

FALL 2020 NEWSLETTER

# FIR ACRES THEATRE

LEWIS AND CLARK COLLEGE



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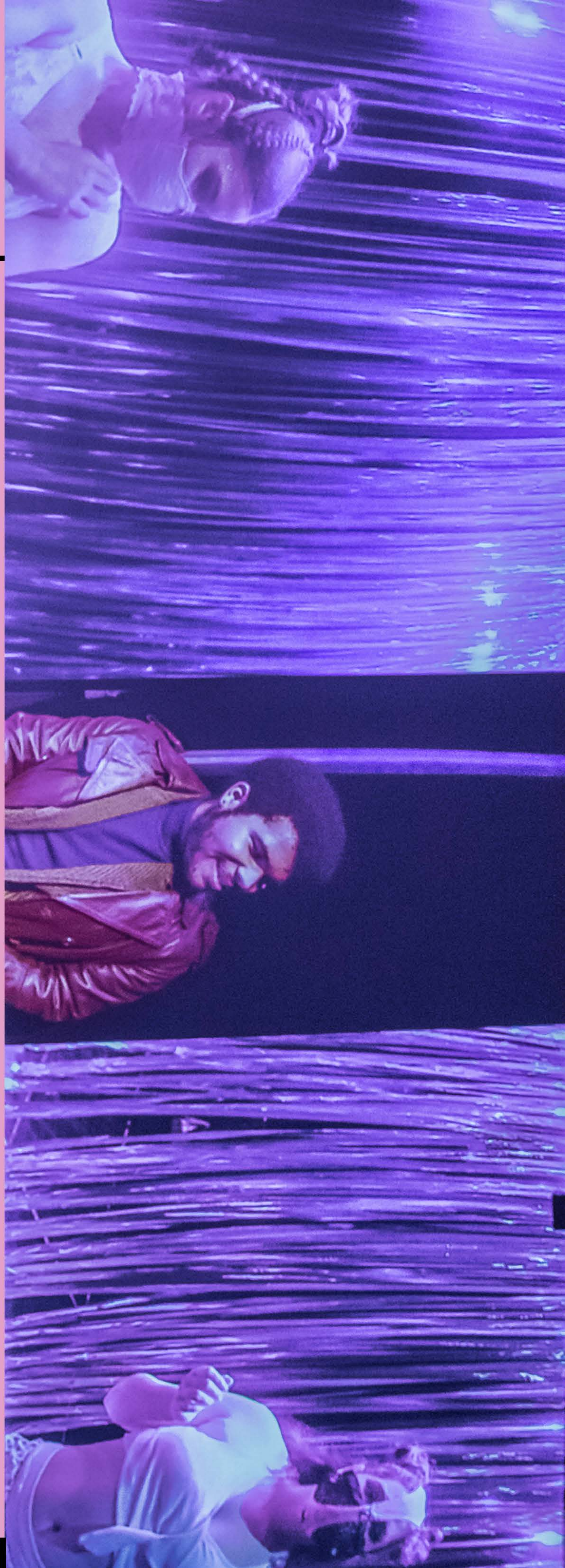
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# MEET THE FACULTY AND STAFF

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JENNY AMPERSAND COSTUME SHOP MANAGER AND INSTRUCTOR  
JAMPERSAND@LCLARK.EDU



JOYCE BEENY ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR  
BEENY@LCLARK.EDU



SUSAN DAVIS SENIOR LECTURER IN THEATRE/HEAD OF DANCE  
DAVIS@LCLARK.EDU



REBECCA LINGAFELTER ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF THEATRE  
RLINGAFELTER@LCLARK.EDU



ERIC NORDSTROM VISITING INSTRUCTOR, DANCE  
ERIC@LCLARK.EDU



MICHAEL OLICH PROFESSOR OF THEATRE  
MOLICH@LCLARK.EDU



MATTHEW ROBINS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR AND INSTRUCTOR  
MROBINS@LCLARK.EDU



ŠTEPÁN ŠIMEK PROFESSOR OF THEATRE  
SIMEK@LCLARK.EDU



JENNA TAMIMI POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW  
JTAMIMI@LCLARK.EDU



# A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

STEPAN SIMEK

At the end of August, I sent out a welcome letter to all our new and continuing students. In it, I wrote: **The Fall 2020 semester will be ‘different’ to say the least**, and we all should be honest about the challenges we’re facing. Some experiences will be fantastic and others may not live up to our expectations – such is the nature of the times we’re living through.

Nonetheless, we would like to encourage you to attack the semester in the Theatre Department with the highest expectations of yourselves and of us. We’re ready to make as much lemonade as possible out of the lemons handed to us, and while some trepidation about this whole experiment is inevitable, we’re looking forward to getting to work.” Well, the semester is almost over, and we can look back to it with satisfaction and pride. Yes, it was a “different” semester; everything seemed very strange at the beginning, many things that we normally take for granted were absent; and we all had to work much harder to make things happen. **Nonetheless, we did make a lot of lemonade out of the lemons handed to us, we all “attacked” the semester with the highest expectations of ourselves, and we succeeded beyond expectations.**

With Professor Weeks’ recent retirement, and with Professor Lingafelter on Sabbatical this Fall, we welcomed our first ever Postdoctoral Fellow, Jenna Tamimi to our Department. Jenna, who has just recently completed her Dissertation at UCLA, came to us to teach two classes and to direct our Spring production. This Fall, she taught a very large and – judging by the enthusiastic reports by the twenty-five students in the class – extremely successful course in the History and Theory of Modern and Contemporary Performance, and she is busily preparing for her **Spring Main Stage production of The Secretaries**. We are very happy to have Jenna onboard, we we’re working with the College Administrators to perhaps extend her stay here beyond the duration of her Postdoctoral Fellowship.



With the COVID 19 restrictions, and with the extreme care we were taking to stay safe and to avoid the spread of the virus it would appear that the theatre and dance were in crisis, and that making performance was almost impossible. However, as a Department we decided to consider the current circumstances not as an obstacle but rather a challenge to be overcome, and a “problem” to be solved. For example, all our acting classes were conducted in person with a strict adherence to the mask and social distancing mandates. While we couldn’t engage in certain exercises and procedures that are normally part of the actor training process, we developed ways to compensate for that absence, and concentrated more on scene analyses and the clarity of enunciation forced by the ever-present masks, found creative solutions to scene work that would normally call for a close physical contact of the scene partners, and explored ways how to play an action at a distance. Other classes were taught in the “hybrid” model with some students present in the classroom or a studio and others working remotely, and by all accounts those classes worked well for everyone involved.

Most importantly, the Department continued to engage our students in stage productions.

In November, we successfully produced a fully staged and fully realized musical, *Cabaret* with dancing, singing, acting, and all the necessary components of a major musical production. More than fifty students were involved – actors, singers, dancers, choreographers, designers, stage managers (three of them to boot!) videographers, musicians, technical and costume crews, and so on. The organizationally and technologically complex production that took place simultaneously in two different locations and we used sixteen cameras, complex music recording and mixing technology, and highly advanced video editing programs.



It allowed the entire creative team to not only create a riveting theatrical and musical event and to tell a compelling and important story, but to also learn number of new skills such as acting for camera, rehearsing in relative isolation, recording and mixing music, and other important creative methods for the twenty-first century. **The production was an unmitigated success**, and it was presented for a small live audience as well as live-streamed into a large outdoor tent for a larger group of audience members.

Similarly, our annual Dance Extravaganza, or **Dance X** proceeded as planned with all the work presented on film and distributed to a wide audience. Dance film is a genre of film that involves dance or movement as a principal element. Unlike video documentation of a live dance, the choreography for dance films is typically created for and only exists on film. Our student choreographers and dancers collaborated with local videographers Robert Uehlin and Conrad Kaczor to create several unique dance compositions, and they too have proven that even in those “dark times” dance is alive and well. While we don’t know what exactly is in store for us in the Spring Semester, **the Fall has definitely taught us that creativity has no bounds**, and the it can overcome even the most daunting obstacles. This is why we’re looking towards the next semester with much confidence and we’re convinced that the entire 20/21 academic year at the Theatre Department will continue being a success. Professor Tamimi has some great surprises up to her sleeve for the Spring 21 Main Stage production of *The Secretaries*, our Senior Theatre majors have submitted exciting thesis proposals which they will implement this coming April, our dancers are gearing up for the Spring Dance Y production, and our faculty and students are ready to “attack” the next semester with the same determination to excel as they did during this very strange Fall.

*- Department Chair ŠTĚPÁN ŠIMEK*



THE FIR ACRES FALL 2020  
MAIN STAGE PRODUCTION



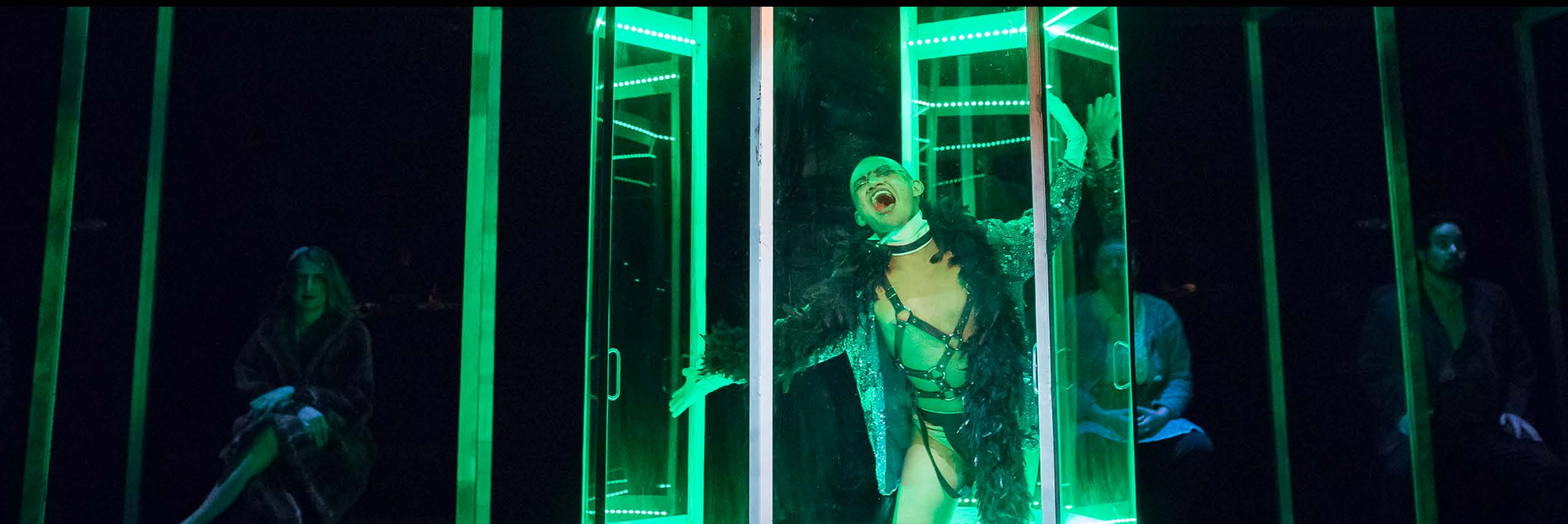
# CABARET

DIRECTED BY STEPAN SIMEK



*Based on the 1950s Broadway play I'm a Camera, which itself is based on Christopher Isherwood's semi-autobiographical novel "Berlin Stories," Cabaret is set in the early 1930s Berlin as the Nazis are raising to power, and it tells a story of an American writer, Cliff Bradshaw and his relationship to the irrepressible English cabaret singer, Sally Bowles as they are engaging in hedonist pursuits of the burlesque entertainment at a seedy nightclub called the Kit Kat Klub, meeting a cast of Berlin characters including an amorous Jewish fruit vendor and his down-to-earth landlady, an increasingly powerful Nazi organizer, and others, and becoming increasingly aware of the looming catastrophe of the Nazi regime.*





*wilkommen to the kit kat klub. photo credit to owen carey*



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We are opening our “hybrid” production of Cabaret just one day after the momentous 2020 US election. As I’m writing this, I’m not at all sure how things will play out on November 3rd, but as you are reading this, you — if the election proceeds along at least somewhat civilized lines — already know. The musical you’re going to see takes place in Berlin, Germany in the early 1930s. It presents us with a world that is in political and cultural turmoil, a society that is deeply at war with itself, and a country that in just a few years will throw the world into the most inhumane, brutal, and catastrophic period of human history, but also with a city that is still one of the most open, permissive, and culturally liberal places in the world. The Nazis in Germany are slowly gaining power, the streets of Berlin are a battlefield, violent skirmishes between the extreme left and the extreme right groups are a daily occurrence, and dark clouds are gathering on the horizon. And yet, the city parties, drinks, dances, and everyone seems to be engaging in hedonistic pursuits of pleasure, entertainment, and sexual freedom. The band at the Kit Kat Klub, where much of the action of the musical takes place, plays on as the Titanic is sinking below the dancers’ feet. Presiding over the story you’re about to see is the Master of Ceremonies at the Kit Kat Klub, a strange and perhaps mysterious figure that will alternately warn, tease, entertain, provoke, and ultimately awaken you to the realization that the grotesque entertainment at the core of this play is but a mirror of the unprecedented conflagration of the equally “grotesque” Nazi regime that is just about to come to power in Germany, and — perhaps — also a mirror of our own time in our own country, ninety years later.

Producing a full-fledged musical at this time of the plague was an audacious undertaking, but it was exactly that audacity, if not the sheer impossibility of pulling it off that drew us all towards it. The dedication, the creativity, and the perseverance of everyone involved in this production was inspiring; every single member of the cast, the dancers, the technical and design teams, the choreographer, the music and voice directors, the musicians, the crew, and the countless others who contributed to this production have proven beyond any doubt that even if things seem impossible, they only “seem” so, because in reality, everything is possible.

— Štěpán S. Šimek



[illegible]



***Dance Extravaganza, commonly referred to as Dance X, offers students the opportunity to have their choreography fully staged for large audiences. This year due to Covid19 restrictions all the work will be presented on film.***

*Dance film is a genre of film that involves dance or movement as a principle element. Unlike video documentation of a live dance performance, the choreography for dance films is typically created for and only exists on film.*

*Student choreographers are collaborating with local videographers Robert Uehlin and Conrad Kaczor and with them they learning new skills about how to film and edit dance. Though we will miss performing to a live audience on Fir Acres mainstage, the process of making dances specifically for film has inspired students to investigate many different creative possibilities and consider new ways that their work can be experienced and viewed.*

*Rather than feeling compromised to not be able to proceed through the Dance X process as usual, the students took the problem-solving ball of plan B and ran with it. Even in these dark and challenging times of isolation and dealing with the limitations that Covid19 imposes, their perseverance and creative spirits seemed to be even more ignited with intense energy. Because this concert was be available for many people to see online, we realize it may have been viewed by an even larger audience than those who make up the normally five sold out shows in Fir Acres. The Lewis & Clark Dance Program believes in empowering students to create and produce dance at the highest possible level. Since its inception, over a thousand students have participated in making Dance X what it is today.*





**ONE**

choreographed and performed by Martin Lopez and Gila Winefeld

Our piece is about resistance versus acceptance; about defiance versus surrender to forces we can't control. In the speech excerpts which this piece draws on, philosopher Alan Watts reasons that individual human choice and being able to shape life in every which way is an illusion. Once we awaken from that illusion, we realize we must come to terms with our one, ultimate reality. In other words, the self becoming one with the universe is the only resolution. It's this deep journey of reckoning that we hope to portray in our piece.

**OF MONSTROSITIES**

choreographed and performed by Liza Clairagneau

An exploration of the ugly and the monstrous. There are monsters that I am, the pain I inflict on myself; and the ones I am told I am by the world I inhabit. In a body that is consistently marginalized, how do I separate the ugly that I am from the ugly I was taught? When I know the monstrous in me, how do I see the humanity in it? How do I confront my monsters not as one dimensional beings, but as reproductions of pain, from this life and others? How do I see the monster in the human and the human in the monster? How do I truly see all of them in me?

**FLUIDITY IN THE BRUTALIST LANDSCAPE**

choreographed and performed by Quincee Lark

The hard geometry of the world we have constructed, with some exceptions, is profoundly incongruous with our forms and the other natural forms with which we have co-evolved. Our very bodies and the bodies of most creatures are liquid, multifaceted, arching, curving, and twisting with a tenderness, softness and flexibility which allows us to grow, heal, and adapt over the course of time. In what ways does this constructed world of geometry serve us as humans and in which ways does it inhibit us? Does living in hard geometry discourage us from connecting to the true fluidity that we possess? What is the psychological impact of living in a box? What do small acts of resistance against a hard geometric landscape look like?



# ***NOT ALONE, TOGETHER***

choreographed by Emma Bryan and performed by Jinju Hurley and Martin

Lopez

This is a narrative about a couple's relationship. This piece explores how long distance relationships are intrinsically different than relationships that do not begin online. Another element of relationships that is explored is how neuro-divergence and romance interact both with beautiful and sinister undertones when engaging in a LDR. Despite the ups and downs it's important to remember that things are scary but things are less scary with a friend so you shouldn't say no to connection forever just because you've been hurt by someone in the past.

# ***NEBULA***

choreographed and performed by Ally Rosa

This piece seeks to create an atmosphere of the intuitive. It explores the way that our bodies move and orbit, and how dance can make us weightless. Ultimately, something celestial will be created out of natural movements. The choreography will fade into space, but left behind will be the physical representation of that movement.

***FACULTY ADVISOR: SUSAN E. DAVIS***

***CINEMATOGRAPHERS: CONRAD RACZOR & ROBERT UEHLIN***

***TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: MATTHEW ROBINS***

***COSTUME SHOP MANAGER: JENNY AMPERSAND***

***PRODUCTION/STAGE MANAGER: MARY ALICE PERKINS***

***GRAPHIC DESIGNER: PARKER WRENN***

# ***DNCX2020***



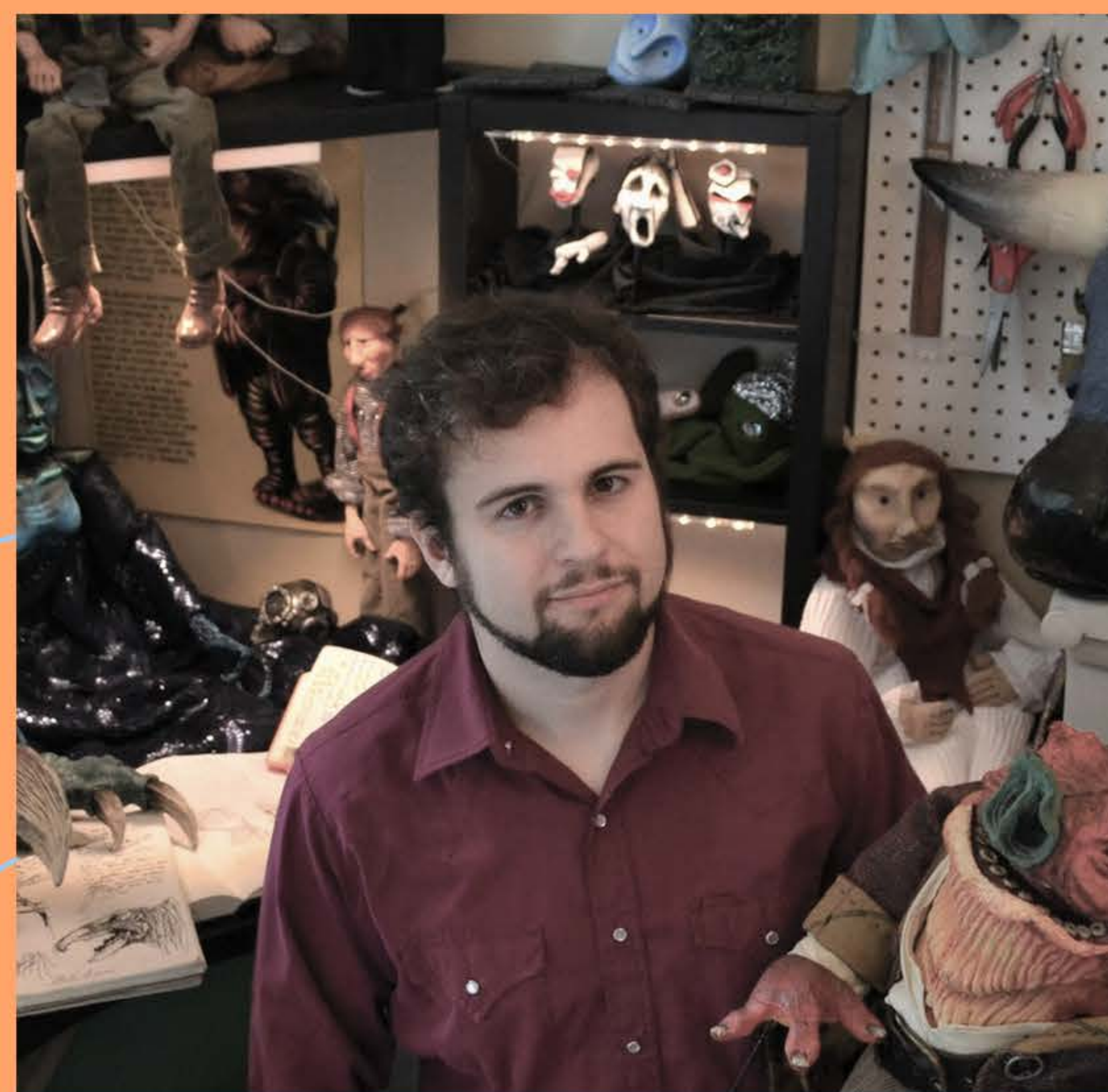
# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

**with Robert Amico**

**class of 2015 Studio Art BA & Theatre Minor**

## **what was the first thing you did after graduation?**

I worked for an events company like some other theater alumni I knew, because it seemed adjacent to theater. It was not. Luckily, that job was short lived. Shortly after that job, however, I worked overhire at Michael Curry Design, a company that fabricates huge puppets and props for Disney and other clients. It was a great job to have right after college: not only did it look good on a resume, but it taught me a lot of useful fabrication skills that I later brought to my work as a Puppet Fabricator for Portland Center Stage and as a Props Master for Artists Repertory Theater and Oregon Children's Theater.



## **what are you up to now?**

When the pandemic hit, I had been in rehearsals for Oregon Children's Theater's production of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar show." I was part of the ensemble as a Puppeteer, but I was also the Puppet Wrangler. I was also working as a Puppet Designer with Stepan and some other local theater artists on a really cool show called "Danse Macabre: The Testament of Francois Villon." Both shows, unfortunately, were cancelled due to Covid-19. The puppetry community quickly adapted. I was able to remotely participate in the National Puppetry Conference and the 48 Hour Puppet Film Festival, take workshops from my favorite puppeteers, and even perform for virtual Puppet Slams across the United States and Canada. The new online-format of Puppet Slams has been a great opportunity to reach audiences and artists with whom I may not have otherwise connected, and I am grateful that I have been able to consistently perform.

I've created several new puppetry acts with the help of Keziah Peterson, another LC alum, and I feel that I have done some of my best work this year. I've had to lean on Graphic Design and other work to help make ends meet, but I am very fortunate for the myriad of puppetry opportunities that have come my way in these times. At the time of writing this, the winter holidays are approaching, and I am continuing to make submissions to various holiday-themed Puppet Slams and Keziah and I are creating a new winter show.



## ***favourite theatre project?***

I really loved being a Puppeteer and the Puppet Wrangler for OCT's "The Hungry Caterpillar Show." I was in their first production of the show in 2018. Not only was it a delight to perform onstage for children, for whom the puppets were truly magical, but it was thrilling to keep the puppets in working condition. The show must go on, and when a puppet broke, it was my responsibility as the Puppet Wrangler to fix it. I knew that I would succeed in fixing it, because I had no choice. It's a pretty cool feeling.

## ***piece of advice that stuck with you?***

"Overhire" work is a theater artist's bread and butter when starting out and is a great opportunity to become acquainted with the cultures of different theaters around town and to form a network. Cultivate your personal and professional relationships, especially if you plan on sticking around Portland for a few years. Word of mouth is huge, and Portland is small enough to make word of mouth really count, but big enough to have a variety of opportunities. If you are interested in puppetry, join the PDX Puppet Collective. You will find many talented and knowledgeable artists who can help you grow.



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

*with Momoka Kato*

*class of 2020 Theatre Design BA*

*what was the first thing you did after graduation?*

I watched Netflix drama that I'd been putting up with not watching until my thesis finished.

*what are you up to now?*

Getting ready for my new chapter in my life as a hotel worker



*favourite theatre project?*

Marie Antoinette was one of my most favorite productions I was involved as a prop designer. The processes of designing and creating fake cakes were challenging but also enjoyable and fulfilling. It was so moving to see those props become part of the “world” of Marie.

*anything you'd like to share?*

I'm so excited to see how those experiences in theatre design will affect my future.

“Pipin” is one of my favorite musical piece and it's so memorable for me since I joined the production in high school which when I decided to learn theatre in college

*piece of advice that stuck with you?*

“Don't be afraid to fail”



# FACULTY UPDATES

## Rebecca Lingafelter

Rebecca Lingafelter has been on sabbatical this fall. Her creative work has focused on performance that searches for liveness and connection within the constraints of the pandemic. She created a mobile pop-up performance with PETE, called the Weather Room, which toured Portland neighborhoods and was made into an choose-your-own-adventure film released in November. In addition she directed a digital documentary performance piece, You Are Here, for Third Rail Repertory, which asked members of the Portland community what it means to live here now. Finally, she has been working with PETE on a new devised work, Fronteriza, which explores the story of company member Cristi Miles' experience as a first generation Mexican American growing up on the border in El Paso in light of the current refugee crisis. While she has enjoyed a little more time to focus on her creative work, she has missed teaching and seeing students and colleagues, and is looking forward to coming back in January!

## Michael Olich

“Last March, within just days of finally presenting the costumes and scene designs for Portland Opera production of Vivaldi’s Bajazet to its first audience, the production that Michael had been working on for three years was cancelled due to the oncoming pandemic. Soon, like everyone else on campus, he was distracted by quickly learning to take the final weeks of the Spring ’20 semester to a ‘virtual’ conclusion. But the virus didn’t get in the way of planning for our Fall ’20 production’s scenography of Cabaret. (And it didn’t prevent his promotion to the rank of full Professor.) Now, with Cabaret coming to life via all kinds of ‘live’ and ‘virtual’ technology, Michael is busy dreaming how Spring ’21 will get to be just as “virtual” – and is excited to be collaborating on the scenic opportunities for our spring production of The Secretaries with our post-doc director Jenna!”

## Joyce Beeny

Hello Dear Ones! Well, I thought I had pretty much run the gamut of challenges here at L&C after 43 years in my happy, cozy corner of the campus. But the curtain has always gone up and that is still the case in spite of the uninvited COVID-19 challenge. Your L&C Theatre Department is alive and well and moving forward. I’m still so very proud to be part of that Team!



## Stepan Simek

During the summer, Stepan spent quite some time planning and preparing for the 2020 mainstage production of Cabaret. He has also taken a long bike trip to the San Juan Islands and back, and he spent some long days working on his old house and his beautiful garden. In September he took over the Chairing of the Department and is tremendously enjoying the writing and replying to gazillions of administrative emails, partaking in the often endless Zoom meetings as part of his duties, and dealing with daily pleasures of running the place in the time of the plague. He's been busily rehearsing for the mainstage production with an amazing student cast of eighteen actors, singers, and dancers, and with the help of a vast student and faculty production team that is determined to pull off this audacious undertaking of producing a full-fledged musical under the current circumstances. He's teaching two acting classes and is grateful for the positive energy that comes from real human beings in a real three-dimensional space in real time in his classrooms and in the rehearsals. Thank you all for being here and for sending out good vibes.

## Jenna Tamimi

Jenna Tamimi is new to the Lewis and Clark community. She completed her Ph.D. at UCLA over the summer and is thrilled to be a postdoctoral fellow in the Theatre Department! It has been a strange but fulfilling school year so far. She has been so impressed by the pluck of Lewis and Clark students and faculty and is so proud to be a part of the team.

Jenna loved teaching The History and Theory of Modern and Postmodern Performance in the fall, and she can't wait to direct The Secretaries this spring!

faculty updates  
faculty updates  
faculty updates





# *Coming Up*

*spring 2021*

## **MAIN STAGE**

### **The Secretaries**

by the Five Lesbian Brothers

Directed by: Jenna Tamimi

## **AUDITIONS**

Recordings by January 20th.

Contact [jtamimi@lclark.edu](mailto:jtamimi@lclark.edu)

## **SHOW DATES**

March 12 through 19

## **THEATRE THESIS FESTIVAL**

Original Works by  
Graduating Theatre Class of 2021  
April 21-24

## **DANCE Y**

Student Choreographed and  
Performed Dance Concert  
Late April





**STAY CONNECTED**  
**@firacresttheatre**





# Fir Acres Theatre