

SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SUMMER '23
ARTS IN REVIEW

MC Art Beat

Visual, Performing, and Media Arts News at Montgomery College



MC
MONTGOMERY
COLLEGE



Cover photograph by Juan Lozano

Courtesy of Photo 251 Student Work, "Go Pro with the Pros."



Message from the Dean

DEAR FRIENDS OF MONTGOMERY COLLEGE ARTS,

The beginning of the spring semester was a hectic but hopeful moment here at MC. Numerous students were on campus and dozens of arts events activities and were being planned. At the same time, a number of our galleries, studios, and performance spaces were closed for renovation. We had to reimagine the way our classes would be offered as well as our artistic events.

Nevertheless, our creative faculty planned inspiring opportunities in the arts during spring for our students, the MC campus community, and the residents of the greater Montgomery County area. As always, they were innovative and imaginative, offering artist talks, workshops, concerts, and theatrical productions in a variety of formats and modes, both in-person and virtually.

Our special events included a salsa music and dance celebration, a talk by Artist-in-Residence David Ross, our Pair of Pairs exhibition, several exciting theatre productions, our annual Spring Dance Concert, and the MC Jazz Ensemble concert.

But now the buildings are renovated, the galleries and performance spaces are open, and terrific programming is being planned. In-person, remote, and simultaneously live and livestreamed events are planned for the fall semester. We hope you will attend one of our arts events, regardless of your preferred modality.

The Fall 2023 Arts Calendar will be out very soon. Please be sure to check our diverse schedule of in-person theatre productions, inspiring dance performances, live and streamed music concerts, compelling artist lectures, informative workshops, innovative gallery exhibitions, and other arts programming at montgomerycollege.edu/artsinstitute.

Please join us at an arts event in the near future.

Frank Trezza, PhD

Dean for the Visual, Performing, and Media Arts

frank.trezza@montgomerycollege.edu

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Dr. Frank Trezza, Editor
Collegewide Dean for the Arts

Elizabeth Melanson, Writer
Professor of Art History

Katherine Hubley, Writer & Designer
Professor of Graphic Design

Kai Fang, Writer & Designer
Professor of Graphic Design

Special Thanks

Music Professor, Molly Donnelly
Humanities Institute Director, Sara Ducey
Radio Professor, Ibrahim Onafeko
Photography Professor, Ronald Beverly
Theatre Manager, Parilla Performing Arts Center (retired), Debra Fyodorov
Theatre Publicist, Parilla Performing Arts Center, Angie Lockhart
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MC CHAMBER SINGERS HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION HONORS VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Above: Dr. Molly Donnelly leads the MC Chamber Singers in a performance at the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Rockville (UUCR) sanctuary. *Photo by Ashley C Neyra*



The MC Chamber Singers perform smaller works for chorus with either piano or a small ensemble of instruments (vs. an orchestra).



The sounds of song and springtime both hold great significance in human culture and evoke powerful emotions and associations. The combination of the joyous expression of music with the themes of renewal, growth, and celebration that the season represents provides an opportunity for individuals to connect with nature, their communities, and their own emotions, while creating a harmonious soundtrack to accompany a time of remembrance alongside some of the most poignant moments in the history of mankind.

This sentiment was on display during the spring 2023 semester as the MC Chamber Singers took to the stage to usher in the season with powerful performances to commemorate one of the most significant moments from our past.

The MC Chamber Singers perform smaller works for chorus with either piano or a small ensemble of instruments (vs. an orchestra). The Chamber Singers is at least 30 years old and consists of a small group of 16

to 20 music majors who are life-long choral singers in various groups in the area. It is a diverse blend of college-age students and more mature and experienced singers.

The ensemble has been directed by Dr. Molly Donnelly for the past 20 years. Professor Donnelly is a veteran of the MC music scene, having served as full-



Above: Clip from The 2023 Annual Holocaust Commemoration Program.



Above: Clip from The 2023 Annual Holocaust Commemoration Program. Footage courtesy of Peter Pereyra.

time music faculty at MC for 25 years while instructing the Chamber Singers, College Chorus, Voice Class, Applied Lab and applied lessons to voice majors.

This spring semester the Chamber Singers performed Robert Convery's "Songs of Children, a cantata in memory of all the children who perished in the Holocaust", on Friday, April 21st, at 7:30. The concert was well attended at the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Rockville.

The piece is a cantata with nine movements which is accompanied by a small string and piano ensemble. It is a setting of poems by Jewish children incarcerated at the Terezin Ghetto and Concentration Camp during WWII, and

subsequently murdered by the Nazis. The composer wrote in his preface to the score: "The purpose of this work was to give accessible musical voice to the poetry, that it be performed in schools as an historically instructive vehicle".

"I have performed this piece two other times with my Chamber Singers. With Anti-Semitism on the rise in America and throughout the world, I thought that having my students learn this cantata and for us to perform it, is a timely choice," said Dr. Donnelly.

Montgomery College Television (MCTV) recorded one movement of the cantata for the MC Holocaust Commemoration. The performance was recorded in the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation

of Rockville (UUCR) sanctuary. “The space is a lovely place to perform and the messages on the Banners behind us are the perfect backdrop for the piece. ‘All Are Worthy’, ‘Compassion For All’, ‘Learn From Each Other’, ‘Search For Truth’, and other impactful ‘Principles Posters’ are particularly meaningful when singing poetry from the victims of hatred,” added Dr. Donnelly. The posters were painted by Elora West, an MC student and member of UUCR. Sara Bachman Ducey, Director of the Paul Peck Humanities Institute at MC, helped to coordinate many of these efforts, incorporating the services of MCTV Multicultural Content Producer, Carolina Galeano, and MCTV Producer/Director, Peter Pereyra. For those wishing to view the performance, the

YouTube link to the final production can be found [here](#).

Dr. Donnelly hopes that the audience takes away from this concert a sense of the Biblical verse from Deuteronomy, which Convery centered the piece around, “Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your hearts all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children.”

“Remembering how horrible and consequential complacency is and how it can lead to devastating consequences. I also hope that the singers in my group have a deeper understanding of the Holocaust through Convery’s setting of these poems,” explained Donnelly.

Lisa Fruth, a member of the MC Chamber Singers since Fall 2021 had this to say of her experience, “Working on Robert Convery’s ‘Songs of Children’ has been an amazing experience, especially at this moment in time. It has been especially meaningful to connect to the poems written by the children. While I can never really know what it is like to walk in someone else’s shoes, connecting with the words of these children gives me a way to honor their memory and all who perished. There is a humility in doing this music which connects us to something much larger than ourselves. It is great



Above: Dr. Donnelly leads the MC Chamber singers. *Photo by Ashley C. Neyra*

reminder of what happens when we, as a society, turn away from our shared humanity. On a personal level, the music has been a great outlet for me to express emotions. I have strong hope in our ability to do better. We are an interconnected human race, meant to love each other across all boundaries. I truly hope that this music serves as a catalyst to recommit ourselves to kindness.”

She goes on to say, “It has been an honor to work with such a talented group of singers with the expertise of Dr. Donnelly and our

amazing accompanist Dr. Sooyoung Jung. Creating music as a collaborative effort with this group of people, in particular, has been a very special and enriching experience, which I truly cherish.”

From the many perspectives of those who were involved in bringing these powerful performances to light, it’s clear this has been both a cathartic and transformative experience for all involved, which is what the spring season represents, a renewed sense of hope and change.

While the Holocaust represents a dark chapter in human history, the significance of springtime within this context highlights themes of resilience, liberation, remembrance, and the importance of learning from the past. It serves as a reminder to value life, embrace hope, and work towards a world where such atrocities are never repeated.



Above: Clip from The 2023 Annual Holocaust Commemoration Program.



Above: Clip from The 2023 Annual Holocaust Commemoration Program.

Summer Dinner Theatre
Welcomes
Helen Hayes Award-Winner,
Roberta Gasbarre,
As Artistic Director



Above: Roberta Gasbarre

Montgomery College's Summer Dinner Theatre (SDT) is thrilled to welcome Helen Hayes award-winning director, playwright, and educator, Roberta Gasbarre, as its new Artistic Director for its 46th season. No stranger to MC theatre, Gasbarre has guest directed many College and SDT productions, including *Evita*, *The Wiz*, *West Side Story*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Cabaret*, *Candide*, *Oklahoma*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. In addition, she taught Acting and Movement for the Theatre at MC from 1991 to 2001.

"When I came to Montgomery College (in 1991) I was struck by the passion and dedication of the young people... Oftentimes they were working two or three jobs in order to take my class. That level of dedication and passion and raw talent was extraordinary... It was so exciting for me to be a part of the Montgomery College community. And I call it a community because I really do feel that there is a level of

mentorship and nurturing of young people here."

Gasbarre joins SDT as Artistic Director after 23 years as a Museum Specialist and Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Discovery Theater, where she wrote, directed, and produced more than 350 performances for audiences of up to 50,000 people every year. Her

choreography, movement work, and directing have been featured at the Kennedy Center, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Studio Theatre, Round House Theatre, Wolftrap Farm



Above: Eleasha Gamble as Dorothy and Ian Anthony Coleman as the Tin Man in SDT's 2013 Production of *The Wiz*

Park for the Arts, Washington Jewish Theatre, Arena Stage's outreach company Living Stage, and The Shakespeare Theater, where she was on the staff for five years. Gasbarre has been nominated for numerous Helen Hayes awards and has won twice for *A Dance Against Darkness: Living with Aids* (Co-director) & *Quilters* (Director/Choreographer). Since 1991, she has been the Artistic



Above: Tori Amos in SDT's 1978 Production of *Godspell*

Director of the Washington Revels, a community organization dedicated to preserving and presenting traditional songs, dances, stories, and rituals from around the world. She has taught acting, movement, and period style in workshops and classes at American University, Catholic University, the George Washington University, University of Maryland College Park and Baltimore, and through Kaiser Permanente's AIDS and health education initiative. Fluent in sign language, she served on the faculty at Gallaudet University and was on the leadership team for the historic world conference and festival, Deaf Way I.

The opportunity to return to MC felt like "kismet" for Gasbarre. SDT's



Above: Priscilla Cuellar in SDT's 2013 Production of *Hello, Dolly!*

Managing Director, Lisa Carrier-Baker, agrees. When Lisa, who was recruited to SDT by Roberta back in 2000, heard that her friend was free for the summer, she thought, "This is fate. This is stars aligning. This is exactly what we need!" She called to offer Roberta the Artistic Director position immediately. Gasbarre remembers, "I laughed out loud because it was so delightful. It was so out of left field."

"Roberta is just a great fit," says Carrier-Baker. "SDT is a stepping-stone from college to a career in professional theatre," and the Artistic Director must fill a "very specific role" that combines being a strong educator with the ability to open doors in the industry for our students.



Left to right: SDT Alums Solomon Parker III and Da'Von T. Moody, SDT Managing Director Lisa Carrier-Baker, and SDT alum Awa Sal Secka



Above: Solomon Parker III on the Cover of the February, 2023 Issue of *Metro Weekly*

Having helped establish SDT as the only pre-professional program of its kind, Gasbarre was able to slip seamlessly back into the role. "It's great to be back," she says. "The students, of course, have changed, but the passion, talent, and commitment to the arts as a vital part of their lives, has not." Since returning, she has been especially excited to see so many children of SDT alumni enrolling in the program.

"That's the longevity of the impact of this incredibly vital program..."

I'm always astounded at what can be produced by this amazing group of mentors and energetic young performers in a very short period of time...We're doing what you might see at a professional dinner theater on an academic budget, which is really astounding. The ingenuity and creativity... it is a wonderful way for young people to be introduced to the hard work and joys of producing theater...They go away with so much. It stands them in good stead for their entire career, no matter what they go into."

What makes the program special, Gasbarre says, is the opportunity to work with incredibly talented people at the very beginning of their careers. She recalls teaching the Helen Hayes Award-Winning actress and star of Broadway's *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, Eleasha Gamble, the difference between stage left and stage right. "I've seen the program change lives," she says, "I've witnessed young people make artistic choices at the end of the summer that they never would have made at the beginning. The period of growth between day one and the end of (the summer) is outstanding and I want that for more students."

As Artistic Director, Gasbarre hopes to reach as many potential young professionals as possible and draw bigger audiences. She also hopes to boost alumni engagement with the program. With scores of esteemed performers, directors, artists, and technicians who got their start at SDT, it will not be hard to find them.

SDT alumni have left their mark on every corner of the industry for almost half a century. Among the program's earliest participants were Broadway veteran and Tony Award-nominated actor, Brad Oscar and singer-songwriter, Tori Amos, who appeared in *Godspell* in 1978. Recent Helen Hayes Award winners

include Priscilla Cuellar (Best Supporting Actress in 2013) and Matthew Nielson, who has won for Outstanding Sound Design a record four times (in 2007, 2009, 2013, and 2016).

When Lisa Carrier-Baker attended a recent performance of *Into the Woods* at Ford's Theatre, she was pleased (but not surprised) to find that most of the people on stage (both princes, both stepsisters, and the baker's wife!) were alumni of the program. Among them was actress and playwright Awa Sal Secka who earned critical acclaim for her portrayal of Dorothy in SDT's *The Wiz* in 2013. She's been nominated for six Helen Hayes Awards in the last four years and won Best New Play or Musical in 2023 for *The Joy That Carries You*, which she co-wrote with Dani Stoller. Another recent SDT alum, Solomon Parker III, also won a 2023 Hayes award for his performance as Harpo in Signature Theatre's *The Color Purple*. This spring, Parker earned rave reviews as Lola in *Kinky Boots* at Olney Theatre Center and appeared on the cover of *Metro Weekly*. SDT and MC alum, Da'Von T. Moody made his off-Broadway debut in *A Man of No Importance* last year and is currently appearing in the national tour of *MJ the Musical*. Cuellar, Sal Secka, Parker, and Moody were among

“We’re doing what you might see at a professional dinner theater on an academic budget, which is really astounding.”



the many actors to perform at the annual Beltway Barks event to benefit DC Actors for Animals, a non-profit founded by Carrier-Baker to promote adoption, advocacy, and education.

Carrier-Baker, who steered SDT through COVID with a virtual season in 2021 and a scaled-down program in 2022, was excited to return in full force this summer with *The Prom* in June and *Something Rotten!* in July. Program alum, Ian Anthony Coleman, who played the Tin Man in SDT's *The Wiz* in 2013, will direct *The Prom*, and former SDT actor and intern, Patricia "Pep" Targete, has been hired to choreograph.

Gasbarre is especially excited for *Something Rotten!*, a musical comedy set in Shakespearean England. "It's so wild and brilliant," she says, "it's full of little Easter eggs for musical-theatre lovers. It was a great choice." As was, she says, her decision to accept the job as SDT's Artistic Director. "The opportunity to come back home to Montgomery College and Summer Dinner Theatre was so fortuitous, such a gift."

For more information on Montgomery College's Summer Dinner Theatre, and to buy tickets for next season's offerings, visit our website.



“GO PRO WITH THE PROS”

REAL WORLD
EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING FOR
PHOTO STUDENTS

Photo by MC student Emma Piguller



Photo by Joshua Feranil



Photo by Juan Fisher



Photo by Anna Nogueira



Photo by Jeff Witorsch

It's been said that there is no substitute for experience. This is the wisdom behind a revolutionary new project by Photography Professor, Ronald Beverly, designed to give his photo students direct experiential learning in front of the camera. He calls the program, "Go Pro w/ the Pros." A few semesters ago, Professor Beverly identified that the Portrait and Fashion

curriculum (PHOT 251) needed an upgrade. Initially, students were working with each other behind and in front of the camera to complete the course requirements. Although collaborations among students are highly encouraged, getting in front of the camera can prove to be intimidating and in some cases distracting. This is when his idea of "Go Pro w/ the Pros" came to mind.



Photo by Jeff Witorsch

"The Media Arts & Technology department provide curriculums designed to help students develop a skillset to be competitive in the industry. Our photography facilities are equipped with the state-of-the-art lighting and printing technologies

commonly found in professional studios allowing students the opportunity to produce commercial quality work. So it seemed logical to extend that potential to include professional models, makeup artists and fashion designers as part of the



Photo by Vanessa Baxter

learning experience,” recalled Professor Beverly.

Entering its fourth semester of being offered as a component in the course, the program has been a big hit. When asked how his students have responded, Professor Beverly enthusiastically responds, “Surprisingly well. Greater than imagined ... It can be challenging to motivate students when introducing new and innovative ideas but with the right combination of support, passion and patience, students will be quick to meet you at least halfway.”

There are many opinions and perceptions about what it means to be a professional in a chosen field, but when exposed to an actual working environment, your notions can come into question through direct experience. Certainly, internships can be effective in satisfying the need to expose students to a working professional environment, but Beverly believes this approach is more personable, condensed and direct with real-time results. When asked what the greatest value students gain from this experience, Beverly is quick to say, “Reality check!”

The Photohispana Group is the professional company contracted for the photo sessions. Once Prof. Beverly recognized the need, he proceeded to look for funding resources. He credits The Art Institute at MC for being very supportive of this initiative and feels fortunate that they continue to see the importance of investing in photography students’ aspirations and achievements.

The investment in MC students has been well worth it. “The story that sticks out most is when I’m teaching students how to function in a studio environment vs. participating in a studio session. Some outcomes can only be achieved through the experience of being there on set with the pros!” After going over the expectations of the sessions, Beverly is emphatic about the fundamental responsibilities as photographers in

being prepared, working with clients and setting a high standard for the best results. “At times I might have over-emphasized the importance of these sessions to the point of evoking panic among the students. But after I mentioned how some professionals feel that working with students means producing mediocre work, that was the motivation they needed!,” adds Beverly.

The results speak for themselves as Beverly proudly displays the work of his students on the [Student Gallery PHOT 251 class website](#). Through these sessions, he hopes his students will re-evaluate their commitment in pursuing photography as a career. “I expect a higher standard from the students as they should expect more from themselves and take full advantage of the support Montgomery College is providing.”



Photo by Angelina Becerra

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a maroon button-down shirt, is sitting at a desk in a radio studio. He is looking directly at the camera. Behind him are two computer monitors. The monitor on the left displays a software interface with various controls and text. The monitor on the right shows a blue desktop background. A professional microphone on a boom arm is positioned in front of him. To his left, there is a rack of audio equipment, including a CD player and other electronic devices. The background wall is light-colored with some acoustic panels. The overall lighting is bright and even.

NEW PART-TIME RADIO INSTRUCTOR

IBRAHIM
ONAFEKO

This Spring 2023, Montgomery College welcomed an exciting new part-time radio instructor in the Broadcast Communications Department, Ibrahim Onafeko

Professor Onafeko comes to Montgomery College after seven years in the industry, working for Howard University radio (WHUR 96.3 FM), SiriumXM, and Voice of America. During this time, he's worked in numerous positions from writing copy, reporting news, to producing promos and podcasts.

Professor Onafeko's journey began in Lagos, Nigeria where he was born and raised. He moved to the States thirteen years ago for eye surgery, which changed the course of his life. Following the surgery, his vision deteriorated and eventually left him blind. But he didn't let that stop him from pursuing a life full

of purpose and meaning. With no sight, but eager to make something of his life, he went back to school to equip himself with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a career in mass communication.

When it comes to teaching at Montgomery College, he is most excited about helping students get a full understanding of the field and its many aspects. "When I began my journey in radio broadcasting, all I knew was being an on-air personality until I was at Howard University where I was introduced to the various departments, such as production, promotion, news,

etc, and the available opportunities therein," said Professor Onafeko.

His experience taught him that a diverse skillset is needed in the field, so his focus is on getting students ready for the industry, making sure they're equipped with the field's necessary knowledge and skills that they will need to succeed in future internships and jobs.

"My inspiration to teach comes from seeing students go from not being able to do something to being able to do that thing and do it to the point that they are being paid to render the skills as service,"

"I tell my students that no matter what they do, they should not discount their creativity, that they should carry their ingenuity with them, as it'll take them very far in the industry and in life."



adds Onafeko.

As far as his take on the modern radio industry, Ibrahim still exhibits the same enthusiasm he had when he entered the industry almost a decade ago. "Radio, today, is still fascinating. The video interview and social media components added to radio have made radio more colorful. Today, the audience can interact more with their radio personalities, they don't have to imagine much how the personalities look and some of the things that go on in the studio. Radio today still maintains its essence



When asked about the wisdom and advice he imparts on his students from his extensive industry experience, he says, "I tell my students that no matter what they do, they should not discount their creativity, that they should carry their ingenuity with them, as it'll take them very far in the industry and in life." He believes that their uniqueness is as important as good work ethic and a passion for the job. He adds, "It is important you like what you

of yesterday, and as it expands, it creates opportunities for professionals."

Transitioning from the professional world into the classroom can sometimes be tricky but Professor Onafeko has found success through connecting with his students by adapting himself to meeting the students where they are and dealing with each student as an individual. He states, "Understanding that everyone is unique and works differently, I tend to adapt myself to their style. Plus, teaching is not about you, it's about the students."

do and back that interest up with hard-work." But at the end of the day, you also have to respect timelines, "I tell them to be time conscious with regard to deadlines, for everything in media is time based."

As for his predictions on where the future of radio is heading, he believes that, "as the industry changes, so will the classroom and the course content changes to keep pace with the new

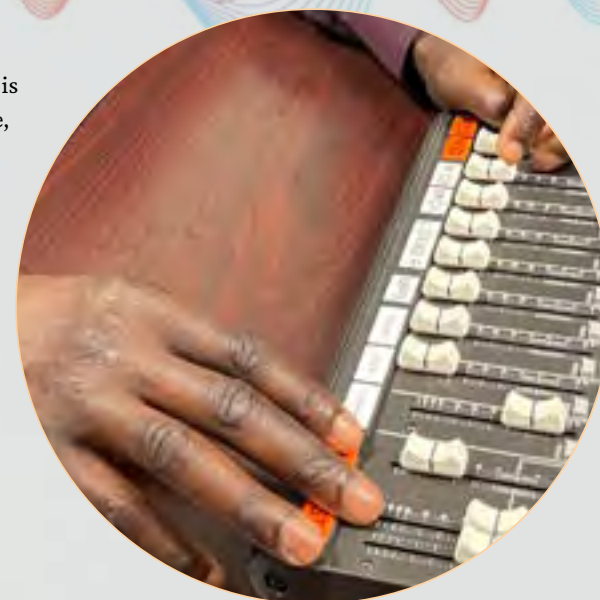
developments. The class, like the factory, is where skills are forged, knowledge is formed, and visions are illuminated. The industry being where the



output of the class is put to practice and where emerging technologies in media are put to use, the future of radio education will continue to evolve with emerging technology in the field."

An example Ibrahim provides, "is the advent of podcasting, which is more radio on-demand. Radio education changed with the advent of podcasting and injected more life into audio production at large."

Wherever the radio industry is heading, one thing is for sure, Professor Onafeko will be ready to bring his students along as he adapts his approach to the students' needs. "I can't tell you how my teaching will evolve, but I can say I'm learning from the students and understanding them as my time with them unfolds."



CELEBRATING DEBRA FYODOROV: 37 YEARS OF UNFORGETTABLE PERFORMANCES AT THE

ROBERT E. PARILLA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

“ I loved what I did. I was fueled because the shows were so wonderful. I was fueled by seeing the community having a great time at our shows. From day one to the end, I loved what I was doing. ”

Debra Fyodorov retired last June after 37 remarkable years as the Theatre Manager of the Parilla Performing Arts Center (PAC) on MC's Rockville campus. Deb, who arrived at the College when the PAC was still in its planning stages, helped build the venue from the ground up and has been a driving force behind its success ever since. Her dedication, passion, and discerning eye for talent have brought countless unforgettable performances to the MC community and made the Parilla Performing Arts Center a cultural beacon in the region.

“It's been exciting since day one,” says Fyodorov, who relished securing the best acts for the PAC season after season. “It was enticing, an obsession. I would spend hours scanning the agencies to see who was going on tour.” With her appreciation for quality and deep knowledge of the industry, Deb was able to book an unbelievable array of icons and renowned artists, including Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Sophia Loren, the London and New York City Operas, the Bolshoi Ballet, and (a recent sold-out performance by) the LVIV National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine.



Michael York and
Debra Fyodorov

Deb's wide-ranging interests and love for the arts are apparent in the decisions that she made for the PAC. A trained ballerina and stepdaughter of the former concertmaster at the Kennedy Center, Deb grew up around live performance. As a student at VCU, she studied printmaking, painting, and art history. “I love all genres. Classical ballet, rock, classical music.”

Though it would be impossible for her to choose a favorite, Deb does have some great memories of meeting childhood idols. Seeing Michael York perform Shakespeare “was spectacular” and working with Ronnie Spector was a career highlight. “My mom brought me to the last show the Beatles played in DC...and the Ronettes were on the bill. They were so big, the Beatles were opening for them in the beginning!”

In addition to booking big-name acts, Deb was the Artistic Director of the PAC's Monday Night Film Series and Saturday Morning Children's Series for many years. In 2019, she initiated a partnership with the Kennedy Center that brought their Theater for Young Audiences touring company to the College. She was also responsible for planning and opening the Cultural Arts Center on Montgomery College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus.

Of course, there was also the less glamorous work of writing

contracts and managing the PAC's operating budget, overseeing venue rentals and writing grants to secure government and private funding every year. "The PAC is open to the public 363 days a year and keeping the theatre running is a 24/7 job. Calls are coming in days, nights, and weekends!"

During COVID closures, Deb ensured that all of the PAC's programs continued, and even expanded the film series to run throughout the academic year. Virtual guest artist performances regularly drew over 200 participants and 25,000 people secured free film tickets.

While she acknowledges that her job could be stressful, she says, "I loved what I did. I was fueled because the shows were so wonderful. I was fueled by seeing the community having a great time at our shows. From day one to the end, I loved what I was doing."

Deb is excited for retirement and appreciative that the College honored



Debra Fyodorov with Peter Schaaf at a Jon Vickers Concert



the agreements that she made before her departure with artists including the BSO, Kennedy Center children's touring company, the Ukrainian National Philharmonic, Wings Celtic Dance, and the Royal National Georgian Dance Company. She is planning a cruise on the Nile with her daughter, a coach for the Youth America Grand Prix International Ballet Competition. "I'm busier than when I was working! It's absolutely wonderful!"

As we bid farewell to Deb Fyodorov, we express our deepest gratitude for her immeasurable contributions to the Parilla Performing Arts Center. Her passion, expertise, and tireless efforts brought world-class performances and unforgettable experiences to our community and made the PAC a paradigm of artistic excellence. We wish her a well-deserved retirement filled with joy, fulfillment, and new adventures.



Sophia Loren and Debra Fyodorov, Photo credit: Naline Darmrong



Art as an Act of Resistance:

The Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine Performs a Sold-Out Concert at the PAC





Violin Soloist, Vladyslava Luchenko and Principal Conductor, Theodore Kuchar at the Parilla Performing Arts Center on January 28, 2023

Among the highlights of this spring's spectacular season at the Parilla Performing Arts Center (PAC) was a sold-out performance by the Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine. Founded in 1902, the LVIV Philharmonic is one of the oldest and largest orchestras in Ukraine and is well known far beyond its borders. Many of the 20th century's most illustrious conductors and musicians have performed with the group, which has toured widely and produced many highly-acclaimed recordings for major international labels.

This performance was part of a 40-concert tour aimed at promoting Ukrainian culture amid the continued violence almost one year after the Russian invasion of the country. Other stops included Germany, Switzerland, Poland, and Austria. In America, the orchestra traveled widely, with performances at the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and Radio City Music Hall.

It has been an emotional year for the orchestra's 65 musicians, who are watching the war from afar and struggling to keep in touch with family

and friends in Ukraine. Speaking to *The New York Times*, the orchestra's conductor, Theodore Kuchar, noted, "There's nobody in this orchestra that does not know somebody who has either lost a finger, an arm, a leg or their life. Everybody has been affected." Michailo Sosnovsky, the orchestra's principal flute, added "I think about my family every minute of every day. It's a very difficult situation. But we must stay and do our part to help our country from here."

Audience enthusiasm has helped to bolster the spirits of the musicians, who have been greeted with standing ovations and waving Ukrainian flags in cities throughout the US. At the PAC, Deputy Chief of Mission for the Ukrainian Embassy, Yaroslav Brisiuck, introduced the orchestra with a rousing speech about art as an act of resistance.



Violin Soloist, Vladyslava Luchenko and Principal Conductor, Theodore Kuchar



Principal Conductor, Theodore Kuchar

The performance was just one of the ways that the Montgomery College community has expressed its support for Ukraine since the winter of 2022. Last fall, MC Music Professor, Dr. Dawn Avery devoted her biannual World Arts Festival to Ukrainian culture and art. Grammy Award-winning musician, producer, educator, and instrument maker, Andrei Pidkivka; cultural anthropologist, educator, and award-winning violinist, Dr. Solomia Gorokhivska; and ballet artist and choreographer, Roman Muykyta, hosted workshops on traditional Ukrainian music and dance. Music and Anthropology students



Left to right: Collegewide Dean of Visual, Performing, and Media Arts, Dr. Frank Trezza; Maria and Yaroslav Brisiuck, Deputy Chief of Mission for the Ukrainian Embassy; Former Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Sanjay Rai; and Interim Vice President and Provost of the Collegewide ABEES Unit and the Rockville Campus, Dr. Eric Benjamin

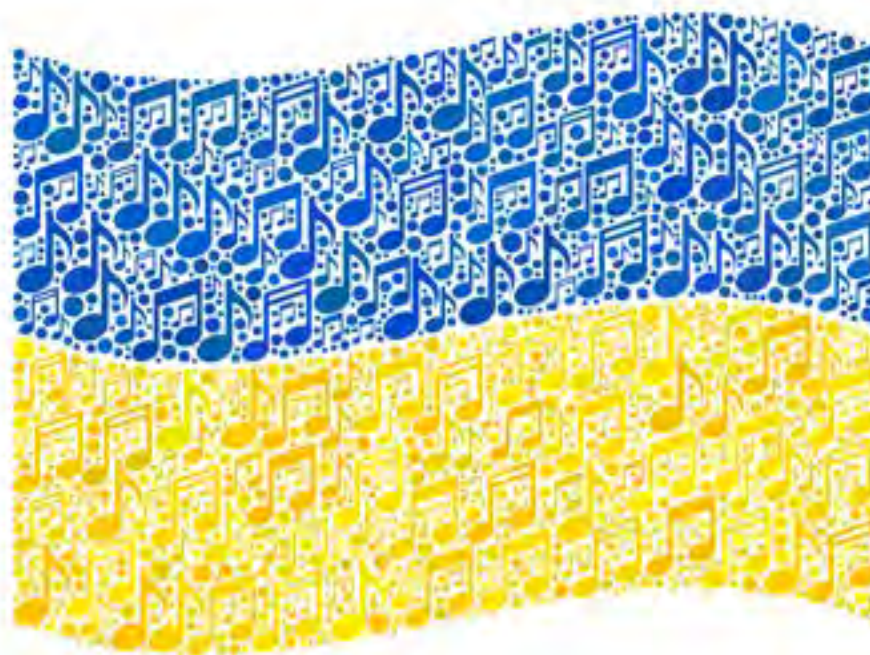
participated in an interview project focused on oral histories related to family, cultural sustainability, and wartime experiences in Ukraine led by Cultural Anthropologist, Dr. Solomia Gorokhivska and photography students created an exhibition of images and video from the festival ([see the online gallery here](#)). The residency ended with a concert called “The Soul of Ukraine through Music and Dance,” performed by the Gerdan Ensemble. For more on the World Arts Festival Ukrainian Residency, see the [Winter 2023 issue of MC Art Beat](#).

The Lviv National Philharmonic

Orchestra’s performance at the PAC, which was planned before the invasion of Ukraine, was already a highly-anticipated opportunity for the Montgomery College community to experience a world-class performance by internationally celebrated musicians. After the onset of war, it became a moving symbol of Ukrainian resistance and resilience. The sold-out concert not only showcased exceptional talent but also served as a reminder of the strength that can be found in art during challenging times. It was a testament to the transformative power of music and a tribute to the unwavering spirit of the Ukrainian people.



The Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra takes a bow at the Parilla Performing Arts Center. Photo credit: Naline Darmrong Photography



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