE 'OF OUR AGE'



BY KRISTINE HARTVIGSEN

**D**on't be misled by Quackenbush Architecture's tony digs in the refurbished Kress Building on Hampton Street. Sure, the place has sexy contemporary lines and fine art on the walls. But the smart presentation of this firm's physical space is merely secondary.

"I have an aversion to the term 'style,'" says Doug Quackenbush, the youthful 53-year-old founder of the architectural firm bearing his name. "Serious architects, we don't think about style when we design. Of course, there still has to be concern about aesthetics and context and how buildings fit into that

context. ... But a focus purely on style dumbs down issues of form and function." After all, a space has to do more than just feel good. It must serve its purpose, and it benefits all of society if it is sustainably constructed and operated.

Quackenbush believes today's architecture should have a common aesthetic that is informed by two things. "A building should communicate its function," he says, "and we should be designing and building architecture of our age and not pretend that a building is of a different age. ... I think most people, even those untrained in our craft, know

when something is not authentic."

"When talking with a client, I try to focus on things that are objective, not subjective," he continues. "Most of the buildings we do are for universities, colleges, and K-12 schools. I think educational buildings naturally lend themselves to be 'of our age' - cutting edge. Often it's about technology, but it's also about creating quality learning environments."

There's an ethic over aesthetic that equals integrity for Quackenbush, who insists he designs for his client's needs above all else, but that certainly doesn't mean the aesthetics of his firm's work



PHOTO COURTESY DOUG QUACKENBUSH

go unnoticed. Clean, modern, and utopian are just a few adjectives that come immediately to mind when describing the firm's completed projects. In May, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded Quackenbush Architects its Merit Award in recognition of its work on Muller Road Elementary School in Blythewood. The modular, high-tech facility has so much more than a pretty face. It's a candidate for the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)'s Silver certification. LEED offers tiered certification at various levels, depending upon how much

has been achieved with regard to a project's energy efficiency and environmental impact. Some governments offer financing, tax, and other incentives for LEED-certified projects because of the energy cost-savings and reduced environmental footprint that directly benefit the community.

In designing Muller Road Elementary School, Quackenbush and his team tackled the most practical challenges first: safety and security. "It needed to be a school that inspires and is open," he says. "However, it houses a vulnerable population." So it basically needed to have qualities of a fortress – an in-

venting, open, learning-friendly fortress. The firm came up with a design that prominently features a large, centralized courtyard enclosed by the practical classroom structures. Utilizing smart, landscape design with indigenous flora, the courtyard is laid out to be learning-friendly as well. This school is the type of place you just naturally want to go into. "The main lobby is very welcoming. It feels almost like you are in a cool hotel, but in reality, you are in a very secure perimeter."

In addition, Richland School District Two's design committee wanted to expand on the traditional classroom





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concept by creating learning environments that included communal, bi-level, project-based areas. “It wasn’t in our original plans,” Quackenbush explains, “so we had to ‘cheat’ by skewing hallways to create collaborative zones, much like open living room areas that are shared by several classrooms in a cluster or ‘house.’ Muller Road has three such ‘houses,’ which are conducive to project-based learning. I am pleased that we were able to pull that off.”

With the 17-acre Muller Road project, the firm was fortunate to be involved from the inception, having a say even in the buildings’ placement. The firm chose a north/south orientation to take full advantage of daylighting, which is placing windows and open air features where they will garner the most natural light to learning spaces and corridors. This can reduce energy consumption by reducing the need to rely on artificial lighting. In addition, the project used local brick and recyclable materials that didn’t need to be trucked in over long distances. And the entire campus runs on energy-efficient mechanical systems and low-flow plumbing.

With Richland Two, “we worked with a client that trusted us and with whom we already had a good relationship,” he says. “The reason I like designing schools and colleges and university buildings is because you are typically working on buildings that have an impact on people. ... And they are educated clients, so we don’t need to teach them” about the benefits of sustainability.

“Very often, a sustainable building pays for itself very, very quickly,” Quackenbush says. And you can’t dispute the public relations value that is added due to green-building’s increasing popularity.

The firm recently completed work on the University of South Carolina’s Softball Stadium, and Quackenbush is especially excited that his firm has been retained to design the university’s new Health Center. “The goal is Platinum LEED certification, because sustainabil-

ity has a huge impact on people’s health. The costs are small to negligible when you are talking about millions of dollars. The real commitment on the part of a client (like USC) is when they want to step up and pursue something like Platinum LEED status.”

Quackenbush opened his firm in 2004. “I had gone as far as I could in my previous firm,” he explains. “I had to make a change. Fortunately, I was able to build a great team of architects. ... Architecture is a collaborative profession. Every single project we do has a hard-working team working with other teams. There no way I could do what I do if I didn’t have an incredible team.”

Steering Quackenbush back to that topic he generally avoids – style – it’s still important to know some of his design influences. Number one, he says, is the late French modernist architect Charles-Edouard Jenneret-Gris, who is known worldwide simply as “Le Corbusier.” Le Corbusier won the AIA’s Gold Medal in 1961 and was a contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright. [Note: New York’s Museum of Modern Art is featuring “Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes” through September 23 if you’re in the area.]

Others whose work Quackenbush admires include Rem Koolhaas, Steven Holl, and Renzo Piano. “They are doing work that is very much ‘our day,’ very dynamic,” he says. “The best modern architecture is truly sculpture and truly inspires.”

With a few exceptions, Quackenbush is a generally lukewarm about the architecture in the greater Columbia area. “We are too staid,” he contends. “I think part of the issue for me is Columbia is very conservative. I think there is too much restraint as a reaction to that. ... I think that is a problem because it squelches experimentation.” However, he believes, with the emerging talent pool, that there is indeed hope. “Right now, we have a generation of architects in Columbia who are doing good work. Their clients are the benefactors; they recognize the power of great buildings.”

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# THE HALF & HALF

When you first walk into The Half and Half, a design/printmaking studio in Columbia, SC, it is hard to believe that you are entering a business. Its industrial feel defines the space. High brick walls. Exposed ductwork. Vintage woodwork. Light shining in from rooftop windows. But with this open floor plan, it does not take you long to zero in on the items that truly sets their workspace apart from other local businesses. There is a rough wooden basketball goal set off on one side of the building. A wall-mounted flat screen, equipped with gaming consoles, surrounded by posh chairs and a well-used couch. On the opposite wall there is a beer tap waiting for late-night planning sessions. And sitting there on full display is a bourbon stockpile that would make Don Draper envious.

Sure, they have a design space with multiple oversized iMacs. They also have a production space that is loaded with impressive looking equipment that had to be brought in by cranes. Not to mention the wall of concert and festival posters that make up the who's who of today's music scene. But it is the bourbon and the beer tap that stand out the most. Company founders Sara Thomas and Nick Wilson are just fine with that. They refer to it as "the Google complex." Laughing, Wilson says, "We want this to be a space where our employees want to spend their time. We work







# When A National Company Goes Local

By William Garland  
Photos by Forrest Clonts





Amber



We just jumped to  
to do the **cool s**  
hung on to that



the end and wanted  
**stuff.** And we have  
t mentality.



long hours and we work hard. And we don't want our people to feel this sense of a daily grind, where they are just looking for that light at the end of the tunnel."

Perhaps the Google complex is an apt way to put it. The Half and Half feels like a company that would exist amidst the booming tech world of Silicon Valley. And it is not just because of the space, or the availability of alcohol. There is something more happening in their workspace. Their business model is backed by an authenticity—nothing about any of it feels forced. Things are happening everywhere you turn. Jimi Hendrix plays on an old set of beat up speakers in the background. Employees in the back are printing the Dave Matthews Band's latest posters and sorting them onto massive pallets, while another employee inspects a proof for the company's most recent design project. There is intense productivity happening all around, but somehow everyone maintains this effortless persona, and the daily grind seems like it would be furthest thing from any of their minds.

Thomas Jennings, the company's first full-time hire, jokes about the daily work environment, "Working on the creative side can feel like a high stress job. Often times, I will go to bed thinking about it. Wake up thinking about it. But then you step back and look at the job, and you realize how much fun it is. I get to work here all day. It's really pretty hard to complain about that." Jennings is right, and it is that creative energy that drives the momentum behind the success of The Half and Half.

Thomas and Wilson first started working together at the University of SC where they studied design under Professor Stephanie Nace and printmaking under Professor Mary Robinson, who is also profiled in this issue of *Jasper*. Thomas says that they entered into the company with a naïveté and no lines of credit. "There were stressful mo-





ments," Wilson adds, "at times it felt like we were operating on a month-to-month basis." And yet they pushed their boundaries and managed to build a company with national recognition in a few short years—landing big name production clients like Dave Matthews Band, The Avett Brothers, The Walking Dead, and President Obama, just to name a few. They have also worked on the design end with companies and artists like Live Nation, Live Talks LA, Toby Keith, and Band of Horses to create products and sometimes even marketing campaigns. Today the company has a strong foothold in national conversations, and they are stepping out into new ventures here locally.

The next few months will be busy ones for The Half and Half. They will host their opening for their new space in Five Points at the end of September, and with it, they will unveil their own new branding campaign. They are using the occasion to help their potential clients, both nationally and locally, to better understand everything that The Half and Half can offer. Thomas admits that at times people are confused by exactly what they do, and what they can offer for clients. Thomas says, "People see the wall of rock posters and automatically think that we designed all of that, and that is what our business is. Regardless of how open we are about our business model, it has been difficult to break away from that perception and get the word out about the company's full versatility." Nodding in agreement, Wilson adds, "We have been insatiable about always wanting to do other things. When we first started, we did what other designers want to do constantly. We made rock posters. We just jumped to the end and wanted to do the cool stuff. And we have hung on to that mentality."

The launch of their new branding efforts will give The Half and Half that chance to reintroduce themselves to the community during a time when they have several exciting new projects on the immediate horizon. The scope of these projects will leave little doubt as to their company's versatility. They will begin with the launch of "Meet the Press," which will coincide with their opening gala. This new initiative aims to bring several of their larger clients down to Columbia for a weekend. Wilson is particularly enthusiastic about this project. "It is going to give us the chance to develop a relationship with some of those clients that we don't normally have face-to-face interactions with. Up until now, it has been a bit like we're Internet friends. This is going to allow us to change that," Wilson says. The idea is that these companies will come down to Columbia with the prospect of giving a talk and selling some of their merchandise, but while they are in town, The Half and Half is going to go wine and dine them, and show them a bit of what Columbia can really offer. "Everybody invites these people to give talks," Wilson says. "We want to do more than that. We want to take them out on a river trip for a day, and then give them a taste of some of the city's unique dining options that night." Their first guest will be Good Fucking Design Advice, and they will continue to bring in other major companies and individuals every other month. "We'll see how it all goes, but for the time being, everyone we have talked to is stoked about the whole prospect, and can't wait to get down here," Wilson adds.

Immediately following the launch party, The Half and Half is going to have to shift their focus over to the first inaugural Great American Whiskey Fair, which will take





place on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 701 Whaley. The design group at The Half and Half has been working tirelessly to create the event's entire marketing campaign from the ground up. "We're doing everything from their social media presence to all of their logos," Jennings says. "We have done work like this for Indie Grits, The Tasty Tomato Festival, and other projects, but this event is definitely going to be on a large scale. It is going to allow us to show some of our range as designers," Jennings adds.

The Great American Whiskey Festival will be a major event for the city, and it will also act as a perfect conduit for The Half and Half's most exciting venture to date. They are closing the year out by jumping headfirst into the bar and restaurant business. Through a partnership with Kristian Niemi (who has already helped reshape Columbia's restaurant culture), The Half and Half will become partial owners of Bourbon, a new high-end bar and restaurant on Main Street. "We have always wanted to do it," Wilson says. "It is right up our alley. We have the freedom to do exactly what we want with the branding of the restaurant," Wilson can hardly contain his excitement as he discusses the possibilities that this partnership will offer. "This unique opportunity gives us the chance to directly affect the level of business expectations when it comes to successful marketing campaigns in Columbia. We can raise the bar ourselves. Bourbon is the first of many other business ventures down the line."

The Half and Half has clearly hit a turning point in their business. Their national reputation is well established, and now their name is appearing alongside more and more local events and ventures. Thomas and Wilson have made a name for themselves in the community and they want to keep expanding their role as they move from one project to the next. When asked about the particulars of the future, they both shoot off a litany of ideas that are already in the works. We can expect to see their names continue to show up throughout Columbia. These two began their business with the mentality that they were going to do the things that they loved, and they were going to foster an environment that was reflective of the creative work that they produced. So far, they haven't disappointed. And don't expect that to happen anytime soon.



# LOCAL RECORD REVIEWS

BY KYLE PETERSEN



## Todd Mathis

*Please...Don't Tread On Me*  
(Whiskey Tango Revue Sessions)

While local songwriter Todd Mathis is most well-known as the frontman for the rambunctious, heart-on-sleeve alt. country rockers American Gun (and before that as rhythm guitarist for Boxing Day and Betty Sneetch), he's put out a few solo records over the years that have ranged from the electric, wide-ranging ruminations on *War Songs* to casual, off-the-cuff Christmas albums that alternated humorous and sad-eyed tunes with aplomb.

This time around, Mathis has enlisted "Columbia's least-feared country band" (Whiskey Tango Revue) to back him on a set of twangy, libertarian-leaning songs that is distinctly different from the kind of material that American

Gun records. This comes through most clearly in the ramshackle swagger of the Charlie Daniels cover "Long Haired Country Boy" and the barebones lament "Mmm Mmm," the latter of which cleverly splices political commentary with nursery rhyme references in a way that captures a bleak sense of hopelessness about the world's problems. Things get a bit more rollicking on "Elvis Presley's Hits," a standalone tune that explores the dark side of the King's story via his ruthless manager, Colonel Parker, replete with extensive honky tonk piano from guest player Richard Putnam.

Throughout, there is a sense of casual fun that pervades these recordings, something that helps carry these quite-good tunes through some less-than-fully-formed arrangements (the liner notes mention that the group didn't so much rehearse the songs as "go over them" a few times before hitting the record button). The EP ends with a "bang" on Mathis' hilarious-yet-serious "NRA," which satirically champions the organization. With a big, brash chorus proclaiming "America/ we love guns" and featuring such couplets as "Michael Moore is a lunatic/Michael Moore is a fucking prick," the tune is spot-on in capturing the excesses of the pro-gun lobby, and it's humor is tempered quite a bit by the interspersing of new reports and commentary surrounding both recent and historical incidents of gun violence.

Overall, it's a fine solo outing from the AG frontman, and a welcome wetting of the palette given the group's relative absence from the scene as of late.

## Miles to Go

*Gypsy*

Miles to Go is a band that exists in the uneasy space between progressive rock and pop rock, unwilling to give up the instrumental adventurousness and lengthy arrangements of the former while never omitting the hook-filled songcraft of the latter. The easiest direct comparison would be Jeff Buckley's *Grace* mixed with a little Fiona



Apple or Ben Folds, accounting for the front seat position of frontman Alex Davis's sparkling keyboard work as well as his swooning vocal presence over the proceedings.

And while the songs themselves aren't bad, they clearly exist on *Gypsy* as a platform for the spinning of one musical idea gracefully off another. While the energetic, relentless Rhodes piano work never seems to end, the other members of Miles to Go also shine here, as guitarists Garrett Glover and Joey Williams, freed from establishing a primary melody, make up idiosyncratic side-riffs and take brief-but-scorching guitar solos on almost every song. The jazz-inflected runs that Davis frequently takes also require an ace rhythm section, and Mose Andrews and Soloman Encina are more than capable, giving these songs the propulsive forward momentum that keeps the songs engaging and light on their feet. This is a band that clearly means business.

As a songwriter, Davis explores familiar pop-rock ground in his chronicling of the emotional ups-and-downs of life and love, and, while he isn't terribly concerned with establishing firm hooks in these songs, he does convincingly evince the musical version of a romantic lead through the stories each song tells. It's an interesting effect for a band that otherwise might be buried under the virtuosity and complexity, but it ultimately makes *Gypsy* a satisfying and compelling listening experience.



## Chemical Peel

*Bike Thief [EP]*

This young punk rock trio continues to impress with their latest effort, *Bike Thief*, a 4-song EP that has all the aggression and distortion of their previous efforts while showcasing an increasing maturity. While the group sounds very much in the vein of early '80s no-wave bands like Sonic Youth and Missions of Burma, but when your influences are such difficult-to-pin down pioneers of music that mix noise experimentation, punk rock, and Velvet Underground-esque melodies, you have your heart in the right place.

Things get off to a low-key start with "Born to Kill," a song which begins with a wandering guitar line from guitarist Ony Ratsimbaharison before bassist Max Smith comes in with a simple, chant-heavy vocal that rides along Victoria Mandanas's drum rolls and a compact chord progression. Still, the way that the guitar wanders through some Middle Eastern-inspired single note riff variations in between the distorted crunch of the verses is telling, as it indicates how Chemical Peel's songs tend to subvert expectations. "New Paradigm" and the title cut see Ratsimbaharison utilize both punk rock death screams and her Kim Gordon-indebted cool on a pair of restless tunes that can often feel like slowed-down math rock, if it weren't for the persistent melodies which undergird both.

While the murky production can tend to muddle the band's sound a bit, giving it a bit of a haze and darkness that seemingly diminishes the power and

rage behind more rollicking numbers like "Bike Thief" and "Chance," at the same time it feels like a throwback to the sound of the recordings that are inspiring the trio. Plus, it's punk rock. All the visceral rage and release from the music is best experienced at a sweaty live show anyway.



## Valley Maker

*Yes I Know I've Loved This World*

"We grew up in a Southern town / what was up was really down / what I found was really found / I think I met you underground," sings Austin Crane on his latest release as Valley Maker, *Yes I Know I've Loved This World*. In contrast to his last release under that moniker (an eight song exploration of various stories from the *Book of Genesis* told bereft of judgment and a yearning to understand the character's lives and emotions), this collection of songs turns inward as Crane parses larger questions of faith, love, and mortality with more personal reflections on a life of growing, living, and learning in a region so imbued with religiosity that untangling the twisted notions of self and belief that accompanies such a life becomes inordinately difficult.

Although Crane has spent the last few years in grad school at the University of Kentucky, he released three records as an undergraduate here at USC and frequently returns to perform and record. He's always been blessed with a sensitive and keen-eyed perspective on such introspective themes, but the songs recorded here are easily his best

batch to date. His reedy, evocative voice wraps around his words with a blanket of desire, creating the convincing persona of a young man reaching out into the darkness in search of light. And, quite importantly, he gives the ghostly vocal presence of the Atlanta-based Amy Godwin wide latitude to soar in and around these tunes, creating an important thematic foil, as it's never clear whether her presence is that of an angel or a mere echo.

Crane's own nylon-string guitar work and sparse, Crazy Horse-style electric guitar chords anchor the rhythm and cadence of most of these songs, although light percussion and full band support is provided by his old bandmates (Nathan Poole, Caleb Weathersby, and James Gibson, with contributions from Kenny McWilliams) when needed. The overall effect is contemplative and light, even on the more angst-ridden tunes like "Pretty Little Life Form" and "Take My People Dancing," reminiscent of the probing work of folkies like Sufjan Stevens or Bill Callahan, although Crane's voice is decidedly his own. While this is a uniformly strong set of songs, highlights include the desperation- and doubt-laden "Only Friend," the wistful nostalgia of "The Mission," and, above all, the smoldering, quietly epic closing track, "Goodness," which ties together the multiple thematic threads by echoing biting one liners again and again, first as statements and then as pleas. *Yes I Know I've Loved This World* indeed.





## Those Lavender Whales

*Parts & Pieces/Goose and Geeses EP*

The beauty of Those Lavender Whales as a band is that they can be both soft and loud, wise and whimsical, and exuberant and restrained, and often all within the span of a single song. Leader Aaron Graves is clearly a songwriter in love with melody for the sake of melody, and yet he also peppers his songs with honest sentiments from the shallow and ephemeral to the prophetic and profound. It often feels like twee pop, but it really isn't—it's just earnest and honest about the inherent quirkiness of life that most of us downplay about ourselves in public.

Even more so than on last year's triumphant effort *Tomahawk of Praise*, the sense of Those Lavender Whales as a band comes through quite clearly on this EP. Jessica Bornick's drumming is assured and confident, electric guitarist Pat Wall feels more fully integrated into the band's sound (particularly on the centerpiece here, "Sometimes"), and the intensive overdubbing process that Chris Gardner and Graves put those older TLW songs through feels streamlined as well. That could be because of the quieter nature of most of this material, which lends itself to a lighter hand, but I can't help but think that there's something to be said for the songs needing less thematically (Graves' final line here seems relatively at peace with the fact that he was "conceived in the dirt/and I will return to the Earth").

Nonetheless, as with most things crafted by Graves and company, there are moments that you just can't shake. When the band hits the second half of "Sometimes," as the music slows and Graves speaks for a generation when he intones "we tell ourselves because we are older/ we understand why things are breaking/ we've done these things for so long/ we've convinced ourselves that we're not faking" and then sets off into a wordless coda, you can't help but be swept away.



## Reggie Sullivan Band

*Nobody's Home*

There's probably not a more talented and radio-ready group of musicians in Columbia than the Reggie Sullivan Band. Led by the jazz-trained bassist and vocalist Reggie Sullivan, a hard-working and hustling instrumentalist who has performed far and wide as an in-demand professional musician, this crack band also features Nick Brewer (leader of the erstwhile alt. rockers By the Bull), drummer Brendan Bull (also of By the Bull), and guitarists Zach Bingham and Jmichael Peeples. The band is equally adept at jazz jamming as pop-rock perfection and their versatility and virtuosity shines through in almost any setting.

And most of the time, their skill and chops are enough to win over new converts. The biggest question mark, though, comes down to original songs, a task that weightily falls down at Sullivan's feet. As a writer, Sullivan clearly aspires to keep his songs neat and concise while allowing his and his band's

arranging dexterity to carry many of these tunes. This mostly works—using his John Legend-inspired croon, songs like the Al Green-inflected "Hazy" or the Jason Mraz-styled reggae of "Nobody's Home" come off without a hitch, as does the nostalgic love-gone-bad "Out The Frame," which Sullivan should be shopping around Music Row pronto.

The two alternative rock numbers, "Sociable High" and "Battle Song," surprisingly sound like where the band is most comfortable, although they are more interesting when they stretch their limbs and incorporate other styles. The last song, "P.O.W.," is a fine example. It's a lumbering, '80s-reminiscent ballad that barely escapes becoming a cliché, but does so largely because of a bridge which sees Sullivan adding some faint, studio-added background vocals that gradually build into a moment of quiet beauty. When the slightly bombastic chorus comes back in, it all somehow works. While RSB might play it a little too safe in comparison to some of the more adventurous acts in Columbia, it's hard to deny that they have the polish and widespread appeal to turn into something really, really big.



## People Person

*Dumb Supper*

People Person is ostensibly the songwriting vehicle for Can't Kids drummer Jessica Oliver, a sparkling presence on stage with that local indie rock powerhouse as well as in bands like Hauswerk and Falling off a Building. And for a while, it really did seem like a solitary pursuit—the 2011 lo-fi effort



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- 10/6 The Hitmen
- 10/10 The Grascals
- 10/13 Brenda Lee
- 10/15 An Evening with Mark Russell
- 10/18 Porgy and Bess A Concert Version
- 10/19 Robert Earl Keen
- 10/20 Chris Mann In Concert
- 10/22 Willie Nelson
- 10/25 Sawyer Brown
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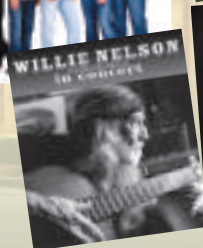
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- 11/7 Edwin McCain
- 11/8 B. J. Thomas
- 11/9 The Gibson Brothers
- 11/15 Phil Vasser
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- 11/19 Ring of Fire

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- 12/5 Tony Kenny's Christmastime in Ireland
- 12/6 Jingle All The Way
- 12/7 208th Army Band of Concord, NC
- 12/8 Palmetto Mastersingers
- 12/12 Artie Shaw Orchestra
- 12/13 State Capella of Russia
- 12/17 Branson Christmas Style
- 12/20 Eddie Money
- 12/31 New Year's Eve Celebration

### January

- 1/5 Dailey and Vincent
- 1/12 Godspell The Musical
- 1/17 Swingin' Medallions
- 1/18 Bo Bice
- 1/20 The Lennon Sisters
- 1/23 Smoky Joe's Café
- 1/24 Hotel California-Eagles Tribute
- 1/29 Elixir of Love - Opera
- 1/30 Travis Tritt



### February

- 2/8 Richard Smith
- 2/9 Glenn Miller Orchestra
- 2/12 National Dance Company of Siberia
- 2/14 Marina Lomazov
- 2/15 Arlo Guthrie
- 2/16 The Lettermen
- 2/22 James Gregory - Comedy
- 2/25 Man of La Mancha
- 2/28 Delbert McClinton

### March

- 3/2 Annie Sellick and the Hot Club of Nashville
- 3/3 Ozark Jubilee
- 3/4 Church Basement Ladies, A Mightytrtress
- 3/6 Michael Bolton
- 3/8 The Oak Ridge Boys
- 3/9 Frankie Avalon
- 3/11 Dublin's Irish Cabaret
- 3/15 Cowboy Movies
- 3/16 Roslyn Kind
- 3/19 Don't Stop Believing, Journey Tribute
- 3/20 Direct from Ireland - Celtic Nights
- 3/22 Georgette Jones and Band
- 3/23 The Kingston Trio
- 3/24 A Variety of Great Music
- 3/25 Steep Canyon Rangers
- 3/28 A Far Cry
- 3/29 Up Yonder, Comedy
- 3/30 Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians

### April

- 4/7 Golden Dragon Acrobats
- 4/10 An Evening of Duo Piano Music
- 4/22 Newberry College Opera Scenes
- 4/25 Charlie Thomas' Drifters
- 4/26 James Best - Comedy
- 4/27 Doug and Bunny Williams
- 4/30 C. B. Smith Show of Pigeon Forge

### May

- 5/1 SC Storytelling Network
- 5/4 The Raleigh Ringers
- 5/8 Cinderella, Russian National Ballet
- 5/9 Pawel Checinski - Pianist
- 5/10 "Whispering" Bill Anderson
- 5/17 Rick Alviti

### June

- 6/14 Hen Party - Comedy
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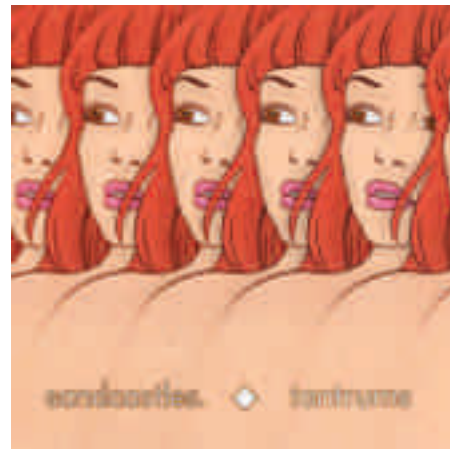


*Swimming for Keeps*, which was full of charmingly scuzzy guitar riffs and reverb-laden vocals delivering disoriented pop songs, felt very much like a solo recording project.

However, over the past year or so People Person has developed into a ferocious live presence, with Oliver's new material featuring pumped-up guitar riffs and Jenny Lewis-style vocals that give the project a boost of sonic adrenaline that comes through quite clearly on *Dumb Supper*. With a poised supporting cast consisting of Can't Kids leader and talented instrumentalist Adam Cullum on bass and Magnetic Flowers drummer Evan Simmons, *Supper* makes its biggest impression on propulsive rockers like "Ah, Drag" and "Portions for Fatties," songs which mix punk rock energy with the kind of enigmatic indie pop hooks that Oliver had been delivering all along. A lot of this comes from the tightly locked grooves that Cullum and Simmons provide, but make no mistake; this is still very much a showcase

of Oliver's muse. Her electric guitar work has a cutting presence throughout this recording, pushed way up into the mix whether she's playing throbbing chord progressions or meandering and plaintive ballads. Lyrically, she's by turns honest and evasive, with most of the songs turning inward to reflect on love and insecurity, but all accented by liberal use of double and triple-tracked backing vocals that roam the emotional register from disenchanted to deranged. When she yelps "I freaked out!" in the middle of the second verse of "Ah, Drag" or wordlessly coos the melody of "Up and Done It," it's clear how versatile and entrancing she is as a vocalist.

And while the up-tempo material here is more immediate, it's worth noting that the cleaned up versions of halting, mid-tempo songs like "Astoria" and "It Bugs Me, It's Nothing" provide the moments where People Person is at its most distinctive, crafting pop songs from the rumble and wreckage of indie rock in a way that is uniquely their own.



## sandcastles

*Tantrums*

Bakari Lebby, aka MC B-Money of the joke-rap duo Sweet Vans, has always had a sensitive side. While his more emotionally laden material has surfaced from time to time, *Tantrums* is the first fully-formed and accomplished solo project he has really pushed into

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the public conscious. Taking notes from the sample-heavy, lost-in-reverb nostalgia of the chillwave trend, the melancholic indie rock of folks like The Wrens and American Football, along with a bit of the down-tempo, beat-heavy R&B of Drake, Lebby crafts hypnotizing, synth-heavy music that buries the lyrics in a foggy haze and, in the process, ends up creating fairly inscrutable pop music.

On record at least, it mostly works in his favor, allowing emotion and vibe to take the forefront while the specific scuff marks of bitter romance and failed relationships get worn down a bit and slide into the background. Given the uncomfortable fragility some of those specifics have, it generally makes for a more com-

elling listen, and allows Lebby's production skills to shine. Hard, idiosyncratic beats exist cozily alongside droning synth lines and muffled background vocals that in some ways feel like a more-accessible version of his Sweet Vans partner William Flourance's work in Ramphastos.

While it's always a surprise to be reminded that somebody like Lebby, who often serves as a life-of-the-party DJ at clubs around town and absolutely owns the microphone as a satirical braggadocio in Sweet Vans, creates such personal and earnestly emotive music, this side of him is also a welcome one, creating more nuance and complexity in one of the Columbia scene's more interesting characters.

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FINDING

SOMETHING NEW WITH

# POST-ECHO

BY KYLE PETERSEN  
PHOTO BY ALEXIS SCHWALLIER

Like so many great ideas, this one began in a bar.

It's a natural setting for Franklin Jones and Justin Schmidt, the team behind the local record label/collective Post-Echo and a duo who love to talk freely and intensely about music, art, film, and philosophy almost as much as they love to create things. The two first met through a mutual acquaintance at the University of South Carolina, where they both work, and quickly bonded first over a shared gift of gab and mutual tastes in music and film. Eventually their friendship evolved towards creating, among other things, a band (Forces of a Street), an audiovisual comic book (*Drift*), a mysterious video series (*Passage*), and Post-Echo, a difficult-to-cate-

gorize organization that performs both typical and not-so-typical record label roles.

The idea to start Post-Echo grew from the first project the two men started collaborating on back in 2010, a sci-fi comic book project hashed over "in a couple of bars, on a couple of napkins" that the two titled *Drift*. "Originally it was going to be a comic book with a soundtrack, and then we decided to





***On the meaning of Post-Echo: “You have a sound, and then the natural echo that follows the sound. And people just kind of assume after the echo, that’s it. So Post-Echo is about what happens after that, after the preconceived notions of sound have ended.” – Franklin Jones***

make it a collaborative soundtrack, with lots of different artists,” explains Schmidt. “It ended up taking us two years to get it done.”

*Drift* became the initial flagship project of what was to become Post-Echo, as it “ended up being the spinal cord for a lot of the other stuff we were doing,” says Jones. “It really became something we were doing peripherally.”

“It was basically a crash course in organizing an entertainment media project,” echoes Schmidt. “It just happened to take two years, and in between that time a lot of other things started hap-

pening.” The comic book, which exists in both print and digital form, explores notions of hyper-reality and phenomenology within the context of a traditional, *Star Wars*-style sci-fi action adventure narrative. It’s an esoteric experience, to say the least. But in many ways it is also the key to understanding how and why Post-Echo exists.

The soundtrack that Jones and Schmidt ultimately pulled together featured some of the most fascinating and eerie music being made in these parts, music that flies in the face of the notion that Columbia is a town stuck in the re-

cent past. By collecting a diverse cadre of envelope-pushing artists, from the sci-fi histrionics of Storms OV Jupiter and jittery electro-rockers Roomdance to peppy instrumental post-rockers Pan and the claustrophobic synth-and-sample projects of JFS and Ramphastos, Post-Echo managed to paint a coherent picture of the tantalizing music being made (mostly) in the margins of our community—something that struck a chord with the two men.

Before *Drift* was even completed, the duo tested the waters with another compilation entirely separate from



# DRIFT

*Drift* called *Future: YALL*, which served as something of a “road test” to see if artists were interested in the kind of collective they envisioned. It featured many of the acts that they had corralled into the *Drift* project, and its success led them to believe that, in setting out to provide their services, vision, and support to artists who didn’t have the time or inclination to promote their work or look out collaborative opportunities, they could make a difference.

“Our goal is to try and make sure [the artists] have resources that they maybe wouldn’t ordinarily have had,” Jones explains. “It’s all about that many more people hearing it, experiencing it.” For Post-Echo, that means everything from making music videos, recording interviews, and coordinating public relations to throwing elaborate audiovisual events, assisting with artwork and CD/vinyl production, and providing lots of opportunities for collaboration.

“We are willing to entertain pretty much any idea,” Schmidt admits. “We want to utilize new ways and new tools to promote local musicians that fight against the times we live in, where we are bogged down and oversaturated by content from the Internet.” This has led the two down some pretty weird territory, including a multimedia event called “Phenomenology Via Quantum Sound: A Post-Echo Musical Lecture Featuring the Subconscious of Val Kilmer” to a partnership with Redbox and Richland Library to throw an indie rock-inflected 80s-themed prom party. Each event though, for all its whimsicality or quirkiness, is a creative endeavor designed to facilitate new and different experiences for existing artists, which gets to the heart of what Post-Echo is all about.

The label started out small, with road warriors Pan and Cancellieri as well as more enigmatic and experimental acts like Storms OV Jupiter, Roomdance, and Devereaux [the solo project of Jasper design editor Heyward Sims] filling out the initial line-up. “We wanted to get people who were approachable and interested in coming together and collectively raising a sort of flag for the music

[they were making],” Schmidt recalls. It has grown from there, with the roster swelling with other experimental acts alongside the fuzz-pop of People Person and the post-punk-inflected roots rock of Dear Blanca, creating some diversity while maintaining a distinct “Post-Echo” aesthetic. Perhaps not surprisingly, videographers like Taylor Glazier and Jason F. Stroud (who is also a musical artist on the label) have become integral members of the Post-Echo roster as well.

But first there was *Drift*. Even now when they talk about the book, the Post-Echo leaders remain seriously enthused with the project, despite chewing through multiple illustrators and facing delay after delay. “[Because] *Drift* is fundamentally about the idea of phenomenology, where everything is happening at once and there is no time whatsoever, it was a lot for an illustrator to grasp,” admits Jones, a writer and playwright by trade. “But I’ve always thought the most interesting stories are not necessarily about characters interacting, but about variations of one character interacting—like, who I am today is not the same person I will be tomorrow, or who I was yesterday. And if you get all those different variations of that self in the same room, there would be some interesting dynamics going on.”

Similar questions are at the heart of their new video series “Passage,” which is currently nearing completion after almost a year of filming. The initial concept came in part from Bobby Markle, a graduate student at USC in the Psychology department who, along with Caitlin Hucks, often serves as the public face of Post-Echo in videos and public relations. He and Hucks also provide a sounding board and foil for the more technically-oriented Jones and Schmidt. “Bobby did a Tumblr post on abandoned places [around the world] that really got a lot of interest,” Jones says. “And we had been talking about doing a movie for a while anyway, just kicking around scripts. We became really interested in the idea of abandonment and decay. I think the best way of describing [the film’s conceptual roots]

is like the low hum of an industrial building at night. I find that to be an absolutely fascinating and, in a way, an intoxicating feel.”

From there, the two, along with Markle, who wound up playing the lead in the film, sketched out an evocative script split into five distinct parts, each of which would get an originally composed score by a Post-Echo-affiliated artist. With Jones serving as director, Schmidt as principal photographer, and Markle as the lead actor (and often along with Stroud, who assisted with some camera work and post-production) the group would, over the course of the year, trek out to abandoned industrial spaces in Columbia and film a wordless story full of “petro-punk mystique” that borrows from the aesthetic of *The X-Files* and *28 Days Later*.

“It’s been a little more and a little less than fun,” Schmidt admits, recounting the long days and unexpected encounters with deer carcasses and large insects. “But we all got more excited about it as we went on. Originally it was going to be one fifteen minute shoot. We ended up creating a wonderful little jigsaw puzzle for ourselves to figure out.” As of now, four of the parts are completed, and the group expects to have the final piece finished by year’s end.

While projects like *Drift* and *Passage* are the “creative lodestar of Post-Echo,” Jones and Schmidt both stress that they are “essentially small projects among others” that the label works on. “I don’t think we would know what to do with ourselves if we were just managing other projects and not doing anything creatively on our own” Schmidt says. But it is all ultimately in service of highlighting the quality of the musical talent in the area.

“You can’t walk down the street [here] without bumping into somebody who is really talented in music or visual artists or something else,” Schmidt contends. “I don’t know how essential we are in this city in terms of making it stick, but I think it’s important that as many people as can try and make it stick. And I’d like to think that we are just doing our best to do our part.”



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# J Ballet

## PREMIER

BY BONNIE BOITER-JOLLEY · PHOTOS BY JONATHAN SHARPE

From its origins as dance master led court dance, ballo in the Italian renaissance, to the 16<sup>th</sup> century *spectaculi* that had by the mid-1600s garnered a paying audience of nobles and commoners alike, ballet is an art form that has intrigued for centuries. Most ballets dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century centered around storytelling, often following a story arc adapted from literature and employing pantomime to communicate relationships and events. As time and the art form progressed, more ballets were created that were based primarily on the inspiration of the music.

Choreographer and father of American ballet George Balanchine described ballet as “the art of movement, in time, in space,” indicating no necessity for narrative. When the dance has no story,

the audience may question, why am I watching, and what am I looking for? In fact, there are several key characteristics and qualities that should catch the audience’s eye in any ballet. *Jasper* invites you to take a look at some of these qualities and how best not only to view them but to determine whether they are being performed well and correctly.

Ballet has a vocabulary all its own that references the many arm and leg positions, body facings and shapes, and various steps, jumps, and turns that comprise a dance. Early in a dancer’s education she or he will learn to straighten her knees, pointe her feet, and rotate her hips outward (this is referred to as *turn out*) in a few basic positions. The mastering of these techniques continues to evolve throughout a dancer’s career. Often, a dancer’s ability will be measured by the height of the extension of her leg from hip to toe, the degree to which she can rotate her

hips, or the arch and articulation of her foot. These however, are not the only characteristics an audience member should look for. One must also take into account a dancer’s *port de bras* (carriage of the arms,) *épaulement* (use of the head and shoulders,) and *ballon* (the height and suspension of a jump.) Other more difficultly defined qualities include musicality, strength and control, and presence and performance on the stage.

A dancer’s *port de bras* must be strong and fluid. The arms seemingly float, yet hold their position in relationship to the body. Just as the arms are anatomically anchored to the back through the scapula and *latissimus dorsi* and *trapezius* muscles, a dancer’s *port de bras* must in turn originate from these muscle groups. A certain expansion across the chest and connection to the spine give the elbows lift and allows the dancer to achieve a simultaneously open and



## **PORT DE BRAS**

(pohr deh brah)

THE DANCER DEMONSTRATES FOURTH POSITION LUNGE WITH ARMS IN ARABESQUE. NOTICE THE WAY THE LENGTH AND CURVE OF THE PORT DE BRAS EXTENDS THE LINE OF THE LEG.



composed quality in the upper body. If the *port de bras* is weak, the shoulders may rise or elbows may droop, giving the arms a brittle or broken look. An audience member should look for elongation and softness in a dancer's *port de bras*.

The *épaulement* is closely related to *port de bras* in that the two work in tandem. A specific movement and positioning of the head is often meant to accompany the arms. The head and eyes may lift or tilt to follow the arm and, likewise, the arms and hands may move to frame the position of the head. Though subtle, the art of *port de bras* and *épaulement* can complete a *Ballerina's* movement and put the finishing touches on a stage picture made by the *corps de ballet*. The perfect marriage of the two is a meticulous one that requires years of study and practice to achieve. If the *épaulement* is neglected or used incorrectly, the body line of the dancer can become fractured, much like leaving out the final piece of a puzzle. Ballet without *épaulement* appears mechanical and flat. For an audience member, the way a dancer uses her head and shoulders should add dimensionality to a dance, seamlessly directing attention and steering focus.

Both *port de bras* and *épaulement* are used continuously throughout ballet, even while jumping and, if used correctly, can help achieve greater *ballon*, or suspension in a jump. The art of jumping in ballet, *petite* or *grande allegro*, requires significant strength and elasticity of the tendons in the feet and legs. The more controlled the *plié*, or bending of the legs, and the more powerful the push through the leg from hip to toe, the higher the jump. While *petite allegro* consists of small intricate foot work and demands great control of the inner thighs and feet, *grande allegro* demonstrates both power and buoy-



## ÉPAULEMENT

[ ay-pawhl-mahn' ]

THE DANCER DEMONSTRATES *TENDUE CROISE DEVANT*. NOTICE THE WAY THE *ÉPAULEMENT* OPPOSES THE DIRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFTED ARM BOTH FRAMES THE HEAD AND EXTENDS THE LINE OF THE STANDING LEG.

## BALLON

[ beh-lahn ]

THE DANCER DEMONSTRATES *BALLON* IN A JUMP FROM FIFTH POSITION TO FIRST POSITION. NOTICE THE BEND OF THE LEGS IN *PLIÉ*, THE STRENGTH OF THE ARMS AND TORSO IN THE AIR, AND THE STEADINESS OF THE LANDING.



## ARABESQUE

[ ah-rah-besk ]

THE DANCERS DEMONSTRATE A PARTNERED *ARABESQUE*. NOTICE THE VERTICALITY OF THE FEMALE DANCER'S TORSO IN OPPOSITION TO HER LEG, THE CONTINUATION OF THE LINE BY HER MALE PARTNER, AND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO.







## BAD

ance. While female dancers achieve a sense of weightlessness by dancing *en pointe*, on the tips of their toes, while wearing special hardened pointe shoes, male *danseurs* defy gravity by way of a polished *ballon*. A dancer's position while in the air should remain one of grace and composure rather than strain or panic. Regardless of the height of a jump, the audience should never sense the drop of weight in a landing. A skilled performer will control her descent through the strength of her feet and land softly and (seemingly) without effort.

In addition to the five basic positions of the feet and arms that children learn early in ballet, there are a number of more advanced body positions that are recognizable throughout the art form. In an *arabesque*, for example, the dancer stands on one leg while extending the other directly behind, exhibiting most of the balletic qualities addressed



## GOOD

THE DANCER'S FEET ARE CROSSED AND ROTATED, FITTING PERFECTLY TOGETHER LIKE PUZZLE PIECES.

above. The dancer must have the hip rotation and flexibility to lift the leg at such an angle; the back strength to maintain the torso's verticality; the control of the *port de bras* and *épaulement* to complete the line; and the balance to remain on one leg whether standing, jumping or *pirouetting*. The *pirouette*, meaning to turn in a singular position while balancing on one leg, takes both strength and control and is a skill that many work for years to master. It may be performed in a variety of positions either partnered or alone. The late, well known and loved teacher David Howard, was known to question the nature of the *pirouette*, "Is it a turning relevé? Or a relevé that turns?" Regardless, the relevé, or rise to the toes, should transition seamlessly into the turn itself. The evenness with which one turns, and the steadiness of the balance, are strong indicators of a good *pirouette*. These qualities coupled with multiple

rotations make for an impressively executed turn.

George Balanchine is famously quoted as saying "Dancing is music made visible." It is debatable as to whether or not he is implying the necessity for actual, audible music. What is clear however is the necessity of rhythm, melody, syncopation, and time within the dance. *It is the dancer's craft to make the notes appear.* Some of the greatest dancers have been deemed so not because of their ability to dance to the music, but instead because of their *ability to dance the music itself.* Movements can be executed on the front end of a beat anticipating the note, on the back end after the note has been played, or in the middle of the beat simultaneously with the note itself. A simple change in musicality can alter both the look and the feeling of a performance altogether.

Along with musicality, a dancer's knack for performing, often referred to as their stage presence, can signify the difference in a hobbyist and a professional. A dancer should bring a sense of magic to the stage. Yes, it is important to remember the skill and talent required in executing the dance, but regardless of the years of practice and study, a dancer without the ability to deliver a quality performance that both connects with the audience and transports them, lacks the quality that truly defines the art.

A ballet performance has such a brief and fleeting existence. It is an art experience that is meant to be enjoyed entirely in the moment. *Jasper* hopes that the next time you find yourself in some such brief and ephemeral encounter, you will have a greater understanding of why you are there, and how best to enjoy it.

Au Cas Que Vous Ne Le Saviez Pas

**ÉPAULEMENT** [ ay-pawhl-mahn' ] **PORT DE BRAS** [ pohr deh brah ]

**BALLON** [ beh-lahn ] **ARABESQUE** [ ah-rah-besk ] **CROISE** [ krawh-zay' ]

**TENDUE** [ tahn-dew ] **PLIÉ** [ plee-yay ] **PIROUETTE** [ peer-whet ]

For more on proper ballet technique visit [JasperColumbia.com](http://JasperColumbia.com).

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# Jasper presents the Second Act Film Festival

BY WADE SELLERS

As part of *Jasper's* mission to cultivate the arts in Columbia, we knew that something needed to exist specifically to bring *local* filmmakers together. We wanted them to work on a singular project, be able to recognize one another and, hopefully, to build a sense of community. With that goal in mind, *Jasper Magazine's* Second Act Film Festival was born.

The Second Act Film Festival exists in two parts. The first is a film project with the second part being the film festival itself—a one-night-only screening of the films created by the filmmakers who were chosen to participate in the project.

Of course, the film project format has been around for a while and exists in various forms. The 48 Hour Film Project, for example, takes place in Charlotte, Atlanta, and many cities across the country. But our goal was to create a unique take on the film project format. The Second Act Film Festival format is simple. All participating filmmakers receive the same two pages, the first act and last act respectively, of a short film script created by a team that included local author Janna McMahan. There are no scene descriptions, character names or genders attached. Just dialogue. The filmmakers' job is to create the second act and make the film. There is a minimal set of guidelines to follow but the film the filmmakers make is left completely to their own creative skills.

In August, we put out a call to all filmmakers living in SC. Filmmakers who submitted their names for consideration were juried by a diverse panel of film enthusiasts and professionals from Columbia, including Simon Tarr, Brad-



ley Powell, Coletta Bailey, Lee Ann Kornegay, and Janell Rohan, with limited input from the editorial staff at *Jasper*. From the pool of entries, ten filmmakers were chosen.

On the night of the festival all ten films will be screened, after which the filmmakers will be invited to the stage to discuss their creative processes with the audience. Filmmakers will later be invited to attend a roundtable event with the festival jury in an effort to stimulate discourse about their films and the artists' various approaches to filmmaking. Feedback from the audience, the judges, and the artists' peers is critical to the growth not only of the artists themselves, but also to their sense of community.

The overall goal of the Second Act Film Festival is to introduce local filmmaking talent to the arts community in Columbia. It allows us to offer a creative

challenge to one of SC's undervalued art forms, as well as the opportunity to bring other artistic disciplines into the process. Local artists from many disciplines will be offering their talents in making the Second Act Film Festival a truly diverse event.

We hope that the Second Act Film Festival will plant the seed for a new creative outlet in our independent film community. A community that is ready for its voice to be heard.

*Jasper presents the Second Act Film Festival on October 10<sup>th</sup> at the Tapp's Arts Center. Doors open at 7:00pm. Tickets are \$10 in advance and at the door. Information can be found at [www.secondactfilmfestival.com](http://www.secondactfilmfestival.com)*

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# CURTAIN UP

W/ AUGUST KRICKEL

After a largely successful season that found some theatres taking risks, others reviving proven winners, and still more expanding their offerings and garnering notice and acclaim, the fall onslaught of new shows is upon us! Thanks to some name-brand musicals that lured Columbia's best and brightest to auditions, it's hard to think of a time when this much acting talent was appearing on local stages simultaneously. The downside is that nine shows open within eight days of each other. Just remember there are plenty of weeknight performances and Sunday matinees that won't conflict with football or annual festivals. Curtain Up!

**Workshop Theatre** kicks off their final season at the corner of Bull and Gervais before a major move of the theatre, details of which will be announced soon. Yes, that's right - Workshop is alive and well, with a season full of classics from the last few decades. Running September 13-28 is *Beehive: The '60s Musical*, Larry Gallagher's affectionate tribute to and recreation of female singers from the decade that spanned bobby socks and the summer of love. Valdina Hall, Devin Anderson, Roxanne Livingston, Jordan Harper, Rayanna Briggs, Safiya Whitehead, Brandi Smith, and Tameshia Magwood channel everyone from the Supremes to Petula Clark to Janis Joplin. Jocelyn Sanders and Daniel Gainey share directorial duties, with Barbara Howse-Diemer as choreographer, and Roland Haynes, Jr. as music director. Then Eric Bultman directs Hunter Boyle and Jason Stokes in Anthony Shaffer's Tony-winning *Sleuth*, one of THE great mysteries of the modern era. Handsome rake Milo matches wits with urbane novelist Andrew, but who has the upper hand, and who has murdered whom? Run dates are November 1-16; for information, call 803-799-4876, or visit [www.workshoptheatre.com](http://www.workshoptheatre.com).

**On Stage Productions** presents *An Evening of One Acts*, running Sept. 13-22 at the On Stage Performance Center, 680 Cherokee Lane in West Columbia. Included are a farce (*The Other Other Woman*), a thriller (*The Baby Sitter*), and a murder mystery comedy (*Any Body for Tea*), with an additional late-night performance on Saturdays, which includes an extra play called *Dead*. For information, visit [www.onstagesc.com](http://www.onstagesc.com).

**Trustus Theatre** takes a turn to more traditional (and lavish) Broadway fare with *Ragtime: The Musical*, Terrence McNally's adaptation of the acclaimed E. L. Doctorow novel, featuring Tony-winning music and lyrics by Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens. Class and race clash with justice and humanity as we follow intersecting lives in turn-of-the-century New York. Chad Henderson directs a dream cast including Vicky Saye Henderson, Elisabeth Baker, Bobby Bloom, Kevin Bush, Terrance Henderson (who also choreographs), Avery Bateman, G. Scott Wild, Daryl Byrd, Chip Stubbs, Scott Vaughn, and a huge ensemble full of familiar faces seen as often in lead as in supporting roles. Jeremy Polley is music director, and the extravaganza runs September 13 - October

5 on the Thigpen Main Stage. Then it's actress vs. director in a cat-and-mouse game of seduction, domination and eroticism, as Jim O'Connor directs *Venus in Fur*, the 2011 Broadway smash from David Ives, running November 1-16. And don't despair if you're unsure of what covered dish to bring to an apocalypse: director Robin Gottlieb brings sexy, absurd farce and satire back with a revival of her hit from earlier this year, *5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche*. The original cast (Katie Mixon, Dewey Scott-Wiley, Emily Meadows, Elena Martinez-Vidal and Vicky Saye Henderson) reunites in a giddy romp through assorted double entendres and sexual stereotypes, running October 10-26 in the intimate 50-seat Trustus Side Door Theatre. For information, call 803-254-9732, or visit [www.trustus.org](http://www.trustus.org).

You can't keep a good play down, and the **SC Shakespeare Company** is likewise reviving a show from last season, Carlo Goldoni's *A Servant of Two Masters* (which suffered from many rainy nights last spring.) Returning are the original cast, including Rob Sprankle, Kaitlyn Jones, Scott Stepp, Sara Blanks, Tracy Steele, and Jeff Driggers, as zany Italian *commedia dell'arte* characters pursue romance and intrigue via slapstick and disguise. The show runs September 17 - 21, in Finlay Park (and those performances are free), takes a break, and returns October 4 - 6 at Saluda Shoals Park. Also, be sure to catch Driggers, Bobby Bloom, and Elizabeth Stepp in an excerpt from *The Compleat Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)* at the Rosewood Arts Festival on Saturday, September 28. For information, call 803-787-BARD, or visit [www.shakespeareesc.org](http://www.shakespeareesc.org).

**Chapin Theatre Company** will present Paul Slade Smith's *Unnecessary Farce* at the Harbison Theatre at Midlands Technical College, September 19-28. Glenn Farr directs Dana Bolton, Ellen Rodillo-Fowler, Jim DeFelice, Todd Kemmerling, Scott Means, and Lou Clyde in a taut psychological thriller ... no, we're kidding, it's a farce, although seemingly ripped from the headlines. A city's mayor and accountant are caught in a sting by rookie cops, but circumstances, an outraged wife, and a Scottish hit man throw everything into chaos. Expect the slamming of doors, the doubling of entendre, the revealing of lingerie, and madcap comedic frenzy. For information, call 803-240-8544, or visit [www.chapintheatre.org](http://www.chapintheatre.org).



**Town Theatre** follows their successful run of *Miss Saigon* with another local premiere of a modern classic, *Les Miserables*. Director/choreographer Shannon Willis Scruggs and musical director Lou Warth lead yet another all-star cast in this musical/operatic adaptation of Victor Hugo's saga of love, desperation, vengeance, and obsession. Chris Cockrell is Valjean, pursued by Javert (Lee O. Smith), with Frank Thompson and Jami Steele-Sprinkle as the Thenardiers, sisters Dell and Rebecca Goodrich alternating as Fantine, Catherine Hunsinger and Sami Sessler alternating as Eponine, Erika Lynn Bryant and Karly Minacapelli alternating as Cosette, and an ensemble of nearly three dozen. Run dates are September 20 - October 12; for information, call 803-799-2510, or visit [www.towntheatre.com](http://www.towntheatre.com).

**Columbia Children's Theatre**, located upstairs in Richland Mall, has been attracting more and more adults to their shows, thanks to first-rate performances from some of the city's finest actors who regularly distinguish themselves in other venues. Running September 20 - 29 is *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*, in which "everyone's favorite flat world traveler comes to life on stage in a whirlwind worldwide musical travelogue." Cindy Flach makes her CCT debut as director and choreographer, with musical direction by CCT mainstay Paul Lindley II. Anthony Harvey and David Quay are double-cast as the title character, with able support from Elizabeth Stepp, Toni Moore, Diane Gilbert, Evelyn Clary, Julian DeLeon, and Christina Whitehouse-Suggs. Then the NiA Company makes another guest appearance on the CCT stage October 18-20 with *Br'er Rabbit*. NiA often takes folk tales back to their roots, then turns them upside down with inventive storytelling and comedy, so be forewarned that "this is not your uncle's bunny," as the furry little trickster "tries to out-smart, out-slick and out-dance the bigger, stronger, animals in the forest." For information, call 803-691-4548, or visit [www.columbiachildrenstheatre.com](http://www.columbiachildrenstheatre.com).

It's not easy being green. Or mean, or grumpy, or huge. Learn more as the **Lexington County Arts Association** presents *Shrek: The Musical*, running September 20 - October 6 at the Village Square Theatre. Follow the misadventures of loveable ogre Shrek (T.J. Daley) as he quests with irreverent Donkey (Stephen Fisher) to find the

feisty Princess Fiona (Ashley Manley.) Debra Leopard directs this family favorite, with book and lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire, and music by Jeanine Tesori, based on the Oscar-winning animated film. Then fasten your seatbelts for a bumpy, hilarious, and heartwarming ride though female bonding, with Robert Harling's sentimental favorite, *Steel Magnolias*, which runs November 1-10. Just remember - there is no such thing as natural beauty. For information, call 803-359-1436, or visit [www.villagesquaretheatre.com](http://www.villagesquaretheatre.com).

**Stage 5 Theatre**, now located at 847 Stadium Drive, # 4, just down from Williams-Brice and a stone's throw from Conquest Brewing, has been increasingly ambitious in their productions of late. Running September 20-29 is *Hamlet 1993*, director William Boland's interpretation of the Shakespearean tragedy wherein we catch the conscience of the king. Mitchell Hilburn plays the depressed prince, with Chris Mathews as the "treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain" Claudius, Hillary MacArthur as Gertrude who doth protest too much, Sarah Crouch as the doomed Ophelia, Lucas Bender as Laertes, Bryan Bender as Polonius, and Corey Langley as Horatio. Then Michael Bailey directs *Lombardi*, based on the life of the famous coach, and running October 18 - 27. For information, call 803-834-1775, or visit [www.mbfproductions.net](http://www.mbfproductions.net).

USC's **Theatre South Carolina** is the most reliable venue in town when it comes to producing works of great authors. Up first is Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, directed by Louis Butelli, and running September 27-October 5 at Drayton Hall. It's a comedy of manners about scholarship and science; it's a literary romance spanning two centuries; it's an intellectual detective story, or possibly all of the above. Then Patti Walker directs Dael Orlandersmith's *Yellowman*, a "provocative, affecting drama about the harsh realities of internalized racism in the African-American community." This adult-themed show runs one weekend only, October 10-13, in the Lab Theatre at 1400 Wheat St. For information, call 803-777-2551 or visit <http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/thea/2014/Season13-14.html>.

**Theatre Rowe** is venturing out as South-eastern Theatrical Arts Bandits (S.T.A.B.) to

bring murder mysteries to a restaurant or event venue near you. Their series of dinner theatre productions also continue upstairs in Richland Mall (over Barnes & Noble.) Running September 27-October 13 is *Contempt of Court*, by David Landau, an interactive comedy set at Judge Judy's People's Night Court, "where audience members become plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses and jury in some of the most outlandishly funny law suits ever to double cross the bench." Then Eileen Moushey's aptly titled *Seance at the Mall* runs October 25-November 24. For information, call (803) 200-2012, or visit or <http://scdinnertheatre.com/>.

**High Voltage Theatre** invites you to sink your teeth into the world premiere of the *Bram Stoker Estate's Dracula*, running October 17-31 at the West Columbia Riverwalk Amphitheater; details are on page 6 of this issue.

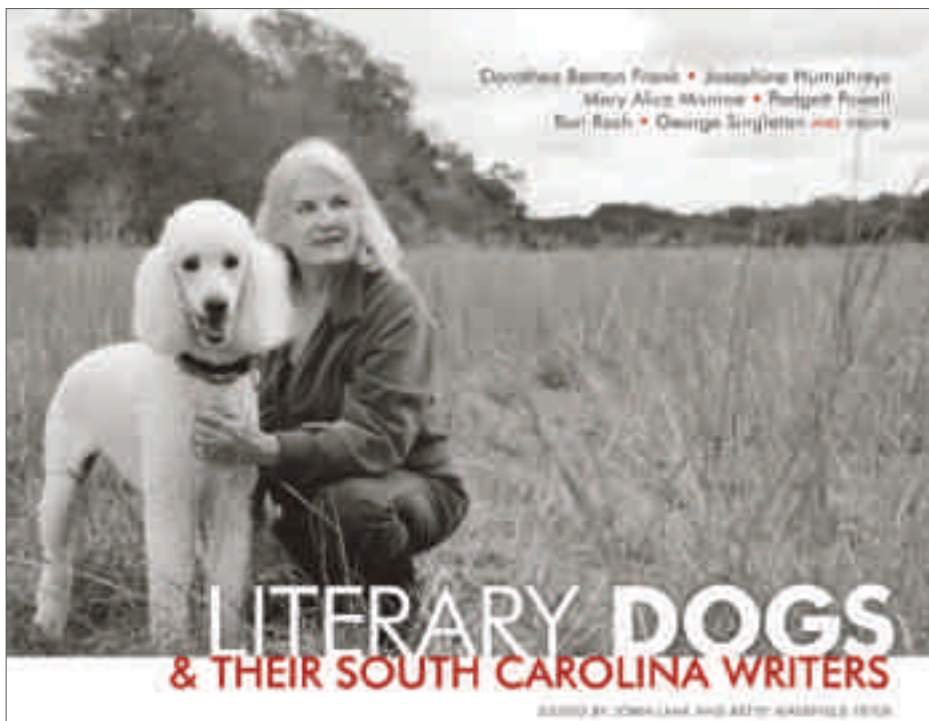


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# Literary Dogs & Their South Carolina Writers

A REVIEW BY BRANDI BALLARD



**H**ub City Press' *Literary Dogs & Their South Carolina Writers* seeks to answer the question "Why do writers love dogs?" The collection features 25 tales of beloved South Carolina writers – including Dorothea Benton Frank, Ron Rash, and Christopher Dickey – and their dogs.

The stories highlight some of the universal facts of dog ownership. Like new parents, dog owners spend an inordinate amount of time talking about what goes into and comes out of their dogs. It is appropriate then that this collection begins with the editors' own story

about dog vomit and a resulting injury to one of the dog's human companions.

Despite these less savory but often funny insights into the world of dog ownership, non-dog lovers will find a lot to love in this book. While the stories center on the dogs, they serve as a conduit for talking about relationships, love, loss, displacement, and forgiveness. In his essay, "Dog Hands," J. Drew Lanham finds himself unable to grieve the passing of his father-in-law until his own dog, a Labrador Retriever named Jack, passes a short time later.

In "Forgiving Ruedi," Mary Alice Monroe has to learn to forgive her Bernese Mountain dog after it bites her daughter in a heat-stroke induced delirium. It is only by seeing her children's forgiveness and unconditional love for the creature that Monroe is able to move past the event. Ron Rash writes about

loving "An Ugly, Mean Mutt" that clings to life, it seems, out of meanness. The reader also meets Nicole Seitz's four-pound quesadilla-stealing Chihuahua, Kahlua, and a slew of other bad dogs.

Through their dogs, the reader gets an intimate look at the way these animals have shaped their owners' lives and vice versa. Christopher Dickey, the son of James Dickey, reveals that his father's poem, "A Dog Sleeping on My Feet" was actually inspired by a corgi named Buckshot. In some cases, the dogs were left in the care of parents after their children had moved out. Others were sought out, though in Lanham's case his romanticized dreams of having a birding dog were crushed when the dog turned out to have a short attention span.

One thing many of the stories has in common is the presence of dogs at the feet of their owners while they write. As I write this, Bunny, our twelve-year-old Yorkie, and Lucy, our six-year-old, rescued ChiPin, are curled up under my desk, asleep. Though the writers don't really say what this means, I view my dogs presence as a sense of encouragement and comfort, as if they are saying *you can do it, we'll wait*.

*Brandi Ballard is currently pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing at USC, where she is a James Dickey Fellow. She is the co-editor of The Art of Medicine in Metaphors: A Collection of Poems and Narratives and an editor of Yemassee.*



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# THIS WEEK IN NORTHERN IRELAND

BY JOSH BREWER

*12 June 2012*

Streets flooded.

A queen shook hands with a republican.

They looked at art.

Some people spread out a flag on a hillside with the sign

“Ériu is our queen.”

One of these people was beaten

and escaped by rolling down the hill.

In town, some kids threw petrol bombs at policemen.

Our toddler son, Polish and American, said

“Q is for queen.

She will come to Belfast,

and she will shake my hand and follow me.”

He looked at the coastal cliffs from a bus and saw

gorse, heather, knobby trees, and linksland.

Josh A. Brewer's writing has appeared in *Sargasso*, *Poets Against War* (Canada), *Bluestem*, and other journals, as well as *Yemassee* (where he served as book reviews editor). He once had a poem selected for publication on a city bus, and he has lived in an obscure corner of Columbia known as “Frogtown.” Currently an associate professor of English at Ivy Tech in Lafayette, Indiana, he will begin an MFA program in poetry at Butler University in the fall.

# LATE SUMMER

*—with a line from Sappho*

BY SUSAN LAUGHTER MEYERS

Is it the smell of fresh-cut grass  
and sliced leaves,  
plus the plea of some small bird  
in the weeds and vines?  
Crooked sticks woven  
through the fence wire.  
O the loud machinery of cicadas.  
What else to shout out the window  
across the feathered fields but  
yes, open the sky—  
*Up with the roof!*  
Yes, open the sky  
across the feathered fields but  
what else to shout out the window?  
O the loud machinery of cicadas.  
Through the fence wire  
crooked sticks woven  
in the weeds and vines,  
plus the plea of some small bird.  
And sliced leaves.  
Is it the smell of fresh-cut grass?

Susan Laughter Meyers's book *My Dear, Dear Stagger Grass*, just released, won the inaugural Cider Press Review Editors Prize. Her book *Keep and Give Away* (University of South Carolina Press) won the SC Poetry Book Prize. She is a recent recipient of *Prairie Schooner's* Edward Stanley Award, as well as The SC Academy of Authors' Carrie McCray Nickens Fellowship. A long-time writing instructor, she lives in Givhans, SC.

# Rockin' a Hard Place: Flats, Sharps & Other Notes from a Misfit Musical Owner

## by John Jeter

A REVIEW BY KYLE PETERSEN

**i**f you talk to anybody in the Columbia music scene for any length of time, at some point they will invariably bring up the mostly-undisputed lament that the city is missing a decent mid-sized venue—something akin to the Visulite Theater in Charlotte, The Orange Peel in Asheville, or Charleston's Music Farm.

And while each of those cities also has structural advantages that, at this point, Columbia sadly does not, another reason our fair city hasn't sustained a solid, marquee-level music hall is that running one is just really damn difficult.

John Jeter, longtime co-proprietor of The Handlebar in Greenville, the most likely model for any successful similar-sized venue in Columbia, explains the difficulties and travails in his new memoir, *Rockin' A Hard Place: Flats, Sharps, and Other Notes from a Misfit Music Club Owner*. A former journalist and published novelist, Jeter knows how to spin a good yarn, even if his recollections can occasionally falter when he gets a bit too whiney or embittered.

For the most part, though, this book shines, whether Jeter is regaling the reader with John Hiatt's tour rider requests (freshly roasted rotisserie chicken, please), or the crazy antics of local characters like the nameless noise ordinance Nazi or the ancient, appearing-out-of-the-woodwork lighting technician Herb, who, despite some fairly

strong chemical dependencies served as a talisman for the club for many years before his death and shared his zany lighting designs along with a mix of true and tall tales about his glory years as a roadie during rock 'n' roll's heyday in the 1960s and '70s.

More than anything, though, what keeps the reader fascinated is how Jeter pulls the curtain back on the harsh realities of a club promoter who is sometimes required to pay large advances to touring artists without any real guarantee of a return. Not to mention how the money made last week with a huge beer-drinking crowd for a regional favorite can disappear the next week with an under-attended show by a legend like Junior Wells or Richie Havens. And how, sometimes, an owner might book an act like the Zac Brown Band and barely fill half the room, but then six months later the same act will fill huge auditoriums.

While Jeter often seems somewhat ambivalent about his path—somewhat due to his health difficulties, which included hip replacement surgery and a nervous breakdown—it's hard not to read this memoir as an affirmation of his decisions in life. He revels in the accounts of meeting Joan Baez for the first time, of booking John Mayer right when he was taking off, and, most of all, of still being a music fan in the music business, which tends to shake quite a lot of fandom out of the average person. And, that's mostly how the book leaves the reader feeling, too.



As a whole, the memoir accomplishes a rare feat in meeting a variety of interests—whether you are interested in the operation of a music club, love the Americana-hued artists that inspired Jeter to open the club in the first place, or just have a general fascination with poignant meditations on the life of small business owners, there's something for you here. That Jeter, along with Kathy Laughlin, his Herculean wife, has kept The Handlebar running for close to 20 years almost demands that his story be taken seriously. What's more, the venue's proximity to Columbia makes it a must-read for anyone who has ever lamented the state of the Midlands music scene.



# ENGAGING WITH THE SC PHIL IN ITS 50TH YEAR



PHOTO BY THOMAS HANNONO

BY MORIHIKO NAKAHARA  
Director and Conductor, SC Philharmonic

**M**y first official concert with the South Carolina Philharmonic as its music director was in September 2008, around the same time as the notorious Lehman Shock. In orchestras across the country, grand artistic visions gave way to immediate crisis management. I have heard our industry leaders say

phrases like, “It’s the economy, stupid,” or “Flat is the new up.” At the same time, however, we as artists must continuously push the proverbial envelope towards innovation and adventure in spite of our budgetary constraints. For someone who is a complete mess whenever attempting to practice yoga, I have learned that balance and flexibility are essential for survival in this business. For instance, our upcoming season includes such warhorses as Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4, along with two world premieres by Joan Tower and USC professor John Fitz Rogers, and a special collaboration with Béla Fleck on his new banjo concerto.

Recently there was a minor war of words between the print media in Columbia and Charleston over the question of which city is better. Whenever I’m asked whether I enjoy working in the “South” (with that strong emphasis on the last word), I always answer that I love working in Columbia because of its creative, passionate, and dynamic individuals across many disciplines. Great cities are not defined by their geographical location or natural beauty, but by their people. For this reason we are actively forming current and future collaborations with the Columbia Museum of Art, Nickelodeon Theatre, Trustus, Southeastern Piano Festival, and more. While our core product will always remain the standard canon of symphonic music from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present, I believe that there are so many opportunities for insightful collaborations and thematic alignments across a wide spectrum of disciplines.

Every February, the SCPhil performs a series of Young People’s Concerts for thousands of elementary school students. For the last two years, we have partnered with Carnegie Hall to

present LinkUP! for these students. LinkUP! is not a typical “drive-by” education program of the past; it is interactive, fast-paced, multimedia driven, fun, and most importantly, participatory. Imagine 1,500 students and their classroom teachers playing their recorders, clapping their hands, and singing along with the orchestra! I welcome any naysayers about the future of classical music to witness this program. Classical music can indeed be relevant and exciting for people of all ages and backgrounds, depending on how the music is presented and how the listeners are engaged. Hopefully, these lessons we have learned from the growth of our education programs will also be applied to everything we do, including our Masterworks series concerts.

At the risk of sounding cliché, I ask, if an orchestra goes out of business and no one notices it, does the glorious music the said orchestra makes even matter? Thanks to our passionate music lovers, generous corporate sponsors and individual donors, and dedicated volunteers, the SCPhil celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the upcoming season. Our leadership team is committed to delivering unique entertainment and cultural enrichment via inspiring performances, innovative programming, and meaningful educational outreach for the next fifty years and beyond.

I would love to hear your ideas about how we can make our concert experience more approachable and engaging. (Save for a concert with a Linkin Park cover band, which I would not consider...) Drop me a line at morihiko@scphilharmonic.com or on Twitter at @morihiko\_naka. I hope to see many of you at our upcoming concerts and at one of many arts events happening throughout the Midlands.

*For someone who is a complete mess whenever attempting to practice yoga, I have learned that balance and flexibility are essential for survival in this business.*



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