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Theatre Reviews

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Rhinoceros

By Caitlin Iles

For the past four years I have always looked forward to the twice-yearly performances put on by the Acadia Theatre Company, and this fall's *Rhinoceros* did not disappoint. I entered the reception and the numerous rhinoceros sculptures, made out of everything from garbage and pop cans to *papier mâché*, contributed to the savage, animalistic atmosphere manifested in the play. Michael Devine's adaption of the play was masterfully envisioned and realized. The play alluded to World War II Nazi Germany and the Vichy Government of France; however, Devine ensured that its central themes of repressed savagery and intolerance remained relevant to his audience. Though the theatre in Lower Denton

is by no means a large space, Devine utilized every last corner, including the upper walkways. Harkening back to *The Threepenny Opera* when the upper walkway was memorably used during a sex scene, there was an inspiring bedroom scene that played with the audience's perception of space and gravity. It was also the location of one of my favourite scenes: the shower scene in which the main female character, one of the last remaining "humans," turns into a rhinoceros. The movable set was incredibly well done and a true testament to the capabilities of the Acadia Theatre Company – not just on stage but off as well.

Now to the performance. The actors in this play literally left me speechless. They were all so raw; their performances were truly inspiring. There was not one actor who was not fully immersed in, and devoted to, his or her character. From Azura Goodman's Papillon to Alice D'eon's Daisy, Luke Salmon's

Berenger, and Robert Ramsay's Jean, every actor contributed equally, regardless of the respective centrality of his or her role. Devine's directorial decision to have all the characters onstage during the performance added to the drama. The use of a masked audience forced the viewers to take an uncomfortable, complicit role in the action, making the marching scene with the four boy rhinos all the more chilling. The point, I believe, was to push the audience out of their comfort zone and challenge them, forcing them to think about the scenes they were witnessing instead of passively observing the spectacle.

Rhinoceros was yet another excellent production from the Acadia Theatre Company. Bravo!

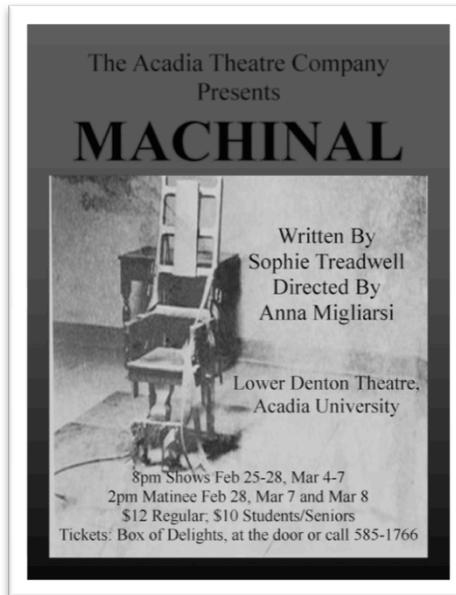


Machinal

By Becky Dobson

Before watching Acadia's Theatre Students' winter semester production of Sophie Treadwell's 1928 play *Machinal*, I had the chance to read and discuss the play in one of my English courses. I completely fell in love with the play and the issues that it presented (in fact, I'm writing my essay on it for that class). I was sceptical about whether or not the production would live up to my expectations, as generally speaking, reproductions of written works, like movies, never seem to turn out quite the way we had imagined. However, director Dr. Anna Migliarisi and her students did an impeccable job in their rendition of *Machinal* and left me with a new appreciation of the play.

Machinal, based on the Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray trial of 1927 that resulted in death by electrocution of both, depicts the oppressing and suffocating life that



Promotional Poster M. MacNeil

women once faced, and continue to face to this day, albeit in different forms. The main character, labelled the Young Woman throughout the play and portrayed by Abby Bower, leads the life of an automaton, filled with menial work, marriage and motherhood. Her life is comparable to the workings of a machine, conveyed onstage by two large columns, consisting of a collage of mechanisms. The young woman attempts to uplift herself from this monotony by forming an adulterous relationship with another man. In order to be completely free of this oppressive life, the young woman murders her husband and is ordered by law to be electrocuted.

Costumes and set design contributed immensely to the dull and suffocating atmosphere that the play evoked. The play consisted of much black and white imagery. The stage floor was composed of a black and white checker pattern. This pattern, and its colour scheme, were reflected in all of the actors' attire and props throughout the play.

The acting, in every regard, was outstanding. Abby Bower's and Rob Ramsay's performances, as the young woman and her husband respectively, were fantastic. Bower

was able to captivate the utter terror and frustration that were essential to the character, particularly in the last scene as the young woman prepared to be executed, which had me near tears. However, when acting beside the young woman's lover, Bower lit up and conveyed a completely brilliant happiness. These two personalities that Bower portrayed to the audience conveyed how detrimental her relationship with her husband was to her mental health. Ramsay was able to remain a sympathetic character, for he was not once cruel to the young woman, but he also effectively portrayed the unintentional chauvinism that men often emit. He also accurately depicted the classic mannerisms that such burly, big-shot men often display both physically and vocally, which lent a comic element to an otherwise harrowing play.

My only advice if you ever see a production of this play is to make sure you take a bathroom break before it begins. *Machinal* does not have the luxury of having an intermission. The reason for this is that an intermission would certainly take away from the mechanical, monotonous environment that the play conveys. The play does not allow you enough time to collect your thoughts about the scenarios acted out, which is certainly a reflection of the emotions of the young woman.

All in all, Acadia University is extremely lucky to have such a cast of talented students.



Learn More

Each year the Acadia Theatre Company produces two shows. To learn more about Theatre Studies, visit our website:

<http://theatre.acadiau.ca/>

Minifest

By Sally Christensen

Each year, the Acadia community is invited to submit one-act plays; selected plays are then directed, produced and cast by the Acadia Theatre Company and performed near the end of the Winter term in a grand production known as Minifest.

This year's Minifest was held in Denton Hall, and featured five one-act plays performed back to back, with a brief fifteen-minute intermission in between. The first half of the production featured a poignant mix of family drama and comedy; the halfway point aptly concerned the crossing of boundaries, while the latter half delved into darker realms.

The opening play, *Baby Shower*, was written by Anna Ross and directed by Abigail Bower, and involved the complex relationship between three generations of women: a crotchety old grandmother, a new-age mother, an "open minded" polyamorous aunt, and the three daughters. The aunt and grandmother were particularly well done, but all of the characters were believable. Personal tragedy was interspersed with intensely comedic scenes – the glow in the dark moment was hilarious. Very entertaining and very moving – an excellent job all around.

The second play was *Family Hold Back* – written by Caroline Roy and directed by Meaghan McGibbon – and was another look at three generations of women. The cycle of destructive behavior was the core message of this piece; though you could see the damaging effects of the grandmother's caustic tongue, you couldn't help but laugh at her portrayal. The interaction between the sisters was priceless, and the tension between each of the binary pairs was tangible. I've met each of these women before and may have even been one myself – the ending was devilishly funny and terrible, all

at once – I felt guilty for laughing. Great characters – flawed, real, and funny – and a terrific performance.

The third play was entitled *We Think We're Funny* and was written by Jeff Carpenter and Josh Darby. Directed by Matt MacDonald, it opens with a man lamenting on the "action couch" about his lack thereof and leads to some astoundingly awkward scenes. Great use of mood lighting, audio and props – and it definitely wins the "Best Kiss" award for the evening. This play featured some of the best use of body language – I would definitely call it "Dantastic."

The fourth play, *Absurd*, was written by K. Eric Frederickson and directed by Luke Salmon. *Absurd* opens with a young woman looking to make a return; she first encounters the absurdly dramatic "El" (featured in the picture below), then Nora, the seemingly deranged customer service representative, and finally meets the lackadaisical Gander and his assistant Thyme. It soon becomes clear that not all is as it appears to be. The characters were extreme and the cast did an admirable job

bringing the absurdity to life.

The final play, *The Battle of Frogs & Mice*, was written by Ellen M. Rooney and directed by Daniel Franck. Epic poet Homer himself narrated the tale of friendship and war, and even the Greek gods made an appearance. Black light made the painted actors "pop" visually and believably converted a gymnastics mat into a pond. The battle was, dare I say it, epic in proportion – spear-wielding mice against frogs in an intricate battle dance, punctuated by the thunder and lightning of Zeus.

In between scenes, stagehands wearing all black efficiently dressed and undressed the stage. Oh, and wore white construction hats that glowed in the low ambient light. And wore equally glowing tighty whiteys over their black pants.

Overall, it was a very entertaining evening – I'd buy the soundtrack for this year's Minifest; the choice in musical accompaniment was perfect. The Acadia Theatre Company did a fabulous job with this year's plays – congratulations are in order for the entire cast, crew, directors and stage managers. Well done!



"El"

Kristin McCurdy

Authors @ Acadia

The Authors@Acadia series invites published authors to read their work to the Acadia University community.

Jacob Mooney

By Alex Morton

My first impression of Jacob Mooney as a writer was that he didn't quite seem like the type of person that I would picture to publish poetry. It wasn't until he started reading his poems that I began to understand the thought, passion, and depth that he put into his writings. I found that some of the poems were almost a little too deep for me to understand clearly, but he definitely got the point across by the use of his voice and emphasis of words. I liked how Mooney seemed like he wanted to be unique, both by how he wrote his poems, and in their visual presentation in his texts. His new book, *The New Layman's Almanac*, had poems written on a 90 degree angle, across the page. This is something that you don't see very often and I found that it really made the book stand out. Mooney is also unique in his use of titles, such as "A Guide to Entombment," and "A Guide to Alternate Histories." Mooney's use for these titles was to give the poems a bond or connection to each other, and make them his own. His use of words, and how he put them together, was in a way like I've never heard before. Though sometimes I found this slightly confusing, I was never bored during any of his readings.

The reading that really caught my attention was "A Guide to Chord Progression." This was a poem based on his apartment experiences with his friend. It describes his experiences of killing rats, drinking, and writing music. The way Jacob takes something so simple and gives you a vivid mental picture was really impressive. I also

really enjoyed "PAN PAN PAN," a poem about the Swissair Flight 111 plane crash off Peggy's Cove in 1998. I thought it was very interesting how Mooney wanted to interpret this disaster. Rather than describing the events of the crash he wanted to express how a small place like Nova Scotia can still have bad things happen to it. I found it interesting when Mooney mentioned that he travels a lot, and that he likes to move on a regular basis. By moving regularly he becomes inspired by new environments, which he really illustrates through his poetry. Mooney has a creative knack for making things that don't seem so interesting into something really moving. Overall Mooney's poetry is very well done, and I look forward to his future works.



Andrew Steinmetz and Ven Begamudré

By Sally Christensen

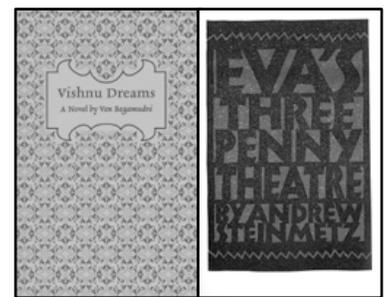
Andrew Steinmetz and Ven Begamudré both attended the Gaspereau Press Wayzgoose, and were kind enough to find time to fit Acadia in as well.

Andrew Steinmetz read excerpts from his latest novel, *Eva's Threepenny Theatre*. An unusual love child of fiction and memoir, it blurs the line between the role of historian and author, what really happened and the inner truth. We learn about Eva, Andrew's Great Aunt from Germany, who once had a minor role in a theatre production, but fled Nazi Germany in the 30s. She is dying, so the deadline for finishing the memoir is ever-present

and literal. Beginning as a transcription, the story takes on a life of its own. We learn about Eva's pet monkey as a child, but we also learn about the process of writing and the overwhelming power of stories – we are left with the notion that "vision is everything – reality is nothing," and that the story always comes first.

Begamudré's dry sense of humor immediately struck me as he prepared to read excerpts from his latest novel, *Vishnu Dreams*. Following the stories of a family torn apart, *Vishnu Dreams* blends Hindu mythology with American and Canadian landscapes, mirroring his own rich history. He read from a selection focused on Durga, the elder sister enrolled in a military reserve regiment in BC. The passage jumps back and forth in time, lending a surreal, dreamlike quality to the revelation of her power and wit in a male-dominated environment. The most notable part of the reading, however, was his voice. Several passages included lyrics; he sang unselfconsciously.

Learn More



Both *Vishnu Dreams* and *Eva's Threepenny Theatre* are available at Gaspereau Press. Visit their website:

<http://www.gaspereau.com/>

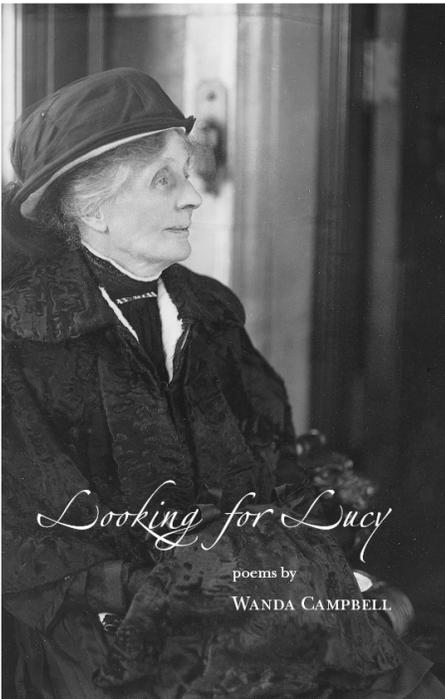
Wanda Campbell

By Sally Christensen

Visiting authors are especially valuable to the students enrolled in the Creative Writing classes, and Dr. Wanda Campbell strongly encourages her students to attend. Dr. Campbell normally gives the introductions for the visiting authors – but this time, she was the one introduced.

Dr. Campbell's latest poetry collection, *Looking for Lucy*, is a thoughtful look at the role of women, explored through a wide spectrum of Lucys. From Lucille Ball to *Australopithecus afarensis*, a variety of Lucys are pondered, focusing finally on Lucy Adaline Van Horne, wife of William Cornelius Van Horne.

Presenting in the Auditorium of the KC Irving Centre, Dr. Campbell read to a full house. In true Acadia fashion, the reading was joined by a visual presentation. First, a matrix of Lucys to break the ice – Lucille Ball and Lucy Van Pelt eliciting laughter. Each reading was prefaced by another image, giving insight into the



L. Van Horne © McCord Museum

inspirations for many of the poems in the collection.

In this collection, Dr. Campbell explores what it is to be Lucy – the light emerging from the dark, women at the edges of obscurity. Triggered by a visit to Ministers Island, this collection led Dr. Campbell across Canada and deep into historic records in her search to learn more about the woman behind the man who linked Canada from coast to coast by rail.

A love of trains, a love of Canada, a love of literature – all blend together in this contemplative and scholarly collection of poems.

Learn More

Looking for Lucy is published by Leaf Press. Visit their website:

<http://www.leafpress.ca/>

David Levy

By Sally Christensen

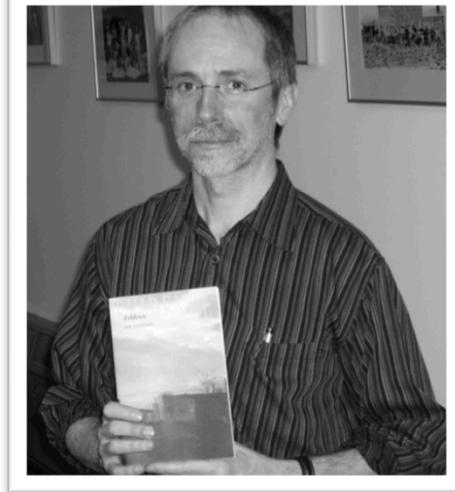
On February 9th in the Irving Centre Auditorium, David Levy – Acadia alumnus and world famous astronomer – treated his audience to a presentation that married his twin passions of astronomy and literature. Entitled “More Things in Heaven and Earth – the Relationship between Literature and the Night Sky,” Dr. Levy’s presentation explored the importance of astronomical events in canonical works such as *Hamlet*, *Don Juan* and *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Through anecdotes and beautiful images of eclipses, we glimpsed the aesthetic appeal that drove the one-time English undergraduate student to the study of the stars.

Learn More

Visit Dr. Levy’s website:

<http://www.jarnac.org/>



Ian Colford

Sally Christensen

Ian Colford

By Sally Christensen

At the invitation of the Vaughan Memorial Library, and in collaboration with the publishing house Porcupine’s Quill, Ian Colford offered up a reading of his latest publication: *Evidence*. *Evidence* is a collection of short stories revolving around an Eastern European man whose life was shrouded in mystery: Konstantin Bitri.

The collection itself is not arranged in chronological order, leaving you to piece together the details of Konstantin’s life in a mosaic pattern. The selections that Colford chose to read were in chronological order, and their selection led to an intriguing question. In each sample, a younger Konstantin encounters an older, more authoritative man – was this intentional? Asked if it was, Colford demurred, saying, “You learn something about your book that you never expected to.”

Colford also treated us to an excerpt from a work in process – *Lives of Hector Tomas* – about a young boy in an unnamed South American city. Though he is Canadian, Colford’s travels are what drive his fiction, and though his locations are exotic, the players are familiar archetypes.

Leo McKay Jr.

By Sally Christensen

On March 18th, Leo McKay Jr. was invited to read from his new manuscript, currently entitled *Roll Up the Rim*. As one might expect, this new novel concerns the Tim Hortons contest and was at least partially motivated by a comment on the number of scenes that took place in Tim Hortons in his earlier work *Twenty-Six*.

Roll up the Rim is set in Truro and follows Tim Hortons employee Owen, who is obsessed with the contest, and his interactions with a visiting Mountie. The excerpt read was set in the interrogation room of the local police station, showing an early meeting between Owen and the Mountie.

McKay's choice of third person limited narration became apparent as he described the "75 or 100 watt bulb" and the "3rd or 4th grade education" while reading. McKay described the choice of third person as being "like standing over the shoulder" of the protagonist, providing closeness not possible with a first person narrative – even if it does sacrifice some of the certainty of details.

McKay described his early sense that there just weren't many stories about where he was from and his realization that he would be the one to fill that void. When asked about the potentially ephemeral quality of his pop culture references, he asserted that the world he lives in is completely dominated by Harry Potter and Tim Hortons, so that is what he must write.

McKay's first collection of stories, *Like This*, was short-listed for the Giller Prize in 1995 and received the Dartmouth Book Award in 1996. His first novel, *Twenty-Six*, received the Dartmouth Book Award in 2004. McKay is working on his current manuscript and teaching at Cobequid Educational Centre in Truro.

Interviews

Jeremy McFarlane

By Becky Jackson

B: Where are you from?

J: *Moncton, NB*

B: Which university did you attend for your undergrad?

J: *Mount Allison University. Go Mounties?!*

B: Why Acadia?

J: *Because they gave me lots of money...funding is important, kids.*

B: Can you describe your thesis in three words?

J: *Capitalism isn't Democracy.*

B: What do you do when you're not thesis-ing (from the verb "to thesis," ha)?

J: *Well, I watch a lot of Twilight, play guitar, and spend lonely time hours in my room/ office.*

B: The publication of this interview definitely ought to get you some dates... That said, what do you think the best thing about Wolfville is?

J: *It is a close walk to the coffee shops.*

B: And conversely, what do you consider the worst thing about Wolfville?

J: *Walking uphill to res sucks.*

B: As an English buff, I have to ask, what is your favourite book?

J: *The U.S.A. Trilogy.*

B: And for interest's sake, your favourite movie adaptation of a book?

J: *While I can't tell you my favourite, I CAN tell you my least favourite adaptation, which was Tristram Shandy. It failed miserably, and they didn't even try. It wound up like a bookclub discussion and was meta – BS.*

B: As a kid, what did you want to be when you "grew up"?

J: *Not an English student! My dad is a cop, so probably a cop. I used to think, "Reading is for nerds."*

B: What convinced you that pursuing English was worth the risk of nerdiness?

J: *When I read George Orwell's Animal Farm, and thought "Cool, angry things!" By the time I realized English was for dorks I was in too deep.*

B: Speaking of being in too deep, what are your top 3 PhD choices?

J: *Dal, Carleton, and McGill.*

B: Besides a PhD, what does the future hold for Jeremy MacFarlane?

J: *Eventually I have a record to finish, I want to write an audio play this summer, and I intend to finish some and continue to create some creative writing pieces.*

B: That sounds like quite the future, but before we part, Jeremy, do you have any words of wisdom for future English Master's students?

J: *Don't do it if you're going to be a dork! If you have to be a dork, make sure you're well funded.*



Learn More

To learn more about Acadia's MA in English program, visit our website:

<http://english.acadiau.ca/>



Jeremy McFarlane S. Christensen

Myles McNutt

By Becky Jackson

B: Where are you from?

M: Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia. But born in Kentville, true story.

B: Which university did you attend for your undergrad?

M: A little school known as Acadia University.

B: Why did you choose Acadia for your Master's?

M: There's a lot of factors that went into that decision. Certainly, my familiarity with the faculty was a major plus, but I also felt I would benefit from a smaller program. And, on a personal level, I had created existing relationships throughout the university that I felt could help me balance my university existence.

B: Can you describe your thesis in three words?

M: Canada. Television. Towns. In alphabetical order.

B: What do you do when you are not thesis-ing (from the verb "to thesis," ha)?

M: I work as a Residence Assistant on campus, and served as President of the Paul Tom Debating Society, so a lot of my time was taken up by those activities. However, admittedly, the largest major drain on my time was my blog - I decided two years ago to become an amateur television critic, and in many ways my entirely voluntary job feels like the one to which I commit the most time.

B: What do you think is the best thing about Wolfville?

M: It's tough once you've been here for five years to really pick out one thing, since it's all kind of too familiar now. I think that it is so easy to become familiar, to not feel as if you're missing out because it's such a small town or because it's all basically on one street, is perhaps my favourite quality. I spent my first summer in Wolfville last year, and saw more of the landscape than I had before, so there's always new things

to discover to the point where the "isolation" becomes irrelevant.

B: What do you think is the worst thing about Wolfville?

M: It's less a "worst thing" than a sad reality - one gets the sense that the Al Whittle Theatre could have once provided nightly movies, allowing for a more burgeoning arts culture to flourish, but the economic reality is just too much for that to handle. I always feel as if I should be participating more in the local arts scene, but with such a busy schedule it's tough to work around.

B: What is your favourite book?

M: I admittedly have gone from the point where I consider my favourite books and more to the idea of my favourite texts, which allows me to consider television and film on the same level. It's kind of my personal stamp on "English" as a discipline, and something I'd love to see more people move towards. On the level of general text, then, I think I have to go with Battlestar Galactica - there's a reason I was able to convince the department to let me write my undergrad thesis on the series, and it's because of its transcendence beyond traditional genres or media to something incredibly powerful, and that at times dominates my thought processes.

B: Perhaps redundant, then, but do you have a favourite movie adaptation of a book?

M: I think this is an entirely different genre in and of itself, primarily because of the process of transitioning the text into an entirely different medium: one of the reasons I'd argue for films being considered text is that there are only EXTRA layers of creativity and agency, and they provide an even deeper realm of analysis. I'd say that my favourite adaptation, though, would have to be Blade Runner, not because it's my favourite film based on a book but rather because it is so interesting to see what Ridley Scott brought both visually and philosophically to the



Myles McNutt

S. Christensen

project. It's entirely different from Dick's original novel (Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?), but remains consistent with its initial purpose, creating a fascinating text.

B: As a kid, what did you want to be when you "grew up"?

M: I wasn't much of a dreamer, I won't lie - I went through elementary school motivated entirely by grades, got through middle school on similar principles, and then through high school realized that my academic motivation was perhaps a sign that I was destined to continue on that path into potential employment. My time at Acadia has cemented this belief, as the English program really developed the right skills at the right time to allow me to, now, feel prepared to take the leap to the next step. So, I guess you could say it has been a gradual realization.

B: So what is the next step?

M: I'm taking some time to rest after two back-to-back theses, but eventually plan to apply to PhD programs the year following, although admittedly not within the confines of "English." I'm interested in media studies, the critical evaluation of television in particular, and since becoming an actual television critic would be entering

into a dying field it feels like academia might present the ideal amalgamation of personal desire and professional interest.

B: What are your top three choices of schools for your PhD?

M: Since I'm taking a year, I haven't thought quite far enough ahead to list three, but for the part of me who desires to spend more time covering TV on my own terms, the idea of heading to USC in Los Angeles and being in the midst of the television industry is a highly romantic and desirable notion.

B: Do you have any words of wisdom for future English Master's students?

M: Be willing to stretch the definitions of the term "English." The freedom of a larger project like this affords you that opportunity, and the further you investigate the more you'll discover new things about yourself; there is no better time to get a better grasp on whether you'd like to continue with your education.



Stan Janz

By Becky Jackson

B: Well Stan, at the risk of sounding completely unoriginal...where are you from?

S: Everywhere, nowhere, I am a citizen of the world, of the universe, of time and space...

B: Yes, but if I had to pin you down to a more concrete location where would that be?

S: The Middle East...of Canada that is. Brandon, Manitoba.

B: Which university did you attend for your undergrad?

S: BU, Brandon...not to be confused with Boston University. It is a nice little university and similar in size to Acadia.

B: Why Acadia?

S: Well, I have always had an affinity for Acadian culture; I found the story of Evangeline both romantic and

moving; and I may or may not have cried while reading Low Tide at Grand Pré...Mainly I chose Acadia because I had connections here, knew I wanted to be on the East coast, and it wound up being a debate between here and Dal. It turned out that I wouldn't receive the same level of funding and would have to attend as a part-time student at Dal, so the timeframe and funding were in Acadia's favour.

B: Can you describe your thesis in three words?

S: Yes. I. Can. ... Robot. Agamemnon. Participle.

B: What do you do when you are not thesis-ing (from the verb "to thesis," ha)?

S: I spend a lot of time getting in touch with my inner adult, considering the lilies, and making plans for world domination...

B: All right "the Brain," what's the best thing about Wolfville?

S: I could start by saying you, Rebecca Jackson...

B: Well, Stan, shameless flattery aside, what truly makes you appreciate Wolfville?

S: There are a lot of things, but I think the view of the Minas Basin as I drive in every morning.

B: And conversely, what do you consider the worst thing about Wolfville?

S: The fact that there are no wolves...Actually, the lack of variety in restaurants; the kids want the sushi!

B: Amen. As an English buff, I have to ask, what is your favourite book?

S: Light in August by William Faulkner.

B: And for interest's sake, your favourite movie adaptation of a book?

S: For sure A Clockwork Orange, Fightclub, and A Scanner Darkly.

B: For the benefit of the loyal readership of *Voice 4* I have to mention that *A Scanner Darkly* is part of your thesis because "Robot. Agamemnon. Participle" doesn't exactly reveal this fascinating detail,



Stan Janz

S. Christensen

but not to be entirely sidetracked... As a kid, what did you want to be when you "grew up"?

S: A full-time dreamer, then I wanted to be a haberdasher...for those of you who don't know, that is a person who makes hats.

B: Given the fact that you did not realize your dreams of haberdashery, and have spent your time teaching, what made you decide to abandon this dream and become a teacher?

S: I really wanted to help unravel the fabric of our society and do some good damage.

B: Speaking of doing some serious damage to society, what are your top 3 choices of schools for a PhD?

S: University of Wisconsin, University of Calgary, and University of Nottingham.

B: Besides a PhD, what does the future hold for Stanley Janz?

S: So You Think You Can Dance 2010...Failing that I will go back and teach in Calgary for two years and hopefully start my PhD at the same time.

B: That sounds like quite the future, but before we part, Stan, do you have any words of wisdom for prospective English Master's students?

S: Have a good time, all the time!



Keri Smith

By Julia Cook

J: What was your educational experience before Acadia?

K: I had one false start at York University in the late 90s, right after high school. After that I worked at Blockbuster's and the Government of Ontario. The latter job was very depressing, so I decided to return to school in 2004. I attended Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario.

J: So...what was it like coming back to school as an older student?

K: I was a little scared, I have to admit. I thought I would never meet people and would not relate to people. It seems strange because it was not like it was a huge age difference. However, when I arrived there were a lot of older women students. I think the difference coming back this time I was able to understand the boundaries between conforming to the university structure and being able to establish my own opinion.

J: What are the highs and lows of being a Master's student at Acadia?

K: Both are exactly the same thing: it is a small community! There is a good interaction with students and professors. However, at the same time, it can also be a bit of a negative. Everyone knows your business and you know everyone's business!! The school environment can feel a little too interconnected.

J: What kind of balance do you find in your life? Or, more accurately, do you have a life?

K: Yeah. I have found hobbies and things to keep me amused. I have a very close friendship with someone. We go for drives and drink coffee. That kind of stuff helps ground your life and get out of your studies.

J: So, talking about studies, how IS your thesis going?

K: I actually think it is going really well right now. I am really starting to connect with it and I am feeling more



Keri Smith

S. Christensen

secure with that. It deals with domestic spaces and gender performance.

J: Where do you see yourself in the future?

K: I honestly don't know. But an English degree is not restricting. You can go all sorts of directions. It is both a good thing and a bad thing. You would think I would like to be an English teacher or go into journalism, but I don't see myself going down that path. I am currently working on a script for a television series. I guess I will have to see where that leads me.



Jennifer Knoch

By Rebecca Dobson

As an English major, I am constantly bombarded with questions and snarky comments about what I plan on doing after university with such a degree. To many people, reading novel after novel seems like an easy enough task in comparison to their numerous lab write-ups and tedious calculations. Though “English” doesn’t ring any distinct bells of a clear occupation or career path, unlike when someone states they’re taking “Engineering” and it becomes quite obvious that they’re aspiring to be an engineer, a degree

in English can lead to many exciting and unique job opportunities. Jennifer Knoch, who graduated from Acadia University with an English degree, is a prime example of someone who has indeed chosen an interesting path.

After graduating from Acadia, Knoch decided to enrol in the Creative Book Publishing Program at Humber College in Toronto, Ontario. The program, which runs May through August every year, combines creativity and entrepreneurship in an attempt to provide opportunities for students to eventually work in the publishing industry and its related fields. In the first two months of the program, students take specific courses taught by practicing professionals of the industry. The courses range in fields from Design and Technology to International Rights and Contracts. In the third month, students then specialize in two of three areas: editorial, marketing, or literary agenting/rights management. Finally, in the last month, students are split into small groups and are asked to design a false publishing company. Together, students compile their own business plans and publishing lists, design covers, create websites, and produce market plans and profitability forecasts. At the end of the month, groups then present their enterprise to a panel of industry professionals, who then decide what company they would most likely invest in. Knoch says, “I can’t stress how creative and collaborative the program is. I would groan as much as the next person when faced with group work... actually, maybe more than the next person...but here I was amazed to discover how motivated and enthusiastic everyone else was.”

Knoch’s group decided to centre their enterprise around graphic novels based on Shakespeare’s plays. Graphic novels are considered to be the fastest growing new category of publishing. A graphic novel is much

like a comic book; however, it is often deemed as being more mature and suggests a more solidified story rather than a simple ongoing story with continuing characters. Currently, Mariko and Jillian Tamaki's *Skim* is receiving much critical attention as a graphic novel. "Though the graphic novel is generally dominated by Manga, comic literature is expanding and has great potential," says Knoch.

Knoch currently works at ECW Press in Toronto. ECW is a Canadian publisher that publishes a wide range of material from Canadian fiction and poetry to pro wrestling books, mysteries, and T.V. and music books. Knoch states that it's a fascinating place to work because of the variety of genres the press publishes: "One day I'm doing photo research for a book on Mixed Martial Arts, the next day I'm proofreading a local history." ECW published the Governor-General's Award-winning collection of poetry *More to Keep Us Warm* by Jacob Scheier as well as *All in This Together: the Unofficial Story of High School Musical* in the same year. Knoch states, almost sadly, "I hate to tell you which one sold better

than the other." Knoch is involved in many aspects of the publishing process, including editorial work, publicity and work involving technology.

So, there you have it. Being an English major doesn't just have to result in becoming a teacher. The next time you receive daunting comments about finding a career with such a degree, you can at least tell explain one very unique and interesting path you know an English major has taken.



Events

estuary

By Rebecca Dobson

Come on, admit it. We all love art. Even if you can't twist your head around the deep symbolism and metaphors in poetry, you probably have enjoyed looking at a painting or a photograph. Despite this though, it seems the spotlight on the creative arts is slowly fading. As this year's editor for *estuary*, Acadia's one and only creative arts magazine, I feel it's necessary to make sure that this spotlight continues to shine. *Estuary* is one of Acadia's few creative outlets for students; however, outside of the Faculty of Arts, it is generally unknown to the student population. Over the next few years, the club hopes to change that.

Estuary accepts postcard stories, poetry, photographs, artwork, and even original music pieces. As long as it can be presented on the Internet, anything creative goes. This year, *estuary* will be publishing two online editions, as well as a print edition featuring the best selections from the online magazines. In early April, *estuary* will be holding a launch party in the Acadia University Art

Gallery for the print edition of the magazine. Students who have had their written works selected will have a chance to read them out loud to those attending. Artwork and photographs will be on display, and beverages and snacks will be provided. Everyone on campus and in the community is encouraged to attend in hopes that not only will *estuary* become more recognized, but that the creative arts in general will be too.

Estuary has been hard at work this year preparing for the publication of the magazines. We have met at least once a month discussing, selecting, and editing for the editions. On top of this, fundraising efforts were a regular occurrence. This year we have had two book sales, a bake sale and a treat bag sale, with all profits going toward the production of the print edition.

This year's print magazine will be available in April at the Info Desk in the SUB, in the Department of English and Theatre, and in shops throughout downtown Wolfville. This year's, and previous years', online editions can be found at <http://www.acadiau.ca/estuary>.

Learn More

For more information on the programs or topics discussed in this article, please visit the following websites:

Creative Book Publishing program at Humber College:
<http://creativeandperformingarts.humber.ca/content/publishing.html>

Drawn & Quarterly (Canada's leading publisher in Graphic Novels):
<http://www.drawnandquarterly.com/>

ECW Press:
<http://www.ecwpress.com>



"A Rare Delicacy in Antigua"

K. Eric Fredrickson

English Society

By Sally Christensen

The English Society hosted a potluck at the Wong International Center on October 10th to kick off the year and celebrate a common love of literature. More than a dozen dishes were featured and the round table format was the perfect venue for the new members to get to know one another.



Potluck

S. Christensen

Many braved the darkening night on October 30th to join in celebration of the arcane and spooky. It was an evening of frightening poetry and prose, open to both students and faculty – with costumes strongly encouraged.

Bono himself made an appearance that night, as did an ashen zombie, an irate chef, a dilapidated cat and an irreverent priest. Huddled in the corner of the “study area” of the Library Pub, performers read a variety of verse, from Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven,” to a treatise on teen vampires; there was something to satisfy everyone.



Hallowe'en

S. Christensen



Scrabble

S. Christensen

This semester, the English Society hosted a friendly Scrabble Night in the 4th Floor lounge in the BAC on February 25th. Lovers of English can be a contentious lot, but the results were ultimately wordy, educational and fun! The English Society made a strong showing, but we were all trounced by a Computer Science grad student, whose score blew us all out of the water. We’re blaming it on the need for math skills.

Finally, creative writing was celebrated on the Equinox – all departments were invited to a creative writing reading at the Axe. Readings included both poetry and prose, serious and funny – a wonderful mix that highlighted the variety of talent at Acadia.



Equinox reading

Myles McNutt

Ultimately, the English Society’s mandate is to promote the love of literature across all disciplines. Our meetings and events welcome all departments and we have big plans for even more interdisciplinary events next year.

Creative Feminist Theory

By Becky Jackson

English Honours students Caitlin Iles (left) and Rebecca Jackson (right) strike a dramatic pose following a presentation for Anne Quéma’s feminist theory course. Jackson was giving a presentation on Judith Butler’s text *Gender Trouble* and decided to stir up a little trouble herself. Butler argues that drag reveals the constructed nature of our gender identities and considers these identities to be continuous, on-going performances. For her presentation Jackson elected to illustrate this point by performing as a dapper gentleman for the day, and as one of her friends stated, “erasing gender binaries one ‘stache at a time!”



Gender Trouble

Becky Jackson

Learn More

Are you interested in participating in the English Society or contributing to *estuary* or *Voice 4* next year? Be sure to contact Christine Reed in the fall to get in contact with next year’s executive.

christine.reed@acadiau.ca

AAUEC

By Sally Christensen

This year, Acadia sent five representatives to the 28th Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference, held at St. Mary's University. Three presentations were academic and two were creative, representing great diversity in topics.

Rebecca Jackson read her paper "Destabilizing Dialect: Imagining a New Construction of Sexual Identity through Language," in which she discussed the relationship between language and sexual identity through a consideration of three feminist theory texts.

Corey Liu delivered an engaging presentation on Shakespeare, entitled "On Language, Performance, and the Loss of Identity in Richard II," which explored how the play's meta-theatrical nature affected the audience's response.

Tracy Tidgwell examined the role of colonization and imagination in the creation of West Indian identity in her paper "Imagination and the Possibility of Identity in Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain*."

Sally Christensen read an excerpt from her creative writing thesis, entitled "Trough." This chapter highlights the most turbulent moment between two sisters on vacation in Malaysia.

Meaghan O'Hara wrote a new piece for the conference, entitled "Life of the Mind," in which she presented a stream of consciousness alternate reality, ultimately leading to more questions than answers.

Each of Acadia's participants received resounding applause for their contributions and triggered a great deal of discussion from the audience afterwards.

In addition to the student presentations, the AAUEC this year included presentations by special guest authors and spoken word artists the first evening, including Native Son, David Rimmington and Colleen Subasic. Student participants were encouraged to share their work at the open mic, as well. On the second evening, all participants were invited to The Halifax Feast, a dinner theatre production that poked fun at modern medical dramas.



Dave May

Myles McNutt

Department of English and Theatre Colloquium

By Sally Christensen

Faculty and students alike gathered together on March 25th for the Department of English and Theatre Colloquium, which included brief presentations on the theses as well as a question and answer period afterwards. Both Master's and Honours students presented. First up were the Master's students: Jeremy McFarlane, Stan Janz and Myles McNutt. The Honours students followed: Sally Christensen, Caitlin Iles, Becky Jackson, Dave May and Meaghan O'Hara.



C.Liu, S. Christensen, M. O'Hara, T. Tidgwell, B.Jackson Kyle Doré

Production Notes

Voice 4 is typeset in 11pt Times New Roman with Calisto MT headers.

Logo design by John Torres:
<http://www.odins-beard.com>

Layout by Sally Christensen

Voice 4 is printed at the Acadia Print Shop

The online version and more about Acadia's Department of English and Theatre can be viewed at
<http://english.acadiau.ca>