

FIR ACRES NEWSLETTER

ONE ACT FESTIVAL

THE KING STAG

DANCE EXTRAVAGANZA

LOVE & INFORMATION

THEATRE THESIS FESTIVAL

SUMMER '15, LEWIS & CLARK THEATRE



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The Department continues to thrive, and we're looking forward to an exciting '15-'16 academic year. There has been a regime change! Stepan Simek is under house arrest in New York City (i.e. leading the New York program), and I will be returning as Chair, a post I held from '01-'09. Since Stepan is following his New York trip with a year long sabbatical, he won't be returning to us until Spring '17. This is what happens when you earn a "Faculty Excellence Award," as Stepan did last spring. Yay! In the meantime, we plan on re-arranging the furniture and converting his office into a spa.

We are happy to have Visiting Assistant Professor Quill Camp back with us for at least another year. Quill went to Reed as an undergraduate, but through a long process of professional counseling we have forgiven him! Among the many things we're excited about this year is that Quill will be teaching a course on African theatre and performance, a much-needed non-Western addition to the curriculum.

We should also mention that Stepan was instrumental in establishing a special honor for Vaclav Havel, the former president of the Czech Republic and one of the 20th century's great playwrights, on campus. It's called "The Havel Place" and it's a small landscaped area directly across from Fir Acres. There's a bench with two chairs (created by a noted Czech artist) with a linden tree growing up inside the table. It is a great honor and privilege to have one on our campus. Kudos to Stepan for making it possible.

This fall *Once Upon a Weekend* will have an alumni component! Alums will be able to write to the prompt and come to the casting call on Friday afternoon. We're reprising the alumni participation event we sponsored four or five years ago that was such a success.

I will direct the main stage show, Carlo Gozzi's *The King Stag*, and because the show involves mask work (the show features two deer, a bear, and a parrot) we will be working with guest artist Tony Fuemmeler, a local mask-maker, puppeteer, and movement specialist, on the show. Tony will be building some spectacular masks as well as providing commedia-based movement workshops. Michael Olich is designing the set and costumes for the show and Matthew Robins has been working out the logistics of a revolve stage – which we haven't ever really tried. So Stag will be a colorful, magical adventure!

The one-act festival this year has been organized by last year's American Theatre class under Quill's

leadership. It has an actual name this year—*"Think Fast"*—and it mixes some classic one-acts with a contemporary, student-written play.

Rebecca Lingafelter is working on multiple projects, as usual. Rebecca was Teacher of the Year at LC last year (Yay!) and has accordingly been selected to deliver the opening address at Convocation. She has promised us that she will make us laugh, cry, and inhale deeply. Rebecca will be on a well-deserved junior sabbatical in the spring.

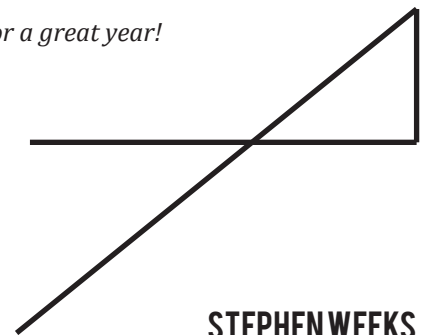
Quill will be directing the spring main stage: a contemporary play by Caryl Churchill called *Love and Information*. And course there will be a spectacular *Senior Thesis Festival* in the spring created by our senior majors.

The Dance curriculum has expanded with the addition of two new courses: Social Dance Forms and Contact Improvisation. In addition, Eric Nordstrom has signed on as our permanent adjunct faculty member in dance. Dance X is as popular as ever, as is the program itself, and we had a huge audition process for this year's iteration. Finally, we are getting movement on our long-term goal of acquiring/creating a new dedicated dance studio! Tip of the hat to Lewis & Clark's Director of Facilities, Michel George, for helping to nudge this dream of a project along.

We have new (and more) lighting instruments for the Black Box, and a new sound and projection system. So now all our BB classes will be even more fully equipped for classes, demonstrations, finals, and productions!

As usual, the Department will be running day and night with activity, and our "artist-scholars" will be up to their ears with coursework and production work. If you're a new student, we welcome you to check us out, see what we're doing, and join in. If you're a returning student, we welcome you back, and hope to see you in our classes and productions soon. If you're an alum, please stop by to say hello to catch up with us and so that we can catch up with you.

Best wishes for a great year!



STEPHEN WEEKS

ROBERT AMICO '15
terrifies as the Doctor
in *Spring Awakening*,



EXIT THE KING RECAP

SPRING '15 MAINSTAGE

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Eugène Ionesco wrote the witty, raucous, and ultimately deeply moving play *Exit the King* in 1962 after suffering a serious illness in his middle age. He wrote that the illness and the fear that it provoked prompted him to see if “one could learn to die.” More than anything else, *Exit the King* is an attempt to come to grips with the inevitability of death. But it is at the same time a play that celebrates life, delighting in all of its ridiculousness, preposterousness, and fragile beauty.

Exit the King marks the fourth outing of Ionesco’s alter ego protagonist Bérenger, who had previously appeared in *The Killer*, *A Stroll in the Air*, and Ionesco’s most famous full-length play, the absurd political satire *Rhinoceros*. In this play, Bérenger is not only a stand-in for the author, but for the audience as well. His fate will also be our fate. In the play, Queen Marguerite admonishes Bérenger for not having spent enough time contemplating and preparing for his death. In a sense, this is what Ionesco is offering us – a moment to contemplate our own mortality, to begin the process of understanding what it will mean to be absent from the world. That is, if the world will even continue to exist – in *Exit the King* the demise of the king is mirrored by the dissolution of his empire and the threat of total environmental collapse. It is in drawing this last parallel that *Exit the King* marries the timeless with the timely – not only must we face our own inescapable demise, we must also confront the possibility of complete ecological ruin.



A disgruntled Queen Marie (**EMILIA SORACCO** '16) is comforted by Queen Marguerite (**EMILY HODGSON** '15) in *Exit The King*.



LONG LIVE THE KING. THE KING IS DEAD.



EXIT THE KING

In this play, Ionesco exploits the tension between ephemerality and permanence inherent to theatrical performance. Every night the curtain comes down and the world of the play disappears, but the next night the curtain rises again. Ionesco’s double disappears in *Exit the King* only to reappear in other plays. Though Ionesco doubted the durability of the world, he wrote plays nonetheless, small defiant acts of faith in the face of a reality that might or might not extinguish itself. Though he knows he must go, like King Bérenger, Ionesco refuses to go quietly.



ROBERT QUILLEN CAMP

King Berninger, played by
MATROSS '17, attempts
to assert his authority
over his rapidly
dwindling kingdom.
Exit The King, Spring '15



A BEHIND-THE-SCENES INTERVIEW

WITH MATTHEW ROBINS

So, how did you get your start in theater?

Well, I actually started in high school originally. I had a very influential theatre teacher who came into my school with almost no arts training and quickly cobbled together a theatre program you could really be proud of. She recruited me originally as an actor—it wasn't until college, where I was still pursuing acting, that I got a part-time work study job working in the scene shop just building sets and doing lights. And it only took a few years of that before I realized that, one, I'm way better at carpentry than I am at acting, and I wasn't very good at carpentry at the time, so that should tell you something about how good of an actor I was. But also, I enjoyed it. A lot. Even more than I enjoyed performing. So much so that I would occasionally skip my classes to go in and work on sets. After three years working in that shop, I graduated from Whitman and I already had a job offer waiting at a small summer stock theatre in upstate New York. The people I met there led me to additional technical work in New York City. I realized that not only did I enjoy this kind of work far better, but I had far more job security in the technical theatre world.

On that note, do you think that backstage experience is a crucial part of theatre education?

I do. I, like many people in our department, believe that a little bit of general theatre education goes a long way. No matter what you specialize in, having a wide range of knowledge is going to be really useful. One of the things I love to hear from alumni—even those who went on and never did any technical theatre—I'll meet with them and they'll be like, "Hey, the stuff I learned in T-Lab helped me build a barn". Or, "I built a deck in my backyard".

Okay, I'm taking that class.

Things like that. So even the people who don't go on to specifically do technical theatre are constantly telling me that these things are still useful to them, and are marketable!



NO MATTER HOW LONG I DO THIS, THERE'S ALWAYS GOING TO BE SOME NEW CHALLENGE, SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE BEFORE.



Most definitely. So, you're the technical director and you oversee all of backstage. Do you have a favorite part?

It's hard to say. I do a lot of things here, which is one of the reasons I love this job so much, because I get to do so many different things that I wouldn't get to do in a non-educational theatre. Some of my favorites are, of course, actually building. Even after all this time, and after I have a small army of students who do the construction for me, one of my favorite things is still going into the shop, getting covered in sawdust or welding slag, and actually getting to build something with my own hands. But probably the other thing that comes to mind is getting to hang out during tech rehearsals, especially for the student-directed performances. Getting to be there backstage while everything is coming together, and seeing the show finally snap together into a work of art, as it always does in the last second. And getting to be there with all the actors, technicians, designers, and seeing all that come together.

What projects are you most looking forward to this year?

The King Stag is going to be huge. The costumes are going to be amazing. And the set, you know, it's not the biggest or most elaborate set I've ever built. But it is going to include a turntable, which turns "on its own". We're going to find some way to motorize it. I've built a lot of turntables in my life, but I've never motorized one, so that's a fun design challenge for me. No matter how long I do this, there's always going to be some new challenge, something I've never done before.

What inspires you most about the work you do?

There's a lot of the day-to-day stuff that I enjoy—the building, the people I work with, the conversations. But what keeps me in the theatre when I could theoretically go off and do other things is... it's going to sound cheesy, but it's the magic of live theatre. Live theatre is an art form that exists for a brief moment and then is gone. Each performance only exists for a limited amount of time... even the longest Broadway runs come to an end, and that giant set that you were so proud of eventually ends up in a warehouse or a landfill somewhere. And somewhere on that night, in that specific moment, with *that* audience member watching *that* show... when the cues go perfectly, when the set changes and the light cues hit, and the video screen is finally working for once, and the actors step out on stage and they have that wonderful moment together. There are those moments where, even after all these years, there's a magic. You're seeing a work of art that sometimes just transcends reality. And every once in a while you maybe get a glimpse of something bigger.

MATTHEW HAS WORKED AS FIR ACRES' TECHNICAL DIRECTOR SINCE '08.

2015 ONE ACT FESTIVAL

THINK FAST



On October 1 through 3, the LC Theatre Department will present **THINK FAST: 2015 ONE ACT FESTIVAL**. The focus of the festival this year is on theater and social change, and we will pair the plays with panel discussions around issues raised by the work.

SOLVEIG ESTEVA '16 is directing Alice Gerstenberg's early twentieth-century feminist play *Overtones*, which contrasts the way women present themselves in public with their true private thoughts.

RAYMOND FENTON '16 is directing Bertolt Brecht's classic *Lehrstück* ("learning play") *The Exception and the Rule*, which explores intersections of violence and class.

CHARLOTTE MARKLE '15 is directing *Men are Unappealing* by **EMMA SCHULER** '16, which, by examining how women "should" behave, provides a more contemporary take on some of the issues raised by Gerstenberg's play.





ERIC NORDSTROM,

Visiting Instructor of
Dance, leads a contact
improvisation lab
in Freiburg, Germany.
Read about his trip on
the next page.

FREIBURG IMPROV FESTIVAL



Each August, teachers and students from around the world gather in Freiburg, Germany for the Contact Improvisation Festival Freiburg. Contact Improvisation (CI) is a physical investigation into gravity, momentum, and weight sharing between two or more bodies. Dancers move with constant attention to their own bodies, impulses, and trajectories, while listening and responding authentically to their partners. The form encourages mindful awareness and mutual exchange. The yearly Freiburg festival offers 200 participants the opportunity to dive into an intensive week to explore the dance form.

This year, I was invited to participate in the festival, and also to join a group of international CI teachers who met for the week preceding the festival.

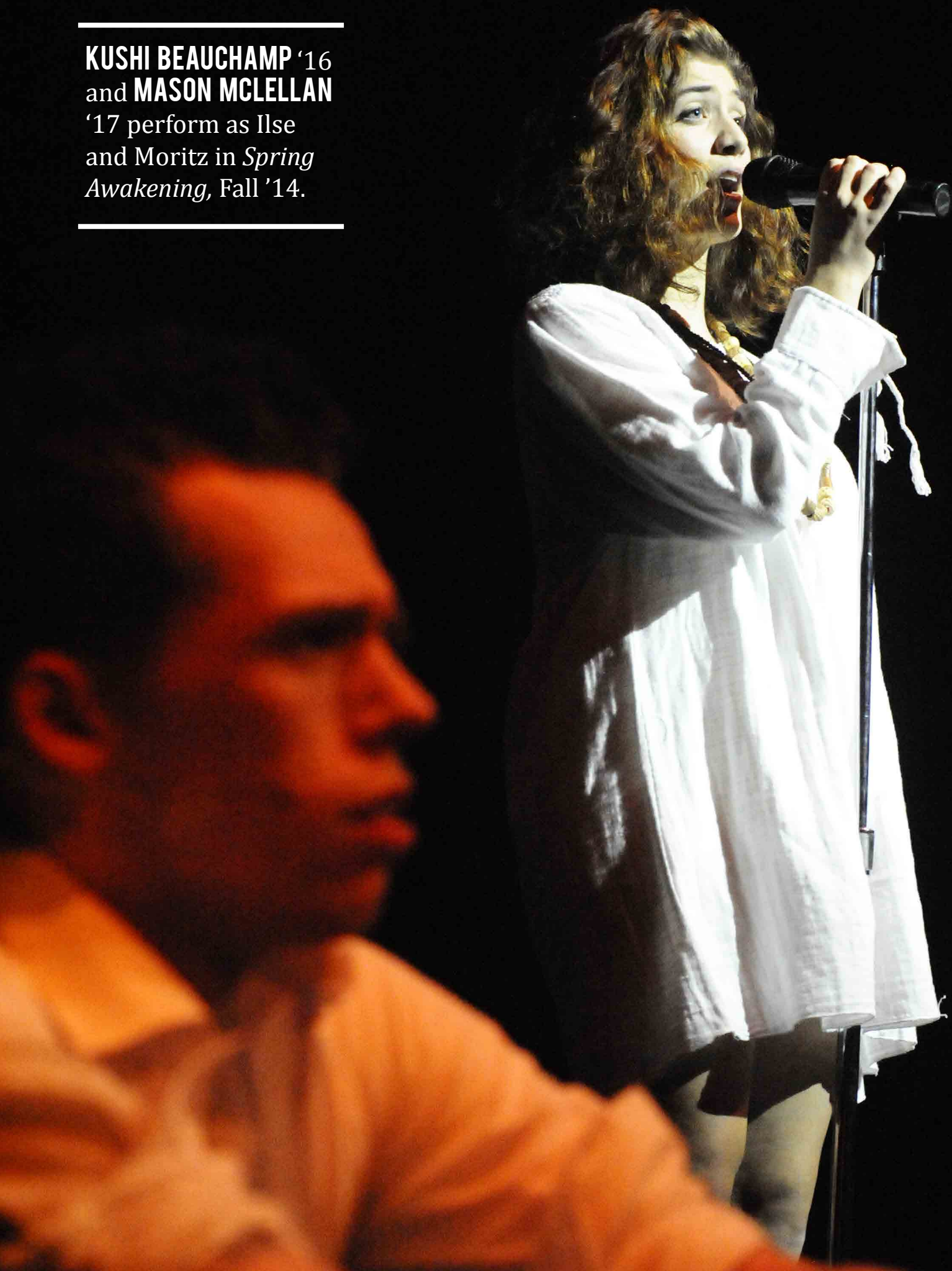
During this "teachers meeting" week, our group met to exchange ideas, explore pedagogy, and dance together. Being at the festival has underscored for me how CI is being used worldwide as a dance form and movement research to answer the question: what is possible at the point of contact where we meet?

I am excited to bring new ideas gleaned from the festival, along with my long history of CI, to Lewis and Clark this Fall by teaching Contact Improvisation (TH 201), Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:40-11:10AM.



ERIC NORDSTROM

KUSHI BEAUCHAMP '16
and **MASON MCLELLAN**
'17 perform as Ilse
and Moritz in *Spring
Awakening*, Fall '14.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

This May, **USMANALLY ('04)** won an Obie Award for his off-Broadway performance in *The Invisible Hand*, by Ayad Akhtar. This is only one of several honors Usman has received this year, as he was additionally recognized by the college as the recipient of the 2015 Outstanding Young Alumnus Award, presented by the Lewis & Clark Alumni Association. Usman has starred in theatre premieres across the country, including a stage adaptation of Disney's *The Jungle Book*, and *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. His television work includes roles on *Damages*, *BOSS*, and *Madame Secretary*.



USMAN ALLY '04

WORKING ON SOMETHING INTERESTING? DROP JOYCE A LINE AT BEENY@LCLARK.EDU

TO BE FEATURED IN THE WINTER EDITION OF THE FIR ACRES NEWSLETTER!

FACULTY UPDATES



REBECCALINGAFELTER IS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

REBECCALINGAFELTER spent spring semester teaching Devised Performance and Senior Thesis for the first time. She enjoyed both immensely and was very proud of the work that the students created in both classes. She also performed in Third Rail Repertory's *Belleville* by Amy Herzog and *Grounded* by George Brant at CoHo Theatre. She was honored this spring to be named Teacher of Year, and also win a Drammy Award for her solo performance in *Grounded*. This summer she began work on *The Journey Play is the Whole Thing* with her company, PETE. This series of integrated performance events attempt to create a durational work of art which explores the themes, landscapes and questions inspired by Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. The first event, *Drowned Horse Tavern*, was produced in July as part of CoHo Theatre's Summeriest. This fall, Rebecca will be co-directing Will Eno's play *The Realistic Joneses* for Third Rail Repertory Theatre.

ROBERT QUILLEN CAMP will be giving a lecture this fall at the Portland Art Museum on the relationship between the practice of conceptual artists like Sol Lewitt and new possibilities for dramatic form. In the spring, in addition to directing Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information* on the LC mainstage, he will be collaborating with Portland Experimental Theatre Ensemble on a new performance work, *The Procedures for Saying No*.

SUSAN DAVIS is very excited about the growth of the dance program with the addition of two new course offerings, Contact Improvisation and Social Dance Forms/History and Practice. She is thrilled to be working with Eric Nordstrom, our new permanent adjunct who brings his expertise in Contact Improvisation to the curriculum. This fall she will oversee the 19th annual Dance Extravaganza. With the 20th year concert on the horizon Susan would love to collaborate with dance alums!

In June and July, **ERIC NORDSTROM** rehearsed and performed with POV, a Portland dance company that makes architecturally based work. In August, he travelled to Freiburg, Germany to teach a contact improvisation lab and attend the International Contact Improv Festival. He continues work on his RACC-funded documentary film about the history of contemporary dance in Portland.

Since the last newsletter, **MICHAEL OLICH** has been focusing his creative activity on developing and completing the scenery and costume designs for this fall semester's Main Stage production of *The King Stag*. He even travelled to Canada for a costume shop, hunting for India-influenced fabrics from wonderful neighborhood shops in Vancouver, BC.

MATTHEW ROBINS was happy to work with Anon It Moves for their May production of *The Winter's Tale*. As lighting designer, he was also able to work in one of Portland's newest theaters, Shaking the Tree. He was happy to highlight (all pun intended) some of the talent from The Circus Project, a local circus arts training organization.

Last spring, **STEPAN SIMEK** organized the unveiling of the Vaclav Havel's Place at the College in the presence of such dignitaries as the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States, and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. This Fall, Stepan will lead the arts-focused New York abroad program. He has also been translating a new Czech play, *A Very Large Mermaid*, and is in preparatory stages for his translation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, which will be the second Chekhov translation in his planned series of new translations of all of Chekhov's major plays.

STEPHEN WEEKS finished his sabbatical year and is looking forward to returning this fall as Department Chair and as director of *The King Stag*. During his sabbatical, he completed a writing project on the performance of anti-communist citizenship during the early Cold War, and lectured on *A Streetcar Named Desire* for Alumni Weekend, and on *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland.

'14 THEATRE DEPARTMENT HONORS '15

LEON PIKE / EDGAR REYNOLDS SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 1987 (with the help of Edgar Reynolds) to honor Leon Pike, who was a distinguished faculty member in the technical and design area from 1961-1987, awarded to students in theatre, with a preference for design and technical theatre.

**2014-15 RECIPIENT
TREVOR SARGENT**

HOWARD ROSS WARREN SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 1988, awarded to students who demonstrate academic excellence in the theatre arts or dance.

**2014-15 RECIPIENTS
EMILY HODGSON, MARLON JIMENEZ OVIEDO, & AMY WILLIAMS**



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COMING UP ...

NEW YORK ABROAD

WITH

STEPANSIMEK



DANCE X

THEATRE FACULTY

JOYCE BEENY... Administrative Assistant

ROBERT QUILLEN CAMP... Visiting Instructor in Theatre

SUSAN E. DAVIS... Dance Program Head and Senior Lecturer

ASHTON HULL... Costume Shop Manager and Instructor

REBECCA LINGAFELTER... Assistant Professor of Theatre

ERIC NORDSTROM... Visiting Instructor of Dance

MICHAEL OLICH... Associate Professor of Theatre

MATTHEW ROBINS... Technical Director and Instructor

STEPAN SIMEK... Professor of Theatre

STEPHEN WEEKS... Chair and Associate Professor of Theatre

FOLLOW FIR ACRES



@FIRACRESTHEATRE

FALL '15 SEASON

OCTOBER

OUAW
OCTOBER 17

THINK FAST

OCTOBER 1
TO
OCTOBER 3

NOVEMBER

KING STAG

OCTOBER 30
TO
NOVEMBER 7

DANCE X

DECEMBER 4
TO
DECEMBER 5

DECEMBER