

Folio

MLitt/MFA
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MASTER OF LETTERS/MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN SHAKESPEARE AND RENAISSANCE LITERATURE IN PERFORMANCE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER



Dr. Reginald Foakes Donates 500 Scholarly Books in Support of the Mary Baldwin College Shakespeare Program

Reginald Foakes PhD, professor emeritus of English at the University of California, has generously donated more than 500 books on Shakespeare and related studies from his personal collection to the MLitt/MFA program through Mary Baldwin's Grafton Library. The books, some of which are extremely hard to find, are being catalogued and integrated into the library system. They reflect a range of topics of interest to Shakespearean scholars and to the Mary Baldwin community.

Dr. Foakes was a guest presenter at the 2005 American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Conference, at which time he also gave a lecture to the Mary Baldwin community, "The Ghost in Hamlet." While at the college, Dr. Foakes was impressed by the scope and unique nature of Mary Baldwin's graduate program. During an afternoon chat with Dr. Frank Southerington about the needs of the program, the two professors discussed Grafton Library's current resources for Shakespearean scholarship. During that conversation, Dr. Foakes asked Dr. Southerington, director of MLitt/MFA, if the program might benefit from a donation of books.

"It gives me much pleasure to be able to supplement your holdings," said Dr. Foakes. "I think I learned as much by browsing in libraries as I did by the teaching I received, and I would like to think students still may do so."

The donation includes Volumes 1–50 of *Shakespeare Survey*, which, from its inception in 1948, has been one of the major international journals publishing scholarly work on Shakespeare.

Dr. Foakes authored *Shakespeare and Violence* and *Hamlet Vs. Lear: Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art*. He has worked with equal distinction on Shakespearean and contemporary dramatists and on documents about Elizabethan theatre.

Students browsing MBC's library shelves might also find Henslowe's *Diary* and the Arden edition of *King Lear*, both of which were edited by Dr. Foakes.

"I was doing some calculating with regards to our budget," said Professor Southerington. "It would have taken us nearly 10 years to achieve this level of acquisitions for our library. It is a gift that will do much to improve our students' scholarship, and indeed Mary Baldwin's place as a resource for scholarly research."



Ralph Cohen Teaches Teachers to Cure "ShakesFear"

Professor Ralph Alan Cohen PhD celebrates the culmination of a 19-year project with the forthcoming publication of his book, *ShakesFear and How to Cure It*. (Prestwick House). The book is written for teachers who want to bring Shakespeare's works to life in the classroom.

Divided into two sections, the first part of the book covers the reasons students often fear the Bard, and provides teachers with suggested do's and don'ts for teaching the works. The second part of *ShakesFear and How to Cure It* addresses individual plays. Dr. Cohen provides insightful commentary, plays to stimulate students, ideas for staging scenes, alternative readings, and useful film selections.

Professor Cohen uses his extensive experience in the classroom, as a director, and at various institutes for teachers to help new English teachers cultivate lovers of Shakespeare.

Mary Baldwin's Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature in Performance Program Announces Dramaturgy Concentration

Mary Baldwin College's masters program in Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature in Performance, in partnership with American Shakespeare Center, announces the addition of dramaturgy to the three existing concentrations of study (acting, directing, and teaching). The dramaturgy emphasis will begin in fall 2007, and is particularly appropriate for the Mary Baldwin/American Shakespeare Center alliance. It relies on the same fusion of skills, practice, and performance theory already fostered in the program.

Dramaturgy reflects a burgeoning profession in the field in this country and in Europe. Dramaturges often provide the academic and scholarly research a theatre company needs to mount thoughtful and professional productions of play, placed within the context of genre, artistic choice, history, culture, and social issues.

A new seminar course, Dramaturgy, will be offered as the nucleus for the emphasis. Taught by Dr. Jacqueline Bessell, the seminar will introduce students to production and institutional dramaturgy, including text preparation, pre-production, and rehearsal work related to issues of design, direction, and performance. Graduate students will gain experience by preparing program notes, plans for audience discussion, and study guides to plays from Early Modern drama and productions offered at American Shakespeare Center. Discussion of non-Renaissance plays and the practice of companies throughout the United States and Europe will also be introduced.

Dr. Bessell holds a doctorate in dramaturgy and dramatic literature from Clark University. She has been dramaturge for productions at Shakespeare's Globe in London and regional theatres in the United States, including Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and Pioneer Theatre in Salt Lake City.



Visiting Scholar to Teach Drama Texts

Visiting scholar Dr. William P. Williams will teach Drama Texts at MBC in January 2007. Dr. Williams is senior lecturer in English at University of Akron and professor emeritus of English at Northern Illinois University. His publications on Elizabethan bibliographies are extensive, including (with Craig Abbott) *An Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies*, which will be used as a reference text for the course.



STUDENTS REVEL IN SUMMER SUCCESSES AT HOME AND AFAR

Ralph Cohen Leads Whirlwind Tour of the London Stage

In July 2006 Dr. Ralph Cohen, Mary Baldwin College professor and executive director of American Shakespeare Center, led a summer course in London, taking 18 MLitt/MFA graduate students on a whirlwind tour of Shakespeare's London. In keeping with the theme of scholarship and stagecraft, students studied the history and architecture of Early Modern London, saw 12 theatrical productions, and participated in a showing of short scenes on the Globe stage.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Jeremy Fiebig working in the Globe shop, under the direction of master builder, Peter McCurdy; Caroline Gaddy and Sara Enloe rehearse on the Globe stage; Simone Daleo and Rob Smith runthrough combat choreography.

Student Actors Learn to Play the Pain

In June 2006, 13 MLitt/MFA students sweated, grappled, punched, and kicked their way through stage combat techniques. Colleen Kelly, part time instructor at MBC — the first and only woman ever to have held the office of vice president of the Society of American Fight Directors — tutored students in Movement and Stage Combat three hours a day for three grueling weeks. Students learned to execute unarmed combat elements involving balance, stance, cueing, eye contact, imaginary point of contact, body knap techniques (sounds that simulate the moment of contact), kicks, punches, rolls, and vocal reaction.

The class also practiced the difficult task of masking (hiding the moment of contact from the audience). Actors must create the illusion that each blow lands on target, often without actually coming in contact with one other. It takes long hours rehearsing precise combat

maneuvers to make a brief moment of stage fighting look believable.

“Colleen Kelly is so knowledgeable,” remarked MFA student Kris Ayers. “The course was exhausting, but we all learned so much. Everyone who took the fight test was certified.” The skills proficiency test in unarmed combat evaluates the theatrical form of fighting with the “natural weapons” of the human body: fists, feet, elbows, and knees. The test adjudicator was Joseph Martinez, chair of the theatre department at Washington and Lee University.

University Wits Take Shakespeare on the Road

The University Wits, with an organized troupe of 14 graduate students and graduates, toured public parks, traditional theatres, and outdoor venues in the Shenandoah Valley, Ohio, and Michigan from June through

August with a wildly successful production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The tour ended in Staunton with the final performance at Masonic as part of MLitt/MFA student orientation.

The novel approach to the tour combined playing with original staging practices (actor-based production, no director, audience interaction, doubling roles, acoustic music), and the spirit of an authentic Shakespearean touring troupe in which each actor is also a financial stakeholder in the company. Using a pay-what-you-will scheme, the Wits tour of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* created a financial bounty, enough revenue to pay back each actor's original investment and more. Additional income will be used to support future Wits endeavors.

For more information on the summer tour, or this fall's University Wits events, including the 24-Hour Theatre Festival and an education conference, visit the student Web site: academic.mbc.edu/mlitt/



Alumni News



Rick Blunt MFA '06 recently appeared as Flavius/Brutus in the Richmond Shakespeare Theatre's production of *Julius Caesar* in Richmond, Virginia. He has also been understudy for the Resident Troupe at American Shakespeare Center.

Alex Carney MFA '06 appeared as a rescue worker in the History Channel's docu-drama on the 9/11 attacks, *Countdown to Ground Zero*.

Megan McDonough MFA '05 recently became associate director of education at Maryland Shakespeare Festival. She is responsible for booking the Shakespeare Alive! 2007 School Tour, which will bring *Hamlet* (MBC student Becky Kemper's MFA thesis production) and *Wild and Whirling Words* (an introduction to Shakespeare with assorted scenes

from the canon) to over 40 middle schools, high schools, and colleges throughout Maryland. She also overhauled the Maryland Shakespeare Festival Web site to ensure that it reflects the exciting things happening with the company (www.mdshakes.org).

Mary Coy MFA '06 is currently stage manager for American Shakespeare Center. In August 2006 she stage-managed three theatre venues at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland for the American High School Theater Festival with more than 40 participating high schools from across the U.S. This fall, she presented her paper, "Trochee and Gesture: Word and Action in *Richard II*," as part of the Shakespeare and the Queen's Men Conference at University of Toronto.

Performance Festival FALL PRESENTATIONS 2006

MASTERS OF LETTERS THESIS PRESENTATIONS

Auditors and Actors: Eavesdropping on the Early Modern Stage
presented by Katherine Mayberry

Rhetoric in Action
presented by Becky Kemper

O' Excellent Device: Disguise on the Early Modern Stage
presented by Cassie Ash

Tailors in Early Modern Drama
presented by Bob Taylor

He Words Me: Shakespeare's Techniques on the Introduction of Words New to the English Language
presented by Sarah Enloe

No Pillars on the Stage: An Examination of Globe II
presented by Kris Ayers

MASTER OF FINE ARTS THESIS PRESENTATIONS

The Two Noble Kinsmen
directed by Jeremy Fiebig



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