



Shakespeare and Performance Launches New MFA Model

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Ralph Alan Cohen didn't have enough to do in 2001, so he started a graduate program in Shakespeare and Performance. The Master of Letters/Master of Fine

Arts (MLitt/MFA) program that Ralph launched with founding director Frank Southerington opened its doors for business in September of that year and so, along with the Blackfriars Playhouse, will celebrate its 10th "birthday" in fall 2011. Just like the Blackfriars, the graduate program has changed mightily in the past decade, growing in numbers, altering its name, and adjusting its emphasis. From a charter class of seven students the program has grown to a robust cohort of more than 50. From Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature in Performance, the program has winnowed its identity to Shakespeare and Performance (SAP). And from a program of segregated concentrations — acting, teaching, directing, and dramaturgy — the program is moving to forge these core competencies into a synthesized sequence of integrated concerns.

The launch of Shakespeare and Performance as a new MFA model in spring 2012 will be therefore a fitting way to mark the program's first decade of existence, a decade marked by innovation, investigation, and constant, creative change.

The redesigned MFA takes as its inspiration the same innovative combination of scholarship and stagecraft that informed the inception of the MLitt/MFA 10 years ago. The new MFA is equally inspired by the theatrical culture of early modern England. Indeed, it seeks to explore the drama of the English Renaissance through an immersive, experiential, rigorous curriculum with the

"Company" at its center, a pedagogical model based upon the personnel arrangements of early modern playing. While the details of the redesigned MFA continue to emerge, several core principles have guided — and continue to guide — our work as we hammer the new model into shape:

- The Shakespeare and Performance program is fiercely committed to a *collaborative model of theatre making*. Collaboration is at the heart of the intellectual and creative life of the greater Staunton community, and the new MFA experience enhances opportunities for student work founded upon collaborative play making. The new MFA seeks to produce, above all, theatre makers working in a cooperative, laterally integrated model of distributed decision-making.
- SAP is also programmatically committed to *creative research* into the plays and playing culture of the early modern period. That means research into and

productions of canonical, hypercanonical, arcane, or even obscure works from that time. Such is the institutional commitment to that material that we are developing a company-based methodology, an ethic of company work allegiant to the historical models at the center of our scholarly endeavors.

- The new MFA will present students with *demanding but enabling challenges*, challenges that combine pressure with support — for it is in the space between pressure and support that the best learning happens.

Ultimately, the new MFA is not a departure from but an embrace of the founding spirit of both the Blackfriars and the MLitt/MFA program — a spirit that looks to rigorous scholarly research into the past to inspire a new generation of plays, players, and playmaking. In these terms, the development of the new MFA is a large step towards becoming who we already are.



PHOTO BY WOODS PIERCE

Shakespeare and Performance graduates take their seats at Mary Baldwin College's Commencement ceremony May 22. The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) is the highest degree awarded by the college, giving those graduates coveted seats at the front of the student section to take in a view of the hillside blanketed with friends and family. MFA candidates are "hooded" at the podium, while Master of Letters students wear their hoods to the ceremony with the rest of their academic regalia.

The ASC@ASC: A Semester of Actor-Scholar Councils

By Liz Lodato

The Actors' Renaissance Season, which runs each year from January through early March, is a unique and wonderful time at American Shakespeare Center (ASC). Just one of many special features of this season is the ASC@ASC, or the Actor-Scholar Council at American Shakespeare Center. The Ren Season, as it is known, yielded five podcasts, each one focusing on the most recent show. In a one-of-a-kind melding of scholarship and stagecraft, ASC actors met with current and prospective Mary Baldwin graduate students to discuss the ins and outs of each show and the processes of the Ren Season.

The podcast sessions — facilitated by ASC's education department and faculty members in MBC's Shakespeare and Performance program — were insightful, entertaining, and helpful for scholars and actors alike. Topics ranged from specific characters, to the history and language of the plays, to moments of particularly difficult staging. The meetings

served to further uncover how much work goes into this special season, given not only the abbreviated rehearsal schedule, but also the difficulties encountered by the absence of a formal director.

One of the greatest challenges of the Ren Season is staging large ensemble scenes in which all of the actors must appear onstage simultaneously, leaving no one to function as an "outside eye." Other interesting challenges included actors' unfamiliarity with and the disguise conceits within *Look About You*; the huge technical demands of *3 Henry VI*; and what exactly Harry Dampit, played by Tyler Moss, was doing in *A Trick to Catch the Old One*.

The ASC@ASC provided an opportunity for company actors to share anecdotes from the season and to advise students, as well as for scholars to answer questions from the actors about history and text. This meeting of minds was a special ingredient that made the 2011 Actors' Renaissance Season delightful. **To listen to the podcasts, visit <http://americanshakespearecenter.blogspot.com>.**

Stuart Hall Connection Imparts Valuable Lessons

By Rachel Gabel

The dynamic collaboration between Mary Baldwin's Shakespeare and Performance program and Stuart Hall School — a private K–12 school just blocks from campus — was showcased during the 2010–11 academic year. Faculty members Paul Menzer and Matt Davies collaborated with Brett Sullivan Santry '11, head of the theatre program at Stuart Hall, on a document that detailed opportunities for Shakespeare and Performance (SAP) students. Santry later interviewed a number of graduate students as candidates for positions as guest directors and guest teachers.

As a result, Stuart Hall and SAP collaborated on productions of *The Adventures of the Blue Carbuncle*, *Macbeth*, and *Our Town*, directed by graduate students Edward Sheehan, Zachary Brown, and Tony Tambasco, respectively. In addition, Master of Letters candidate Riley Steiner led Stuart Hall's upper-level Acting Studio class through a series of exercises designed by her former acting teacher, Uta Hagen.

The partnership allows Shakespeare and Performance students to expand their résumés through valuable experience in the theatre practice and teaching — and to earn course credit along the way. This author spent spring 2011 as a guest artist in Stuart Hall's Introduction to Acting Class, working on mounting *Our Town*. It was a joy walking into that classroom every day and working with a group of kids who were talented and passionate about what they were doing.

The collaboration also reinforces the idea that Staunton's theatre community

extends through many walls, institutions, age groups, and levels of experience. Stuart Hall students look forward to seeing SAP students in future productions, attending project performances by Master of Fine Arts candidates, and even having chance encounters in downtown Staunton. We are part of

a community, and the more we can contribute, the stronger we will be as a program and as a theatrical community. Next year, as SAP students return to King Theatre at Stuart Hall, the interaction will enhance education for grade school and graduate students alike.



Robust Relationship

Brett Sullivan Santry '11 (pictured, top left, with Stuart Hall students in a production of *Our Town*) joined the faculty at Stuart Hall four years ago while working on his MLitt degree at MBC, reigniting a spark for joint projects between the schools:

- Kris Ayers '07 produced two Christopher Durang one-acts during her final semester in the Shakespeare and Performance program.
- Other productions: *As You Like It* (directed by Johnny Adkins), *Othello* (directed by Casey Caldwell), and *Coriolanus* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (directed by Edward Sheehan).
- Dramaturgy: Cassie Ash '08 on *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*
- Costume design: Anna Gonzales '09 on *The Belle of Amherst*
- Set building: Maxim Overton on *Macbeth*

To learn more about the theatre program at Stuart Hall School, please visit: www.stuart-hall.org or contact Brett Sullivan Santry at BSantry@stuart-hall.org.

Oregon 'Trail' Brings Festival Scholars to Staunton

By Tony Tambasco

Staunton played host to two members of Oregon Shakespeare Festival's (OSF) literary department in fall 2010: Lue Douthit, OSF director of literary development and dramaturgy, and Alan Armstrong, dramaturg for the Festival's 2011 production of *Henry IV, Part 2* and several previous productions. Douthit and Armstrong collaborated with American Shakespeare Center's John Harrell to present a forum for students on cutting early modern texts for the modern stage. During the forum, called The Kindest Cut, Douthit explained that the answer to questions such as "if, what, and how much" to cut is the answer typical to most questions asked in theatre: "it depends."

Both Armstrong and Douthit seem to agree that the preparation — and not just the cutting — of a text is variable and dependent on

several factors: the performance space, the actors available to perform, and sometimes something as seemingly irrelevant as the amount of dressing room space available. The overarching lesson was that aspiring dramaturgs would do well to remember that they are preparing a text for a moment and not for all time.

In addition to participating in the forum, Armstrong taught Dramaturgy as a guest professor in fall 2010. Due to a shortened timeframe, the class had the feel of an intensive workshop, but the immediacy of Armstrong's project with Oregon Shakespeare Festival gave the course special purpose. To the delight of all in the class, Armstrong drew on the talents of Shakespeare and Performance graduate students to help with his research for OSF's upcoming *Henry IV, Part 2*.



Douthit



Armstrong

PHOTOS BY JENNY GRAHAM, OSF

Armstrong asked students to prepare glosses of text, write program notes, and create maps, preparing them for the tasks that may be asked of them as dramaturgs.

The scholars' stays in Staunton were brief, but student Asae Dean is already taking advantage of this OSF connection: she joined the company as assistant director this summer, and will (we hope) tell us a bit about her experiences in the next issue of *The Folio*.



Interested in learning more about what was discussed during The Kindest Cut? Read an entry in Tony Tambasco's online research journal: <http://merryfringe.blogspot.com/2010/11/notes-from-kindest-cut-forum.html>

Combat Takes Center Stage in a Winter Wonderland

By Michael Allen Hollinger

The Winter Wonderland Workshop — the largest regional stage combat training event in the United States — has attracted students, teachers, and professional fight directors from across the nation for 16 years. Sanctioned by both the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD) and the British Academy of Stage and Screen Combat, this event offers practical classes suitable for every level of stage combatant, as well as lectures, panels, and performances. I was one of four Shakespeare and Performance students who had the pleasure of attending the 2011 workshop. Brian Falbo, Jessi Malicki, Jamie Weaver, and I traveled to St. Charles, Illinois, to hone our skills as stage fighters and improve our performances in original-practices-style productions.

Among the classes offered were *When Words Fail*, led by Michael Anderson, which taught new ways of performing conventional moves and Short-Form Long-Form Quick Stick Quarterstaff, taught by Stephen Anderson, which focused on techniques at the beginner and intermediate level. Another instructor, Craig Lawrence, taught *Shield*, a course

inspired by the aggressive shield technique of comic superhero Captain America, and Neil Massey led *Psychology of Killing*, which drew from Dave Grossman's book, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*.

One of the many highlights was the presence of two of the founding members of SAFD, maestros David Boushey and Erik Fredricksen. Boushey taught a two-part class, *Unarmed Fighting for Film*, which gave actors an understanding of the differences between film fighting and stage fighting. Film fighting — more often than not — has a much tighter playing space than than combat on the stage, and requires its combatants to be aware of the camera at all times. If a student stepped out of frame, Boushey took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of heightened awareness in this style of combat.

Aside from purely educational opportunities, participants enjoyed evening performances and had ample opportunities to stock up on weaponry. On the first night, vendors set up displays in the New Orleans Ballroom, offering merchandise at discounted prices. On the following evening, participants were treated to a highly anticipated performance of

Dirk and Guido: The Swordsmen!, an award-winning display of interactive swordplay. Two master swordsmen, Dirk Perfect and Guido Crescendo (played by renowned teachers Doug Mumaw and David Woolley), teach honor and the art of chivalry in this Renaissance-style comedy, performed with universal lighting.

Studying early modern drama does not only entail researching and speaking at conferences; just as important are the performative elements indicated within the text. One such element is stage combat, and for those of us who had the honor of seeing a performance workshop of such high caliber, it was a rush, both physically and intellectually. I am thankful to the program for helping fund our trip, and I advise all — whether actor, director, or dramaturg — to take advantage of similar opportunities in the future.

Love's Labours Found: MFA Projects Reflect Scholarship, Stagecraft

By Monica Tedder and Glenn Schudel

Mary Baldwin College's Master of Fine Arts (MFA) students explored many avenues of early modern staging during the 2010–11 academic year. The group's performances included obscure early modern plays (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, and *The Maid's Tragedy*), a modern adaptation of a Shakespearean play (*Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief*), a couple of Shakespeare's more famous plays (*The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet*), and one rarely performed play from The Bard (*Timon of Athens*). In every case, students left their audiences not only with things to ponder as they exited the theater, but also with a renewed appreciation of early modern and Shakespearean drama.

Dramaturgy candidate Rachel Kohler presented the anonymous *The Misfortunes of Arthur* through a process similar to American Shakespeare Center's Actors' Renaissance Season. With no formal director, Kohler provided her actors with detailed dramaturgical information about the history and relationships of the characters and interpreta-

tions of the five esoteric dumb shows prescribed by the text. She asked her actors to make all of the decisions about the production — from choosing costumes to blocking the show to finding props. Her goal was to see the impact of dramaturgical information on a Renaissance-style production of a show as little-known as *Arthur*. The resulting production was fast-paced and quite clear, despite the audience's unfamiliarity with the story and some conspicuous rhetorical quirks in the play's language.

Kohler's cast included Rin Barton, Brian Falbo, Andrea Kelley, Liz Lodato, Jocelynn Joy Murphy, Elizabeth Rentfro, Dan Stott, and Daniel Trombley. Joy Walker served as prompter and Monica Tedder was costume assistant.

MFA candidate Casey Caldwell staged Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, an entertaining city comedy that tells the story of a young man who avoids his duty and disguises himself as a shoemaker's apprentice to secure his marriage to the woman he loves. His father tries desperately to prevent the match, and the shoemaker becomes mayor of London. To set the scene, the delightful performance started out

with good old-fashioned shoe shining provided by the actors for audience members. The cast included Johnny Adkins, Katie Crandol, Brian Falbo, Bob Jones '10, Andrea Kelley, Amanda Devlin-Knowlton, Jay Knowlton '06, Linden Kueck, Cass Morris, Katy Mulvaney, Maxim Overton, Brett Sullivan Santry, Shannon Schultz, and Melissa Tolner. Asae Dean served as stage manager, and Morris and Devlin-Knowlton coordinated costumes, music, and props.

MFA candidates Sarah Chang, Katie Crandol, Amanda Devlin-Knowlton, and Andrea Kelley took part in an unconventional production of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Helmed by Rob Clare, noted director and friend of the Shakespeare and Performance (SAP) program and American Shakespeare Center (ASC), the performance featured the four women sharing the role of Kate. They divided her lines and often observed or interacted with their fellow Kates to highlight different aspects of the character's nature. The Kates were joined by supporting cast members Johnny Adkins, Zach Brown, Bobby Byers, Jeff Chips, Michael Allen Hollinger, Kim Maurice, Thadd McQuade, Katy Mulvaney, Maxim Overton, Paul Rycik, Melissa Tolner, Daniel Trombley, and Jamie Weaver. Shannon Schultz served as assistant director, and Asae Dean as stage manager, while Hollinger coordinated music and Monica Tedder costumed the show. Colleen Kelly, SAP faculty member and ASC director of training, choreographed the dances and the fights.

MFA candidates Bonnie Morrison (as Desdemona) and Laurie Riffe (as Bianca) were joined by second-year student Amanda Noel Allen in Paula Vogel's *Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief*. The modern adaptation of *Othello* focuses on the female relationships of Shakespeare's play, especially the class issues that divide them and the influence wielded by the



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(top) Dan Stott in his role as King Arthur in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. (bottom) The four women sharing the role of Kate (left to right: Katie Crandol, Amanda Devlin-Knowlton, Andrea Kelley, and Sarah Chang) express their frustration during *The Taming of the Shrew*.



(clockwise from top left) Bonnie Morrison, as Desdemona, and Laurie Riffe, as Bianca, discuss the tricks of their trade in *Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief*. Lady Capulet (Jeff Chips) mourns the dead Tybalt (Brian Falbo) in Shannon Schultz' all-male production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Johnny Adkins, left, as Amintor, asks his bride, Evadne, played by Amanda Noel Allen, for a dance in his final thesis performance of *The Maid's Tragedy*. Railing against humanity is Brett Sullivan Santry as Timon in Edward Sheehan's directorial project, *Timon of Athens*.



much-discussed but never-seen men in their lives. The production was directed by Mary Coy '06, who was assisted by Katy Mulvaney. Danielle Guy stage managed and Maxim Overton served as technical director. ASC actor Benjamin Curns choreographed the play's violence.

Shannon Schultz presented her final MFA directing project, an all-male production of *Romeo and Juliet*. In doing so, she examined Shakespeare's use of boys to play women and how that casting affects modern performances of the play. Her cut of the script left in a few scenes that rarely make it into modern performances, such as the second chorus at the beginning of the second act and the musicians' scene from the end of Act IV, while cutting the Queen Mab speech to only a few lines. These editorial choices forced even the audience members most familiar with the play to listen to every word as if for the first time, creating a rejuvenated take on the well-known play. Schultz's cast included Johnny Adkins, Zach Brown, Bobby Byers, Jeff Chips, Brian Falbo, Michael Allen Hollinger, Jay Knowlton '06, Paul Rycik, Glenn Schudel, A.J. Sclafani, and Michael Wagoner. Katie Crandol and Angelina LaBarre served as assistant director and stage manager, respectively. J.P. Scheidler choreographed the fights and Justin Schneider '10 provided dramaturgical research.

Master of Fine Arts candidate Edward Sheehan directed *Timon of Athens*, mixing a fair amount of comedy into the rather cynical tragedy. The play — which many critics argue is impossible to stage — came to life as the title character, played by Mary Baldwin graduate Brett Sullivan Santry '11, threw off his bathrobe and began pulling at his hair. During the first half of the play, audience members

were encouraged to sit on stools on the stage, a common occurrence at Blackfriars Playhouse. At intermission, the stools were struck, leaving Timon truly alone for much of the second half. The cast included David Ashton, Will Campbell, Robby Cantrell, Jeff Chips, Brian Falbo, Jessi Malicki, Valerie McQueen, Bonnie Morrison, David Santangelo, and Melissa Tolner. Amy Bolis stage managed the production, Glenn Schudel served as dramaturg and McQueen directed the musical performances.

Johnny Adkins, MFA acting candidate, worked with second-year directing student Asae Dean to choose the script for his thesis performance. They decided on Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*. According to Dean, they chose the script because they wanted "a text rich in terms of character journeys and staging spectacle." That, and more, is provided by the play's knotty, overlapping love triangles, inset masque, and the bedroom assassination of a monarch. Dean also said that the play "reveals rather than reifies a lot of ugly notions about female sexuality." To highlight the play's arguably progressive take on gender, Dean used cross-gender casting to great effect, choosing a cast that was almost entirely female. Adkins, as Amintor, was joined onstage by Amanda Noel Allen, Bobby Byers, Katie Crandol, Rachel Gabel, Maria Hart, Linden Kueck, Kimberly Lenz, Kim Maurice, Cass Morris, Bonnie Morrison, Elizabeth Rentfro, Shannon Schultz, and Stephanie Tschetter. Angelina LaBarre served as assistant director and Michael Wagoner as stage manager. Fights and dances were choreographed by Benjamin Curns and Lindsey Waters, respectively.

“...Where have *you* been gadding?”

Cassie Ash '08 is pursuing a PhD in English at the Shakespeare Institute of University of Birmingham in Stratford-upon-Avon. Her study is fully funded by a College of Arts and Law scholarship from the university. Ash's doctoral thesis is a modern edition of the unattributed Admiral's Men play *Look About You*, first printed in 1600. She also recently performed in a three-person *Macbeth* directed by former Shakespeare and Performance faculty member Jaq Bessell.

Erin Baird '10 will be teaching creative drama and theatre education at Fresno Pacific University in fall 2011, equipping future teachers and community leaders with drama and storytelling skills to use both in the classroom and in other contexts. In June 2012, with two semesters of university teaching behind her, Erin will have a California teaching credential that will open up new opportunities.

Megan Bayonet '07 works as custom sewing supervisor for Yves Delorme, Inc. while developing her own knitting design business. Bayonet's designs have recently been published in *Interweave Knits* and she is working on custom designs for a yarn manufacturer in Charlottesville, Virginia. She lives in Waynesboro with her lovely two-year-old daughter, Emma, and husband, Chris.

Andrew Blasenak '08 passed his comprehensive exams, completing a big step toward his PhD at Ohio State University (OSU). Meanwhile, Andrew worked as assistant director and fight choreographer for the OSU production of *Othello* directed by Alison Bomber, senior text and voice coach for Royal Shakespeare Company. He married Chelsea Phillips '09 in March 2011 onstage at Blackfriars Playhouse.

Rick Blunt '06 appeared onstage in American Shakespeare Center's 2010–11 Restless Ecstasy Tour, playing Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, and Lucio in *Measure for Measure*. Rick also plans to collaborate with fellow graduate

Rob Gibbs '06 for the next round of his one man show. Rick will be back with ASC for the 2011–12 Almost Blasphemy Tour, playing Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Clown in *The Winter's Tale*, and Bergetto in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*.

Cathy Brookshire '04 is instructor of speech, communication, and rhetoric in the English department at University of South Carolina (USC). She and colleague Dr. Hunter Gardner are recipients of a USC Principle Investigator Research Award as well as a major grant from the South Carolina Humanities Council for their documentary project, *Always Coming Home: South Carolina Women Veterans Speak Out*. The 30-minute film received its initial screening in March 2011 at the USC Comparative Literature NOSTOS conference *War, The Odyssey, and Narratives of Return*. While on sabbatical at New York University in fall 2011, Brookshire plans to begin work on a play based on the interviews conducted for that film.

Mary Coy '06 had a fulfilling year in 2010, beginning with teaching voice and coaching

Shakespeare projects in the graduate program at NYU Tisch School of the Arts. In the fall, she taught acting and voice at University of Maryland, College Park. In the spring, she directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (featuring MBC grad student Daniel Trombley) for Nelson County Shakespeare Festival, which she founded to experiment with all she learned as an MBC student. She also had the huge pleasure of directing Shakespeare and Performance student actors Bonnie Morrison, Laurie Riffe, and Amanda Noel Allen in the MFA showcase *Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief*. This year will also mark her ninth year teaching Shakespeare to sixth-graders in Nelson County (*As You Like It*) and her third North Carolina Shakespeare Festival project, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which she will actor-manage while playing Mistress Page. Her private Linklater teaching practice continues and, happily, includes many MBC students.

Noah Jones '08 is Court Square Theater Manager in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and he continues to run Clever by Half Productions, a small professional theatre troupe in Staunton.



Clever by Half produced *Much Ado About Nothing* to coincide with Valentine's Day, starring MBC graduates Christina Scott Sayer Grey '08 and Bob Jones '10. Sarah Lewis Klingbeil '11 directed.

Becky Kemper '07 left Maryland Shakespeare Festival after 11 years as founding artistic director to become outreach director for San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Recent projects include the publication of her article, "A Clown in a Dark House: Reclaiming the Humor in Malvolio's Downfall," originally presented at the Wooden O Symposium and subsequently published in *Wooden O Journal* and *Shakespeare Criticism*. She continues researching rhetorical staging techniques and presented on the topic in January 2011 at the Shakespeare Theater Association. Kemper's adventures have also included a weekend Shakespeare Intensive for African-American Shakespeare Festival, serving as text coach and assistant director for *Twelfth Night* with the same group, and performing Morgan La Fey and others in an adaptation of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* at Pear Theater.

James Mainard O'Connell '08 and wife Marie are the proud parents of Kevin Mainard O'Connell, born 1/11/11. Daughter, Katie, is four years old. O'Connell was accepted as a company member at Maryland Shakespeare Festival, and has published a review of the book *Phenomenal Shakespeare* in the *shaksper.net* online journal. He

is in his second semester as adjunct instructor of theatre at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn. He enjoys working as a freelance theatre generalist and educator.

Mark Mannette '06 is assistant professor of theatre at St. Andrew's Presbyterian College in North Carolina. He spent the fall 2010 semester in Italy.



Cass Morris '10 works at American Shakespeare Center (ASC) as academic resources manager in the education department. She is responsible for publications, such as study guides and the new ASC magazine, *The Playhouse Insider*. Morris is also in charge of social media for ASC, including its education blog, Twitter account, and Facebook page. She also assists with workshops and seminars.

Christine Parker '09 is adjunct English instructor at Victor Valley Community College in Victorville, California. She also serves as dramaturg at Redlands Shakespeare Festival.

Chelsea Phillips '09 served as dramaturg for the Ohio State University production of *Othello*. She also helps coordinate the Arts Initiative, promoting a partnership between Royal Shakespeare Company and its Stand Up For Shakespeare program. Chelsea and Andrew Blasenak '08 were married on the Blackfriars stage in March 2011.

Victoria Reinsel '10 performed in the Washington DC premiere of the off-Broadway hit *My First Time* with Rasa Arts Collective, and she dramaturged and performed in Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's production of *Cymbeline*. Earlier this year, she taught with the Institute of Reading Development and Creative Kids and led master classes for Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. In April, she performed in Young Playwrights' Theater's New Play Festival, which showcases selected works of young playwrights produced by professional actors, directors, and dramaturgs. In July, Reinsel will direct The Stage Door summer camp for middle school students at Encore Stage and Studio in Arlington, Virginia. She recently founded Brave Spirits Theatre, a professional company dedicated to bringing fresh, energetic productions of the works of Shakespeare and other early modern playwrights to the DC area.

“...gadding?” *continued*

Cassie Robertson '09 is seeking a literary agent for new editions of Shakespeare she is preparing. Her editions are designed to be read while simultaneously “showing” the reader what a performance could look like.

Brett Sullivan Santry '11 is completing his fourth year as theatre program director at Stuart Hall School, where he recently assumed the position of head of fine arts. During his tenure, he has worked on improving the King Theater performance space, which he previously designed. This year, for the first time, an MFA directing project — Edward Sheehan’s production of *Timon of Athens* — rehearsed and performed in King Theater and at Blackfriars. *For more information on the collaboration between Stuart Hall and the Shakespeare and Performance program, please see p. 2.*

Christine Schmidle '10 worked during summer 2010 at the Shakespeare Festival in Neuss, Germany and had the joy of experiencing European influences on Shakespeare, including musical versions and Peter Brook’s dramaturgical piece *Warum Warum (Why Why)*. Schmidle worked at Shakespeare’s Globe in London as assistant for text work under Giles Block. She returns to Staunton this summer to direct a play for ASC Theatre Camp.

Justin Schneider '10 served as 2010–11 artistic fellow at The Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington DC.



Lauren Shell '09 taught English in Jinan, China, during the 2009–10 academic year. She taught *Romeo and Juliet* and directed students in a production there in May 2010. She is especially proud that her students — non-native English speakers — learned their lines, fight choreography, and the conventions of early modern staging while also taking her Conversational English class. Students plan to continue similar Shakespearean performances each year in an effort to have more opportunities to practice English and perform onstage.

Robert Smith '08 teaches basic acting, theater history, introduction to theater, clown/commedia, actor movement, and — of course — Shakespearean acting at James Madison University, Southern Virginia University, and Washington and Lee University (W&L). He recently directed Ionesco’s *Rhinoceros* and Euripides’ *Trojan Women* at Southern Virginia University and will direct *Cabaret* at W&L in fall 2011.

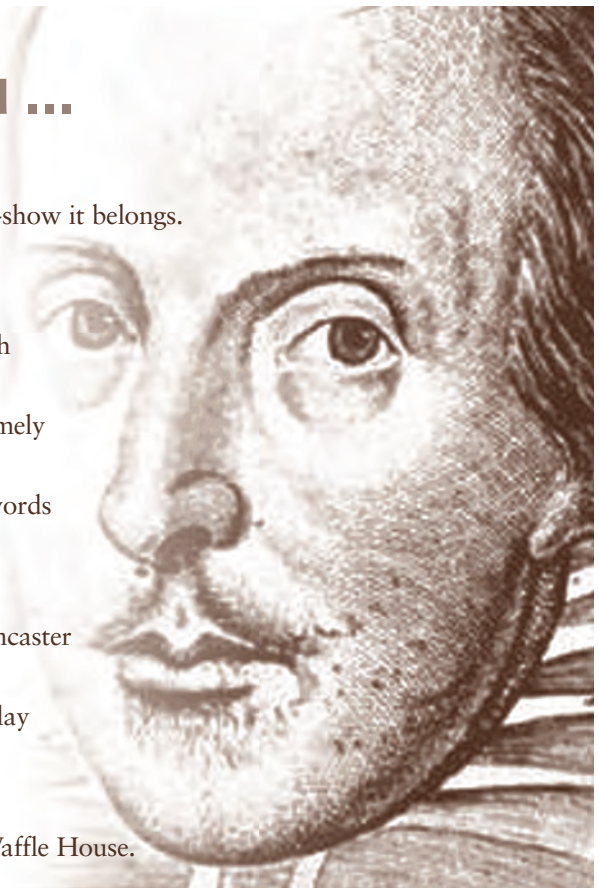
Dawn Tucker '09 is working as director of education and as an actor at Southwest Shakespeare Company in Mesa, Arizona. She is also an adjunct theatre faculty member at Mesa Community College. Most recently, she played Luciana in *Comedy* (directed by Jared Sakren), Edith in *Blithe Spirit* (Don Bluth), Lady Anne in *Richard III* (Jared Sakren), Hermia in *Midsummer* (Don Bluth) and Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Jared Sakren).



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

Compiled by Elizabeth Rentfro, Monica Tedder, and Stephanie Tschetter

- #10 ... can't listen to any song without thinking about in which play's pre-show it belongs.
- #9 ... name all of your characters in video games and role-playing games after Shakespearean characters.
- #8 ... misremember a line of text, but the misquotation you come up with is still in iambic pentameter.
- #7 ... hearing a reference to Shakespeare in pop culture makes you extremely (and probably inappropriately) giddy.
- #6 ... speak with an affect-a-si-on in your conver-sa-ti-ons so that your words will better fit the scan-si-on.
- #5 ... have at least toyed with the idea of naming your dog Troilus.
- #4 ... your partisanship for either the House of York or the House of Lancaster has almost led to a fistfight.
- #3 ... visit another country and immediately go to see a Shakespearean play (despite the fact that you don't know the language).
- #2 ... point out the historical inaccuracies in *Shakespeare in Love*.
- #1 ... peruse your *Norton* or *Hollinshed's Chronicles* while sitting in a Waffle House.



Instructing Duo Produces 'Two Gents' ... Times Two

By Glenn Schudel

On April 18, students and faculty in the Shakespeare and Performance program were treated to two performances of Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* — performed by two different casts — at Blackfriars Playhouse. The plays served as the final assignment for students in the program's Performance of the Language course, an acting requirement for all first-year students.

The two performances used the same cut of the script and identical doubling structures and both were co-directed by Mary Baldwin College professors Colleen Kelly and Matt Davies. In previous years, the class consisted of a combination of lectures, acting exercises, monologue performances and scene work. This year, Kelly and Davies teamed up to focus on staging two distinct 90-minute performances. They divided the class into two casts — which rehearsed simultaneously but separately — to provide students with more acting opportunities.

Students found or created their own costumes and props and organized additional rehearsals, in a manner reminiscent of early modern playing companies.

The first cast to take the stage included Jarom Brown, Bobby Byers, Maria Hart, Kim Lenz, Jessi Malicki, Brian Maxwell, Elizabeth Rentfro, A.J. Sclafani, and Stephanie Tschetter. This performance focused on the play's comic elements, and audiences appreciated the quick pace and moments of slapstick. The second cast, whose performance took a deeper look at the play's relationships and the tensions between characters, featured Jonathan Haas, Angelina LaBarre, Liz Lodato, Kim Maurice, Rachel Ratkowski, Dan Stott, Monica Tedder, Michael Wagoner, and Jamie Weaver. Second-year students Katy Mulvaney and Tony Tambasco served as teaching

Matt Davies, instructor in the Master of Letters/Master of Fine Arts program, guides graduate students in his Performance of the Language course at Blackfriars Playhouse.

assistants for the class and as assistant directors for the productions.

"Working under different directors concerned us at first," said Liz Lodato, "especially since they both have such distinct directorial approaches. But after we switched — halfway through the process — we were excited that we were exposed to their differing styles and were pleased that we had been able to maintain a cohesive tone for the production, and continuity through our characters."



PHOTO BY RACHEL RATKOWSKI



SPRING 2012 EVENTS

THESIS PROJECT FESTIVAL

February 5 and 6

Featuring MFA dramaturgy and MLitt thesis presentations
Times TBA, Blackfriars Playhouse

MFA ACTING PRODUCTION

The Conspiracy of Charles, Duke of Byron

Directed by Matt Davies

March 18–20

Times TBA, Blackfriars Playhouse



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