



**Raissa Breña
Explores
Fashion History**

A Modern Spin
on Classical
Sculpture

A New Voice
for Opera





ON THE COVER: Fashion historian Raissa Bretaña ('13). Photo by Chris Sorensen.

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CFA ON INSTAGRAM



Chelsea Square came alive when @apollinaire theatre's bilingual production of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* began a three-week outdoor run in August. CFA students Mishka Yarovoy ('24) and Emma Laird ('22) played the titular characters. #ProudtoBU

@buarts; Photo by Danielle Fauteux Jacques



A NOTE FROM HARVEY

I used to collect things. In my younger years, I filled baseball card albums with Topps cards featuring my favorite team: the Chicago Cubs. Ryne Sandberg. Andre Dawson. I had my comic books, each in protective sleeves, from the earliest issues to the most recent bookstore arrivals. *G.I. Joe*. *X-Men*. There were also stamps and coins.

These collections offered a way to engage the world. This was in the years before the internet would allow vicarious and virtual engagements. My collections enabled me to travel. They granted audiences with sports stars. They made history tangible and accessible. Holding a Byzantine coin, I was (and still am) in awe that that small object was handled by people millennia earlier.

I never intended to collect face coverings. However, the reality of living, working, and parenting in the age of COVID has made it nearly impossible (and certainly inconvenient) to possess just one mask. I'm sure that you have your own unintended collection.

The latest addition is a BU 2025 mask. Scarlet with bold white letters, it was given to the 4,000 first years and transfer students (and a few deans) at this year's matriculation ceremony, the event where incoming students officially become Terriers. The mask and the ceremony are wonderfully affirming, essentially saying "welcome" and "we're all in this together." It also winks to the future—the after times of COVID—as a souvenir of adversity overcome.

There's my BuffaLOVE mask. It features a bison with that word—blending Buffalo and Love—scripted on its side. An expression of care from my sister in western New York, it is both comfortable and comforting. A hug as a mask.

There are also text-free masks. Two of my favorites were hand-made by Mary Ducharme, CFA's registrar. Back when they were difficult to access, she created scores of accordion-style, cloth face coverings and gifted them to students and staff in our offices to help keep us safe. Mary and her handiwork are amazing.

Every mask is a story. Each reveals a moment in our lives. All reflect a shared sense of responsibility for others.

This semester, we are fully back on campus. Our students are vaccinated. They are living, learning, and laughing together. There are a lot of smiles behind the face coverings.

Do you have a mask that is especially meaningful to you? If so, email me at cfadean@bu.edu. I would love to hear your story.

Harvey Young, Dean of CFA

WRITE: Share your thoughts on this issue—and anything else CFA-related—at cfaalum@bu.edu.

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Natasha Moustache

INSIDE

CFA Magazine
Fall
2021

2 SHOWCASE

MODERN CLASSICS

Sculptor Evan Morse ('15) uses ancient, timeless styles to comment on—and poke fun at—contemporary society

8 COLLAGE

The World of CFA

26 PROCESS

FROM STUDIO TO LAB

Lucy Kim turns simple screen prints into organic creations with lab-grown melanin

36 CLASS NOTES

You're directing, producing, painting, writing, teaching, sculpting, sketching, composing—creating a whole world of art

41 MUSE

Sarah Atwood (BUTI'08, CFA'14) began a musical project during the pandemic lockdown



MY LIFE IN FIVE OUTFITS

Raissa Bretaña ('13) studies history through a fashion lens



A SINGULAR LIGHT

Annie Wiegand ('10) is one of the country's only professional Deaf lighting designers



UNA VOZ/ONE VOICE

Opera singer Mario Arévalo ('09) is focused on helping the next generation of Latin American musical talent



TO BOLDLY GO

Actor Michelle Hurd ('88) on *Star Trek*, *Law & Order*, and continuing her father's fight for equity in Hollywood



Overthrown, 2021
patinated plaster,
27 x 39 x 2 in.
Despite its ageless look,
the models for this relief
were sculptor Evan Morse's
brother-in-law and nephew.

MODERN CLASSICS

Sculptor Evan Morse uses ancient, timeless styles to comment on—and poke fun at—contemporary society

By Andrew Thurston



When ancient Greeks or Romans worked out, they didn't hit the showers to freshen up; instead, they grabbed a strigil—a long, curved blade—and scraped off the dirt and sweat.

The habit was so widespread it inspired a host of votive sculptures, *Apoxyomenos*, the Scraper. Each statue showed a naked male athlete—rippled muscles and distant gaze—scouring the film from his skin. The most famous was carved by Lysippos in the fourth century BCE.

In his 2020 take on the Scraper, award-winning sculptor Evan Morse, whose work puts a modern twist on classical art, replaced the strigil with a more contemporary tool: stick deodorant.

The painted polychrome plaster *Athlete with Deodorant* shows a nude male in the timeless pose of *Apoxyomenos*—but with a blue towel tossed behind him and a bright red Old Spice Original in hand. The statue was modeled on a friend who qualified for the US Olympic marathon trials.

“In a lot of my work, I’m thinking about how humans are inherently the same as we have been across time—just little aspects of our culture have changed,” says Morse (‘15).

Athlete with Deodorant is part of Morse’s Idols series, which also includes a relief of a nude woman walking a robot dog, a statue of a man wearing a cow-patterned onesie, a bust flossing its teeth, and a marble icon stuffing a burrito in his mouth. Morse works mostly in clay, plaster, and stone, using ancient styles and techniques to highlight present-day themes. Based in Newton, Mass., he also sculpts—in nonpandemic times, at least—in studios in Carrara, Italy, and West Rutland, Vt.

All images courtesy of Evan Morse



Opposite: *Athlete with Deodorant*, 2020, painted polychrome plaster, 39 x 14 x 16 in., is a modern twist on classical Greek sculpture.

This Page: Morse carves a marble sculpture (left). *Humanity as Earth-Shaper*, 2020, patinated plaster, 42 x 32 x 4 in. The relief sculpture shows a lone plant in an industrial world (below).



“There’s usually a little humor in my work,” says Morse. “It’s important for me to have fun. But as I’ve been doing more political work—and it’s hard not to be more political at this stage—it’s hard to balance that out, because some of it can be so negative.”

On one side of 2020’s *Sacrificial Altar for Plastic Water Bottles*, a relief shows a woman filling a bottle at a public spring; her jeans and sneakers set in contrast to the antique goddess figure perched on the fountain’s plinth. The 19-inch-high piece, made from terracotta, was inspired by a water fountain Morse saw in Lucca, Italy, and the empty bottles littering his neighborhood and the politics of clean drinking water.

“I was thinking about offerings to the gods and the marks we leave,” says

Morse. The altar is part of a series incorporating found objects that includes reliquaries for dog fur, food packages, even toenail clippers. “I’m also making the sculpture more of a functional object than just a purely aesthetic thing.”

Morse and his wife, Taylor Apostol (‘15)—also a sculptor—recently launched Goathouse Studio, a website and business to promote their commissioned work: their latest is a marble portrait bust of author and poet Julia C. R. Dorr for Rutland, Vt. But practicality doesn’t always top his agenda.

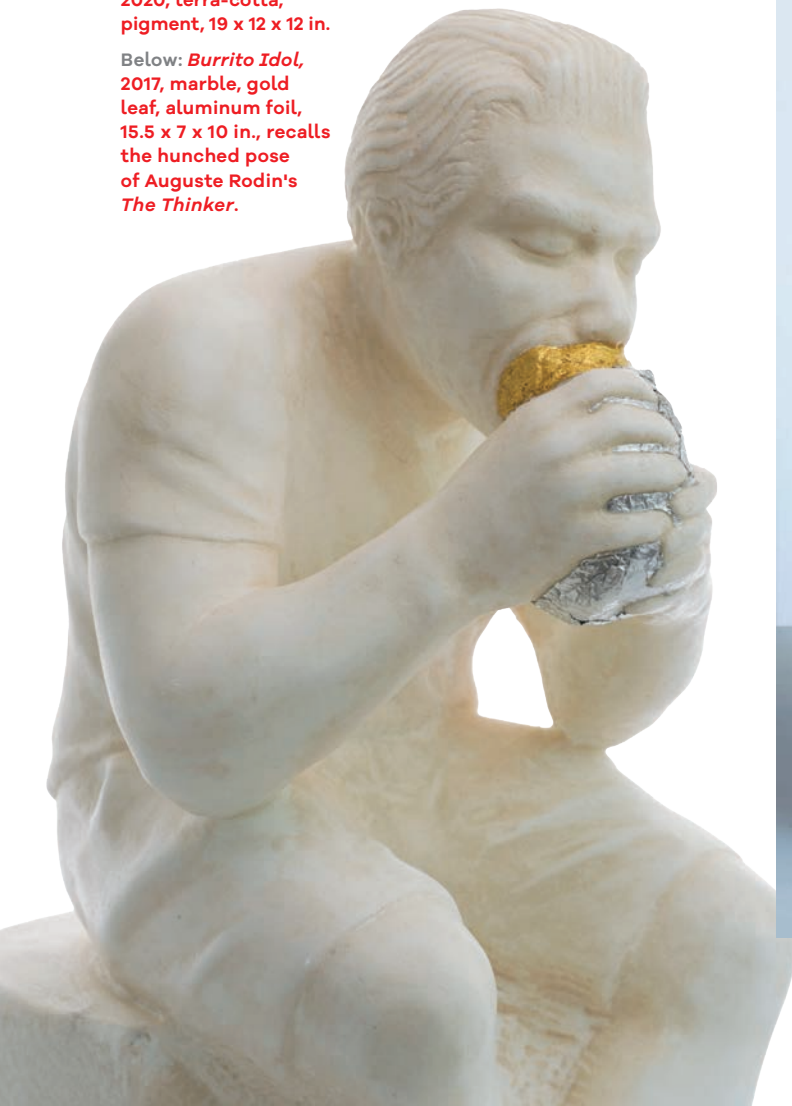
“I’m not thinking, ‘What’s the work I can make that’s going to sell?’” says Morse, whose art is largely supported by grants. “I’m thinking about the best work I can make.”

While some of his peers use computer-aided milling, Morse does everything by

“I find the reductive aspect of stone carving appealing. There’s the resistance from the stone. I like the traditional methods of working.”

Right: Morse considers the politics of clean drinking water in *Sacrificial Altar for Plastic Water Bottles*, 2020, terra-cotta, pigment, 19 x 12 x 12 in.

Below: *Burrito Idol*, 2017, marble, gold leaf, aluminum foil, 15.5 x 7 x 10 in., recalls the hunched pose of Auguste Rodin’s *The Thinker*.



All images courtesy of Evan Morse



Left: *Umbrella Saint*, 2017, marble, 36 x 16 x 6.5 in., was inspired by a photo Morse took in Italy of an immigrant street seller.

hand; each sculpture takes months. “I find the reductive aspect of stone carving appealing. There’s the resistance from the stone. I like the traditional methods of working.”

The only technology involved is the camera he uses to capture inspiration for future work—sometimes he’ll also turn to photo editing software to combine images.

Like the plastic bottle altar, *Umbrella Saint* was also sparked by a photograph Morse took in Italy. Hewn from marble, the sculpture looks like it’s been torn from the walls of a medieval European cathedral: a stoic male standing in a half-domed niche, the hint of a smile on his lips. And yet this pious character isn’t wearing robes, but a hoodie; isn’t holding a cross, but umbrellas.

“The central figure was inspired by these immigrant street sellers. The guy that I photographed was from Senegal, so it’s about this immigrant who is legally there, but still only on the fringe, still an outsider,” says Morse, who paid the seller for his time, keeping in contact to share images of the 2017 statue, which is part of his Idols series. “I was putting this outsider figure—who’s now Italian—into the context of this Renaissance-style architectural niche. Saints always have their token items, and I was seeing these guys standing like statues with their token items like umbrellas or lighters.”

With the pandemic limiting his opportunities to explore Europe, particularly its historic cities laced with public art and sculpture, inspiration for more recent pieces has come closer to home. *Overthrown*, a 2021 relief in patinated plaster, shows a parent tumbling from a couch, kids clambering around, toys littering the floor. The models were his brother-in-law and nephew.

“I started with the idea of that tragic hero,” says Morse, who admits the piece also captures his own feelings on parenthood. “But then I was thinking about making it more indicative of the general anxiety of the past year—people locked in their houses all day, trying to work and manage the kids at the same time.” ●

COLLAGE

THE WORLD OF CFA



RISING STAR

Producing in Hollywood

By Taylor Mendoza

ELIZABETH "LIZZY" RICH

(’14) studied acting at CFA, but now works behind the scenes on Hollywood blockbusters. Rich is the assistant to the president of Pascal Pictures, the production company behind hit films like *Little Women*, *The Post*, and the *Spider-Man* series starring Tom Holland. As well as managing the company’s logistics and workflow, she also helps maintain its “development slate, which means reading lots and lots of scripts and books.” Outside of work, she runs BU’s pilot School of Theatre Mentorship Program, which she founded to connect recent graduates with alumni mentors.

Why did you decide to pursue film production?

When I was working as an actor after college, I felt really far removed from all of the decision-making. I wanted to use the

creativity that I had as an actor and apply it to film production.

How did training as an actor at CFA prepare you for your career?

I learned about collaboration and how to be prepared and reliable. I bring those lessons to my job now: stay open-minded, think about a story in a new way, and don’t have a big ego.

The best part about working in film?

Having the privilege of seeing something go from an idea a writer has to something an actor does, to something that makes someone laugh or smile or react in a movie theater.

An actor you’d love to work with in the future?

I would love to work with Julianne Moore (’83). I also can’t wait

for the day when I can call up my talented actor friends from CFA to be in the films I am working on. That is the ultimate dream.

You recently launched a pilot School of Theatre Mentorship Program.

I met with the School of Theatre director, Susan Mickey, and we talked about the gap between recent graduates and people who graduated 10 or more years ago. I felt that I could help bridge that gap. Last year, I reached out online and asked if anyone wanted to be an alumni mentor. I had 80 alumni respond. We are in our second year of the program, and it’s amazing to see so many people connecting and helping one another.

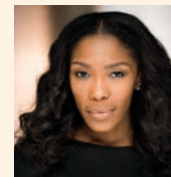
Email cfaalum@bu.edu for more information about the School of Theatre Mentorship Program.

FACULTY

New Theatre Faculty



Christopher V. Edwards, senior lecturer, is artistic director of Actors’ Shakespeare Project. A director and actor, he has worked on productions on London’s West End and Off-Broadway as well as at Guthrie Theater and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, in addition to other award-winning venues.



Patrese McClain, assistant professor, has performed at the Goodman Theatre and the Victory Gardens Theater and starred in Syracuse Stage’s *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. She toured nationally in *Jitney* and has appeared in many television shows and films, including the movie *Widows*.



Melisa Pereyra, assistant professor, has starred in productions at Dallas Theater Center, South Coast Repertory, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Lookingglass Theatre Company, and more. She is a company member of American Players Theatre.

Courtesy of Lizzy Rich; Courtesy of Chris Edwards; Joe Mazza (McClain); Eric Schabla (Pereyra)



AWARDS

PAINTING DORCHESTER

SHANTEL MILLER was selected as the \$20,000 grand prize winner of the 2021 Esther B. and Albert S. Kahn Career Entry Award for emerging artists. When the Toronto native came to CFA to pursue an MFA, she moved in to an all-Christian women’s house in Boston’s Dorchester neighborhood. Soon, she began a series of paintings exploring the lives of the people she met in church and around the neighborhood. “It was my first time living in a Black neighborhood, and I felt like I was home in a sense,” Miller (’21) says. “People felt familiar. I also experienced a renewed sense of interconnectedness in my life, a new sense of spirituality—just being inspired wherever I went.” Miller is using the funds from the award to secure a studio space and purchase supplies in order to expand her body of work. She plans to visit various Black churches and create portraits and figurative paintings inspired by what she sees. Her project will also include historical research on the congregations.



JOSEPHINE HALVORSON AWARDED GUGGENHEIM

JOSEPHINE HALVORSON, an internationally recognized painter and CFA’s chair of graduate studies in painting, was awarded a 2021 Guggenheim Fellowship. Renowned for her carefully observed still lifes and landscapes, Halvorson doesn’t work with photographs; rather, she paints *en plein air*—working outside in all elements and changing light conditions, often in a single sitting. She also produces sculptures and prints.

SOUND BITES

“I wanted to train in theater—it was my first love—and I thought I probably wouldn’t become an actor if I didn’t study it. And I think it’s true that I wouldn’t have...if I didn’t study it in this way [at BU].”

EMILY DESCHANEL (’98), who played Dr. Temperance Brennan on the hit Fox television series *Bones*, appeared on BUTV10’s second *Variety Hour* show in June 2021. She joined the University’s student-operated media network to discuss her decision to attend BU.

Watch the episode at butv10.com/from-a-distance



Courtesy of Josephine Halvorson; Billy Bennight/AdMedia via ZUMA Wire/Alamy (Deschanel)

PROFILE

UNA VOZ / ONE VOICE

Mario Arévalo realized his dream of becoming an opera singer. Now he's focused on helping the next generation of Latin American musical talent.

By [Mara Sassoon](#)

Photos by [Sonya Revell](#)



WHEN OPERA TENOR MARIO ARÉVALO WAS A YOUNG CHILD,

the thought of leaving his El Salvador hometown—let alone pursuing a career in music—was unfathomable.

“I was from a poor family, living in a very poor area,” he says. “My options were limited.”

The son of a single mother, Arévalo ('09) was a natural performer growing up, always dancing and singing for friends and extended family in his small town of San Vicente. “I just did it for fun. It wasn't something I ever thought I could develop beyond a hobby.”

Arévalo has come a long way from those impromptu recitals he put on as a child. He's performed in operas around the world—from Canada to Austria to Italy, founded an arts organization in 2016 that elevates the work of Latin American musicians and artists, and is now working to help build a theater and arts center to nurture the next generation of musical talent in his hometown. “I can't believe what this small project I started five years ago has become,” says Arévalo. “I'm excited to see where I can go with it next.”

A DREAM FORMS

In 1991, when Arévalo was eight, his mother left him and San Vicente for the United States, determined to make a better life for the two of them. He went to live with his grandmother for the next six years, before he finally was reunited with his mother on Long Island, New York.

“[My mother] came to the US without papers, then obtained residency when she got married and brought me [here]. At first, as a child, I didn't understand anything, but now I tell her that I understand her sacrifices,” he told *Noticias Telemundo* in an interview.

Arévalo began high school in New York knowing only a few words of English. The transition was jarring. He was taking ESL classes and trying to catch up on his credits in order to graduate on time. When he was told he needed to take an arts class, he joined his high school's choir.

It was there he met a teacher who would change the trajectory of his life.

“I'd say that's where my opera dreams began,” Arévalo says. “It's all thanks to my choir teacher, Ms. Robin Hall.” She provided Arévalo a safe haven as he adjusted to life in the US and eventually encouraged him to pursue a degree in vocal performance at the Conservatory of Music at SUNY Purchase. “She really spent time getting to know me,



and helped me to achieve what I wanted to do with my singing. She went beyond teaching. She protected me, she cared about me.”

At college, Arévalo began to see music as a possible career, particularly after working with an opera company that performed with the American Symphony Orchestra. “It was my first paid gig and I was just like, ‘Oh my God, I now know I am totally made for this.’ I thought one day I could be doing what the principals in the opera are doing if I work hard enough. But I also thought I still needed to learn some more to succeed.”

A master's program felt like the right next step. Arévalo auditioned at CFA and credits instructors like Penelope Bitzas, an associate professor of music, voice, and Shiela Kibbe, an associate professor of music, piano, with helping him find the confidence to embark on his opera career.

“They both helped me discover myself as a singer and become a real musician. They pushed me—I don't think I would be where I am today if it weren't for what I learned at BU.”

OPERA AND BEYOND

As his graduation from CFA approached, Arévalo received a call from the International Opera Theater, a company

“I didn't see anything from the Latin American repertoire. And I thought, ‘What is going on with that? Why are people not performing it?’”

that brings singers and instrumentalists from all around the world together to perform on one stage. They offered him an audition for a new play, *Jago*, by Italian composer Carlo Pedini, which tells the story of Iago (*Jago* in Italian), the villain in *Othello*. He snagged the role of Hassan/Guardiano. “They found me on Myspace of all places,” he says. “It was an amazing production to be a part of.”

From there, Arévalo moved to New York. Auditions began opening up for him, and he went on to perform in productions with the New York City Opera, Virginia Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and Boston Lyric Opera. But gradually, he started to notice something missing from the performance opportunities he encountered. “There were chances to sing Italian, French, German, Russian repertoire, all these different languages. But I didn't see

anything from the Latin American repertoire. And I thought, ‘What is going on with that? Why are people not performing it?’” he says. “There are so many incredible Latin American composers and musicians, like [Argentinian composers] [Carlos] Guastavino and [Alberto] Ginastera. And not a lot of people perform or even know about their work.”

Arévalo wanted to change that.

In 2016, he founded the organization Una Voz, Un Mundo—One Voice, One World—dedicated to amplifying the work of Latin American musicians and composers. His first effort was organizing a show at a New York City church, which featured seven performers. “The church was absolutely filled with people. It was so great to see. I was just trying to create a platform for Latin American musicians to have a stage, but I realized there was so much I could do with the organization.”

As Una Voz, Un Mundo grew, offering master classes and more performances around New York, it caught the attention of Carlos García, the secretary general of the United Nations Association of El Salvador, which in 2018 named Arévalo its goodwill ambassador for fine arts and culture. Since stepping into that role, Arévalo has broadened the focus of Una Voz, Un Mundo to also work on elevating the arts in his home country. He started setting aside portions of proceeds from shows and recitals to purchase instruments to donate to schools in El Salvador.

“We've already donated more than 100 instruments to various schools, and now my goal is to expand our efforts and help other small schools around Latin America,” he says. “This role has shown me I'm not only a singer, I'm not only a performer, but I also have a voice to impact new generations of musicians. There is so much potential out there, and all these younger generations need are opportunities. That's why I see Una Voz, Un Mundo being a voice for so many things—it can be a voice for power, a voice for help, a voice for beautiful music, a voice for unity.”

BACK TO SAN VICENTE

A few months before the pandemic broke out, Arévalo moved to Miami, Fla., to begin rehearsals for the world premiere of a new musical called *Always Remember*. The show was canceled as theaters closed, and since then Arévalo has been participating in only virtual productions. In the meantime, he has focused on growing Una Voz, Un Mundo. The organization recently attained nonprofit status, and Arévalo has partnered with an organization in San Vicente called SanviPuede to help get a theater and arts center built in the town (the town's previous theater was destroyed in an earthquake in 2001 and has remained in ruins since).

“They reached out to me because they've been working to get this theater built for 20 years. I wanted to be that voice to help them, to give back to my community.”

Arévalo appealed to local politicians for help. They've now secured the \$1.5 million needed to build the facilities—which will include music, art, and ballet studios, a computer lab, and a library, in addition to the new theater—but have been navigating changes in the local government and pandemic-related construction delays before ground can finally be broken. “It's already been designed, and it's incredible,” he says. “It'll be a place where kids can come to develop themselves artistically. This will be so important for everybody, but especially for the children of San Vicente.” ●

FEATURE

MY

LIFE IN FIVE OUTFITS

By Mara Sassoon
Photos by Chris Sorensen



Raissa Bretaña is a fashion historian who hosts a series for *Glamour* magazine in which she fact-checks the hair, makeup, and clothes in popular films and television series for historical accuracy.

RAISSA BRETANA STUDIES HISTORY THROUGH A FASHION LENS

IN THE WEEKS after the Netflix miniseries *The Queen's Gambit* premiered in October 2020, sales of chess sets skyrocketed. The show, which takes place over the course of about ten years from the mid-1950s, follows the fictional chess prodigy Beth Harmon, charting her meteoric—and at times rocky—rise from orphan to internationally renowned phenom.

The show was also responsible for the resurgence of another trend: 1960s fashion. Harmon's evolution in the show is visually portrayed through her changing style over the years, and viewers were quick to take notice of the attention to fashion detail. Soon, articles with titles like "The Trends from *The Queen's Gambit* I Want to Copy" were popping up, offering advice on how to rock the winged eyeliner, flipped hair, checkered coats, and headscarves Harmon, played by Anya Taylor-Joy, wears in the series.

The miniseries' costumes also caught the attention of *Glamour* magazine, which included the show in its popular "Would They Wear That?" video series, in which fashion historians, including Raissa Bretaña, fact-check hair, makeup, and wardrobe in films and television series like *Grease*, *Bridgerton*, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, and even *Snow White*. Bretaña ('13), who studied costume design at CFA, reviews some of Harmon's many looks in *The Queen's Gambit*, from the pageboy hairstyle and plaid pinafore she wore as a high schooler in Lexington, Ky., to the modernist mint green and black color block dress she wears at the Paris Invitational chess tournament later in the series. Bretaña's final verdict: Harmon's wardrobe was pretty accurate.

"Most people know me through the *Glamour* videos," Bretaña says, "but it's just a small fraction of the work that I do as a fashion historian. I feel like part of my greater mission as a fashion historian is making this information accessible and entertaining, and advocating for fashion history as a legitimate branch of history. It's been heartening to know that there are people who are interested in this, that the field is growing and becoming more widely recognized."

Below, Bretaña takes *CFA* readers behind the scenes of her well-tailored career through five outfits.



HAT TRICKS

Bretaña, who grew up in Los Angeles, Calif., designed costumes for local community theater performances in middle and high school. She had her sights set on becoming a professional costume designer for theater and film and thought CFA's costume design program would be the perfect place to polish her skills.

"It was a conservatory style program. I knew I'd be getting

hands-on training, very specified coursework, and very small class sizes," she says. There were only five costume design majors in her graduating class. "I got to take classes that I might not have gotten to take in other BFA programs, like fabric dyeing and millinery," or hat-making, a skill she continues to use today as she makes hats on a freelance basis.

COSTUME RELICS

"Ultimately, I found my true passion is fashion history, and not through any fault of the theater—it's still my first love," Bretaña says. She realized this during two internships at Western Costume in North Hollywood, Calif., which she did over the summers after her sophomore and junior years. Western Costume was established in 1912 and is one of the oldest film and TV costume houses in the world, having started outfitting movies from the very early days of the silent era.

"I did an internship in their research library because I thought I wanted to be an award-winning costume designer, and I understood that in order to do that I had to work with award-winning costume designers." She conducted research for designers on productions including *American Horror Story: Asylum* and *Mad Men*—both set in the 1960s.

"I really fell in love with the research aspect of it. I was poring through old issues of *Vogue*, as well as Sears catalogs for shows like *Mad Men*, and I really loved looking at these primary sources," she says. She would later fact check *Mad Men* in a *Glamour* video.

During her internships, Bretaña also supervised Western Costume's star collection, what she describes as a "temperature-controlled fortress of Hollywood history" that contains some of the most valuable costume pieces from film history, including a blue-gray dress Vivien Leigh wore in *Gone with the Wind*, the hat Claude Rains wore as Captain Louis Renault in *Casablanca*, the traveling clothes from *The Sound of Music*, and items from Elizabeth Taylor's *Cleopatra*.

"At the time, I don't think I realized how lucky I was to have these internships. The whole experience was really instrumental in helping me discover my love for fashion history."



Opposite: At CFA, Bretaña honed her millinery, or hat-making, skills. She wears a 1920s-style cloche hat she created.

This page: Bretaña wears a shift dress, colorful tights, and square-heeled shoes, which would have been popular in the 1960s. As an intern at a Hollywood costume company, she conducted wardrobe research for the 1960s-set show *Mad Men*.

This page: A lecture at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts on an exhibit called *Think Pink*, which explored the gendered history of the color pink in fashion, inspired Bretaña to become a fashion historian. Here, she wears a 1970s pink flared jumpsuit and wedge sandals.

Opposite: Bretaña, who wears a pair of futuristic heels, knows a thing or two about shoes. She's written a book that looks at the history of footwear over four hundred years.



THINK PINK

"A year after graduating, I had a moment where I realized that I did not want to continue doing costume design professionally, which was very harrowing because I spent my entire adolescence and college years working toward that," says Bretaña.

The epiphany came during a lecture at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts on an exhibit called *Think Pink*, which explored the gendered history of the color pink in fashion. "It felt like the doors were flying open. I had been there a million times. I'd seen all of their fashion exhibitions, but until then I never thought of who curated the shows," she says. "I didn't even know that you could bring together gender history, social history, fashion history, and art history, all into this one profession." After the talk, she approached the show's curator, Michelle Tolini Finamore. "I basically said, 'How do I become you when I grow up?'"

The two had lunch the following week and Tolini Finamore offered Bretaña an internship. After Bretaña interned at the MFA, Tolini Finamore encouraged her to get her master's degree in fashion and textile studies at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York.



SHOE SAVVY

Today, Bretaña is an adjunct instructor at FIT—where she got her master's—and Pratt Institute, where she teaches courses on 20th-century fashion and art, the history of costume and fashion in film, and the history of modern fashion. "My favorite period of fashion in

this span is probably from 1910 to 1914, like we see in *Titanic*," she says. "This is the birth of modern dress, when you really see some incredible design."

But Bretaña emphasizes that teaching is just one other component of her multifaceted career. "There is no blueprint for how to become a fashion historian because it's a relatively young occupation, and fashion history has only recently been acknowledged as a viable field of study. My day job is teaching—and I love it—but that's

less than 50 percent of what I actually do."

Besides teaching and hosting the *Glamour* videos, Bretaña also recently wrote the book *Shoes* (Abbeville Press, 2021), a visual history spanning four hundred years of footwear, showcasing rare items that can be seen in museums around the world.

"There is no set career path for this profession, and there are also very few jobs. So I feel very lucky to be working so much."



Bretaña was a fashion consultant on Netflix's miniseries *Hollywood*, about the film studio system in the late 1940s. She wears a 1940s-style gown similar to the fashion displayed in the show's Oscars episode.

"Being a consultant on *Hollywood* was probably my ultimate dream job."

HOLLYWOOD HISTORY

Bretaña also conducts fashion research for film and television as a consultant. "That's probably some of my favorite work that I do because it makes me feel like I'm back at Western Costume," she says. During her internships at Western, she worked with the noted costume designer Lou Eyrich on *American Horror Story: Asylum* and the two stayed in touch. Since then, she's helped Eyrich with research for FX's *Pose*, about New York City's drag ball culture in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and Netflix's *Hollywood*, about the film studio system in the late 1940s.

"Being a consultant on *Hollywood* was probably my ultimate dream job," says Bretaña. She primarily did research for the show's finale, set at the 1948 Oscars. The creators and producers wanted to recreate the clothing worn by every nominee, presenter, and attendee. So Bretaña pored over back issues of the *Hollywood Reporter*, *Vogue*, *Women's Wear Daily*, and tabloids from the time to look for clues. A big challenge was that all of the photos she encountered were in black and white, so she also looked for descriptions of colors and fabrics in fashion columns. One flashback scene in the finale depicts Hattie McDaniel, played by Queen Latifah, winning a Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her role in *Gone with the Wind* at the 12th Academy Awards in 1940. McDaniel was the first Black actor to receive an Oscar.

"She was endlessly photographed, but nobody really talks about the color of her dress. I went on a wild goose chase, and eventually found it—it was aqua blue. I got that information to the designer at, like, 3 am in order for them to make the outfit so that Queen Latifah could wear it for shooting the next day. It was exhilarating." ●

INTERVIEW

Actor **Michelle Hurd** on *Star Trek*, *Law & Order*, and continuing her father's fight for equity in Hollywood

TO BOLDLY GO

By **Marc Chalufour**

Michelle Hurd plays Raffi Musiker on the Paramount+ show *Star Trek: Picard*. She considers Musiker the role of a lifetime. "She's not perfect, she's had issues, she has crutches that she's going to be leaning on. She's a real human."



Cara Robbins/Contour by Getty Images

Not a day goes by without a stranger on the street spotting Michelle Hurd and shouting “*Law & Order!*” Despite roles on dozens of high-profile shows—including *ER*, *Gossip Girl*, and *Daredevil*—Hurd (‘88) remains best known for playing Detective Monique Jeffries on the first two seasons of *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*. But even the ubiquitous police drama, now entering its 24th season, can’t rival the franchise that Hurd recently joined: *Star Trek*.

Hurd plays Raffi Musiker, a former Starfleet colleague of Jean-Luc Picard (Sir Patrick Stewart), whom he recruits for a new mission on the Paramount+ show *Star Trek: Picard*. The show, which premiered in 2020, continues the story of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and joins 13 feature films and 10 television series in the franchise that first transported viewers to other worlds in 1966.

For Hurd, it’s the role of a lifetime. She still recalls watching the original *Star Trek* with her family and appreciating its message of diversity and acceptance. It’s a message that hasn’t always matched her experiences as the daughter of a white mother and Black father. Hugh Hurd, her father, was an actor and civil rights activist. He starred in John Cassavetes’ first film, *Shadows*, raised funds for Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS’55, Hon.’59), and cofounded the Committee for the Employment of Negro Performers, which helped spark a congressional hearing on discrimination in the entertainment industry. Merlyn Hurd (‘55), her mother, was also an actor before becoming a psychologist. Following in her father’s path onscreen as well as off, Hurd has been active with diversity and equity efforts within the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and serves on the global leadership board for Time’s Up, which promotes workplace equity for women.

After lengthy pandemic-related delays, season two of *Star Trek: Picard* is back in production and is scheduled to premiere in February 2022. Hurd spoke with CFA during a day off from shooting.

CFA: What characterized your time at BU?

Hurd: I didn’t understand why certain roles were given to certain types of people. I wanted to play Juliet, not just play the nurse. So I was a bit of a rabble-rouser because I played every different ethnicity in college and all I could think was, “I’ve got no problem playing a minority—I’ve got that down.” But I was there to try to play parts that I would not otherwise have the opportunity to play. That definitely made me a driven actor. Once I graduated, I was really hungry and aggressive and ready to tackle anything.

Were there roles that you had to fight to be considered for that you got?

That I got? [Laughs] I definitely fought for roles, but it was a different time. I played all these ethnic characters. I remember they brought in an outside director for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and I was so excited to give my best Titania monologue—and he cast me as Hippolyta. I asked him, “What made you think to cast me as a Hippolyta?” And he said, “Oh, well, when I had done some research, I found that Hippolyta was referred to as the Black Moon.”

Your father was a civil rights activist as well as an actor—what do you remember about his work?

My godfather, Godfrey Cambridge, was also an actor, and Maya Angelou was a friend—they all worked together in an acting company. It was a normal thing to see them in our living room, talking about civil rights issues and injustices. I grew up knowing that there was inequity and knowing that to be an artist, as a person of color, was going to be challenging. It’s why I do so much committee work now and I work as hard as I can to create equity in the rooms that I walk into.

What has or hasn’t changed since your father’s career?

There have been huge steps. Every day that I’m on set, I think how proud my father would be. Tears would well in his eyes to know that his daughter is working with Patrick Stewart on *Star Trek*. And I do think that women and people of color are getting seen more, our stories are being told.

It’s imperative for our youth to see themselves represented in the arts, because then they’re included in

“WHAT’S SO BEAUTIFUL ABOUT STAR TREK IS IT GIVES A PLATFORM TO PEOPLE WHO FEEL LIKE THEY HAVEN’T BEEN SEEN.”



Hurd with *Star Trek: Picard* costars, from left, Isa Briones, Sir Patrick Stewart, and Evan Evagora at a fan screening of the show in Berlin, Germany, in January 2020.

the world. I’m a Jane Austen fan, and when I read Jane Austen I see myself in it, I visualize myself. But if I watch a classical version, I don’t see myself. Recently, I’ve been watching *Bridgerton*, and it’s kind of amazing how the guilt is lifted. I’m allowed to enjoy it because I see myself represented. In that case, there have been great strides.

But systemic change happens behind the camera. We need people of color in our writers’ rooms, producing, directing, and on our camera crews. And not just people of color, but LGBTQIA+, disabled, and neurodiverse individuals. When we have everybody in the room, our conversation grows and our stories get more exciting and interesting. We have a long way to go there.

Are you in a position to push for those changes?

This season, I said, “OK, I’m on a really good show. I have a little bit of power. What can I do?” And I was able to talk to our producers about hiring people of color for the hair and makeup room. We had a Black guest on the show and she said, “I came to the studio today like I do every job, with all my hair and makeup stuff in my car. When I walked into the makeup room and I saw a woman of color, I realized that I could sit back and be treated like everybody else on the set.” So we’re making strides.

That’s a good transition to *Star Trek: Picard*. What appealed to you about your character, Raffi Musiker?

What did *not* appeal to me! There is something so flawed about her. She’s not perfect, she’s had issues, she has crutches that she’s going to be leaning on. She’s a real human. And I’m saying lines that [showrunner and writer] Michael Chabon has created for me. It’s a blessing.

Were you a *Star Trek* fan before landing this role?

My parents were civil rights activists and me and my sisters are biracial. When we would watch television, it was really important to my father that his children see themselves represented. *Star Trek* was the one show that we would all sit down and watch. Every episode was about inclusion and diversity and the world trying to deal with people who are blue. How do we interact and how do we make a cohesive world? I want to have that same sort of impact on kids now. It’s one of the reasons I told my producers that I want Raffi to always have this huge mane of unruly hair. I want kids who look like me to see that curls are still in, in 2400.

You’ve been on a lot of popular TV shows that have passionate audiences—how does *Star Trek* compare?

You usually do a pilot and you put it out there and you have no idea if anybody’s going to watch it. But *Star Trek* has a built-in family. It’s overwhelming how passionate, committed, warm, and welcoming the fans are. What’s so beautiful about *Star Trek* is it gives a platform to people who feel like they haven’t been seen. You reach people from every walk of life, every shade, every ability and disability. And then they find their voice and they reach out to say, “Thank you.” It really makes me want to do good by them.

There’s nothing quite like this show and this family. It’s a beautiful experience.

CBS and Paramount have used *Star Trek* shows to anchor their Paramount+ streaming platform. Does that shift away from traditional network and cable television affect you as a performer?

Absolutely. When you think about old-school *Law & Order*, we did 24 episodes a season. A lot of times there would be a few episodes that were filler. Now, all of a sudden, we have this whole new format and we’re doing 6 or 10 episodes. That’s like a great short book. We can give you this impactful story and hopefully make you want more. It’s a different thing from when I first started in this industry.

You spoke earlier about the roles you didn’t get at BU. Is there a role you’re still eager to play?

I’m still waiting for Titania. [Laughs] I wish I had a better answer. I’m not interested in playing the girlfriend, the wife, the pretty person. I’m really interested in telling true, flawed individuals’ stories, and in making people who don’t often see themselves represented be seen. I want to continue to empower women of color and women of a certain age and make sure that there’s a strong voice for women out there in the arts. ●

PROCESS



Lucy Kim, an associate professor of art, creates screen prints with lab-grown melanin. Here, she stands in an incubator at BU's Celenza Lab, where she develops the prints.

FROM STUDIO TO LAB

Lucy Kim uses science to turn simple screen prints into organic creations

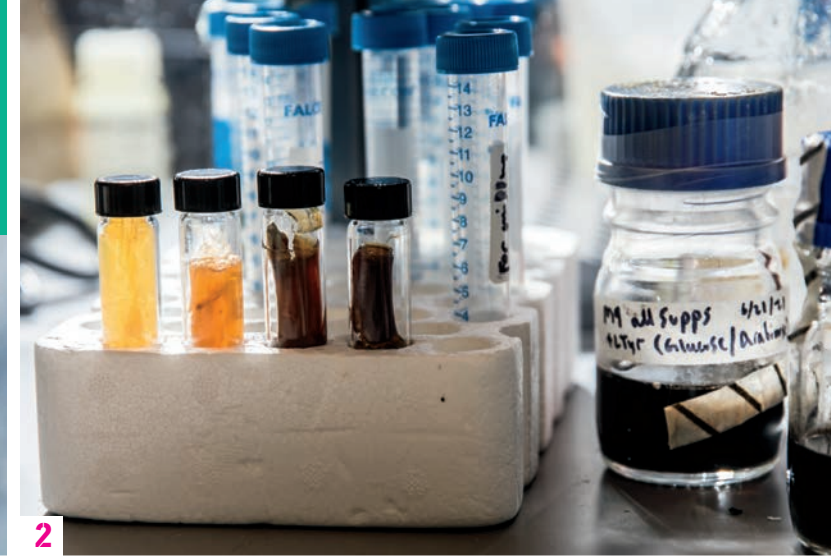
By Marc Chalufour

Photos by Jake Belcher

Lucy Kim likes to experiment. The award-winning visual artist and CFA associate professor has made a career of manipulating materials into paintings, sculptures, or hybrids that can't be easily categorized. She has worked with urethane resin, fiberglass, epoxy, oil and acrylic paints, silicone, aluminum foil, burlap, and wood (and that's just a partial list). She's built 3D textures into paintings and mashed 3D busts until they're almost two-dimensional. Now she's experimenting with a new material that shapes our lives in myriad ways: melanin. Kim is creating art with the natural pigment that gives our eyes, hair, and skin their color, using it to make captivating monochromatic screen prints. But printing with melanin isn't like mixing up a bunch of dyes. In organisms, including humans, it takes a series of incredibly complex chemical processes to produce the pigment. To make these prints, Kim has had to swap her artist's studio for a scientist's lab.



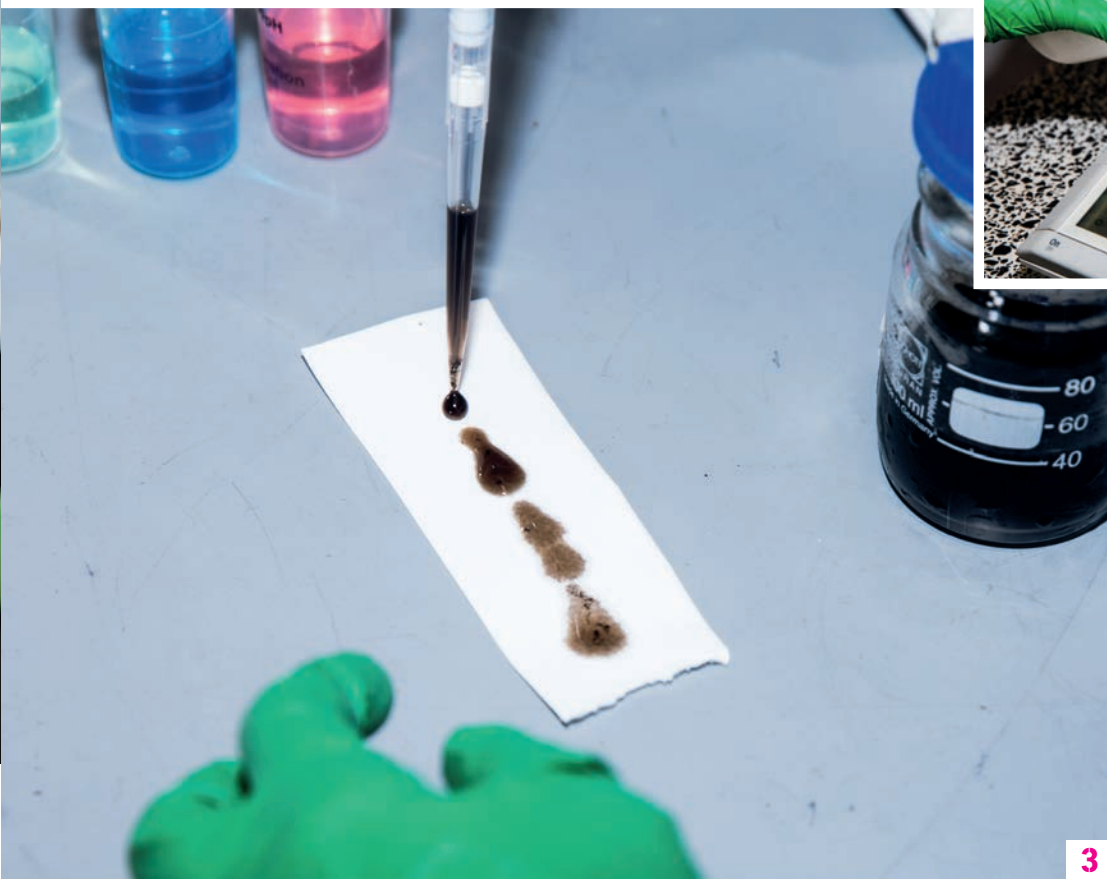
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AN IDEA BLOOMS

In 2018, Kim arrived as the new artist in residence at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, excited to push her art in new directions. The sprawling biomedical research center in Cambridge, Mass., has hundreds of researchers working on genome editing and the biological roots of disease, and the artist in residence program is meant to spark creative thinking—so Kim began networking.

She booked 15-minute meetings with the busy scientists and signed up for tours so she could peek inside their labs. After toying with ideas connected to gene editing—a hot topic in late 2018, after a Chinese scientist claimed he'd created the first human babies with edited genes—Kim moved on. “I just couldn't figure out something that felt organic with my process and my work,” she says. That's when she returned to an idea that she'd abandoned several years earlier: creating paint with melanin.

Kim had explored ideas of human appearance in past projects and had first tried to create a melanin-based paint in 2014, reaching out to a science supply company online. After

answering their suspicious questions—“Who are you? Why are you requesting lab materials?”—they sold her one gram of laboratory-grade synthetic melanin. It came in powder form and cost nearly \$400.

Kim only made enough paint—by mixing the powder with linseed oil—to cover a tiny swatch of paper. “I was too scared to use it,” she says. Besides, “It's pretty boring looking—it's just granular black pigment.” She tabled the project.

Her residency at the Broad Institute provided a good reason to revisit the idea. Kim posted a note on the research center's Slack channel and got a response from Sam Myers, a research scientist who specializes in proteomics, the study of proteins. Though his field has nothing to do with melanin, Myers was

interested in art and intrigued by Kim's project. He offered to share his small lab space. Together, the artist and the scientist found a different, more affordable way to obtain melanin: growing their own. Kim's scientific education was about to begin.

DESIGNING A PROCESS

Working with Myers, Kim discovered the work of Guillermo Gosset at Instituto de Biotecnología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Gosset had developed a strain of the bacteria *E. coli* that would produce melanin when incubated in a lab. “Where does he sell it?” she wondered, before Myers explained that scientists often share information freely. “I had no idea. You have to share, otherwise no one would

get anything done.” Kim contacted Gosset and he sent her a small tab of bacteria-infused paper. Instead of creating a melanin-based paint, this time she decided to try another art technique she'd used in the past: silk screen printing.

With Myers' help, Kim learned how to culture the bacteria, creating a liquid chemical mixture. Their first attempts to turn that mixture into melanin involved brushing the liquid bacteria onto a small sheet, then placing it in an incubator where the brownish pigment began to flourish. But for screen printing, Kim needed to give the mixture an ink-like viscosity.

“The biggest challenge was that I just didn't know how to do anything in the lab,” she says.

She combined the bacteria with hydrocolloids—thickeners often used in cosmetics and gastronomy—to make an “ink.” Although it goes onto the page clear, when the bacteria ink is placed into a warm incubator, the melanin springs to life, blooming in shades of brown and black. Kim repeats the culturing process for each printing to create the new bacteria cells she needs to work with.

Kim uses a screen made from fine polyester mesh stretched tightly over an aluminum

1. Kim examines two plates streaked with *E. coli* cells; 2. Vials and containers of melanin; 3. Kim pipettes an *E. coli* culture containing melanin for a swatch test on paper; 4. Weighing ingredients to make the *E. coli* ink

frame. She covers the screen in a photo emulsion, a light sensitive chemical mixture. Once that dries, she overlays an image printed on clear acetate; exposure to light then burns the image into the emulsion, which then washes off wherever the image was burned and opens up the mesh's holes to allow ink to pass through. Kim then squeezes the viscous bacteria across the screen and onto a sheet of paper, which she places in an incubator to create a print.

For her melanin project, she began by creating test prints with images from past projects. Only over three to four days in the incubator does the melanin darken and bloom across the paper. Because it's a natural process, Kim can't control whether the melanin will maintain the screen's original detail, create mysterious patterns, or lend the image an eerie blurriness. The process can also fail entirely. If the paper gets too dry, melanin doesn't grow. If there's contamination, mold can grow.

“Sometimes, I have no idea why it ends up one way or another,” she says.

A DISTORTED THEME

The muted brown tones of Kim’s melanin prints are a stark visual departure from other recent projects. An ongoing series of sculptural paintings, *Waves*, features oil paint on rippling slabs of fiberglass and urethane resin, created from casts of a beach’s surface. In one, a repeating pattern of deep blue and black creatures look like crows from one angle and rabbits from another. Working with so many materials can require a lot of painstaking steps, but at some point Kim often yields some control to chance, letting the material do what it wants to do, just as she’s done with the melanin project.

“Distortion is a big thing in my work,” Kim says. “But you have to be able to recognize something to know that it’s distorted.” For a series of pieces created between 2016 and 2020, Kim used epoxy, urethane resin, and fiberglass to cast and replicate the likenesses of three people. Then she flattened the casts and framed the cartoonish results. Her three subjects were carefully selected: a fitness trainer, plastic surgeon, and geneticist—all people who alter the human body in their own work.

Another defining characteristic of Kim’s art is scale. The pieces in her plastic surgeon/fitness trainer/geneticist series measure 92 by 60 inches each. *Rejuvenate and Repeat*, a vibrant cascade of yellow and green oil paint, resin, epoxy, and fiberglass, is 19.5 feet tall.

Two years into the melanin project, Kim is working out how to make larger prints. Her first attempts were about 5 by 7 inches—small enough to fit into basic lab incubators. Her goal is to work up to 3 by 4 feet, a size that will require a walk-in warm room the size of a closet to incubate.

THE ART OF SCIENCE, THE SCIENCE OF ART

Just over a year into Kim’s residency at the Broad Institute, the coronavirus pandemic erupted. COVID research immediately became the top priority, and she lost her lab access. Fortunately, in her search for ways to make larger prints—and have less competition for incubator time—Kim had already connected with John Celenza, an associate professor of



5. Squeezing the *E. coli* ink across a screen to create a test print. The ink goes on clear; 6. Kim covers a tray with prints in water for an experiment using different carbon sources in the ink; 7. Pouring more water into prints in the incubator; 8-9. Incubated test prints depicting birds.



biology at BU, and he agreed to give her access to his lab. At BU, she’s also getting help from the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, which provides stipends for students who develop their own research based on her project. “I’ve been so moved,” Kim says. “I rely on the kindness of a lot of people.”

The integration of her artistic process into a laboratory has been a natural fit for Kim. “Experimentation and surprise—and in some ways, disappointment—are my lifeline,” she

says. “To me, the point of being an artist is to see something new. You’re always trying to find a new path, confronting a new thing.”

She’s found kindred spirits in Myers, Celenza, and many of the scientists she’s consulted. “Every time I describe why I think art is amazing, when I’m talking to research scientists, it’s like “That’s exactly how I describe science.’ The whole point of it is to learn.”

Befitting a project born from such a process, Kim is producing something unique.

“There’s no precedent for doing this,” she says of using *E. coli* to make melanin prints.

A MEDIUM WITH MANY MEANINGS

In much of her work, Kim has played with ideas of human appearance, and that theme is what first led her to consider working with melanin. “It’s the most dominant thing that affects [human] appearance in terms of coloration,” she says.

Melanin also plays an important role in protecting skin cells from ultraviolet light. But the nuances of melanin’s biological functions can be overshadowed by its role in creating perceptions of racial identity. “It’s a provocative material,” Kim says. And its use in a work of art carries many levels of meaning.

“TO ME, THE POINT OF BEING AN ARTIST IS TO SEE SOMETHING NEW. YOU’RE ALWAYS TRYING TO FIND A NEW PATH, CONFRONTING A NEW THING.”

During the question and answer portion of an online talk about her project, one viewer asked Kim if printing on white paper might further the stereotypes that white is pure and black is a blemish. Another asked if the decision to print on cotton paper was a commentary on slavery. It was not—Kim needs to use archival-quality paper, which is typically a cotton blend.

“It’s such an important topic,” Kim says. “I want to be mindful and educate myself.”

Physically and philosophically, Kim’s melanin prints remain very much a work in progress. What will her final prints depict—and what meaning will they convey? “Honestly, I don’t know yet,” she says.

So Kim will keep experimenting, refining her process and working on larger prints. And she welcomes the extra scrutiny that national events have brought on her work. “It makes me learn more,” she says. ●

SINGULAR LIGHT

By Andrew Thurston Photo by Laura Barisonzi

As one of the country's only professional Deaf lighting designers, **Annie Wiegand** is pushing artistic boundaries and working to increase industry diversity and access

LIGHTING A STAGE SHOW IS COMPLEX: actors are constantly moving; scenes, seasons, and moods shift; music and sound effects crash, swoop, and dip. The lights have to follow everything, reflecting it all.

And if lighting one show is hard work, Annie Wiegand once had to figure out a way to light two—at the same time, on the same stage. In Playwrights Horizons' 2018 Off Broadway production of *I Was Most Alive With You*, two casts—one hearing, one Deaf—performed the play simultaneously on a stage split into two levels. Wiegand's challenge was to make sure all actors, from the players projecting their voices on the lower stage to those signing on a balcony above, were bathed in light.

"It was really hard to light them appropriately—just the architecture of that was challenging," says Wiegand ('10), a lighting designer who's worked on Broadway and beyond, including with the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Huntington Theatre, and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. She's also an assistant professor at Gallaudet



“I more strongly rely on my eyes and relate to the world visually, so I think that gives me an advantage sometimes—I see things in a different way than hearing designers do.”

Very few of them have a disability, and Wiegand remains one of a small number of Deaf people in any backstage job. “There’s an entire field of work—and an entire field of possibilities—for Deaf individuals,” she says.

Many theaters, large and small, have a long way to go to improve accessibility for Deaf cast, crew, and audiences.

Take the obligatory headset. Most backstage crew have one, orders and cues flying from ear to ear to keep the show rolling. It’s practically useless for Wiegand. She can talk into it, but requires an American Sign Language interpreter to relay any responses.

“Any technical theater artist relies on a headset, and that’s something I’m still trying to figure out because not every Deaf individual can speak and use their own voice,” she says. Headsets are so embedded in theater culture that imagining a world without them requires “a large systemic change if we’re going to talk about communicating in a different way.”

Whenever Wiegand starts on a new show, she lets everyone know what she’ll need: an interpreter and more frequent team meetings. “Hearing artists can have their head down, do their work, and their ears are still open to picking up those sorts of things that I don’t have access to.” With more regular meetings, she can also join in with the little jokes and throwaway comments that pull a team together—and spark creative ideas.

She recognizes that improving accessibility can be a challenge, especially when so many arts organizations are battling tight budgets. But, she says, there are grants and sponsorships targeted to theaters aiming to hire diverse artists. And having a more diverse staff leads to a better, more creatively exciting end product.

“I more strongly rely on my eyes and relate to the world visually, so I think that gives me an advantage sometimes—I see things in a different way than hearing designers do,” says Wiegand. She gives the example of making lighting adjustments during a production: most hearing designers will wait for an actor to speak a line to cue the change. “I always cue on visual elements—such as an actor’s movement onstage or a scenic change—sometimes that changes things for a stage manager. It’s just one example of how my work is different.”

ELEVATED WITH LIGHT

Wiegand’s path to BU started in Des Moines, Iowa. She grew up a couple of miles from a large community theater in the

state capital, where she started taking dance and mime classes at around age five. The dramatic arts were “infused in me since a very young age,” she says. She also studied theater at school, then at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C. After graduation, she tried her hand at just about every backstage job: electrician, stagehand, costume stitcher, lighting designer. The last one stuck.

“Lighting is the glue for a production,” she says. “We have beautiful set designs, costumes, amazing actors, but it doesn’t exactly come to life until you add the light in. The light gives you the layers you need to tell a story: it helps you know who to focus on, where to focus on the stage; it helps you with emotional undertones and cues; it tells you about the time of day. Everything feels more elevated with light.”

One of the things that pulled Wiegand into CFA’s lighting design program was the promise of accessibility. “I felt like with other schools and programs, I needed to fight a little bit harder to gain the access that I needed.”

At BU, she studied with Mark Stanley, an associate professor and resident lighting designer for New York City Ballet.

“The first thing I noticed about Annie’s work was her sense of color: Her portfolio for MFA admission showed a heightened awareness of color and how to use it effectively in telling stories,” says Stanley. “Her designs have always built on that sensitivity. Annie is also very aware of the text in a play. She has a unique understanding of the perspective of the playwright and can zero in on the mood and dramatic intent that is behind the words.”

Before the pandemic, Wiegand was finally starting to get some industry recognition. After years of being offered fewer shows than her hearing peers, she was beginning to match them. She hopes that continues—or perhaps even picks up a bit. And she’d love to work on more musicals. “Because why not?” she says. “I can, it’s totally possible.”

And with more organizations getting serious about diversity, equity, and representation, more paths are emerging for other Deaf people looking to break into the theater business. There wasn’t a precedent for Wiegand, but she’s making sure there will be for those who follow her.

“Be stubborn. Be stubborn for what you’re passionate about—and what you want to do—and find a way.” ●

American Sign Language interpretation provided by Cara Schwartz with support from BU Disability & Access Services.



In Playwrights Horizons’ 2018 production of *I Was Most Alive With You*, one hearing and one Deaf cast simultaneously performed the play on a stage split into two levels. Wiegand’s challenge was to make sure actors on both levels had proper lighting.

University in Washington, D.C., teaching theater and dance program students in its school of arts and humanities.

One budget-priced solution she and her assistant, Gifford Williams (18), hit upon for *I Was Most Alive With You*: strips of LED lighting on the balcony railing. They “helped to fill in the actors’ faces a little bit more,” capturing the nuance of the Deaf performers’ work as equally as that of their colleagues treading the main boards below.

It’s an episode that helps illuminate Wiegand’s career in theater: pushing boundaries, trying creative new ways to light shows, and fighting to improve arts access for the Deaf community.

Wiegand is one of the only—and was probably the first—Deaf lighting designers in the country.

“There was no precedent for me,” says Wiegand, speaking through an American Sign Language interpreter. “In the last 10 years I’ve been working as a professional lighting designer just trying to make my way through—and I’m still trying to figure it out today.”

SEEING IN A DIFFERENT WAY

As the summer heat picked up, Wiegand was emerging from a pandemic bubble. With 15 of her students and three guest artists, she’d

been cloistered on the Gallaudet campus for a production of *Deafenstein*, a new play by Anna Wood-Jacobowitz. The entire cast and crew had quarantined for two weeks before pushing through production in three. As a faculty advisor to the play, Wiegand was a production manager, lighting designer, and COVID safety lead. She says it was exhausting—and emotional.

“After almost a year and a half of being distanced, suddenly coming together for a very short time and this kind of project, there were a lot of emotions in that room,” she says. *Deafenstein* tells the story of two Deaf sisters producing a film version of *Frankenstein* with a Deaf monster. “It was really exciting. The script had a lot of valuable themes, and themes that are important to the Deaf community.” The filmed stage performance was a coproduction with the National Theatre of the Deaf.

Wiegand has been teaching at Gallaudet since 2014—and full-time since 2019—and says one of the reasons she went into education is to help “open up the field, technical theater, to Deaf individuals.” Despite some progress toward diversity in recent years, white men still hold a significant majority of lighting designer positions—as they do most offstage roles in theater.

Joan Marcus/Courtesy of Playwrights Horizons

CLASS NOTES

WRITE TO US!

We want to hear what you've been up to. Send us your stories and photos, and we'll share the highlights here. Email cfaalum@bu.edu.

1950s

Liz Gribin ('56, PAL'56) received a plaque from Marquis Who's Who for her award-winning paintings. She is represented by several galleries around the country and works in her studio in Needham, Mass.

1960s

Susan Surman ('60) wrote the short play *Moving Day*, which had two performances in June 2021, at the Stained Glass Playhouse in Winston-Salem, N.C., as part of its "10-Minute Windows," a virtual short play festival in partnership with Winston-Salem Writers. Festival viewers selected *Moving Day* for the event's best play, best director, and best actor awards. The play can be viewed on Stained Glass Playhouse's Facebook and YouTube channels. Surman invites fellow alumni to contact her at susansurman@yahoo.com.

Cynthia Maurice ('63,'65) showed her work in the solo exhibition *Clues: New Drawings and Prints* at Galatea Fine Art in Boston in March 2021. The prints were influenced by the 1600s writing genre cento, which involved clipping words from other works.

Mike Moran ('66) has worked as a jazz pianist, performing in jazz clubs in the New York area, Atlantic City, and Las Vegas. Moran has often accompanied singers, including his wife, the painter, actor, and playwright Kitt Moran. They have published an album, *Kitt Moran Sings the Mike Moran Songbook*, which includes an instrumental cut called "I'll

Remember Erroll," a tribute to pianist Erroll Garner.

Alaina Warren Zachary ('68) wrote the comedy sitcom *Crankey Village, N.M.*, which is finding success on the festival circuit and has won multiple awards.

1970s

Ruth Mordecai ('70,'80) showed 21 new paintings in an exhibition at Matthew Swift Gallery in Gloucester, Mass., in fall 2020.

Ellen Wineberg ('70) is the director of the Watertown, Mass., art gallery Storefront Art Projects, which presented an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and sculptures by artists from Gateway Arts, a workshop and gallery for artists with disabilities in Brookline, Mass., in summer 2021. In spring 2021, the gallery also featured work by Nancy Schieffelin (CAS'68, SSW'72) and **Sachiko Akiyama ('02)** in the exhibit *Essential Work/Essential Workers*, which celebrated the creative human spirit during the pandemic.

Lorraine Shemesh ('71) had a solo exhibit, *Holding On*, at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., where she was artist in residence from September through November 2021.

Sara Nealy ('75) is the executive director of the Kahilu Theatre in rural Waimea, Hawaii, which produces a wide variety of performances and cultural activities and has two art galleries and an arts education program. With the launch of Kahilu.TV, their Vimeo digital platform, Kahilu Theatre has audiences from Austria to Japan.

Caren Canier (BUTI'73, CFA'76) had two paintings on display at the Albany International Airport Gallery in the exhibit *Sunrise Sunset* in spring/summer 2021.

Christopher Gowell ('77) juried the sculpture exhibit *Positivity*, which was on view at the Newburyport Art Association's Hills Gallery in May 2021. A sculptor herself, Gowell founded the Sanctuary Arts School and Sculpture Center in Eliot, Maine.

Susan Catherine Collyer ('78) is an actress turned director/producer. She recently created the video *The Meaning of Memorial Day: Stories of Sacrifice*, in which Rhode Island veterans share their stories. The video screened at the Barrington Public Library and Bay Spring Community Center in Barrington, R.I., in May 2021.

Burt Hara (BUTI'79) is the associate principal clarinet in the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Joe Joyce ('79) was named the new musical director at Baldwin High School in Baldwin, N.Y. The first show he produced in this new role was *Once Upon a Mattress*, which had performances in April 2021.

1980s

Jason Alexander ('81, Hon.'95) will star in a new scripted podcast, *Bedtime Stories of the Ingleside Inn*, inspired by the memoir of Melvyn Haber, who owned the infamous Melvyn's Restaurant and Ingleside Inn in Palm Springs, Calif. Alexander will play Haber. He also starred in Tide's 2021 Super Bowl commercial.



LESLEY COHEN ('74) showed her work in *(IN)Between* at the Bromfield Gallery in Boston, Mass., in May 2021. The exhibit showcased abstract drawings that explore "the ambiguity of transitional space." Cohen says the drawings also are metaphors for the "meanwhile-times" in the middle of the pandemic. "Each piece is a network of seemingly disconnected, disparate, but inseparable relationships all held in a complex, delicate balance." Pictured here: *Fluctuation (2020)* Charcoal and pastel, 28 x 35.5 in.

Margo (Fisher) Lemieux ('81) had a painting on the cover of the summer 2021 issue of the poetry magazine *Rattle*. She recently retired from her faculty position in the art and graphic design department at Lasell University and was awarded emerita status. While at Lasell, Lemieux helped organize the Vietnam Shoulder to Shoulder Experience for students, taking students to Vietnam during their winter break to develop an understanding of Vietnamese arts and culture.

Kathleen Gurchie ('83) was a juror for the Art League of Long Island's virtual exhibition *Awakening*. Gurchie carefully selected 59 of 221 works submitted by artists to display in the exhibit, which ran from July 17 through September 6, 2021.

Julianne Moore ('83) voiced Cora Prescott in the animated movie *Spirit Untamed*, a spin-off of 2002's *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*. Moore is also set to star alongside Natalie Portman in the film *May December*, which will begin production in 2022.

Laurence C. Schwartz ('83) directed the world premiere of the comedy-murder-mystery play *Case Closed: The Dorian Corey Story*, which closed its six-week run at the Gene Frankel Theatre in Manhattan in October 2021. The play centers on the discovery of a mummified corpse in drag

performer and fashion designer Dorian Corey's closet shortly after her death in 1993.

Michael Chiklis ('85) appears in the upcoming Netflix film *Don't Look Up*, which stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Lawrence and was filmed in Boston for three months in fall and winter 2020.

Carlos Maldonado ('86) is a member of the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, which won Best Latin Jazz Album for its album *Four Questions* at the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards in 2020.

Gretchen Seifert (BUTI'81,'86) showed her work in a solo exhibition, *Gretchen Seifert: In Abstrac-*

tion, at the Canal Street Art Gallery in Bellows Falls, Vt., in spring 2021. Seifert's artwork is influenced by her background in classical cello.

Sonya White Hope (BUTI'83,'84, CFA'88,'90,'16) codirected Sankofa-Songs Summer Institute: A Virtual Conference for Music Educators and Administrators, PreK-College, in July 2021. The 2021 institute followed the theme of Scott Joplin's grand opera *Treemonisha*, and offered three days of programming to music teachers, arts administrators, collegiate music education faculty, music education majors, and homeschooling and other interested parents, as well as high school students interested in careers in music education.

1990s

David F. Coleman (BUTI'86, CFA'93) is the director of choral music at the Dana Hall School and the director of the Tufts University Gospel Choir, which has 225 members. He is also an associate professor of theater at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, a member and featured soloist with the Boston Landmarks Orchestra, and was a featured performer in a Boston Pops performance in June 2021. In 2020, he was nominated for an Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Music Direction for *Choir Boy* at SpeakEasy Stage.

Larry Groff ('93) displayed his oil paintings in the exhibit *Through a Grain of Sand, Inventions from the Microscopic Landscape* at the Santa Ysabel Art Gallery in California in July and August 2021. The exhibit's title was inspired by the first line in William Blake's poem "Auguries of Innocence."

2000s

Elissa Von Letkemann ('02), a graphic designer and artist, is the recipient of two 2021 Graphic Design USA Packaging Design Awards for her branding and packaging work with Portsmouth Soap Company and Sweet Grass Farm. See these projects and more at elissavonletkemann.com.

Lisa Flanagan ('04,'09) is an award-winning audiobook narrator and voice actor. In March 2021, she received her third Audies nomination for her voice role in the audiobook for *The Trial of the Chicago 7: The Official Transcript* (Simon & Schuster Audio, 2020). She also received her tenth Earphones Award from *AudioFile* magazine for narrating the audiobook for Elizabeth Becker's *You Don't Belong Here* (Hachette Audio, 2021). Flanagan is also the librettist for the opera *We the Innumerable*, composed by Niloufar Nourbakhsh.

Jorge Villavicencio Grossman ('04) was promoted from associate professor to professor in the Ithaca College School of Music's

Department of Music Theory, History and Composition.

Uzo Aduba ('05) starred as therapist Dr. Brooke Taylor in the fourth season of HBO's *In Treatment* and as Sasha in Amazon's anthology series *Solos*. Aduba is set to star in and executive produce the forthcoming CBS drama *Low Country*, in which she will play a gay deputy sheriff working in the Deep South.

Angela DiBartolomeo (BUTI'00,'01, CFA'06,'23) presented her paper "Distant Stars: A Performer's Analysis of O. Messiaen's Appel Interstellaire & P. Dukas' Villanelle" at the 2021 virtual International Horn Symposium.



GAIL SAMUEL (BUTI'87) was named president and CEO of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO). Previously COO of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Samuel is the first woman to lead the BSO.

Anthony R. Green ('06) founded the concert and educational series *Castle of Our Skins*, which is dedicated to celebrating Black artistry through music. It also invites exploration into Black heritage and culture, spotlighting unsung and celebrated figures of past and present. CFA's School of Music welcomed *Castle of Our Skins* for *Black Love*, a three-day residency in April 2021.

Yevgeny Kutik (BUTI'00, CFA'07), a violinist, shared a five-installment docu-recital series, *Finding Home: Music from the Suitcase in Concert*, which was filmed at the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport, Mass., on his

YouTube and Facebook channels in February and March 2021. The 30-minute to 40-minute episodes featured music performances, including works from his 2014 album *Music from the Suitcase*, as well as Kutik's personal narrative storytelling. Kutik also made his solo debut with the Boston Civic Orchestra, performing Beethoven's Violin Concerto in June 2021.

Laura Parrish ('07) collaborated on the event *Moby's* at The Melville in July and August 2021 in New Bedford, Mass. For the event, Parrish, who operates The Whalehouse, the onetime home of Herman Melville's sister, as an Airbnb, featured sculptures of whales in the home's garden area while a local gallery displayed Moby Dick-related paintings.

Autumn Ahn ('08) had her work exhibited at the gallery Selebe Yoon in Dakar, Senegal, from May 20 through July 31, 2021. Ahn also participated in a five-week residency at the gallery.

2010s

Lidiya Yankovskaya ('10), Taichi Fukumura (BUTI'12, CFA'14), Nathaniel Efthimiou ('20), and Lina Gonzalez-Granados ('20) were four of the 15 recipients of the 2020 Career Assistance Awards from the Solti Foundation U.S.

Geneviève Leclair ('11), an assistant professor of conducting at Berklee College of Music, was announced as one of four guest conductors for the 2021–2022 season of the Oakville Symphony in Oakville, Ontario, Canada.

Bryan Powell ('11), Jennifer Greene ('15), Warren Gramm ('21), and Jonathan Dillon ('25) presented at the National Association for Music Education Eastern Division Conference in April 2021. Their topics of discussion included modern band, music technology, and diversity.

Olivia Rose Barresi ('13) played Hermes in a modern adaptation of *Prometheus Bound*, which was

filmed at The Tank in New York City. It streamed in spring 2021 and is now available on-demand through Vimeo.

Katrina Galka ('13) and Kaileigh Riess ('21) advanced to the finals of the Lotte Lenya Competition, which recognizes talented singer/actors of all nationalities, ages 19–32, who are dramatically and musically convincing in repertoire ranging from contemporary Broadway scores to opera/opera. Galka also made her Zurich Opera debut as Olympia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* in April 2021.

Alexia Mouza ('13), a pianist, performed in a livestreamed concert at the Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv, Israel, in spring 2021. Mouza was awarded the Best Performer of a Chopin Piece Prize and Audience Favorite in Stage II at the competition.

Louise Billaud ('14), a professor of music and the concert pianist in residence at New River Community College in Dublin, Va., taught a 10-week online course, *Music in Society*, in spring 2021. The class explored the language of music through an introduction of basic elements, forms, and styles through time.

Jamie Hillman ('14) was named associate professor of music, director of choral studies, and the Elmer Iseler Chair in Conducting at the University of Toronto, Canada, in summer 2021. Hillman conducts the University of Toronto MacMillan Singers and leads the master's and doctoral programs in choral conducting.

Anna Arazi ('15) gave a virtual recital featuring prominent Israeli composer Verdina Shlonsky as part of the International Stretto Piano Festival in May 2021.

Yoni Battat ('15) was featured in Newton Cultural Development's Parlor Performances, which showcased music from local musicians over six weeks in winter and spring 2021. Battat is a multi-instrumentalist (viola, violin, oud), vocalist,



MARK HOLLOWAY (BUTI'97,'98, CFA'02) is a member of the Pacifica Quartet, Indiana University's quartet-in-residence. The group's album, *Contemporary Voices*, won Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance at the 2021 Grammy Awards. The *Chicago Tribune* praised the album, calling their recording of composer Shulamit Ran's "Glitter, Doom, Shards, Memory—String Quartet No. 3" one of the best classical recordings of 2020, "dispatched with unmistakable and apt ferocity."

and composer, specializing in contemporary and traditional Jewish music from Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Nicholas Brown ('15) is principal clarinet with the New Bedford Symphony, second/bass clarinet with the Boston Lyric Opera, and a clarinetist with Hub New Music. Brown also launched and serves

as executive director and principal clarinet for the Boston Festival Orchestra, which had its inaugural season in July 2021.

Ellen Humphreys ('15) appeared in the Netflix thriller *Deadly Illusions*.

Rebecca Ness ('15) exhibited her work in the solo shows *Windows and Worlds* at Carl Kostyal Gal-

lery, London, in 2021, and *Pieces of Mind* at Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, in 2020. Her work focuses on the domestic, on ritual, and the home.

Anthony Trecek-King ('15) wrote and hosted the radio show *The Silent Canon*, which was commissioned through a partnership between Classical 90.7 KVNO and

Courtesy of LA Philharmonic

Lisa-Marie Mazzeo

the Omaha Symphony. The show highlighted the rich contributions of Black artists to the Western classical canon and aired for 13 weeks on Classical 90.7 KVNO in winter and spring 2021.

Wenzhuo Zhang ('15) played five pieces on her yangqin, an 18th-century Chinese stringed instrument, presented a brief historical background on the instrument's origin, and discussed its continued usage through the present day in a virtual performance in spring 2021.

Brittany Lasch ('16) published *Book of Arias*, a collection of 33 opera arias transcribed for the trombone. The book includes opera synopses, full libretti, translations, downloadable piano scores, and performance notes from Lasch.

Viviana Vargas ('16) created the podcast *Building Our Own Tables* with Boston's HowlRound Theatre Commons. The podcast conveys lessons from BIPOC founders of various organizations in and related to the theater industry.

Isaac Kim ('17,'19) made his debut on the bass with the Korea National Opera in a concert titled *Opera Journey* in April 2021.

Daniel Takacs ('18) wrote the play *An Institution*, which was presented at the Jocunda Festival on April 12, 2021, in New York, N.Y.

Joyce Chiung-Hsien Huang ('19,'24) won first place in the college students and professional musicians category of the American Protégé International Piano and Strings Competition 2021 in New York, N.Y. She will have the opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in 2022.

Elizabeth Flood ('19) was selected for the 2021 Real Art Awards, presented by Real Art Ways of Hartford, Conn., and received \$2,500 and a solo exhibition. Her work uses drawing and painting to survey the complex layers of violence and extraction within the American landscape.



ELAINE VAAN HOGUE ('97) (right) portrayed Grammy Sofie in Wheelock Family Theatre's production of *Walking the Tightrope*, which streamed on May 1, 2021. She starred alongside current CFA student Valyn Turner ('23), also pictured. The play, which tells the story of a granddaughter and grandmother learning how to deal with loss, was a collaboration between Wheelock Family Theatre and Boston University School of Theatre.

2020s

Marie Graham ('20) gave a talk titled "Why Your Young Child Needs Music" at the Forsyth County Public Library-Cumming Library in Cumming, Ga., on March 20, 2021. She discussed the important role music plays in young children's intellectual and kinesthetic development and provided applicable ways that music can help children process information, develop coordination, and build brain power.

Anna Harris ('20), a violinist, performed in Boston Public Library's Concerts in the Courtyard series on June 25, 2021.

Alyssa Primeau ('20,'22) is a flute fellow with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago for the 2021-22 season.

Darryl Singleton ('20) joined Washington State University School of Music as part of the cluster-hire program "Racism and Social Inequality in the Americas," which aims to bring more faculty of color across all colleges and departments within WSU. Singleton is teaching the courses Black Music in America, Music & Social Justice, and Jazz Drums.

Matthew Xiong ('20) teaches musicians of all levels and specializes in helping his students work through

performance anxiety issues. Xiong began embracing the techniques and psychology behind defeating performance anxiety after battling his own stage fright issues as a pianist.

Emily Trantanella ('21) and Micah Rosegrant ('21) created a biweekly arts newsletter, *Begin*. Subscribe to it at beginnewsletter.substack.com.

Mosheh Tucker ('21) and Bridget Bailey ('21) were featured in the *Boston Globe* as two of five art school grads to watch. Tucker was also named the summer 2021 artist in residence at Gallery 263 in Cambridge, Mass.

Benjamin Reese Photography



PLAYING PAGANINI

By Taylor Mendoza

VIOLINIST SARAH ATWOOD had a feeling big changes were in store for her. It was spring 2020, and concert halls around the United States were shuttering. She realized she had to find a way to get creative at home.

"I had this premonition that my profession was not going to be the same. To keep that panic at bay, I tried to stay busy and keep practicing, which was all I could do to support my career as everything shut down," says Atwood (BUTT'08, CFA'14), the principal second violinist for the Portland Symphony Orchestra and Boston Lyric Opera. And so the Pandemic Paganini Project was born. Atwood set up a GoPro camera and began filming herself

playing through early 19th-century Italian musician Niccolò Paganini's 24 Caprices for Solo Violin, uploading the videos to YouTube.

Paganini's Caprices—each a short burst of technically complex music—presented a challenge for Atwood, testing how far she could push her skill. "They encompass basically every aspect of violin playing you could imagine. You can play these your whole life and still discover new things in them, no matter what skill level you're playing at," says Atwood, also a first violinist for the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra.

Atwood started playing the violin at four years old. "I grew up with two science-minded parents on a research station where they were working, and one of the research assistants played violin just for fun. When I was two, I heard her practicing in the garden, and somehow knew that that was what I wanted to do in my life," she says.

Atwood's peers have given her a lot of encouragement and positive feedback on the

Paganini Project. "I think fellow musicians understood that this was the way that I was handling getting through a really tough period in my life. Because my career is as an orchestral musician, even in the principal seats that I hold, I'm not often heard playing solo. With these clips on YouTube, people finally could hear what I sounded like without a section behind me."

Now, Atwood is looking forward to easing back into live music performances, but that doesn't mean the end of her at-home projects. Her most recent YouTube series is an exploration of the progression of old to new in Italian solo violin music as she plays 18th-century violinist Pietro Locatelli's 25 Caprices, which may have influenced Paganini's work, and modern-day composer Salvatore Sciarrino's 6 Capricci. "I would never have imagined doing anything like this if the pandemic hadn't stopped me in my performing tracks. Even as I'm starting to gradually go back to work, I still plan on carving out practice time to keep this project alive." ●



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