

HIXSON-LIED

COLLEGE OF FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

FALL 2023



Sandra Williams transforms her passions into art

ALSO INSIDE: Meet Directors Felix Olschofka and Hank Stratton



Dean's Letter



I remember writing in last year's letter that we have the opportunity to take a leadership role in creating a truly contemporary model for arts and design training. And as I reflect on my first year as dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, I remain excited about those opportunities as I have gotten to know our faculty, staff and students, our alumni and donors, and the greater community. This is a college that is moving forward!

They say the only constant in life is change, and that applies to our college right now. This fall, we welcome two new dynamic leaders of our academic units. Hank Stratton is the new director of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and executive director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre. He came to us from the University of Arizona, where he was previously the head of acting/musical theatre and the artistic director of the Arizona Repertory Theatre. Hank executed a strong vision for enrollment growth at the national level at Arizona, and he understands the opportunity we have here for both theatre and emerging media arts to be national leaders. We also welcome Felix Olschofka as director of the Glenn Korff School of Music. He came to us from the University of North Texas, where he was associate dean for operations and professor of violin. Felix is a forward-thinking leader and was the ideal candidate to lead the school into an exciting new era. You will meet both in stories in this magazine.

We also welcome Laurie Richards, the former state film officer through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, who is the interim programmer at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center. Danny Lee Ladely retired as director on Sept. 1. You can read about his

outstanding 50-year career in this magazine. We also feature William Grange, who retired after 27 years as professor of theatre in the Carson School.

Finally, we also have welcomed a new Chancellor—Rodney D. Bennett became the 21st chancellor of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln this summer. He replaced Ronnie Green, who retired on June 30. We look forward to working with Chancellor Bennett.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Hixson-Lied College Magazine, which has a variety of stories about our faculty, students and alumni. I thank you for your support of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts.

Andrew W. Belser

Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Dean

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Fall 2023

For Alumni and Friends of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Hixson-Lied Dean

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Williams transforms

By L. Kent Wolgamott

her passions into art

The dishes on the table draw on Sandra Williams' Peruvian heritage—lomo saltado, a stir fry that reflects the culinary influence of Chinese/Asian histories in Peru, and papas a la huancaína, a rustic potato dish from the Andean highlands.

Sitting under the table are Gladys and Arthur, Williams' rescue dogs and prowling around the dining room and kitchen is Armando, the cat she adopted after fostering him for a few weeks.

The books on the other end table are evidence of research for a book about street art that has taken Williams to Mexico City and Alliance, Nebraska.

And the ceramics on the wall shelves on the wall link Williams to art school in her hometown of Cleveland, Lincoln, and, by extension, to the

Amazon rainforest and Key West, Florida.

Those places and the pets connect the diverse practice of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's associate professor of art that combines public art and murals, her distinctive bright colored resin pieces and delicate paper cuts, and her interdisciplinary educational endeavors.

In Cleveland, where Williams' Peruvian mother, a nurse, met her policeman father in the hospital where she worked, Sandra found her twin passions when she was a little girl—art and animals.

"I've always loved animals," she said as Arthur jumped onto her lap, begging for a treat. "I think my other choice in life was to be a vet. But I remember shadowing a vet when I was in high school, and thinking, 'This is horrible. I really

Above: Sandra Williams, "Back to the Garden" (detail), 2021.

Below: Sandra Williams, "Subterranean Fires 1," 2018.



can't do this.' You think you're going to be helping animals, but there's so much other stuff that goes with that job. So, I ended up going to art school."

That school was the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA), where Williams, who studied ceramics, developed the aesthetic that has continued to inform her work for two decades.

"If you look at (UNL ceramics professor) Eddie Dominguez's work, if you look at a lot of people who came out of that program, there's this aesthetic, they call it the Cleveland cloisonné because there tends to be bright color, black line," Williams said, pointing to a pot on the shelf. "That's very present in Peruvian work, too. That pot there is narrative, it's carved, the black line and bright color. That's what I discovered there."

That aesthetic is clearly seen in the large, polyurethane pieces that were Williams' primary medium of the 2000s, brightly colored, thick works most often depicting a person with plenty going on around them, or, atop them as butterflies, communion wafers, feathers and dirt made their way into the resin.

In 2014, however, Williams' medium and, to some measure, aesthetic changed, moving

from one of the heaviest artworks to one of the lightest.

That happened when she embarked on a 2014 residency at the Madre de Dios Biological Research Station, located deep in the Amazon rainforest, where she intended to look at animals, especially species facing extinction.

Because she had to pack all her art materials in and out of the rainforest and couldn't use anything with toxicity, she turned to working with cut paper.

The cut paper pieces that have followed from the Amazon trip are exquisite and delicate, narrative through images and text, sometimes



Sandra Williams



Left to right: Alliance High School student Sierra Banks, Cicely Pickel (B.F.A. 2022) and Kyren (Conley) Gibson (B.F.A. 2011) with the completed mural titled "This Must Be the Place" on the side of Dave's Pharmacy in Hemingford, Nebraska. Sandra Williams collaborated with Gibson, the executive director of the Carnegie Arts Center in Alliance, Nebraska, on the mural. Courtesy photo.

colorful, sometimes in black and, largely, address the collision of humans and animals in the natural world.

But, of late, they veered into "Eat a Peach," an exhibition about love held at The Studios of Key West, the gallery and community where Williams' work has been best received.

Williams, who came to UNL to teach visual literacy in 1999, undoubtedly has passed some

of the CIA aesthetic on to her students. But more importantly, she's passed another primary element in her oeuvre—public art and working collaboratively in the community, work that can be found in her organization of Day of the Dead celebrations and, more pertinently, in street art and murals.

She's passed that interest on by developing one of few street art classes offered in any

university, a course informed by her trips to Mexico City and Puebla, Mexico, where she found murals that incorporated the lives of indigenous people, something she didn't experience in school.

"When I was in art school, I never saw myself reflected in academic culture," she said. "I think there was one day in my sophomore year, when our instructor showed us a video on Frida Kahlo. That was it."

Murals, in contrast, include all races and

ethnicities, and often deal with social justice and other contemporary issues, which is of great interest to UNL's art students.

"This is a pretty diverse school, and I think that street art really captures that audience," Williams said. "I think those people equally love our regular art history classes. But this class talks about George Floyd, and it talks about COVID, and it talks about political uprising and it talks about feminism. So there are a number of students who may find it more germane to the way they live life."



Sandra Williams, "La Uma." Photo by Larry Gawel.

And, Williams pointed out, street art, which includes graffiti, is great fun for the viewer and the artists.

"There's a certain playfulness, as well as the subversion that I like," Williams said. "This sounds terrible, but I'm going to say it anyway. I think subversion and resistance is really essential to young people's education. When I've had them go out and do stencils with spray paint, and these are college kids, they have so much fun. Even if we have permission, it feels a little bit naughty. They like it."

Street art is also what brought Williams and a pair of students to Alliance to create a mural, which, in turn, led her to become part of RISE with Insects, a UNL Grand Challenges project in which she is collaborating with experts in child, youth and family studies, entomology, science communication and psychology to create a camp for first and second graders to study insects and planetary health.

"Because I've always been interested in animals but didn't pursue that other interest of mine, it didn't mean that I would have to cut it out of my life," said Williams, who started working with scientists during her Amazon residency. "Transdisciplinary work is something that I've wanted to do for like 17 years. But until there was a format for that, it was really hard to find a team or a partner or someone who would make time for it."

As for her own work, Williams foresees another change in medium and scale in the near future.

"For the past nine or 10 years, I've been pretty successful showing my paper cut work," she said. "Now, I don't want to talk about it too

much, but I want to turn it into public art. Like, what do those paper cuts look like when they're cut out of steel, and they're 12 feet tall, and the monkeys are on rods, and they can spin in the wind?"

She'll be doing that work along with teaching in Lincoln, where she intends to stay until retirement. Then, she'll likely find a place to get away from the winter ice, snow and cold.

"I'm seriously considering retiring to Mexico City," she said. "Mexico City is lit. And your tears don't freeze to your face there."

--L. Kent Wolgamott is an arts and entertainment writer for the Lincoln Journal Star. ■



Sandra Williams, "In Heaven, Everything is Fine," 2021.

Stratton looks to build on Carson School legacy

Hank Stratton is the new director of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and executive director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre. He came to Nebraska from the University of Arizona, where he was head of acting/musical theatre and artistic director of the Arizona Repertory Theatre.

“What an opportunity,” Stratton said. “The unique co-location of the emerging media arts center and the performing arts is unlike any other school. I see the school in this unique position of becoming a world leader in all those disciplines, and they are really the 21st century careers that all of our students are going to have and are going to aspire to, whether they are actors, whether they are designers, whether they are emerging media artists—who are really designers and storytellers. Everyone is a storyteller. That’s the heartbeat of it.”

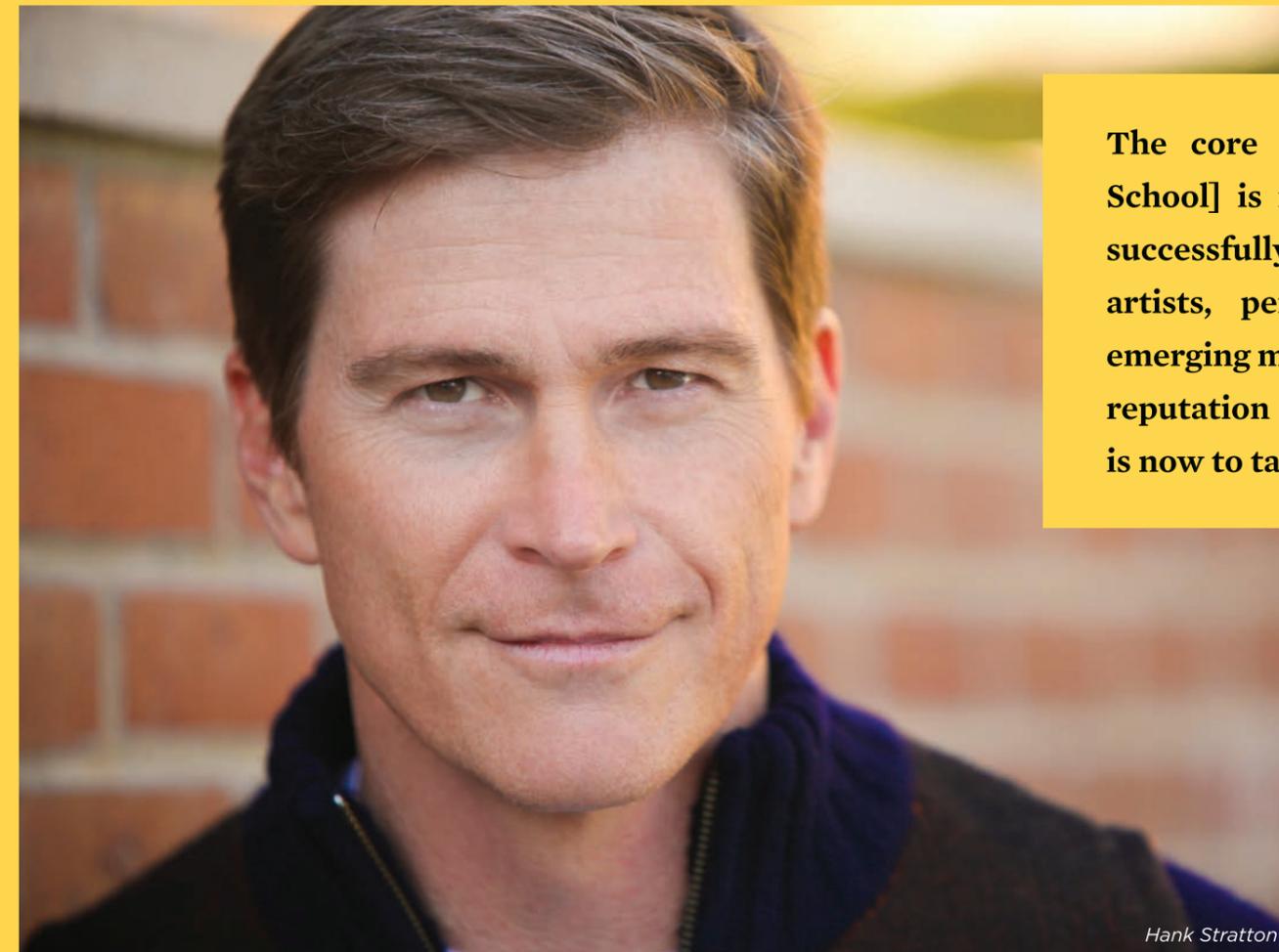
Stratton sees a strong foundation at the Carson School that he hopes to build upon.

“The core strength is really its legacy and

how successfully it has been training artists, performers, designers and emerging media artists,” he said. “It has a strong reputation nationally. The challenge is now to take it to that next level, and what I’m hearing from the faculty and staff is that they sense that same urgency that I do that the students out there that I connect with when I’m on a recruiting trip or teaching a masterclass is that they are all asking for this next piece. This is a prescient moment for us as a school and as theater educators to meet that demand. I just see tremendous opportunities for students.”

The students that he met with as a candidate were eager for that as well.

“I was speaking to the students—and the students were my favorite part—but I was asking them what they needed, and they were all needing exactly what was there,” Stratton said. “The students are eager to find new pathways of collaboration between the different areas of the school. What other school



Hank Stratton

The core strength [of the Carson School] is really its legacy and how successfully it has been training artists, performers, designers and emerging media artists. It has a strong reputation nationally. The challenge is now to take it to that next level.

traditional track to integrate and to merge as storytellers with a common goal. And in terms of the acting training, something I’ve been tracking at the University of Arizona ever since I got there, is that the first jobs most of the actors, and certainly the musical theatre majors as well, will get will be in television and in film. I think we need to be much more forward-thinking about the kinds of vocations and modalities that the students are

has a motion capture studio and a drama training program, and they’re both world class and dying to collaborate with each other? So let’s figure out how to do that, for sure. That’s just one example.”

He is eager to build more connections between emerging media arts and theatre.

“I want to see if we can incorporate more evidence of collaboration in terms of the theatre that we produce,” Stratton said. “They’re all students of the Johnny Carson School, so let’s figure out a way that it would benefit both the EMA students and the design students over here that are more on a

going to have an opportunity to work in. Some of the best independent movies right now are being made on streaming platforms.”

He plans to increase recruiting for the Carson School.

“I am always most interested in curious students, empathic young artists. I’m very inspired by vulnerability and creative courage. I consider it a privilege and an honor to bear witness to some of those risks that they take in front of their educators every single day,” Stratton said.

He also plans to continue to tap into the networks he has established.

“I have gained some trust from arts educators, performing arts centers and some festivals throughout the country, and I hope I can take the good work that I have done and build on that at the Carson Center and just let them know that’s where we are now, and this is what I see for the next iteration of 21st century actors. I will be extremely involved with my students. They’re my favorite part, and they are why we’re all here,” he said.

He also plans to reach out to alumni.

“The alumni are the lifeblood of the legacy of any training program, and they’re trusting us to be the keepers of that legacy,” Stratton said. “I’ve relied on alumni to help bridge that gap between college and the professional world. It’s important.”

Stratton is honored to lead the Carson School, named for famed entertainer, talk show host and Nebraska alumnus Johnny Carson.

“How humbling to be leading a school that is named after a man who dedicated his entire life to creating careers, to giving pathways and openings to young artists,” he said. “He was making careers in one night. He started the careers of Jerry Seinfeld and Garry Shandling and Ellen DeGeneres, among others. Just the way that he would lead with empathy, and he would have conversations that we were all curious about. He never made the interviews about himself. And then suddenly, dropping into this, would be an animal handler that would come out and set a meerkat on his head. And he was such a deft comedian, he knew that if he just sat there, the audience would be eating out of his hand. It also humanized him in a way that no other late night talk show host was willing to do. He invented the format. We invited him into our homes every single night, and he was part of our family. I’m really honored to be leading a school that has that kind of legacy and that kind of history of starting careers.”

He’s honored to have the continued support of the Carson Foundation.

“From what I’ve read, they’re very mindful of that mission of taking young artists, encouraging risks and seeing where that goes,” he said.

Stratton is eager to get to know his faculty and students, as well as the community.

“I think it’s very important for me, in my first year, to get to know the community,” he said. “Every community has its own culture, its own value and its own personality. I want to get to know that community and figure out what they need.”

He wants to maintain and build upon the quality of the performances in the Carson School.

“What’s really exciting about the Rep is that it provides a practical classroom for students and models professional expectations in the most immediate way,” Stratton said. “The other thing I am extremely impressed about with the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film is Theatrix, the student-run theatre company. It’s unlike anything I’ve ever seen, and it’s something that students ask me about all the time. What are my opportunities to create my own content? That’s also a real value of mine.”

He also wants to increase outreach and engagement.

“Access is really important, and access to arts education, to me, is a core value,” he said. “Creating work that is representative of the actual global world that we live in is important and often ignored. I think it’s mission critical to the success and survival of any ethical drama training program to exhibit true cultural competency in the work that we do and the students that we support and the ways that we encourage them to collaborate with each other. It’s just going to make them fuller, better and more responsible artists as part of the global community.”

He’s interested in students that understand that the arts are a huge responsibility.

“Storytelling is a privilege,” he said. “And it’s hard work. One of my drama teachers said to me because we were like ‘Oh, we’re so tired, we’re in rehearsal and we’re in voice class at 10 o’clock in the morning,’ and she said, ‘Of course you’re tired. It’s important work. You should be tired.’ I never forgot that.

“I’m very humbled, and I can’t wait to get started.” ■

Olschofka begins as Korff School Director

Felix Olschofka began his tenure as Glenn Korff School of Music Director on July 3. He comes to Nebraska from the University of North Texas (UNT) College of Music, where he was associate dean for operations and professor of violin.

German-born and raised, Olschofka had been at UNT since 2010. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Music Conservatory Hanns Eisler Berlin, a performance certificate from Indiana University and a doctorate from the University of California San Diego.



Felix Olschofka

Olschofka said he was drawn to the position at Nebraska for multiple reasons.

“As a musician, scholar and educator, I’ve always been passionate about the power of music to inspire, educate and transform lives,” he said. “There’s a long history of excellence in music education, performance and research here, and the Korff School has produced many accomplished musicians and scholars. And because this School of Music has such an outstanding reputation nationally and internationally, it attracts world-renowned artists, teachers and scholars and high-caliber students. I’m very excited about this opportunity. It’s a comprehensive music program that emphasizes creativity, innovation and collaboration, but also diversity, inclusivity and community engagement. And those are all important principles that I share.”

He also liked that it is part of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, which promotes interdisciplinary work and collaboration.

“I’m a strong advocate of that,” he said. “During my appointments at San Diego State University and University of North Texas, I closely collaborated with music, dance and theater faculty in joint projects. I remember one project in which a composer wrote the music, a dancer created the choreography, and dance students and I performed live on stage. It was an inspiring collaboration by everyone involved. Based on these kinds of interdisciplinary, collaborative and diverse experiences I had in the past, I envision that as being part of the School of Music and the other schools within the Hixson-Lied College.”

Olschofka said the Glenn Korff School of Music has several core strengths.

“What I see is that our faculty is nationally and internationally recognized and has a lot to offer to our talented students,” he said. “During my on-campus visits in February and May, I was so pleased with the initial meetings I had with the faculty, staff and students. Everyone in the School of Music is

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“It’s a comprehensive music program that emphasizes creativity, innovation and collaboration, but also diversity, inclusivity and community engagement. And those are all important principles that I share.”

extremely dedicated to the success of the school, its faculty and its students. And then, of course, our successful alumni are recognized for what they have been doing in the past and are currently doing in the music field, beyond music and outside of music. There’s a long-standing tradition here in educating students to achieve excellence as educators, performers, composers, choreographers and scholars.”

He also notes the comprehensive curriculum of the school that builds on tradition and values.

“That’s a core strength, for sure,” he said. “At the same time, we are at this juncture in music education where we value tradition, but also need to innovate. I believe that could start with revising and expanding our curriculum to ensure it serves our students’ needs in the 21st century. There’s a fine and delicate line to preserve the tradition and values, but then at the same time, have this kind of infusion of innovation and new ideas that pushes the envelope of the music and dance curriculum. I have had fruitful conversations with the faculty, and I’m pleased to see their openness to these ideas.”

The curriculum must prepare students for the ever-changing music industry.

“The music industry has undergone significant changes in recent years, particularly due to the fast development of new technologies,” Olschofka said. “We’re required to adapt to these changes to remain relevant and successful. Music has always been an integral part of human culture for many centuries, and so its study has evolved over time. And now with the upcoming emerging technologies, artificial intelligence and global connectedness and diversity, I think the traditional

study of music needs to blend with these realities to keep up with the changing times to serve our students and understand where the current jobs are and will be. Technology has always revolutionized the way we create, produce and consume music.”

Olschofka is also interested in increasing the diversity in the school, including recruiting more out-of-state and international students.

“It brings an entirely new set of different cultural backgrounds to campus, and would enrich not only the school’s community, but also the university. It’s reciprocal for students from other U.S. states and abroad that come to study here in Nebraska,” he said. “When we reflect on the life of a musician in today’s multifaceted contexts, it is our responsibility as educators to prepare our students to become global citizens and understand the world from many different perspectives. As we are a land-grant university, we educate, support and serve students from the state of Nebraska, which is also an essential aspect of our school’s mission.”

As Olschofka arrives on campus, construction is underway for the new music building.

“It will be a state-of-the-art music building, including a first-rate recording studio and classrooms with the newest high-tech equipment for faculty and students to not only work and study but thrive,” he said. “This is incredibly exciting for everyone. When we imagine how the new building can facilitate active and experimental learning, we will be able to offer music technology, entrepreneurship, music business and commercial music courses of the highest caliber. This is also a crucial selling point to our prospective students that show a great interest in these types of degree offerings.”

The \$75 million project, along with the \$15 million Kimball Recital Hall renovation, is being funded by the Nebraska Legislature through LB384.

“It shows a strong commitment toward music and dance and recognizes the importance of the performing arts on campus,” Olschofka said. “We are profoundly grateful to UNL administration and the Nebraska Legislature for this investment in our future that will elevate our teaching and research endeavors in music and dance.”

He wants the Glenn Korff School of Music to have a strong impact on the community.

“The school here has a really unique opportunity to contribute to the cultural and social fabric of the community,” Olschofka said. “I know there is great support of arts and music in the city. What’s important to me is to strengthen those partnerships with local organizations and promote the values of music education and the arts to a wider audience. I believe outreach happens on and off campus. We want to invite the community to campus, and

particularly with the new building and the renovated recital hall, to show our community members the richness of music making and scholarly research we do, while we, at the same time, send our students and faculty to off-campus events within the community. It’s crucially important that the school is as visible and engaged as possible and contributes to the arts scene.”

He notes that the Glenn Korff School of Music has been providing a high-quality education to aspiring musicians for over a century.

“One of the most important roles of the school is to educate future music teachers, who will then go on to shape the next generation of musicians, and so on,” he said. “It’s essential to cultivate connections with our alumni who work so successfully in K-12 and higher education, build long-lasting partnerships and engage in collaborations with them. When I think about our commitment to community outreach and engagement, it’s particularly important for our future music teachers because they will be the ones working with students from diverse backgrounds and communities.”

Olschofka is excited to be part of this community.

“There will be challenges, no doubt, but I believe challenges are tremendous opportunities for progress, success, and further growth as well,” he said. “I’m really excited and eager to get started.” ■

Souto creates 'We Are Nebraska'



Francisco Souto's "We Are Nebraska" hangs in Rm. 201 of Canfield Administration Building South.

A year in the life of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has been captured in "We Are Nebraska," a new artwork by Francisco Souto commissioned by former University of Nebraska–Lincoln Chancellor Ronnie Green, who retired this summer.

The two-foot tall by eight-foot wide graphite drawing is displayed in the Chancellor's Office in Rm. 201 of Canfield Administration Building South.

"Ronnie has been following my research and artwork for a long time, and I remember clearly he attended one of my exhibitions, 'Diaspora II' at Kiechel Fine Arts and mentioned that he's been very impressed with my work," Souto said. "He told me it would be an honor for the university to own one of your pieces."

Souto was commissioned to create a work for

the university and was given complete creative control of the piece.

"Francisco is a gifted, internationally acclaimed artist, and I have long admired his work," Green said in a Nebraska Today story about the piece. "At the debut of the Kiechel exhibition, I had a revelation that we needed to have a piece of Francisco's work that featured and would forever be a part of our university."

He commissioned the work in early 2020, but then the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

"The idea since the beginning was always to show in the piece the level of commitment that the university has for the community and the wonderful access to public education, but I didn't know any specific details at that point—would I be drawing people, would I draw the campus, I didn't

know," Souto said. "But I couldn't deny that this was happening. We were in the middle of a pandemic, and wanted to demonstrate that, despite this global disruption, the university continued to move forward."

The idea for the piece then came to Souto.

"What if I take a year of the university? What will that look like?" he said. "You start 'reading' the drawing from the left to the right, almost like you're reading a story—a timeline. It begins with students moving into the dorms and then slowly you can see the pandemic creeping in. There were the masks and the outdoor classrooms. Eventually, you see the whole progression until the students graduate. To me, that piece visually and emotionally encapsulates what the university's engagement is with the communities, but also that even in the hardest,

unprecedented conditions, the university continues to thrive and move forward with its mission."

Seventeen months later, "We Are Nebraska" was finished.

Souto used photos from Craig Chandler, director of photography for the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, as inspiration. Each interaction in the drawing is a composite of multiple images.

"I got the idea that I would like to draw students living on campus, but they were nowhere to be found—they were all gone because of the pandemic," Souto said. "So I reached out to Craig Chandler to see if he would give me access to his photo database."

He estimates that he used about 200-300 photos to create the 39 people in the final piece.

Included in the artwork is Chancellor Green talking to a student, as well as an image of Souto's son, Pablo, a junior graphic design major, walking with a portfolio in his hand.

"I am talking about the community that has

become my hometown. I incorporated Ronnie Green as the leader of that timeline, and then also included my son to give the sense that this piece is really close to my heart. This is about my passion, my commitment to the university, and the amount of respect that I have for this wonderful institution. That's why I call it 'We Are Nebraska,' because in many ways, it encapsulates all the things that make Lincoln and UNL such a wonderful place. It's really powerful and impactful in that way."



Above: To create the intricate details in his drawings, Francisco Souto wears a visor that magnifies his work. Photo by Craig Chandler.

Below: Francisco Souto discusses "We Are Nebraska" with members of the university's executive team on Nov. 21, 2022. Photo by Craig Chandler.



Souto earns Cather Professorship

Francisco Souto received a Cather Professorship from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln this spring. Willa Cather Professorships were established in 2001



to recognize faculty members with the rank of full professor who have established exceptional records of distinguished creative activity.

"It's very exciting," Souto said. "As we all know, the arts are an essential part of our culture and extremely significant to education. So besides being recognized for all the accolades that I have received for my research over the last 20 years, it also demonstrates the university's commitment and recognition of the arts. That alone is one of the most rewarding aspects of this award."

Souto is just the third professor, and the first in 20 years, from the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts to receive this professorship, joining Professors Emeriti Keith Jacogshagen and Karen Kunc in receiving this honor.

His honors include more than 45 national and international awards and grants. He received the Lorenzo il Magnifico Award at the XII Florence Biennale, and he was one of only 61 artists nationwide included in the exhibition "State of the Art 2020" Discovering American Art Now" at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Souto joined the University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty in 2004 and became director of the School of Art, Art History & Design in 2018.

‘O Pioneers!’ opera to tour Nebraska

The Glenn Korff School of Music’s opera program presents the opera ‘O Pioneers!’ this fall at the Lied Center for Performing Arts and across Nebraska to help mark the 150th anniversary of Cather’s birth in 2023.

The opera, composed by Professor of Composition and Director of Orchestras Tyler White, is based on Willa Cather’s novel and was originally premiered by UNL Opera in 1999 and was performed again in 2012. It will be directed by Richard H. Larson Distinguished Professor of Music (Voice) and Director of Opera William Shomos. Design will be done in collaboration with the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. The cast will include students, alumni and faculty from the Glenn Korff School of Music.

The performance at the Lied Center will be on Nov. 12 with a full orchestra conducted by White. The tour is scheduled to take place the week of Oct. 15 through the Lied Center’s Arts Across Nebraska program with stops in McCook, Scottsbluff and Red Cloud, the home of Cather. For the tour, White has a composed 6-instrument chamber ensemble version of the score.

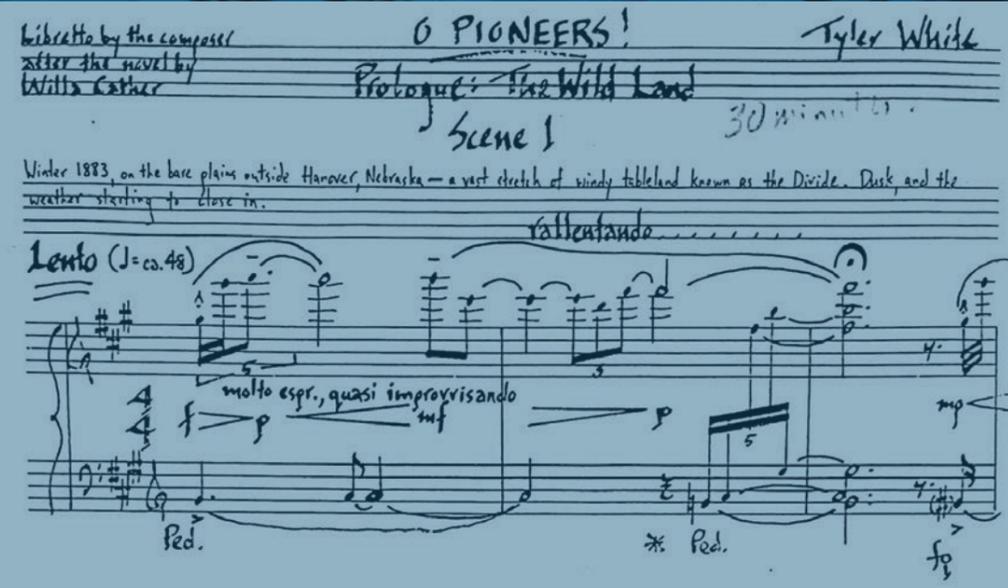
“Tyler and I have been talking about it since we performed ‘Gambler’s Son’—that we wanted one more go around with ‘O Pioneers!’ It really holds a special place for both of us,” Shomos said. “And then we got to this year and here we are at the 150th anniversary of Willa Cather. The writing



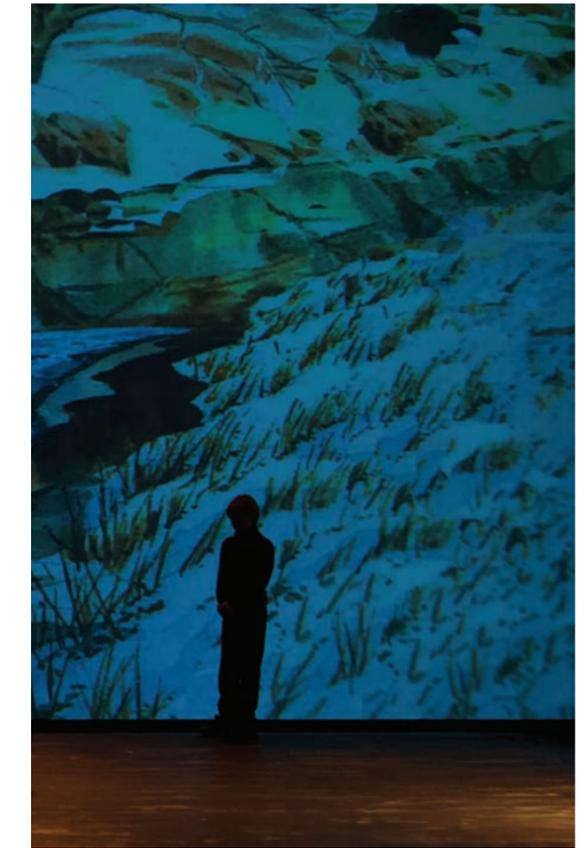
Tyler White



William Shomos



The first page of Tyler White’s handwritten score for “O Pioneers!” Courtesy photo.



Left and right: Taea Bloch performs in the 2012 production of “O Pioneers!”. Center: Adam Fieldson (left) with Taea Bloch in “O Pioneers!” Photos by Laurel Shoemaker.

was on the wall. This is the time to do it.”

“The Gambler’s Son” premiered in 2019 and was composed by White with librettist Laura White. The opera was adapted from another famous Nebraska author’s novel, Mari Sandoz’s “Son of the Gambler Man,” which tells the story of the gambler and townsite promoter who founded Cozad, Nebraska. That opera was performed in both Lincoln and Cozad.

“O Pioneers!” is a 1913 novel by Cather that focuses on a family of Swedish-American immigrants living in Nebraska at the turn of the

20th century in the fictional town of Hanover, Nebraska. It follows protagonist Alexandra Bergson as she grows from a child into an adult. It’s a story of hope, perseverance and forgiveness.

“O Pioneers!” is special to both White and Shomos, who have been collaborating as colleagues for nearly 30 years.

“Along with [Professor of Clarinet] Diane Barger, Tyler and I started the same year back in 1994,” Shomos said. “Early on, I discovered that he was a composer, and so I said, why don’t you write an opera? And this was what he came up with. For

all my work as Director of Opera, I’ve had Tyler at my side for 30 years. It’s almost half of my life and my entire career here at UNL. We’ve just gone through a lot of life together. And the fact that I love his music, that I love his operas, that helps.”

White said, “I have always been deeply touched and profoundly grateful for his lasting belief in the importance of my opera, which he’s often said is the most significant thing he’s done at UNL,” White said. “A composer could ask for nothing more.”

White has always been a fan of Cather’s work.

“Ever since my teen years, I’ve been a huge fan of Cather’s,” he said. “And I remember thinking from literally the first time I picked up a Cather novel, ‘Death Comes for the Archbishop,’ looking at that first chapter, I was so struck by the clarity and evocative simplicity of her writing style.”

White said, “O Pioneers!” is probably the most operatic in its conception.

“It has an adultery and murder plot in there. And then there’s endangered love, lost love and all sorts of very heartfelt and lyrical subjects,” he said. “Also, it’s one of her novels that has the clearest sort of plot arc.”

He was also intrigued by Cather’s opposition to dramatic adaptations of her work—she even put it in her will that there be no adaptations done of her work, which has since lapsed, making the opera possible.

“But I can understand why she felt that way,” White said. “Because when you put something on the stage or on screen, the first thing you lose is the author’s narrative voice. And that, for Cather, is so crucial to the impact of her novels as the way she describes things and the way the narration moves forward. What intrigued me as a composer was then the possibility and necessity of reflecting the tone of Cather’s narration in my musical language.”

White has continued to update the opera since it premiered in 1999 and completed his final revisions in 2019.

“I made some important changes gradually over the years since the first production,” White said. “The main revision was that originally the show had passages of spoken dialog, and I’ve recast all that musically, so the whole piece is sung

virtually beginning to end.”

Shomos has always found the music White composed for this opera to be beautiful.

“The music has always been, to me, astonishingly beautiful, and it’s just a good piece of theatre,” Shomos said. “If you haven’t seen the opera before but are familiar with the book, I think Tyler does a really wonderful job of sticking to the detail and intent of Cather. It’s what I would call a very faithful adaptation of her work.”

Shomos said White has also filled in the orchestration and made it richer than it originally was.

“He has a sophisticated musical language, and the result is something very beautiful,” Shomos said. “And I think he does a really wonderful job of portraying the characters, making them individual, giving them each their own musical fingerprint. And then there’s what he does with the character of the land, which is also a key player in this story. You hear in his music the vastness of the Nebraska landscape on the divide. You hear the warm embrace of the land. You hear the harsh coldness of the land. And the way his music works, and this is his own genius, you hear the cycle of the land and how it relates to our own destinies and our own lives.”

One of the cast members, alumnus Jeff Keele (B.A. 1999; M.M. 2004), was in the original 1999 production. He is currently the assistant transportation supervisor for Lincoln Public Schools and sings regularly in Lincoln. He will be reprising his role of Frank Shabata.

“He is a farmer, married, with a strong stage presence,” Keele said. “He is grumpy, jealous

and unhappy about the attention his wife receives from other gentlemen in the community. His jealousy overtakes him

and changes the course of his life permanently. The first time I played this role, my girlfriend at the time, who is now my wife of 23 years, was actually scared of me as a person from time to time. It was definitely important to leave this character at the stage door and not take it home.”

He enjoyed performing the role in 1999, which made saying yes again an easy choice.

“Bill Shomos has been a huge influencer to my life, and any chance to honor him and be able to perform in my hometown is a no-brainer,” Keele said. “I’m also very curious to hear and learn how the opera has evolved into the score it has settled into. In a sense, it will be a new show to me in that aspect.”

Alumnus Krista Lawrence (M.M. 2017), who is an international award-winning soprano based out of Lincoln, is playing Marie Shabata, Frank’s wife.

“Marie is a free spirit, who makes a nice foil to Alexandra’s grounded and sensible personality,” Lawrence said. “In the book, she is described as being unable to walk anywhere, she always runs, and she is beloved by everyone in their community for her friendly and positive attitude. Even though she seems simple, at first glance, she has a lot of layers and subtext underneath much of her dialogue.”



Jeff Keele



“The University of Nebraska belongs to the entire state. . . . It’s so important that we share the work that we do here with as many people as we have the resources to do, especially in rural communities that don’t have easy access to the theater in Lincoln.”

--William Shomos

Lawrence likes the themes of “O Pioneers!”

“Not only is it a love song to Nebraska and what life as a pioneer was like, it teaches concepts that still feel relevant today,” she said. “This production will include several of my friends from my time at UNL, so it’s a sort of homecoming for us.”

Sebastian Sorensen (B.M. 2017; M.M. 2023) will play Carl Linstrum.

“Years after his family’s farm fails, he comes back and falls in love with Alexandra, hoping to marry,” he said. “Alexandra’s brothers don’t approve of this since he will become the owner of her share of the farm, which makes the marriage seem like a good business move rather than an act of love. Carl cares about earning his place and doing the right thing.”

He was eager to perform an opera based on Cather’s novel.

“Willa Cather is able to capture the character of the land with passion, and her characters are incredibly detailed and complex,” Sorensen said. “This opera celebrates one of my favorite authors who is dear to me as a native Nebraskan myself. Opera is a wonderful story-telling art form that is elegant, beautiful and inspiring. Dr. White’s setting is incredibly faithful to the book, so it is certain to satisfy anyone who has loved the work of Willa Cather.”

Shomos is eager to tour “O Pioneers!” with his cast and crew.

“I think the experience and the excitement of getting to do a show in a different space and having to adapt to different settings is really good for them,” he said. “And it’s a lot of fun. We connect with the communities outside of Lincoln.”

Last year’s tour of “La Traviata” included their fifth stop in Ord, as well as their first performance in Scottsbluff,

which drew an audience of 700.

“That’s pretty amazing if you think about that,” Shomos said. “In Scottsbluff, Nebraska, 700 people coming out for opera. It was just an overwhelming success, and we had a couple of days in the community doing programs for students and arts supporters to build relationships. It was just a fantastic experience for the students to work with these audiences. The University of Nebraska belongs to the entire state. Everyone pays their taxes to support the university. It’s so important that we share the work that we do here with as many people as we have the resources to do, especially in rural communities that don’t have easy access to the theater in Lincoln.”

Lawrence is looking forward to introducing opera to new audiences.

“O Pioneers!” has a lot of themes that almost anyone can relate to—the importance of family, weathering the hard times, wanting something you can’t have, being a strong and independent person,” she said. “I think a lot of people who have never experienced an opera before don’t know what to expect. But opera was the major form of entertainment before television and musicals existed, and it has a huge range as an art form.”

White is looking forward to more people seeing the work.

“This means the world to me to have this opera come to the people and the places that Cather knew and to reach the population with Cather’s work in a way that will be fresh and make them want to go back to the novels themselves.”

“O Pioneers!” is presented with support from the Glenn Korff School of Music, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, Lied Center for Performing Arts, James C. and Rhonda Seacrest Tour Nebraska Opera Fund, UNL Friends of Opera, and the Ariel Bybee Visiting Professorship Endowed Fund. ■

POWELL RECEIVES FACULTY MENTORSHIP TO GROW AS AN ARTIST

School of Art, Art History & Design junior Taylor Powell has turned her hard work and mentorship under faculty member Byron Anway into great opportunities for her to grow as an artist.

“I feel like there’s so many opportunities in the arts for people if they just learn about it and act on them,” she said.

During her freshman year, Powell took 3-D Design with Anway, assistant professor of practice in foundations. Powell drew his attention with a video she created for an assignment where students had to use either photography or video to interact with the landscape.

“Taylor did this video at Holmes Lake. There’s a big pumping unit that manages the level of the water, and there are signs on it that say stay off, keep out,” he said. “Taylor asked me if she could use it as part of her video, and I said, no, I want to be able to be invited back. So, of course,

she used it. They climbed all over it and made this beautiful, sensitive, thoughtful, cinematic and really sharp design, where she climbs up onto this thing that says do not climb, and she does hopscotch and cartwheels, and she sits up there and looks around, and nothing happens. Then she climbs down and goes off. And it’s about the rules and self and the rebellious nature of youth, but also about land art, modernism and formalism and abstraction. It was gorgeous.”

He encouraged her to apply for UCARE (Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience), which is a paid opportunity for students to work one-on-one with a faculty research mentor. She has worked as his studio assistant this past year and will continue this year as well.

“She’s done amazing. Primarily what she does for me as a studio assistant is she builds my canvases,” Anway said. “She takes over some of the studio responsibilities, and I teach her how

to do it. She helps me build picture frames and frame works on paper, and she also helps me photograph my artwork for applications, my website and my archive. So, in turn, these are professional, marketable skills that could benefit her as an artist or in terms of working in the arts. But it’s also modeling what the parts of being an artist are that don’t have anything to do with making pictures. It gives her a chance to see the business side of being an artist and hopefully help her decide whether or not this is the path for her.”

Powell said it was a great opportunity to learn from him.

“I was pretty nervous, at first, just because working under a professor seemed a little nerve wracking,” she said. “But I saw it as a really good opportunity to learn from him. I knew that he’d be able to show me new opportunities and open some doors for me.”

Powell is also intentional in making her own art outside of the classroom.

“I try to work a lot outside of class as a way to develop my art more,” she said. “I feel like I have bigger ideas for what I want my art to look like, and I know that to make that happen, I have to put in the practice and put in the work.”

Powell received an Elgas Project Grant and will have a solo exhibition in the School of Art, Art History & Design’s MEDICI student gallery this fall (dates to be announced).

“She’s recently been awarded money from the school to frame a series of drawings and watercolor paintings and to have an exhibition,” Anway said. “She made all of the work outside of her own coursework. It’s her own studio practice. It’ll be her first solo show, and she was able to receive funding for that.”

Powell said her experience with UCARE helped encourage her to pursue other opportunities.

“I wouldn’t have applied for the grant if I wasn’t in UCARE,” she said. “And I think since having applied for that one, I have my eye out for other opportunities now that I kind of know a little bit more about the process.”

Anway hopes her next step will be to apply for a Hixson-Lied student creative activity grant.

“She works for me as a studio assistant, but in the end, it’s not really an employee,” he said. “It’s an opportunity for an ambitious, motivated student to have one-on-one mentorship in the professional nature of being an artist. So mentoring her through an application for research funding, bringing her



Background on all pages: Taylor Powell, "Room," 8" x 24", acrylic paint. Courtesy photo. Above: Taylor Powell with her artwork in Richards Hall.

in and showing her my own research and professional practice, and then assisting her with writing grant applications for funding. That's the main part of it—for her to have mentorship in developing her own work and seeing what's possible and how her work might be able to get out into the world."

Her recent work has focused on distorted self-portraits.

"Kind of ways that I can take a picture or a reference of myself and change it in some way so that it's not just my face," she said. "I enjoy reflections or fisheye ways of distortion. And a lot of my work since then has been very reference photo and observation based. I think recently I've been thinking more about ways that I can branch out from that, and kind of let the painting or drawing function on its own away from the reference photo. I think that's where more development in my sketchbook or just making more art, that will kind of come with that."

Anway said Powell is quiet, but also confident and critical.

"There was a real sense of rebellious fun," he said. "Her work is rigorous and intense, and she has a wonderful strength of the power of observation. With a lot of her work, she starts with self-portraiture, but she uses distortion or transparency like a physical time lapse. She's making visible physical or emotional or internal states, and it feels very relevant to our contemporary moment as people come out of the pandemic and try to identify what the world looks like going forward and how they



Top: Taylor Powell, "Lamp Light," 15" x 17", oil paint. Courtesy photo.



Upper right: Byron Anway (right) provides mentorship and experience to Taylor Powell as part of the UCARE experience.

Lower left: Taylor Powell, "Warped," 16" x 16", colored pencil. Courtesy photo.



Left: Taylor Powell, "Bug Eye," 10" x 10", colored pencil. Courtesy photo.

see themselves in it."

Powell appreciates the mentorship she has received from the School of Art, Art History & Design faculty.

"If I have any questions about my artistic direction or if I need inspiration about different artists, Byron is always recommending people to look at. And other classes, too. Like in my painting classes with Matthew [Sontheimer] and Aaron [Holz], they give me different artists that they think would be valuable for me to look at that relate to what I'm currently working on. I think with Byron, it's a little bit more about an art attitude and how you view making art. I think he's trying to lead me down the path of what I want to do after and what I want to get from this undergraduate experience. And then I have to decide from there what I take from it or what attitude I act on."

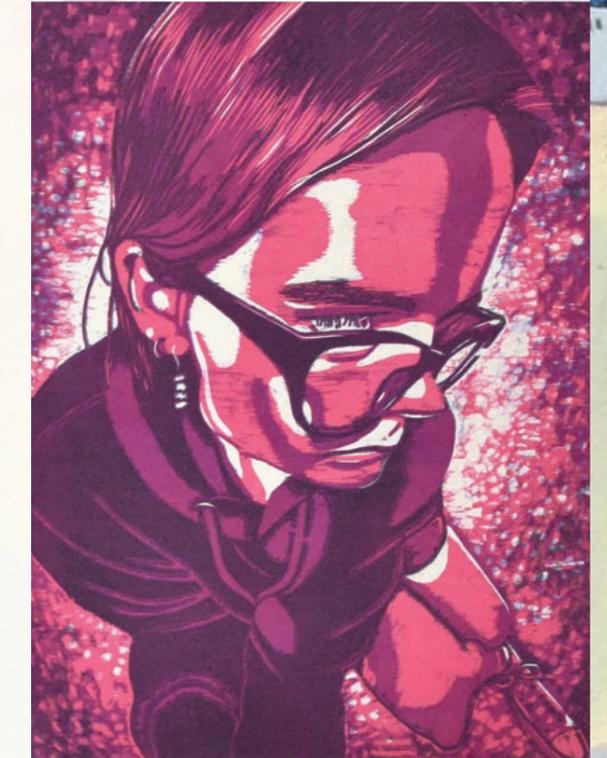
Anway enjoys mentoring students.

"To find the kids who are ambitious and reliable and hardworking and have their own ideas and their own practice and be able to support them is the best part of the job," he said. "A lot of times success doesn't come down to whether they're capable. It comes down to whether or not they have access and whether they even have an awareness of what's possible. If you don't know about a grant, how would you ever know to apply for it? That a very small amount of institutional knowledge or professional experience on my part can be very significant for a young person starting out. But it's easily the most fun part of my job."

In the meantime, Powell plans to keep

creating art and growing as an artist.

"I'm really just trying to make more art and try to understand why I make the art that I do," she said. "And just experiment with what I'm doing and see where it kind of goes from there." ■



Taylor Powell, "Forehead," 11" x 15", woodblock relief print. Courtesy photo.

EMA senior uses augmented reality for London installation

Trystan Nord, a senior emerging media arts student from Gretna, Nebraska, traveled to London in June for the opening of “Can You See How I See?,” a graduate thesis project for Central St. Martens student Yoni Chepishcheva. Nord served as technical artist for the project.

“Can You See How I See?” is an experimental multimedia experience that looks to spread awareness of the medical condition called Palinopsia, with which Chepishcheva has been diagnosed. Palinopsia is a pathological group of visual symptoms in which there is an abnormal persistence or reoccurrence of an image in time when performing sudden movements or experiencing changes in the environment.

“Basically you see a bad blur effect whenever you move your head too quickly,” Nord said. “And the colors on all of these are transparent before blurred images are reversed. I believe blue becomes pink, and green becomes purple. It changes the way she sees the world.”

Chepishcheva researched her symptoms as a teenager.

“I noticed that every time I said something to friends and said look at the

shape of this or look at the afterimage that you have, or look at how your face turns from white to blue or from black to green, people would say I don’t know what you’re saying. I don’t see this,” she said. “I gradually lost friends because people distanced themselves. I ended up marginalizing myself in

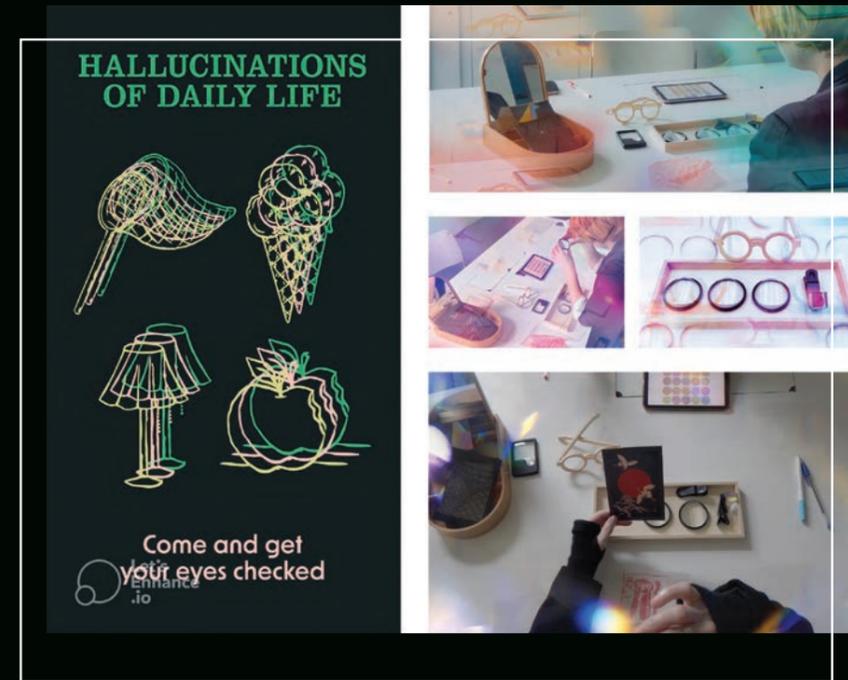
my own one-person community, and I never understood why people don’t see that way.”

She later found a neuro-ophthalmologist who diagnosed her with Palinopsia. Her project aims to bring the struggles of Palinopsia to everyone through a mixed-reality experience. It was on display at Central St. Martens from June 13-20. It has also been accepted to the Florence Biennial, an art exhibition held in Florence, Italy, in October.

Nord and Chepishcheva met last summer

when he traveled to London for the study abroad course “Story Abroad: Future Fictions, London, U.K.,” led by Assistant Professor of Emerging Media Arts Ash Eliza Smith and Megan Elliott, the Johnny Carson Endowed Director in Emerging Media Arts.

“Trystan and Yoni met and collaborated during our Story Abroad trip last



Left and right: Images from “Can You See How I See?” Emerging Media Arts senior Trystan Nord served as technical artist on the project. Courtesy photos.



summer in London where Stephanie Sherman and I were able to sync the Central Saint Martens’ Narrative Environments program with our UNL cohort,” Smith said. “We had multiple lectures, workshops and social gatherings with the students from CSM and UNL and opportunities to collaborate on a final project. Students expanded not only their international networks, but also their knowledge and experience with emerging media arts on the global stage. I cannot emphasize enough the value of these faculty-led programs, nor the support from the Carson Foundation, Hixson-Lied Endowment and Global Experiences to make this happen.”

The UNL students met with students from Central Saint Martens’ Narrative Environments program and had the chance to get to know each other’s interests.

“I started talking with Yoni because the project her group did was pretty interesting to me. And I talked about my interest in medical extended reality. And that’s when Yoni told me that she has this condition called Palinopsia. I said that’s such an interesting thing. I have worked in AR before, I wonder how you would do that as an augmented reality experience. And she said, for my capstone, I



Emerging media arts student Maricel Reinhard participates in “Can You See How I See?” in London. Students from the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts’ London study abroad class this summer had the opportunity to see the project, on which senior Trystan Nord served as technical artist. Photo by Ash Eliza Smith.



Trystan Nord at the installation of "Can You See How I See?" in London. Photo by Ash Eliza Smith.

want to do something like that.”

They talked further about such a project and discussed what the parameters would be.

“And we really thought that this could work, and we could do this in a really fantastic way, and it kind of took off from there from just the idea to an actual project and now a full-blown installation,” Nord said.

Nord thought augmented reality would fit this project.

“I knew that kind of augmentation that augmented reality brings could be perfect for something like this and what Yoni was describing,” he said. “Being able to bring that and not only this is what Palinopsia looks like in a very separate experience that is removed from the body, but personally putting you in, giving you that condition and being able to fully immerse yourself

into somebody who has this condition was a very interesting challenge.”

Nord has appreciated the experience he’s gained from working on such a project.

“I’ve gained so much experience,” he said. “Personally, just working with Yoni, of course, and learning about the condition of Palinopsia has been interesting in its own right and experiencing that. But also, I was able to gather a lot and learn about how to do an installation on such a grand scale.”

Nord also hopes to bring his experience with the project back to the Carson Center sometime next fall.

“I love the EMA Center and how artists are allowed to show their work,” he said. “One thing I want to do next semester is give an IGNITE talk to do a presentation showing what I’ve worked with Yoni on and show the students that these opportunities are out there. One of the reasons I’m so excited that Professor Ash Smith is bringing the Carson students that are going to London this summer to the opening of this experience is because I want to show people that even though we are in Nebraska, that doesn’t mean you don’t have opportunities. You have opportunities all around you. I had to go to London to find mine, but I got that opportunity through this school. As long as you put yourself out there for experiences and are willing to step out of your comfort zone, it’s out there.

You can do it.”

Nord sees the potential for the technology.

“I think, for me, the power behind this project really relies on where this deeply emotional experience and community is meeting the ability to bring that to the masses, and the ability to utilize this technology to not only create this cool optical effect for people, but to get them to think about it and see in a different way. It’s to get them to understand the emotions behind living day in and day out with this condition. That is where the power and excitement comes from. And I think other people are starting to recognize its ability to really have a true impact on people. There’s so much potential for this, and I’m so excited to be on the ground floor.” ■

Carson Center students network in Los Angeles

Twenty-one students and three faculty and staff in the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, along with Johnny Carson Endowed Director in Emerging Media Arts Megan Elliott, and Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Dean Andy Belser, attended the Infinity Festival-Hollywood last fall.

The Infinity Festival celebrates story enabled by technology. The festival featured panels, exhibitions, screenings and a virtual production workshop with Erik Weaver, all driven by today’s top innovators, creators and thought leaders.

The trip to Los Angeles was made possible with support from the new endowed directorship for the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts created by a \$2.5 million gift from the Johnny Carson Foundation.

The week of workshops, tours and networking opportunities also included a tour and lunch at Disney Imagineering with Mikhael Tara Garver, an immersive and experiential creative director at Walt Disney Imagineering and a lecturer in the Carson Center;

a tour of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures; and a virtual production workshop with Nonny de la Peña, the founding director of Arizona State’s Narrative and Emerging Media program who is often acknowledged as the “godmother of virtual reality” and a member of the Carson Center Advisory Council; among other activities.

Kicking off the week was a special L.A. Connectors Dinner, organized by the Nebraska Coast Connection and Nebraska Alumni Association. Students were matched one-on-one with Hollywood professionals and alumni from the area.

“The event was great because it was purposeful in matching students with professional alumni working in the same fields the students are studying,” said Kirstin Wilder, senior director of publications for the Nebraska Alumni Association, who helped organize the dinner. “Students were matched ahead of time and given bios on who their dinner companion would be and vice versa. It was also small—54 guests total in a room that only sat 60,



Left: Hixson-Lied College Dean Andy Belser addresses alumni and students at the L.A. Connectors Dinner. Photo courtesy of Kirstin Wilder.

Bottom: Students and faculty from the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts had the opportunity to tour Disney Imagineering with Mikhael Tara Garver as part of their trip to Los Angeles to attend the Infinity Festival-Hollywood. Courtesy photo.

so the setting was intimate. The professionals were so excited to be in a room with students from Nebraska and to share their wisdom and tips.”

Olli Jenkins, a junior emerging media arts major from Lincoln, was paired at the dinner with Ted Schilowitz, a futurist at Paramount and a member of the Carson Center’s Advisory Council.

“We spoke about the fundamentals of story and what virtual

reality can open us up to experiencing, and it was incredibly honest,” she said. “My dream career is creative direction and worldbuilding, and I felt like I saw a clearer pathway to success after talking with him. Plus, meeting someone so high-profile, yet so down-to-earth, reassured me that putting the work in and being authentic are the qualities that matter most.”

For more on the dinner, visit <https://go.unl.edu/7r0m>.



2 graphic design students win national awards



Rachel Dempsey (right) with Assistant Professor of Practice in Graphic Design Jen Landis after winning a Gold ADDY. Courtesy photo.

Two recent graphic design graduates from the School of Art, Art History & Design (SAAHD) won awards at the 2023 National American Advertising Awards (ADDY).

Rachel Dempsey (B.A. 2022) won a Gold ADDY Award for her project “UGH! My Tummy Hurts Again Zine,” while Anna Dimig (B.A. 2023) won a Silver ADDY for her capstone project “P.S. I Love You,” which captured love stories on postcards from every state she could gather. Dempsey and Dimig were both dual majors in graphic design in SAAHD and advertising/P.R. in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

A Gold ADDY is recognition of the highest level of creative excellence and is judged to be superior to all other entries in the category. Entries that are also considered outstanding and worthy of recognition receive a Silver ADDY.

“I am incredibly proud of Rachel Dempsey for winning the prestigious Gold ADDY award and Anna Dimig winning a Silver ADDY from the National American Advertising Federation,” said Jen Landis, assistant professor of practice in graphic design. “This recognition is a testament to their exceptional talent, dedication and creativity as designers. They have consistently delivered outstanding work that stands out among the best in the nation.”

Landis said these awards demonstrate the quality of work created by students in the graphic design program.

“This award reinforces the fact that UNL designers are equipped with the skills and vision to excel on a national stage,” she said. “It demonstrates the depth of talent and the strong work ethic instilled in our students. It is a testament to the quality of education they receive, and the guidance provided by our exceptional faculty. I am thrilled to see our students achieving such great heights and making their mark in the industry.”

Dempsey said she was surprised to learn she had won an Addy.

“Being in this creative industry is an experience that is hard to explain because there is so much talent, and it can be easy to get lost in the middle of trends,” she said. “I want to stand out, so to receive a Gold Addy award on the national level proved that I did just that. It was a huge confidence booster, which we creatives need more than we’d like to admit.”

Dempsey is currently working at Pixel Bakery Design Studio as their multimedia designer. Her award-winning project was for her senior



Above: Anna Dimig with her capstone project, “P.S. I Love You,” which captured love stories on postcards, won a silver ADDY. Courtesy photo.

Right: Rachel Dempsey’s “UGH! My Tummy Hurts Again Zine” was created to help educate the general public about what it’s like having celiac disease. Courtesy photo.

capstone project and was related to celiac disease.

“I ended up writing, designing and creating a zine (mini magazine) to help educate the general public about what it’s like having celiac disease,” she said. “I was diagnosed with celiac disease my sophomore year of college and had absolutely no idea what it was. Being able to use my knowledge, I wanted to make something that would make learning about the disease interesting, educational, and most

importantly, something anyone could understand.”

Dimig, who is now working as a design and motion graphics intern at Bailey Lauerma, said the best word to describe what she felt winning a national award was “shock.”

“You get so excited when you win an ADDY award on any level, and you feel so content that you almost forget there’s a chance to win another,” she said. “You don’t necessarily expect to keep moving on to the next level, so each time you do, it’s extremely exciting all over again. The chance to attend the actual ADDY awards shows is such a great networking opportunity, and the awards, in general, have really helped get my name out there in front of agencies.”



ADDY Awards

Below is a full listing of School of Art, Art History & Design graphic design students who won recognition in the ADDY awards at the state, regional and national levels this year.

- **Rachel Dempsey**, Gold ADDY award at the 2023 National American Advertising Awards; Gold ADDY award and Best of Show at the regional National American Advertising Awards; Gold Medal (2) and Best of Show at Nebraska American Advertising Awards

- **Anna Dimig**, Silver ADDY award at the 2023 National American Advertising Awards; Gold ADDY award at the regional National American Advertising Awards; Gold Medal at Nebraska American Advertising Awards

- **Madeleine May**, Gold ADDY award at the regional National American Advertising Awards; Gold Medal at Nebraska American Advertising Awards

- **Nina Campbell**, Gold Medal at Nebraska American Advertising Awards; Silver Medal at Nebraska American Advertising Awards

- **Emily Bray**, Silver Medal at Nebraska American Advertising Awards

COLLEGE LOOKS TO EXPAND REACH THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

By Andrew W. Belser

What is arts engagement and why is it such an important piece of a prominent arts college at a public flagship research university like the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts?

The university's land-grant mission directs us to serve the entire state with our research and creative activity. Just as importantly, contemporary professional artists routinely report that they have composed careers from different threads beyond their chosen artistic discipline. In addition to being "working artists," many are producers, arts managers, grantwriters, teachers, arts engagement specialists, healers or engaged with the arts in ways they did not imagine when they went to school.

Many aspects of multi-faceted artistic careers involve knowing how to work with varied constituents in large and small communities. Given today's expansive artistic landscape, it's vitally important to offer students skills for engaging meaningfully with communities. We also must teach that engagement may have many different facets through our college offering engagement opportunities like traveling to offer performances, arts education for youth on campus and in their communities, or experiential learning activities such as creating public art—to name just a few.



Rajeane Shepherd, left, North Platte Community Playhouse board member, talks with Ashley Aloï, Playhouse manager, and Dean Andy Belser on Oct. 26, 2022, in North Platte. Photo by Job Vigil, courtesy of the North Platte Telegraph.

When I started as Dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts in July 2022, I was delighted to find that many engagement programs existed across the college dedicated to engaging with communities beyond the university. Some programs are well-established such as the enduring program of opera tours funded by the James C. and Rhonda Seacrest Tour Nebraska Opera Fund. Some are outgrowths of a professor's expertise and teach-

ing like Sandra Williams' "Street Art" and her work with students painting murals in small communities. Some are "one-off" invites of a performance ensemble. And some are aimed at K-12 aged education like the Carson Center's partnership with Calibraska, where young people learn emerging media at the Center and at various locations across the state.

I quickly saw an opportunity to expand the college's rich legacy and ongoing work with engage-



Dean Andy Belser holds a violin created by The Open String at the London studios of Robert Brewer Young at W.E. Hill & Sons. Photo by Jack Campbell.

ment efforts. Our first step has been to form a close relationship with the university's robust Extension program, which was established for the sort of engagement outlined in our land-grant charter. While many naturally think of Extension's work in agricultural research, they are excited about working with the Hixson-Lied College to promote innovative engagement programs using their vast network of state-wide Extension zones, 4-H affiliations and field stations. In October 2022, Extension planned a trip for me to visit two communities—North Platte and the greater Lexington/Cozad/Gothenberg area—where I was overwhelmed by interest in arts engagement from broad sectors of those communities.

As I began to understand the rich potential for increasing the college's arts engagement across the

as engagement hubs for all of Nebraska.

I will close by offering a snapshot of an emerging UNL partnership between The Open String (<http://theopenstring.org/>) and our School of Art, Art History & Design and our Glenn Korff School of Music. World-renowned London-based violin maker Robert Brewer Young has established and built a New York/London-based non-profit called The Open String (TOS), in which 10–12-year-old youth in worldwide underserved areas learn to build and play their own conservatory-quality instruments. Students participate in making high-quality instruments, which teaches them an appreciation of craftsmanship, gives them crucial embodied experiences in today's technological age, and offers some interested youth affordable instruments that can travel with them as their musicianship advances.

state, and Extension's interest in partnering with us, I invited Brad Richter, founder of a nationally celebrated arts engagement non-profit (leadguitar.org), to consult with the college to set up a college-wide collective of engagement activities. Richter is helping the college to imagine how to build an infrastructure between our schools and communities who want engagement with us. We aim to create a website where the college's units can be accessed and viewed

In January, I traveled with a cohort of college faculty and staff to visit to Brewer Young's instrument-making studios in London to learn whether UNL had the capacity to manufacture The Open String instruments at the conservatory quality central to the project's mission. The January trip to London not only confirmed UNL's capacity, but also further demonstrated potentially substantial long-term opportunities for UNL and The Open String (TOS) to collaborate in ways that will benefit both.

Brewer Young and his team of makers will work closely with UNL staff and faculty as well as violin makers in the greater Lincoln/Omaha area to teach and refine the processes for us to make these instruments for youth throughout Nebraska. String faculty in UNL's Glenn Korff School of Music will create a structure for UNL graduate and undergraduate students to serve as teachers in engagement programs built on existing UNL Extension infrastructure.

TOS and UNL are positioned to become the United States hub and noteworthy template for growing this innovative project nationally and internationally. A key element will be to create an exportable template for other land-grant universities to adopt the program throughout the nation in partnership with their extension infrastructures. The Open String at UNL will evidence a new model for arts engagement as a necessary and vital impetus for Big Ten and Research I land-grant universities in a time when higher education seeks innovative ways to evidence our importance in contemporary culture.

In the coming years, you will be hearing much more about the college's progress as we become a vital hub for arts engagement across Nebraska, the Midwest and the nation.

Evans receives national Charlene Gordon Arts Impact Award

Brannon Evans, a theatre performance major in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film who graduated in May, was one of two recipients nationally of the Charlene Gordon Arts Impact Award.

The recipients of this award are selected from the ASPIRE Arts Leadership program with the sponsorship of the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival National Committee and the College of Fellows of the American Theatre.

Evans was chosen to represent Region V of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) in the national ASPIRE Arts Leadership Cohort and was in Washington, D.C., in April.

"Overall, D.C. was so amazing," Evans said. "I learned a lot about arts administration and was able to refine the theatre company I hope to one day create. My cohort were some of the most amazing and inspiring people I've ever met, and there was so much support from the organizations

and leaders we took workshops from. I'm excited for the future of theatre!"

For more on Evans' award, visit <https://go.unl.edu/vskf>.



Brannon Evans.
Courtesy photo.

UNL Dance program hosts ACDA regional conference

The Glenn Korff School of Music's dance program hosted the 2023 American College Dance Association (ACDA) North-Central Conference March 12-15 in Lincoln.

More than 330 people from 22 universities attended the conference, which was themed "Meeting in the Middle." The region includes Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.

The conference included performances, classes, feedback, presentations and meetings.

Associate Professor of Dance Susan Ourada, the regional conference coordinator, said it was important to showcase the dance facilities at Nebraska.

"It was really important for us to show off our beautiful new facilities," she said. "I think the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is the perfect place to host a conference like this. So many hotels and restaurants are within walking distance from the university. The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts is a gift, so we want to show off all of those things. Nebraska and dance just go hand in hand."

The conference was also a good experience for the UNL dance students.

"We're a small program with two full-time and two part-time faculty. This gave them a chance to get a perspective from all across the country about not only the modern dance and ballet that they study here, but it's a chance to take other forms of dance," Ourada said. "It's also a chance to see what the choreography from other schools looks like."



Students from more than 20 universities participated in classes and workshops at the 2023 American College Dance Association North-Central Conference, which was hosted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Photo by Daniel Ikpeama, Glenn Korff School of Music.

Fleming co-creates groundbreaking 'The Wilds'

Assistant Professor of Emerging Media Arts Jesse Fleming created "The Wilds," a groundbreaking new performance experience, with acclaimed choreographer Laurel Jenkins and Grammy-nominated producer/composer Lewis Pesacov. "The Wilds" premiered last October at the Lied Center's Johnny Carson Theater and is now on tour.

Produced through a partnership between the Lied Center for Performing Arts and the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, "The Wilds" is a mixed-reality, performance experience, where movement instantly becomes music as emerging technology allows dancers to create an immersive journey of sound, light and visual media in real time. Part mythology, part utopian vision, "The Wilds" fuses live dancers with motion-capture technology and real-time animation.

"The Wilds" was made possible, in part, with a grant from the Hixson-Lied Endowment.



"The Wilds" premiered at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in October 2022.

Richards appointed interim programmer at The Ross

Laurie Richards, who retired last year from her role as state film officer through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, was named the interim programmer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center. Danny Lee Ladely retired Sept. 1.

Richards said she saw this as an opportunity to provide some continuity and consistency for the Ross as it looks to expand and build on its strong legacy into the future.

"It is an honor for me to continue to build upon the outstanding legacy of the Ross," Richards said. "Norman Geske had the original vision for a showcase for independent film that came to fruition with the gifts cultivated from Mary Riepma Ross. And for nearly 50 years, Danny Ladely brought an extraordinary lineup of independent films with a purpose and a commitment to ideas. He also brought a diverse lineup of filmmakers to Lincoln. I can't wait to get started to continue to challenge our patrons with the independent film programming and the National Theatre and Met Opera streaming they expect."

Hixson-Lied College of Fine

and Performing Arts Dean Andy Belser has worked with the Friends of Ross Board to lay out a strategic vision for the future of the Ross that expands its mission to increase its role as a community resource, engage further with curriculum across the university, grow its identity as a national film/filmmaking thought leader, increase its role as a multi-disciplinary arts center, commission filmmakers and artist residencies, and be a home for festivals and collaborations with major festivals.



Laurie Richards. Courtesy photo.

World AIDS Day event is Dec. 1

Professor of Voice and Vocal Pedagogy Kevin Hanrahan is organizing a performance event to celebrate World AIDS Day on Dec. 1. The First Friday event will take place from 4-6 p.m. at the International Quilt Museum at 33rd and Holdrege streets on the university's East Campus.

The event is free and open to the public. It will also be live streamed on the Glenn Korff School of Music's Facebook page.

The event will feature collected and uncollected works from "The AIDS Quilt Songbook" performed by Hanrahan, guest artists Susan Hurley, Deborah Popham, Marcy McKee and William Reber, and students from the Glenn Korff School of Music.

In addition to the performance, there will be a presentation on the treatment and prevention research by Dr. Benson Edagwa, a researcher and associate professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center; a panel from the original NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt on display; and a free-will donation to support the Lincoln Chapter of the Nebraska AIDS Project.

This event is a partnership between the Glenn Korff School of Music, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Nebraska AIDS Project and the UNL LGBTQA+ Center.

Hanrahan was inspired to organize this event after hearing a lecture-recital on the AIDS Quilt Songbook by Hurley, Popham and McKee at the International Congress of Voice Teachers in Vienna, Austria.

The AIDS Quilt Songbook is an ongoing, collaborative song-cycle originally founded by baritone William Parker that responds to the stigma, ignorance and grief caused by the spread of HIV/AIDS. It premiered in 1992 at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in New York City. The original 18-song songbook included compositions by William Bolcom, Libby Larsen and John Musto. Several dozen more songs have since been added by more composers. It is a companion work to the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, a 54-ton tapestry that is a living memorial and celebration of the lives of people lost to the AIDS pandemic.

"I just thought these are beautiful songs," Hanrahan said. "What spurred in my mind was we don't hear about AIDS so much anymore. I thought to myself, is there a way that we could give back or engage the community and remind them that this group of people still exist, they still suffer, they still have fears, they still live with the disease."

Hurley, who is associate professor of voice at Mississippi University for Women, is the founding artistic director of an AIDS Quilt Songbook benefit concert series in Phoenix, Arizona. She says the event in Lincoln is important to both honor the past and educate for the future.

"We really do want to honor and empower people who are living with HIV," she said. "It's important to keep the stories going because we learn from stories, and I think we sometimes forget history. We want to support, honor and memorialize those we lost and what we lost culturally as well. It's also important to share

the information as it is relevant now. We have a generation of adults, many of whom have not been taught this history. It's important for all people to know about it because any one of us could become HIV positive at any time, but particularly young people who have not heard the information before. These wonderful songs can start a conversation."

Hanrahan hopes people attend the interdisciplinary event.

"How often do you get to go to a concert that mixes music performance with visual arts and science research?" he said. "It will be fully engaging—mind, body and soul."



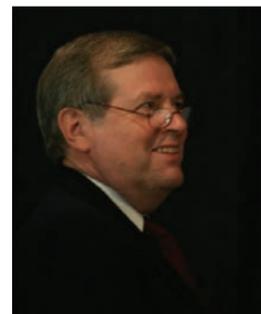
Susan Hurley



Deborah Popham



Kevin Hanrahan



William Reber

Marquette's Longhenry named director of Sheldon Museum of Art

Susan Longhenry, director and chief curator of the Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University, was named the next director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Sheldon Museum of Art. She began Aug. 15.

Longhenry was selected through a national search to lead Sheldon, which is home to one of the nation's premier collections of American art and a national leader in developing multidisciplinary approaches to the visual arts. She replaces Wally Mason, who retired after guiding the museum for nine years.

"I'm thrilled to join Sheldon Museum of Art's many stakeholders at this exciting point in its evolution," Longhenry said. "I've long been an admirer of Sheldon's renowned collection and its extraordinary building. I'm inspired by the potential that I see for Sheldon to integrate even more deeply with the university community, city of Lincoln and Nebraskans across the state."

Longhenry is a specialist in modern and contemporary art with more than 30 years of leadership experience with art museums nationwide. She is recognized as a progressive leader of academic art venues and brings a unique focus on the integration of academic and community engagement.



Susan Longhenry. Courtesy photo.



Left to right: Lied Center Piano Circle Member Keith Heckman, Steinway representative Barry Damerell, Marguerite Scribante Professor of Piano Paul Barnes, Lied Center Executive Director Bill Stephan, Pianist Emanuel Ax and UNL Chancellor Ronnie Green. Courtesy photo.

Lied Center selects new concert grand piano at Steinway Factory

The Lied Center for Performing Arts has built a reputation of presenting the world's top pianists, and attracting internationally renowned artists requires providing world-class instruments for their performances.

Thanks to generous support from the D.F. Dillon Foundation and Rhonda Seacrest, eight-time Grammy Award-winning pianist Emanuel Ax traveled to the Steinway factory in Queens, New York, to select a new 9' Steinway Model D Concert Grand piano for the Lied. Ax was joined by Lied Center Executive Director Bill Stephan, Marguerite Scribante Professor of Piano Paul Barnes, UNL Chancellor Ronnie Green and Lied Center Piano Circle Member Keith Heckman.

Ax opened the 2023-2024 Lied Center

piano series on Sept. 24 in a performance that marked the debut of the new piano on the Lied stage. The Lied's concert grand Steinway piano that has been used in performances since the building opened in 1990 will continue to be available for concerts and other events throughout the year.

"From Emanuel Ax to Yuja Wang, Van Cliburn himself to Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Gold Medalists, the Lied Center has established itself as one of the world's top presenters of classical piano concerts and recitals," Stephan said. "We could not be more excited to add this spectacular Steinway instrument to Lied Center concert experiences and are so grateful to the wonderful donors who made it possible."

Frost to capture Alaskan wilderness in composition



Trevor Frost meditates on the top of a mountain in Alaska. Courtesy photo.

Trevor Frost, a second-year D.M.A. student in wind band conducting with a related area in composition, was one of six composers selected for the “Composing in the Wilderness” program in Alaska in June. During his adventure, he experienced 10 days in the inspiring backcountry of Lake Clark National Park and will now compose a new band work to be performed around the country.

float planes and flew over a saddle in the mountain range and landed on the lake. They taxied us to shore, we unloaded our equipment, and they flew away. From there, we officially began our experience living in the Alaskan wilderness.”

A knee injury during a hike the first day gave Frost some doubts about whether he should be there or not, but he persevered and experienced an

Now in its 11th year, the unique “Composing in the Wilderness” program is led by adventurer-composer Stephen Lias and offered by the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival in collaboration with Alaska Geographic and the National Park Service.

“It was truly a life-changing experience,” Frost said. “We all met the morning of June 4 in Anchorage, where we took a bush plane to Port Alsworth, a little port town with about 200 inhabitants. From there, we took three

incredible adventure.

“Our final full day, we went on another hike. My knee was feeling a lot better because of the knee brace. I remembered that first night and my doubt. I told myself I can do this. I deserve to be here, and that I will make myself proud,” he said. “We got to the top, and I felt refreshed. We spent about an hour on top of the mountain taking in the landscape and thinking about our prompts. I took the time to meditate, living in the moment and absorbing the environment. It was a spiritual moment for me, meditating on top of a mountain in Alaska. I felt my spirit connected with the Earth below me. It was cleansing for me.”

He was proud to push himself beyond his comfort zone.

“This was physically the most challenging experience I have ever had, but I’m so happy that I did it. I went on this journey for me,” he said.

Each composer was given a prompt and will use that inspiration to compose new works for wind ensemble that will be premiered in 2024 by three university wind ensembles, including the Glenn Korff School of Music’s Wind Ensemble, as well as the Stephen F. Austin Wind Ensemble (Texas) and the Grand Valley State University Wind Symphony (Michigan).

Frost will be writing a six-minute piece for wind

ensemble that should be “light, humorous or playful.”

Frost said this experience has helped him as a composer.

“As a composer, this experience has given me more insight on how to create music that is multidimensional and transformative,” he said. “I’ve always felt that my ‘Chorale and Dance,’ written in 2021 was a turning point in my compositional voice. Although I view that still to be true today, my experience in the Alaskan wilderness has confirmed this transformation in my compositional voice. I describe my music as a single seed that which contains the world.”

Frost has about six months to finish his wind ensemble piece and will turn in the completed work around Jan. 1, 2024.

Carolyn Barber, the Ron and Carol Cope Professor of Music, Director of Bands and director of the Wind Ensemble, said having a UNL composer in the mix will only enhance the experience for the Wind Ensemble.

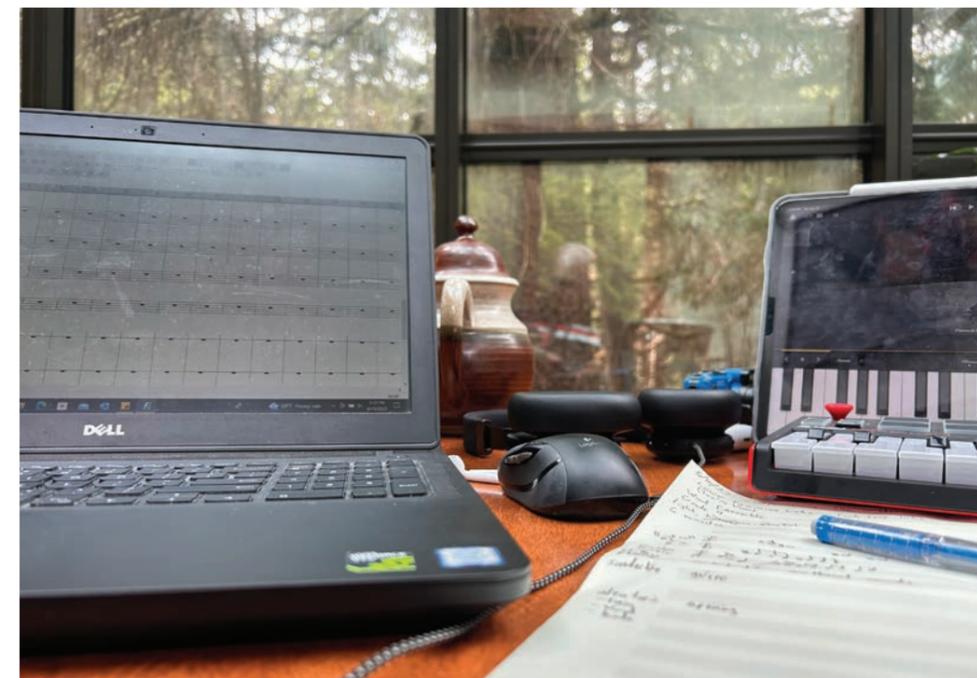
“I am familiar with his compositions, and the project seemed like a great fit for him,” she said. “It will be fun having a person on the ‘inside’ of the composition side of the project. That will really enrich the Wind Ensemble’s experience when we start prepping the program.”

Frost said he learned the importance of being comfortable with being uncomfortable.

“The only way you learn about yourself is to visit the realm outside of your comfort zone,” he said.



Trevor Frost sets up his tent. Courtesy photo.



Trevor Frost began work on his composition while in Alaska, but will have six months to complete it. Courtesy photo.



(Left to right) Guide Liz Hertz, Trevor Frost, Kory Reeder, Robert Alexander, Stephan Lias, Ryan McQuay Meredith, Jason Carl Rosenberg, Paul Rudy and guide Dom Gawel. Courtesy photo.

WEISS RETURNS AS 2023 ALUMNI MASTER



Mari Weiss (center) with Nebraska Alumni Association Executive Director Shelley Zaborowski and Chancellor Ronnie Green at the Medallion Dinner. Photo courtesy of the Nebraska Alumni Association.

Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film alumna Mari Weiss (M.F.A. 1988) was one of nine alumni named to the 2023 class of Alumni Masters by the Nebraska Alumni Association. Weiss was on campus in March for Masters Week.

Since 1964, more than 400 alumni have participated in the Alumni Masters. Selection of the Alumni Masters is competitive. Candidates are alumni who have shown great promise, success and leadership in their fields.

“It’s nice in that most of the times, these kinds of honorariums or distinguished titles tend to go to those who have more celebrity,” Weiss said. “I’ve been a journeyman, a working actor in this business. I’ve made a very nice living for 32 years. With all humility, this is more likely to be what most of the students’ careers will look like. But even in that, very few people have that journeyman career that has that kind of length. I feel very fortunate, but I also worked at it. So it meant a lot for them to celebrate that.”

Weiss has built a diverse and expansive career in theatre and television, having performed, written and directed works from New York to Los Angeles. A native of Chicago, Weiss has performed with such theatre companies as Steppenwolf, Court Theatre and Annoyance Theatre. Her television credits include roles on “Shameless,” “Jane The Virgin,” “Mad Men” and “Seinfeld,” as well as more than 100 commercials. Her voice-over career includes being “the voice” for such clients as McDonald’s, Yoplait and Blue Cross, as well as animation, video games, narration and audio books.

Weiss grew up just outside of Chicago in Wauconda, Illinois. She received her undergraduate degree from Illinois State University before coming to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln for her Master of Fine Arts degree.

“I really liked the program. They had new facilities, and Dick Nichols was one of the best movement teachers in the country,” Weiss said. “Unfortunately, Dick left a month before I started classes, and he didn’t tell us, so that was a little disappointing. But it all really worked out because one of his proteges took over.”

Being able to do a lot of different things at Nebraska helped prepare her for her career.

“You learn so much in the doing. You learn so much from getting up and making mistakes and figuring out what works, what doesn’t work, what is in your wheelhouse, and what might not be,” Weiss said. “It’s a place to go ahead and stretch yourself and try things you wouldn’t have tried before. The more you know your instrument, the

more informed you are with how you go into the business. Because the business sometimes doesn’t have time to figure you out.”

Her big break came when she became the voice of Yoplait Yogurt, which she did for four years.

“I did something that was outside of my comfort zone, which was I reached out to someone I’d met and had a decent relationship with. She was at DDB ad agency. I asked her if she would take five minutes to listen to my demo and give me feedback. She listened and gave me feedback. Then, she went out the door, but she walked right into a meeting with a bunch of executives where they were trying to find the next voice for Yoplait Yogurt, and they basically described me. I got called to go in and audition for it, and I hooked it. That became my calling card.”

A few months after that, she went to New York with “The Real Live Brady Bunch,” where she originated the role of Alice and performed it in New York and Los Angeles.

“I never not worked as an actor again,” she said. “I never did another support job, other than the things I do because I enjoy them, like teaching. But it was just sort of like dead broke to boom, boom, boom, and then not looking back.”

Weiss has enjoyed the voice-over work she has been able to do.

“The biggest thing is it’s not about what I look like, which sounds overly simplistic, but you can’t underestimate that,” she said. “But in voice-over, there were so many things I was able to do. I did all these video games where I played kick-ass babe roles that I would never get on camera. You’re bound by your voice, but it’s really more open. I really enjoy it.”

Weiss said her career has been fun.

“Come on, to walk into a booth and do this crazy Russian accent?” she said. “It’s just so fun. When you’re on a set, it’s not always fun. It’s a heck of a lot of waiting, and there’s a lot of rejection. But overall, it was a lot of fun.”



Mari Weiss (right) coaches seniors in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film on voice-over technique. Photo by Tim Ganser.



Two UNL photography students receive prestigious SPE Student Awards



Left, top: Laura Cobb, "my mother's hand," archival pigment print, 2022.

Left, bottom: Laura Cobb. Right, top: Jamie Ho, "Comb to the End" (still), GIF, 2022. Right, bottom: Jamie Ho. All courtesy photos.



UNL Opera's "La Traviata" at The Golden Husk Theatre in Ord, Nebraska. Photo by Daniel Ikpeama, Glenn Korff School of Music.

UNL Opera tours 'La Traviata'

The Glenn Korff School of Music's opera program went on tour in Nebraska last spring with three performances of Verdi's "La Traviata" in Ord, Scottsbluff and Lincoln.

The tour was made possible by The James C. and Rhonda Seacrest Tour Nebraska Opera Fund.

UNL Opera's touring production of "La Traviata" featured an evocative projection design created by the Emerging Media Arts faculty. Staged by Glenn Korff School of Music Assistant Professor of Music Suna Gunther, the opera was presented with costumes and singing by UNL Opera voice students, accompanied by a chamber ensemble.

SPE Student Awards for Innovations in Imaging is especially important to me because it acknowledges an expansive definition of photography and lens-based work since my art practice is not only lens-based, but includes time-based media, new media and installation."

Cobb, who received her Master of Fine Arts in photography in May, was appreciative of the recognition.

"It's very exciting to be selected for this award and to be recognized for my work within such a prestigious organization," she said. "The support I've received within the photography community is tremendous. This award really shows how much I've grown as an artist during my time at UNL."

Two graduate students in the School of Art, Art History & Design received the Society for Photographic Education (SPE) Student Awards for Innovations in Imaging last spring.

Laura Cobb and Jamie Ho were only two of five recipients nationally for the awards. Awards are offered based on merits of submitted portfolios and included a travel stipend to attend the annual conference held in March in Denver, an annual conference fee waiver and a one-year membership to SPE.

"I am very honored to be recognized for the strength of my creative work," said Ho, who received her Master of Fine Arts in photography in May. "The 2023

EMA senior earns Maxis Studios internship

Alijah Mallula, a senior emerging media arts and English major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, earned a three-month summer internship from Maxis Studios, in Redwood City, California.

"My experience, as a whole, has been amazing," Mallula said. "I have been having an awesome time. I have been learning so much, and I have loved getting to know everyone in the studio."

There were 619 applicants for the internship, and Mallula was the single candidate offered the internship.

"I was shocked, for sure," Mallula said. "It makes me feel great. I am very nervous, and I want to make a good impression on everyone there. And to be honest, I still cannot believe it. It feels like a dream."

Maxis Studios is known for the popular "The Sims" video game series. Mallula is unable to reveal

details about the projects she is working on, but said she has been doing sound design for the first half of her internship. She will be doing dialogue editing, too.

"Overall, I've been learning the ins and outs of the studio and learning in-depth about how audio functions in games," she said.

Sound design was her primary interest.

"I love creating sounds that engage players and users into a world and change how they view it," she said. "Audio has the ability to be able to shape a story and give it dimensionality that allows the audience to connect the characters and the story as a whole. Through my time in the emerging media arts program, I have found that games are really an intriguing storytelling platform and are a way to challenge myself in every aspect of my creative process."



Alijah Mallula sits on The Sims couch at Maxis Studios. Courtesy photo.

'Only in Nebraska' campaign launched

Last fall, the University of Nebraska system announced the public launch of "Only in Nebraska: A Campaign for Our University's Future."

The campaign is a historic effort to encourage at least 150,000 benefactors to give \$3 billion to support University of Nebraska students, faculty, academic programs and research to address the needs of the state.

While the campaign has three priorities, the

top priority is students. The campaign will create additional scholarships to help make education affordable, attract more students and keep them in Nebraska. It also will invest in programs such as learning communities which help retain students, provide mentorship and guidance and ensure their timely degree completion.

More information about "Only in Nebraska: A Campaign for Our University's Future" is available at <https://OnlyinNebraska.org>.



A Campaign for Our University's Future™

Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Giving

The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts gratefully acknowledges the following contributions to the University of Nebraska Foundation to support the college from June 1, 2022, to May 31, 2023. If you are interested in making a gift, visit <https://go.unl.edu/givefpa>.

Dean's Club

Johnny Carson Foundation

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Ms. Kristine Winter

\$5,000 to \$24,999

Dr. Jill B. and Mr. Steven M. Cohen

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Dr. Patrick Grim & Dr. L. Theresa Watkins

Mr. F. Pace Woods, II

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If you are interested in making a gift, visit <http://go.unl.edu/givefpa>.

We are pleased to thank the following contributors, who accepted our invitation to join the Art Patron's Circle, the Carson Circle, the Encore Circle and the UNL Dance Program from June 1, 2022, to May 31, 2023.

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Carson legacy celebrated



The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts hosted members of the Johnny Carson Foundation on campus last October to celebrate the legacy of Johnny Carson.

Just prior to their arrival, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln announced a \$2.5 million gift from the Johnny Carson Foundation to create an endowed directorship for the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts. Megan Elliott, the founding director of the center, is the first recipient and will be known as the Johnny Carson Endowed Director in Emerging Media Arts.

Allan Alexander, president and a director of the Johnny Carson Foundation, along with Johnny Carson Foundation board members Larry Witzer and Jeff Sotzing, attended the special weekend of events. They met with students and faculty in the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts and Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.

In addition, the Carson Lecture Series returned and featured comedian Pat Hazell and special guest Teresa Ganzel, a recurring cast member of “The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson.” Ganzel starred in many popular skits on the show as part of the Mighty Carson Art Players.

For Omaha native Hazell,

appearing on “The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson” was a special experience and opened doors for him.

“It was a level up from ‘as seen on TV.’ As seen on the Johnny Carson show and to have Johnny’s okay symbol for a comedian opened the doors to clubs and to corporate events and to theatres and touring opportunities and Vegas, and so forth,” he said. “He was very, very generous with young comics having their debut, and he would go out of his way to set the audience up for it. Walking through that curtain was like a portal to the next portion of your life as a comedian because from then on, you are a Tonight Show-approved comedian.”

Hazell said students at Nebraska can learn a lot from Carson.

“Partly in his generosity and philanthropic gift giving, he created the theatre and the emerging media arts center and state-of-the-art access to all kinds of things,” Hazell said. “You don’t have to be in Hollywood or New York to make it. All you have to do is learn your craft, and Johnny learned his craft there. Everybody is lucky that he lived in the area and wanted to generously to give back to what gave him a lot.”

To see more photos from the weekend, visit <https://go.unl.edu/carsonweekend>.



New music building

CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

Construction is underway for the new music building at 10th and Q streets, as seen in this photo taken on Sept. 14. Photo by Kathe Andersen.

Construction on the highly anticipated new Westbrook Music Building is underway. The project is scheduled for completion in 2025.

The \$75 million project, funded by the Nebraska Legislature through LB 384, will revitalize the southwest corner of the University

of Nebraska–Lincoln’s city campus. The building, home to the Glenn Korff School of Music, will provide new state-of-the-art facilities for current and future students. The project will include a mix of old and new construction, with renovations of the southwest wing of the current building connecting to approximately 75,000 square feet of new construction.

The new building will span across the two parking lots west of the current building, at the corner of 10th and Q streets. Westbrook Music Building has been on the construction list for some time, in an effort to make acoustical and other updates to enhance current students’ experiences and attract top talent to Nebraska.

Westbrook's existing connection to Kimball Recital Hall has been a priority to maintain. The project includes a slate of exciting new updates, in hopes of creating a cutting-edge facility for music and dance. Some of the anticipated features include a recording studio and rehearsal halls, among other things.

One highlight of the new building will be a new immersive recital space, which Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Dean Andy

Belser is tentatively referring to as "The Music Box."

"We are incredibly excited about the immersive space that will be one of the first acoustically tunable and visually immersive music performance spaces situated within a U.S. music school," he said. "The acoustically tunable space will allow us to teach students across the college how to enter a professional world of acoustical engineering in concert halls, churches and performance spaces.

This cutting-edge performance space, combined with

other high-tech features like a digital recording studio, will allow the Glenn Korff School of Music to expand our curriculum to train students for today's technology-rich music and performance industries."

The construction to Westbrook will occur in phases. As new portions of the building are completed, current portions will be removed or renovated. When the north part of the existing building is taken down, it will leave space for additional green space attached to the arts quad.

To view a live feed of construction, visit <https://go.unl.edu/a5dn>.



Top, left: A rendering showing the west sidewalk of the new music building. Bottom, left: A new immersive recital space, tentatively called "The Music Box," will feature tunable spatial sound that can be redesigned based on the acoustical needs of each performance, as well as a curved array of LED screens that will create a visually immersive performance environment. Above: The south elevation of the new music building. All photos courtesy of Sinclair Hille Architects and BNIM.



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1988

Mari Weiss (M.F.A.) was one of nine alumni named to the 2023 class of Alumni Masters by the Nebraska Alumni Association. Weiss was on campus in March for Masters Week. For more on Weiss, see pg. 38.



Mari Weiss

2003

Sally J. Brown (B.A.) participated in the internationally renowned artist residency with Proyecto Ace in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in May. Read more about her at <http://sallyjanebrown.com>.

2007

Tory Lenosky (B.F.A.) returned to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln last September for a screening of her film “Resurrection” at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center as part of the Norman A. Geske Cinema Showcase. The Emmy-nominated producer has worked as a producer on 22 movies. “Resurrection,” starring Rebecca Hall and Tim Roth, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.

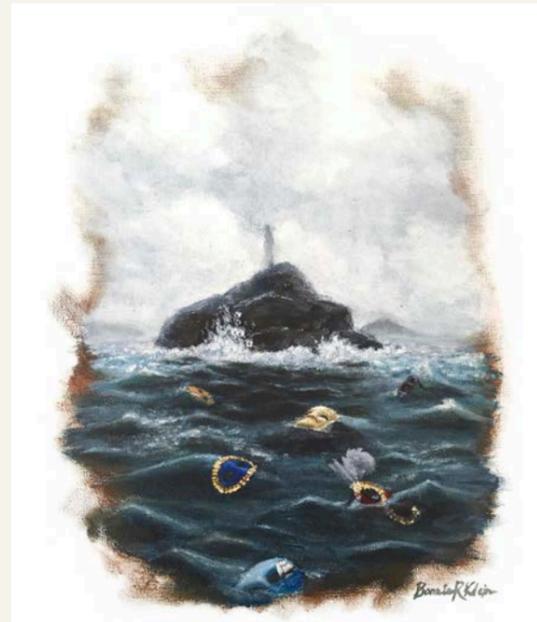
2008

Jonathan Crosmer (M.M.; D.M.A. 2011) wrote a piece titled “The Faces of Monte Cristo,” which premiered last November by the Lincoln Youth Symphony, conducted by Professor of Viola **Clark Potter**. The 15-minute work for full symphony was inspired by the 19th century novel, “The Count of Monte Cristo” by Alexandre Dumas. Crosmer lives in Lexington, Kentucky, where he is a principal software engineer for Redzone. He is also the artistic director of the chamber music series Amadeus Lex (<https://amedeuslex.com>), which he founded in 2021.



Jonathan Crosmer

The score cover art for Jonathan Crosmer’s “The Faces of Monte Cristo.” Courtesy photo.



2010

Marcelo Lian (M.M.; D.M.A. 2013) performed a 90-minute recital at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Oct. 17, 2022, after receiving honorable mention in the Progressive Musicians competition. Lian accompanies the choirs and vocal music at Lincoln High and teaches classes at the Omaha Conservatory of Music.



Marcelo Lian performs at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall on Oct. 17, 2022. Courtesy photo.

2012

Neil Diagle Orians (B.F.A.) was appointed area head and assistant professor of printmaking at the University of Cincinnati in August 2022. He recently completed an artist residency at the Morgan Conservatory of Printmaking in Cleveland, Ohio. In July, he attended an artist residency at Millay Arts in Austerlitz, New York.

2013

Alicia Harris (M.A.) was quoted in “Hyperallergic,” an online publication for art criticism. In the article (<https://go.unl.edu/zja0>), Harris comments on a recent large work of land art in the Nevada desert by Michael Heizer. Harris is currently an assistant professor of art history at the University of Oklahoma.



Alicia Harris

2017

Larry Buller (M.F.A.) was accepted into the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) juried exhibition titled “I Contain Multitudes,” which was curated by Nebraska alumnus **Garth Johnson** (B.F.A. 1997) at the NCECA annual conference in Cincinnati. Only 40 pieces were selected out of more than 300 entries. Buller was also recently invited to show at Art Basil as part of Art Week Miami. He was also invited to an exhibition at the American Museum of Ceramic Art (AMCA) in Los Angeles titled “Making in Between: LGBTQ+ Identities in Clay,” which opened in May.

2020

Gayle Rocz (B.A.) received a \$2,000 Individual Artist Fellowship from the Nebraska Arts Council. Rocz is a dance artist, scholar and educator currently based in Omaha.

earns alumni award for her creative career

Elizabeth Baquet (B.F.A. 2012), a podcast executive for Mosaic Media, returned to Lincoln this spring as the recipient of the Alumni Achievement Award in Theatre Arts.

“It was pretty exciting. I was in New York for work and received the e-mail. I was excited and surprised. It’s truly been 10 years since I’ve been able to come back and visit the school, and especially with the new emerging media arts and everything that has changed, it’s exciting to see how far everything has come since we were here.”

Baquet oversees development and client pitches for podcast projects in a variety of genres. Mosaic Media’s A-list roster includes Will Ferrell, Judd Apatow and Jessica Chastain. Additionally, Baquet oversees Ninth Planet Audio, Mosaic Media’s in-house audio production company, which holds a first-look deal with iHeartRadio’s Big Money Players Network.

Baquet said the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film was a great place to explore what interested her.

“I think it really was, for me, a great place to try a little bit of everything and really start to find what pieces of the industry appealed to me and what roles I enjoyed,” she said. “I quickly learned that I wasn’t interested in acting. I really wasn’t interested in directing or writing, but I loved working with those people, so producing became my path pretty quickly, which allowed me to then work on a lot of student projects and really be able to try different things.”

Baquet said there’s so much to learn and know within the industry that just comes from experience.

“Having enough of the basics from our professors in classes and then being able to actually take that and apply it to a film shoot, even in our sophomore year, which is a lot earlier than other programs are able to do,” she said. “To do a hands-on project each year was so helpful to just kind



Left to right: Elizabeth Baquet, Carson Center Director Megan Elliott and Todd Nelson at IGNITE on May 5 at the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts.

of make the mistakes in a space that is forgiving.”

Originally from Clay Center, Nebraska, Baquet and her family moved to Lincoln when she was in seventh grade. She developed a love for film watching movies at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center.

“What got me excited about filmmaking as a potential career is my mom would bring me to the Ross to see a lot of the sort of films here that you couldn’t see anywhere else,” she said. “Especially then, there wasn’t streaming so if you wanted to see an independent film, you had to go to an art house.”

Two films that stood out for her were “Breakfast on Pluto,” starring Cillian Murphy, who plays a transgender woman finding her way in Ireland and England, and “Rabbit-Proof Fence,” which starred Kenneth Branagh and was an Australian film about indigenous girls who were taken and put into a work camp.

“I just remember both of those films really stuck out to me as worlds I knew nothing about, but I was so excited to be able to see them and take it in,” Baquet said. “I remember a moment specifically of then the credits rolled, and I sort of realized, oh, people make these and get to work on them. I want to do what these people do. It was a spark, I guess, without knowing specifically what even it meant to do that.”

After graduating from Nebraska with her degree in film and new media production, Baquet became a director of production for Funny or Die, a production company founded by Will Ferrell and Adam McKay. She worked on various digital web projects before moving into their television department, where she worked on shows such as IFC’s “Brockmire,” TruTV’s “Billy on the Street,” Netflix’s “American Vandal” and Comedy Central’s “@midnight” in addition to several comedy specials. Her work on “Billy on the Street,” starring comedian Billy Eichner, earned her three Emmy Award nominations, as well as a PGA Award nomination, all before she turned 30.

“I started in early 2013 and that was really when the company was just starting to shift into television production and still doing tons of web videos,” Baquet said. “It felt a little bit like summer camp with all



Elizabeth Baquet with her mother at the 2019 Emmy Awards. Courtesy photo.

of the creatives. We had in-house writers and directors just always coming up with hilarious ideas.”

Before joining Mosaic Media just over two years ago, Baquet served as head of production for PodcastOne where she developed and launched dozens of successful podcasts while supervising an in-house team of producers, editors, and engineers.

“I got into the podcast space in the last four or five years,” she said. “I think it’s carved out a really unique spot within the creative industry.”

At Mosaic, she supports clients and the projects they want to develop and has helped build out a sustainable process to produce a lot of shows in-house with a creative team.

“Helping you put pitch materials together and sell the show to networks and then also helping produce projects through Ninth Planet, which is the in-house production company,” Baquet said. “It’s so interesting. I’ve always enjoyed podcasts. What I love about it is it’s just so accessible, and also the good and the bad of it is that the barrier to entry is incredibly low. Anyone can make a podcast and put it out there. It feels a little bit like kind of the early days of internet videos and YouTube. But I think the podcast space is one where there’s just so much room for creativity.”

Podcasts are not just talk shows.

“There are incredible narrative, documentary-style podcasts now about all different

types of things and even scripted fiction podcasts are becoming a lot more prevalent,” she said. “And those are so impressively done in their own way with the audio and the sound design and creating this world that exists only in a listener’s mind. The experience is so different from a lot of things where you are spending by yourself an hour with a show and getting to know a host really well. It’s a really strong way to build a brand and build a community around a project. It feels like there’s a lot of blue sky, and there’s still a lot of people who don’t listen to podcasts, so I like that kind of challenge of how do we reach people who haven’t tried it yet and what’s the show that appeals to them? And there are still so many formats that haven’t been cracked like what does a cooking show in a podcast look like?”

Baquet said her advice to students is to be passionate and to be prepared.

“It’s a tough career to go into,” she said. “It’s one that you must be really passionate about. It has to be more than a hobby. But I think there are so many different ways to be creative, so I think it’s something that anyone can really find a way to be successful in. But it does take a lot of work, and it’s more than sort of a 9 to 5. It’s something you are constantly working on and learning. So much success comes from persistence.” ■



Elizabeth Baquet producing a podcast pilot. Courtesy photo.



Elizabeth Baquet (left) and Rudy Jansen work on their senior thesis project, “Home Room.” Courtesy photo.

New faculty on campus

The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts welcomes the following five new faculty members this fall:



Carlie Antes

Assistant Professor of Practice and 3D Foundations Coordinator

Carlie Antes earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln with an emphasis in ceramics and returned to complete her Master of Fine Arts in sculpture. Antes’ work explores biological and ecological structures set alongside human inventions and behavior—utilizing the physical matter of her lived experiences as visual placeholders for people, places, memories and emotions.

Antes has received numerous awards and accolades for her creative research including the Dan and Barbara Howard Creative Achievement Award (2020), the Jean R. Faulkner Memorial Art Exhibition Award (2017, 2020), and the Francis William Vreeland Award (2017, 2023). Antes looks forward to engaging a diverse student body and bolstering their understanding of three-dimensional visual information, its relationship to art/craft/design and the everyday human experience.



Bryan Jackson

Assistant Professor of Emerging Media Arts

Bryan Jackson is a director, writer and educator formerly based in Los Angeles. His films take a unique approach to narrative storytelling and draw upon his work in LGBTQ activism and background in theater and experimental film.

He is currently in post-production on “Cream,” based on a story by Rikki Cucornet. He earned an M.F.A. in directing from UCLA.

Jackson was co-founder and faculty of DigiFilm at the University of California, Irvine. DigiFilm is a filmmaking program whose majority is comprised of BIPOC, Women and LGBTQ students. At UCI, he created the International Documentary Program, which sends undergraduate filmmakers to film documentaries at community sites focused on environmental and social justice, women’s empowerment and new models of education.



Joshua Lowe

Assistant Professor Graphic Design

Joshua Lowe earned a Master of Fine Arts in visual communications from Purdue University and has previously served on the faculty of Illinois Wesleyan University, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and Purdue University. He is a former art director in both agency and in-house design settings, with an emphasis in typography, storytelling and branding.

Lowe’s work has been awarded and published in international design journals, including “Communication Arts” and “Graphis.” He has received Telly and Addy awards for his work in advertising and has exhibited throughout the Midwest.

His current research embraces and explores the relationship between physical and digital experiences and seeks to drive positive change through visual storytelling, motion design and interactivity.

As a design educator, Lowe aims to foster a culture of creative problem solving and innovative output through healthy collaboration, encouraging students to seek local and global design problems to solve.



Felix Olschofka

Professor and Director of the Glenn Korff School of Music

Felix Olschofka comes to Nebraska from the University of North Texas (UNT) College of Music, where he was associate dean for operations and professor of violin.

German-born and raised, Olschofka was at UNT since 2010. He formerly served as director of graduate studies from 2018-2020. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Music Conservatory Hanns Eisler Berlin, a performance certificate from Indiana University and a doctorate from the University of California San Diego.

Olschofka has toured as a soloist, concertmaster and chamber musician throughout Europe, Asia, North America and South America. He founded the UNT International Summer Music Institute in 2014 and served as both director and faculty for this two-week long workshop for highly talented pre-college and college students.



Hank Stratton

Professor and Director of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and Executive Director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre

Hank Stratton comes to Nebraska from the University of Arizona, where he was head of acting/musical theatre and the artistic director of the Arizona Repertory Theatre.

A graduate of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, Stratton has served as a guest artist for leading educational institutions around the country, including masterclasses at UCLA, the University of Michigan and San Diego State University.

He is a co-founding instructor for Five Days of Broadway, a performing arts summer intensive in partnership with the prestigious Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts. He also sits on the Board of Directors for The Professional Arts Education Center, a not-for-profit whose mission is to provide merit- and need-based scholarships in the performing arts. He is also a founding board member for The Foundation for a National AIDS Monument.



Above: Paul Haar with his mother, Dorothy.

Right (background): The CD cover for Paul Haar’s CD, “Too Late, Too Soon.”

Courtesy photos.

Haar releases CD in tribute to his mother

Glenn Korff School of Music Associate Professor of Saxophone Ora Paul Haar is releasing his CD, “Too Late, Too Soon” this year. The CD and title song are a tribute to his late mother, Dorothy, who died in 2022 at the age of 93.

“‘Too Late, Too Soon’ is a saying my mother used to use,” Haar said. “She would say, ‘Too late, too soon we get smarter.’ It refers to how we commonly don’t realize how important the small things are in life and how quickly life moves.”

The CD includes 10 tracks, including three written by Haar— “Too Late, Too Soon,” “Dot’s Diddy” and “Beehive Blues.”

This is Haar’s first CD, and he recorded it with Associate Professor of Composition, Emerging Media and Digital Arts Tom Larson.

“I’ve always wanted to do one,” Haar said.

For the last few years, he was caring for his mother during the Covid-19 pandemic. During a long hospitalization and rehabilitation stint, she opened up to Haar about the love of her life, her first husband.

“I’ve never written a piece of music in my life and never really wanted to. I feel that composers are composers, and players are players,” Haar said. “I just went home that night and had a melody in my head and sat down and composed the piece and the lyrics to the title song, ‘Too Late Too Soon.’ I don’t know where it came from. It was just one of those things where I could not stop working on it until it was done and the final lyric was the right way.”

“Beehive Blues” was written about his mother’s signature hairdo and features Jackie Allen on vocals.

“One of her signature things was her hair,” Haar said. “She had it up to a beehive, but it wasn’t a true beehive. It had French rolls and was an architectural monument. She was so particular about her hair.”

But when she moved to assisted living, she could no longer use her regular beautician of nearly 50 years.

“I thought, let’s write a blues song from her standpoint, that for her, it would be a tragedy that she couldn’t do her weekly beautician appointment.”

Haar describes “Dot’s Diddy” as a swing tune.

“It was just kind of a moderately up tempo, businessman’s bounce type swing tune,” he said. “It was the type of tune that she would reluctantly dance to.”

The other tracks on the CD include “Stella by Starlight” by Victor Young, “Chelsea Bridge” by Billy Strayhorn, “For All We Know” by J. Fred Coots, “Smile” by Charlie Chaplin, “Sacred Heart” by Rick Margitza, “Sail Away” by Tom Harrell and “I Can’t Get Along Without You” by Bob Olsen.

“Every tune has some genesis to a relationship,” Haar said. “Either the melody is beautiful, or the lyrics mean something or were one of my mom’s favorite tunes. Something like that.”

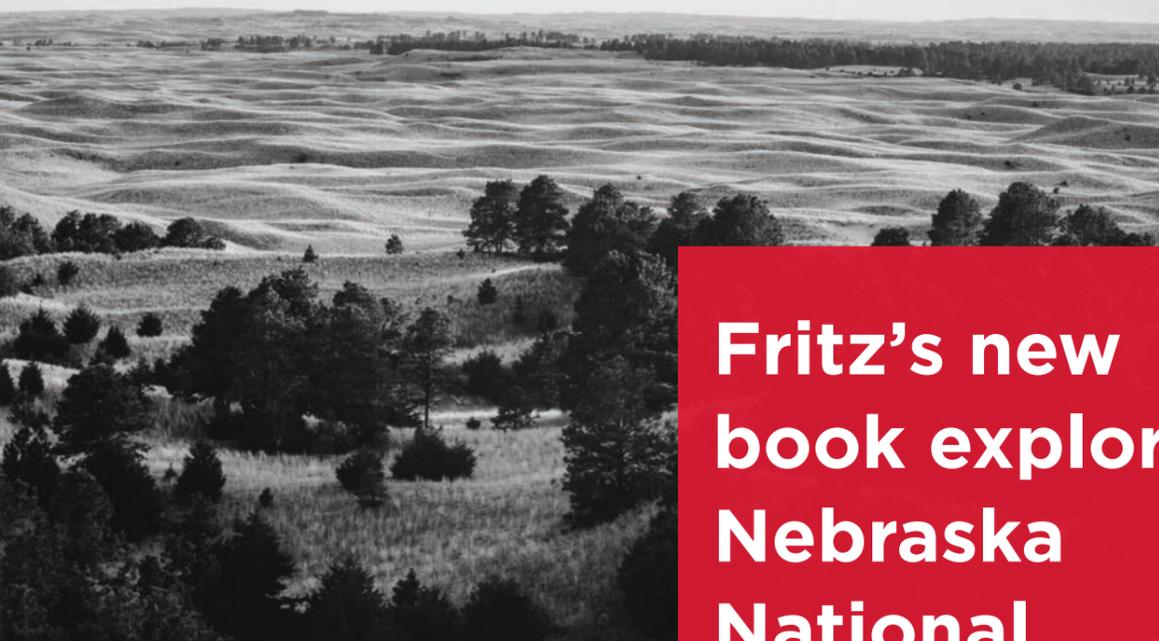
He hopes people will like the CD and thinks his mom would, too.

“I hope she likes it,” he said. “I know she would. I could hear her saying, ‘Well, now, why did you have to wait until I was dead to finally get me a recording of some of my music?’ It’s been a long time coming.”

FIELD GUIDE TO A HYBRID LANDSCAPE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANA FRITZ

ESSAYS BY Katie Anania, Rebecca Buller, and Rose-Marie Muzika | MAPS BY Salvador Lindquist



Dana Fritz's "Field Guide to a Hybrid Landscape" (University of Nebraska Press).



Dana Fritz

Fritz's new book explores Nebraska National Forest and Grasslands

Hixson-Lied Professor of Art Dana Fritz's latest book, "Field Guide to a Hybrid Landscape," was published by the University of Nebraska Press earlier this year.

In the book Fritz traces the evolution of the Bessey Ranger District and Nursery of the Nebraska National Forest and Grasslands, or the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey, as it is more widely known. It is the largest hand-planted forest in the Western Hemisphere, and formerly in the world.

Her contemporary photographs of the unique ecosystem are combined with environmental essays, maps and historical photographs from the U.S. Forest Service archives to inform the reader of the complex environmental and natural history of the site.

"I organized the photographs into chapters that make visible the forces that shaped the Bessey Ranger District—sand/wind/water, planting, thinning, fire, decomposition and sowing," Fritz said. "I noticed human-made patterns such as rows and non-human patterns such as waves. These patterns appear at multiple scales throughout the photographs in the book. I thought about contrasts, including grass and trees, empty and full, light and dark, native and introduced. Using black and white photography to tell this story emphasizes these patterns and differences."

The book features photographs by Fritz, as well as essays by Assistant Professor of Art History Katie Anania, Associate Professor of Practice in Geography Rebecca Buller and Rose-Marie Muzika, director of science at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, as well as maps and a timeline by Assistant Professor of

Landscape Architecture Salvador Lindquist.

Fritz began photographing the forest in 2017 and continued through 2021. She is grateful for the support she received for the project from the U.S. Forest Service staff at the Bessey Ranger District and Nursery.

"I contacted them to let them know what I was doing because I also wanted to learn about it," Fritz said. "Richard Gilbert, who is the nursery manager there, met me the first time I went out there and showed me around in an incredibly generous way. He also showed me the nursery, which grows millions of trees a year."

She also collaborated with Todd Duncan and Duncan Aviation to complete some aerial photography of the forest, which is included in the book. It was her first experience with aerial photography.

"I was kind of terrified, but I had to push that aside because this was an amazing opportunity," Fritz said. "And it was a revelation. It's like looking down at the map in real time. It's incredible. To see a place I've been so many times on the ground and studied the map so intensely, and then to see it from the air. It was so thrilling."

Fritz's book received support from a University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Office of Research and Economic Development Arts and Humanities Research Enhancement Grant, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Endowment faculty grants, and the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

"I couldn't even consider doing this without that kind of help," Fritz said. "I had a lot of support from UNL, and I'm really grateful for that."

For more information on the book, visit <https://go.unl.edu/fieldguide>.



Left: Eastern Redcedar Thicket. Right: Leaning Trees. Photos by Dana Fritz.

Background: Left: Sandhills near Thedford Airport; Right: Dismal Riverbank. Photos by Dana Fritz.

FACULTY NOTES



Diane Barger

Diane Barger, Ron and Carol Cope Professor of Music (Clarinet), performed as E-flat clarinetist in the Professor's Choir and in a featured recital with her Amicitia Duo (joined by Hixson-Lied Professor of Piano **Mark Clinton**) at the International Clarinet Association's (ICA) 50th anniversary ClarinetFest® in Denver, Colorado, in July, where she also served as president of the ICA (a position she holds through August 2024). She also performed with the Amicitia Duo in March as featured artists at the Alabama Clarinet Symposium and as guests at the Alabama School of Fine Arts.



Paul Barnes. Courtesy photo.

Paul Barnes, Marguerite Scribante Professor of Music (Piano), was the Georgia Music Teachers State Conference Artist and gave a solo recital and masterclass in November 2022. Barnes was also featured on Cappella Romana's series in Portland and Seattle in March 2023. Barnes performed his Hixson-Lied supported commission of Ron Warren's "The Way of Mountains and Desert" on the Cutting Edge Concerts Series in New York on May 24. Barnes took eight Glenn Korff School of Music to Greece in July for the Piano Plus Summer Piano Institute and welcomed 16 high school pianists from around the country to the Lied Center Piano Academy in July.

Anthony Bushard, professor of music history and area head for theory, history and composition, published an article in "College Music Symposium" titled "Creating Interactive Content for the 21st Century Music Student: Reinvigorating Text Development in the Foundational Course and Beyond" (62:2; November 2022).



Anthony Bushard

Richard Endacott, professor of film, has earned film festival success for his screenplay "Turn Over." The script has won Best Dramatic Short Script at the Cowpokes International Film Festival in Harrah, Oklahoma; Writer's Block Award (Best Short Script) at the Snake Alley Festival of Film in Burlington, Iowa; and Best Short Script in the Copa Shorts Film

Festival in Maricopa, Arizona. It has also earned semi-finalist selection in the Cinema Soup Film Festival in Gatlinburg, Tennessee; the Lake Travis Film Festival in Lakeway and Bee Cave, Texas; and the Desertscape International Film Festival in St. George, Utah, as well as Juried Selection for Competition honors at the Great Plains Film Festival in Yukon, Oklahoma, and won honors in the Skiptown Playhouse International Film Festival in Los Angeles. The film has received grant support from the ORED Arts and Humanities development grant, the Hixson-Lied faculty creative and research activities grant, and the Carson Center.



Left to right: Richard Endacott, Charlie Major, Grace Birkland and producer Jamie Vesay on the set of Endacott's short film, "Turn Over." Photo by Craig Chandler.

Dana Fritz, Hixson-Lied Professor of Art, published "Field Guide to a Hybrid Landscape" with University of Nebraska Press in January. Photographs from the book have been exhibited in UNL's Great Plains Art Museum, NewArtSpace (De Pere, Wisconsin), the University of Arizona's Laboratory of Tree Ring Research (Tucson) and Centro de Iniciativas Culturales de la Universidad de Sevilla (Seville, Spain). Fritz also received the Hixson-Lied College's Senior Faculty Research Award in 2023.

Suna Gunther, assistant professor of music in voice, founded Soo Opera Theatre's three-week apprentice program in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, where she adapted and directed a production of "Die Fledermaus" featuring five UNL students. She also sang the role of Musetta in Soo Opera's mainstage production of "La Bohème." Gunther also directed Soo's "Gianni Schicchi" this past summer and joined the faculty of the Brancaloneoni International Music Festival in

Piobbico, Italy.



Suna Gunther

Stanley Kleppinger, associate professor of music theory, was invited to deliver lectures at the University of Iowa and Drake University in October 2022. His address to the Iowa Music Colloquium, "Pitch Centricity in Concept and Perception," was also the basis of a guest presentation to a graduate course on pitch centricity at TCU in February 2023. Kleppinger also published, with co-authors Timothy Chenette of Utah State University and Stacey Davis of the University of Texas-San Antonio, an omnibus review of current aural skills literature in the 2022 volume of the "Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy." Coupled with that article is a series of video blogs, "Five Conversations

about Aural Skills," which may be viewed on YouTube at <https://go.unl.edu/5conversations>.



Stanley Kleppinger (lower right) in the video blog "Five Conversations About Aural Skills." Courtesy photo.

Jen Landis, assistant professor of practice in graphic design, released her book, "Skip the Bad Songs." It is a powerful book for teens, unlocking their potential and promoting happiness. Landis is partnering with local non-profits to give 1,000 books away to tweens and teens. Learn more at <https://SkipTheBadSongs.com>.

David Long, associate professor of theatre, created his first short film, "Betty Lou Had a Song." The film earned Top 5 honors in the 2022 Louisiana Film Prize competition and had a screening in March at the

Omaha Film Festival. In the film, a struggling musician, played by Long, is forced to care for his spirited mother suffering from early-onset Alzheimer's disease.



The Husker Horn Choir, conducted by Professor of Horn Alan Mattingly, performed as the featured group at a First Friday concert series sponsored by St. Paul United Methodist Church in Lincoln.

Alan Mattingly, professor of horn, was a featured artist at the 54th International Horn Symposium in Kingsville, Texas, in August, performing with the NU Corno Ensemble. He also conducted the

28-member Husker Horn Choir in May as a featured group on the First Friday concert series, sponsored by St. Paul United Methodist Church in Lincoln.

Jacqueline Mattingly, assistant professor of practice in music, was invited to present at the 2023 NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) Strategies conference in Kansas City, Missouri, with Connie Boehm and Abbey Ragain, formerly of Big Red Resilience and Well-Being. The topic of the presentation was “Well-being: Emerging Trends and Integration with Academic Affairs.” Mattingly and Ragain were also invited to present on this topic at the May 2023 UNL All-Staff Conference.



Left to right: Jacqueline Mattingly, Connie Boehm and Abbey Ragain presented at the 2023 NASPA Strategies conference. Courtesy photo.

William McMullen, professor of oboe, and Nathan Koch, bassoon,

were invited to perform three recitals and three masterclasses in October 2022 at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and the University of Alabama in Birmingham.



William McMullen with oboe students at the University of Southern Mississippi. Courtesy photo.

Jeff O'Brien, director of technology for the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, received the Exceptional Excellence Award for 2023 from the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

Matthew Rush, interim lecturer of percussion, was invited to be a guest artist/clinician at the 4th Annual Norwin Winter Percussion Camp on Jan. 13-14 in North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

William Shomos, Richard H. Larson Distinguished Professor of Music (Voice) and director of UNL Opera,

staged a production of “Amahl and the Night Visitors” with Omaha-based vocal ensemble Résonance in January. The production featured Metropolitan Opera bass-baritone Kevin Short, along with UNL alumni **Jon Gathje** (B.M.E. 2004; M.M. 2010) and **Jesse Wohlman** (M.M. 2016).

Greg Simon, associate professor of composition and jazz studies, received a Nebraska Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship in the amount of \$2,500. He also completed a new composition, “We Interrupt This Transmission” for vibraphone and electronics, commissioned by Andy P. Smith at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Ash Eliza Smith and **Robert Twomey**, assistant professors of emerging media arts, created “CLEANING THE STABLES,” which was included in the La Jolla Playhouse Without Walls (WOW) Festival in April in San Diego. Smith and Twomey also conceived and executed AI Radio Play, an extended theater piece that doubles as a workshop. This past year, they ran the workshop/theater/radio play in Barcelona and Paris at ISEA (International Symposium on Electronic Art) and in Indiana at SLSA (Society for Literature, Science

and the Arts). For more information on each episode, visit <https://radio-play.net>. Their collaborators have included **Jinku Kim**, assistant professor of practice in emerging media arts.



Ash Eliza Smith and Robert Twomey’s “CLEANING THE STABLES.” Image by Sam Bendix.

Ash Eliza Smith, **Robert Twomey** and **Dan Novy**, assistant professors of emerging media arts, with the Nebraska Technology and Governance Center and Cinema 16, organized and co-hosted a one-day, intensive AI filmmaking hackathon in April, where creatives offered up speculative visions of the future and emergent system designs to offer us clues and strategies of ways that we can shape an interspecies future. Listen to a podcast about the event at <https://go.unl.edu/59i6>.

Ash Eliza Smith, assistant professor of emerging media arts, and UNL

Associate Professor of English Kwakiutl Dreher were fellows at the inaugural WORLDING, a first-of-its-kind research and development initiative that explores climate futures at the intersection of documentary, land-use planning, speculative modeling and game-engine technologies.



Francisco Souto, “Diaspora” triptych.

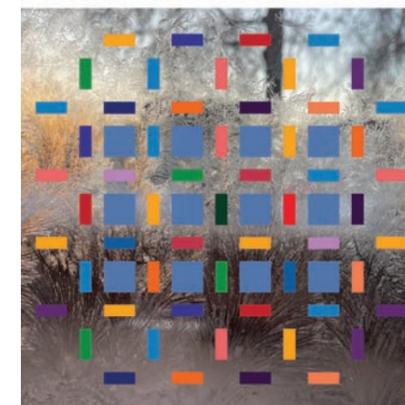
Francisco Souto, Willa Cather Professor of Art and Director of the School of Art, Art History & Design, had a solo exhibition, “Diaspora III” at K Contemporary Gallery in Denver, Colorado. The exhibition included 20 highly detailed colored pencils and graphite drawings. Souto’s work was also included in the group exhibition “Taking Up Space” in Denver. This exhibition coincided with the U.S. State Department’s inaugural “Cities Summit of the Americas.”

Hans Sturm, Hixson-Lied Professor of Double Bass and Jazz Studies, presented at the International Society of Bassist’s (ISB) 2023 Convention at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he also served as president of the ISB, an office he has held since 2019. Sturm was a featured guest artist and clinician at the 2023 KC Bass Workshop in Kansas City, Kansas, and the Music at the Summit 2023 Festival in Breckenridge, Colorado. In late summer, Sturm appeared in Italy (Milan, Lucca, Trieste and Bari) and Paris, France, in a series of duo concerts with his wife, jazz vocalist Jackie Allen. Sturm’s book, “75 Years on 4 Strings: The Life and Music of François Rabbath” was nominated for the 2023 Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) Awards for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research.



Hans Sturm

David von Kampen, lecturer in music, composed the original score for a documentary titled “You Have No Idea” that has played at film festivals across the country. He also released “12 Very Short Pieces for Solo Piano: Volume 3” in April.



David von Kampen’s “12 Very Short Pieces for Solo Piano: Volume 3.” Courtesy photo.

Sandra Williams, associate professor of art, had a solo exhibition titled “Eat a Peach” at The Studios of Key West. “Eat a Peach” is a series of papercuts made during the first two years of the pandemic and are a meditation on the meaning of love in our culture. Williams also presented “The Ravenous Feminine: The Unruly Body in Public Space” at the 2023 Southwest Popular and American Culture Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Brenda Wristen, professor of piano and piano pedagogy, presented “Stacking Engagement Layers to Enhance Group Piano Instruction” in July at the National Conference for Keyboard Pedagogy, where she was also honored with an Outstanding Service Award by the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy. Her article “No Thumbs of Fifth Fingers on Black Keys, Except...” was published in “The Piano Magazine” (Autumn 2022), and she was subsequently the featured author in an online presentation and discussion hosted by the journal. Wristen’s article “Should We Always Change Fingers on Repeated Notes?” was published by “American Music Teacher” in the April/May 2023 issue.



Brenda Wristen

The nomination form for our 2024 Alumni Board Awards is available now at <https://go.unl.edu/fpaawards>. Nominations for the Alumni Achievement Awards, Award of Merit and Student Leadership Awards are due Friday, Dec. 8, 2023. See the website for full details or e-mail unlarts@unl.edu to have a nomination form e-mailed to you.

Honors Day celebrates achievement



Left to right: Trent Claus, Elizabeth Baquet and Todd Nelson with Dean Andy Belser at Honors Day.



The recipients of this year's Hixson-Lied Faculty and Staff Awards. Back row, left to right: Jamie Bullins, Sandra Williams, Danni Gilbert, Marques L.A. Garrett, David von Kampen, Dana Fritz and Dean Andy Belser. Front row, left to right: Sean Strough, Jen Landis and Christy Aggens. Not pictured: Anna Henson and Leslie Harms. For more on these recipients, visit <https://go.unl.edu/hlawards>.

The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts recognized alumni, faculty, staff and student achievement at its annual Honors Day dinner on May 5.

The award recipients included the following alumni board award recipients:

- Alumni Achievement Award in Art: **Trent Claus** (B.F.A. 2006). Claus is a visual effects supervisor and senior compositor at Lola VFX and has been with them since 2007. The company has developed many unique and proprietary effects that have been used in more than 120 feature films and television productions, including “Captain America: The First Avenger,” “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,” “The Mandalorian” and “Obi-Wan Kenobi.”

- Alumni Achievement Award in Music: **Sam Loeck** (B.M. 2014). Loeck joined the Calgary Philharmonic as principal bass in 2016. Recently, Loeck was under consideration for the position of principal bassist of the London Symphony Orchestra, one of the premier orchestras in the world. While he did not get the position, the year-long process allowed him several stints as guest principal bass with the orchestra.

- Alumni Achievement Award in Theatre and Film: **Elizabeth Baquet** (B.F.A. 2012). Baquet is a podcast executive for Mosaic Media where she oversees development and client pitches for podcast projects in a variety of genres. Additionally, Baquet oversees Ninth Planet Audio, Mosaic Media's in-house audio production company, which holds a first-look deal with iHeartRadio's Big Money Players Network.

- Award of Merit: **Todd Nelson and the Nebraska Coast Connection**. The Nebraska Coast Connection (NCC) was founded in 1992 by Producer/Director Todd Nelson, and its monthly Hollywood Salon has been a touchpoint for University of Nebraska–Lincoln students, alumni and Hollywood transplants. The Nebraska Coast Connection has sponsored internships over the summer for Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film students and celebrates regular engagement between professionals, alumni and current students.

- Student Leadership Award: **Katherine Schmit**, Glenn Korff School of Music. Schmit was a senior music education major from Lincoln. She was a member of the Cornhusker Marching Band for four years, where she served as Trumpet Rank Leader and two-year Drum Major.

For a full listing of this year's award recipients, visit <https://go.unl.edu/9n7j>.



Danny Ladely. Courtesy photo.

LADELY REFLECTS on 50 years at the Ross

This journey began as student involvement for a University of Nebraska–Lincoln English major from Gordon, Nebraska, who was a photographer and loved the movies.

“I started programming movies in Sheldon while I was still a student. I had joined what was then called the Union Program Council, now the University Program Council, as the token hippie,” said Danny Lee Ladely, director of the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center. “In those days, they had the Foreign Film Society, and they showed one foreign movie a month during the fall and spring semesters. Then I started another series, Special Films, and showed films in Sheldon.”

Sheldon Director Emeritus

Norman Geske, who died in 2014, began showing films as art at the Sheldon in 1968.

“Woody Varner was president of the University of Nebraska Foundation, and Mary Riepma Ross was one of the trustees, and she loved movies. And Woody knew that Norman wanted to show movies,” Ladely said. “So he introduced them to each other, and they hit it off, and she promised she would fund movie showing at Sheldon.”

In 1973, Geske wanted to hire someone to run the program full time.

“I happened to still be in college after eight years as an undergraduate,” Ladely said. “My father said, you know, we were really happy to send you to college, son, but we didn't

know you were going to make a career out of it. I took that hint and took the job. And in June of 1973, 50 years ago, I started showing movies.”

Now, 50 years later, Ladely retired Sept. 1 as director of the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center. Laurie Richards, who retired last year as state film officer through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, was named interim programmer and worked with Ladely in the transition.

Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Dean Andy Belser is working with the Friends of the Ross Board to lay out a strategic vision for the future of the Ross and defining how leadership for the Ross will evolve in the future.

“I think the Ross has been hugely successful in carrying on the traditions that were laid out by Norman Geske originally,” Richards said. “And Danny was the perfect fit to continue on with those traditions, with that tradition of independent film and cinema that wouldn't otherwise be seen.”

Ladely received regular donations and movie suggestions from Ross, who lived in New York City at the Hotel Pierre. Ross was an attorney and among the first women to practice law there.

“Mary Ross was sending me \$10,000 checks every so often, and she clipped all the New York Times reviews—she was an avid moviegoer—and stuffed them all into an envelope,” Ladely said.

Ladely decided to share with her his vision for the film program at Nebraska.

“I sat down and wrote her a long letter, telling her that in order us to continue the film program, we'd have to have our own facility. That became especially true after Norman Geske retired,” Ladely said. “I detailed what I wanted the new facility to be like, and it's pretty much what it turned out to be—two theatres, back to back, stadium seating. So we only had one projection booth that way. It turned out really beautifully.”

In 1990, Ross established a \$3.5

million trust at the University of Nebraska Foundation to support the university's film program and construction of a new facility. The Sheldon Film Theater was named after Ross in 1991. In 2003, the program moved to the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center, which was constructed adjacent to the university's Van Brunt Visitors Center at 13th and R streets. Following her death in 2013 at the age of 102, Ross donated \$7.7 million through her estate to create a permanent endowment for the Ross that is now worth about \$9.5 million.

"She was a blessing, and it's because of her that we're here," Ladely said. "There are only a handful of universities in the country that have a facility as nice as this one."

Ladely created a visiting filmmaker program in 1973, which eventually became the Norman A. Geske Cinema Showcase. To date, Ladely has brought more than 270 filmmakers to Lincoln, including Peter Fonda, Bill Plympton, John Waters and Seymour Cassel, among others.

Tory Lenosky (B.F.A. 2007), has brought two of her films to the Ross, "Resurrection" in 2022 and "Loitering with Intent" in 2015.

"I will be forever grateful to Danny's innovative and diverse international film programming at the Ross," she said. "It expanded my knowledge of cinema well beyond

I will be forever grateful to Danny's innovative and diverse international film programming at the Ross." --Tory Lenosky

what I knew when I entered UNL, and it enthralled me. It meant a great deal to me to come back there as an alum to showcase two of my films. To screen them in the same theatre I watched countless movies and guest filmmakers speak meant the world."

Ladely has formed partnerships with the Lincoln Public Schools and their Arts & Humanities School to introduce these guest filmmakers to their students through in-person lectures. These same filmmakers also visit with students in the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts.

"I just think it was important to have a person who made the film present to do a Q&A session with the audience and visit with the students," Ladely said. "And those students impressed every single filmmaker that I brought here."

But after 50 years of showing films at Nebraska, Ladely is ready to retire.

"After 50 years, I think it's time to hang up my hat," he said. "But it's been a really wonderful job." ■

Left to right: Danny Ladely, Mary Riepma Ross and Norman Geske at the opening of the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center in 2003. Courtesy photo.



Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, Records (RG 54-06-00). Archives & Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries.



Danny Ladely. Photo by Michael Reinmiller.

GRANGE RETIRES FROM CARSON SCHOOL

Professor of Theatre William Grange retired last spring after 27 years as Professor of Theatre in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.



William Grange

by Routledge. Along with books, Grange has published numerous essays, book chapters, academic journal articles, reviews and encyclopedia entries.

have some great researchers in the college, but I was definitely fortunate. There's no doubt about that. It's a research university, and that is a very high calling, in my opinion."

Grange's interest in theatre began when he was in high school in Ohio.

"A friend of mine dared me to audition for the school variety show," he said. "And I'd never done anything like that before. Well, it turns out that my voice had changed. I went in and auditioned, and they said, wow, what happened to you? What happened was my voice got bigger and deeper, and they gave me a very nice spot in the variety show, and I sang and danced."

In college, he majored in English and the equivalent of theatre and German, he said.

"I went to school in Germany and got interested in German theatre and was in a play there," Grange said. "Then I came back."

He has also received three Fulbright awards, including one at the University of Vienna and two at the University of Cologne. He has also received several research fellowships from the German Academic Exchange Service (including one as a guest professor at Heidelberg University), the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Dorot Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and more. His research has twice earned him the Vice Chancellor's Award for Research in the Humanities.

"When I first got here, I wasn't on campus four weeks before they gave me about \$4,000 to go to Germany," he said. "I mean, I had to apply for it and compete for the money. We certainly

William Grange said there is a lot to think about as he reflects on his time at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"There's been a lot of change," he said. "Of course, the gift from the Johnny Carson Foundation was certainly a great advantage. And the tremendous amount of support I got from the university to do all this research and publish books, I will always be grateful for that."

Grange is the author of 13 books, the most recent being "Cabaret," published by Methuen, and "The Business of American Theatre," published

He went to Columbia University in New York City to study acting and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree.

“I worked with a lot of great people in New York, and it was the theater capital of the world in those days, at least it thought it was,” he said.

He returned to graduate school and earned a Ph.D. from Indiana University.

“That’s where I started getting a lot of grant money from the German government and from the Fulbrights,” he said.

He taught at Florida Southern College and Marquette University before arriving at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 1996.

“The rest is history,” he said.

Ultimately, his interest aligned more with the scholarly aspects of theatre rather than performing.

“I studied acting, and I got less and less interested in acting, and more and more interested in theatre as an art form,” he said. “Professionally, I thought this idea of the German theatre was going to be my area of specialization. And it’s brought me all kinds of great friends and unbelievable adventures.”

He’s had the chance to talk to people involved in German theatre dating back to the 1920s.

“There are a lot of them that worked in the theatre during the Nazi period,” Grange said. “And that was fascinating to me because the Nazis loved theatre and subsidized it well. It’s history, and I felt like I was really involved in history. And I loved that.”

After retirement, Grange plans to continue researching and writing.

“I hope to be doing other things, too,” he said. “I’ve always liked woodworking. I’ve got a shop here in my house. I like working with soil. After all, we’re in Nebraska. I’ve got an incredible patch of black dirt that the buffalo pounded down in my backyard. Anything will grow out there if it gets enough water.”

He appreciates the support he got at Nebraska.

“I got a chance to be a real contributing scholar in theatre,” Grange said. ■

William Grange was recognized for his retirement at this year’s Honors Day celebration by Dean Andy Belser.



William Grange (right) as B.F. Schlegel in the 1998 Nebraska Repertory Theatre production of “Carnival,” music and lyrics by Bob Merrill and book by Michael Stewart, based on original material by Helen Deutsch. Directed by Kent Paul. Courtesy photo.



Sixteen of the 18 students receiving their Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in emerging media arts pose at Memorial Stadium following commencement in May. Courtesy photo.

First four-year EMA students graduate

Among the 123 May graduates from the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts were 18 students receiving their Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Emerging Media Arts.

These graduates are the first to complete four years in the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts.

“I’m immensely proud of these first four-year graduates from our program,” said Megan Elliott, the Johnny Carson Endowed Director in Emerging Media Arts. “They took a chance on a program that was being built as they arrived on campus, and I could not be more thrilled with what they accomplished in their four years in our program. They have exceeded all of our high expectations.”

For more on these grads and a list of the first four-year EMA graduates, visit <https://go.unl.edu/0ajw>.

NCC’s Hollywood Salon returned home to Lincoln

The Nebraska Coast Connection held The Hollywood Salon Comes Home event on May 8 at the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts. The event was part of a celebration of 30 years of the Nebraska Coast Connection and The Hollywood Salon.

The event featured a Q&A with two Nebraska friends who made their careers in Hollywood: Kearney native Jon Bokenkamp (creator, writer/producer of NBC’s “The Blacklist”) and UNL Theatre and Journalism alumnus Todd Nelson (CBS/Paramount producer and founder of the Nebraska Coast Connection).

“Your home sweet home in Hollywood has come home,” Nelson said.

Nelson was in Lincoln to receive the Award of Merit from the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at its Honors Day Celebration on May 5.

The Nebraska Coast Connection is an education and networking alliance that connects professionals working in the entertainment industry. It was founded in 1992 by Nelson, and its monthly Hollywood Salon has been a touchpoint for University of Nebraska–Lincoln students, alumni and Hollywood transplants.

The Hollywood Salon Comes Home event was sponsored by The Nebraska Coast Connection, the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts, the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and the Nebraska Alumni Association.



Jon Bokenkamp (left) and Todd Nelson have a conversation during the Nebraska Coast Connection’s Hollywood Salon Comes Home event on May 8 at the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts.



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*Or donning their feathers
they abandon their formae and return
to the wild
then there is dancing
there is always dancing*