

# JASPER





# TAPP'S arts center



EVENTS



EXHIBITIONS



RENTALS



WORKSHOPS



5 A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR

- By Kyle Petersen

8 READS

- The Doom of Ravenswood

12 SPECIAL

- From Mao to Marilyn

14 LISTENS

- Rap Talk

24 WATCHES

- Jennifer Moody Sanchez
- Walter Graham

28 CENTERFOLD

- Jason Kendall

36 LISTENS

- Local Record Reviews

44 SPECIAL

- Saluda Shoals Music Festival
- Jasper's Spoleto Picks

63 SCREENS

- Amy Shumaker

52 GAZES

- Russell Jeffcoat

56 READS

- *American Sycamore*
- *Smell of Salt, Ghost of Rain*
- *Lost Cantos of the Ouroboros*
- *Fate Moreland's Widow*
- Poem by Melissa Dugan
- Poem by Ken Denk

63 GUEST EDITORIAL

- By Randy Akers



08 ON THE COVER  
THE DOOM OF RAVENSWOOD

14 LISTENS  
RAP TALK

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W. Heyward Sims ART DIRECTOR • Forrest Clonts PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR  
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Thomas Hammond STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Alexis Schwallier STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Annie Boiter-Jolley OPERATIONS MANAGER  
Robert B. Jolley, Jr., MD PUBLISHER

## CONTRIBUTORS

Erika Ryan • David Stringer • Woody Jones • Melissa Dugan  
Ken Dink • Randy Akers • Michael Spaw  
Will South • Sarah Gough • Brandon Rushton

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## Dear Friends,

**PUTTING TOGETHER** a magazine is a lot of work.

As I'm only two months (and first issue) into my new role as assistant editor here at Jasper, that might seem like a fairly obvious thing to say. After all, cries of being overworked are practically an American tradition, particularly among us white collar folks who gather together over wine or a beer late at night to commiserate about our endless mountains of blown deadlines and backlog of projects. But I'm not saying that to garner your sympathy, but rather to push it towards our fearless leader, Editor-in-chief Cindi Boiter.

Having worked closely with Cindi on this last issue for the first time, I more intimately understand the laborious process of corralling a legion of talented freelancers to not only take on assignments, but to produce creative, engaging work that fits the magazine's vision and challenges our readers.

We've mostly succeeded this time, with an eclectic array of subject matter that ranges from my digressive (although fiercely relevant) hip-hop roundtable with rappers FatRat da Czar, Preach Jacobs, and Karmessiah to centerfold Kendal Jason's fascinatingly introspective performance art piece that grapples with masculinity and the mythos surrounding *The Wizard of Oz*. In between, we hopscotch through talking

about the music direction *Dream Girls* to the vagaries of 19<sup>th</sup> century female composers to the curious case of Andy Warhol, among other subjects. It's a ride.

Putting it all together though, is a process, one that requires a lot of thinking, brainstorming, and chasing down ideas before there's an even a rough sketch of what the magazine is going to look like. And from issue to issue, there's also always a small (or large) set of fires that need to be put out. These problems range from the logistical—a photographer may have locked his keys in the car on the way to a shoot or a planned feature falls through because the subject is out of town—to concerns about the political and social ramifications of the stories we tell or how much we should temper our desire to educate and promote with critique and taste. It's hard to predict what these quandaries will be ahead of time, or how best to prepare for them. You just deal.

All of that is only partly why Cindi asked for my help though. Since I started with Jasper as music editor back in 2011, she's always encouraged all of the editors to bring their own vision to their subject matter, and for the most part I think I've done a good job living up to that. The music coverage in Jasper has drifted dramatically over the years—the record review section, now a staple, first appeared over a year into the magazine's existence, and for a while I was

writing a column that bounced around almost as much as what I chose to feature—but ultimately I'd like to think (humbly, if that's possible) that I forged a particular sensibility of what and how we wrote about our music scene. I've also dabbled in other areas, writing about film, literature, and theater for the magazine when inspired or called upon to, but what has remained consistent is my desire to both to get at the heart of a story emotionally and intellectually, to acknowledge all of the outward realities of art while at the same time recognizing that how and why it makes us tick is usually a little more complicated than that.

That's pretty much what the magazine has done across the board as well, but as the new assistant editor I'd like to continue and strengthen that mission. As Columbia's arts scene grows, there's a clear hunger to challenge ourselves, in all sorts of ways, and there's always going to be some tension and disagreement over any sort of change. However long my tenure in this position will be, I'd like for us here at Jasper to do our best to give our community ways of thinking, rejecting, challenging, or re-thinking the role of arts in our social world as well as deep within our own interiority. Again, a tall order.

But you don't make a magazine if you don't like a little bit of challenge.

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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THE  
**JASPER GUILD**

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The Jasper Guild is a group of supporting artists and arts lovers who appreciate not only the vital Columbia, SC arts scene, but the magazine devoted to promoting it. Members of the Jasper Guild recognize the labor-of-love that is Jasper and work to do their parts to ensure that Jasper continues to publish a 100% LOCAL & artist-produced magazine. You're invited to join us in our mission to make Columbia, SC the Southeast arts capitol by becoming a member of the Jasper Guild. And the next time you open a copy of Jasper you'll be able to say,

"I helped make this happen and here's my name to prove it!"

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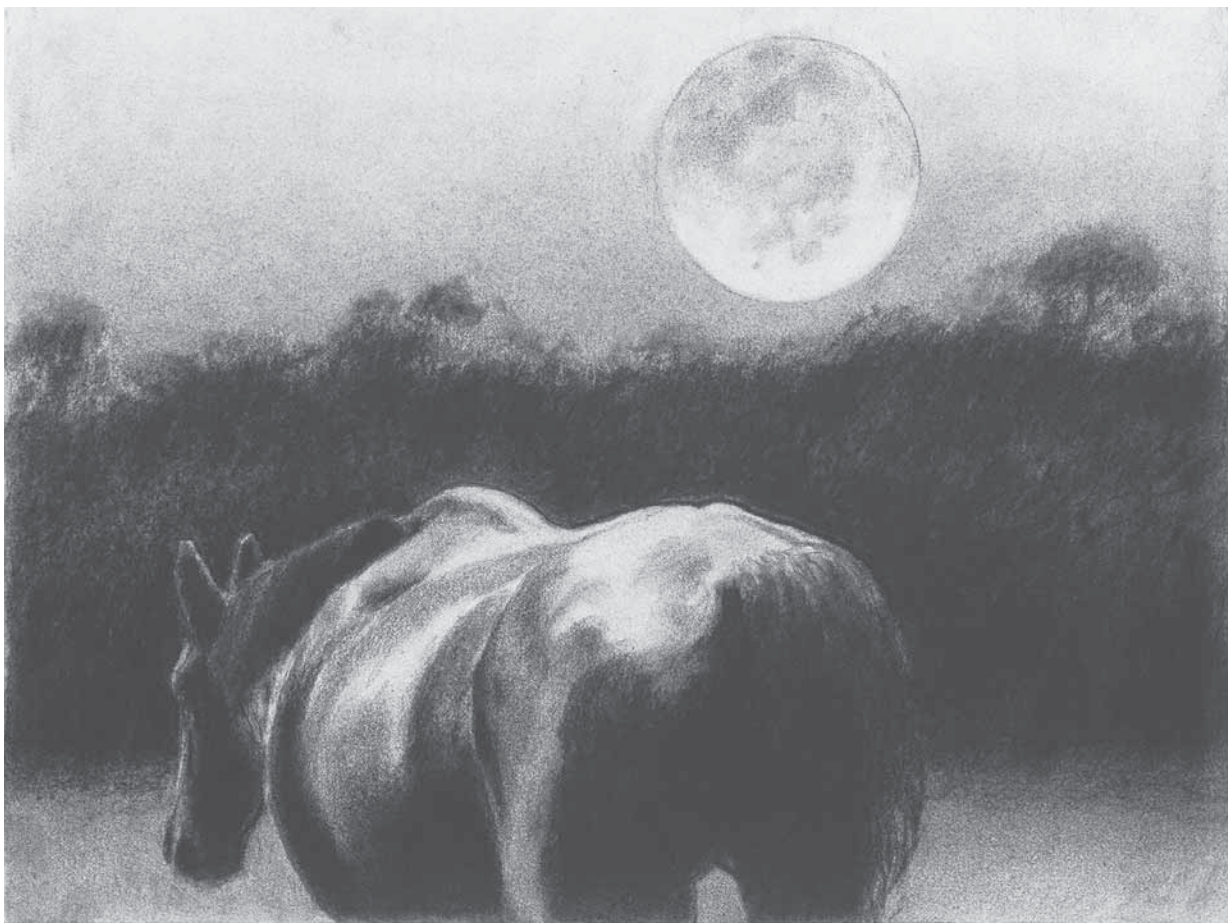
*"But I'm just a starving artist myself," you say?*

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Visual Artist Stephen Chesley Revisits Archibald Rutledge in

# THE DOOM OF RAVENSWOOD





“

The swamp, went by the fanciful name of the Doom of Ravenswood; though I confess that it never impressed me with any sense of impending disaster.

---

- Archibald Rutledge

”

It is more than an understatement to call noted outdoors writer Archibald Rutledge (1883-1973) prolific. The author of more than 50 books, hundreds of magazine articles in such publications as *Field and Stream*, *Outdoor Life*, and numerous additional magazines directed toward boys, as well as thousands of poems, Rutledge was a natural choice to be South Carolina's first poet laureate in 1934. Growing up in McClellanville, SC and the swamps of SC's low-country, Rutledge was an avid outdoorsperson—as an adult, traveling back to SC with his sons to teach them to hunt and fish—and his stories of the beauty, peace, and adventure he found in

nature influenced and inspired him all his life. Nowhere are these elements more evident than in the short story, “The Doom of Ravenswood,” re-released this year by the University of South Carolina Press and illustrated with lush charcoal sketches by noted Columbia-based artist, Stephen Chesley, with a forward by Rutledge scholar Jim Casada and an afterward by Charles W. Waring III.

“The Doom of Ravenswood” was likely published in a very limited edition of 200 to 250 copies in or around 1913 as part of a collection of 18 of Rutledge's (mostly previously published) short stories. The compilation was titled *Old Plantation Days* and was published by the small Eddy Press Corporation of Cumberland, Maryland, not far from where Rutledge taught English at Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania. Five stories are unique to the *Old Plantation Days* collection including “Claws,” also illustrated by Chesley and published in 2014 by USC Press, this year's “The Doom of Ravenswood,” and three others, “The Egret's Plumes,” “The Ocean's Menace,” and “The Heart of Regal.” It was the rarity of these stories that inspired the Humanities Council SC and USC Press to initiate the project of re-publishing the piec-

“

Then, trembling, I stood still—if, indeed, it might be called standing—for the black water had begun to bubble thickly about my legs, and they, like dead weights, sank slowly downward.”

---

- Archibald Rutledge

”



es with new illustrations. That's where Chesley came on board.

"In part, the satisfaction I receive is from the opportunity to elevate art and literature while reintroducing Archibald Rutledge to a new generation," Chesley says. "Also, as the illustrations are inside the narrative and out, I envision these volumes as sparking children's imaginations and giving them exposure to nature's incredible diversity, richness, and drama while perhaps instilling a sense of love and wonder of the natural world."

Rutledge's personal affiliation with the area about which he wrote gave him great inspiration for the story. Ravenswood Place is the narrator's home to which he was traveling when he stopped to pick flowers, accidentally becoming ensnared in what the reader is to assume is quicksand. His fate lies in his relationship with his faithful horse, Redbird.

Chesley found it easy to place himself in the same situation as the narrator, given a similar predicament in his past. To those friendly or familiar with Chesley, it's not difficult to find the illustrator in the illustrations. "Resemblance to the character in 'The Doom of Ravenswood' evolved from using my own positioning for the figure, so there is some spillover in likeness," Chesley says. "Also, upon reading this particular tale I was reminded of being mired up to my waist in a quicksand of sorts in Sparkleberry Swamp. Rutledge's description of the stages one goes through realizing a simple problem has become lethal seemed more than familiar to me."

The 20-plus illustrations in "The Doom of Ravenswood" are outstanding examples of Chesley's skills, at times calling up the detail of Audubon and the lushness of early O'Keeffe. Even more so than last year's *Claws*, Chesley's illustrative art is evocative, engaging the reader, no matter their age or interest in the outdoors, in the story of one afternoon in the life of an unnamed narrator, his horse, called Redbird, and a swampy piece of land by a slow stream bordered by deceptively welcoming blue flag flowers colloquially known as the Doom of Ravenswood. **-CB**







# From Marilyn to Mao

ANDY WARHOL'S FAMOUS FACES

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At the Columbia Museum of Art  
June 12 through September 13

By Will South





sk the famous what people really know about them. They will tell you: Nothing.

Of course, we do know some things. We know what a person “does,” whether politician or painter or Pulitzer Prize winner. We know whether or not someone invented something, or was the first to walk on the moon, or a movie star.

But what we do not know far outweighs what we know. We do not know the habits and secrets of the famous or what they think of during the day. We do not know the person behind the fame, the “real person.” We know that fame is like a mask. It hides more than it reveals.

And yet we are, as a culture, obsessed with fame. Often with fame comes wealth and with wealth comes power. The famous surely must have a freedom and flexibility beyond that of the everyday person, their lives must be infinitely more stimulating and satisfying. Our culture admires and envies the famous, so much so that celebrities are America’s aristocracy.

Andy Warhol knew that celebrity was at the heart of popular culture. People as different as Marilyn Monroe and Mick Jagger are role models and idols—we cannot seem to see them enough. And so Warhol made images of celebrities and made them large and re-

peated them over and over. Warhol placed us face to face, as it were, with our own fascination with fame, and America began to think of fame through the eyes of Andy Warhol.

Warhol said that in the future everyone would be famous for fifteen minutes. His prediction has more or less come true with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. We carefully craft images of our lives online, garnering friends and followers we may not even know. Social media is giving us our fifteen minutes, and we are taking it—as Warhol figured we would.

And why? The promise of fame is a life enriched with excitement and possibility. The reality of fame is that the famous are simply people, too, not unlike us, except they are shrouded in myth—myths that we create. Andy Warhol understood that fame and celebrity represented a fundamental disconnect between truth and perception. “Who wants the truth?” he said, “That’s what show business is for, to prove that it’s not what you are that counts, it’s what they think you are.”

Imagine, if you can, a room full of art critics. They have gathered to discuss the legacy of Andy Warhol. The late Robert Hughes would claim that Warhol was a fraud. Mark Rosenthal, a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, would say that Warhol’s art touches every aspect of the contemporary art world that followed him. Some critics would land in between, believing Warhol’s influence to be important as part of the larger Pop movement, but not so important that it changed the history of art. The history of art was changing anyway, just like the history of the world.

So, what is the legacy of Andy Warhol? Is it really anything you want for it to be, from fraudulent to foundational?

Warhol himself might chuckle that such a question would even be asked so many years after his death. He might well believe that we should have moved on long ago to ev-

er-new ways of thinking and creating. And, in a sense, we have: advanced digital technology (unavailable to Warhol) has opened new realms of possibility, and a globally-connected art world has produced new ways of collaborating. Yet, we still look at Warhol as some kind of progenitor of all that is new and brash and jazzy. Is he?

The upcoming show at Columbia Museum of Art does not answer this question. Instead, the art exhibited demonstrates an obsession with fame, an obsession Warhol found all around him and which, not surprisingly, is found everywhere today. If the role of the artist in a society is to recognize what is special or different or attractive in a culture and give shape to it, then Warhol did exactly that. For us, fame remains something special and attractive, keeping Warhol relevant and interesting. It hardly matters, in a sense, if he had something like talent or not: he had an intuitive sense of what mattered to ordinary people—and that was extraordinary people.

Artists cannot control their legacy. Marilyn Monroe made a few passable films, posed for various magazines, and somehow reigns supreme in American mythology. Mick Jagger sings the same songs he was singing over a half a century ago, and people still listen to them. And there is Warhol himself, still the object of exhibitions and new books. As a culture, we do not seem to tire of him. But what do we really know of him? His entire career seems to beg this question. We know this:

He is famous.

*Will South is the Chief Curator  
for the Columbia Museum of Art*

The title 'Fat Rat' is rendered in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The word 'Fat' is in a bright yellow color, while 'Rat' is in black. A halftone dot pattern is overlaid on the right side of the letters, particularly on the 'a' and the 't'. The background is white, with a dark purple and pink halftone pattern visible in the top right corner.

# Fat Rat

Preach Jacobs, FatRat da Czar, and Karmessiah Chat  
about the Past, Present, and Future of Hip-Hop

BY KYLE PETERSEN



## Hip-hop needs words.

Well, that's not precisely correct—but hip-hop was born out of a need for words, a powerful, almost revolutionary way for a disempowered minority to be creative and express itself with little more than a couple of turntables and a microphone.



**F**ROM THERE, a long, complex musical journey that is alternately inspirational and disheartening unfolds across the decades, starting in the late 1970s. What is undeniable, though, has been the genre's steady, inexorable rise to becoming the most popular form of music in the world.

Given that rise though, it's surprising how much confusion and lack of historical awareness there is for rap music and hip-hop culture in general. Or maybe it's not much of a surprise, given how racially tense our country still so obviously is in the wake of the events in Ferguson and, more recently, right down I-26 in North Charleston.

But rather than bore you with a long history of the genre and how it's thriving (or not) in Columbia, we thought we'd do something a bit different and try to grapple with the music's legacy and what it means for our city in 2015. To do that we enlisted three prominent rappers from the local scene and chatted informally, touching on some of the key principles that have driven the music's growth, what their personal experiences have been as hip-hop artists, and where both the local scene and the international one needs to go from here. The conversation took some digressions and got spun around a few times, with dense moments of allusions and references that might be lost on somebody unfamiliar with the genre.

But that was also kind of the point. The best rappers are spitting out poetry with its own particular tradition and reference points, and to that end our conversation mimicked that reality. And the fact that we were able to talk, even for a moment, about rap music godfathers like Afrika Bambaataa, a DJ who pioneered the use of breakbeats and theorized about the importance of having a genuine hip-hop culture, or KRS-One, a legendary socially conscious rapper that appeared in the mid-1980s, suggests something on the genre's rich history.

We also spent a fair amount of time talking about Kendrick Lamar, a young Compton rapper whose masterful sophomore LP *To Pimp a Butterfly* had just been released a few weeks prior. Lamar is arguably the biggest







PEOPLE  
WEREN'T  
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BUT THEY WERE  
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KNOW WHAT  
I'M SAYING?

// Preach Jacobs

name in the game right now, and *Butterfly* is a jazz-inflected, densely layered masterpiece with lots to say with an excitingly fresh and yet historically aware way of saying it.

The members of our roundtable were as follows:

FatRat da Czar, or Darius Johnson, is the eldest member of the group, and is widely considered to be the leader of the hip-hop scene in Columbia. Johnson has released many, many albums and mixtapes over the years, and currently manages a nascent collective called NewSC and works as an engineer at the Boom Room recording studio. He also is one of the primary organizers of Love, Peace, and Hip-Hop, an annual family-friendly festival that just celebrated its third year in existence.

Next is Dherick “Preach” Jacobs, who in addition to making music is also an activist, journalist, music promoter, and founder of Cola Con, the only comic book and hip-hop convention in existence. Jacobs also has to his credit one of 2014’s best SC LPs, *Arrow of God*, under the moniker Analog, and had just officially announced his candidacy for City Council a few days prior to our conversation.

The two were joined by Dennis Morgan, a.k.a Karmessiah, a younger Millennial rapper and producer whose music has been praised as “outsider hip-hop” by *Shuffle Magazine* and the *Columbia Free Times*. Neither Jacobs nor Johnson had met Morgan prior to this conversation, although Morgan had produced a track on FatRat’s last LP *Da Cold War 3*.

Here is what we talked about, edited for space and clarity.

**JM:** I thought we could start off by talking about this recent *Free Times* cover story (“Arts in Black and White”). Do we live in a culturally segregated city?

**PREACH:** I’m actually glad you said that, man, because there is no use in running [for City Council] if I can’t say what I want. Just the fact that I’m running—you know, when the *Free Times* article came out, that said I was considering running for office a few months ago, the headline read “Hip-Hop artist mulls council run.” And for me, having “hip-hop” and “city council” in the same sentence, that’s what’s needed, that’s what’s necessary.

Everything is intentional. Me not having my hair cut down and taped up, and me actively saying I’m a hip-hop artist. That’s the point, to say ‘hey man, you can be hip-hop and be involved in policy, you can be in hip-hop and show that you have power, you can be hip-hop and show that your art matters.’ So hell yeah I want to talk about a lot of these things from a hip-hop perspective.

**JM:** The question of that tag “hip-hop,” seems to bring up another question that I find very interesting. For the last thirty years or so, hip-hop, more than any other cultural force, has come to define who black men in America are. Part of that tag is empowering, but partly, rightly or wrongly, it’s also oppressive too. You guys all make hip-hop music, but whether you do or not, you still have to reckon with that tag in some way. What do you think about that?

**FATRAT:** The question is layered--that’s a thick question. I gotta think about hip-hop defining black males--I never really thought about it like that. That’s an interesting perspective.

I’ll say this. We needed--we being people who represent the struggle--I don’t know if that’s a black thing. The roots of this culture, the origins are in South Bronx of New York, came from people who didn’t have anything. Out of that, came a new sound, came a new dance, a new dress, a new way of expressing yourself. And then [Afrika] Bambaataa coined this new activity with the word “hip-hop.” So wherever there are people who feel outcasted or who don’t feel a part of this scene, whatever it is that society has going on, you are going to find some people who are operating in a hip-hop fashion. When people have their own ideas about where they’re at, what kind of music they can create. This is a very fearless culture that is not very apologetic. I think that spirit has maybe been...maybe hip-hop started before the name hip-hop, you know what I’m saying? ‘I’m not going to apologize for rocking like this, I’m gonna do my own thing.’

That’s definitely not to take anything away from Bambaataa or DJ [Kool] Herc. And for me personally--we were brought here, so I don’t feel like Johnson is my last name, I don’t know much of my past, ya know? Hip-hop is

something I identified with, because it was me. I know where that starts. Bambaataa is my grandfather, Kool Herc is my grandfather, Mobb Deep is my uncle, Master P is my uncle, it is my family in my mind.

I don’t know if young black males felt lost as I did at a certain age, but these were the people that I felt were giving me some information about what’s going out here post-Civil Rights Act, in a new world where everything is supposed to be fair. And on paper it is, but it may not be as fair as it looks.

**PREACH:** For me growing up, the influence of hip-hop was real cerebral. I didn’t think about the impact it had until I got older and realized what it was. My heroes were Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Miles Davis.

So more than thinking that hip-hop defines black men or defines young black folks, I think that’s always been there. So before--people weren’t rapping in the sixties, but they were rapping the sixties, you know what I’m saying? There’s a need to create and express ourselves. One of those things where when you give the most oppressed a platform to speak, that’s when great things can happen. Hip-hop wasn’t supposed to exist. It came from nothing!

...and the idea that you can’t even find out where you’re from and who you are, that’s something that other Americans outside of African-Americans take for granted, because no one ever stripped you of where you’re coming from, who you are. For this music to come out of that, that’s what is identifiable. That’s why we look at Malcolm, that’s why we look at Martin, that’s why we look at Tupac. That’s why we look at these people, regardless of genre of music, because they are like, ‘hey, we’re defining ourselves, and we aren’t letting anyone else define us.’

**KARMESSIAH:** I feel like hip-hop wasn’t supposed to be an outlet for expression of black masculinity, it just became a natural channel. It’s a way of speaking openingly and directly. It just became something that young black men could rally behind so they could feel powerful, when so many times you just feel powerless, withheld from expressing who you are. I think once that became an industry and money got enough that became twisted, but for a while I think it was a way to



identify with. Nowadays, as far as the mainstream goes, I don't think so.

**PREACH:** How do you feel about the Kendrick album?

**KARMESSIAH:** I loved it.

**PREACH:** Me too.

**KARMESSIAH:** It was necessary, with the way mainstream hip hop is nowadays. We kind of have to go in the opposite direction. We've gone so far into this kind of circus-y kind of music, you have to go back to the organic. When you go to one extreme, you kind of have to go back to the other.

...The way I see it, hip-hop is on the decline, but that's only because every other type of creative pursuit is on the decline, because it's been corrupted by money. But at the same time, it's a beautiful decline. People aren't following the rules anymore, and being far more creative. When I was growing up, there were so many rules in hip-hop and codes, and that was important, but a lot of those things now are not being followed and [are] forgotten by some people. That's how you get Young Thug, and Gucci [Mane], and trap rap [a relatively new subgenre]. But then you have kids that really care about the culture and want to keep it alive and the history and the details of it, and that's what Kendrick is doing if you really listen to it. His references to James Brown and P-funk records--for somebody my age, maybe a year older, to do that? Most of the kids nowadays don't know about that shit. So it was necessary for a guy my age to say, 'hey remember where the fuck we came from.'

**PREACH:** What I love about the album is that, for a lot of artists, when they make records, they think about making everybody happy. Kendrick was like, 'I'm gonna make a record for young black folk that understand the plight, that understand the struggle.' And I would argue that in black music, the two most powerful albums of the last fifteen years are the Kendrick record and D'Angelo's *Black Messiah*, and they came out within six months of each year. Kendrick's album is in-

credible. It puts a lot of these other guys on notice. You got Kendrick doing something like "Mortal Man" and Kanye's doing "All Day," talking about how rich he is? You're really seeing some of these guys disconnecting from the community.

**KARMESSIAH:** It's difficult though. One of the things I always keep in mind is that we have a duality, as men and women. We have to let loose sometimes, we have to party some-

times and explore that aspect of our personality too. Everything has its place. But we do need more representation of young black people and what they're going through, especially in rap music.

**PREACH:** The only reason I throw shade at Kanye, recently, is I'm just holding him to the standards he claims he holds himself to. Ferguson happened, "I Can't Breathe" happened, and where was Kanye? He says nothing.







Nothing! And he wants to get up and complain about Beck? For Beyoncé? And you got nothing to say about us!?! That's when you sit your ass down.

**FAT:** When you talk about power and economics...I mean, Kendrick's album is cool, but I'm more about Nipsey Hussle because he's talking about ownership and bossing up. It's one thing to write about it from your window and have a whole bunch of ideas with

some big machines behind you. And I'm not taking anything away from Kendrick, it's a great-sounding album. I'm kind of surprised no one says it sounds like *Stankonia* though. Nobody says that!

[Laughter]

**FAT:** I think what [Hussle] is saying and what he's doing, quiet as it is--he's not making as much noise as Kendrick Lamar's major label

release--but if you look at yesterday's *Forbes* magazine, he was named as independent music's next mogul. You talking about somebody on the next level. The information he's giving me is a lot more powerful.

**PREACH:** It's about taking action.

**FAT:** Okay, alright, you know what I'm saying? So when somebody kicks back [and praises] Kendrick, I don't even--I mean, he's dope,

YOU CAN LOOK AT  
ANY CULTURE THAT  
DERIVES FROM AFRICA,  
THEY ALL HAVE A  
CALL-AND-RESPONSE,  
THEY ALL HAVE CHANTS,  
AND DRUMS AND  
PERCUSSION.  
THAT'S JUST WITHIN US.  
THIS IS JUST A MODERN  
VERSION OF THAT.

// Harmessiah

he's a really dope emcee. And the music is fresh. But--and there's no 'but' with that. But changing what albums are going to cost is big, you know? You don't tell Van Gogh that's a ten dollar painting every time he paints. It's not always a thousand dollar thing. He could kick back and let other people bid on this craziness. Nip is just saying, why do I have to charge 10?

**PREACH:** You know what's he talking about? Nip charged, what was it, a hundred dollars? For a mixtape.

**FAT:** He's saying, when I got a fanbase, and they love everything I do, they're proud to pay. I'm not forcing you to buy a hundred dollar copy--you can download it for free. But if you want a hard copy, it'll cost you a hundred. And he sold a thousand of them in a weekend, and he's nailed down what somebody doesn't even make selling a million on a major. So when he comes through in his 600 Benz, that's more inspiring to me, because that's not advance money.

But for Kendrick, you know, he has a lot of ideas. And I had a lot of ideas when I was 20s too.

**PREACH:** Think about it like this though--I call it the Charles Xavier and Magneto theory. You look at Pac [Tupac] and you look at Jay [Z]--Jay is the ridiculous business man, and Pac will be loved forever. Pac was the emotional theorizer and had all of these deep ideas, while Jay is like 'alright, I got 20 bucks, I'm gonna flip that to 60 bucks.' And I think your Nipsy argument is the same thing.

**FAT:** There's no doubt about it, Pac is my favorite emcee. I got his script on my arm. When you come in my house--there's no mystery. But you have to give credit where credit is due. When you talk about freedom, who's giving you information to free yourself? Is it the idea that we should all be harmonious, or is it, 'yo, let me shoot you something you can use...freedom is being able to say 'fuck it, I'm out.' That's free. What Nip has is freedom.

I think it's time for artists to be more responsible with that information. We buyin' it up, we're influenced by it, but we're not getting information. I mean, you were talking about Malcolm X, I didn't know about no Malcolm X. KRS [One] taught me about Mal-

colm X. When he dropped "You Must Learn," he gave me a whole encyclopedia to look up. He made me feel some type of way. I was a young kid, and he was like 'you must learn.' Over a funky beat, yo! You can throw that track on now, he still plays it live. And Kendrick is dropping that kind of information, but at almost 40 I've done walked the block.

**KARMESSIAH:** That's what I was saying, it was necessary for people of my generation, we needed an album like that.

**FAT:** And Kendrick did that for them. The worst thing about Ferguson, to be honest, was they didn't have nobody to speak for them. The only person who can do that is Kendrick. It doesn't matter if Chuck [D, of the landmark rap group Public Enemy] get on the TV. We already know what Chuck is going to say. But they need that, because we had Pac. Pac would have come out, had a press conference with Scarface, and say 'this ain't going to happen no more.' He would have blew it up.

**PREACH:** That's exactly my point. We don't need a bunch of [Talib] Kwelisi--

**FAT:** It's not for them.

**JM:** This seems to be getting to something really fundamental about the genre in that it's designed to pass knowledge down in a way that you really can't say about any other form of music.

**KARMESSIAH:** It's an oral tradition. It's an African thing. You can look at any culture that derives from Africa, they all have a call-and-response, they all have chants, and drums and percussion. That's just within us. This is just a modern version of that. But it can carry more weight now because back then you couldn't broadcast that to millions of people. It's time now to take some responsibility, especially for people my age. The problem with millennials is that a lot of us really are out of touch. A lot of kids are out of touch with their history. If we're just making songs about turning up or whatever, what legacy are we leaving for the next generation of kids, when they want to hear something to look up, and they got Chris Brown and he's autotuned and singing about strip clubs. I mean that's

all good and well--it has its place--but that's why we need Kendrick.

**JM:** One of the things this conversation has touched on is the sheer diversity in rap music--that different artists do very different things and that it's really a large umbrella of styles. But it seems like the larger culture wants to think of it as a very repetitive, thematically stagnant genre...

**KARMESSIAH:** I do think that's true, but I think it's deeper than that, I think that's anything a black man does is gonna be limited and simplified so it doesn't seem that complex. Let's just call this rap--it's not just rap, it's more than that. I listen to Dignity Planets just as much as I listen to 50 Cent, and these are two artists at completely different ends of the spectrum. And it's not just rap--you can have Hip-Hop Family Day where there are positive things going on, where there's not somebody getting shot, because hip-hop is not just "the trap" or "the block," there's people telling different stories and always has been.

**PREACH:** That's what I'm saying. To think that hip-hop as one thing has never been the issue. When I was growing up, we listen to Beastie Boys, we listen to NWA, we listened to A Tribe Called Quest.

**JM:** So what can we say about the local hip-hop scene right now?

**FAT:** Preach said some stuff about the city, what I want to say is that the talent is finding its way to the top in Columbia, and the previous talent like myself and Preach are forging ahead to make some room here and make some room there, so this long mile I've walked and Preach is walked and Shekeese has walked and a few others—I don't want to leave anyone out—it's not in vain.

**KARMESSIAH:** The way I see it, it just has to be top to bottom with everybody rallying together. You can't have a cohesive scene, without seeing top to bottom, from any age group, respect where they're coming from and what angle they're coming from and what background they're coming from.



## Columbia Actor Jennifer Moody Sanchez Plays Lincoln Center

Sometimes clichés just work best. For Columbia-based theatre artist Jennifer Moody Sanchez, the old chestnut “It’s like a dream come true” is, by far, the best way to describe her feelings about playing Lady Macbeth this spring at New York City’s Lincoln Center.

Born and raised in Columbia, Sanchez graduated as a theatre major from the University of South Carolina before moving to Ohio to act for a year and then going further west to Los Angeles where she spent 16 years acting and training with, among other groups, the Groundlings. Sanchez returned to Columbia in 2012 to raise her daughter and be closer to her family and, soon thereafter, rekindled ties to the Columbia theatre community. It was the connections she made as an undergrad at USC, though, that landed her the plum role of Lady Macbeth in *A Tale Told by an Idiot*, a new adaptation of the Shakespeare classic.

“I had worked with the Aquila Theatre Company [out of] London on the play *The Oresteia*, directed by Robert Richmond, when I was an undergraduate student at USC. I remained in contact with some of the company members and was informed that two of the company members formed Psittacus Productions,” Sanchez says. Working out of New York City, Psittacus Productions is self-described as “a group of collaborators in the theatrical art form,” Sanchez continues. “Through Psittacus, I was initially offered the role of Witch #1 and Lady Macduff to be performed [in the play, *A Tale*

*Told By An Idiot*] at Lincoln Center, and I was dancing on air! However ...when the actress who was slated to play Lady Macbeth had to pull out, I was asked to fill the role.”

*A Tale Told By An Idiot* was adapted by Louis Butelli, Robert Richmond, and Chas Libretto and is a concentrated re-telling of the essence of *Macbeth* in graphic novel style, with some anachronistic twists (Guy Fawkes plays a role, for example). Previously performed in Hollywood, Los Angeles, and New York City, this staging takes place at Lincoln Center’s Clark Studio. “We start rehearsals Saturday, May 2nd and open Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, Sanchez says. “It will be directed by Robert Richmond and the cast includes a long-time friend Louis Butelli who is very well-known to the theatre scene in Columbia.” The show runs through May 22.

“Words cannot express how excited I am about this opportunity,” Sanchez says, but she assures us that she won’t be making New York her new home. “I will be returning to Columbia in the summer to audition for Trustus Theatre. Trustus has been my theatre home for the past three years. I am extremely honored to be part of their Ensemble.” Sanchez’s previous Trustus roles include Vanda in *Venus in Fur*.

Sanchez is still on Cloud Nine about this opportunity. “As an actor, you get told the word, ‘no,’ more than the word, ‘yes,’” she says. “It’s nice to hear the word ‘yes!’ I’m living proof that perseverance is key. Never give up. Dream big. And always listen to your mother!” - *CB*



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# THE MUSIC MAN

A look into the life of musical director Walter Graham

BY HALEY SPRANKLE

**C**OLUMBIA NATIVE Walter Graham is unabashedly sentimental about music, and words can only partially describe how passionate and involved he truly is. As an active and beloved member of the arts community, Graham has consistently pursued the music he fervently fell for in his youth. “I became a lover of music as a child. My grandmother told me that while I was a baby, I would sit on her lap and clap and sing along in church when the music would start,” Graham says.

That little spark lit a fire in Graham, encouraging him to explore all facets of the art. Between percussion, gospel choir, church choir, and show choir, Graham began to garner the tools that would later help him in his musical endeavors. In 1994, he expanded into musical theatre. “My high school director, Linda LeMaster, was directing the musical *Lil Abner*. I was not going to be in the cast because musicals were not my thing. Mrs. LeMaster was stressed because her choreographer had quit on her and she didn’t know what to do, so I told her that I would help out by choreographing the musical for her,” Graham elaborates. “I had no idea what I was doing, so I took the video of *Lil Abner* home and studied the choreography. I adapted the choreography and taught it to the cast. Looking back on it, I realized that was a huge task for someone who had never been in a musical.”

It didn’t end at choreography for Graham, though. “Since I was choreographing the show, my teacher put me in the show. During the rehearsals and shows, I fell in love with musical theater,” Graham reminisces.

Graham’s love for musical theatre grew so much that he became a regular face on the Columbia stage. From shows like *Jesus Christ Superstar* to *The Wizard of Oz* to *Chicago*, Graham performed at many different

theatres around town. He continued adding credits to his name offstage too, as he began musically directing productions as well. “Besides teaching the cast the music, you are the right hand of the director,” Graham says of the music director’s role. “You hire the instrumentalists to play the show, you rehearse the band, you rehearse the cast and band together, and you make sure the story is told through the music.”

Graham’s first experience with musical direction was with *The Melody Lingers On: The Songs of Irving Berlin* at Town Theatre. This summer, Graham takes on the musical direction of *Dream Girls* running from June 26 through August 1 at Trustus Theatre. “Terrance Henderson and I were cast in *Dream Girls* back in 2000 at Workshop Theater. This show kicked our butts as we tried to figure out how the dialogue that was sung and the layers of music [involved]. The musical was bigger than we thought, but we made it,” Graham remembers. “Terrance is directing the musical now at Trustus. He figured since I knew it so well, I might as well musically direct the show.”

Knowing the music well is no easy feat. Unlike the classic musical theatre sound, the *Dream Girls* tunes are heavily based on the decades around which the plot revolves. “The music is great. The show begins by giving you a feel of Motown music in the 60’s, then it moves with time through the 70’s with the disco sound, and even has a little 80’s music,” Graham explains. “You will walk out singing a tune from the show.”

Graham says he approaches this music “with caution” as he leads each singer and musician through the score. With a musical this big, details are everything. Luckily, as a University of South Carolina graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Choral Music Education (1999) and a Masters in Choral Conducting (2014), Graham has all the skills he needs to perfect such a demanding show.

“This baby is huge. I want to make sure everything is correct for the musical. I want to make sure that every “i” is dotted, “t” is crossed, and quarter notes are exact. I want to make sure it is the best version that anyone has ever heard,” Graham says.

Even when he’s not spending long nights rehearsing at the theater, Graham’s world still revolves around music. “I am proud to say that I have two of best jobs in the world. I am the Director of Choral Activities at Dreher High School and I am the Associate Choral Director at Trenholm Road United Methodist Church,” Graham says. “All of my jobs involve teaching music. It is my life.”

Even though his hard work is abundantly apparent in conversation, Graham’s humility and humble disposition shines through. “I am most excited about the community seeing this talented cast. Everyone in this show can sing their butts off,” Graham says. “I hope the audience will enjoy the show. Also I want the audience to learn about the struggle in the music world for African-Americans in the 1960s and 70s. Also see the struggle of the behind-the-scenes [lives] of these performers.”

His selfless love of the art helps Graham promote what it’s all really about—bringing the music to the people. “Music ... makes everyone smile, whether it is the sound of a 3-year-old singing or a beautiful choir performing or what we do in the shower when no one is around. Everyone loves some type of music. It gives us peace when we are stressed,” Graham says.

At the end of the day, Graham has made his passion his career quite successfully. Whether he was a child singing in church, a kid in the school band, a college student in a theory class, or a musical director for a major production, Graham has always known that music was his first love.

“Music is my life,” Graham says happily. “I cannot imagine my life without it.”



PHOTO BY **FORREST CLONTS**

**JASPER GAZES** · 27



# Pushing Boundaries & Taking Names

JASON KENDALL IS  
A **DIFFERENT** KIND  
OF DOROTHY

BY CYNTHIA BOITER

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**AT** more than six feet tall and 200-plus pounds, one wouldn't expect to find anything delicate about multi-dimensional performance and visual artist Jason Kendall. An elementary school art teacher, husband, and father to 6-year-old twin daughters by day, by night (or after school hours, really) Kendall is a cross-dressing force of unconventionality hell-bent on deconstructing Southern masculinity and examining the blue collar work ethic.







**THE MOST RECENT** resident artist at Tapp's Arts Center, Kendall continues an artistic quest that the 40-year-old began back when he first played football at the University of South Carolina: a better understanding of masculine identity construction. And while we still may not see a tender side to the artist, even when he's dressed in the triple XL Dorothy Gale costume that he sewed and designed himself, we need only wait until he changes into his work clothes—a pair of brown overalls and t-shirt—to see his feminine leanings come through. That's when the almost hulking man sits down—knees together, arms crossed demurely across his chest—and the clothes, the props, the years of study and artistic endeavor all come together in a perfect little epiphany. Jason Kendall isn't just looking through art for answers to questions about masculinity. Jason Kendall is looking for himself.

Born and raised in Columbia, SC, Kendall has been married to his wife Faith for 15 years. A studio art major while he participated as a walk-on in the football program at USC before transferring to North Greenville College, Kendall left SC to attend art school at Ringling College of Art and Design in Florida, earning a BFA in sculpture. After graduation, he and his wife moved to New York City where he lived in Brooklyn and worked at the Dia Center for the Arts, eventually teaching in the fine arts department at NYU, where he also earned an MFA. He moved back to Columbia in 2009 and, since then, the artist has divided his days between family and work responsibilities and spending time in the studio developing new projects.

Kendall's residency at Tapp's has allowed him the time and space to more fully realize his latest project and see it come to completion. The Dorothy Project, which opened on May 7<sup>th</sup> and runs through the end of the month, is a re-imagined tale of bits of *The Wizard of Oz* focusing primarily on the three main women from the story and their designated themes. According to Kendall, "I decided to use the three main female characters of *The Wizard of Oz* as vehicles to talk about the three major themes in my work simultaneously. These themes manifest in Dorothy, who represents the Realm of Identity Construction; the Wicked Witch, who is immersed in Personal Narrative; and Glinda

who resides in the Absurdity of Uber-Masculinity in Sports."

"The Dorothy Project," Kendall continues, "has been an opportunity for me to do, dress and explore these topics in a way that I have never done before. I wanted to try and put it all together, in a sense. After becoming a father to two girls, my convictions have changed a bit. I feel freer to express my understanding of masculinity with a slightly different approach. ...Each facet you will encounter [in the exhibit] signifies a part of my own journey, but in the space you choose your own path through this adventure and hopefully you'll find a little courage along the way." The space to which he refers is the whole upstairs of the Tapp's Arts Center, which was appropriated for Kendall's exhibition, opening on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

Kendall has had high hopes for this project. "I hope that this exhibition will transform the space within Tapp's into a portal for my creative process," he explains. "When the public enters the space they will be put in the middle of my creative process, which contains a multitude of American references (such as *The Wizard of Oz*) that conjure up childhood memories that touch on important socioeconomic challenges the Southern[er] American male experiences. These ideas deal with the relationship between work and play, and the fact that the building used to be a commercial space segues into how the public may expect to *consume* something within its walls. This may seduce the audience into following a trajectory of ideas that will allow them to create their own complete narrative."

Kendall's appropriation of the character of Dorothy is also strongly connected to the affiliation of Dorothy Gale, Judy Garland, and *The Wizard of Oz* with the GLBTQ community. While Garland was and continues to be an icon of gay culture, the code phrase *friend of Dorothy*, usually indicating a gay man, goes back historically to World War II. In preparation for the show opening on May 7<sup>th</sup>, Kendall conducted a piece of performance art called *Brickwork* during which he attached yellow paint-dipped cinderblocks to his body with a harness and dragged them along a carpet to create a newly interpreted version of the yellow brick road. Ed Madden, director of USC's Women's and Gender Studies Program, who attended the performance, called it "stun-











I started with  
the idea of  
Dorothy  
creating  
yellow bricks.

ning.” According to Madden, “*The Wizard of Oz* is one of those cultural texts that’s both incredibly mainstream and incredibly subversive. Oz is a land where nobody is what they seem, everyone already has what they need, the lion is a big sissy, and the most powerful people are three women. Jason Kendall takes on the iconography of Oz and transforms it, messes it up more. Dorothy is a big-boned gal lunging like a linebacker, and the effortlessness of movement in the film becomes exertion, endurance, exhaustion. And the yellow brick road -- like gender-- is always under construction in Kendall’s performance.”

As you take your own journey through this exhibition, Kendall says, “You may read, see, watch, and hear elements that are familiar and others, not so much. This will create an experience that stays with you after you leave the space.”

One of the sounds attendees will hear is Pink Floyd’s 1973 *Dark Side of the Moon*, often attached to the feature film *The Wizard of Oz* as part of an urban legend which claims that, when played simultaneously, the album and the film sync as if the album was written as a soundtrack for the movie. Kendall considers the playing of the Pink Floyd album, sometimes called *The Dark Side of the Rainbow* or the *Wizard of Floyd*, during his performance a nod to an earlier project that conflated music and masculinity, in many ways leading the artist to his current project.

But masculinity as a construct has been a common thread in his work all along, sometimes addressed via video and other times through more traditional visual art mediums. “All of my work pre-Dorothy dealt with masculinity on many levels, but more specifically masculine identity construction

and how my own personal narrative has influenced my views on rites of passage in an effort to become a man,” Kendall explains. “The prominent theme that drove most of my early works was the cycle of self-worth. How men tend to view their body (or sexuality) as mechanisms to feel good about themselves. For example a football player’s self-worth is dependent on how their bodies perform during the *game* (much like sex). This facilitates a disconnect between the man’s body and the emotional self which makes him who he is. When this cycle plays itself out over the span of one’s life, many times the body expires before a reconciliation with its mind happens. This tragic yet absurd stubbornness to change or reflect on oneself provided much of the fuel that drove those early works.”

The Dorothy Project is a logical extension of Kendall’s interest in deconstructing masculinity, but he also uses the mechanism to address the ideology of work vs. play as it is interpreted as good vs. bad and masculine vs. feminine in popular culture. “I started with the idea of Dorothy creating yellow bricks. The simple task of dropping dirty cinder blocks into yellow paint transforms the blocks into meaningful objects,” Kendall says. “However, because of the sheer weight of the materials and physicality of accomplishing this task it resides in the realm of labor. This duality questions what exactly the context or meaning of the action is. Is she working or playing?” As in the original story Dorothy remains the “accidental protagonist that navigates a space between a native and foreign land to discover her identity, [but] with the question of work vs. play being revisited throughout the installation both via the Wicked Witch, who restrings and tunes

a broom guitar, and Glinda, an inanimate object, [Glinda is a football tackling dummy], activated by an outside action,” Kendall says.

“This links the characters and the actions to what happens in my studio practice where I struggle physically against objects and materials while tackling several mental creative problems simultaneously,” he continues, equating the struggle to the types of drills an athlete practices in football. “It is the work that makes you more proficient in your ability to play.” Kendall draws on his own experience as a college athlete here and the goal of performing masculinity successfully. His Oz characters and their actions “produce a type of triad that creates the basis for the rest of the work to develop while responding to the space within Tapp’s,” he says. “This triangular dynamic presents a multitude of possibilities and circumstances that will affect how and what is made. As the work progresses the relationships between the characters and space transforms the narrative into more complex and strange associations that will communicate a unique vision. I am completely honored and excited by the opportunity this presents to me personally, to my career, our community and to Tapp’s.”

The exhibition consists of performance props that have been reconstructed into installations, videos, photographs and drawings all placed in a cyclical arrangement throughout the space as if a cyclone touched down inside Tapp’s. Throughout the various mediums it is clear that while Jason Kendall may not have completely found himself in his work, he has certainly discovered bits and pieces that make him the person he is today. Hopefully, viewers of his work will find themselves so lucky.

# Local Record

# REVIEWS



## DANNY JOE MACHADO

### DANASCUS

When The Restoration frontman Daniel Machado began playing sardonic solo shows under the name Danny Joe, they quickly became performance pieces. Often times he would stumble to the stage clad in a tucked in Western shirt and cowboy hat, feigning a drunken nonchalance that gradually dissi-

pated over the course of the set. The songs were cutting, often satirical reflections by or about a fictional “Danny Joe” country-rock figure that played skillfully on the real-life reflections and insecurities of Machado. It was pretty trippy stuff.

Those songs eventually became the basis of *Danascus*, his debut solo record. And while the “Danny Joe” character is an integral part of these songs, the difference between character and songwriter was blurred even more. Many of the tunes seemed just plainly self-critical as Machado takes modern relationships and his own artistic temperament to task. The opening track “Dissolve” wrings its hands over embarking upon cohabitation because it means sharing a Netflix account, while “Sensitive” cracks wise about ignoring a lover’s inducements because he “has to finish these shitty lyrics right now.”

Elsewhere Machado voices the Danny Joe character more wholeheartedly, taking on the weathered lament of a nostalgic scene veteran on the throwback rocker “1973” and the revelation story-song title track. On the latter tune, sung to a drunken country two-step, Machado riffs on the Biblical story of

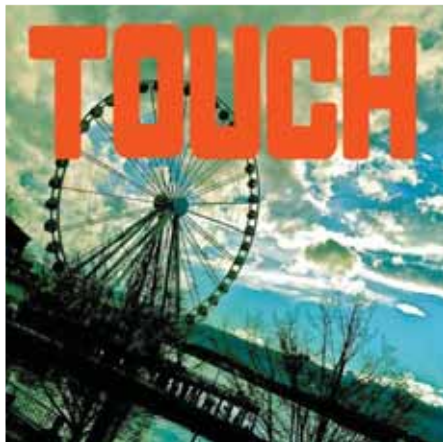
Paul getting struck by lightning and turns into a belligerent tirade of repentance of the now-reformed rocker which also manages to take swipes at the songs Machado wrote with The Restoration.

Throughout, the clever commentary and self-awareness rewards repeated listenings, but that’s not to say that the album is dependent on them. Using plenty of programming and noise effects alongside his regular weapons of guitars and violin, Machado balances some of the dreamy chamber-folk impulses we got from him on The Restoration’s debut *Constance* with the bluesy irascibility of the band’s last EP *New South Blues*. Among the highlights are “Shenzhen,” a talking blues which intersplices the suicide attempt of a smartphone factory worker in China with a story of how “Danny Joe” was caught being unfaithful by the very same technology, and the raucous “Alone (With You),” a rave-up rocker that sees Machado yelping through the same subject matter he treated more tenderly just a few songs before.

Machado remains one of the finest songwriters in the state, with the kind of intellect and storytelling prowess that is rarely



matched, and fans of his prior work or other keenly self-aware songwriters as diverse as Randy Newman and Father John Misty will be right at home here. Meta self-flagellation, whether fictional or not, has rarely been more pleasurable. -KP



## PRAY FOR TRIANGLE ZERO

TOUCH

The rise of solo bedroom pop acts like Toro y Moi and Washed Out in the late 2000s did two distinct things: birth the often-mocked “chillwave” designation, and also inspired a generation of Southerners to make nostalgic electro-pop.

Both of those performers soon distanced themselves from that tag and distinct style, and Lucas Sams, a.k.a Pray for Triangle Zero, probably wouldn't be happy with it either, but his music decidedly does owe a measure of debt to those trailblazers. The heavily reverbed melancholy and hazy melodies he writes are well within the lineage of chillwave, even as he tends towards busier productions and more urgent tempos than would be the norm. He also incorporates some lovely R&B-inflected moments, like on “Her Bath Salts” and “Easy, Girl,” which win him easy comparisons to Toro.

Those tunes are undeniably likeable, but the best stuff here is when Sam is tinkering on the edges of that signature style, when he tries out a more laconic delivery on the bustling “Ferris Wheeler” or veers into *The Soft Bulletin*-era Flaming Lips territory on “Call Out Your Name.” If his approach has a

flaw, it's that these tunes pass by a bit too briefly and unpresumptuously to make them particularly memorable. But that's also what makes them such humble pleasures as well. -KP



## THE UGLY CHORDS

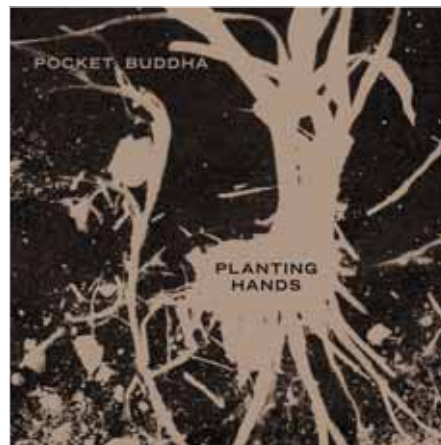
HARBINGER

Manic, ADD-inspired indie rock is nothing new, but The Ugly Chords do it better than most, packing in dreamy Modest Mouse-esque balladry and charging psychedelic garage riffs right on top of each other, often within the same song. What's most impressive, though, is how these schizophrenic compositions manage to hold together and, occasionally, create genuine earworms that stick in your head days later. The sweet indie-pop of “joe/anne,” for instance, is a great example as it captures all of the contradiction and joy of the band's music, sliding from plaintive strums to shout-along garage section that alternates back and forth with a sugary chant that self-awarely proclaims “your brevity meant everything/ but I'm counting on and counting free.”

Other highlights include the fragile “bloomdysalias,” a spare acoustic number that showcases the group's lyrical poise (“Pan down to a poorly lit tree line/ two lovers dance against the grain of asphalt on their heels”), the cathartic sprawl of “picture on the fridge,” a post-punk/no wave ramble that gradually folds in on itself with increasingly spastic and dysfunctional guitars, and the micro-prog instrumental “the torment of

existence/the horror of non-being.”

All of the stops and shifts are less abrasive than it reads on paper though—there's a genuine energy and excitement in these tunes that carries you through all of the sordid twists and turns that's surprisingly organic. In fact, I'd go so far as to say it's on the short list as one of the best South Carolina records of 2015. -KP



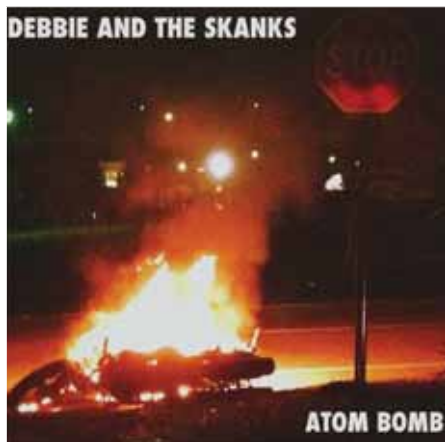
## POCKET BUDDHA

PLANTING HANDS

On first listen, it's frustrating how steadfast Pocket Buddha is in its refusal to really cut loose. Each of the nine tracks on *Planting Hands* contains at least one moment that teeters right on the jagged edge between traditional, front-porch Americana and pit-stained alt-country, but these moments prove to be mostly a tease as the latter mode never really gets a chance to flex its muscles. Eventually though, the aggravation fades and gives way to an appreciation for the band's sense of discipline and self-control. That isn't to say that this is a record lacking energy or momentum though. Highlighting expert guitar and banjo picking, simple bed-rock rhythms, and confident lead vocals, the album trots merrily along on the strength of pro-caliber musicianship and lyrics so personal a listener feels more like they are being sang *to* rather than sang *at*.

That's really the crux of the record's appeal. Any given song, whether delivered by vocalists Darren Woodlief or Kelley Douglas, has the delicate intimacy of a serenade, a sen-

sation only enhanced by the Prairie Willows' Kristen Harris and her fiddle adding subtle texture to the whole affair. In the best possible way, *Planting Hands* is an album best experienced alone, if only to ensure maximum attention paid to the musical details and dirt road poetry at its core. —MICHAEL SPAWN



## DEBBIE & THE SKANKS

ATOM BOMB [SINGLE]

Columbia is in the thick of its honeymoon phase with Debbie & the Skanks, so the release of the band's first single is timely. And they're doing it the old fashioned way—put out a single, push the A-side, and still give the B room to do with the world what it will. The band hopes to eventually press these two to a 45, another sign of their old school tendencies.

The recording itself is consciously gritty and fits nicely with the band's name and its self-styled presentation as a sloppy train wreck waiting to happen. The A-side, "Atom Bomb," is dominated by fuzzed-out electric guitar reminiscent of the first two White Stripes records, but Debbie Adedokun is the show-stealer. Her vocal range is expansive, but what makes her such a compelling singer is how deeply she digs her heels into the mud. She's insistent, passionate, completely unwilling to be denied. The song itself is a darkly jubilant blues romp propelled by a loose swinging rhythm that suits the lyrics' self-destructive proclamation that "I'm an atom bomb/ You ain't seen nothin' like me/

When I start falling/ Everything's history."

The B-side, "Guns and Roses," opens with a short but ominous guitar line and gives way to a violent and swampy polemic against the anonymous breaker of Debbie's heart. Lyrically, it plays like an updated version of Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Were Made for Walking," had Nancy been a staunch second amendment activist and Tarantino enthusiast. Musically, it's a second cousin to "Atom Bomb," but with more tom-toms and a sexier tempo. If these two tracks mean anything, we can expect plenty more devilish, unwashed rock and roll from Adedokun and her skanks.

—MICHAEL SPAWN



## FASTER STEREO

COME ON

Recalling the heyday of the 1980s when bands like R.E.M. and The Replacements jingled and jangled all over college rock radio, faster stereo is the brainchild of Jangly Records' founder, Paul Bodamer (The label name is clearly no accident). The band's debut album, *Come On*, named after the faithful Jesus and Mary Chain cover that leads off the set, boasts serious cred from the get-go thanks to the majority of guitar and bass duties handled by Mitch Easter (Yes, that Mitch Easter, the guy who produced R.E.M.'s *Murmur* and fronted cult favorite Let's Active!). Bodamer and Easter are ably backed by local warhorse Todd Mathis (American Gun) as well as Atlanta-based guitarist Mark Gallegos.

*Come On* is punctuated with a breezy mood. Much of this is due to the relaxed and off-the-cuff nature of Bodamer's vocals. He feels like a friend hanging out and singing a few songs. This is not to say that the playing isn't tight and concise. These are bright and catchy pop songs, perfect for a summer drive in the convertible with the top down.

In addition to the aforementioned title track, the album also consists of two other well-chosen covers including "Remember," by Fashion Battery, once a key band in the Athens, GA music scene and name-checked in an article by Spin magazine alongside the Bar-B-Q Killers in 1985. The other is a curiously contemporary cover by Seattle singer-songwriter, Damien Jurado that nevertheless feels right at home alongside this set of nostalgic gems.

The album closes with an instrumental track called "Fever Dream" that is an excellent capper to this fine set with Easter and Mathis's guitars perfectly entwined. One can only hope that this isn't simply a one-off project. While it may seem like simply a 80s throwback project by some excellent players, it is clear this is still fertile musical ground when written and played well. —WOODY JONES



## HERMIT'S VICTORY

SELF-TITLED

"Crawling out of a hole is the Hermit's Victory" sings Tyler Bertges on the self-titled debut album from Hermit's Victory. That line, and the band name, is reflective of not

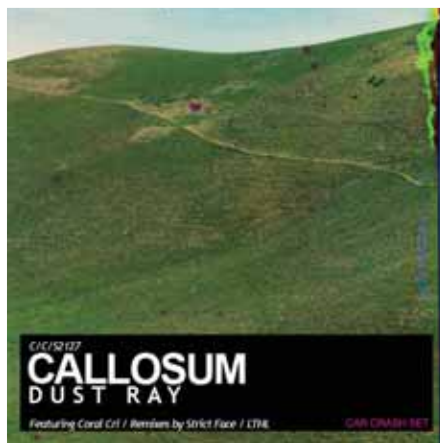
only Bertges himself, but the entire album. The hazy bedroom pop steps out from the lo-fi home recording sound usually associated with the genre with the help of Charleston producer Wolfgang Zimmerman, who also happened to be his roommate at the time of recording. For Hermit's Victory, the label of bedroom pop goes beyond any certain sound that one might imagine. Throughout the album Bertges croons in a hushed voice, lush in the mix, his vocals find their way into all the crevices in the instrumentation, soft enough to not wake a roommate or a sleeping partner.

Hermit's Victory bio via his Charleston record label Hearts & Plugs notes that Bertges is plagued by anxiety. Lyrically it's a theme that comes up often in the album, with "Mooch" being the closest glimpse into Bertges' social fears; that song and others give listeners a psychological peak into his life as the cozy warmth of the music makes the bed for Bertges window-watching observations.

Where the album thrives is its attention to detail and a mix of acoustic and electronic instrumentation, with the soft hums and high-pitched background vocals layered on top of grooving bass and a mix of live and electronic drums. Other instruments, like the warm horns on "Swerve" or the acoustic and clean-jazz lead guitars, are mixed in and often buried throughout in the most tasteful way. It's such a carefully recorded album in those aspects, but at the same time it leaves open room for live moments of magic, like the sharp ring in "Sleeping Evil" or a botched vocal take reassembled into something new and usable.

Overall, an extremely well-crafted effort that rewards repeated listening.

—DAVID STRINGER



## CALLOSUM

### DUST RAY EP

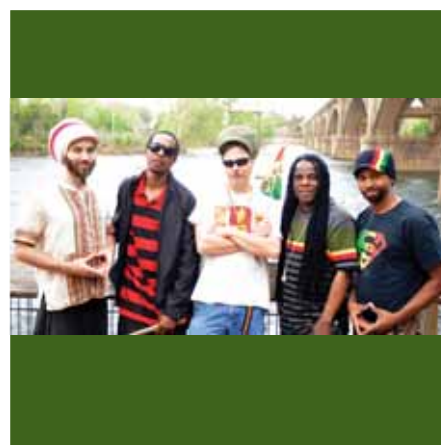
Callosum, the alter ego of USC student Mason Youngblood, is a front-runner in Columbia's electronic scene, a scene which has grown exponentially since the formation of Moas Collective, a web-based, electronic collaboration that was also a product of Youngblood's hard work. *Dust Ray* is his most recent effort as Callosum, an electronic and hip-hop production project, and the record includes four original tracks and two remixes by Strict Face and LTHL.

With *Dust Ray's* sound, Callosum's music is almost better without lyrics. Even though the faded, synthesized words sung in Callosum's music add just enough to make it more appealing to listen to in a non-club environment, the atmospheric experience of each song takes precedence as it pulls the listener in more and more as the EP progresses. All four tracks are inherently different, but you can only get the full experience listening to them as part of the whole. The progressions of Callosum's songs come through in a dream-like sequence that hits in waves.

While there's a dependable consistency to all of the tunes here, it's "BB It's You," featuring another Moas Collective producer Coral Cri, that stands out from the pack. The beat is undeniably catchy, and it ebbs and flows intensely through its entirety. If you were to skip from the first 30 seconds to the last 30 seconds, you would think it's a different song — this ever-changing progression the song

takes is nice, avoiding the occasionally stagnant feel club music can take on if you aren't dancing to it under strobe lights.

That being said, although this EP is begging to be played through some expensive speakers at a packed club, that doesn't mean it can't serve as day-time driving music as well. Callosum's been around for the better part of two years now, and this is a major stepping-stone on his musical timeline — it shows off Youngblood's talents while also leaving listeners waiting for more. This isn't the music for bass-obsessed ravers, but *Dust Ray* is a skillfully crafted, electronic endeavor that's certainly worth a listen. —ERIKA RYAN



## JAHSON & THE NATTY VIBEZ

### REGGAE GATHERING

Modern, yet traditional-style reggae is dwindling, but it's definitely not extinct. Many popular groups in the genre nowadays are inspired by the originals, but stray away from what truly makes reggae "reggae." Luckily, Jahson and the Natty Vibez are around to keep the genre alive in Columbia.

Jahson and the Natty Vibez have been spreading the love, while also carving out a niche for reggae in the Columbia scene, since 2011. On April 2, they released their third project *Reggae Gathering*, which is undoubtedly their best work thus far.

From the beautiful harmonies to the steady, thick rhythm section omnipresent in their songs, *Reggae Gathering* aims squarely at the established, traditional Jamaican-orig-



# GOT WARHOL?

## THIS SUMMER, THE CMA DOES.

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Judging from the ever-rising price of his art and throngs who attend his shows, Andy Warhol remains one of the most popular artists in the world. Why? In his own words, CMA Chief Curator Will South's lecture will not answer that question completely, but will have a good time trying. Free with membership or admission.

### **ART BREAK: BRAD COLLINS**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 16 | 10:30 A.M. – NOON**

ArtBreak looks at art through a different lens. Each session features a speaker who gives insight into their worldview by sharing their interpretation of works of art at the CMA. This month, begin the morning at the museum with pastries and coffee sold at a pop-up café by Drip before Brad Collins, professor of art history at USC, discusses Warhol and how he was a product of, and influence in, his time. Free with membership or admission.

### **PSYCHEDELIC SUMMER SOLSTICE TOUR AND TASTING**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 21 | 6:00 P.M.**

Tune in, turn on, drink wine with Andy Warhol on the longest day of the year. "Be a standing cinema" while enjoying summer wines hosted by Doug Aylard of Vino Garage and experience the From Marilyn to Mao: Andy Warhol's Famous Faces exhibition during a private tour. Judy Garland, Muhammad Ali, Superman, and all your other friends are going to be there eating hors d'oeuvres in the cool, day-glo atmosphere of the museum and they want you to come be a superstar (for more than 15 minutes). \$65 / \$55 for members.



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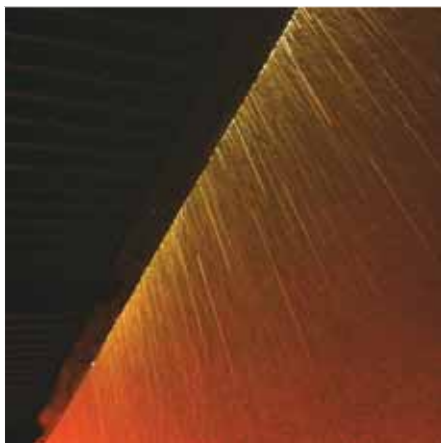


inated sound. It takes more than a walking bass line to complete a true roots-reggae album, and Jahson and the Natty Vibe covered all the bases, both in attitude and in practice. Social justice lyrics sang through a thick Jamaican accent are layered over melodic guitar picking, gentle background vocals, horns, and skillful percussion—a sunny tribute to the original reggae veterans reigning from Kingston.

Even for a casual fan that's not overly familiar with the genre, *Reggae Gathering* makes for compelling listen. Tracks like "Keep It Together" effortlessly appeal to wider audiences, with an upbeat, catchy saxophone paired with bright lyrics that are all about a feel-good vibe.

Although *Reggae Gathering's* 17 tracks are so similar that they run together at times, the song "War Monger" is perhaps the strongest track on this album. With a strong start that captures the listener within the first few seconds, "War Monger" combines one of the group's more-resilient melodies with a provocative and necessary lyrical message.

Columbia's music scene isn't as diverse as it could be, but its bands like Jahson and the Natty Vibe that bring a specific cultural element to the table. Indie rock groups are well-loved, but they're a dime a dozen, making the Natty Vibe a refreshing change of pace. —ERIKA RYAN



## GEORGE FETNER

### BENEATH THE ICE OF EUROPA

A late-2014 self-released album from Columbia composer George Fetner includes some interesting excursions and deviations for listeners who may want to find out what the combination of composer Robert Muczynski and Pink Floyd's *Atom Heart Mother* may sound like. Predominantly works for solo instrument and electronics (whether interactive, pre-recorded, or generated), George Fetner's album *Beneath the Ice* includes works he composed during his undergraduate career and after, works that typically – subtly or extensively – alter the timbres and attack points of the instruments in question. Fetner himself performs in some of the pieces, and local heavy-hitter performers and USC faculty like Michael Harley (bassoon) and Jennifer Parker-Harley perform various works.

The album begins with Michael Harley performing Fetner's *Black Lion*, a work for solo bassoon and electronics that sees the bassoon generating its own counterpoint and textures, using various delay lines and colorations, taking some of the already-plaintive and variously eerie sounds a bassoon can make and distorting or muffling those

works, creating an alternately ominous and uncomfortably comedic universe. Michael Harley performs exuberantly and pours his rich tone into the work.

Saxophonist Andre North shows off his contemporary music chops amidst some technically challenging passages in *Cave of the Lighted House*, including some finger-knotting runs, tongue slaps, and multiphonics (producing multiple simultaneous sounds from a monophonic instrument). His performance of the work is stellar, clear, and controlled.

One of the strongest works on the album are the eponymous *Beneath the Ice of Europa* – a work that, in its original string quartet form, Fetner dismisses as a mis-step. Rescored for a reduced electronics component and electric guitar, the sound world holds together well – timbres and gestures in the guitar work very well against the continuous, ever-building textures in the fixed media portion, and the unified, octatonic harmonic language Fetner speaks in for the work creates a ready-made sense of drama that contributes to the nocturnal, pulsating tapestries beneath the guitar.

The recording closes with *Go Forth* for guitar, voice, and electronics, a multi-movement composition that seems to capitalize on the thinness of textures and spare use of material in the other works. The piece, in a bit of a dramatic arch format, occasionally bears similarities to various instrumentals on King Crimson's early Adrian Belew-era records – that is, activity seems to float in stasis and motion seems slowed, though the technique is effective. Fetner's gift is for textures and manipulating these, slowly: *Go Forth* could easily become a work stretched five times longer with telescoped pacing and still work given Fetner's ability to create sonic fabrics. Ice is blocky, still, inert: Fetner's music is not – rather, it is lucid, transparent, and liquid; it is a voyage into intimate, personal worlds.

- TD



## PATRICK HAWKINS

### HAYDN & THE ENGLISH LADY

Columbia's Patrick Hawkins has given lovers of the piano and lovers of classical music in general a vibrant two-for-one history lesson. The November 2014 release *Haydn and the English Lady* (Navona Records) not only includes performances on a period instrument (and not just any period instrument), but rarely-heard, little-known compositions by an English female composer and pianist that time has nearly forgot; it is likely very few people know the name William Geib in relation to keyboard instruments, and likelier that even fewer people know the name Maria Hester Reynolds Park.

Along with Hawkins, the star of this recording is the William Geib "Square" Piano from 1831. John Geib, Sr., began building pianos in London during the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and upon coming to America, the Geib family name became one of the most important names in the manufacture of pianos for a time. William Geib took over the family-run operation after his father, but slowly backed out of the piano business. The name slowly faded from the market and in-

struments ceased to be produced by around 1840. The piano used in the recording, from 1831, has a range of six octaves (over an octave less than a standard modern piano), and is unusual in that it has no iron or steel frame, which translates into the piano being pitched substantially flatter than modern pianos. The color is full-bodied while delicate, trebly without losing warmth. The difference between this 1831 piano and a modern, say, Steinway, is palpable in the tone quality and resonance: bass tones are clear and present, and even the mechanical actions add to the magic of the instrument. For those unaccustomed to period instruments, the sound quality may be jarring, but that surprise wanes quickly: we hear living history through the instrument.

Hawkins, a concert pianist specializing in the early keyboard works of the Late Baroque and High Classical eras, assembles a collection of works by the little-known English composer Maria Hester Park for this recording. Park, a pianist and composer who was "allowed" to teach ladies of nobility and high birth to supplement her husband's income as an engraver, lived from 1760 to 1813 and composed from about 1785 until 1811, producing a substantial number of keyboard works. On *Haydn and the English Lady*, Hawkins performs three of Park's piano sonatas and a brief waltz. Park's works are reminiscent of an admixture of late Scarlatti, Clementi, and Haydn – all composers whose music to which she would likely have had contact. The works are strongly indicative of their time—clear melodies, clean and direct forms (on the surface, at least), and balanced proportions are all hallmarks of these compositions.

Yet her music seems to stand above contemporaries like Kuhlau or Kozeluh, with clever technical and performance demands from its performers, occasionally quirky dec-

orations and sonorities, and a wider range of moods and affects than some of her contemporaries. Her work *A Waltz in E-flat Major* is melodramatic in places, suggesting the elegance of the waltz, but with a sighing exhaustion from the exuberance of the dance. The piece could even be read as a subtle and elegant commentary on class—something with which she was constantly reminded of in her teaching and daily life. As with the *Waltz*, there is more at work under the surface; a closer listen reveals clear large structures in these compositions, but robust and, for their time, advanced approaches to smaller forms woven within the larger themes. Hawkins captures these intricacies and brings sensitivity to the proceedings, playing with an almost carefree dignity and effortless response to the technical demands of Park's works and a loving sensibility to the colors of the instrument. This approach brightly illuminates Park's compositions—works that on a first listen may appear as merely charming without the investigation they deserve.

Hawkins pairs the lesser-known Park with a composition of Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809), a well-traveled composer in his time who, on a visit to London (as best we can tell), purchased prints from Park and dedicated, if not outright composed, his Sonata in D (Hob. XVI/51) for her. (There is debate over the recipient of the work.) Hawkins's interpretation of the Haydn piece is elegiac and graceful, particularly in the Capriccio in G Major (Hob. XVII/1), where the intimate, slightly unusual tone of the Geib piano and the organic phrasing and motion coalesce. The temptation with Haydn (and by extension his contemporaries) is to become almost robotic in technical demands; Hawkins is fluid, studied and steadied, and breathes living qualities into these works. **-TD**

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[Not all submissions will be considered. Selection for review is determined by quality, space, and relation to the Columbia area.]



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# SALUDA SHOALS MUSIC FESTIVAL

## F E A T U R E D A R T I S T S

**WITH 400 ACRES OF WOODS** and wildlife and the pristine waters of the Saluda River flowing through it, it's not hard to argue that Saluda Shoals Park, just 10 quick miles from Columbia's Main Street, is a work of art in itself. And given how sorely lacking Columbia is in lush and accessible green spaces, the proximity of such a natural treasure as Saluda Shoals Park should make it a city-dweller's go-to place not only for hiking, rafting, and river sports, but for picnics, plein air painting, and stretching out under a shady tree to strum a guitar or read a good book.

In an effort to encourage Columbians to explore the natural bounty of the park, the Saluda Shoals Foundation, under the direction of Dolly Patton, has joined forces with Jay Matheson and Phil Blair of the Jam Room Music Festival and *Jasper* magazine to inject some art into the park on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> for the first ever Saluda Shoals Music Fest.

Along with music from Jam Room Music Festival faves The Woggles and more (see sidebar on page 45), Jasper invited four Columbia artists to exhibit their work during the concert. Invited artists were chosen based on their ability to mesh with the nature-loving, music-savvy crowd expected to attend the music festival. The Jasper 2015 Saluda Shoals MusicFest Featured Artists include Jennifer Hill, Justice Littlejohn, Lucas Sams, and Sammy Lopez of the PIENSA: Art Company.

It should be quite a match.

Jennifer "Jenny Mae" Hill was born and raised in Chapin and grew up in local theatre. Inspired by the films of Tim Burton, Mary Blair, and toys from the 1980s, Hill began making her strange little stuffed creatures in 2000 after meeting and falling in love with her husband, puppet master Lyon Hill. Before long, JennyMae.com was born and, in 2007, Hill's toys were featured in the Dustin Hoffman/Natalie Portman feature film, *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*. As for her taste in music, Hill's favorite local band is the Prairie Willows, a group whom she and her husband successfully collaborated with at this year's Indie Grits Film Festival.

Lucas Sams was also born and raised in South Carolina, graduating from the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts before studying painting in Tokyo, Japan, and receiving his BA from the University of SC. A painter, sculptor, illustrator, writer, musician and filmmaker, his work, in its various forms, draws inspiration primarily from the history of art, from the ancient and classic to the modern and the post-modern. Other sources of inspiration include pop culture, punk rock, religion, mysticism and the occult, and science fiction. Sams says that, "Music has always been a huge inspiration and love/obsession of mine. While I'm working, I usually try to find stuff I haven't heard before and discover new favorites, although these days I'm too caught up working on my own music to branch out too much." Among Sams' favorite local music you'll find Can't Kids. "They're

such cool people and their music is amazing," he says. "I've seen them live too many times to count and even got to open a show for them once."

Sammy Lopez of PIENSA: Art Company was born in Colombia, South America, but grew up in Puerto Rico, Miami, and Columbia, SC, beginning his work as an artist very early in his life before training officially at the University of SC. Lopez is primarily influenced by his brother Dre, with whom he and Robert LeHeup started the PIENSA: Art Company several years ago. "Other than that, my influences go from Looney Tunes, comic book artists, to fine artists like Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Piet Mondrian, Norman Rockwell, James Jean, to even graffiti artists," Lopez says. A fan of electronic and hip hop music, Lopez says his theme song is Telepopmusik's *Just Breathe*. "I love that track for many reasons and it's a good reminder for me to breathe...I forget to do that a lot."

A graduate of Wofford College with a MFA from Western Carolina University and a MTA from the University of SC, Justice Littlejohn has spent most of his professional life teaching art to students in the upstate of SC. Since 2011, Littlejohn's summers have been devoted to teaching students at the SC Governor's School for the Arts through the Ignite Program – an accomplishment which the artist values above all other experiences. - CB





**ON** Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, Saluda Shoals will host its first Music Fest. Atlanta-based veteran rockers the Woggles top the bill, bringing with them their notoriously raucous and sweat-soaked stage show. Influenced primarily by the jukebox rock and roll of the fifties and sixties, the Woggles' live performances have become infamous for their entertainment-or-death levels of energy. The bill also includes the Capital City Playboys, Columbia's best (and perhaps only) rockabilly trio, which includes the Jam Room's Jay Matheson on bass. Los Perdidos (pictured), also a three-piece, specialize in surf-rock. Although it might seem unfortunate that they lack a singer, the group easily makes up for it with an airtight delivery and formidable chops. Hailing from Charlotte, Americana/folk duo Sinners & Saints rotate between up-tempo hootenanny tunes and slower, soggy-eyed ballads, both with heavy emphasis on vocal harmony. Rounding everything out are the Prairie Willows, against whom no harmonic vocalists should dare compete. This trio of ladies is ostensibly a folk group, but their songs can reach such emotional heights that trying to slap a label on it is pretty much useless. Park gates open at noon and the music begins at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$10 per person.

—Michael Spawn

# SPOLETO

J A S P E R P I C K S



LIL BUCK - PHOTO BY KYLE CORDOVA

**TIME WAS**, Columbia area arts aficionados, hungry for heaping helpings of all-things-art, would have to wait all year until springtime and travel to Charleston to get their fill of the arts smorgasbord that the Spoleto Festival USA brings to the state. These days though, there's more going on in our local arts scene than most of us have time to take in. But this in no way negates the thrill of the complete arts immersion available for 17 days and nights every year for the past 38 years in Charleston. Jasper highly recommends that Columbia artists and arts lovers make the trek to the coast to enjoy Spoleto Festival USA. Running from Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> through Sunday, June

7<sup>th</sup>, tickets are available at [www.Spoletousa.org](http://www.Spoletousa.org). Here are Jasper's top picks for this year's festival.

## KATE DAVIS

At just 24 years of age, jazz vocalist and double bassist Kate Davis's resume isn't very long, but it's certainly impressive. At the 2012 American Voices concert with Renee Fleming, the Manhattan School of Music student was tapped at the last minute to fill-in for Grammy-winning singer Kurt Elling and wowed audiences with her rendition of Billie Holiday's "I'm Gonna Lock My Heart." Since

then she's made her name as a talented instrumentalist with the ability to conjure up the ghost of Billie Holiday who also has the startling ability to blend the American songbook tradition with her own contemporary sensibilities. She briefly became a viral YouTube sensation with her flamethrower throwback version of Megan Trainor's "All about That Bass" with the Postmodern Jukebox, and she's currently balancing her own, indie rock-inflected jazz tunes alongside traditional standards in her live sets with an austere three-piece band. This young musician's star will likely only continue to rise from here on out.

## THE SCOTTISH BALLET PRESENTS A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

A sure way to get to a Southerner's heart is to aggrandize a piece of classic Southern theatre by translating it into another art form. That's what The Scottish Ballet has done with Tennessee Williams' 1947 Pulitzer Prize winning play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Under the direction of Nancy Meckler with choreography by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, this balletic version of the New Orleans classic, with a jazzy score by Peter Salem, has received high praise, too. According to the *Sunday Times*, the dance is persuasive, exhilarating, moving, and ingenious." Our only question is, how does a choreographer write the labanotation for Stanley Kowalski's dramatic vocalization of "Stella!"

## J.S. BACH'S ST. MATTHEW PASSION

This is likely the most dramatic and epic version of the Passion of Christ you are ever

KATE DAVIS - PHOTO BY SHERVIN LAINEZ



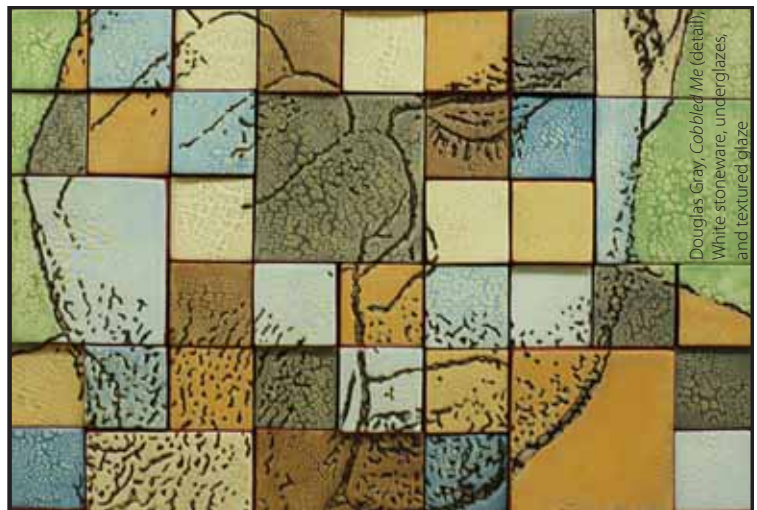
A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE - PHOTO BY ANDREW ROSS



likely to encounter. Bach's masterful composition, based on the Gospel of Matthew, requires soloists, a double-choir dialogue, a double orchestra and three and a half hours to pull off, and Spoleto USA plans to do it masterfully. Led by director of choir activities Joe Miller, the Westminster Choir and members of Taylor Festival Choir will perform alongside musicians from New York Baroque Incorporated, who will be playing period instruments, as well as the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra. This will be a rare opportunity to experience one of the masterpieces of classical sacred music performed by some of the world's best musicians.

### WHAT MOVES YOU BY LIL BUCK AND ASHLEY BATHGATE

Trained in both ballet and hip-hop, Memphis dancer Charles "Lil Buck" Riley has experienced an unlikely career trajectory, moving from being a virtually unknown dancer in 2009 to a YouTube sensation in 2011 when a video of him dancing with Yo-Yo Ma went viral, all the way to 2014 when he was named Performing Arts Innovator of the Year by the *Wall Street Journal Magazine*. Performing with cellist Ashley Bathgate, a member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, an offshoot of Bang on a Can, once called "the country's most important vehicle for contemporary music" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the world premiere of *What Moves You* will likely go down in history as one of the great collaborations of our time. Unfortunately, tickets will likely be unavailable by print time for *Jasper*.



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# Amy Shumaker

## A Little Banjo Music, Texas Tea, and the Rest is History

By Kristine Hartvigsen

**Y**ou could say she got in on the ground floor, wedging her foot in the door of South Carolina Educational Television's headquarters in Columbia. The spunky young woman just wouldn't go away, and she was willing to work for nothing. A quick study, she was determined to make herself indispensable. And, ultimately, she did.

"I started as a volunteer at ETV," longtime SC ETV Executive Producer Amy Shumaker begins. "I showed up at work every day. In the evening, I waited tables at Garcia Mexican Restaurant." It was 1988. The average cost of a movie ticket was \$3.50. Dot matrix printers were *de rigueur*. Stephen Hawking

published *A Brief History of Time*. For the first time, CDs outsold vinyl. And television still used an analog signal.

A Pittsburgh native, Amy grew up watching the antics of Jed, Granny, and the other quirky Clampetts on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. "My parents were liberal about TV," Amy says. "I was all about TV. I wrote my first script in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, a contemporary version of *The Ten Commandments*."

After six persistent months of volunteering at SC ETV, Amy was rewarded with a part-time, hourly paying job. About eight years later, in 1996, Amy also began assisting INPUT, an international, non-profit organization of public television profession-

als that hosts an annual conference where attendees screen the best of the best public television programs. She later became INPUT's U.S. national coordinator. "I am kind of known as the INPUT lady," she quips. INPUT curators select raw, slice-of-life stories and documentaries rarely found on commercial stations. Its conference recognizes television's power to raise awareness and understanding across the world's disparate cultures. INPUT allowed Amy to attend conferences around the world. "I never dreamed I would travel to places like Capetown, South Africa, and cities in Europe," she says. "I would love to go more places."





Around 2000, as SC ETV began experiencing major budget cuts, Amy turned to digital media to expand her skills. "I really wanted to get interactive experience back then thinking I wanted to be more marketable so I could move on in my career," she says. "And then 9/11 happened, and I realized how much I loved Columbia, my friends, and working at ETV. I bought a house in Rosewood." Her work included creating educational websites for knowitall.org, and, later, documentaries with interactive websites. When Amy became an executive producer in broadcast content in 2005, her first assignment was to develop and launch *Carolina Stories*, a weekly series highlighting the state's rich history and culture.

Other projects included the 'Keep It Real' TV series and website educating teenagers about the consequences of high-risk behavior. The series gained attention because it did not shy away from graphic images of traumatic events. All of these efforts also allowed Shumaker to get comfortable producing documentaries.

Since that time, Amy has amassed an extensive list of producing credits, including episodes of *Southern Lens*, *A Chef's Life*, and most recently, *180 Days: Hartsville*, a two-hour documentary that takes viewers through the entire academic year of two elementary schools in Hartsville, SC. The film powerfully demonstrates the challenges of transforming education in smaller, rural schools. Funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and other sponsors, it is the second in what is anticipated to be a national series of *180 Days* documentaries on smaller towns across the country.

"*180 Days* was my first venture into cinéma vérité," Amy says, which is a somewhat improvisational, reality-based documentary style in which the camera captures events without obvious directorial control. As co-executive producer, Amy was not present for all of the shooting of *180 Days*; the long-term project had crews working continuously over, well, 180 days of the school year. The role of executive producer is considerable but often performed behind

the scenes, from writing grants to connecting the logistical dots.

"I serve in a liaison role, building relationships, making things happen," she explained. "I cultivate the talent and keep them from having a nervous breakdown!"

One of SC ETV's most popular series is *A Chef's Life*, which premiered in 2013. Originally declined by The Food Network, the half-hour weekly show chronicles the work of Chef Vivian Howard and her husband, Ben Knight, proprietors of Chef and The Farmer, an upscale, farm-to-table restaurant in North Carolina. The show celebrates Southern culture and cuisine prepared with seasonal local produce and ingredients. With ETV and Shumaker's help, the 13-episode first season had 8 million views and recently won a Peabody Award. Joining the team of *A Chef's Life* on stage at the New York ceremony to accept the award, Amy found herself humbled, grateful, and rather starstruck. Cast members from *House of Cards*, *Breaking Bad*, and *Scandal* also were at the award ceremony.

"As a local ETV producer, a Peabody Award seemed like a long shot, but it has always been on my bucket list," Amy says. "Prior to the awards, we met some of the other winners. Anthony Bourdain introduced himself, and Vivian Howard, the producer and host of *A Chef's Life*, leaned over and said, 'He doesn't know we're cool yet!' That was hilarious, and I believe she was right. Also, the producing team from *180 Days: Hartsville* was there, which made it extra special, because the first installment of the *180 Days* series won a Peabody the year before."

It was a glamorous night, and Amy felt fortunate to stand by and enjoy the moment while Howard gave the acceptance speech on behalf of the team. "The cast from *Orange is the New Black* was on the steps as we departed," Amy recalls. "I said, 'I love your show!' And they all whispered, 'Thanks and congrats' as they were going up next. Definitely surreal!"

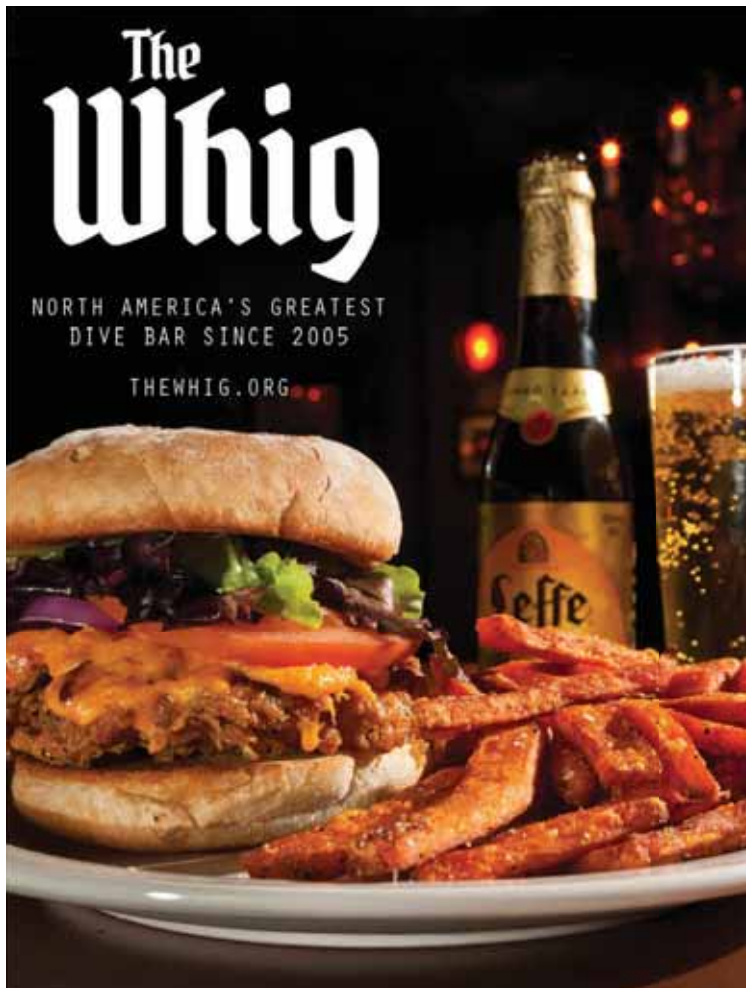
"Amy has been making things happen for a long time," says longtime colleague and filmmaker Wade Sellers, owner of Coal

Powered Filmworks and film editor for *Jasper*. Back in the mid-2000s, Wade and Amy founded the Beg and Grovel Film Festival, which was held at the old Nickelodeon Theatre to showcase indie films from around the country. "She has always been involved. And she is always very diplomatic. She is just really naturally good at what she does."

Lee Ann Kornegay, an independent film editor, producer, and director who has had many projects aired on ETV, shares Wade's respect and admiration for Amy. "We have been friends and peers in the industry for 15 or 20 years," she says. "Amy is the epitome of southern graciousness when it comes to filmmakers and documentarians and public television. ... She is super smart. She knows her business. She is passionate about films and southern films in particular."

Amy is well aware of her good fortune. "ETV is the only real job I have ever had, you know, where you actually get benefits," she says. "I'm proud of the fact that I have a career in public media at all, and especially at South Carolina ETV. We are one of the leading public television and radio networks in this country and have been since the station's first broadcast. Many people study TV and film but aren't able to pursue this line of work for a variety of reasons. I feel lucky."

These days, Amy is happy to live in Rosewood instead of Beverly Hills. Someday, she would like to see a Southern storytelling institute that focuses on filmmaking open in Columbia. It's a dream that took hold while she worked on *Carolina Stories*. "We have some seriously talented storytellers on staff. I think the work speaks for itself. We have to grow our own filmmakers in South Carolina, and in the entire Southeast for that matter. It's important that we tell our own stories on film, just like great Southern writers, musicians, and artists do in their own way."



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# HEIGHTENED ABILITY

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## The Award Winning Photography of Russell Jeffcoat

BY RACHEL HAYNIE

Steadying a camera was a piece of cake for fine art photographer Russell Jeffcoat after the former vaulter invested sweaty years gripping the end of a vaulting pole. Capturing unique angles has been a natural extension of seeing the world upside down as he cleared high bars. And the innate sense of timing, fostered by his practice of the ancient sport, has furthered his finesse at stopping the action in his internationally recognized frames. His “snap” decisions, honed at the end of a fiberglass pole, are still informed by his knowledge of angles.

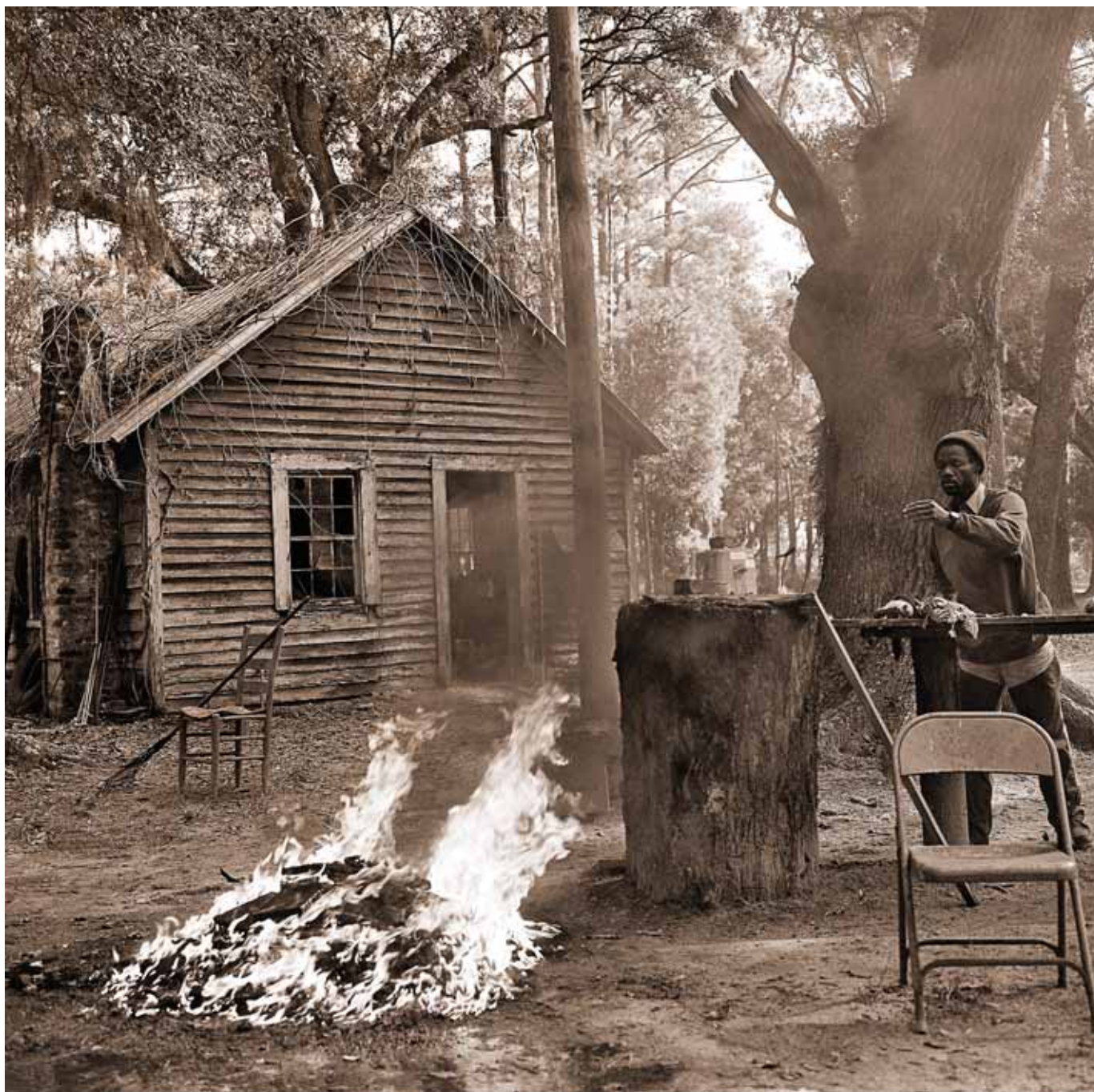
“To be able to do it, you first have to be able to picture yourself being able to do it -

picture yourself soaring over that bar, turning your body at just the right moment to get the needed loft,” the award-winning photographer says.

It was indirectly through pole vaulting that Jeffcoat landed in photography. A conversation with *The State* photographers Vic Tutte and Maxie Roberts out at USC’s Weems Baskin Track about where best to capture the arc of the vault in their sports photographs piqued his curiosity.

The trio’s friendly banter eventually led to an invitation for the scholarship athlete to come out to see the newspaper’s darkroom. “The first time I saw an image emerging in

the developer tray, I was hooked; I knew right then I wanted to be a part of this,” recalls Jeffcoat. He continues to process and print his own film using vintage cameras and time-honored methods, including techniques Tutte and Roberts showed him. Now he teaches this, along with more contemporary methods, as part of the creative process. Photography students travel to Columbia for his tutelage, and his pictures are seen and celebrated the world over. And in recent years, his ability to capture evocative images, images found universally touching by viewers and jurors, has brought him multi-continental attention.



*Preparing Doves*

The trend started several years ago with a first place win in the prestigious Photo District News Face competition. Most recently his work was exhibited in the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Black and White Spider Awards. Selecting his work for that award was a jury of international captains of the photography industry:

The Royal Photographic Society, FoMu Fotomuseum, Aeroplastics Contemporary, Torch Gallery, Stockholm City Museum and Fratelli Alinari in Florence, Italy.

The field of 8,508 entries represented 73 countries. Nominees vied for 132 title awards; Jeffcoat took two honors. Creative

director of the awards, Basil O'Brien, says Jeffcoat's entries "represent black and white photography at its finest." Black and White Spider Awards are the leading international superlatives honoring excellence in this field.

Locally, Jeffcoat is perpetuating his experience by teaching both photography and





*Art School Chefs*



the creative process. Photographer Molly McFaddin, who has flown in from Ohio several times for private two-week tutorials, describes him as “a very hands-on teacher who views the world in ways most people don’t—which helps make his art so unique.”

This month Boyd Saunders, Jeffcoat’s friend and mentor, shares in an exhibit with the photographer at McCormick Arts Council at Ketarah in McCormick, SC, on view through the end of May. “La Femme: A Celebration of the Eternal Female” showcases myriad views and interpretations of the female form.

Jeffcoat’s classical portraits, described as “contemporary Mona Lisas,” honor the beauty and perfection of the female form, as do a collection of luminous nudes. Saunders’ suite of lithographs entitled *Odalisque* reimagines exotic females who tantalized around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

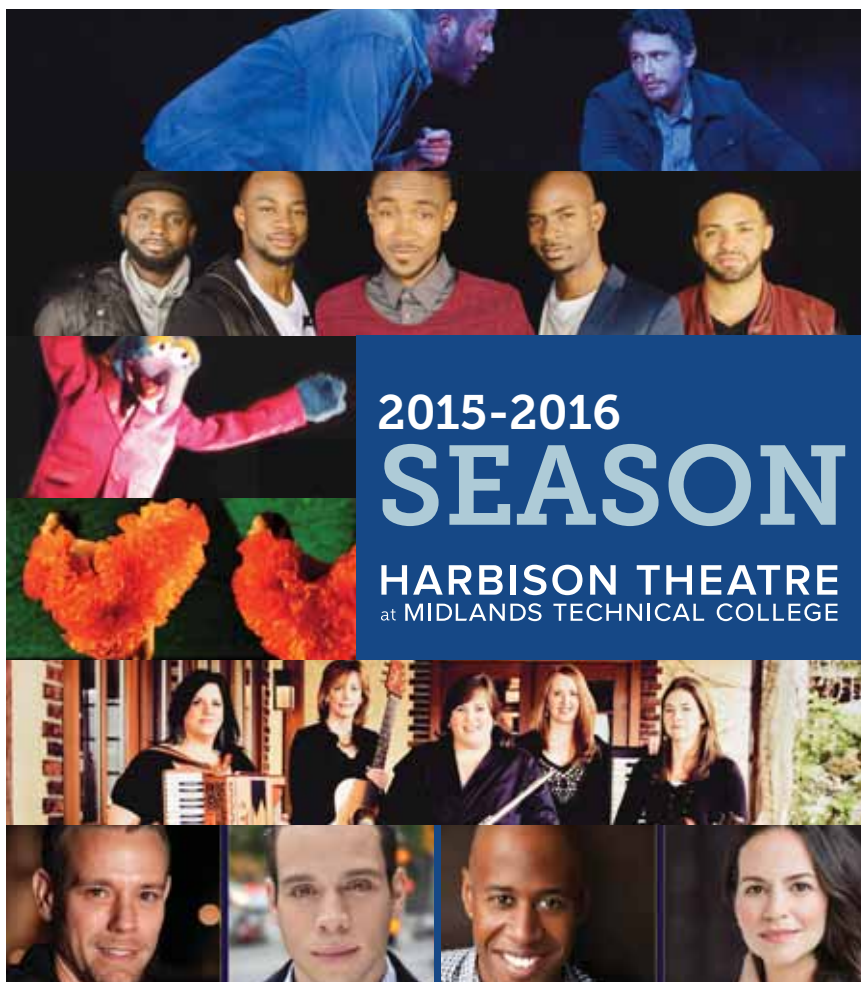
“What we are showing is complementary,” says Saunders, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Art of the University of South Carolina where he established the print-making program. “Russell has a particular sensitivity and fondness for the women he photographs. His pieces have a classicism about them.”

His neighbor and fellow artist Susan Lenz describes Jeffcoat as “old school” and a “photographer’s photographer.”

“He knows his way around the darkroom, what f-stops are and how to use them, and when a controlled depth of field will convey a desired atmosphere,” she says. “Russell doesn’t ‘take pictures’; he captures images he has carefully sculpted. Years studying the work of masters, like Dorothea Lange, result in hand-developed images. It’s not unusual for him to print the same image on various papers, in different sizes, and in subtly different tones, always looking for the ideal. And finding it.”

Jeffcoat’s ideal shots have appeared in the likes of *Time*, *Der Spiegel*, *Playboy*, and *Glamour*. They have won him accolades in the International Nude in the Landscape Exhibition in Carmel, CA as well as in Astoria, OR for the Photographic Nude International. This spring, his black and white work appears in exceedingly good company in *Blur* magazine.

As he did in his early pole vaulting days, Russell Jeffcoat is still scaling the heights.



# 2015-2016 SEASON

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|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Caroline Rhea</b><br/>OCTOBER 2, 2015   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>The Magical Music of Harry Potter</b><br/>OCTOBER 11, 2015   3:30 PM</p> <p><b>NTL: Of Mice and Men</b><br/>OCTOBER 15, 2015   7:00 PM</p> <p><b>The Great American Songbook</b><br/>OCTOBER 18, 2015   3:30 PM</p> <p><b>Committed</b><br/>OCTOBER 23, 2015   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>NTL: Frankenstein</b><br/>OCTOBER 29, 2015   7:00 PM</p> <p><b>Fabien Cousteau: One Ocean, One People</b><br/>NOVEMBER 10, 2015   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>NTL: Hamlet</b><br/>NOVEMBER 12, 2015   6:00 PM</p> <p><b>MOMIX Botanica</b><br/>NOVEMBER 15, 2015   3:30 PM</p> | <p><b>Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox</b><br/>NOVEMBER 21, 2015   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Holiday Pops</b><br/>DECEMBER 13, 2015   3:30 PM</p> <p><b>NTL: Treasure Island</b><br/>JANUARY 17, 2016   2:00 PM</p> <p><b>Strings &amp; Salsa</b><br/>JANUARY 22, 2016   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Wiesenthal</b><br/>JANUARY 30, 2016<br/>2:00 PM AND 7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Glennon Doyle Melton</b><br/>FEBRUARY 4, 2016   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Valentine's Cinema: Roman Holiday</b><br/>FEBRUARY 13, 2016<br/>7:00 PM DESSERT<br/>8:00 PM FILM</p> <p><b>Sing Along with The Muppet Movie</b><br/>FEBRUARY 21, 2016   3:30 PM</p> | <p><b>HT@MTC PERFORMANCE INCUBATOR PRESENTS: Ruins</b><br/>FEBRUARY 27, 2016   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Broadway Back Together</b><br/>MARCH 5, 2016   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Cherish the Ladies</b><br/>MARCH 10, 2016   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Negin Farsad: Fighting Islamophobia, Bigotry, and What Have You with Comedy</b><br/>MARCH 15, 2016   7:30 PM</p> <p><b>Sci-Fi in Hi-Fi</b><br/>APRIL 23, 2016   3:30 PM</p> |
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# Review

## *American Sycamore* by Kathleen Nalley

B Y B R A N D O N R U S H T O N



In her new chapbook, *American Sycamore*, Kathleen Nalley creates a complex collection centered on the ways in which humanity is forced to adapt if it hopes to persist. This is a book about survival and growth, about how to strip the self bare as a way to build the self back up. This is a world full of transitions, transformations, and arriving at the revelation that there is no wrong way to shuck the world that tries to sink us. Nalley's chapbook sings nature's song in the hopes that it becomes a part of it.

Nalley's collection begins with an epigraph by Annie Dillard about the adaptability and persistence of the sycamore tree. The book follows this up by engaging in a variety of forms pursuing one common purpose: finding a way to last.

Readers of *American Sycamore* are quickly ushered into a world where nature provides a sense of solace. Though, this is a solace that is in jeopardy, a solace still penetrable by the pollution of outside forces. Nalley wants to shake the world back into a natural order, a world where the inner-self isn't starving, a world where she doesn't have to say:

Give me the good, ol'fashioned root  
vegetable loosened from the dirt  
that grew it. Give me beans to snap.

These days, everything is complicated,  
Bedazzled, soul stripped.

What Nalley has created in *American Sycamore* is a field guide for disrupting the diurnal. This book challenges the cycles that control us. This chapbook is ambitious, it singlehandedly intends to disrupt the familiar trajectory of our own kind. The book isn't after answers; it longs to find a place of stability that can withstand the shock of where we're headed. In her own words, "I can explain the whole life / cycle and beyond. Which gets chloroform, / which gets drought, / which gets chemical bath. / Only I know how the ticking time / bomb works."

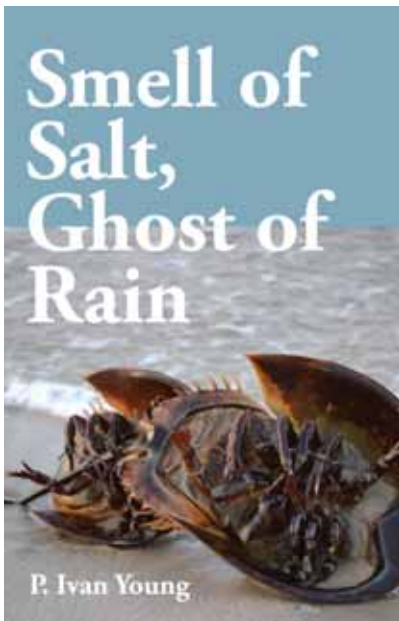
Nalley's *American Sycamore* sinks its roots with the intent to stick around. In a world quickly closing in, we are, after all, looking for that safe place to cement ourselves.

I c a n e x p l a i n t h e w h o l e l i f e  
c y c l e a n d b e y o n d . W h i c h g e t s c h l o r o f o r m ,  
w h i c h g e t s d r o u g h t ,  
w h i c h g e t s c h e m i c a l b a t h .  
O n l y I k n o w h o w t h e t i c k i n g t i m e  
b o m b w o r k s .

# Taxonomy of Want

P. Ivan Young's *Smell of Salt, Ghost of Rain*

BY JONATHAN BUTLER



P. Ivan Young's *Smell of Salt, Ghost of Rain*, new from Brick House Books, brings to mind T. S. Eliot's phrase about "mixing / Memory and desire." Young's setting is that of the hazy Carolina coast rather than foggy London, but the graduate of USC's MFA program knows something about stirring the old cocktail of recollection and want. Like a landscape painter, he carefully assem-

bles the details of the scene, making the setting and its objects the site of memory and meditation.

Much of Young's work deals with difficult, coming of age lessons, and the outdoors is often his classroom, as in "Deer-Unspoken," wherein the speaker describes a first deer hunting trip and the hollow sense of loss that accompanies its ostensible success: "a bitter, cold alchemy, an empty harvest." But Young is also interested in lessons learned in the wilderness of the suburbs, as in "Reasons," which makes rationalization a logic that drives the poetic form:

Because Tommy's mother  
slipped a Percodan at lunch  
and Brent's father  
mixed bourbon with his coffee.

And then extends the series of reasons to include children inheriting their parents' coping mechanisms:

Because we stole what we needed—  
candy and records, comic books and liquor,  
pot from a parent's drawer.

Often, Young blends memory and desire in a single image, as in "Dress," wherein a hanging garment summons "so many distractions of the interspersed days laid out / in spaghetti straps and stripes, crepe and wool," or

"Trapeze," wherein the sight of women performing a high-wire act solicits the memory of an acquaintance who jumped to her death: "how long did we pass under you / without noticing you were there?"

As this last example suggests, the people of Young's book are freighted with pain, often from a very early age,

... Most of us knew waking to  
a father solemnly leaving with suitcases  
in hand, the lies parents told to smooth  
the emptiness.

and the collection is concerned in part with the inadequacy of language to the suffering of its characters, and leaves open the question of whether or how the silence might be bridged, as in "Languages We Don't Speak":

... Men form a code  
beneath word and gesture, distance in the eyes,  
the hope that something is being said, the danger  
that something is being said—

But if *Smell of Salt, Ghost of Rain* is in part a meditation on the ways that language cannot bridge the gap, it is also itself an effort to test how far language can go in this direction, and towards this end it makes its coastal settings the medium of this transmission.

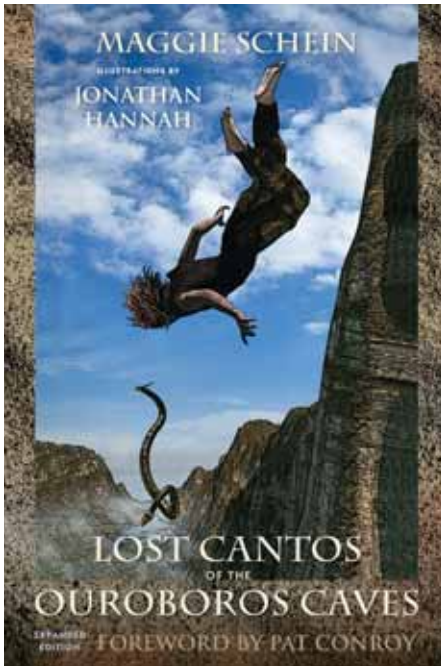
... Men form a code  
beneath word and gesture, distance in the eyes,  
the hope that something is being said, the danger  
that something is being said—



# A Battle for Understanding

## Maggie Schein's *Lost Cantos of the Ouroboros*

B Y S A R A H G O U G H



Maggie Schein's *Lost Cantos of the Ouroboros Caves* (The University of South Carolina Press, 2015) is philosophical and insightful, taking on big spiritual challenges in a reasonably small book – a collection of nine short stories, the eighth split into a trilogy. While not actually consisting of “cantos,” the language is lyrical, purposeful, and weighty with meaning in the way of poetry as Schein writes new fables neatly layered with allusions to tales of old.

Before even opening the cover of this book, Schein plays with our innate quest for understanding. The title entices with a subtle challenge: herein lies some lost knowledge, and if you can navigate the mystical, tangled web within, you can be the lucky one to recover this knowledge, to keep it

and share it. The cover image of a boy and snake tumbling off the side of a mountain warns that the journey is not without perils, but like other warnings within these tales they go unheeded at first – which is exactly how it is meant to be.

This is a book of human nature, of finding truth and one's place in the scheme of things both because of and despite that nature. Schein explores the meaning of life, love, death, and the connectedness of all things. It is a humanization of the Wheel of Samsara, the Buddhist cycle of existence in which human beings are eternally reborn until we finally learn all the lessons we are supposed to, and are honed down to our very essence, finally achieving totally consciousness. “Ouroboros” refers to the ancient symbol of a snake devouring its own tail, determinedly cyclical, and each of the characters within this book find themselves somewhere along that whirring, recurring journey.

Perspective is a recurring theme, particularly how humans are blinded by their relentless, externally focused questions and presumptions and therefore unable to see or comprehend the great design that is unfolding right before them. In one instance, the cruelty that we often assign to forces of nature is actually kindness and an exquisite fulfillment of destiny. In another, a buzzard is not a wretched scavenger, but a serene, purifying presence. Supporting and background characters from certain tales are brought to the foreground in others, illuminating how things are easy to miss from some angles, but from others are essential links in the chain of existence.

Jonathan Hannah's illustrations echo the call for varying perspectives, allowing the reader to peer down on scenes from above

and then observe them straight on, examining close-up details and then take in expansive horizons. Some characters seem to return the scrutiny, gazing directly at the reader, crowding the frame, while others turn their backs, hovering just out of sight. Like Schein's writing, they are richly layered with symbolism and meaning, echoing the conclusions to come.

The early, more accessible fables lure the reader in with their fantastical enchantments. Animals are elegant and wise, able to communicate with humans in order to warn, protect, and impart knowledge. A young man seeks enlightenment through the challenge of summiting a mountain and is guided by a snake. A swan guards lost souls. A gatekeeper is chosen to usher those in the in-between on to the next world, assisted by a spider. Schein's treatment of each fable is beautiful and original.

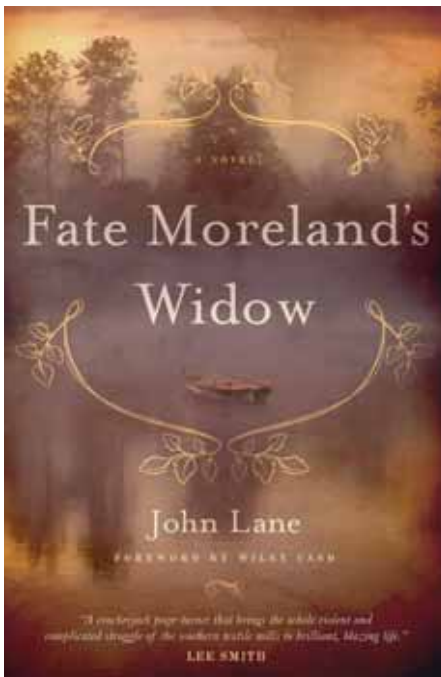
Then the stories get increasingly philosophical and circuitous, going “meta” in wonderfully perplexing ways. These are stories about the beginning of story itself, as well as the limitations and power of stories versus what is “true” and of the present. The reader, too, begins to play his or her part as another character stuck on the wheel of destiny, waiting for fulfillment and awareness but kept off-kilter and pulled along with a sense of inevitability.

In these stories as in life, events may be predetermined by some grand design, but each step along the journey is necessary and meaningful to go through. In the end there is certainly not simplicity, but there is satisfaction. Though the path was twisted and tangled, we finally reach the consciousness that, through each character, we have battled so hard for.

# Review

## *Fate Moreland's Widow* by John Lane

BY KYLE PETERSEN



long-established South Carolina poet and memoirist John Lane.

The story's protagonist is Ben Crocker, a self-described "company man" for a textile company located in the foothills on the border between North and South Carolina. Told in the "present" of 1988 but concerned with the details of several incidents involving a fatal boating accident and union-busting in the 1930s, Crocker is caught in the throes between his desire to work his way up the ladder in management and his familial and community affiliations with the mill workers. While that sounds very temporally specific, the shadow of South Carolina's current union controversies, along with thoroughly pressing national concerns about growing income equality and the unequal justice doled along both racial and class lines, give the novel a cutting contemporary relevance.

Largely due to the limitations of the first person narration from Crocker's perspective, many of the mysterious details and key conversations that readers crave are either unavailable or shrouded by the liminal space the middle man occupies in a mill village. This was likely a conscious move on Lane's part to deflect the more mystery-driven aspects of the story in favor of creating a more fully-realized portrait of class struggle that touches on the myriad and diffuse indignities that are a

product of such a social and economic divide. Still, that means we get a very fragmented sense of the most fascinating characters—the local union leader Olin Campbell, the beautiful, surprisingly complicated Novie Moreland, the wryly malevolent Angus McCane, the drunken older brother of the curiously absent mill owner/manager George McCane—while Crocker himself gradually fades away from our interest.

The novel builds ultimately to exactly what you expect it to—a contentious, plot-twisting trial and a failed strike/unionization attempt at the mill—but neither leads to any real catharsis. Lane is set on telling a more accurate and nuanced version of history, one that recognizes the seedy undercurrents of social class on small town southern life, on the simultaneous presence and absence of a labor movement in the world of southern textiles, and the ways in which our reckoning of the past speaks clearly to the present moment even as it offers up no easy answers or understanding. He ultimately succeeds at this, a testament as much to his sense of craft as to the vivaciousness of his subject matter, but the lingering sense of remove created by Crocker and affirmed by the unfinished nature of the story will potentially leave readers with a perplexingly and perhaps pointedly unsatisfied feeling at the close of this debut.

As William Faulkner never stops reminding us, history is a living, breathing thing, a powerful force that informs and effects our present in layered, complicated, and often contradictory ways. This is, of course, one of the great themes of Southern letters, with its long tradition of mulling endlessly and murkily over the past, but the idea seems to have a very particular valence in *Fate Moreland's Widow*, the first novel from

# Ars Poetica, or Portrait of an Angler Fish

BY MELISSA DUGAN

I wanted to draw you in close,  
so I sacrificed my beauty to a migraine,  
and she burst from my forehead,  
my new appendage, a neon globe

embedded in a flesh-stick.  
The darkness here is thick;  
it will reconstruct your bones,  
but I am ready to absorb you,

to merge our blood vessels.  
I will feed you. I do not give  
off light in order to see.  
This is my secret: I can see

only in the dark. The light is for you,  
and behind it, I am the shadow,  
and the teeth, and the darkness,  
and the juices. The light—my

bacteria—they breed for you.  
I do not need to speak  
to be here, waiting, colorless,  
with coins for eyes. The light

that is mine is not mine: we  
have an arrangement, as I do  
with six males whose digestive  
tracts have dissolved.

I take what I need from them  
when I need it. When the eggs  
come, they will not be pretty,  
and I will forget them the moment

my children slip from my body.  
But one day you will be swimming  
near the bottom of the trench,  
and you will witness

a divine glow. In that moment  
I hope you will believe the ocean  
has swallowed a star so hot  
it never ceases to burn.

---

Melissa Dugan has recently graduated from the University of South Carolina with her MFA in poetry. Melissa also has degrees in education and in liberal studies. Originally from Pennsylvania, Melissa has worked as a waitress, a nursing home receptionist, a health insurance claims analyst, and a high school English teacher.



# Each Night I Build Myself Anew

BY KEN DENK

I feel raw tonight,  
torn open with  
solitude and wine, and  
songs that break me  
into soft pieces  
from the inside,  
sung to me from snug  
pads on my ears,  
dog puddled at my feet.

He has no idea why I weep.

---

A fugitive from poetry for 40 years, this nurse and single father fled the upstate forests of his home state of New York, but was eventually caught in South Carolina. Hemmed in by metaphor and simile, he has chosen to make his home-in-exile in Columbia. He is susceptible to coffee, wine, poetry and fearsomely smart women.

# Poems on the Comet



Painting: Thomas Sailot

How would you tell the story  
of Columbia?

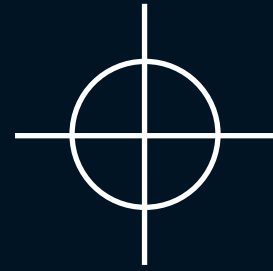
Submit your poems  
about the city!

Selected poems will be appear on  
Columbia's buses later this year

Poems will be judged by Columbia's  
poet laureate, Ed Madden

Poems should be no more than 10 lines  
and address the theme "The story of the city"

Submit to  
[poetlaureate@onecolumbiasc.com](mailto:poetlaureate@onecolumbiasc.com)



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# The South Carolina Book Festival in its 18<sup>th</sup> Year

B Y R A N D Y A K E R S



**S**pring in Columbia means graduations, weddings, gardening and books. May 16-17 are the dates for the 19th annual South Carolina Book Festival at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. I invite you to step in from the out of doors into an enchanted space designed and dedicated to those who love books.

The South Carolina Book Festival is The Humanities Council's largest and most visible annual event. Started in 1997 as a one-day event at the Koger Center in honor of the Council's 25th anniversary, the Book Festival has grown significantly in the past 18 years to become a regional and even nationally recognized event. This May's festival will include presentations by more than 100 authors, book signings, book sales from over 90 vendors, and many collateral events.

South Carolina is a state that is rich with literary heritage, but there were not any major statewide events celebrating authors, writing and literacy in South Carolina in the 1990s. The SC Arts Commission had sponsored a festival called "Carolina Connections" in the late 1980s, but it was a one-time event. Books, reading, and literacy are vital markers for the health of a community. The more people read, the more they are engaged in civic, cultural, volunteer, and philanthropic activities. It was not a stretch for The Humanities Council, a cultural organization which promotes literature, to begin to sponsor this statewide event.

The SC Book Festival reaches a diverse audience of more than 6,000 people from South Carolina and beyond. Attendees are from every race, age, creed, and corner of the state, with approximately 7% coming from other states, filling area hotels and restaurants. This brings hospitality and accommodations tax dollars to the City of Columbia and Richland County, adding to our state's healthy tourism industry.

The SC Book Festival allows The Humanities Council to partner with numerous literary groups such as the South Carolina State Library, the South Carolina Arts Commission, the School of Library and Information Science at USC, Richland Library, the Southeastern Independent Booksellers Association, local county school districts, and other cultural and education groups, ensuring that efforts are coordinated with organizations that are involved in similar literary efforts. Such exposure adds to the ability to market the festival and to raise funds. Approximately one third of the festival's budget comes from federal support—

the rest of the funds are raised from city, county, foundation, and private donations.

The SC Book Festival has significantly increased The Humanities Council's visibility and fundraising. It also has important spin-off effects. The survey instrument used at the festival shows that attendees are more likely to visit their local libraries and to read books by featured authors. As a free event, many of our underserved and rural citizens who could not afford ticket prices attend, especially families who want to expose their children to books.

Please come May 16-17 to enjoy award-winning and best-selling authors such as Rick Bragg, Ron Rash, Dottie Benton Frank, Natalie Baszile, Savannah cook book writers Cheryl and Griffith Day, and many more. Take your children to the children's pavilion for fun and special programs. Buy a rare book, first edition, or the latest suspense or romance novel. Enjoy the restaurants and shops in the Vista, and then come to the Convention Center for a true literary feast.

The Humanities Council is in its 42<sup>nd</sup> year as the state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. A private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, it supports, promotes, and initiates public humanities projects throughout South Carolina.

**RANDY AKERS IS THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE HUMANITIES COUNCIL**



●●●●●  
first thursday  
on main

# the COLLA CRITIE RION AWARD

The Columbia Criterion Award challenges artists to push the boundaries of their creative expression through monthly themed juried shows. The eleven monthly winners will receive a cash prize and be entered into the annual competition which will culminate in one finalist receiving the Columbia Criterion Award. Visit [www.tappsartscenter.com/criterionaward](http://www.tappsartscenter.com/criterionaward) for submission deadlines and eligibility requirements.

