

# Mason Gross SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

SPRING 2012 MAGAZINE

*Professor Catherine Murphy*

Tepper Family Endowed Chair in Visual Arts

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

February 29, 2012

*Making History*

The Mason Gross School establishes  
its first endowed faculty chair

**RUTGERS**

Mason Gross School  
of the Arts





## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

On Feb. 29, 2012, the Mason Gross School made history by investing painter Catherine Murphy as the inaugural Tepper Family Professor of Visual Arts. The endowed chair, the result of a generous, \$3 million gift from Rutgers College alumna Marlene Tepper, is the first endowed faculty chair in the history of the school. The investiture ceremony at Kirkpatrick Chapel drew more than 300 attendees, one of the largest investitures in the university's history.

Without a doubt, Professor Murphy, whose highly detailed paintings of everyday life have been variously described as "meticulous" (*New York Magazine*) and "monumental yet tenderly intimate" (*The New York Times*), ushers our already robust painting studio into a golden age.

"I hope Catherine's students are deeply inspired by her passion," Ms. Tepper said during her investiture speech. "Then they, too, can enrich lives . . . If so, the purpose of this endowment will be fulfilled." Read more about this glorious day on page 4 of the magazine.

Meanwhile, on March 21, the school hosted a groundbreaking for the new Robert E. Mortensen Hall. The approximately 23,400-square-foot facility will consolidate existing venues into a performing-arts hub. The building will include a choral hall, choral suite and library for the school's vocal ensembles; a movement studio; and a technology suite for sound recording and engineering. Mortensen Hall also will feature an atrium, café and courtyard to foster interdepartmental gatherings and collaborations.

The school continues to extend its reach beyond the campus gate by establishing partnerships with various institutions. Our Dance Department is collaborating with the neighboring State Theatre, as the State welcomes high-profile dance artists who then work with our students. Learn more about the exchange with Israel's Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company on page 15 of the magazine.

Lastly, I am proud to announce MasterWorks, a compelling new partnership between the Mason Gross School and the neighboring George Street Playhouse. The partnership calls for a joint production each year, one that would put Mason Gross students on the stage of this venerable regional theater.

— *George B. Stauffer, Dean*

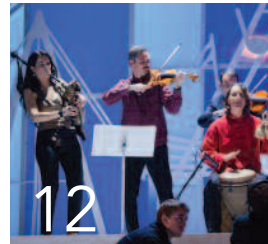
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We're social—and we're networking. Follow Mason Gross School of the Arts on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr and YouTube and receive daily updates about students, faculty, alumni and events taking place on and off campus. Post your own news, links, photos and video, and find other artists for potential collaborations.

THIS MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED FOR ALUMNI, FACULTY, STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES, DONORS AND FRIENDS OF THE MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS. YOUR LETTERS AND COMMENTS ARE WELCOME. PLEASE WRITE TO [ALUMNI@MASONGROSS.RUTGERS.EDU](mailto:ALUMNI@MASONGROSS.RUTGERS.EDU) OR TO MASON GROSS MAGAZINE, MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, 33 LIVINGSTON AVE., NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901.





## The Tepper Family Endowed Chair in Visual Arts



Above, donor and Rutgers College alumna Marlene Tepper and her husband, David, pose at the Old Queens Building before the investiture ceremony for the Mason Gross School's first endowed faculty chair. At right, artist Catherine Murphy pauses before the crowd in Kirkpatrick Chapel after receiving the honor. Murphy is the first Tepper Family Professor of Visual Arts. Top, four of Murphy's oil paintings.

On Wednesday, Feb. 29, 2012, Rutgers University welcomed painter Catherine Murphy as The Tepper Family Professor of Visual Arts. The investiture ceremony was especially momentous, as it marked the Mason Gross School's first endowed chair.

More than 300 people attended the event in Kirkpatrick Chapel, including university President Richard L. McCormick, Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Richard Edwards and 72 processing faculty members, making it the one of the largest investitures in university history.

"What a glorious day for the arts at Rutgers," Dean George B. Stauffer said in his speech. "... Catherine Murphy's arrival at Rutgers brings our painting studio into a golden age."

Donor Marlene Tepper recalled her initial impression of Murphy's meticulously detailed works, some of which take years to complete: "I was floored. I had tears in my eyes," the Rutgers College alumna said in her speech. Tepper donated \$3 million to establish the chair, as well as \$400,000 for scholarships in the painting program. When Tepper learned that Murphy would be on faculty, she says she "smiled for every student."

Murphy's speech drew a standing ovation.

"I'm so overwhelmed, and it's so hard to overwhelm me," she began. "... Marlene Tepper has done something significant with her generosity: It says that creativity is something a great university should pay attention to."

Murphy's work at the Mason Gross School involves delivering studio critiques both one-on-one and in groups. She said



she hopes her students will recognize the value of their efforts.

"Perhaps the students can begin to understand that making something—having empirical evidence of their thoughts, being responsible for a body of work—makes them part, however humbly, of a conversation that started on the walls of the cave," Murphy said.

Tepper seemed eager for Murphy to continue that conversation with the Mason Gross School's artists.

"I hope Catherine's students are deeply inspired by her passion," Tepper said. "Then they too can enrich lives. . . . If so, the purpose of this endowment will be fulfilled."—LG



“

*Do I expect that any art program will turn out hordes of dedicated artists? Maybe just a few tenacious souls.*

*But I hope that learning this discipline will help all of them conceptualize and problem-solve, as well as understand and question the status quo.*”

Catherine Murphy, Tepper Family Professor of Visual Arts



Clockwise from left: Dean George B. Stauffer addresses the attendees during the ceremony, one of the largest investitures in university history; Dance professor Barbara Bashaw, from left, with EdM dance education students Melissa Sande, Lauren O'Connell, Annanda Carmody, Felice Santorelli, Elizabeth Zwierzynski and Daniel Levi-Sanchez at the reception in Winants Hall; Tepper speaks of her admiration for Murphy's work; Visual Arts Chair Diane Neumaier, from left, Murphy, Tepper and Dean Stauffer; Visual Arts students Sophia Naess, from left, and Raque Ford pose with Murphy and a mighty big Rutgers cookie.

PHOTOS BY LAUREN GUILIANO PHOTOGRAPHY



# Ask the Expert: Visual Arts

Intimidated by the prospect of visiting an art gallery or a museum? Painter and drawing professor **Julie Langsam** shares her tips for looking at and engaging with works of art. Try out your mad skills at an exhibit of work by BFA students at the Mason Gross Galleries at Civic Square, running from Wednesday, April 18, through Friday, May 11, 2012. The opening reception is set for 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday, April 26. Admission, as always, is free.



LARRY LEVANTI

## What advice would you give someone entering a museum or gallery for the first time?

I like to walk slowly through the museum for about an hour, and maybe one or two things I feel moved by—but not everything. Pay attention to those objects and images that are demanding your attention, that make you want to stand in front of them. That's how you develop an eye. If one piece stays in my head, I feel really good about it; I feel I've really seen it.

## What should a viewer look for?

Trust your instincts and reactions. Every-

thing doesn't have a literal meaning. Stand in front of a work and experience it. Don't make judgments. People with "innocent" eyes often see a lot more clearly and without preconceptions. Many times artists themselves are trying to get to that place where there is some unfamiliarity, some unknown. It isn't something to be afraid of, but to be embraced. The most important thing: having an open mind.

## What's your response to people who say, "I don't get it. What is it about?"

Many people are more comfortable with recognizable imagery, not realizing that the comfort level comes from having a deep understanding of the imagery. If I am looking at a still life of fruit, I have intimate knowledge of, say, an apple—I have eaten one, smelled one, held one. Looking at an abstract painting is much the same: finding a frame of reference, even if it seems relatively unimportant, is helpful. If you are looking at a [painting by Mark] Rothko—maybe you think of a memory, a moment, a situation, like noticing when the sun is setting, where the sky is meeting the ground. It's about trying to move everything aside and to be present with the work in that moment and not be afraid of what you don't know—because the experience you have in front of a work of art is what is important, not what it is "about."



Julie Langsam's *Neutra Landscape (Plywood Model House)*, 2010, oil on linen, 60-by-60 inches. Courtesy Julie Langsam

## BRODSKY CENTER AT THE MET

Selections from the Brodsky Center for Innovative Editions' print projects are on view throughout 2012 in the Mezzanine Gallery at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Prints on display include works by Will Barnet, William Kentridge, Faith Ringgold and Miriam Shapiro.



Will Barnet, *Celebration*, 2005, lithograph, 30 inches-by-22½ inches. Collaborating Printer: Randy Hemminghaus.

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## Q & A with Steve Dillon, Music alum and Advancement Council member



COURTESY STEVE DILLON

Mason Gross Advancement Council member and **Music** alumnus Steve Dillon has owned Dillon Music in Woodbridge, N.J., for 20 years. The trombone player, who deals in new, used and antique brass and woodwind instruments and accessories, says he began selling instruments out of his parents' house when he was just a junior in high school. Dillon says his client base includes musicians from The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, as well as orchestras in Russia and Japan. He also spends his time researching the life of the late trombone virtuoso and band-leader Arthur Pryor. Here Dillon recalls his experience as a Mason Gross School student and speaks about why he continues to support his alma mater today.

**Q: What is your most memorable moment as a student?**

**A:** One of the most memorable moments was when the Rutgers Jazz Ensemble went to Notre Dame for a competition. We'd sent a tape in and got a bad spot in the competition; it was a noon on a Saturday. We took the bus there. Guys were playing basketball in their tuxes. We won seven or eight awards out of 15. People were shocked. They were wondering, "Who is this Rutgers?" A lot of those guys from then went on to be successful [musicians].

**Q: What or who inspired you while you were at Mason Gross?**

**A:** I wouldn't be where I am today if it was not for [late Music professor William "Prof"] Fielder. Fielder was a mentor. He talked sense into you. He instilled confidence. I met him in my second year. He was hard on me,

but you could call him at 8 p.m. and ask him questions or stop by his house to see him. Prof was a long-time customer of Dillon Music. I told Prof when I was opening the business.

**Q: What advice would you give to incoming and current students?**

**A:** Learn to be diversified, broaden your horizons. What you think you want to do in the future may not be what you end up doing. Just because you don't make the orchestra doesn't mean you can't earn a living in the music industry . . . You have to do something until you make it. It may sound romantic, but [being] a starving artist doesn't feel good.

**Q: There are so many good causes. What makes Mason Gross special to you?**

**A:** I support the Fielder Scholarship Fund to pay it forward. Scholarships help students. I would love to see more practical life experience be put into education. Students coming out of college have no idea of the real world. I'm in the music industry, and I don't play for a living. A lot can be done in the music industry.—RR

An aerial photograph of a marching band performing on a football field. The band members are wearing white uniforms with red accents and are arranged in a large formation. The field is green with white yard lines. In the background, there are stadium lights and advertisements for Canon and F.T.I. Consulting.

# 30,028

Attendance at Yankee Stadium in New York City on Nov. 12, 2011, when the Rutgers University Glee Club belted the national anthem at the Rutgers-Army football match-up. The CBS Sports Network televised the performance. The Marching Scarlet Knights took the field, pumped up the crowd and performed alongside the West Point Band as 1,000 members of the Corps of Cadets marched. And yeah, in case you hadn't heard, we creamed 'em, 27-12.

ELAINE ANZEVINO



# Alum went to extremes on *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*

Aaron Jackson figures this week could be his toughest yet.

The Theater alum is about to embark on an enervating, three-week adventure that will culminate in building seven houses in seven days for families who have lost homes to the tornado that ripped through the city of Joplin, Mo., in May 2011.

As design producer on the three-

hanky ABC television show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* (the network recently canceled the show), Jackson crisscrossed the country with host Ty Pennington and a massive construction crew, concocting fantastical interiors for families who are often in dire straits. There's the New York family of a girl with dwarfism whose home serves as a facility for a chapter of Little People of America, Inc.; or the man in Pennsylvania who quit his job to care for his paralyzed adult son. Each story was more heart-wrenching than the next.

"It is emotional, to a point," says Jackson, who lives in Los Angeles.

"You get involved in their stories. Some of them are definitely more heart-breaking than others.



This one [in Joplin] will be one of the harder ones. We're working with families who've lost people in the tornado."

The pace was relentless: Jackson says each project spanned three weeks, from conception to unveiling. The final week was devoted to demolition and construction, beginning with what Jackson calls "door-knock day," when the crew surprised the family, to the "reveal," when the family

**"THEY'RE ALWAYS PUSHING US TO BE MORE AND MORE EXTREME. WE'RE DOING THINGS YOU WOULDN'T NORMALLY SEE INSIDE A HOUSE."**

toured the new structure.

Jackson says he put in 14-to-17-hour days, collaborating with the architect, dreaming up and pitching room themes inspired by family interviews, selecting paint colors, cabinetry, flooring—"everything down to lighting fixtures"—and convincing businesses to donate services and materials to the effort.

Jackson just completed his own home renovation and says he's long had an affinity for home renovation and design. He says joining the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* crew was "an adventure . . . You just never know where you'll end up. You definitely get to meet a lot of cool people" and indulge in radical design concepts.

"They're always pushing us to be more and more extreme," says Jackson, who designed a bedroom with a carousel and outfitted another with a tree that the



PHOTOS COURTESY AARON JACKSON



# Rutgers Center For Digital Filmmaking documentaries air on NJTV

children could climb. “We’re doing things you wouldn’t normally see inside a house.”

The designs weren’t merely fanciful; plenty of the *Extreme Makeover* projects were complex undertakings meant to maximize a home’s functionality. For instance, the team installed a therapy room inside the home of the quadriplegic Pennsylvania man and equipped the entire structure with fixtures that allow him to navigate the space more easily.



Jackson’s wildest design: a zoo-themed bedroom for a little girl in Georgia named Camry who hopes to be a veterinarian when she grows up. Camry’s big sister, Anaiah, had her leg amputated after shoving Camry out of the path of an oncoming truck. The room features a tree-house/jungle-hut bed, carved rock desk, hammock reading nook, a coterie of oversized stuffed animals and a wraparound, hand-painted mural.

Jackson, a longtime scenic designer for the stage, says his work on television wasn’t merely about creating attractive environments. Often, he says, the show provided families with a fresh start.

“We’re giving them a whole new life sometimes,” Jackson says. “College scholarships, a new car—there are all kinds of amazing things that happen here.”—LG

Several student-staffed documentary films out of the Rutgers Center For Digital Filmmaking are reaching a wider audience as they air across the state on NJTV, formerly known as NJN. The televised screenings are part of *NJ Docs*, a new monthly film series devoted to university- and college-made documentaries from New Jersey.

The award-winning Rutgers student-faculty collaboration *Atlantic Crossing* kicked off the series in February. For *Atlantic Crossing*, Rutgers faculty and students followed researchers and students from the university’s Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences as they prepared for the voyage of the first robotic glider to cross the Atlantic. On April 2, *NJ Docs* aired the student-faculty collaboration *Thailand Untapped*, about three Rutgers Engineering students working to bring potable water to a remote village.

John Servidio, NJTV’s general manager, says he expects to air three or four Rutgers-produced documentaries per year on *NJ Docs*. Servidio says he is eager to air local content by filmmakers with a fresh take.

“Students bring in a different outlook, a different feel to what they do,” he says. “Coming in with that attitude—that they don’t have to follow the rules—[means] they have a lot to say.”

Chantal Eyong was an undergraduate English major when she worked on *Atlantic Crossing*.

“It was a huge learning curve for me, working on a production team and learning how to communicate science,” says Eyong, now on staff at the Rutgers Center For Digital Filmmaking, a new division of the Mason Gross School of the Arts. “It’s exciting to see the movie airing on NJTV, to share a dynamic story that took place so close to home.”

Dena Seidel, director of the Rutgers Center For Digital Filmmaking and the director of *Atlantic Crossing* and *Thailand Untapped*, says reaching such a wide audience via NJTV is gratifying. She says students earn professional film production credits on the documentaries, character-driven narratives that take place at Rutgers or involve members of the Rutgers community.

“After all the investment in terms of time, relationship-building and artistic creation involved in shaping a story—to have your film selected for television broadcast is incredibly validating,” Seidel says. Films also will appear on NJTV’s website, njtvonline.org, after the televised broadcasts.



Above, Rutgers student Carly Rogers works on treating the water in *Thailand Untapped*, which aired on NJTV as part of a new series devoted to university- and college-made documentaries. Below, engineer Clayton Jones, from left, Rutgers oceanographer and professor Scott Glenn and Rutgers Center For Digital Filmmaking Director Dena Seidel in *Atlantic Crossing*.



PHOTOS COURTESY RUTGERS CENTER FOR DIGITAL FILMMAKING



The rumor is that **LaToya Ruby Frazier**, Mason Gross Galleries at Civic Square curator and faculty member, may be changing careers and giving up art for high fashion. *The New York Times* announced Frazier's inclusion in the Whitney Biennial 2012 with a series of photos of her work introduced by a shot of Frazier in haute couture. It is an interesting and intentionally ironic contrast to the tough, probing quality of her photo documentary work, much of it dealing with her family and her coming of age in Brad-dock, Pa., an industrial city long on the skids.

Music faculty member **Darryl Bott** recently received the New Jersey Music Educators Association Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his years of service in promoting music education throughout the state. The award citation notes that Bott's talents and contributions have benefited not only students at Mason Gross but have had a positive impact on student musicians throughout the state.

Theater faculty member **Deborah Hedwall** recently appeared in a new play, *The Fall to Earth*, at the 59E59 Theaters in New York City. The play was well reviewed in *The New York Times* by Eric Grode. In his largely positive review, he notes some minor problems with the play before going on to note: "Luckily, the tireless Ms. Hedwall dives into her pinwheeling character with relish, papering over some less plausible moments as she demonstrates how Fay simultaneously attracts and repels anyone in her orbit. Within minutes, the same woman marveling at the 'smallest, cutest typewriter I've ever seen' on her daughter's cellphone has hurled that same phone out the hotel window."

# NEWS Faculty & Staff

In the brief period since the Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking was established in June 2011, the center has made its presence felt across the university and the state. Under the direction of **Dena Seidel**, assisted by a staff of Rutgers University alums **Chantal Eyong** and **Jim Monahan**, the center has major film projects underway, including a collaboration with Greg Blimling, Vice President for Student Affairs, to create a documentary on veterans returning to campus to continue their education; a film with Peter Gillies, director of the New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health to document a cooperative and ambitious program intended to combat childhood obesity in New Jersey; and with the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences to film *Antarctica Quest*, a documentary about Rutgers scientists studying climate-change issues in Antarctica. At the same time, the joint SAS/Mason Gross filmmaking course component of the center has expanded greatly to include a far fuller array of course offerings and is poised to eventually expand the certificate program into a major. Seidel also has been interviewed by *New Jersey Monthly* for an article to appear in April 2012, and NJTV has agreed to air the documentary projects the center produces as a part of a regular series called *NJ Docs*. (Read more about the broadcasts on page 9 of the *Mason Gross* magazine.)

Theater chair **David Esbjornson** recently staged an off-Broadway revival of Edward Albee's intense drama *The Lady from Dubuque* starring Tony-winner Jane Alexander. The play deals with a game the characters play—"Who Are You"—and comes up with life-and-death possibilities to the meaning of that question for the characters, at least those who remain on stage after the first act concludes. Esbjornson comes to this project after his recent successful staging of *Driving Miss Daisy* on Broadway and in London's West End starring James Earl Jones and Vanessa Redgrave, and his Shakespeare in the Park production of *Measure for Measure*. Ben Brantley, in his laudatory *New York Times* review of *The Lady of Dubuque*, cited Esbjornson's "crisp" direction and the way "this exquisitely mounted production illuminates" the play.

**Maureen Hurd** got the chance to perform at Steinway Hall in the fall and to showcase her Mason Gross clarinet students at the same time. Hurd is a Conn-Selmer Artist, and Henri Selmer Paris organized a week of performances and workshops that included Hurd, our students, Todd Levy, principal clarinet of the Milwaukee Symphony, and others. **Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer** accompanied Hurd during her performance.

Recent alums, from left, Nick Sciscione, Scott Schneider, Kyle Marshall and Tyner Dumortier, are members of Professor Randy James' new all-male dance company. Alum Alex Biegelson, not pictured, is also part of the company, called 10 Hairy Legs.







Professor Stanley Cowell

Dance professor **Randy James** is organizing a new all-male dance company featuring five of our recent alumni. Once fully established, the company plans a New York City season in which the group will perform a broad range of works from many of the most prominent choreographers. The company consists of Dance Department alums Kyle Marshall, Tyner Dumortier, Scott Schneider, Nick Sciscione and Alex Biegelson. With dancers of this caliber, the new company can't miss. James also had his dance *The Day After Jesus Was Born* performed at the 92nd Street Y in New York City.

Music professor **Stanley Cowell** had a busy year performing at a number of important venues inter-nationally, including two Italian theaters—Teatro Manzoni in Milan and Teatro Dell'Ossevanza-Imola near Bologna—and Billboard Japan in Tokyo, among others. He also was featured pianist at a two-concert replication of John Coltrane's *Africa Brass* at Lincoln Center's Rose Hall. Cowell released two CDs and is topping off the year by receiving an honorary doctoral degree from his undergraduate alma mater, Oberlin College in Ohio. Time to take a well-deserved bow, Stanley! —DB

## FACULTY PROFILE: Keith A. Thompson, Dance

"I LOVE TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH DANCERS ABOUT SUBJECT MATTER. IT GETS PRETTY EMOTIONAL."

Choreographer Keith A. Thompson grew up in a military family. But the idea of the dancer as a rhythmic soldier, mirroring prescribed movements and regurgitating patterns, seems to leave him cold.

"I love to have conversations with dancers about subject matter," says Thompson, a recent addition to the Mason Gross School's Dance Department. He also helms his own company, danceTactics Performance Group, and serves as rehearsal director for Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. "It gets pretty emotional. If they're working with me, and they don't connect to me as a human being—if they don't know me as Keith—there's only a certain amount of distance we can go.

"If we open up . . . that investment goes even deeper," continues Thompson, a member of Trisha Brown Dance Company from 1992 to 2001. "And trust—that enriches the movement. What we're doing is very intimate and intricate. How do you achieve these things if you don't connect on a deeper level?"

Thompson began his training relatively late, as a student at The Ohio State University.

"I knew nothing about dancing," he says. "But my roommate said: 'You're always dancing around the room; I dare you to audition.'"

Thompson says he "connected to the rhythms" of jazz in his college dance classes but detested ballet and modern. He dropped out of school and spent a few years in Minneapolis as a computer programmer. He spent nights studying dance, which eventually led to a spot in the city's Zenon Dance Company and the end of his computer career.

"I walked into my boss' office and said, 'It's my birthday, and I'm quitting,'" Thompson recalls. "I said, 'I want to be a dancer.'" Eventually, he nabbed a full scholarship to The Ailey School in New York City.

But Thompson credits Trisha Brown with nudging him toward artistic maturity.

"Trisha trained me to be a thinking dancer, not just a doer," says Thompson, who is collaborating this semester on a project with actor Bill Pullman. "A thinking dancer is a dancer who takes initiative and is making choices. They will



Thompson, foreground, in rehearsal.

run with their imagination, which gives choreographers not just one appetizer but a platter to choose from."

Mason Gross dancer **Myssi Robinson** says Thompson is keen on nurturing "thinking dancers" himself.

"It is not enough to mimic," Robinson says of Thompson's approach. "He requires that his students also understand the origins and complexities of each movement exercise. This process of . . . verbalization was very challenging."

Thompson admits that he still struggles with "promoting myself and patting myself on the back," but that Brown fueled his confidence.

"I felt she valued my opinions, trusted my outcomes and didn't toss them away," says Thompson, who has performed internationally as a professional dancer for some 25 years. "She allowed me to be me and not be the mimic. If you trust a collaborator and feel they trust you, you allow yourself to be more vulnerable."

Establishing trust among his dancers seems to be working. Robinson recalls her first impression of Thompson: "He seemed very relaxed, yet slightly nervous, which was endearing . . . He is tuned in to our experiences as students."

Ideally, Thompson says, his dancers emerge hungry to seize on a movement, absorb it, embody it—maybe even wrestle with it.

"The most important thing is knowing that they're trained but [also] knowing that there's more," Thompson points out. "They can take ownership of their learning. Don't just listen, but challenge me." —LG

Catch students performing Thompson's choreography at DancePlus Spring April 20-29, 2012, at the Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater.



# Student & Alumni news

Less than a year after performing in the Dance Department gala at The Joyce Theater in New York City, Dance alumnus **Nick Sciscione** returned to The Joyce stage in March 2012 with the internationally renowned Stephen Petronio Dance Company. Sciscione was featured in two pieces: *City of Twist* and *The Architecture of Loss*. For Sciscione to be chosen to join such a distinguished company immediately upon graduation is only one of many indicators about the quality of our dance program. Sciscione also will be joining a new company being established by faculty member Randy James.

Recent MFA alumna **Martha Clippinger** had her first solo exhibition at elizabeth harris gallery on 20th Street in New York City. And an auspicious debut it was: Our own John Yau reviewed the exhibit for the online journal

of the arts Hyperallergic.com, stating that "Clippinger's mostly small constructions are like exuberant bundles of energy that you would want to go to a dance party with, especially if you at all shy. Her work is friendly, outgoing and unapologetic about its inherent eccentricities." The same could be said of the artist herself. Bolstering Yau's praise was a review in *The Brooklyn Rail* by Robert Berliand: "Here Clippinger's intimacy, wit and insouciance bring to mind the work of Richard Tuttle. She responds to the orthodoxy of modernist abstraction by recasting it as everyday play with common materials."

Gotta dance! Gotta dance! No doubt Gene Kelly's mandate influenced Visual Arts BFA alumna **Nicole McKeever** to move to Ireland and earn a master's degree in Irish dance performance at the University of Limerick.



## Celebrating Yo-Yo Ma

On Dec. 4, 2011, **Music alumna Cristina Pato**, above at left, took the stage at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., to honor cellist Yo-Yo Ma in a performance televised later that month on CBS. The Galician bagpiper is a member of Ma's renowned Silk Road Ensemble, featuring artists from around the globe. She has collaborated with Ma since 2006. Pato performed several selections with her Silk Road colleagues, along with James Taylor and Emanuel Ax, among others.

"To be backstage with Ravi Coltrane, Herbie Hancock or my friends from the Silk Road Ensemble was the most beautiful experience," Pato says, adding that she noted a true "sense of community that was created around the honorees"—Meryl Streep, Sonny Rollins, Neil Diamond and Barbara Cook, along with Ma.

"Yo-Yo Ma is a constant inspiration for me," Pato adds. "His humanity and generosity are always teaching me how to become a better human being. My life has changed since the day I started to work with him."



Visual Arts alumna Nicole McKeever performs with the famed Riverdance group. Riverdance's U.S. tour ends in June 2012.

McKeever has been competing competitively in Irish dance at the world-championship level since she was 13. She is one of the lead dancers in the acclaimed Riverdance group.

Recent BFA Theater graduate **Justin Kruger** was one of the leads in *How the World Began*, which recently played at the Peter Jay Shard Theater in New York City. *New York Times* critic Charles Isherwood singled out Kruger in his review: "And Mr. Kruger, a recent graduate from the acting program at Rutgers University, embodies Micah's troubled discomfort with an ease that impresses. Even very young actors can run into trouble playing adolescents, painting the usual insecurities and sensitivities of the genus in overly bold colors . . . Mr. Kruger's sensitive performance allows us to see the damaged, even desperate young man under the stoic surface."

**Molly Price**, a veteran of TV's *Third Watch*, appears in Mike Nichols' Broadway revival of the Arthur Miller classic *Death of Salesman* at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. The play stars





Leah Durner's painting was featured in the January 2012 issue of *Town & Country* magazine.

Philip Seymour Hoffman and runs through June 2, 2012.

**Leah Durner**, MFA Visual Arts, found a novel way to have her work exhibited and widely seen outside the sometimes hermetic world of the New York City art scene. The January 2012 issue of *Town & Country* magazine featured a number of designer showcases for sophisticated home design. The Carrier and Company model apartment featured

Durner's work, noting that "her abstract paintings are the perfect, unfussy complement for brightly painted walls." Durner also has her work regularly exhibited in more conventional spaces, most recently in a one-person show at 571 Projects in New York City. Durner is always careful to cite the education she received at Mason Gross, singling out professors Leon Golub, Martha Rosler and Geoffrey Hendricks in bios. —DB

# Overheard

OUR FAVORITE QUOTES, STRAIGHT FROM THE MOUTHS OF MASON GROSS STUDENTS, FACULTY, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

*"This career is not a sprint, it's a marathon. There is no such thing as a big break. It just is consistently doing good, quality work, and then the work will come to you. No matter what happens, you have to fight and not let anyone tell you what you can and cannot do."*

— Actor and Mason Gross Theater alum

**Adam Mucci**

formerly Dep. Halloran on HBO's *Golden Globe*-winning *Boardwalk Empire*, giving advice to students at his high school alma mater, Hasbrouck Heights High School. Mucci is set to appear in *Men in Black III* in May 2012.

Tony-winning **Theater** alum **Roger Bart** stopped by campus on Dec. 2, 2011, to conduct a high-spirited musical-theater master class with a group of BFA and MFA Theater students. Bart gave pointers about auditioning and shared his own experiences.

MFA actor **Michael Walker** says Bart's counsel "to really approach [songs] as monologues first so that we understand the character" was especially enlightening. In addition, Walker says he was intrigued to learn how Bart, who has found success on both stage and screen (*The Producers*; *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; *Desperate Housewives*), prepares for auditions.

"He told us to always know who is in the room when you are about to audition and to IMDB/Google them," Walker says. ". . . It's great to hear from [alums] how the professional world operates."



PHOTOS BY LARRY LEVANTI



Tony-winning alum Roger Bart stopped by campus on Dec. 2, 2011, to conduct a high-spirited master class with a mix of BFA and MFA Theater students.



# Yvonne Almeria Campbell, actor

THEATER ALUMNA,  
MASON GROSS  
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

I arrived at the Mason Gross School of the Arts as an unpolished artist. The school gave me the tools I needed to perfect my craft. My classmates and I spent countless hours doing the Meisner Technique, learning to be present and expanding our creativity. As a student I looked to other alumni—Calista Flockhart, Kristin Davis, Avery Brooks—who walked the halls of Mason Gross. These actors were trained just as I was, and it was encouraging to see their success.

When I graduated from Mason Gross, I wanted to give back to the students who would follow in my footsteps—artists following their hearts. I support scholarships to help students realize their dreams. I believe each of us should reach out to help those pursuing their passion. It is more critical than ever to give back, especially in this difficult economy, when arts funding is being severely cut across the country.

I ask you to join me in supporting the Mason Gross School of the Arts. Your gift can help forward Mason Gross' mission to train working artists.



Yvonne Almeria Campbell


LAURA ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY

**RUTGERS**

Mason Gross School  
of the Arts

## Give to the Mason Gross Annual Fund

To make a gift to the Mason Gross School of the Arts, please contact the Office of Development at 848-932-5237, or use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation to the Office of Development, Mason Gross School of the Arts, 33 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Please make checks payable to the *Rutgers University Foundation*.



# CROSSING BORDERS

Students wrap up year-long focus on Israeli dance

LARRY LEVANTI

Arguably, not much will lure the average college student back from winter break two weeks early. Most students would balk at the idea of plunging into 80 hours of rigorous physical activity back at school while friends snooze till noon and catch up on episodes of *Dexter*.

Nevertheless, 18 Mason Gross BFA **Dance** students spent the first half of January engaged in an international exchange with the renowned Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company. Later in the month, dancers trained for three days alongside Pinto, co-founder of the experimental Israeli dance-theater group. The intensive wrapped up the Dance Department's year-long focus on Israeli dance, which has included collaborations with Batsheva Dance Company and Vertigo.

"Israel has an incredible dance scene—incredible dance energy," says Julia Ritter, chair of the Dance Department. "It is a laboratory of experimentation. I wanted students to be pushing themselves with [Pinto and Pollak's] challenging movement but also delve into the theatricality." The company employs several actors as well as dancers.

Dance professor Jeff Friedman served as artistic liaison between Pinto and the Mason Gross dancers. He says this immersion gives student dancers the opportunity to "work at an intensive level with professionals in the world. They see themselves as professionals in a very concrete way." Friedman says the department is developing a "Dance in Israel" course as well as an International Dance Studies certificate.

Sophomore Dance student **Mimi Gabriel** says interpreting the movement language of

various Israeli choreographers throughout the year has broadened her understanding of the country's dance scene. Gabriel says she hopes to study next year at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, a newly established study-abroad program involving the Mason Gross School and the Rothberg International School at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Gabriel says she has noticed that Israeli dancers are "very versatile and passionate a lot of the time. They have an ability to express passion through movement. Their bodies are so strong. It seems like they can do anything. I want to see what they're doing."

Talia Beck, a freelance principal dancer with the Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company, led the collaboration with Mason Gross students.

"The students came so open to it," she says. "Usually at a school you have to deconstruct their habits and opinions, but it was very easy to release them and have them come into the piece . . . They go for it."

Gabriel says she is grateful to have experienced Beck's knowledge firsthand.

"To be able to see her dance a step is so incredible," Gabriel says. "You can't learn that on YouTube; you have to be in the rehearsal process."

But Beck emphasizes that these two weeks were not just about translating the finer points of Pinto and Pollak's aesthetic.

"I also want them to find humor and freedom in that," Beck says. "I want them to take away the playfulness and joy of moving. Freedom allows for new ideas to come."



EYAL LANDESMAN

Top, Dance students Mimi Gabriel, at center, and Erin Dowd participate in a workshop with the Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company. Above, a member of the company in performance.

Ritter has arranged for the students to participate in exchanges with Chinese and Turkish dancers and says she plans to continue to bring in international dance artists.

"When the students graduate, I want them to see that New York City is not the only option," she says. "I want them to have face-to-face exposure with international artists."

"I say, you need to be able to communicate globally as a dancer and a human being," Ritter continues. "If anything, that's really my goal. For dance to survive, there need to be synergies between different kinds of people and different kinds of dance."—LG

**Mason Gross students will perform a collage of work by the Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company at the school's annual DancePlus Spring concert, set for April 20-29 at the Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater.**



# CHOIR DIRECTOR TEACHES CHILDREN TO RAISE THEIR VOICES

“Love at first sight.” That’s how Mason Gross School Music professor and Rutgers Children’s Choir Artistic Director **Rhonda Hackworth** describes her first experience working with a children’s choir.

“It was a *big* group of kids from *all* sorts of backgrounds,” Hackworth says of her time as a graduate assistant at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Hackworth, better known as “Dr. H.” to her students in the choir, recalls that there was so much going on in the rehearsal involving families, kids, undergraduate helpers, graduate assistants and the conductor, that she thought, “This is how it should be!”

Hackworth’s passion for working with children goes back to her days serving as

both a church music director in Virginia and a professor at a local community college. She says spending time shuttling back and forth between producing children’s musicals at the church and teaching college students “hooked” her.

“I love teaching college where we talk about teaching children,” Hackworth says. “But if I don’t actually get to teach children it seems something is missing. I just love the exuberance of kids during their elementary-through-early-adolescent years: they are delightful, pliable, eager and squirmy, and they really do their best.”

Hackworth became artistic director of the Rutgers Children’s Choir in 2008. Since then, the group—a treble-voice choir dedicated to providing artistically excellent,



PHOTOS BY LARRY LEVANTI

**“I JUST LOVE THE EXUBERANCE OF KIDS DURING THEIR ELEMENTARY THROUGH-EARLY-ADOLESCENT YEARS: THEY ARE DELIGHTFUL, PLIABLE, EAGER AND SQUIRMY, AND THEY REALLY DO THEIR BEST.”**



age-appropriate vocal training for third-through eighth-grade children with unchanged voices—has expanded to include two additional divisions: Little Knights, for

children in kindergarten through second grade, and the Rutgers Chamber Singers, an auditioned ensemble of advanced singers in grades five through eight. In October 2011, Hackworth hosted children’s choirs from around the state on campus at the inaugural Fall Children’s Choir Festival.

“I’d love to see the day when someone who started in the Little Knights continues all the way through the [Rutgers Children’s Choir], applies to Rutgers,” she says, “and becomes a freshman in my class!” —CK

## RUTGERS CHILDREN’S CHOIR PROGRAMS

**LITTLE KNIGHTS:** Kindergarten-second grade, 5-5:35 p.m. Wednesdays. No audition required.

**CHORISTERS:** third-fifth grade, 5:45-7:05 p.m. Wednesdays. An audition is required to evaluate placement according to age, musical skills and vocal development.

**CHORALE:** fifth-eighth grade, 5:45-7:05 p.m. Wednesdays. An audition is required to evaluate placement according to age, musical skills and vocal development.

**CHAMBER SINGERS:** fifth-eighth grade, 7:20-8 p.m. Wednesdays. An audition is required for membership in this ensemble. Chamber Singers is for children in Chorale who are ready for a more challenging music experience. Members must commit to sing in both Chorale and Chamber Singers.

Classes run throughout the school year on the Douglass Campus in New Brunswick. More information is available at 732-932-8618 or [www.masongross.rutgers.edu/extension](http://www.masongross.rutgers.edu/extension).

# STUDENT PROFILE: Mika Godbole

## MIKA GODBOLE CHALKS IT ALL UP TO HORMONES.

Godbole admits that her choice to become a musician “was because of a boy. He was playing bass drum in a marching band. From then on I said, ‘I want to do that.’ I wanted to be around him.”

The drummer boy is long gone. But nearly 20 years later, Godbole’s passion for percussion endures.

Godbole, a Mason Gross graduate **Music** student, presented her recital, Steve Reich’s minimalist *Music for 18 Musicians*, on March 5, 2012, at the 740-seat Nicholas Music Center. The 32-year-old timpanist marshaled the forces of four pianists, two clarinetists, one

cellist, a violinist, an array of keyboard percussionists and a four-woman vocal ensemble. “With timpani [also known as the kettledrum], you’re always this low voice,” Godbole explains. “I’m very shy. When I play the timpani, I feel like I have a voice—a contributing voice. I finally felt I could speak. I wasn’t saying anything that hadn’t been said before, but it was something.”

Godbole did not take a formal percussion lesson until she was 17. But what Godbole lacked in experience she made up for in grit. As Godbole tells it, at her college audition, she informed her future teacher: “This is what I could do in four months; imagine what I could do in four years.” He took her on.

“It was like learning to ride a unicycle,” Godbole says. “I used to not sleep for days at a time. I didn’t know the rudiments. I was so far behind [the others]” that Godbole says she was forced to “count the lines” as she scrambled to read music. “I worked very hard and finally—timpani: I realized I was good at one instrument. Then there was hope.”

Ultimately, the sound of the timpani inspired her to press on.

“I liked being inside the sound,” Godbole remembers. “There’s something so cool about being inside something—you’re creating something, part of a whole. I’m glad I stuck with that feeling even when I stunk. I can’t tell you how much I cried [when I first started]. Everyone has that in life, when you hit a wall and you don’t know how to get to the other side.”

Eventually, she made it to the other side. After graduating from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Godbole earned a master’s of music at Rowan University in Glassboro, N.J.; she arrived at Mason Gross in 2007. Two years later, she received an invitation to join a former Mason Gross professor in a performance of Hector Berlioz’s *Requiem* alongside The Philadelphia Orchestra.

“To get from the point of ‘I don’t know what I’m doing,’ to this—I’ll never forget it,” Godbole says. “Everything was worth it for that moment of playing with my teachers onstage. I can’t believe it even happened.”

Who knows what made Godbole a musician—serendipity or sheer will. One thing is certain: This story begins with a boy, a girl and a bass drum; it ends with a self-professed “scaredy cat” seizing on a sound and following it.

“Persistence is the most important thing,” Godbole says. “I may get up and say, ‘I feel terrible,’ but you have to get up and hit your brain against the wall, and hopefully something happens. Sometimes that hope is enough.” —LG



PHOTOS BY MO DAOUH/  
RUTGERS FOUNDATION





# Recent Theater alum wins *Dancing with the Stars* costume contest

**Amanda Wolff** had just two frenetic days to research, sketch and submit her costume designs to the *Dancing with the Stars* judges.

Swamped with work as an apprentice at Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre, prepping costumes for *The King and I*, the 2011 Mason Gross School Theater alum thought there was no way she could make it work.

But fortunately, Wolff listened to her mother, an avid *DWTS* fan, who nudged her daughter to do double duty.

"My mom said, 'What do you have to lose?'" recalls Wolff, 22. "I'm glad I did."

In early November 2011, Wolff learned that her designs had won and would appear on the Nov. 15 episode of *Dancing with the Stars*. A pair of dancers wore the punk-inspired costumes as they performed the paso doble to Lady Gaga's hit song *Bad Romance*.

Just before Wolff departed for Los Angeles, she says, "I was watching *Dancing with the Stars* and thinking, 'Next week [the costumes] will be mine.' I can't believe this happened."

Wolff headed to Los Angeles for the taping, and she brought along her mom for the adventure. They embarked on a whirlwind tour, stopping by Grauman's Chinese Theatre, attending a red-carpet premiere of the film *Breaking Dawn* and hanging around the set of the CBS comedy *The Big Bang Theory*.

Wolff says she designed the *DWTS* looks with the understanding that the show "is definitely a family show, so I knew the costume couldn't be too crazy, too out there, too scandalous, something the public wouldn't understand."

She says her mom taught her to sew when she was just 6 or 7. The design program at the Mason Gross School "connected that love of arts and sewing," Wolff says. "My mom taught me the basics. Rutgers taught me the technical skill."

Wolff says the Theater program also furthered her goal of not "sitting behind a computer all day. That's not for me . . . They taught me not to be afraid, not to hold back."

Wolff hasn't done much time behind a computer. While in the BFA Theater program, she interned at the CBS drama *The Good Wife* alongside Mason Gross



COURTESY AMANDA WOLFF

Theater alum **Daniel Lawson**, the show's costume designer. She says she is game to work behind the scenes of live shows or for television.

"I definitely got a chance to see some of the inner workings of the film industry," Wolff says, "and I think having that knowledge will help me in the future."—LG



STEVE WAITNEIGHT

Dean George B. Stauffer, from left, Dean of Students Casey Coakley, Maestro Lorin Maazel and opera singer Nancy Gustafson celebrate Maazel's 82nd birthday.

## Making music with Maestro Maazel

Dean George B. Stauffer and Dean of Students Casey Coakley joined opera singer Nancy Gustafson and others on March 6, 2012, to celebrate two occasions: Maestro Lorin Maazel's 82nd birthday and the formalization of the Mason Gross School's collaboration with Maazel's Castleton Festival.

Maazel, former music director of the New York Philharmonic, established the festival in 2009 on the grounds of his sprawling estate in rural Virginia. Gustafson acts as general manager of the festival, while Maazel serves as artistic director and chief conductor. For two months each summer, they bring in hand-picked vocalists and instrumentalists to live in the estate, study alongside Maazel and perform under his baton.

In 2011, several Mason Gross School singers and instrumentalists made their Castleton debut. According to Dean Stauffer, the school plans to provide full funding for five vocalists and five instrumentalists this summer, where for the first time they will earn academic credit for their participation at Castleton. —LG

## PIANISTS PLAY CARNEGIE HALL'S WEILL RECITAL HALL

A dozen Mason Gross pianists took the stage at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in New York City on Nov. 13, 2011, for a rousing performance celebrating the 200th birthday of Hungarian composer Franz Liszt.

David Dubal, author, lecturer, pianist and honey-voiced host of WWFM's *The Piano Matters*, hosted the evening; Music professor Min Kwon organized the event.

"The general level of playing was of an extremely high caliber," Alexandra Eames wrote in her critique of the concert at NYCConcertReview.com. "The students played with confidence, technical security and musical sensibility, proving that the Music Department at Rutgers is on a par with the world's most prestigious conservatories."

Kudos to participating pianists **Paul Conrad, Eva Shu-Yu Huang, Jahye Kim, Mina Nourbakhsh, Zin Bang, Alexander Beridze, Miao Hou, Junko Ichikawa, Huizhong Shen, Chia-Shan Cheng, Erickson Rojas** and **Yevgeny Morozov**.



LARRY LEVANTI



Some jobs our alums have held post-graduation.  
Working artists for sure:

**Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist**

**Tony-nominated Broadway director**  
**Galician bagpiper**  
**Founder of Tony-winning regional theater company**  
**Mime artist**  
**Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra Lead Trumpet**  
**Jazz and opera singer**  
**Golden Globe-winning actress**  
**MTV**  
**Marching band director**  
**First violin, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra**  
**Graphic novelist**  
**Principal cellist, New York Philharmonic**  
**Tony-winning actor**  
**DJ/ executive**  
**record producer**  
**Filmmaker and screenwriter**  
**Chair of Jazz studies, Temple University**  
**voice actor**  
**Playwright**  
**Performance/video/light artist**  
**Dancer, Stephen Petronio Company**

# 2011 ALUMNI HOLIDAY RECEPTION

More than 160 alums, faculty and friends gathered on Dec. 12, 2011, for the annual alumni holiday reception at The Ailey Studios in Midtown Manhattan. Attendees toasted the season, feasted on hot and cold hors d'oeuvres (the guacamole was a hit) and enjoyed city views from the glassed-in studio. Visual Arts alum Richard Cuozzi won the evening's raffle—a pair of engraved Rutgers wine glasses along with a wine-bottle opener and stopper.



PHOTOS BY LARRY LEVANTI

## Art of glass

The Mason Gross School's custom-made 42-bowl glass armonica made its public debut on Dec. 14, 2011, at Schare Recital Hall. **Music** student **Curtis Streetman** performed on the new instrument before an audience of faculty, staff and friends, as did his instructor, noted glass musician and new Mason Gross faculty member **Dennis James**. Benjamin Franklin is most often credited with the mid-18th-century invention of the glass armonica, a series of tuned quartz bowls mounted on a spindle. The armonica player elicits the sound, often described as "heavenly" and "ethereal," by rubbing the glass. The Mason Gross School's glass armonica was purchased in part with support from Col. Robert and Professor Charlotte Craig. Col. and Professor Craig also fund an annual graduate fellowship for the student selected to study the instrument in addition to his or her main discipline.



Glass armonica student Curtis Streetman, from left, with donors Col. Robert and Professor Charlotte Craig and glass armonica expert Dennis James. James is new to the Mason Gross School's Music faculty.

LARRY LEVANTI



# Design students team up with food-policy council to fight hunger

Forget waiting until graduation to plunge into the “real world”; if you look hard enough, you notice that the “real world” is everywhere.

More than half of New Brunswick households report struggling with regular access to fresh, healthy food (2009 *Healthier New Brunswick Community Survey*)—proof that the “real world” comes with plenty of challenges.

Seventeen Mason Gross School students in Jacqueline Thaw’s Design II course confronted those challenges during the fall semester by volunteering to establish a brand identity for the newly formed New Brunswick Community Food Alliance. In December 2011, three students presented design concepts in a meeting with Community Food Alliance members, and soon after the Alliance opted for junior **Visual Arts** major **Ali Worthington’s** design.

The Alliance is a local food-policy council with representation from a wide cross-section of the community: Rutgers University, Johnson & Johnson, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, the New Brunswick Board of Education and

the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as various grassroots groups.

“This is where design can be helpful, for a new organization,” says Thaw, who initiated the Mason Gross-Alliance collaboration via the university’s Civic Engagement and Service Education Partnerships program, or CESEP. “I do think design might help them figure out and promote who they are.”

The Alliance’s goal, according to member Lisanne Finston, also executive director of the New Brunswick-based Elijah’s Promise, a multi-service agency that features a soup kitchen, catering business and culinary school: “Create a healthy food environment” by, among other things, expanding farm stands and community gardening, enhancing healthy, affordable offerings in corner markets, eliminating junk food from the emergency food supply and establishing incubator kitchens to house small food businesses.

The student designers’ charge: formulate a distinctive visual brand that will define Alliance brochures, stationery, packaging, business cards and the burgeoning organization’s homepage, among other items.

What can art do to stave off hunger? According to Finston, who has served as the Alliance liaison on the design project, plenty.

“Internally it helps us to focus in on and visually represent how we see ourselves in a way that will resonate with people and will draw them into becoming involved in the organization,” she says. “In a sound-bite society, it’s important that you can clearly and succinctly communicate what you’re about. If not, you’re sunk.”

**“IN A SOUND-BITE SOCIETY, IT’S IMPORTANT THAT YOU CAN CLEARLY AND SUCCINCTLY COMMUNICATE WHAT YOU’RE ABOUT,” SAYS COMMUNITY FOOD ALLIANCE MEMBER LISANNE FINSTON. “IF NOT, YOU’RE SUNK.”**

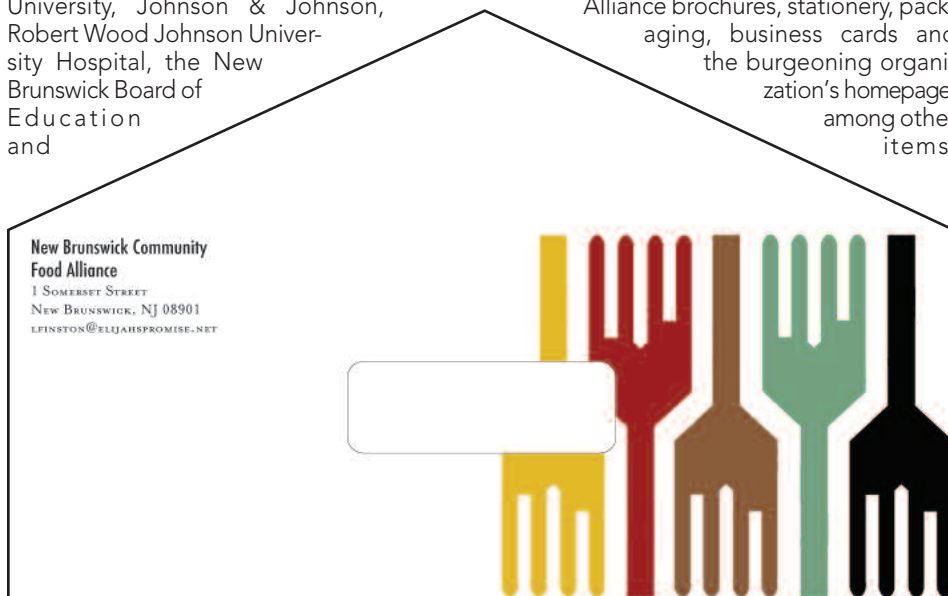
Worthington says she learned about how to “form a design around the client’s needs. As a Mason Gross student, I am asked to complete projects for which I can usually provide my own subject matter and style,” she says. “The way in which I created this style had to stem from the client’s needs, not my own. This process helped me gain new perspective in my application of design while maintaining my own style.”

Sophomore Visual Arts major **Derek Springsteen** says he was eager to expose his designs to professional scrutiny.

“This is not an exercise; it’s the real world,” says Springsteen, who met with Finston and other students to determine the Alliance’s design needs. Ultimately, he says, his sketches of fruit slices are meant to communicate “the idea of a centrally focused community, with everyone coming together. Everything points to the center. I felt that [design] connected to Lisanne’s idea that they were trying to make [the partnership] work for everyone.”

Finston says she hopes to continue the Alliance’s collaboration with the Mason Gross School.

“The arts are excellent skill sets and important resources in communities,” she says. The Alliance has “the challenge of having a clear image and brand. To [consider] a new organization without this is unthinkable.”—LG



Ali Worthington's winning design for the New Brunswick Community Food Alliance.





TAKE

FOUR THINGS

LARRY LEVANTI

1

Catching original documentary and narrative films on **TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2012**, at the **New Lens Student Film Festival**. The **free** event, sponsored by the Rutgers Center For Digital Filmmaking, kicks off at 7 p.m. in Nicholas Music Center. Stop by and find out what our student filmmakers have their eyes on.



LARRY LEVANTI

2

GRADUATING NEARLY 200 STUDENTS ON **Saturday, May 12, 2012**, at the State Theatre, a lovingly restored former movie palace and vaudeville house in downtown New Brunswick. We admit it: Our lower lips quiver each year when we hear the opening strains of *When the Saints Go Marching In* as the faculty enter the hall.



COURTESY STATE THEATRE

3

Giving the Mason Gross School a standing O when the neighboring State Theatre presents the school with the **State Theatre Leadership Award in the Arts**, Saturday, May 19, 2012, at its annual gala. According to the State Theatre, the award honors individuals or organizations making a significant contribution to the "artistic excellence, scope of service, fiscal stability or advancement of the performing arts in New Brunswick and New Jersey."

**AWW, SHUCKS; WE THOUGHT NO ONE HAD NOTICED.**

we're all jazzed up about...

### The 2012 Mason Gross Summer Series

4

four Wednesdays in July of **free** music and dance by professional companies from across the globe, and of course, the annual performance by the **RUTGERS JAZZ FACULTY**.

Learn more about the performing-arts series on the back page of the magazine, and

**GET YOUR SUMMER ON** at the Mason Gross Performing Arts Center.



CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN





## Kirkpatrick Glass Project

In October 2011, the school began restoring all 43 stained-glass windows in Kirkpatrick Chapel. The project began with a team from Jersey Art Stained Glass Studio of Frenchtown engineering the removal of the clerestory windows. In November, the team removed the eastern stained-glass windows, three of which date back to the late 19th century from the studios of Louis Comfort Tiffany. The entire project, which also will encompass the massive windows above the front door and at the rear of the chapel, is slated for completion in June 2012. To support this worthy project, or to learn more about other funding opportunities at Kirkpatrick Chapel, please call 848-932-5237.



PHOTOS BY LARRY LEVANTI



# STUDENT VOICES: Elizabeth Rose Zwierzynski

Dual BFA/EdM **Dance** student Elizabeth Rose Zwierzynski traveled to South Africa last summer with Rutgers Graduate School of Education's South Africa Initiative: Study Tour 2011. During the three-week service/learning trip, Zwierzynski traveled to Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria, where she taught dance to underprivileged children. She received support from the Mason Gross Academic Excellence Fund, the Graduate School of Education's Alumni Association and Dr. Sarane Boocock, as well as George and Dr. Aubrey Leef. Zwierzynski relates her experience here:



PHOTOS COURTESY ELIZABETH ZWIERZYNSKI

The South Africa Initiative marked a lot of firsts in my life: my first plane flight, my first trip to another country and my first challenge as a dance educator. The trip was the most transformative experience of my educational career.

The study tour taught me the importance of being a flexible educator. Prior to visiting the various schools, I did not know how many students I would have, how old they were and for how long I would teach them. To accommodate, I created a flexible lesson plan that could be adapted to any age range. These moments forced me to be sensitive to the actions of the students, to improvise and adjust as needed.

One of my most cherished memories is of a young girl who ran up to me after I had finished class. She caught word that someone was teaching a dance class, asked me if I danced ballet and began moving. The young girl allowed me to follow her dance movements. We shared a mutual role of leader and listener as we switched, dancing and following. There was something so brilliant and vital shared in that nonverbal communication.

Outside the classroom, I visited many



Elizabeth Zwierzynski with her dance class in South Africa.

historic sites, such as Robben Island, where numerous political prisoners, including past South African President and Nobel Laureate Nelson Mandela, were held during the apartheid era. In addition, I was very touched by a tour guide at the District Six Museum in Cape Town. The guide, Noor Ebrahim, related how he was forcibly removed from his home once the area was declared whites-only. These personal histories have distilled for me the political tension of South Africa.

I was in awe of South Africa and its people. My trip has provided a lasting impact by setting up a foundation for my future learning in my dance-education course work.

Visit Zwierzynski's South Africa blog at [www.masongross.edu/dance](http://www.masongross.edu/dance).

## In Memoriam

THE MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS COMMUNITY REPORTS WITH GREAT SADNESS THE LOSS OF ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL. WE EXTEND OUR CONDOLENCES TO EACH OF THEIR FAMILIES AND CLASSMATES.

**Lois Dean Braen**, Music, 1947, BA, Douglass College, 11/9/11

**The Very Rev. William M. Hargett**, Art, 1960, BA, 9/19/11

**Judith Weiss Hollander**, Art, 1964, BA, Douglass College, 4/13/11

**Edith M. (Miller) Kogan**, Art, 1965, MFA, 10/12/11

**Cecily (Goldstein) Low**, Art, 1966, BA, Douglass College, 12/5/07

**Norman Shiffman**, Theater, 1981, MFA, 7/28/11

**Edith J. (Thomas) Waterhouse**, Art, 1954, BA, Douglass College, 9/6/10

**Judd Woldin**, Music, 1957, MA, 11/27/11

All death notifications included in this issue of our newsletter were submitted to the university after our last issue in fall 2011 and before going to press on this issue. We apologize for any omissions and ask that loved ones of deceased alumni, friends, donors to the school, faculty and staff notify us by emailing [records@winants.rutgers.edu](mailto:records@winants.rutgers.edu). Please be sure to include the full name of the deceased (and name as a student, if it were different), death date, class year and major. Thank you.



## Mason Gross Summer Series 2012

**Wednesday, July 11, 7:30 p.m.**

**MUSIC:** TENET  
Nicholas Music Center

**Wednesday, July 18, 7:30 p.m.**

**DANCE:** Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana  
Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater

**Wednesday, July 25, 7:30 p.m.**

**DANCE:** Monica Bill Barnes & Company  
Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater

**Wednesday, August 1, 7:30 p.m.**

**MUSIC:** Rutgers Jazz Faculty  
Nicholas Music Center

Nicholas Music Center and Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater are part of the Mason Gross Performing Arts Center, 85 George St., New Brunswick.

Admission is **FREE**. Tickets may be assigned at time of entry. Seating is first come, first served.



Flamenco Vivo  
Carlota Santana

LOIS GREENFIELD

The Mason Gross Summer Series is sponsored by the Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Rutgers Summer Session and the Bloustein Fund.

All information subject to change.

**732-932-7511**

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