



# Folio

MLitt/MFA  
SUMMER 2008

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

## Graduate Students Shine at National Conference

Five Master of Letters (MLitt) students traveled to St. Louis in March for the College English Association (CEA) conference and in the process demonstrated the relevancy and originality of their research at Mary Baldwin College. The students' acclaimed presentations inspired the CEA board to offer the MLitt/MFA program a prestigious permanent roundtable session at its annual conference. The newly forged partnership will provide valuable opportunities for conference experience to future MLitt/MFA students and bring recognition to the program in a national arena.

Second-year MLitt students Raven Claflin, Lauren Mignogno, and Chelsea Phillips and first-year students Reesa Graham and Rachel Kohler delivered

modified versions of their theses and other research papers to a crowded room; some attendees even sat on the floor. Claflin presented his findings about Shakespeare's villains' use of rhetoric, synthesizing his thesis in a mere eight minutes. Phillips also delivered an abbreviated version of her thesis, discussing Shakespeare's use of duplicate character names, such as Antonio and Sebastian. Mignogno talked about the importance of remembering that companies of young male actors originally performed early modern plays, and that this fact should affect interpretation of a play. Graham discussed a mobility study of *King Lear*, including a specific look at Peter Brook's film production of the play. To close the session, Kohler presented ideas on fairy folklore and how Shakespeare's writings



Five MLitt student presenters pose with Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen (second from left), MBC professor and American Shakespeare Center founding executive director, at the College English Association national conference.

PHOTO BY MARINA FAVILA

contributed to a shift in commonly held beliefs that fairies were scary, human-like spirits to viewing them as the small, sprite-like creatures popular today. The audience was intrigued by the papers and asked questions about how to bring the ideas into their classrooms, which sparked productive discussion.



PHOTO BY WOODS PIERCE

## MFA PERFORMANCE OF KING LEAR CAPTIVATES

The 2007-08 Master of Fine Arts acting students presented *King Lear* at Blackfriars Playhouse in March. The production of Shakespeare's timeless tale was set in a primitive world where the thin line between animal and human natures was blurred. The cast created a setting in which tribal tattoos, talismans, and animal skins were indicators of status and family, and where basic instincts could keep one alive in the most rugged of landscapes. Pictured are Patrick Bentley '08 as Lear (left) and Cassandra Ash '08 as Cordelia. The production was directed by Jacquelyn Bessell, MBC assistant professor.

## From the Director

Chief among the pleasures of my position as director of the MLitt/MFA program at Mary Baldwin College is the chance to host scholars and practitioners of early English drama in Staunton and have them share their knowledge and expertise with our community. Consider some of the guests that passed through Staunton during the 2007–08 academic year.

**Stephen Greenblatt**, Harvard University, author of *New York Times* bestseller *Will in the World*

**Tiffany Stern**, Oxford University, author of three ground-breaking works of theatre history



**Carole Levin**, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, leading Tudor historian and 2007 MBC Commencement speaker

**David Bevington**, University of Chicago, editor of the comprehensive *Complete Works of Shakespeare*

**Jeremy Lopez**, University of Toronto, author of *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern England* and co-editor of *Shakespeare Bulletin*

**Russ McDonald**, University of London, author of *Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*, and many other reference works

**Roslyn Knutson**, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, leading theatre historian



**Andrew Wade**, former head of voice, Royal Shakespeare Company

**Barbara Palmer**, retired, University of Mary Washington, theatre historian and president of REED-USA, Inc.

**Thomas Berger**, retired, St. Lawrence University, textual bibliographer and president of the Malone Society.

**The Performers Exchange Project**, a Charlottesville, Virginia-based international performance group.

**Genevieve Love**, Colorado College, rising star in Shakespeare studies and author of unique articles about early modern stage direction

**Megan McDonough** '04, head of education at Maryland Shakespeare Festival

**Stephen Urkowitz**, retired, City University of New York, leading textual scholar

The metaphor is overworn, but Staunton is truly becoming one of the premiere crossroads for scholars, teachers, and practitioners of Shakespeare and early English drama. Staunton is a legitimate addition to a short list of sites — London, Stratford, Washington DC — where conversation percolates about the issues of most pressing concern to those who perform and profess early English drama. And students in Mary Baldwin's MLitt/MFA program have the chance not just to listen to that conversation, but to contribute to it. It may not be long before Staunton, Virginia, is known to be *the* major crossroad — not just of Interstates 81 and 64 — but of scholarship and stagecraft.

— Dr. Paul Menzer

## Students Explore Shakespeare's Italian Inspiration

*How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.*

— Portia, *The Merchant of Venice*

Like his characters, Shakespeare borrowed from many countries for settings, characters, and themes in his works. This spring, Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen, Mary Baldwin College professor and American Shakespeare Center founding executive director, led 11 students on a three-week tour of Italy, a country featured in 13 of the Bard's plays. The class, aptly titled *Shakespeare in Italy*, included study of the development of art and architecture during the Italian Renaissance and Shakespeare's use of Italian locations.

Starting in Venice, the class backtracked through time, visiting Verona, then Florence (birthplace of the Renaissance), and ending in Rome, home of the eponymous Empire. Students were given access to some of the world's significant art collections. The Galleria

degli Uffizi in Florence, the Musei Vaticani in Vatican City, the Galleria Borghese in Rome, and the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice provided the artistic backdrop for a comprehensive study of Renaissance art.

Cohen also provided opportunities for students to educate each other. Each person gave a presentation about the architecture and historical significance of one building, the life and works of an artist, and the Italian (and/or Roman) sources of one of Shakespeare's plays. Each member of the class became an expert on an aspect of the Italian Renaissance. The ability to view and discuss famous works in the context originally intended by their artists was a highlight of the trip.

Photos and commentary from student participant Brett Gann can be viewed at <http://shakespeare-in-italy.weebly.com>.



PHOTO BY RALPH ALAN COHEN

*Note: At final count, members of the class, Shakespeare in Italy, consumed 373 scoops of gelato during their time in Italy!*

# Graduate Students Play Leading Role in Blackfriars Conference

By Justin Schneider

In a significant demonstration of the growth of the reputation of the MLitt/MFA program since it was initiated at Mary Baldwin College in 2001, students and alumnae/i represented the program and the college as scholars in their own right at the fourth Blackfriars Conference, sponsored by American Shakespeare Center (ASC) last fall. During the five-day conference, students, alumnae/i, and visiting scholars participated in paper sessions, lectures, workshops, and roundtables designed to deepen their understanding of the Bard and early modern theatre and literature.

Students participated in nearly every aspect of the Blackfriars Conference. Volunteers helped with registration, served as ushers for performances and other events, dressed as bears to perform timekeeping duties (*see sidebar*), and provided organizational assistance for ASC wherever possible.

MLitt/MFA students also proved themselves on stage at the conference. Student actors worked closely with scholars and members of the ASC resident troupe to add performance aspects to scholarly presentations. Attendees were also treated to two original productions by MFA students: *The Fortunate Exploits of Sir Ferdinando Gorgeous in the Land of Pentametria* by Patrick Bentley '08, and *Breakout Session: Disguise* by Cassandra Ash '08. Barbara Palmer, MLitt/MFA scholar-in-residence, led students in a dramatic reading to herald the creation of REED-USA, Inc, the MBC-based branch of the Records of Early English Drama (REED), which is headquartered at University of Toronto.

Scholarly presentations by MLitt students included a paper by Robert Jones '08, "*Comedy of Errors at Gray's Inn*," presented alongside his former professor James Loehlin, who is now at University of Texas, and Claire Baker Kimball '07, who presented "*Mnemonics of Stage Violence in Early Modern Drama*." Alumna Ann Pleiss Morris '05 gave a paper entitled "'I shall be hiss'd at, on my life now': Liminality and the Boy in Early Modern Inductions," and Jenna Steigerwalt '06 presented "*Second Person Pronouns in Staging Conventions in the Collaborative Work of Dr. Faustus*."

ASC honored Alan Dessen, the Peter G. Phialas professor of English at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ASC cited Dessen as "a model of the ways in which scholarship can speak to the practice of theatre and, as important, listen." The tribute included the use of early modern stage directions to moderate time limits for scholarly presentations: thunder sheets functioned as time warnings, and scholars who overstayed their time on stage were forced to "Exit, pursued by a bear." David Bevington served as keynote speaker for the conference. Other speakers of note included Stephen Greenblatt, Russ McDonald, Roslyn Knutson, and Tiffany Stern.

## 'Exit, Pursued by a Bear': Backstage at the Conference

By Justin Schneider

Kermit the Frog says "It's not easy being green." As it turns out, being brown isn't exactly a walk in the park. It's tough to be a bear. As if disappearing habitats and other ecological concerns were not enough, television pundit Stephen Colbert (*The Colbert Report*) verbally attacks bears on a daily basis. American Shakespeare Center (ASC), however, is committed to returning this noble creature to its rightful place in literary culture: pursuing actors and scholars from the Shakespearean stage.

As an eager volunteer during ASC's Blackfriars Conference, I may have spent more time backstage wearing a bear suit and holding a stopwatch than I did watching sessions. In spite of missing the presentation of interesting papers, I didn't feel left out for a minute. I was able to hear them ("to hear a play," and all). It was also an opportunity for paws-on experience with the nuts and bolts of running an academic conference, and a chance for me to interact with presenters on a personal (rather than academic) basis. Additionally, being able to chase and attack the same scholars whom I cite and quote on a daily basis was a unique experience. I highly recommend it as a means of recovering from writing academic papers.

Being a bear wasn't all fun and games. It required nerves of steel (or a thunder sheet), impeccable timing (or a stopwatch), and a bear suit. Luckily, I had all three. Unfortunately, that didn't keep my first chance to pursue a scholar from ending poorly. The presenter, Don Hedrick from Kansas State University, had clearly reached the end of his presentation. He was still talking, though, and all I could hear was something about London's South Bank. I could only assume that he wanted to "Exit, pursued by a bear." When he reached his time limit, I came out of the discovery space roaring ferociously. Any lesser scholar would have fled in fear. But Hedrick, a smile of triumph already on his face, simply allowed himself to be moved from the stage. It was an ambush. At that moment, a chain was thrown over my head and I found myself being dragged bodily backstage.

"Oh," I thought to myself. "So that's what he was discussing."

Bearbaiting.



# Playwright Makes a Fruitful Visit

By James Mainard O'Connell

American playwright Arlene Hutton visited Mary Baldwin College last November and employed an unconventional exercise to inspire students to think creatively.

Hutton's visit continued the MLitt/MFA program's tradition of hosting gifted professionals who enrich the educational experience at MBC. In the classroom at MBC, she led a series of brief activities aimed at sparking playwriting students' creativity. The most unusual and entertaining exercise to develop storytelling skills began with students choosing pieces of fruit that Hutton provided, such as a banana, two apples, and a handful of grapes. Students were asked to arrange the fruit on their desks in interesting ways. Participants took turns describing their arrangement and the stories that each grouping inspired.

Dr. Roger Hall, MBC adjunct playwriting instructor at MBC and James Madison University professor of theatre,



PHOTO BY BETH LINKS

Visiting playwright Arlene Hutton has received critical acclaim for her work, including an off-Broadway run of her play *Last Train to Nibroc*.

invited Hutton to work with his class and to present a public discussion of her experience with self-producing plays. Hutton's play *Last Train to Nibroc* has enjoyed more than 50 productions, including an off-Broadway stint in 1999 and recent revival at Orange Tree Theatre

in London. Her work *As It Is in Heaven* premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and has been performed to critical acclaim in New York and Los Angeles. Her latest endeavor is a collaborative work, *Letters to Sala*, based on Ann Kirschner's book *Sala's Gifts*.

# MLitt/MFA Students Rock First Sonnetpalooza at Blackfriars

By Justin Schneider

It might not have been a night of jam bands and raucous partying characteristic of Lollapalooza music festivals, but the MLitt/MFA program's first Sonnetpalooza was music to the ears of Shakespeare enthusiasts from Mary Baldwin and the surrounding area. The dramatic staged reading of all 154 of the Bard's sonnets held at the Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, attracted a wide range of viewers and presenters, including MLitt/MFA students and alumnae/i, MBC undergraduates, and American Shakespeare Center actors.

Sonnetpalooza was conceived and directed by first-year MLitt students Christine Schmidle and Dawn Tucker. While discussing possible program events over coffee, Schmidle suggested a sonnet recital, and the event blossomed. Envisioned as a performance of selected

sonnets, MLitt/MFA Director Dr. Paul Menzer encouraged the two students to expand the event to encompass all of Shakespeare's poems.

Organizing the performers was a daunting task. "The widened scope made it more challenging; getting enough voices and finding enough rehearsal time ... but I'm glad we did them all," Tucker said. Volunteers performed between one and five sonnets each, with performances ranging from straight readings to memorized recitals to scenes with multiple participants.

The evening also included a "Find the Fake Sonnet" contest. Proposed by Menzer and executed by student Sarah Klingbeil, the contest involved sneaking a non-Shakespearean sonnet into the event. A prize was offered to the person who could successfully identify the poem. Schmidle, a native German

speaker, presented an extra sonnet by Phillip Sidney after she read a Shakespearean sonnet in German. Most of the audience misidentified Schmidle's sonnet as a translation of the previous one, but Adrian Riskin, MBC professor of mathematics, recognized the imposter sonnet and author.

Sonnetpalooza provided Shakespeare lovers in Staunton the opportunity to be part of a unique performance experience. The event also showed that many people have a connection with specific sonnets. "Most people had at least one sonnet they wanted to read and some people knew all five that they would like to do," Tucker explained. Her favorite? "I'm particularly fond of 119."

"What potions have I drunk of Siren tears ..." that sonnet begins, perhaps a fitting reference to Lollapalooza after all?

# Getting Back to Basics with Original Renaissance Practices

By Cassandra Robertson

Original practices (OP) is more than a buzz phrase among Shakespeare scholars; it is a critical component of creating living history and a way to pay homage to the work of the Bard. A spring visit by Megan McDonough '04 of Maryland Shakespeare Festival, Dr. Genevieve Love of Colorado College, and Dr. Jeremy Lopez of University of Toronto gave students a closer look at original practices in practice.

The OP Forum, as it was named, began with the three guests speaking in American Shakespeare Center's (ASC) Blackfriars Playhouse about their experiences with original practices. Their real-life examples ranged from marketability to education to the definition of "use."

McDonough referenced her experience of persuading others to use original practices and how they enable her audiences to better connect to the hallowed Bard. Love, who was in

Staunton with a group of her students, explored how discussing original practices with students before seeing the current ASC season helped and hindered their understanding of exactly what the phrase means. Lopez presented a paper that examined the labor relations implied by the original practices formula, "using" actors in original staging contexts.

Following a question-and-answer session at the Playhouse, students and other audience members hiked to a candlelit room in the MBC Student Activities Center. To keep with the OP theme, Thadd McQuade, MBC adjunct instructor of English, set up boxes of candles on and over the stage. MBC's Early Modern Drama and Theatre History class, which spent several months preparing for the evening's production, presented four early modern stage selections. The first group presented the brazen head scene from the comedy *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* by Robert

Greene. Another group performed a dance from the end of John Grove's *Wine, Ale, Beere and Tobacco*, *Contending for Superiority*, followed by a "dumb show" from Shakespeare's *Lochrine*. Finally, the audience saw a demonstration of the stage direction [*flay him with a false skin*] from Thomas Preston's mid-16th-century play *Cambyses*.

The OP Forum was designed to present and question what scholars know about original practices. "The ASC has become the default home of original practices in America, so the forum was a chance to provoke conversation about the intellectual underpinnings as well as scholarly and pedagogical uses of OP. We all need to kick the tires now and then," said Dr. Paul Menzer, MLitt/MFA director. Menzer's goal for the forum was accomplished: The audience left the forum still thinking about some contradictory aspects of original practices.

# Actor's Renaissance Season Gives Intern a 'Run' for Her Money

By Eliza Hofman

Watching actors perform on the Blackfriars stage is great; being one of the performers it is better. January through March 2008, I had the opportunity to participate in the fast-paced, creatively challenging, and overwhelmingly fun Actor's Renaissance Season (ARS), also known as a Ren Season, at American Shakespeare Center (ASC). During the Renaissance Season, actors produce five shows with only about 40 hours of rehearsal each ... and without a director. They also find costumes and create their own props.

As expected, working with the ASC company provided a unique opportunity to put my study of original practices to use and to explore the creative process. The most interesting part of the experience involved developing confidence in my abilities and increasing my professionalism. The unique circumstances of the ARS helped these lessons come fast, and for that reason,

an internship with ASC is invaluable to an aspiring classical actor.

Finding my way as an intern at ASC was daunting at first. I felt welcomed by the artistic directors, but I did not know the cast. Most of them had worked together, so fitting into such a tight crowd of incredible talent was intimidating. One of the defining characteristics of the Ren Season is the short rehearsal period. On the first day of rehearsal, we had just a few moments of meet-and-greet before the read-through, and we got right down to rehearsing scenes that afternoon.

The acting company was comfortable with this process. As an intern, I felt a little lost. I didn't know my scene partners, how they worked, or what level of support I could expect. Lack of time exacerbated my nerves, because there was pressure to perform immediately. We also had to find our own props and costumes, and despite a brief tour, I didn't know exactly where to go for what I needed.

The challenging start turned out to be a blessing in disguise. As I quickly got to know my colleagues, I began to realize how capable I was of developing professional relationships that were reciprocally supportive. By solving staging problems, I learned that my fellow actors supported me to the degree to which I supported them. When I gave it my all, I received boundless energy and encouragement in return. I developed design creativity I didn't know I had by scurrying around to find costumes and props. Problem-solving ultimately improved my confidence and revealed what it means to be a professional.

The ARS internship provided me with an opportunity to cut to the chase. I learned what I was capable of in the moment without anyone holding my hand. What I received was the respect and admiration of an incredibly talented group of artists and professionals that will inspire me to work to my potential for years to come.

# Graduate Masters Shakespeare, Finds Real-World Applications

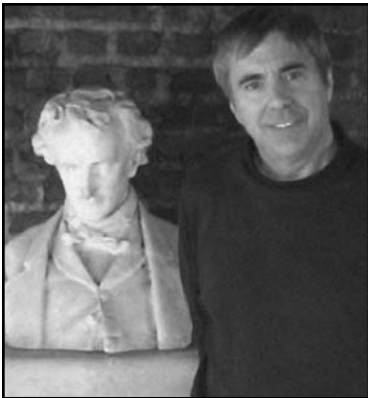


PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE BARTLEY

MLitt alumnus George Bartley '06 is discovering unexpected uses for his studies in the MBC master's degree program, including his work as a guide at Fallingwater, one of many homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Combining his work there and love of music, Bartley recently compiled a CD as an homage to the spirit of Wright's architectural masterpiece.

When George Bartley received his Master of Letters from Mary Baldwin College in 2006, he had no idea how useful it would prove. He entered the program with the intention of translating sections from all of Shakespeare's plays into American Sign Language for those who are deaf — an idea that later served as his final thesis project.

Bartley's path took an unexpected turn during stints as a tour guide at historical sites. He worked at Woodlawn Plantation — the mansion built by George Washington on the Mount Vernon property for Eleanor Lewis, Martha Washington's granddaughter — and the Frank Lloyd Wright Pope-Leighey House in Springfield, Virginia. In Richmond, George worked as a guide at the Edgar Allan Poe Museum.

It's no stretch that Bartley's background in Shakespeare was helpful at the Poe Museum, as Poe is frequently referred to as America's Shakespeare.

"It was just a short jump from being a Shakespeare nerd to a Poe nerd," Bartley said. He presents an audio podcast on the life, work, and influence of Poe at [www.celebratepoe.podbean.com](http://www.celebratepoe.podbean.com), which attracts many listeners in the United States, Sweden, and France. Bartley's interest in Poe and the influence of "just hanging around the Blackfriars' actors while interpreting plays for the deaf," led him to write a one-man show. *Celebrate Poe: A Visit from the Ghost of Edgar Allan Poe* has bookings at several venues, including the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh. The play keeps George on stage for almost 90 minutes, putting his MBC acting classes to work.

Bartley now works as a guide at Fallingwater, one of many homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. With its harmonious integration of nature and architecture, Fallingwater in western

Pennsylvania is a magnet that draws people from the world over — from architects and artists to movie stars such as Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, and Viggo Mortensen. Bartley recently gave his first tour for a group of deaf visitors.

As a direct result of the MLitt program's research emphasis, Bartley also became interested in studying music from selected historical periods. He has produced more than 30 CDs of historic and Christmas music, such as *Music of Eleanor's World*, inspired by his work at Woodlawn Plantation, and *Christmas with Edgar Allan Poe*. Bartley said he enjoys arranging and composing music on keyboards and designing artwork for the covers, but writing text for the CD inserts is what he finds most enjoyable.

Bartley created a DVD that was sparked by a multimedia project he created for the MLitt course Careers in the Professional Theatre. The DVD, *A Spotlight on Rhetoric*, also drew on Bartley's interest in rhetorical devices that developed as a result of classes with Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen. The DVD combines computer animation, thousands of graphics, original music, and vintage photographs to teach students how to use rhetorical devices for better communication.

"I am constantly amazed at the many directions my MLitt degree has taken me — areas that I wouldn't have considered before," Bartley said. "I advise students in the program to take advantage of the range of opportunities that come their way."

Bartley has followed his own advice. Since beginning work at Fallingwater this spring, he has compiled a new CD of music as an homage to the spirit of Wright's architectural masterpiece. The only moss growing under Bartley's feet today is that in the Youghiogheny River Valley in western Pennsylvania.

“[You] shall receive such  
thanks as befits  
A King’s remembrance.”

– Hamlet II.2

Mary Baldwin College has combined the academic and applied aspects of Shakespearean theatrical studies to offer a unique Master of Letters/Master of Fine Arts in Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature in Performance (MLitt/MFA) in partnership with the internationally acclaimed American Shakespeare Center and its authentically recreated Blackfriars Playhouse. This marriage of scholarship and stagecraft sets this program apart from other theatre graduate programs. Launched in fall 2001, the MLitt/MFA program attracts applicants from around the country and beyond. Please visit us at: [www.mbc.edu/shakespeare/mlitt](http://www.mbc.edu/shakespeare/mlitt).

Use the form below to contribute to the MLitt/MFA Scholarship Fund. Growing this fund will enable us to award more scholarships to qualified students. Thank you, in advance, for your support of our program’s educational goals.

CONTRIBUTOR

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## Donor Adds to Grafton Library’s Renaissance Collection

Dr. Elizabeth Johnston Lipscomb of Lynchburg, Virginia donated a collection of books to the Mary Baldwin MLitt/MFA program that includes a 1616 quarto for Ben Jonson’s tragedy *Catiline: His Conspiracy* and a 1639 quarto edition of a Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher play, *A King and No King*. These two authentic works will be housed in Mary Baldwin’s rare book room in Grafton Library, and other 16th- and 17th-century plays and theatrical resources donated by Lipscomb are in Rose Terrace.

Lipscomb inherited the collection from her father, G. Burke Johnston, a Ben Jonson scholar who taught for many years at Virginia Tech. Following in her father’s footsteps, Lipscomb became professor of English after receiving a BA from Sweet Briar College and a PhD from Harvard. She began teaching in the Mary Baldwin College English department and is now Catherine E. and William E. Thoresen Professor Emerita of English at Randolph College in Lynchburg. Lipscomb taught Renaissance English drama at Randolph College until her retirement. The program thanks her for her generosity.



UPCOMING EVENTS

## MFA DIRECTING PRODUCTION

MFA candidate Bob Jones  
November 2008  
Blackfriars Playhouse

## SPRING 2009 THESIS PROJECT FESTIVAL

February 15–17 and 22–24  
Blackfriars Playhouse  
Admission is free

Featuring 14 presentations by  
MLitt students and Lauren  
Mignogno's MFA directing  
production, *The Knight of the  
Burning Pestle* by Francis  
Beaumont

## MFA ACTING PRODUCTION

April 12, 13, 20, and 21  
(Shakespeare's birthday week  
at the Blackfriars: April 19–25)  
Blackfriars Playhouse

Program will include Johnny  
Adkins' MFA directing  
production



### MASTER OF LETTERS/MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN SHAKESPEARE AND RENAISSANCE LITERATURE IN PERFORMANCE

AT MARY BALDWIN COLLEGE IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH THE AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER

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# “...Where have YOU been gadding?”

**Megan Dzaack Bayonet** '08 is working at Mary Baldwin College as interlibrary loan coordinator. She is also revising her MLitt thesis to submit for publication.

**Andrew Blasenak** '08 is performing as Dr. Caius and Corporal Nym in Maryland Shakespeare Festival's production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Later this summer, he will jaunt to Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp to teach voice and Shakespeare before matriculating this fall at Ohio State University to pursue a PhD in theatre history, literature, and criticism.

**Rick Blunt** '06 returned to Staunton to work in ASC's Stark Raving Sane tour. Rick will play Rosencrantz in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and in *Hamlet*, plus Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*.

**Francis Boyle** '07 and **Angela Boyle** '07 live in Cincinnati where Angie teaches reading, writing, study skills, and standardized test prep at Huntington Learning Center. She is also Huntington's marketing coordinator, honing her skills to one day market the couple's own theatre company. While applying for college teaching opportunities, Francis is teaching beginning drama for Children's Performing Arts of Lakota. His class recently presented an improvisation version of *The Wizard of Oz*. Francis wrote two plays, including a mystery, *Treason at the Globe*, which was inspired by his MLitt thesis, and recently competed in the International Mystery Writers Festival in Owensboro, Kentucky. He is developing two additional plays, and he tutors English and essay writing online.

The Boyles are in the early stages of forming a theatre company in Warren County, Ohio. The company's mission is to make live theatre part of everyday life, rather than an expensive special event. They are developing Shakespeare courses and workshops for a variety of age and experience levels. Angela works on shaving time and lines from Shakespeare's plays for educational touring productions in a practice they refer to as "cut and paced."

**Cathy Brookshire** '04 finished a productive year teaching acting classes at University of South Carolina (USC). She also taught

unarmed stage combat and wrote and directed two productions for young audiences: *Molly Whuppie: An Irish Folk Tale* and *At the Water's Edge*. This summer, Brookshire is teaching stage combat for USC Opera Camp and is coaching its production of *Brundibar*. In August, she will direct *In the Beginning*, a new play commissioned by the university to be performed for more than 3,000 freshmen in the fall and tentatively set to tour the state in 2009. Brookshire is the new merchandising chair for the Society of American Fight Directors; she looked forward to seeing MBC folks this summer at the National Stage Combat workshop in Winston-Salem in July.

**Alexander Carney** '06 continues to teach theatre for Baltimore Public Schools. His recent professional projects include *The Who's Tommy* for Winters Lane Productions and *Finding Fossils* by Ty DeMartino at Fells Point Corner Theater. His production of *Angels in America, Part II: Perestroika* won *Broadwayworld.com* Best Drama in Baltimore for 2007. Upcoming projects include *Sweeney Todd: the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* at Spotlighter's Theater in Baltimore (January 2009). After the 2008-09 academic year, Alex will move to Harrisonburg to live with the love of his life.

**Mary Coy** '07 led a Shakespeare exploration with 150 Nelson County Middle School students for the sixth consecutive year. Lessons focused on *King Lear*. Coy and her partner at the school, Betty Tabony, edited a young people's edition of *King Lear* to be published by Swan Books. *Moving Voice*, the 2008 journal of the Voice and Speech Teacher's Association, will include an article by Coy about an acting exercise she developed while a graduate student at MBC. The exercise involves the exploration of punctuation of Shakespeare's plays in quarto and folio formats.

**Evan Crump** '05 has worked as an actor in the Washington DC area for the past year and a half, including with Maryland Shakespeare Festival, Washington Shakespeare Company, and American Century Theater. He was recently welcomed as adjunct professor of theater at Bowie State University.

**Jeremy Fiebig** '07 concluded his first year as tenure-track faculty in the department of theatre at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa. This year, Fiebig directed *Twelfth Night* using original staging practices. He co-designed a Shakespeare minor at Waldorf with history and English faculty. He finished the year with a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* presented by a class of students who cut, cast, and directed the play, and performed it outdoors. This summer, Fiebig plays Richard in *Richard III* and Jaques in *As You Like It* for 2007 MBC graduate Katherine Mayberry's Pigeon Creek Shakespeare company in Michigan.

**Sarah Henley's** son, Arden Michael Henley, arrived April 16. Henley '06 returned to her position as education programs manager at ASC, and she taught Introduction to Theatre at James Madison University in 2007-08.

**Brandon Ketchum** '06 works with troubled youth for the State of Pennsylvania. Ketchum hopes his new job will give him time to act part time and keep his skills in tune. Ketchum continues to write, primarily sonnets and a novel, and he finished a blank-verse, iambic pentameter version of *Richard I* about a year ago.

**Lesley Larsen** '07 worked in the ASC resident troupe in summer 2007 and fall 2008. She played Emilia/Dion/Dorcas in *The Winter's Tale* and Maria in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Last winter, she taught Introduction to Theatre at James Madison University (JMU). This summer, she is working at ASC as an education artist and is an understudy for its resident troupe for the summer/fall season. She will continue to teach at JMU in the fall.

**Ann Pleiss Morris** '05 passed comprehensive exams for her doctorate in English literature at University of Iowa. Her not-so-surprising specialization is in Renaissance drama. This summer, Morris will work on her dissertation prospectus and serve as adjunct instructor at Mount Mercy College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Jason Narvy** '05 is a PhD candidate at University of California, Santa Barbara. He

taught an advanced acting class for their theatre department, Original Elizabethan Stage Practices and Modern Stanislavsky Technique, as well as Shakespearean Verse Through Performance at the College of Creative Studies. Narvy created a Shakespeare in the Park series for the college community and directed *Julius Caesar* at the venue in March and *Twelfth Night* in June.

**John Shirley** '06 completed his first year teaching English, theatre, and directing for the theatre program at Saint Francis High School in Louisville, Kentucky. During the year, his one-act play *The First Chapter: Coming to Jamestown*, co-authored with former MBC theatre professor Todd Ristau, was performed in schools throughout Virginia. Shirley was honored this year to assist MLitt student Anna Gonzalez in reconstructing Philip Massinger's *Believe as You List* for her thesis project. This summer, John is teaching courses in Shakespeare and writing for performance at West Virginia Governor's Honors Academy.

**Colleen Sullivan** '04 completed her first year in Sarah Lawrence College's MFA theatre program in New York. The year was grueling, but in a great way: Students complete six to eight classes each semester along with production work. Sullivan directed original plays, began devising a new piece, and directed Shakespeare. She and a fellow grad student started an all-male Shakespeare company — a first for Sarah Lawrence. Sullivan directed its inaugural production of *Hamlet*. Her summer includes travel to Spoleto, Italy, to participate in La MaMa's International Director's Symposium and work with another graduate student to take his new play to living rooms in Manhattan.

**Corey Vincent** '07 is teaching at Blue Ridge Community College and directing a session of ASC's Young Company Theatre Camp this summer. Vincent's wedding is planned for August, after which she will move to northern Virginia to work as ballet mistress at Amyclae Dance Academy in Stafford. She plans to choreograph a *Faustus* ballet and to write a grant to start a Shakespeare program for underprivileged children.

# “...Where have YOU been gadding?”

**Raven Clafin**, MLitt student, works at The Dixie Theater in Staunton and is fulfilling his dramaturgy internship for the ASC Actors' Renaissance season. He is also assisting participants in ASC's summer session Shakespeare's Blackfriars: The Study, The Stage, and The Classroom, five-week workshop for college educators funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

MFA student **Elissa Dubinsky** is working on a double-barreled dramaturgy internship for both *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at ASC.

**Sarah Enloe**, winner of the MLitt/MFA Ariel Award, is in

Staunton to expand her work with ASC to include project management for the city's Globe Theatre project and higher education initiatives. She is also administering the grant from the NEH for ASC's summer institute. In the fall, Enloe will teach Introduction to Theatre at James Madison University's School of Theatre and Dance.

MLitt student **Eliza Hofman** will play Juliet in *Measure for Measure* with ASC this summer and, like Clafin, she is an intern for the Center's NEH Institute.

**Sara Landis**, MLitt student, serves as an understudy to Goneril in ASC's production of *King Lear* and to Mariana and Froth in *Measure for Measure* this summer.

**Lauren Mignogno**, MLitt student, is house manager at The Dixie Theater in Staunton and serves as assistant manager of the University Wits' touring show *The Tempest* this summer. Mignogno is taking a summer combat class at MBC and working as a tour guide at Blackfriars Playhouse.

MLitt student **Chelsea Phillips'** summer internship at ASC includes creating an interactive online text of and dramaturgy packet for *Hamlet*, which will be sent ahead to tour locations for next year's touring troupe. She is also touring with the University Wits' *The Tempest* and preparing to apply for PhD programs.

MLitt student **Victoria Reinsel** is busy playing Caliban, Ferdinand,

and Antonio in the University Wits' summer tour of *The Tempest*, taking a summer rapier and dagger combat class at MBC, working full-time for a Staunton food supplier, and doing research for her MLitt thesis.

**Lauren Shell**, MLitt student, is working as an apprentice troupe member at ASC, understudying Regan in *King Lear* and Maria in *Twelfth Night*. She's also a teaching assistant for the rapier and dagger summer combat class at MBC. Shell is also performing in Golden Duck Productions' summer tour, playing Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* and the Momma and the Bat in *Little Red Riding Hood*. Tae Kwon Do and horseback riding lessons also fit into her summer plans.

## You know you're a Shakespeare geek when ...



Anna Northam '06 displays her Shakesporean body art.

- # 10 Your license plate reads, "1564WS." (Nancy Garlick, MLitt/MFA visiting professor)
- # 9 You have a Shakespeare-related tattoo ... or two: Lauren Mignogno (MLitt '08) and Lauren Shell (MLitt '08) sport decorative early modern printers' devices. Meat's (Mignogno) is on her forearm and Cupcake's (Shell) is on her back. Johnny Adkins (MLitt '08) has three lines from *The Taming of the Shrew* tattooed on his forearm: *sit by my side / and let the world slip by/we shall ne'er be younger*. Corey Vincent (MFA '07) displays, *my bounty is as boundless as the sea/my love as deep the more i give to thee/the more i have for both are infinite* from *Romeo and Juliet* on her wrist, and a reproduction of a 1598 woodcut scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on her shoulder. MBC Adjunct Instructor of Theatre Anna Northam '06 has a quote from *Hamlet*, Act V tattooed on her ankle: *the readinesse is all*, pictured at left.
- # 8 You consider getting a Shakespeare-themed tattoo, just so you can make this geek list. (Justin Schneider)
- # 7 You get *Henslowe's Diary* for Christmas and proceed to explain to your family why it's so cool. (Cassie Robertson)
- # 6 When people ask if you've met any celebrities you answer, "Yes, Tiffany Stern." (Cassie Robertson)
- # 5 You have Stephen Greenblatt sign your *Norton [Anthology]* and it becomes your most prized possession. (Cassie Robertson)
- # 4 You have debates about who is the most "emo" (emotional) early modern character. The debate finally rests between Shakespeare's Hamlet and Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's Aspatia from *A Maid's Tragedy*. (Chelsea Phillips)
- # 3 You're willing to drive three hours to spend 15 minutes in the vault at Folger Shakespeare Library. (Cassie Robertson)
- # 2 You are more upset when people misspell Shakespeare's name than when they misspell yours. (Justin Schneider)
- # 1 When people misspell Shakespeare, you don't mind because you know he couldn't spell his name either. (Cassie Robertson)