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ABOUT THE COVER: The Rainwater Innovation Grants were created to encourage student musicians to innovate and explore American music. Of the grants’ inaugural recipients, Sean Riley’s 3-D printed electric six-string violin is the most visual representation of taking a classic instrument and bringing it into the 21st century. Photographer Lawrence Peart juxtaposed Riley’s delicate 240-year-old Italian violin with the newly printed plastic instrument. This fall, Riley will play the new violin in a performance of John Adams’ The Dharma at Big Sur, composed for a six-string electric violin. Learn more about Riley’s project and what other students are doing with their grants on page six.
Those of you who have been following the College of Fine Arts for the last few years are, by now, familiar with my refrain: technology, globalization and new forms of creativity are rapidly changing the arts, artistic practices, the way we access and participate in cultural activities, the commerce of the arts and the way “creatives” can and must make a living in cultural and creative industries. And it’s incumbent on a public university arts college to adapt to those changes as rapidly—and radically—as our students need.

I’ve been forecasting and promising a “sea change” in the way we educate the artists, performers and “creatives” of the next generation. I’ve promised that the College of Fine Arts would reinvent itself and its relevance to the economy and culture of our state and region. I’ve promised that we as a college would refashion ourselves to become as vital to the future of the University of Texas as any of the scientific, technical and professional colleges at UT.

With that in mind, I’m excited to share news of the creation of the new School of Design and Creative Technologies, a fourth major academic unit of the College of Fine Arts that will include a new Department of Design, a new Department of Arts and Entertainment Technologies, the Design Institute for Health (a collaboration with the Dell Medical School), the Center for Integrated Design, as well as a new creative entrepreneurship and innovation initiative.

I don’t think it is premature to conclude that this is the single most significant change in the College of Fine Arts since its creation 80 years ago.

This new school is building its curriculum and faculty in close collaboration with the commercial industries that we expect to employ our future graduates. The interest from that commercial world, from High-End Systems, AT&T, IBM, Rooster Teeth, Intel, Dell, Open Labs, USAA, Charles Schwab and Autodesk, has been affirming.

Over the last year, we have put more than $3 million into renovating classrooms, offices, collaborative work spaces and fabrication facilities to help support this new school. We need to invest even more in moving our facilities into the 21st century. I hope you’ll come by to have a look at where we’re going and what we’ve accomplished so far. And I hope you’ll help us advance this vision with your financial support. Our students deserve the investment in their future, which is, after all, our future.

I’m proud to be able to announce that the School of Design and Creative Technologies will be led by design industry thought leader and Center for Integrated Design founding Director Doreen Lorenzo. Lorenzo was formerly CEO of frog design, one of the leading independent design firms in the country.

I’m equally pleased to announce the appointment of Jan Ryan, a veteran executive in the Austin technology industry, venture capitalist and a leader among women entrepreneurs, who will be joining the college as Director of Creative Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

While this will be a year of transition as we reorganize this new unit, we are energized and excited by the opportunities this new school will create for our students.

Excelsior!

Doug Dempster
College of Fine Arts launches School of Design and Creative Technologies

In a move aimed to support the need for creative professionals in the business, nonprofit and government worlds, College of Fine Arts has created the School of Design and Creative Technologies. The new school will focus on educating students for creative professions in heavy demand across a wide range of industries. Students will study designing for health, designing for artificial intelligence, creative technologies in theater and music, entrepreneurial ventures and cross-disciplinary design thinking methodologies.

The school, which will be led by design industry thought leader Doreen Lorenzo, is expected to become the largest academic unit in the college as it continues to grow undergraduate enrollment in the Arts and Entertainment Technologies and Design programs. The school will include a new Department of Arts and Entertainment Technologies and Department of Design, as well as the Center for Integrated Design and the Design Institute for Health.

Thanks to a partnership with UT Libraries, the new school will be housed on the fourth floor of the Fine Arts Library in a space that has been renovated to create state-of-the-art classrooms with adaptable technologies, a high-tech teaching lab, dedicated design studios, an audio studio, seminar rooms and faculty offices.

Three Fine Arts students receive Roy Crane Award

Three of the four 2017 Roy Crane Awards for Outstanding Achievements in the Arts went to students in the College of Fine Arts.

Dance and economics senior Sofia Aranha, graduate theatre student Jacqueline Heimel and music composition doctoral candidate Alex Heppelmann were all honored in this year’s category of performing arts. Each recipient received a monetary award of $1,125. To be considered for the award, a student must be nominated by a faculty member and submit an application and a portfolio. The selection committee was chaired by Assistant Professor of Music Jonathan Gunn.

George Flaherty named new director of CLAVIS

George Flaherty, associate professor in the Department of Art and Art History, has been named as the new director of UT’s Center for Latin American Visual Studies (CLAVIS), a physical and intellectual hub for the advanced understanding of modern and contemporary art from throughout the Americas.

Flaherty previously served as associate director of CLAVIS, and he is also affiliated with the Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the Center for Mexican American Studies on campus. In his new role, Flaherty says he will continue the pioneering work of CLAVIS co-founders Dr. Andrea Giunta and Dr. Roberto Tejada and build upon the university’s long history of sponsoring advanced research and teaching related to Latin American art and Latin American studies.
Marianne Gedigian to be inducted into the Academy of Distinguished Teachers

Marianne Gedigian, professor of flute in the Butler School of Music, was announced as a 2017 inductee into the university’s Academy of Distinguished Teachers. Comprising about 5 percent of the tenured faculty in the university, the academy provides leadership in improving the quality and depth of the undergraduate experience. Members of the academy advise the president and provost on matters related to the university’s instructional mission; participate in seminars, colloquia and workshops on teaching effectiveness; and serve as mentors to new faculty.

Gedigian will be honored with this year’s five other inductees at the annual Academy of Distinguished Teachers dinner in October.

Bruce Pennycook receives Cale McDowell Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Studies

Bruce Pennycook, professor in the Butler School of Music and chair of the Department of Arts and Entertainment Technologies, was awarded the Cale McDowell Award. Pennycook has created the Center for Arts and Entertainment Technologies and a new Arts and Entertainment Technologies degree, both of which bridge disciplines between art and technology.

“Pennycook has been laser-focused and fearless in building this innovative curriculum with dedicated faculty who are artists and entrepreneurs in their own right,” said Holly Williams, senior associate dean in the College of Fine Arts. “What sets his work apart, however, and is especially extraordinary, is his skill at creating partnerships that model the collaboration he expects AET students to learn in this new degree. He has partnered expertly and willingly with foundations, industry leaders, artists, computer scientists, faculty and staff.”

Beili Liu named a Texas State Artist of 2018

Beili Liu, associate professor in the Department of Art and Art History, was named 2018 Three-Dimensional Artist by the Texas Legislature. The one-year term includes statewide recognition and the honor of representing the state’s artistic legacy. Two visual artists—in the categories of 2-D and 3-D—are selected alongside a state musician and poet laureate.

1. Photo courtesy of the Department of Design.
4. Alex Heppelmann. Courtesy photo.
5. George Flaherty. Courtesy photo.
Venice Biennale showcases work of Professor Teresa Hubbard and Alexander Birchler

Teresa Hubbard, the William and Bettye Nowlin Professor in Photography, and Alexander Birchler, a Swiss artist who is an affiliate research scholar at UT Austin, are showcasing their work to an expected half million visitors at the Venice Biennale, which runs through Nov. 26.

Exhibiting at the Swiss Pavilion, their work, Flora, is a double-sided film installation that interweaves documentary and fiction to tell the story of mostly unknown American artist Flora Mayo and acclaimed architect Bruno Giacometti. The work has been lauded as one of the best exhibitions of the festival by many critics.

College co-commissions opera on life of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera

The College of Fine Arts has partnered with the Fort Worth Opera, the San Diego Opera and DePauw University’s School of Music to commission The Last Dream of Frida and Diego, a new opera by Grammy Award-winning composer Gabriela Frank and Pulitzer Prize-winning librettist Nilo Cruz that celebrates the genius and artistic greatness of the iconic artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. The opera will be an homage to Mexican culture and its traditions.

The Last Dream of Frida and Diego will be comprised of three acts and will have three main characters—Catrina (Keeper of Souls), Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera—along with a chorus. The libretto will be in Spanish, though an English version will be available.

The opera will have its world premiere at the Fort Worth Opera in April-May 2020, with subsequent productions scheduled to take place at the San Diego Opera in 2021 and in the College of Fine Arts in February 2022.

Maya Meetings to become Mesoamerica Meetings

UT’s Mesoamerica Center is renaming the annual Maya Meetings event and will now call it the Mesoamerica Meetings.

The annual program brings scholars and interested individuals together every January to study and explore the richness of ancient Maya art, archaeology and writing. The celebrated Mayanist Linda Schele founded the conference in Austin in 1977, when they were known as the Maya Hieroglyphic Workshops. Since their inception, the Maya Meetings have featured lectures, forums and research workshops, many geared to the study and learning of ancient Maya hieroglyphs. Today, the Mesoamerica Meetings continue to evolve with the field of Mesoamerican studies, striving to represent this exciting world of archaeological research and discovery.

“We think it’s time to expand our horizons and shine light upon the wider interconnected world of Mesoamerican archaeology, art and history,” said David Stuart, director of the Mesoamerica Center. “The Maya will often be our focus in workshops and in the symposium, but not always. We look forward to new discussions, new ideas and new friends joining us at future gatherings.”
Ajinkya Barve and Eric Zimmerman, both M.F.A. candidates in Design, have very different backgrounds and professional experiences. But their common interest in health care drew them to apply for fellowships with the Design Institute for Health, a partnership between the College of Fine Arts and the Dell Medical School that uses a creative design-based approach to address the nation’s health care challenges and rapidly integrates that perspective into medical education and community health programs. The institute is led by two veterans of the internationally recognized design firm IDEO: Stacey Chang and Beto Lopez.

Barve grew up in India, where he did his undergraduate work in product design. He was introduced to health care design through an internship with IDEO in Chicago. Zimmerman, on the other hand, had no formal design training—he holds a Master’s Degree in Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs and most recently worked as a public sector consultant for a small firm in New Mexico before applying for the fellowship.

The institute selects two new graduate fellows every year, and the two-year fellowship is designed to gradually bring the students into the fold as support designers at the Design Institute for Health, where they work with various partners in the community and health care industry on different engagements. The first semester of the fellowship is designed to allow the fellows to get oriented to the program and become familiar with the processes and pace of the Design Institute. In their second semester, the fellows work a project that aligns with their professional interest and background, while supporting on other team projects. The fellows continue to support some of the Design Institute’s ongoing work in their second year while they complete their M.F.A. theses.

Barve is currently working on a public-facing, community-oriented physical outpost of the Dell Medical School Library to make it accessible for community members to get information about understanding their health and their voice in it. His work will guide patients on the new clinical interactions that can happen within Dell Med’s Health Transformation Building. He is exploring how people want to receive information and how to onboard and teach them to use the resources through iterative prototyping.

Zimmerman has an interest in the intersection between health and transportation—a topic he’s further exploring in his master’s thesis—and has been working on a pilot project between the Dell Medical School, Community Care Collaborative and the nonprofit ridesharing service RideAustin to provide transportation to medical appointments for some of the community’s most vulnerable patients.

Reinventing health care with design

Design Institute for Health fellowships offer hands-on experience for Design graduate students

By Alicia Dietrich
Make It New

Music innovation grants spark collaboration and inspiration for musicians and scholars

By Rose L. Thayer
As a violinist, Sean Riley loves to discover contemporary music that draws new crowds to the classical art of music. The doctoral candidate believes in building a relationship between the performers and audience through music that is appealing to both parties.

“My late grandfather used to tell a story that a famous violinist came to his hometown in Tennessee and performed a contemporary piece that the audience didn’t understand and didn’t like,” Riley said. “She was shocked that she didn’t get any applause after her performance. To my grandfather’s great despair, the performer told them it was obvious they needed to hear it again and proceeded to play it once more.”

This search led him to The Dharma at Big Sur by John Adams, a living American composer.

“The Dharma at Big Sur struck me as a musical depiction of the grandeur and expanse of American nature and architecture inspired by it,” he said.

But there was a catch in performing this particular composition—it requires a six-string electric violin. Riley’s 240-year-old Italian instrument may be beautiful, but it just wouldn’t cut it for this piece of music. So Riley conceived a project to 3-D print his own electric violin, and thanks to funding from a new American music innovation grant, Riley’s dream to play The Dharma at Big Sur is becoming a reality.
In early January, the Butler School of Music unveiled the Rainwater Fund for American Music, a newly established $5 million endowment created by the late UT alumnus Richard E. Rainwater (B.A., Mathematics, 1966), a Fort Worth investor and fund adviser. The ambition of Rainwater’s fund is to advance the study of music produced by Americans—from roots to jazz to film music to the concert hall—at The University of Texas at Austin. A portion of the endowment was set aside to fund competitive grants for students pursuing innovative projects related to American music.

“I am grateful that we have this opportunity to provide these grants to our students,” said John Fremgen, associate professor of Jazz at the Butler School of Music and member of the grant selection committee. “I was honestly amazed at the scope of the submissions.”

Seven recipients were announced in March with funding offered at $5,000 and $2,500 for projects ranging from Riley’s electric violin to research on traditional Oaxacan music to multi-discipline concerts held in public spaces.

“Sean’s was the one proposal in which a tangible object was the outcome—which was unique,” Fremgen said, describing it as the perfect old-meets-new form of ingenuity. “Rather than a research proposal or an innovative performance proposal, of which there were many interesting ones, Sean’s stood out as unique in that respect. His desire to work with students in other areas to build the instrument was also a plus.”

To complete his project, Riley enlisted Rebecca Milton, an undergraduate student in studio art, and Daniel Goodwin, a recent graduate in mechanical engineering, to help create the violin. This fall he plans to host a joint concert and art installation where he will perform the piece and Milton will showcase art inspired by the music and violin.

“With the right people, generative communication patterns and an excellent idea, a project can succeed in its original purpose and find ways to go far beyond it,” Riley said. After enlisting Milton to transform the 3-D printed instrument into a work of art in its own right, Riley could see his original idea morphing beyond what he first imagined.
Another project set to take place this fall is from Kevin Parme, a Ph.D. student in ethnomusicology. He hopes to promote interest in traditional Oaxacan music, and, by extension, Mexican culture, with a three-part initiative. It involves dissertation research on brass and wind band music in Oaxaca and a bi-national collaboration with CIESAS (the national center for anthropological studies in Mexico), as well as bringing specialist Dr. Sergio Navarrete Pellicer to campus for a presentation of Oaxacan music and dance.

Both student ensembles Prismatx and Austin Camerata used their funding to host multi-disciplinary concerts last spring. Prismatx incorporated art from Rachel Stuckey (M.F.A., Studio Art, 2016), while Austin Camerata collaborated with dance students and faculty from the Department of Theatre and Dance and a creative writing graduate student from the Michener Center for Writers. They held free concerts in a children’s hospital, a brewery and the Capitol building rotunda.

“Our No. 1 goal is to make chamber music more exciting, more accessible and more integrated into the community,” said Daniel Kopp, co-founder on the Camerata project. “We want to find a way to get people in the door and then surprise them.”

Next spring, the Rainwater Grant committee will meet again to select the next round of students with ideas of innovation and creativity.

“Like all art, music must maintain a collaboration between the old and the new,” Fremgen said. “Whether in performance, composition or research, without forward-thinking artists and scholars constantly pushing boundaries and offering fresh perspectives, creativity is lost.”
Longhorns in Hollywood

Semester in L.A. eases transition from student to working actor
By Rose L. Thayer

Walking to class on the first day of the spring 2017 semester was a bit different for Christian Henley and her 14 classmates. Instead of making her way across the Forty Acres toward the Winship Drama Building, she and the other B.F.A. in Acting students were walking together down a street of Burbank, California, as part of the inaugural class to complete the last semester of their undergraduate degree in Los Angeles—the heart of the entertainment industry.

“We were walking in a group, and we see the department chair, Brant Pope, outside the building waving his arms,” Henley remembered. “That was the perfect start. There was so much excitement. That’s how we felt about the whole thing.”

These students were the first to participate in a carefully planned and executed curriculum to bring B.F.A. in Acting students to Los Angeles to complete their undergraduate program in the city that most already planned to move to after graduation.

“A lot of people when they talk about moving to L.A., they say the hardest part is the transition,” said Jordan Maranto, who graduated from the B.F.A. program and is now signed with a manager in L.A. “I always knew I wanted to move to L.A. to pursue acting. This program was five months of having my hand held out there. I met so many people who gave us such great advice. They were reiterating what we already learned at UT Austin.”

In partnership with the UT Semester in Los Angeles (UTLA) Program in the Moody College of Communication, the students had housing and rigorous coursework, but also a taste of what it means to be a working actor in L.A.

“All serious acting programs are training students to work professionally. Hence, you might say that we have a responsibility to build strong bridges to the profession,” said Lucien Douglas, associate professor in acting. “Having worked extensively as a professional actor, it has always been my goal and dream as a university acting instructor to be a part of such a program.”

The program connects students to industry professionals and real-world experiences through a curriculum comprised of acting courses taught by L.A. locals with strong industry ties and experience. Michael D. Cohen, a working actor and recurring character on the Nickelodeon show Henry Danger, taught acting for the camera in a classroom at the Moody College’s Burbank facility. Students also participated in the Foundation Course at Howard Fine Acting Studio in L.A., where they mixed with working actors of varying ages and backgrounds in the classroom.

For Henley, who has since moved to Los Angeles and signed with a management group, these courses were really a continuation and enhancement of what she’s already learned at UT. Going back to her freshman acting class with Douglas, she recalled he constantly emphasized the importance of bringing props to class to transform the stage into a space for the character.

“We always were like, ‘Oh Lucien, he just loves props,’” Henley said with a laugh. Then Howard Fine introduced the same call for props, and it just clicked. “It’s not a joke. It is helpful and other people in the business take pride in that.”

That is what it’s all about, Douglas said. (And yes, he knows the jokes about his love for props). When he traveled to observe the students in Fine’s class, he said he was touched to see them all so invested and working so hard.
“I didn’t feel I was watching students. I felt I was watching young artists, young actors. They were really invested and really living up to the standards and setting the bar high for each other.”

Robert Ramirez, associate professor and head of acting, spent time in L.A. with the students and also witnessed this transformation.

“I was so impressed by the rigor in Howard’s classroom,” he said. “The classroom is run so professionally, and the standard on use of props and time management and focus—we couldn’t have asked for anything more in line with the way we work at UT.”

Both Cohen and Fine have signed on to teach the next iteration of students in spring 2018.

“The students were well-prepared and had excellent work habits,” Fine said. “What made the experience unique is that I was able to work with the B.F.A. candidates for an entire semester. ... Not only did the Texas contingent have to adapt to Los Angeles, but they also got to work with a wide variety of actors from various backgrounds and ages. The challenges they faced helped them gain confidence as their horizons expanded.”

The semester ended with a showcase attended by casting agents, directors and other industry professionals. Cohen conceived and directed the showcase, which was unlike any presented by other programs. It utilized television scripts, and each student wrote a monologue about a deeply meaningful event from their personal lives. Transitions between these moments were filled with short song styling.

“When the 53-minute event ended, all in the audience commented on how unique and original this was, how well-trained and prepared our students were and how they in the industry saw a good sense of who these young actors were personally,” Douglas said. “And that’s what it’s really about—bringing your personal self to the work. It requires a very deep personal investment, revealing who you are.”

Maranto recalls the showcase as one of her best experiences as a UT student.

“At the moment of our showcase ... every single person was at their very best,” she said. “It was such a transformative experience seeing these kids who I met when I was 18 ... and seeing us as these grown-ups and being the best at our craft that we could be.”

With so many of the 15 inaugural students remaining in L.A., Douglas and Ramirez hope to build more connections for students as the program continues. Next fall, another 15 acting students will have the opportunity to tackle the city, with their burnt orange safety net below.

“The learning curve was steep,” Ramirez said. “They’re like our kids, and they suddenly go away, and we’re not there with them. But they were ready. They were ready to go be with new people and to bring what they had from their time at UT with new set of instructors.”

“I hope to share with their friends and colleagues in the business and keep building the UT name and the presence out there in L.A.,” he continued. “One person’s success is everyone’s success.”
Visitors to the art exhibition Skulptur Projekte Münster this summer had an unusual opportunity—to leave the event with an artist’s work permanently tattooed on their body. And if that visitor was over 65? They got a discount.

When he was invited to participate in the project, Studio Art Professor Michael Smith decided to set up a working tattoo parlor that offered discounted rates for senior citizens.

Though he is trained as a painter, Smith now works mostly in performance art and transmedia. His work usually features at least one of the two personas that he’s honed over several decades: Mike, a sweet, naïve Everyman character always searching for the American Dream, but always a beat behind the latest trend or fad, and Baby Ikki, an easily distractible adult-sized toddler with a bonnet and five-o’clock shadow who wanders through places like Burning Man or museums.

While Smith’s work has always explored themes of youth, in the past few years, he’s delved more deeply into themes dealing with aging. His 2015 work *Excuse Me!!...I’m looking for the ‘Fountain of Youth’* explored the parallel searches of Mike and Baby Ikki for the elixir of youth in a journey chronicled as a ballet dance odyssey. The work drew much positive critical attention at its run at the Greene Naftali Gallery in New York and in a live-streamed performance at the Tate Modern in London.

Smith had been thinking about tattoos as a concept as part of the “Fountain of Youth” piece, and when he was invited to create a site-specific work at Skulptur Projekte Münster, he decided to explore that theme further. Smith was one of only 35 artists invited to participate in the prestigious art exhibition, which happens every 10 years.

When Smith traveled to Münster for a site visit, he found the city to be very livable and noticed that it had both a thriving community of seniors and a youthful culture, thanks to the nearby university. He decided to create a tattoo parlor, *Not Quite Under_Ground*, open to everyone, but with an ad campaign targeting senior citizens. He partnered with a local tattoo parlor and Münster tattoo artists and worked with Jesse Cline (M.F.A., Design, 2016) to design the logo, print materials and flash sample book, and with Bill Haddad of Blue House Design in Austin to figure out the layout and design of the physical space for the shop. In addition to reaching out to previous Sculpture Project Münster participants and his excellent network of artist friends to contribute tattoo designs, Smith also created some of his own for the catalog. Designs range from abstract to conceptual, from humorous to downright naughty.

His persona Mike makes an appearance through a travelogue/promotional video for the shop, which follows Mike and a group of seniors as they tour the city and then visit the shop to get tattoos. Mike opts for a to-do list tattoo. Naturally—in line with his persona—he puts it in a location that makes it hard to remember to do the things on the list: his bum.

“The project’s biggest takeaway is how he turns adolescence and youthful folly into an adult subject. That’s something Michael’s done—not just in this piece—but in work over the last decade,” said Jack Risley, Meredith and Cornelia Long Chair of the Department of Art and Art History. “His work has changed a lot over the years, but it is absolutely consistent.”
Risley visited the work in June and points out that the festival has a history of highlighting artists that define their time—Donald Judd, Richard Serra and Bruce Nauman in 1977, Andrea Zittel in 1987 and Jorge Pardo in 1997 to name a few.

"Michael is an artist with a body of work that spans decades, and now a big part of his project is about reconciling his age with youthful foibles," said Risley. "The question that so many artists have is how to grow old as an artist and still remain relevant—especially as someone who's created a persona so identified with youth. To me, that's the truly compelling part of his work."

Smith began teaching at UT in 1999 and joined the Studio Art faculty full time in 2001, though he continues to split time between Austin and New York.

Ryan Hawk, who just finished his M.F.A. in Studio Art this past spring, came to UT in large part for the opportunity to study with Smith. In his undergraduate work at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Hawk found the performance art area of his program to be very austere and formal.

"I saw Michael as the opposite for that—the kind of lineage that he set for himself in the history of performance seemed to be directly at odds with my formal training," said Hawk. "I was constantly renegotiating my own relationship with the medium of performance art and wanting to operate more in the terrain of video and film. His practice was inspiration for me to do that because it’s something that mirrors his pathway."

Hawk points out that performance art seldom intersects with the more traditional art world and that Smith is a rare example of an artist who works in both spheres. Smith served as the chair of Hawk’s thesis committee, and Hawk worked as a teaching assistant in multiple classes that Smith taught, including a performance art class for undergraduates last spring.

“We had a special dynamic,” said Hawk. “With him and his classes, and the kind of work that he represents in his own practice and my own more formal training from undergrad—that combined was super effective. I feel like we were a dream team in some regards.”

The students in the class clicked so much that more than half of them went on to form a performance art collective outside of the class.

“As art students look to artists as role models, Mike’s work is especially meaningful,” said Risley. “There’s an aspect of being engaged with a community that anticipates the social and relational tilt of contemporary practice. But there’s also his interest in narrative and persona—those are all things that have resonance with our students.”


Tell us about your role at Texas Performing Arts.

I’m an assistant in the Audio Department. I get to work alongside my supervisors, Michael Malak and Kenny Kuykendall, as well as the rest of the audio crew whenever there’s a show or event happening. I help with setting up speakers, running cable, testing mics or whatever else needs to be done when setting up the sound system. If the opportunity presents itself, sometimes I shadow one of my coworkers.

What’s the best part of your job?

I’d have to say that my favorite part has been whenever I’m on crew for touring shows. For instance, I got to help with the National Theatre of Scotland’s *Let The Right One In* when it came to the McCullough Theatre and with *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Something Rotten* when they came to Bass Concert Hall. I really enjoy seeing what it takes to make these productions happen and witnessing how it all comes together. It gives me a better appreciation for what I see happening onstage once it’s all finished and the curtain comes up. Then, realizing that I got to be a part of it—there’s really nothing like it.

What’s the most challenging part of your job?

The most challenging part would be remembering everything I’ve learned. We use a lot of different equipment, each kind serving its own purpose, so it can be easy to become a little confused sometimes. Thankfully everyone I work with is understanding and can help me whenever I ask for it. I came in knowing little to nothing about audio, and while I certainly know more than I did in the beginning, I still have a lot to learn.

How has your work with TPA complemented your studies in the Department of Theatre and Dance?

My main focus in the department is in performer’s process, but I’ve also started exploring sound design. Because of what my schedule can be like, I don’t really have the time to be able to study audio the way I’d like to. Working at TPA allows me to work around professionals, but still be in an educational setting. My schedule there can be flexible, which allows me to work on assignments or other things when I need to. Even though it’s not exactly a classroom, I’ve learned quite a lot.

Due to our work environment, being attentive is crucial, and every little thing counts. This has led me to be more detail-oriented in the workplace and in my studies. Seeing the details has helped me in working on character development for an assignment or performance to studying for exams or putting together projects. I’ve developed a better awareness of my surroundings and whatever tasks I’m doing, whether it be reading, writing, rehearsing, etc.

Has your work with TPA changed how you think about possible career options after graduation?

Last fall I started delving a little more into sound design. Most of what I did in the beginning was a mixture of luck, a love for a challenge and Google. It still is, but not as much because now I know more about how it all works together. I knew how to operate a (very) basic system, but that was it. Due to my lack of knowledge, I didn’t really see myself pursuing sound design once I’d graduated. Working with TPA has not only helped me learn what I need to know, but I’ve also started to expand my skills and gain more confidence in the work I do. I’ve now seriously begun to consider working as both a performer and sound designer. Two very different things, but both something that I can’t imagine not being a part of my future.
What does it mean to be an aspiring young professional musician in the year 2017? Last semester we pioneered a new course (MUS 312C – “Music and Culture”) designed to equip all first-year students in the Butler School of Music with the tools to understand and shape their role in contemporary life. Students discussed professional ethics and community engagement, experimented with multiple notation systems and the transcription of various world musical traditions and engaged in improvisation and choreographed movement. We also grappled with the way music and musicians create meaning among themselves and in society, in not only positive, but also sometimes troubling ways. We talked about politics and identity, about copyright and creativity, about privilege and opportunity, about colonialism and its impact on culture and about the ethics of many kinds of performance. We took creative risks with multiple forms of collaborative music-making, and we contemplated canon and curriculum—how institutions determine what music and training is important and who ultimately gets to decide such things? We thought about the many ways professional success can be defined and about the importance of giving back to one’s communities. Over and over we asked: So what? Why does music matter? How do we make our creativity meaningful to ourselves and to others? How can we do the most good in the world as artists and performers?

Our dynamic curriculum combined case studies from art and popular/commercial traditions and covered timeframes ranging from the early Middle Ages to the present day and geographical locations across the globe. Provost’s Teaching Fellow and Associate Professor Sonia Seeman originally envisioned the course. Because Dr. Seeman was on Fulbright leave this year, we (Professors Andrew Dell’Antonio and Robin Moore) further customized the course for this first go-around, with support from doctoral teaching assistants Sarah Lahasky and Joseph Ovalle. The multiple, overlapping, sometimes fruitfully conflicting personalities and perspectives of our teaching team made for an environment in which students could understand that knowledge is best built through respectful conversation, disagreement and sometimes even the humble admission of ignorance. Our teaching team was continuously energized by the welcome challenges of coordinating topics, perspectives and modes of presentation; we were all gratified by the energy that students invested in the substantial written work involved, and we were humbled by the insights they brought to the discussion of their artistic motivations and goals. We drew upon many guest presenters throughout the semester (visiting musicologists, performers and scholars from the Butler School faculty, instrumentalists with expertise in non-Western repertories, exchange students from abroad or with experience in other kinds of music programs), both in-person and remotely, and we are grateful to the generosity of our colleagues at UT and beyond for sharing their expertise and enthusiasm with the class.

The final substantial writing assignment undertaken by each student was an “auto-ethnography”—a multi-part examination of their own background, their reasons for studying music and their perspectives on the appropriate role of musicians in society based on material discussed in our course. In addition, we asked that they consider not only their future plans, but also what skills and perspectives they intended to nurture over the next three years at UT to empower themselves to achieve such goals. Reading 70 very different and equally thoughtful self-reflective essays made us optimistic about the future of music in the coming decades, confident that Butler School of Music students are prepared to create what’s next and grateful that we had the opportunity to facilitate a few of their significant steps along newly defined paths.
Sept. 22 – Dec. 9
Visual Arts Center
Fall Exhibitions
Featured artists include sculptor Larry Bamburg, Mexico City-based art library and independent press, Aeromoto, Israeli artist Asya Lukin of the New Barbizon Collective, M.F.A. Studio Art students Marta Lee and Anika Steppe, as well as featured works from Learning Tuscany undergraduate students.

Oct. 27 – Nov. 5
Butler Opera Center presents Mozart’s Cosi fan tutte
Directed by Margaret Jumonville. Conducted by Kelly Kuo (Oct. 27, 29) and Peter Bay (Nov. 3, 5).

4–5 p.m., Nov. 1
Artist Talk with Carol Mavor
ART building, Room 1.120

7:30 p.m., Nov. 4
Andrew Brownell, Piano
A concert with the Butler School’s new Assistant Professor of Piano performing Ludwig van Beethoven, Sonata in E-flat major-Quasi uno fantasia, and Johann Nepomuk Hummel Fantasie in E-flat major.

Bates Recital Hall
4–5 p.m., Nov. 6
Art History Lecture Series presents: Dr. Corine Schleif
ART building, Room 1.120

Nov. 8
Fifth House Ensemble, Journey Live
Presented in partnership with the Department of Arts and Entertainment Technologies, GAMMA, Game and Mobile Media Applications and The Texas Tribune
Bass Concert Hall

Nov. 8–19
The Crucible
Oscar G. Brockett Theatre

Dec. 6–10
The Drowsy Chaperone
Music and Lyrics by Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison
Book by Bob Martin and Don McKellar
B. Iden Payne Theatre

1. The Magic Flute at the Butler Opera Center in April. Photo by Lawrence Peart.
2. Momentum. Photo by Lawrence Peart.
3. Luna. Photo by Lawrence Peart.
4. Momentum. Photo by Lawrence Peart.
5. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes Concert held in March.
6. and 7. Students at the College of Fine Arts Commencement. Photo by Sandy Carson.
Studio Art major Victoria Marquez closed out her junior year by completing a mural in the Butler School of Music loading dock hallway. The 28-foot abstract painting represents a history of music from 10 pieces. Marquez took those songs and researched the color of the sound of the music. She then took each song and created white motion diagrams from various elements—some capturing the wave of the conductor’s arms, the back-and-forth of a string quartet’s bows or a singer’s mouth as the song builds—and added a second layer to the mural.

This mural was Marquez’s 11th to complete. All the rest are in her hometown of Laredo. “When it comes down to it, my favorite aspect of mural making is learning about the new community it will reside in. I love meeting new people and learning from them. I also just love being challenged to create a design for a mural that meets the needs of their thoughts and ideas as well as my creativity,” Marquez said. “I do hope my mural starts a dialogue on how to bridge art and music, but ultimately my biggest hope is that this piece brings delight to the faculty, staff and students at the Butler School of Music. They are the people who are going to be seeing it every day, and I always kept that thought as my priority.”