

COFAC TODAY

Spring 2014

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In The Pink - Teaching students to turn dreams into realities

CAMPUS SCULPTURE PROJECT

Intended misinterpretation designed to spark curiosity

MUSIC MENTORSHIP

Shepherding students to realize their passion

THE MAGIC FLUTE

OPERA'S BLOCKBUSTER



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Dear Friends, Families, and Colleagues,

Welcome to our fourth, biannual issue of COFAC Today. In the pages of this issue, you can read stories of our students and of significant events in COFAC since fall 2013.

We are thrilled to highlight the unique opportunities our students have had to showcase their talents. This spring, two extraordinary debate students travelled to Indiana to participate in the Cross Examination Debate Association tournament, making history with their win as the first black women's debate team to capture a national title.

As the College has been supporting and encouraging more students to gain real world experience, this semester, students have been busy learning how to put their art into action with COFAC's new course in Arts Entrepreneurship. Similarly, President Loescheke has launched the Campus Sculpture Initiative to showcase student and regional talent and beautify the campus, selecting one design each year to be turned into a full-scale on-campus installation.

This semester we are fortunate to have Liz Lerman on campus as our 2013-2014 Rosenberg Distinguished Artist in residence. Lerman, wears many hats as a choreographer, performer, writer, educator and speaker. She brought her many talents to our college, enriching students across multiple disciplines through her creative process and thought provoking research.

In addition to our current student highlights, our alumni and faculty have made noteworthy impact, mentoring our students. This April, aspiring reporters, editors, and producers have the opportunity to once again engage in the Celebration of Journalism Festival for inspiration from esteemed alumni in the field of journalism and keynote speaker Nancy Giles. In addition, a multitude of Towson's Music Department students have had the pleasure and privilege of being mentored by internationally acclaimed composer Professor Jonathan Leshnoff and Dr. James Anthony, music historian extraordinaire, who will be retiring this spring from a long successful career at Towson University.

To read more about our students and the wonderful projects and events happening in our college, please visit the COFAC website (www.towson.edu/cofac). You'll also find listings for countless dance, music, and theatre performances, art exhibitions, film screenings, and community programs in the Arts & Culture Calendar (see www.towson.edu/main/artsculture/).

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Ashley Larkin performing *The Magic Flute*.

Photo by Kanji Takeno.

The Magic Flute

Serpents, supernatural women, murder plots and comedy—sounds like a Hollywood blockbuster!

by Miri Rotkowitz

Mozart's *The Magic Flute* sounds a lot like a Hollywood blockbuster. There's a serpent chase, supernatural women, murder plots (and major plot twists), some seriously goofy comic relief, a fight for domination of the universe, and, of course, love at first sight. Singers Tae Cha and Katherine Crowe, who portray Tamino and Pamina in TU's spring production, dish about their characters, who find time for romance while saving the world.

Q: What's most exciting about the role you're playing?

KC: "Pamina is a dream role, full of musical and emotional complexities, so I really enjoy digging into those, but it's also really fun to be singing a full role in German."

TC: "I get to be a prince!"

Q: What's the most challenging?

TC: "I have to be noble, always. It is hard to make Tamino serious ALL the time, and hard not to laugh while there are a lot of funny things happening around him."

KC: "The opera spans the course of a single day, and we watch Pamina develop from an obedient princess and daughter into an independent young woman who chooses to fall in love and save the world. It's a welcome challenge to try to make that transformation believable..."

Q: The premise of the *The Magic Flute* is pretty fantastical. What's your favorite thing about the world of this opera? What's the coolest thing about the way the production will be staged?

TC: "My favorite thing about the world of this opera is that anything and everything can happen. And the coolest thing about the way the production will be staged is that audience will be able to see certain things come ALIVE." (Spoiler alert: SNAKE!)

KC: "I love that despite all of the crazy trappings of this opera's world, the whole piece really just boils down to being about love; the simplicity of its message helps counter all of the fantasy. That idea will be mirrored in our set design: three projection screens will feature intricate, animated projections; they're essentially our only scenery. That balance between the complex and the simple is really interesting to play with." ▶

Music Department production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* directed by Dr. Phillip Collister and performed April 11-13, 2014. Tae Cha as Tomino. Photo by Kanji Takeno



Q: Tamino falls in love with Pamina before he ever meets her. If you could give him some advice, what would it be?

KC: "Talk it out! I'm all for fate and destiny and love-at-first sight, but that's not going to do you much good in the midst of your first fight. He and Pamina should definitely work on some communication skills before they get too much further in their relationship..."

TC: "Nope, Tamino, don't do that again. You are letting yourself get into A LOT of [tricky] situations. Although, I guess love can come before you meet someone."

Q: Tamino has to face several trials to win Pamina's hand, during which he can't speak or eat. Which would you find harder—being silent, or not eating? If you had to face the same trials, what would you eat afterwards?

TC: "NOT EATING. I can keep my mouth shut, and be silent. But...no food? Nope I can't do that. After the trials, I would eat Korean food."

Q: Pamina joins Tamino for the last two trials. Why does she do it? What do you think that says about her?

KC: "I think joining Tamino in his trials establishes Pamina as an active and independent member of their relationship. Rather than wait for her prince to earn her, she chooses to join him as an equal. Also, by choosing Tamino, Pamina loses all the family she has ever known. It's the first real decision she's made of her own, and shows she is more than just a daughter, a lover, or a princess."

Q: If you had a magic flute for a day, how would you use it?

KC: "Um, to attain world peace? That's essentially how Tamino uses it though, so I'm not sure that counts...I suppose I'd like to use it to help bridge the gap between contemporary audiences and classical music, particularly classical vocal music. I'd love for audience members to experience our music's poetry and characters in a way that feels reminiscent of their day-to-day lives."

TC: "If I had magic flute for a day, I probably give it to someone else. That magic flute is too much for me."



Photo by Kanji Takeno



Photo by Kanji Takeno

Q: You played Pamina as part of TU's Opera in a Can program. How was the production adapted for kids? How did they respond? Is there anything different about how you're building on or developing the character for the April production?

KC: "Oh boy, well, I've always said that opera is just sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll from a couple hundred years ago, and Magic Flute is no exception, so it was quite a different show for the kids. But when it boils down to it, Pamina is a princess and she and her prince have to go through a lot of adventures before they can live happily ever after. That was what Dr. Collister did a great job of portraying in the kid's adaptation, and what the kids really responded to - plenty of glitter and Princess Leia hair helped! April's Pamina will still have the princess element, but will also have more time to develop as a real human as well." ■

Interviewees:

Tae Cha, BM, Voice Performance, 2014

Katherine Crowe, MM, Vocal Performance, 2014

Top: Katherine Crowe as Pamina & cast members in *The Magic Flute*.

Left: Sarastro, Randall Murrain, far right with Katherine Crowe, Pamina and Chorus of Priests in *The Magic Flute*.

Speaking Out

Towson's nationally ranked debaters make history

by Wanda Haskel

The proof is in the evidence. Anyone arguing that the TU star traveling debate team's success last year was a fluke will crumble under cross-examination.

According to Korey Johnson '16, doubters within the collegiate debate community said they "lucked out at NDT"—that's the National Debate Tournament—at which Johnson and her debate partner Ameena Ruffin '15 surprised their Ivy League rivals by making it to the top 16.

That's why Johnson and Ruffin, fueled this year by a drive to prove their critics wrong, have stepped up to the podium with a vengeance, verifying that their success is all about skill, not luck.

Throughout the fall and winter, the pair crisscrossed the country, going up against or "hitting," as they say in debate lingo, the best of the best, consistently holding their own and bringing home prestigious speaker awards. In their second year as a debate duo, Ruffin and Johnson spent much of the season ranked among the top 10 teams in the country (rankings change with each tournament).

The whirlwind ride included stops at Kentucky, Wake Forest, Harvard, California, Texas and a highly selective round robin in Pittsburg, to which only teams ranked in the top 20 are invited. In Pittsburg, Ruffin and Johnson nabbed the first and second speaker awards, respectively.

The pair topped off the regular season by making history as the first team of black women to be awarded a first-round, at-large bid to the National Debate



TU President Maravene Loeschke, Sen. Jim Brochin, Korey Johnson and Ameena Ruffin in the Maryland State Senate Chamber.

Photo by Kanji Takeno

Tournament. Only the top 16 teams in the country get a coveted automatic invite to collegiate debate's grand showdown. All others hoping to be among the 78 teams attending must prove themselves at additional qualifying rounds. TU joins elite schools, including Harvard, Georgetown, Rutgers, Wake Forest and Northwestern, to receive this honor.

Remarkably, the Towson debaters have continued their winning trajectory despite reorganization within the TU forensics program, which has left them without a head coach this year. They've been getting some remote help from a Pennsylvania-based instructor, but day-to-day, they're largely on their own—to plan strategies, organize practices and register for tournaments.

No complaints from these hungry competitors, though. In fact, going it alone, says Ruffin, "has made us better."

The two hoot with hilarity, remembering rounds in which they were underprepared or the argument shifted, rendering what they had prepared inapplicable. This, they claim, is exactly what helped them grow as debaters. With no one feeding them strategies, they were forced to sharpen their critical thinking skills and ability to formulate arguments on the fly.

Ruffin and Johnson are also one of the youngest teams on the debate circuit, often going head-to-head with seasoned seniors. And as they continue to grow stronger, they still have next year to look forward to, when many of the top teams from other schools will have graduated.

Who knows how far these two feisty products of Baltimore city public schools will go, but one thing's for sure, they're going to keep working overtime to prove that they are consistently one of the best debate teams in the country. So if you see them around campus, congratulate them on a great season. But whatever you do, don't try to argue with them. You'll lose.



Since this article was written Ruffin and Johnson went on to make history as the first black women's team to win the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) national championship. ■

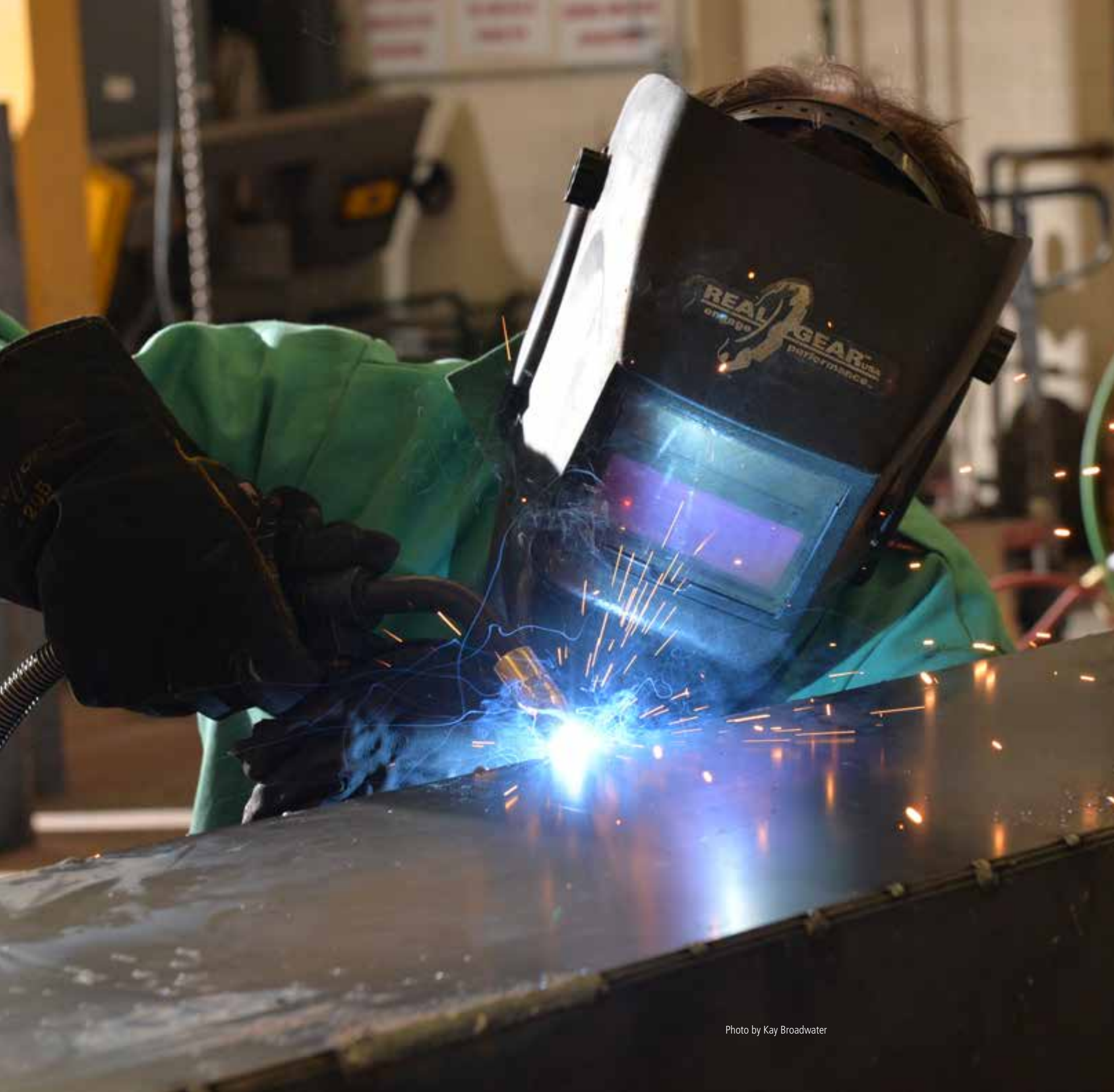


Photo by Kay Broadwater

Campus Sculpture Project

Intended
misinterpretation
designed to spark curiosity

by Miri Rotkovitz

When Nicolas Edwards walks around the Towson University campus, there are a few things he notices. For one, most of the sculptures on campus “are strictly organic sculptural forms.” They’re nearly all located around the Center for the Arts. And there aren’t enough of them, in Edward’s estimation.

But more than that, he notices the cell phones, and the way students are “constantly distracted” by them. “Not enough people, he says, “really observe their daily surroundings.” So Edwards entered a design for consideration to the Campus Sculpture Initiative that he hoped could change that. The initiative—launched by President Maravene Loeschke to simultaneously showcase student and local talent and beautify the campus—competitively selects one design each year to be turned into a full-scale on-campus installation. This year, Edwards’ piece won, and together with a team of advanced sculpture students, he shepherded the design from the page into a fully actualized 26’x12’x8’ powder-coated steel sculpture.

David Meyer, Dave Perry, and Harrison Doyle collaborated to help bring Edwards’ vision to fruition. And though both Meyer and Doyle’s personal designs are typically small-scale pieces in wood, metal, or mixed media, both say they relished working on Edwards’ public sculpture, and collectively figuring out how to handle the unique challenges inherent to the design’s fabrication.

Edwards was “striving for intended misinterpretation from the viewer” when he conceptualized a “point-of-view specific sculpture” comprised of fifteen separate closed forms. Designed “to spark the curiosity,” he says “I wanted to force the viewer to interact and move around my piece.”

There’s a bit of playful mischief in Edwards’ plan, a sort of secret wink shared with the viewer who takes the time to explore the structure. Because what seems at first glance to be a large abstract installation is also a giant, three-dimensional sign spelling “TOWSON.” But to see it, you’ve got to find just the right observational viewpoint. As David Meyer puts it, ▶

"walking past the sculpture from the side, it is spatial and abstract, until you come around and it hits you over the head."

The group has already gotten a taste of the sort of reaction the sculpture might invite. "To locate the specific sites for each form, explains Edwards, "we first had to go out to the site with to-scale wooden templates... everyone walking by was interacting with [the preliminary design] and telling me that they really liked it."

But to turn that model into a permanent structure took a lot of troubleshooting. Meyer, for example, figured out a method for "fastening the constructed steel sculptures to a non-weldable galvanized pole." He also helped "transform flat plain steel into wireframe boxes," which were "then fully welded into geometric forms." He says the most rewarding part of the project was "working in a creative dialogue between the designer, the instructor, and my classmates."

It's a sentiment Harrison Doyle echoed, when he noted that the group was invested in "sharing the workload and creative process equally," working together to tackle the "different obstacles that came up during design, construction and installation...As a group all decisions were made together. This gave each of us opportunities give input on each other's ideas and problems, streamlining the creative process and allowing for faster construction by the group."

More than that, he loved working with friends (he's been close with members of the group "since before high school"), and says that though his own sculptures are typically much smaller, the knowledge he's gleaned by "working on these large comprehensive

scale sculptures has caused me to take more time in planning out my work from beginning to end to avoid problems and mistakes."

Doyle and Edwards both worked on "Art Signs," last year's winning design in the Campus Sculpture Initiative. "But other than that, says Edwards, "I was pretty new to the whole permanent outdoor sculpture process." While the sculpture major was confident about his knowledge of metal fabrication, he says, "there were many things I had to learn before tackling a project of this size." He credits his professor Christopher Lavoie for guiding the group, and making "the whole process possible with his vast understanding of materials and larger sculpture in general."

Now that 12-hour studio days and the "extremely painstaking and time consuming" final task of "welding around all of the corners of each shape," is complete, Edwards and his group of sculptors are looking forward to the artwork's installation on campus. "This is a big landmark for us in terms of experience," says Doyle, who is excited to see what sort "human interactions" the sculpture will inspire.

Meyer is "honored" to have worked on the project, and says he feels "proud to have worked on a piece for the school which will have a positive impact on its viewers and campus."

As for Edwards, who set out to "to add a new dynamic" to the sculpture collection on campus, knowing that he'll "have a permanent sculpture displayed for many people to see everyday" as they walk around campus "is amazing!" But as much as he feels "very proud and honored" to have his name on such an enormous project, he maintains "my favorite element was the time spent in the studio with my friends and teammates. I could have not done it without them." ■

I wanted to force the viewer to interact and move around my piece.



► Students

Nicholas David Edwards, BS, Sculpture 2013

David Meyer, BFA, Illustration, 2014

Harrison Doyle, BFA, Sculpture, 2014

Dave Perry, BS, Sculpture, 2014

Nicholas David Edwards, sculpture and winner of the Campus Sculpture Initiative. Photos by Kanji Takeno



CBS Sunday Morning Contributor, Comedian, and Actress, Nancy Giles was Journalism Week's Keynote Speaker.

Words of Wisdom

Students get the real scoop on journalism careers at the Celebration of Journalism Festival

by Wanda Haskel

Students preparing to be journalists want to know the inside story. What does it take to be successful in this era of social media? How does a young news hound get bylines or airtime? What's it really like to work for a major publication or news organization?

Aspiring reporters, editors and producers can get answers to these questions and more at the Celebration of Journalism. Running April 14-17, the festival brings successful professionals in the field of journalism to campus to share their insights and interact with TU students.

Devin Hamberger '13, past president of the student Society of Professional Journalists, was heavily involved in organizing last year's event. She was inspired by the alumni working in television, radio, print and online journalism who shared their journeys from college to career. Hamberger says the stories resonated because they came "from someone you maybe looked up to when you were a freshman or someone who's close in age to you and you can kind of see yourself in their position after graduation."

And while alumni will continue to be invited back to campus, the program is fortunate this year to be able to expand its guest roster to include more high-profile folks. This was made possible by the generous support of TU alumnus, Bill Owens '88, executive editor of 60 Minutes.

One of the 2014 festival's big names is Nancy Giles, longtime contributor to the CBS News Sunday morning

program. Also a social activist, political journalist and actress, Giles is slated to give the keynote speech on Thursday, April 17.

Immediately following Giles' address is a panel discussion at which attendees will have the opportunity to chat with practitioners on the latest trends in digital journalism. The main panel speaker is CEO of Webmedia Group Amy Webb, who was named one of the "Women Changing the World" by Forbes. Webb is author of the 2013 bestselling book *Data, A Love Story* about the world of online dating.

Other seasoned journalists will be on hand, including Lee Rainie. The former managing editor of U.S. News & World Report is founder and director of the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, a "fact tank" that studies the impact of the Internet.

According to Dr. Cynthia Cooper, chair, Mass Communication and Communication Studies, the Celebration of Journalism is "evolving." Only in its third year, the festival is growing to include an ever-increasing array of journalistic voices.

The more and varied the perspectives, the better. Whether the real-world advice comes from a recent Towson alum working at a local TV station or an Ivy Leaguer from The Wall Street Journal, students are getting big-time benefits. These interactions help them make connections between what they learn in the classroom and what is being practiced in the field—a leg-up for those climbing to careers in the ever-changing world of journalism. ■

Arts Entrepreneurship

IN THE PINK: Teaching students to turn dreams into realities

by Miri Rotkovitz

What do t-shirts, organic coffee, music festivals, and local artwork have in common? Each is the linchpin of a Towson student's burgeoning entrepreneurial idea. And each is being discussed, nurtured and finessed in a unique course on Arts Entrepreneurship developed by Sidney Pink.

As the Administrative Coordinator for the Department of Dance, Pink is the go-to person and information font for all sorts of departmental, COFAC, and university-related business. But the MICA grad is also

"The creation of the class, and the original attempt to write the curriculum, came largely from the question of 'What do I wish people had told me?'"

an exhibited visual artist in his own right, with experience as a gallery curator, theater board member and arts advocate. In 2012, he co-founded the Deep Vision Dance Company's AKIMBO Dance Festival, which uses Baltimore as a backdrop to showcase the work of professional dance and movement artists from the region.

Pink's own entrepreneurial endeavors got him thinking about the training and knowledge gaps young artists across all disciplines often face as they venture out into the world after college. So he pitched a course designed to help cultivate the "21st century skill sets" they'll need to craft viable careers in the

arts, or to launch their own arts-related business projects. "The creation of the class, and the original attempt to write the curriculum," explains Pink, "came largely from the question of 'What do I wish people had told me?'"

The course is only in its second semester, but students from several departments have jumped to take it. Grace Steagall ('16), says she "saw a flyer last semester...and knew I had to take the class." The Business Marketing major loves art and music,

and has work experience as a barista; she says she wanted to learn how to start a business centered on "the things I'm passionate about."

Her idea is to open a combination "restaurant-coffee shop-concert-venue." But she's thinking big—she envisions a large venue similar to The Fillmore, a Silver Spring landmark. And she wants her space to showcase the work of local artists, which will be available for sale on-site.

Thanks to the class, she says, she's constantly learning new things that are helping her flesh out her business idea. She says Pink's curriculum is the first

she's encountered "that actually provides information applicable to life outside of college," and credits him with helping to make her "small dream more of a reality than it ever seemed like before."

For Miles Hamilton, a senior majoring in Digital Art and Design, the course's collaborative format has been tremendously helpful for "generating new perspectives," and avoiding the "tunnel vision" he knows could hinder him in his "drive to start" the t-shirt company he's long imagined.

Hamilton wants to emblazon t-shirts with "cool looking designs that incorporate a positive message. After all, a t-shirt acts as a billboard... maybe a small reminder could change a person's day, or [inspire someone to] do something good for someone else. You never know."

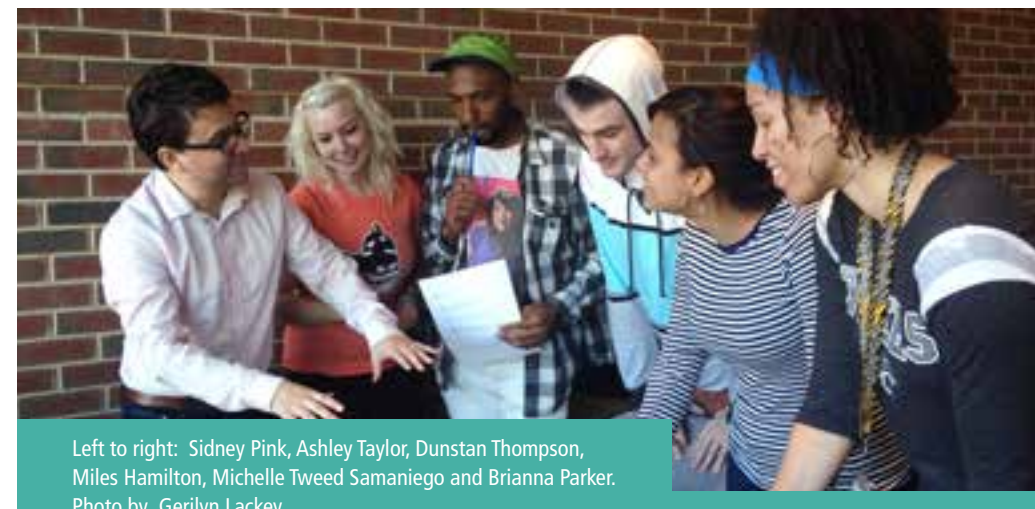
Simultaneously having the freedom to think through his idea in "such a real, comfortable, honest atmosphere...while getting sight of the real world," says Hamilton, "was just what I was looking for."

Communication Studies major Ashley Taylor ('14), enrolled in the course at the recommendation of a friend. She's enjoyed looking at entrepreneurship "through a creative lens," and finds inspiration in her classmate's ventures. For her own part, Taylor—who would like to open an organic coffee shop featuring

locally grown food and coffee from a farm in Honduras—says she was surprised "that the process of making this business a real prospect hasn't been as daunting as I thought. My business plan and frame of mind has grown so exponentially since the beginning of the class."

Madeline Megahan, a Mass Communications major in the Public Relations track, also finds inspiration in her classmates' projects. Beyond that, she says, "they've helped me elaborate and strengthen my ideas so that I may finish college with a strategic idea of what I want to do." In Megahan's case, that may mean pursuing a Masters in Graphic Design after she graduates in May. With a background in vocal performance and a strong interest in the music industry, she hopes "to break into the promotional side of the industry."

The degree, she feels, could lay the groundwork for her to "create graphics for a record label or entertainment management company." As for her class project, she was initially torn between working on a music festival, or her own design company. But she felt comfortable taking the time to hone her ideas in class, thanks in part to Pink's encouraging philosophy that "the world is limitless." It's an idea, she says, "that has both inspired and challenged me as an (almost) college graduate. We can do anything we want to do if we just know how to start." ■



Left to right: Sidney Pink, Ashley Taylor, Dunstan Thompson, Miles Hamilton, Michelle Tweed Samaniego and Brianna Parker. Photo by Gerilyn Lackey

PINK'S THOUGHTS...

...ON ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION:

"Over the last year, I've read a lot of the national literature on where arts entrepreneurship education is going. We are at an exciting time, because it is really just starting to be developed on a national level, to say "This is its own discipline, and it needs its own curricula and educational standards."

...ON THE NATURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

"Entrepreneurial thinking is so individual and personal. It's about connecting the dots between your own passions, your own skill sets, and what's happening out in the cultural landscape."

...ON PAYING THE RENT:

"For most art students, their main priority is artistic success, but we'd also hope for them that they can pay the rent and put food on the table."

...ON THE VALUE OF FAILURE:

"One of the things that entrepreneurs in the business school talk a lot about is that successful entrepreneurs are happy to fail. [The person behind] the successful tech startup says, "Well I had this idea and it absolutely bombed, and then I did this—and I learned—but it failed. And then I did this, and it didn't work, but it gave me an idea, and that made 5 million dollars."

...ON RISK AVERSION:

"For a student, [the class gives them the chance to ask] am I going to be okay with that kind of risk taking? And if I'm not, that doesn't mean I'm not entrepreneurial, but I'm going to do it in a different way."



Dr. James M. Anthony retires from
The Department of Music after 43 years.

Photo by Kanji Takeno

Music Mentorship

Shepherding students to realize their passion

by Miri Rotkowitz

Mentorship can take many forms. It's often thought of as a formal setup, in which a person with great knowledge and experience agrees to take on a promising, if greener advisee. But mentorship is also woven into the fabric of Towson's Music department in simpler, subtler ways. It suffuses professor-student relationships every day, as the students we spoke with attest.

For over four decades, Dr. James Anthony has been a fixture in the Music Department at Towson. During his tenure, he's taught over 21 different courses, sharing his vast knowledge of music history and literature, and his special interests in early music and opera history.

He'll be retiring this year, but he hasn't been content to rest on his laurels during his final semester on campus. Instead, he continues to embrace his role as professor and mentor. Scott Winter, a double major in Piano Performance and Electronic Media and Film, studied Music History under Dr. Anthony, and is currently taking his Survey of Opera course. He "is genuinely concerned with the passing down of knowledge to his students," says Winter, noting that Anthony "is truly an expert in the field of musicology."

But beyond expertise, it's Anthony's friendliness and accessibility that set him apart, and define him as true mentor material. His "love for music and his devotion to educating his students emanates from him in the classroom," says Winter, who notes that Anthony gladly offers "his own personal materials such as books, CDs, and DVDs to borrow to enhance our learning experience."

Karen Berry—a Music Education major concentrating in the double bass—also praises Anthony's kindness and patience, along with his ability to be firm when necessary to "make his point." She relates that when she took Music History I, she "was unfamiliar with most music until 1750." But thanks in part to Anthony's passion for early music, she found the new material both "interesting and exotic," and the class "very exciting."

In fact, she counts that course among those that helped her realize her own passion for music history and research, and her aspiration to become a music librarian.

Winter, too, says it was music history and literature classes that helped pique his interest in the possibility "of pursuing a graduate degree in musicology," and the desire to one day teach at the university level. He says Dr. Anthony, along with Dr. Carl Schmidt and piano professor Dr. Lawrence Crawford "have greatly encouraged me in all of my musical endeavors." He credits them for setting high, yet achievable standards, and says that meeting them has boosted his confidence, and instilled a desire to expand his knowledge further, even via courses he "initially thought too difficult to pursue."

Sometimes, just a few moments during a single lesson make a lasting impression. James Leitch, a Music Education major in the Vocal/General Concentration, has studied both Music Theory and 20th Century Music under Professor Jonathan Leshnoff. One day, to launch a discussion on minimalism, Leshnoff "had us all take out our cell phones, turn them off, sit them in the middle of the room, and just spend a couple of minutes in complete silence." For students primed to expect a class spent listening to music, "it was interesting"—and memorable way to demonstrate the way organic sounds and silences might play into music, composition, and arrangement.

His "love for music and his devotion to educating his students emanates from him in the classroom," says Winter, who notes that Anthony gladly offers "his own personal materials such as books, CDs, and DVDs to borrow to enhance our learning experience."

An internationally acclaimed composer, Leshnoff juggles a full schedule of on-campus obligations with extra-curricular travel and performances. But like Anthony, Leshnoff makes a priority of being accessible, and attentive to the needs of his students—even if they extend beyond the academic. Leitch relates that "when I was working with [Leshnoff] on his guitar concerto, I was dealing with a family issue, and he would ask about it and discuss it. I was impressed with the concern he showed about my personal life."

Ultimately, for students who aspire to teach themselves, having professors who bring a human touch to their pedagogy and model work-life balance is a rare gift. And both Winter and Berry, who now serve as peer tutors, are mindful of the lessons they've learned from their instructors, and strive to emulate their best qualities.

Berry, who tutors Music History II, says her teaching style is influenced by both Schmidt and Anthony, and that the knowledge she gleaned in Anthony's class gives her "a basis for" her tutoring, and a means to communicate comparisons to "the topics and structure in History II."

Winter says he is "very excited about the opportunities" he's had "to spend time helping students with multi-disciplinary courses that involve not only good note-taking and test-preparation abilities, but also acquired skills in musical analysis, listening, and scholarly research coupled with refined paper-writing." Both Berry and Winter acknowledge the professors they so admire who gave them the opportunity to train as tutors and help mentor their peers. It's an opportunity, says Winter "for which I am very grateful." ■



James Anthony with members of the Department
of Music Towson Seminar class, Spring semester
2014. Photo by Kanji Takeno

Choreographer Liz Lerman nurtures the creative process using words and movement.
Photo by Kanji Takeno.



Tapping Creativity

Moving to confidence: Choreographer Liz Lerman helps students and faculty get their creative juices flowing

by Wanda Haskel

As a classically trained dancer, sometimes it's hard for Asya Shaw '17 to get a questioning voice out of her head, one persistently critiquing her performance in terms of right and wrong, correct and incorrect. That's why participating in Liz Lerman's workshop, *Creating with Communities*, last fall had a profound impact on the 18-year-old.

Lerman's methods of nurturing the creative process through group exercises using words and movement opened up a new way for Shaw to view and trust herself as an artist.

"The confidence that she gave me...motivated me..." says Shaw. "Trusting myself allowed me to trust my community members around me...She allowed us to open up—not just to ourselves but to each other."

The experience was so positive that when Shaw learned Lerman would return to campus in the spring for regular visits to IDFA 203 *Creativity in the Fine Arts*, she leapt at the chance to further engage with the world-renowned founder of the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. The new course, developed by COFAC faculty, provides a vehicle for Lerman to personally inject her tools for creative research into the curriculum during four guest appearances throughout the semester. It also reflects the spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration for which Lerman is famous. Meeting in a light-filled Center for the Arts studio, the class is co-taught by Associate Professor Vincent Thomas (dance) and Professor Tom Casciero (theatre), a first-time partnership.

"This is groundbreaking for us as a college," says Dr. Susan Kirchner, professor and chair of the Dance department, "to work together on this kind of level."

The class is popular with students from dance and theatre, but other majors, including music and interdisciplinary studies attend. There's even a business student in the mix. Shaw, who aspires to dance professionally and eventually teach, sees IDFA 203 as an opportunity to continue the work she started in Lerman's fall workshop. "I wanted to take this class to help me," she says, "...not think in right and wrong—just let myself be an artist."

Shaw and many others are afforded this opportunity for artistic growth through Liz Lerman's dynamic methods thanks to the Rosenberg Foundation endowment, which provides annual support to bring an outstanding guest artist to Towson to enhance dance and theatre education.

As the 2013-14 Rosenberg artist, Lerman offered a series of fall semester workshops, infused with her theories and practice on encouraging the creative process, which not only enriched the curriculum for theatre and dance students, but also for faculty from all areas of the College of Fine Arts and Communication. The faculty session, which Lerman designed to help instructors think in more collaborative and interdisciplinary ways, drew participants

from art, music, mass communication, and electronic media and film, as well as dance and theatre.

Lerman, who won a MacArthur genius grant in 2002, is a choreographer, performer, writer, educator and speaker. She founded the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in 1976, cultivating the company's multi-generational ensemble into a leading force in contemporary dance. Lerman authored the widely used text *Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process* (2003). Her current partnerships include work with Harvard University, Urban Bush Women, Yale School of Drama and Dance Base in Scotland.

Vincent Thomas, who danced with Lerman's company back in the '90s, is thrilled to host his longtime collaborator on campus. The Rosenberg Distinguished Artist Endowment allows the college to expose the TU community to the artistic voice of an esteemed artist, says Thomas. "With Liz," he adds, "I think it goes beyond that. It's not only her artistic voice, but it's also her humanitarian voice." For Asya Shaw and others on campus who are experiencing transformative moments as a result of interactions with Liz Lerman, that voice resonates, joining the chorus of influences helping TU artists develop their own creative voices.

"I wanted to take this class to help me, ...not think in right and wrong just let myself be an artist."

TU Students ask questions in Liz Lerman's workshop, *Creating with Communities*.
Photo by Kanji Takeno.



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