

cal state  
**east bay**  
magazine

PLUM TODAY  
MILDEA  
For University Alumni and Friends

## Cultural Contributors

Alumni in film, music, and art

Kennedy Center ovation for 'Tongues'

Spirited 'Black Nativity' concert founder

Graphic novel phenom

**Gene Luen Yang '03**

Spring/Summer 2009

SPRING / SUMMER 2009

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PHOTO JESSE CANTLEY

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# The UNIVERSITY of IMAGINATION

**A**RTS AND CULTURE are the soul and truest expression of a society, no matter how technologically advanced. Thus, in addition to our central role in the economic life of our region, Cal State East Bay continues building upon its remarkable legacy as a cultural contributor. The spring issue of Cal State East Bay Magazine celebrates this essential role and the achievements of some of our distinguished alumni, faculty, and students in the arts.

In reading about their lifework, what emerges is a compelling story of creativity, innovation, and multicultural expression — hallmarks of the Cal State East Bay experience — contributing immeasurably to the quality of life in the Bay Area and far beyond. Our cover story about alumnus Gene Yang, who created the first graphic novel selected as a National Book Award finalist and a serialized New York Times magazine comic strip — all while teaching at an East Bay high school — illustrates the richness and complexity of this theme.

You'll also read about the work of actor Hope Tuck-Gobliish in the Academy Award-nominated film "Milk," gifted musician Ayn Inserto's innovative jazz big band compositions, Aaron Florez's cutting edge animation at DreamWorks, and the inspirational story of Betty Gadling, music director at Oakland's Allen Temple Baptist Church, who earned her CSUEB degree in her 60s. And reading about the University's production of "Tongues" — a one-of-a-kind blend of theater, dance, and music selected for this year's prestigious Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival — reminds us that our students' work in the arts has national impact.

Finally, I hope you'll appreciate as much as I the second installment in our series about the University's "Beats, Physics and the Mind" freshman learning community. Among other possibilities, this diverse group of students includes several aspiring musicians who may one day go on to be CSUEB's next generation of cultural contributors.

Today, Cal State East Bay is reshaping itself as a center of science, technology, engineering, and math education in response to dramatically changing societal needs and economic challenges. At the same time, however, the arts are not only thriving here, but are also an essential element of our vision for the future. What's the connection? The answer is simple: Achieving our vision for the future requires that the Cal State East Bay of the next 50 years be a center of creativity and innovation — a university of imagination — as much, if not more, than in its first half century.



Mohammad "Mo" Qayoumi  
PRESIDENT



PHOTO SAM WILLARD



## LOOKING AHEAD

### New, green fitness center on track to become student life focal point

By fall 2010, a new and green focal point for student life, the CSUEB Recreation and Wellness Center, will debut on the Hayward campus.

Featuring an indoor track, basketball courts, and plenty of space for health education activities, the Recreation and Wellness Center will go up near the intersection of South Loop and Harder roads, across the street from the Pioneer Heights student apartments. The building design incorporates many eco-friendly materials and systems.

Work at the site is slated to start in late spring with demolition of the vacant Student Services Hub. Construction of the new center will commence during the summer.

The 56,000-square-foot Recreation and Wellness Center will house a multi-court gymnasium; elevated jogging track; fitness center; multipurpose fitness and activity rooms for aerobics, martial arts and dancing; locker rooms; juice bar; and administrative offices. The center also will host intramural sports such as basketball, volleyball, and badminton, and fitness programs such as weight training.

"It's going to be an exciting and lively place for students," says Bob Williams, executive director of Associated Students Inc. "Students will come to the center to work out, hang out, relax, and socialize in a building that is friendly to the environment."

The center will be a significant component of CSUEB President Mo Qayoumi's plan for creating a more vibrant university village, a key University objective.

"The Recreation and Wellness Center will contribute greatly to campus life, as it will encourage interaction between students of all backgrounds," Qayoumi says.

An important component of the Recreation and Wellness Center will be a partnership with the University's Student Health Center, which will provide ongoing health and wellness education programs, body mass testing, massage therapy and other programs. An outdoor adventure center will offer information about activities such as kayaking, hiking, and camping. Outdoor equipment also will be available.

"We want to be a one-stop shop to give a holistic, well-rounded ex-

perience that allows students to see the connection between a healthy body and academics," CSUEB health educator Jennifer Miranda says.

The Recreation and Wellness Center will be notable not only for what it will house but how it will be built.

"(Construction will) embrace Cal State East Bay's mission for creating a model sustainable campus," says project supervisor University Planner Jim Zavagno.

Sustainable design features include a green roof and cool roof systems, water efficient landscaping using reclaimed water, and an orientation that takes advantage of natural lighting. A specially designed wall that absorbs heat, combined with natural ventilation features, will help keep the building cool during the day and help heat the facility at night.

Construction of the \$32 million facility will be financed through student fees established in consultation with ASI and other student groups in 2007.

"The center will be an outstanding investment for Cal State East Bay," Williams says. "It will be enjoyed by our students and will be a source of pride for anyone who is environmentally-aware." ■

BY BARRY ZEPPEL

# UNIVERSITY NEWS

## NASA \$1.4 M grant funds CSUEB, county effort to lift high school science education

Science professor Jeffery Seitz says he's long believed that the United States should produce the world's brightest top scientists, as was once the case. With fewer students in the state and nation pursuing degrees and careers in the sciences, however, the U.S. ranks near the bottom of the pack.

A two-year, \$1.4 million grant from NASA will help Seitz, chair of Cal State East Bay's Department of Earth and Environmental Science, and his colleagues improve science education at high schools in Alameda County as they work to turn the tide.

The NASA LIFTOFF grant, awarded to the Alameda County Office of Education March 31, is designed to transform science teaching at a dozen high schools. Seitz and three Cal State East Bay colleagues — chemistry professor Danika LeDuc, physics professor Jason Singley, and biology professor Caron Inouye — will collaborate with ACOE on the project. The acronym LIFTOFF stands for Learning Inspires Fundamental Transformation by Opening up Future Frontiers.

The CSUEB educators will use NASA mission data and research, aided by participation from the space agency's top scientists, to train approximately 25 Alameda County schools science teachers about "how to make science more relevant and fun to high school age students," Seitz said.

"My hope is that we can capture the imagination of more students who would then consider science as a career option," Seitz said.



PHOTO: BARRY ZEPPEL

"Future jobs in California will depend on a population that is trained in science, engineering, and mathematics. Projected career opportunities are going to be in the areas of biotechnology, environmental science, and green technology."

The project's mission calls for creation of high school classrooms where teachers and students actively engage in NASA mission research with NASA scientists and specially trained high school science faculty. For the past 10 years, the East Bay Science Project, led by Seitz, has helped promote teaching of the sciences at area K-12 schools.

"This innovative project is at the very frontiers of science and technology," said Cal State East Bay President Mo Qayoumi, who has committed the University to becoming one of the CSU's pre-eminent campuses in the teaching of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. "(The LIFTOFF grant) builds upon our successful partnerships with NASA and the Alameda County Office of Education to advance teaching and learning of science in our secondary schools." ■ BZ



## HONORARY DOCTORATES for renowned novelist, Internet pioneer, and regional philanthropist

Three distinguished community members — a best-selling author, an Internet pioneer, and an education advocate — will receive honorary doctorates from CSUEB and the California State University system at commencement ceremonies June 13 and 14.

The following individuals will be recognized:

- Dr. Khaled Hosseini, author of the best-selling novel "The Kite Runner," will be awarded an honorary doctor of fine arts degree during commencement ceremonies for the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences.
- Scott Kriens '79, chairman of the board for networking leader Juniper Networks, will receive an honorary doctorate degree of humane letters at ceremonies for the College of Business and Economics.
- Leo Fontana, longtime Contra Costa County businessman and philanthropist, will be presented an honorary doctorate of humane letters at the commencement ceremonies at the CSUEB Concord Campus.

Hosseini, 44, a native of Afghanistan, began writing "The Kite Runner" — his first novel — while practicing medicine in Northern California in 2001. It was published two years later to international acclaim, selling approximately 10 million copies in 48 countries. The story, assigned reading for all CSUEB freshmen in 2006, was adapted into a major motion picture in 2007. Also in 2007, Hosseini's second novel, "A Thousand Splendid Suns," met with international success in 25 countries.

"As a writer, Khaled Hosseini has a special insight and talent for humanizing the people and events that have taken place in Afghanistan," says Cal State East Bay President Mo Qayoumi, who also is a native of Afghanistan. "Mr. Hosseini is highly accomplished in a variety of areas and is an inspiration to all he encounters."

The 51-year-old Kriens, who earned a BA in economics from Cal State East Bay, served as chief executive officer of Sunnyvale-based Juniper Networks from the company's inception in 1996 until September. As CEO, Kriens grew Juniper into a multi-billion dollar corpora-

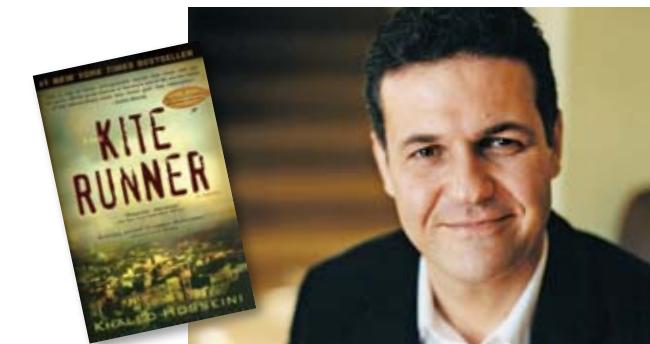


PHOTO: JOHN DOLAN



Scott Kriens



Leo Fontana

tion conducting business in about 100 countries and employing approximately 7,000 people.

"Not only has he been a great innovator and visionary, Mr. Kriens has been a great supporter — financially and otherwise — of Cal State East Bay and higher education," Qayoumi says.

Fontana, 85, has been a force in the community growth of Antioch and surrounding Eastern Contra Costa County for some 60 years, and was instrumental in transforming the city with development of the County East Mall, East County Bank, Delta Memorial Hospital, and the Antioch Senior Center. As a philanthropist, Fontana has helped hundreds of young Antioch residents with his guidance, mentoring, and financial support.

"As a native of Antioch, I, among many others, would never have been able to attend college if not for the encouragement, employment, and mentoring provided by Leo Fontana," said Bob Linscheid, a trustee of the CSU system who also is president and CEO of The Linscheid Company Inc. of Chico. ■ BZ

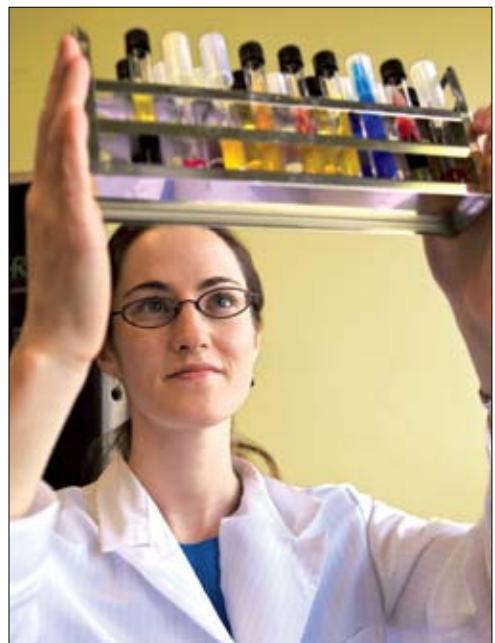


PHOTO SCOTT CHERNIS

CSUEB's Bechtel Transfer Projects will "create a best practice model for the CSU system" by facilitating the transfer of community college students to CSU campuses to prepare for careers in math and science education and engineering.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH S. D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation fosters future engineers, math, and science educators

Assisted by two major grants from the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, Cal State East Bay is taking the lead among California State University's 23 campuses in creating a model program that will ease the way for engineering students and students who want to become mathematics and science teachers to transfer from community colleges to CSUEB.

"One of our interests is in plugging leaks in the pipeline leading to the education and training of future math and science teachers and engineers," says Susan Harvey, program officer for the S. D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation. "We hope the Cal State East Bay community college transfer programs will become models for CSU campuses across the state."

The programs, known as the Bechtel Transfer Project for Engineering and the Bechtel Transfer Project for Math and Science Education, will standardize classes students take at area community colleges while making sure that their lower division coursework meets requirements for admittance to Cal State East Bay. Emphasis also will go toward identifying prospective engineers and math and science teachers early in their college careers.

"The future economic and social vibrancy of our region depends on an increasingly well-educated and technologically skilled workforce," Cal State East Bay President Mo Qayoumi says. "Innovative, well-prepared teachers are the key to developing that workforce through the region's educational systems. Our partnership with the S. D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation will help us address the critical need for engineers and math and science educators."

Working to close the gap, Cal State East Bay increasingly has focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education, or STEM education, tripling the number of new math and science teachers graduating from the University in recent years. In 2007, for instance, CSUEB prepared 122 math and science teachers, up from 36 in 2003.

The Bechtel Transfer Projects represent two of the many STEM projects underway at Cal State East Bay, ranging from a scholarship program that trains students to become effective STEM educators in urban school districts to innovative outreach and partnerships with K-12 districts and community colleges to address significant shortages in engineering fields. ■ MB

## CSUEB NAMES *first endowed chair*

After a global search to fill Cal State East Bay's first endowed chair, Jaideep Singh, an expert in comparative ethnic studies, assumed the Dr. Ranjit Singh Sabharwal Chair in Sikh and Punjabi Studies during winter quarter.

"There are several Sikh studies chairs across the nation, but none of them focuses on Sikh Americans," Singh says. "I want to innovate the entire field."

Singh has served as a visiting lecturer at University of California campuses including Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara. In 2003, he was an adjunct lecturer at CSUEB in the Department of Ethnic Studies.

In his new role, Singh says, he will concentrate on exploring a 21st-century phenomenon. "One of the things we've learned in the post 9/11 world is (about) the role of race and religion," he says. A troubling mix of racial and religious bigotry has led to what he describes as the "racialization of religious identity." He has written on the subject in several academic publications.

A program within the Department of Ethnic Studies, Sikh and Punjabi Studies is open to all students. Singh says he hopes to recruit more students from rural parts of the state, who traditionally have been underrepresented at universities.

Singh earned his doctorate and master's degrees in comparative ethnic studies at University of California, Berkeley, in 2008 and 1994, respectively. He received a bachelor's degree in history from UC Berkeley in 1994. In 1996, he co-founded the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund. ■ MB



Jaideep Singh

PHOTO JESSE CANTLEY

# University Hill gets a makeover

Renovations of the Hayward campus hill where fraternities, sororities, and campus clubs have traditionally displayed their letters and logos are underway to create a neater impression. The transformation continues during spring quarter as student organizations paint their symbols on the hill.

In addition to the facelift, the site also has undergone a name change. The area formerly known as Greek Hill will be called University Hill, says Ric Williams, assistant director of facilities management.

"University Hill will give a sense of entry into the campus," Williams says. "Warren Hall has served as a beacon, and we are looking for other ways to create identity and a strong feeling of where we are."

The plan features 16 recycled wood 15-by-30-feet frames filled with concrete set into the hill in two rows. Student organizations will place their symbols, logos, or letters in the designated areas.

Plans also call for centering a large oak tree at the top of the hill, similar to the Coast Live Oak that is prominently shown on the University seal. CSUEB letters placed flat against the hill and illuminated by solar powered lighting are under consideration for the final design. ■ EM



PHOTO BEN AILES

University Hill, formerly known as Greek Hill, gets a facelift providing spaces for 16 student clubs and organizations to sport their logos on the hillside at Harder and West Loop roads.

# a born storyteller

THE ABCs OF GRAPHIC NOVELIST AND  
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST GENE YANG '03

AS GENE LUEN YANG '03 SCANS THE SHELVES AT A BIG CHAIN BOOKSTORE NEAR HIS FREMONT HOME SEARCHING FOR THE GRAPHIC NOVELS AISLE, HE DOESN'T LOOK MUCH OLDER THAN SOME OF THE KIDS AND YOUNG ADULTS WHO CLAMOR FOR HIS AWARD-WINNING COMIC BOOKS. AUTHOR-ILLUSTRATOR YANG KEEPS HIS STRAIGHT BLACK HAIR TRIMMED SHORT, WEARS CONTEMPORARY RIMLESS GLASSES AND A ZIP-UP BROWN SWEATER OVER CANVAS PANTS. SNEAKERS, BACKPACK, AND A SMILE THAT COMES EASILY COMPLETE HIS LOOK.

It's an endearingly boyish style that doesn't tip off fellow bookstore patrons that a literary light browses among them. His youthful enthusiasm for the genre that has won him national acclaim is no giveaway either.

"They have 'Dragonball Z,'" says Yang, 35, snatching a bound comic book off the shelf as colorful pages flutter open. "This character actually is based on the Monkey King. They're making a live action film of this."

Yang knows the Monkey King character well. A central figure in Chinese literature and culture, Yang features a cartoonish version of the mischievous primate in his award-winning book, "American Born Chinese."

Nearby he spots the marigold yellow cover of "American Born Chinese" — or ABC as Yang and his fans call it — the landmark tale he wrote and illustrated that became the first graphic novel selected as a finalist for the National Book Award in 2006. Calling ABC a "masterful graphic novel," the young adult division of the American Library Association in 2007 gave Yang the Michael L. Printz Award for excellence in young adult literature, making the comic the first graphic novel so honored. The prize also ensured ABC a slot on library shelves nationwide. ▶

Gene Luen Yang '03, left, grew up on Chinese bedtime stories, including tales of the mischievous Monkey King. Yang's graphic novel "American Born Chinese" features the Monkey King and experiences drawn from his middle school years in Saratoga.



COURTESY FIRST SECOND BOOKS

PHOTO JESSE CANTLEY

## COMICS MEET CHINESE LITERATURE

The story ingeniously braids together the outcome of three seemingly unrelated tales about a second-generation Chinese American boy's teenage angst, the arrogant and ambitious Monkey King of 16th-century Chinese literature, and a stereotypically unhip Chinese relative whose annual visits mortify his white cousin. Throughout the book's 224 pages, Yang interlaces elements of American pop culture and adolescent insecurity with Chinese mythology to explore issues of racism and identity. The novel concludes with a universal message about self-acceptance that transcends the struggles of any single race or culture, says Dennis Chester, an associate professor of English who teaches a CSUEB course about the graphic novel.

It's also plain fun to read. The art is uncomplicated and uncluttered, and Yang sprinkles humor and irony liberally throughout the pages.

"I have read the book," says Sarah Debraski, president of the ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association, which gives out the Printz Award. "It's a wonderful example of the marriage of words and images together to form a very powerful message."

ABC didn't earn the prize because it's a graphic novel, she says. It won because it's a "wonderful graphic novel."

## FOR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION

"It's a serious literary award," Debraski says. "It honors the book and validates the form. It showed that graphic novels are a worthy form of literature, and they're not second-class or to be dismissed."

Publisher's Weekly, School Library Journal, and the San Francisco Chronicle among others agreed, naming ABC a Best Book of the Year. An excerpt also appears in the anthology "2008 Best American Comic Books."

While Yang embraces ABC's success, he's constantly

moving forward with new projects, driven by an inner spring of creativity that bubbles over with more stories than he'll ever have time to ink onto a page. He's begun partnering with illustrators to free his time to concentrate on storytelling.

"My ambition always was to do graphic novels and, now that I'm doing them, I want to keep doing it," says Yang, who also teaches computer science classes at Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland. "I don't think I've proved I'm not a one-hit wonder yet."

That assessment is open to debate.

In early April, his serialized comic strip "Prime Baby" completed an 18-week run in the New York Times magazine. Before it hit bookstores in late April, Booklist highlighted Yang's next title, "Eternal Smile: Three Stories," with a starred review. During the summer, he'll be a featured speaker at Comic-Con International 2009, the nation's leading comic book convention. Comic-Con last year drew approximately 125,000 attendees to San Diego for the four-day pop culture extravaganza that annually features big names from the comic book, TV, and film industries. ("This year I get to be a special guest," Yang says. "I hope that means they'll pay for my hotel.")

## POW! A GRAPHIC EXPLOSION

The past decade has seen an explosion in graphic novel growth. In 2008, graphic novel sales totaled about \$395 million, up from \$75 million in 2001.

"Not everybody reads in the same way," observes Debraski of the ALA. "A bound book just with words is not always the form people are reading now. Reading takes a lot of different forms now, including audio books and different technological ways as well, texting and online, things like that."

Yang, who earned his master's degree in online education at Cal State East Bay, originally pub-

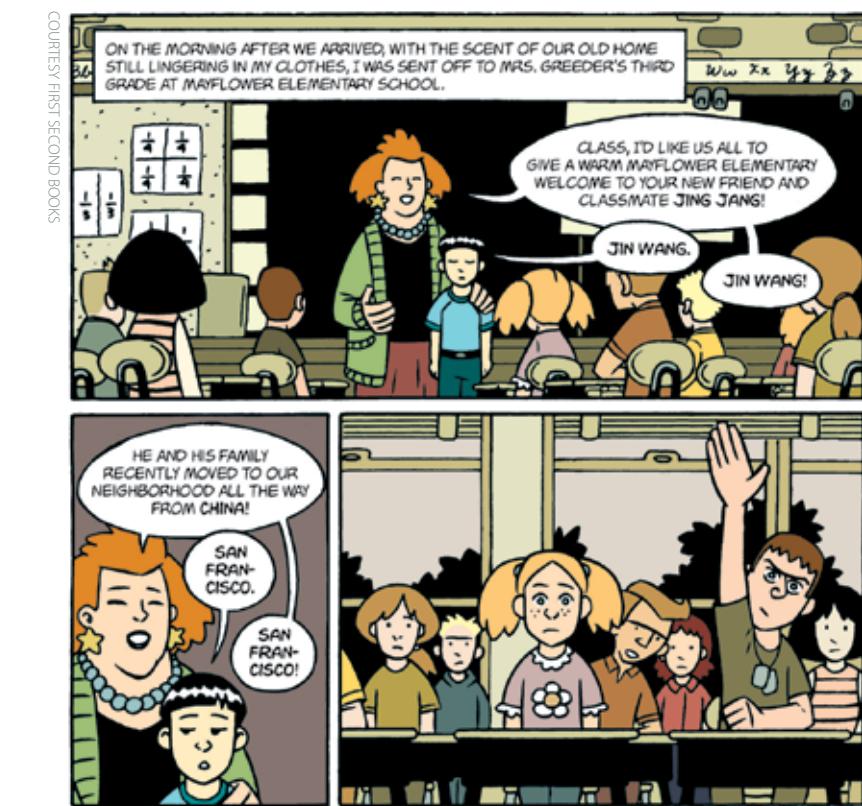
lished ABC on the Internet as a Webcomic, Chester points out.

Whatever form they take, the best comics compel you to read from beginning to end, Yang says.

"There are certain stories that are best told in comics," he says. "As to what that is, it's a little bit elusive. There's an intimacy that a good comic book will take advantage of. When you read a comic, you're seeing the actual brushstroke of a real human being. It's almost like reading a hand-written letter."

A surge in the market also means that, like traditional novels, graphic novels cover an array of subjects, ranging from mutants with supernatural powers to historic biographies, making it easier for more readers to discover something in the genre that suits their tastes, Debraski says.

No doubt the medium's higher profile helped Yang's work capture the attention of editors at the New York Times.



Humor suffuses the panels of "American Born Chinese." In places, writer Gene Luen Yang pokes subtle fun at racism and multicultural illiteracy in America, while in other sections the references are direct.



Struggling with his dual heritage, the main character of "American Born Chinese" undergoes a dramatic physical alteration in a dream sequence. Themes of personal transformation and self-acceptance underpin the plot.

## WHEN THE NEW YORK TIMES CALLS

When the publication sought him out to participate as one of a few cartoonists hand-picked to contribute a serial comic strip to the Sunday magazine, a stunned Yang gleefully accepted.

"It's kind of crazy," Yang says. "They just called (my agent), and she called me and said, 'Do you want to do something for the New York Times magazine? I said, 'What? Yeah!'"

Inspired by the sibling rivalry he observes between his young son and daughter, Yang concocted the clever serialized tale "Prime Baby."

"My story is about a third grade boy who has a baby sister he's really jealous of," Yang explains. "When the baby speaks, she just says, 'Gah.' And when she says, 'Gah,' it's in (sets of) prime numbers."

## MONKEYING AROUND with a LITERARY KING

BY MONIQUE BEELER

While kids in the West grow up listening to fairy tales about "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Little Red Riding Hood," children in China grow up hearing about the adventures of the clever rascal, the Monkey King.

A character in the Chinese literary classic "Journey to the West," credited to the writer Wu Ch'eng-en (circa 1506-1582), the self-important Monkey King decides he's not satisfied with his station as head primate and declares himself "the sage of heaven."

"It's just so much fun to teach," CSUEB Associate professor of English Debra Barrett-Graves says. She's included "Journey to the West" in her "World Mythology" class curriculum for more than 20 years. "He's just a bad, bad boy."

Other gods reject the Monkey King's self-appointed promotion and send the heavenly armies after him. When their attempts to subdue him fail, the Buddha places him under a mountain of stone for 500 years until he agrees to serve as a disciple to a monk on a quest to retrieve Buddhist scriptures from the West.

If the monkey misbehaves or fails to control himself, the monk recites a headache spell that tightens a magic cap on his simian head and keeps him in line.

"The central story came from the seventh century," Barrett-Graves explains. "Over the years in the popular culture, the story became expanded with folk tales and animal fables. It remains the single most popular classic in China."

The closest Western literary equivalent to "Journey to the West" would be "The Canterbury Tales," Barrett-Graves suggests.

Known for his smarts, bravery, power, and mischievousness, the Monkey King also is a favorite of children in Japan and Korea.

Among his special powers and bag of tricks: He can put a piece of his fur in his mouth and spit it out, creating replicas of himself. One of his weapons of choice is an iron rod no one else can lift, but he shrinks it to the size of a needle and stashes it behind his ear when he's not using it. Traveling by cloud, he can cover 108,000 miles in a single somersault.

Working with the monk and two fellow disciples, the Monkey King proves his worthiness by helping his comrades fight dragons and ogres, overcome struggles, and achieve their objective. It turns out he's the only one who can save the journey, Barrett-Graves says.

"The journey itself is part of their spiritual enlightenment," she says. "The ultimate point is not the goal (of retrieving the scriptures): It's the journey."

Depictions of the Monkey King and his companions, above and right, from the Chinese classic "Journey to the West" appear throughout Chinese pop culture in animated films, stories, and toys. Gene Luen Yang uses his drawing of the Monkey King, left center, on his business card.



COURTESY GENE YANG



PHOTO SAM WILARD

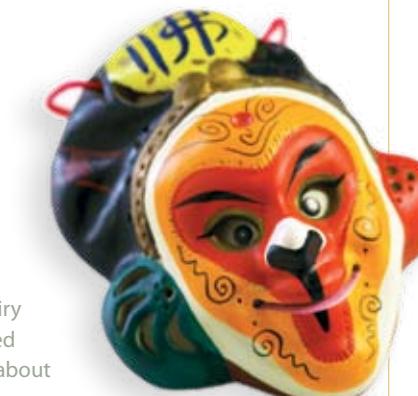


PHOTO SAM WILARD

When the boy, Thaddeus, recognizes the mathematic anomaly embedded in his baby sister's prattling, he sets out on a campaign to prove she's an alien, a revelation he hopes will send her away and reinstate his only-child status. As Thaddeus' telling of his story slips increasingly into fantasy, "Prime Baby's" creator subtly inserts a parallel plot about a family crisis. In the final installment, the crisis' outcome remains unresolved, but Thaddeus makes peace with the presence of his little sister.

"Comics are awesome," Yang says. "Comics are the only way you can tell a story visually and have total control over it. You can't tell an epic story in animation or film by yourself. Until technology changes and a person can animate a three-hour movie all by themselves, it's the only way. I'm a control freak. I think all comics are."

Back at the bookstore, Yang spots ABC on a shelf crowded with Japanese manga comic books and copies of "Watchmen," the graphic novel that inspired a gritty 2009 movie about ex-superheroes reuniting to fight a common threat.

"It's right here," Yang says about his book, then immediately grabs a copy of the Best American Comic Books anthology and flips past the ABC excerpt. "There are some awesome comics in here like 'Northern Dispatches.' These are like diaries out of this guy's journal. He's an amazing artist."

Those familiar with Yang's work say he, too, has distinguished himself in a competitive field.

"I love that book," says Chester, who included ABC in the assigned reading for the CSUEB course he introduced in spring 2008, "The Graphic Novel: Form and Meaning in the Comics."



## NOVEL APPROACH WINS LITERARY LAURELS

A sampling of honors awarded to Gene Luen Yang's graphic novel "American Born Chinese" in 2006 and 2007:

- Michael L. Printz Award
- National Book Award Finalist
- Amazon.com Best Graphic Novel – Comic of the Year
- American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, Top 10 List
- Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year
- Booklist Editor's Choice Book
- Booklist Top Ten Graphic Novel for Youth
- National Public Radio Holiday Pick
- New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age

- Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year
- Publisher's Weekly Comics Week Best Comic of the Year
- San Francisco Chronicle A Best Book of the Year
- School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
- Young Adult Library Services Association's A Great Graphic Novel for Teens, Top 10 List
- Eisner Comics Industry Awards – Best Graphic Album – New Library Media Editor's Choice for 2007
- The National Cartoonists Society Reuben Award for Best Comic Book
- The Chinese American Librarians Association 2006/2007 Best Book Award

translate challenging subjects into a form that's simpler, easier to understand, and less intimidating to them, Chester explains.

"Take something like the Iranian revolution and describe it with images, like in 'Persepolis,' and (for) students born in 1984 who know nothing about

"It's got a real accessibility in terms of talking about different themes and ethnicities," Chester says. "The parts about ethnic identity and the hyphenated world — the students are able to take his experiences and relate it to their experiences."

### ONCE UPON A TIME

The seeming simplicity with which Yang tackles complex societal issues follows a tradition pioneered by the best graphic novelists since the art form's evolution in the mid 20th century. For about 30 years, from 1954 to the early 1980s, however, major comic book producers and distributors followed the Comics Code Authority guidelines, a form of industry self-censorship designed to maintain "good taste and decency" in comic books sold on newsstands.

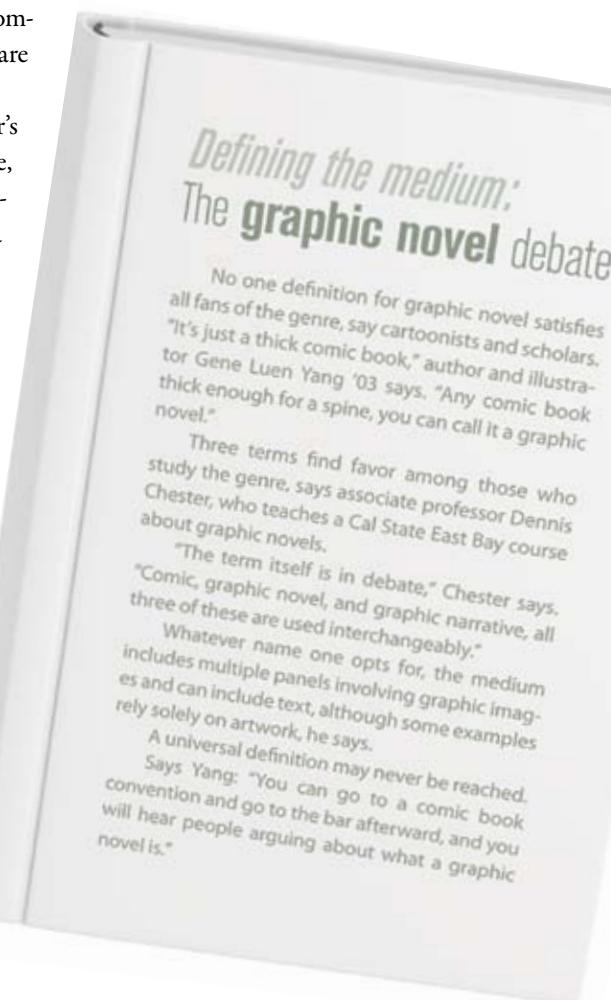
The code led to the creation of familiar mainstream comic books and characters, such as Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four, and gave the industry a reputation for producing kiddie fare, Chester explains. In the 1960s, an underground artists' movement, including influential artists such as R. Crumb and Art Spiegelman, emerged. The new breed of comics creators pushed the genre into new terrain focused on adult activities, themes, and storylines. By the 1980s, retail comic shops opened their doors in

greater numbers, freeing independent comic book artists and producers from the code's lock on distribution. The industry changes paved the way for the proliferation of graphic novels seen today.

### A NOVEL GENERATION

Chester had no problem filling the 50 seats in the class last spring or during the current quarter. He credits his students' familiarity with the comics medium.

In an increasingly complex world that can be difficult for young people to navigate, graphic novels





**“ Sometimes it feels like you’re almost channeling something, when things are flowing out of you that are almost surprising to you. ”**

**Gene Luen Yang ’03**  
CARTOONIST

Gene Luen Yang develops a character for his current project, “Boxers and Saints,” about the Boxer Rebellion in China around the turn of the 20th century. Scouring photos from the 1890s inspires Yang as he creates imagery, above and right, that reflects the period.

PHOTO: JESSE CANTLEY



the (era), it opens things up for them,” Chester says.

Despite the accessible style and liberal use of humor in his cartooning, Yang says he mulls over an idea a long time before committing it to the page.

“I usually start with something that intrigues me or bothers me,” he says. “I don’t think I start off with a message. But I know my stories come off as moralistic.”

Maybe it’s the educator in him that compels him to tuck life lessons into his comics.

After teaching for several years, Yang enrolled in the master’s in online education program at Cal State East Bay. The program itself was taught entirely online — one of the few Web-only graduate programs available at the time — and used online tools such as Blackboard for communicating assignments and facilitating student discussions.

“It was really about how to effectively teach in a virtual environment,” Yang says. “Immediately after I finished my program, I made my classes hybrid classes at the high school. I included online assignments. I used Blackboard for assignments. Now, every teacher on campus is required to use Blackboard.”

The online teaching tools he picked up through the CSUEB graduate program shared something in common with his preferred literary medium.

“One of the benefits of online education is you can get to kids who

aren’t necessarily served in a traditional environment,” he says.

Online teaching, he says, allows him to reach students who are too shy to talk in class but who may freely share their thoughts with classmates through an Internet discussion board. Despite Yang’s use of technology in the classroom and his high profile in the comics world, some things about teaching high school have not changed.

## IT’S ABOUT RESPECT

“It’s really hard to impress your own students,” he says. “Because they see you everyday. It doesn’t get you any more respect to be a cartoonist.”

Fortunately, he’s earned plenty of respect from publishers, who recently released several new titles by Yang. More inventive — and no doubt moralistic — projects also are on the way.

His short story “Blue Scorpion and Chung” appears in “Secret Identities: The Asian American Superhero Anthology,” published in April. In the piece, he spoofs the “weird dynamic” between the Green Hornet character and his Asian driver, Kato. Yang’s tale highlights the racism inherent in the relationship between the superhero who gets all the glory and his Korean American chauffeur who does all the work. Yang’s younger brother’s experiences in medical school inspired his forthcoming title “Four Angels,” about

a video-game-playing slacker visited by angels who press him to become a doctor. And for the project he’s currently drafting, “Boxers and Saints,” he’ll delve into a period of Chinese history he doesn’t know well.

“It’s all about the Boxer Rebellion,” he says. “It’s an historical fiction piece. The Europeans were setting up all these communities in China and having a lot of influence on the dynasty.”

A resentful Chinese public responded violently, setting the scene for Yang’s novel.

No date has been set for the release of “Boxers and Saints.” Yang says he finds the writing process grueling and often procrastinates when it’s time to pen his stories. Other times, his artistic impulses flow freely.

“There are times when a scene of dialog comes to you, and you write it down complete,” he says. “But that doesn’t happen very often.”

“Sometimes it feels like you’re almost channeling something, when things are flowing out of you that are almost surprising to you,” he says. “And there’s gratification that you’re contributing to a larger cultural conversation. Actually, having a larger audience than just my friends and my mom is also gratifying.”

BY MONIQUE BEELER

# Cultural CONTRIBUTORS

Bravo to alumni whose distinctive voices and visions make lasting impressions

FOR CAL STATE EAST BAY ALUMNI WHO HAVE BROKEN INTO COMPETITIVE CREATIVE FIELDS, IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SIMPLY EARN A LIVING. MAKING A MARK IN THEIR CHOSEN PROFESSIONS MEANS CONTRIBUTING A UNIQUE VISION AND VOICE TO THE CULTURE AT LARGE.

In her role in the Academy Award-nominated film, "Milk," Hope Tuck-Goblirsch '96 relished the opportunity to explore — and perhaps further — the ongoing quest for equal rights for all citizens. Nationally acclaimed musician Ayn Inserto '99 leads the vanguard of contemporary big band jazz with her latest CD. And Aaron Florez '99, who has had a hand in major animated feature films, brings a dose of reality to fantastic, imaginary worlds that entice audiences of every age.

Learn more about their accomplishments, as well as those of three up-and-coming talents, in the following profiles.



# A CHOICE ROLE IN 'MILK' FOR Hope Tuck-Goblirsch '96

Actor Hope Tuck-Goblirsch's '96 career got off to a fast start at age 8 when she landed a role in "Showboat" at the Orpheum Theatre. And two years after graduating from Cal State East Bay, she earned a small speaking part in the 1998 comedy "Dead Man on Campus."

But family ties in the Bay Area kept her from pursuing acting full-throttle in Hollywood. She settled down with husband Anthony Goblirsch '98 to raise their family in San Mateo, accepting work in TV commercials and other projects.

Then through the kind of luck that seems to characterize her charmed life, Hollywood came to her. When casting agents for the 2008 film "Milk" held auditions in San Francisco, Tuck-Goblirsch tried out and won the role of Mary Ann White, wife of murderer Dan White.

The film earned eight Oscar nominations, including a best picture nod, and two wins — for Sean Penn as best actor and for Dustin Lance Black for best original screenplay.

"If I'm going to pick one movie to be in, I picked the right one," says Tuck-Goblirsch, 35, seated on a dark leather couch in her sun-lit San Mateo living room overlooking a lagoon. "How freaking cool was that? It was a Gus Van Sant (film) and with Sean Penn."

Most of Tuck-Goblirsch's scenes in the movie recounting charismatic gay rights activist Harvey Milk's rise to political prominence in San Francisco were filmed with Josh Brolin. Brolin earned an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of White, who fatally shot Mayor George Moscone and Milk at their city hall offices in 1978.

Despite Brolin's brush with an Academy Award, it was Tuck-Goblirsch who often found herself next door preparing for work in the larger on-set trailer. She had something her celebrity neighbor didn't: A child working in the film. When

Hope Tuck-Goblirsch '96 relaxes at home in San Mateo with son Anthony and daughter Faith. Anthony portrays the Whites' infant son in the movie.



PHOTO SCOTT CHERNIS



PHOTO PHIL BRAY

Donning 1970s clothes and allowing stylists to give her choppy bangs helped Hope Tuck-Goblirsch, left, get in character for her first onscreen scene with Josh Brolin, who plays Dan White in the Oscar-nominated film "Milk."

filmmakers realized Tuck-Goblirsch had a 7-month-old infant, Anthony, who could fill the role of the Whites' young son, they quickly cast him to portray the baby.

During a baptism scene, Tuck-Goblirsch's colleagues on set expressed amazement at how well the child actor behaved in her arms.

"I must say he looked better than me in his glowy baptismal gown," says a pregnant Tuck-Goblirsch, who boasts a rich brunette mane and a radiant complexion as she awaits the birth of her third child. "A lot of people on the film didn't know he was my son. They kept calling me the baby whisperer."

Although she was a toddler herself during the period depicted in the movie, "Milk's" cultural significance does not escape her.

She credits the film for educating younger generations about the political history of the gay rights movement and those who carried out the struggle then — and continue similar work today such as supporting same-sex marriage, which California voters banned in November with the passage of Proposition 8.

"It humanizes all people — gay and lesbian — and makes people more empathetic," Tuck-Goblirsch says about "Milk." "If the movie came out before the Prop 8 vote, would that have changed people's minds? It was a pretty impactful movie."

Although she's been acting since childhood, when it came to picking a college major, she didn't study theater at CSUEB.

“If I’m going to pick one movie to be in, I picked the right one. ”

**Hope Tuck-Goblirsch**  
'96 ALUMNUS

"I thought, 'I like to talk, I'll take mass communications,'" Tuck-Goblirsch says.

She quickly discovered her major involved honing her writing skills more than her verbal ability. "Writing can help with any career," she says. "Your writing tells a lot about a person ... College in general prepares you for everything; you know you can get through something (challenging)."

Tuck-Goblirsch expresses satisfaction with how she rose to the challenge of performing in "Milk."

After the film premiered in late October, she nervously awaited a review from a family friend known for not mincing words. He applauded her portrayal of the disgraced politician's wife, saying: "I really felt for Mary Ann White. I really wanted to know more about her and where she went and what happened to her."

"I must have done something right," Tuck-Goblirsch says. "Because people really felt for her."

BY MONIQUE BEELER

Actor Hope Tuck-Goblirsch's physical resemblance to Mary Ann White prompted her agent to send her to audition for the role of politician Dan White's wife in "Milk."



PHOTO SCOTT CHERNIS

AARON FLOREZ '99

# Making green ogres and a magical Madagascar real



PHOTO KO PHOTOGRAPHY

In addition to his work in film, alumnus Aaron Florez's talents can be found in video games; *Guitar Hero* and *Guitar Hero II* feature songs by his band, Drist.

When Aaron Florez '99 enrolled in his first Photoshop class at Cal State East Bay, he'd barely ever turned on a computer before. He had always been interested in drawing, although his first interest, and his first major, was music. But he saw a better career path in art, he says, "or maybe that part of me just won out."

And now, as creative supervisor for the surfacing department at PDI/DreamWorks in Redwood City, the computer is his medium as he brings color and life to films like "Shrek the Third" and "Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa."

After graduation and a few years of freelance design work, Florez got a job at a visual effects firm, working primarily on live-action films. Six years ago, he landed a spot at DreamWorks, working in digital painting of textures and surfaces.

As Florez explains, character models are loaded into specialized software as shapes, looking something like unpainted model car kit parts. His team is responsible for adding colors, skin and clothes on people, the varnish on a table, or the reflection on a soda bottle. They create palettes of textures and tones called "maps," which Florez reviews with designers and directors until a map strikes the right balance of stylization and photorealism to match the tone of the film.

In addition to characters and objects — called "assets" — they also paint the backgrounds, or "environments," so the team's work is evident in literally every finished frame. The process demands a keen eye for detail and continuity.

For each job, they examine real-world reference points, such as animals, models, fabrics, and vegetation. To prepare for the African environments in "Madagascar," they went to local parks to get a sense of grass and flat open spaces.

Even with elements that have no real-world counterpart, he says, "everything is rooted in some type of reality. You find something that it relates to, and study that. If you don't, things look weird." Sometimes this comes from surprising sources; when creating maps for machines in one of "The Matrix" films, Florez says, the directors pointed the painters to coral reefs for inspiration.



For "Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa," Aaron Florez '99 and the PDI/DreamWorks surfacing department were responsible for creating, among other things, zebra stripes, giraffe spots, grass and dirt on the ground, and royal headwear for the king of the lemurs.

COURTESY PDI/DREAMWORKS AND PARAMOUNT PICTURES

The grounding in recognizable roots pays off in the big picture. "The audience sees a fantastical creature on screen, but it's still believable," he says.

As supervisor, Florez works with leads from lighting, motion, and other teams on technical and artistic challenges, keeping in mind how their work helps the story. "This industry is always evolving, and the driver is the storytelling aspects. Tools change and develop based on asking 'how can we tell a better story?'" he says.

Even on a sequel like "Shrek" or "Madagascar," the teams may refer to previously established maps, but they redo much of the creative work, making improvements and changes as demanded by the story.

Florez is still a musician, playing guitar in a San Francisco band, Drist. He also paints and explores his own creative side — including a personal animated project he's writing and designing — and says it's the single most valuable thing an artist can do.

"Whatever creative thing you do, that's what you bring to the table," he explains. Aspiring artists, he says, need a good grasp of fine art and art history as well as an understanding of the tools of creation, whether paintbrushes, pencils, or programs. It's a blend of practice and theory that he was able to find at Cal State East Bay.

"It's not enough to learn one method or program," he says. "Anybody can learn how to use a computer program, but it's that little piece of you that makes your work stand out."

**“It's not enough to learn one method or program. Anybody can learn how to use a computer program, but it's that little piece of you that makes your work stand out.”**

**Aaron Florez  
'99 ALUMNUS**

BY SARAH STANEK

## AYN INSERTO '99: A modern jazz "Muse"



Ayn Inserto '99 released her second modern jazz album, "Muse," in February. The CD's contemporary big band offerings include a composition in honor of CSUEB Professor Emeritus Dave Eshelman.

Ayn Inserto's '99 dream gig would be to play the legendary Village Vanguard in New York, putting her orchestra in the company of jazz greats like Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane.

Inserto's second modern jazz album, "Muse," released in February, puts the 33-year-old composer and her 17-piece Ayn Inserto Jazz Orchestra one step closer to that goal.

"Muse" is an exploration of Inserto's many inspirations, with tracks written for the friends, family, band mates, and teachers who have touched her life. "The album cover is of my family," Inserto notes. "I am grateful for everything, and this (album) is about love and family."

"Muse" pays homage to jazz greats including Michael Brecker, Frank Foster, and Steve Lacy. In the album's liner notes, Inserto's band member George Garzone, a saxophonist, says Inserto's genius is that "while her music is harmonically sophisticated, there is a sweet, flowing energy that makes it accessible and enjoyable for any palette." An *allmusic.com* review of "Muse" describes her as "impressive as a writer of modern jazz," calling "Muse" grand and sophisticated.



PHOTO TIM LYNCH

Inserto won a worldwide search sponsored by the International Association of Jazz Education for young jazz composers under age 30, a "tremendously significant distinction," CSUEB emeritus professor Dave Eshelman says.

"Ayn takes her ideas and spins them, juggles them, and turns them inside out in order to create a vibrant patois of contemporary big band jazz," Eshelman says. "The result is music that reflects her joy and energy for life itself."

Inserto, who now lives in Boston and is an assistant professor at Berklee College of Music, was born in Singapore, surrounded by aunts and uncles who played piano and guitar. After taking music classes in kindergarten, she began writing music at 7, "small little ditties," she says. A pianist, she also played organ in the church choir.

The family, including Inserto's two sisters, moved to the U.S. in 1989. Inserto started writing ensemble pieces and arranging music in high school in Concord.

As an undergrad, she studied music at Cal State East Bay with Professor Ellen Wasserman and others. She spent her undergraduate years composing, going to see Eshelman play jazz with his big band in San Francisco clubs, practicing into the wee hours, and performing in ensembles. "It was considered one of the better schools for music," she says. "It was kind of like a big family. Everyone knew each other." After graduation, she studied at the New England Conservatory under mentor Bob Brookmeyer, who plays on "Muse" and remains her jazz composition teacher.

Composing, Inserto says, is the simplest way to express herself on many instruments. "I can picture sounds in my head and take time to develop them," she says.

She counts Maria Schneider, Gil Evans, and pop music, which she listened to until she discovered jazz in college, among her influences. (Michael Jackson, Tori Amos, Madonna, Stevie Wonder, and Sting are her iPod staples.)

Inserto recorded "Muse," the follow-up to her 2006 debut "Clairvoyance," in January, writing eight big band pieces over the course of the last three or four years that ended up on the album. "A good number of them were commissioned," she says, noting that work includes pieces for the Harvard Jazz Band; the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); and Cal State East Bay, in honor of Eshelman's retirement as director of jazz studies at CSUEB in 2007.

Inserto's talents have brought her big band to Dizzy's jazz club at New York's Lincoln Center and her music has been played at various worldwide festivals. Could the Vanguard be next?

BY KIM GIRARD

“Ayn takes her ideas and spins them, juggles them, and turns them inside out in order to create a vibrant patois of contemporary big band jazz. ”

**Dave Eshelman**  
PROFESSOR EMERITUS

# UP-AND-COMING TALENTS



Student Philip Long's leather mosaic "Ascension of John Long" pays tribute to his late father, who died while attempting to sail solo from California to his native Ireland in February 2008. Long pieced together approximately 3,500 photos to create a video showing him building his leather mosaic. The video is available on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)); search for "Ascension of John Long."

## Artist transforms leather into narrative mosaics

Scribbling has turned into a beautiful passion for Philip Long. A Cal State East Bay junior majoring in art, Long began his painting career in the 1990s by free drawing on the backs of envelopes, making stacks of abstract portraits and images he'd use as inspiration for larger paintings.

Recently, he began combining his experience working in the fashion industry with painting by creating leather mosaics, sewn pieces of fabric that detail a person or "paint" a narrative tale. Long's innovative art was featured in the Oakland Museum of California's "Evolution of a Sacred Space: Días de los Muertos 2008," which ran Oct. 8 through Dec. 7.

The idea of combining painting and images with leather was natural to Long. For 20 years, he saved scraps of leather from projects he worked on personalizing and adorning clothing and bags, including leather jackets sporting images

of the Cat in the Hat or the Tasmanian Devil. "It just hit me," Long says. "I'm gonna do leather mosaics."

Long's work was featured for years in East Bay Arts Collective's Day of the Dead mobile exhibits, but his 2008 piece "Ascension of John Long" was his first piece personally created to honor a lost loved one. The impressive 9-by-16 feet mosaic was a tribute to his late father, John Long. "I had a reason to do an altar," says Long.

Long created 20 to 30 drawings that served as a sketch for the mosaic and dedicated roughly 474 hours of labor working directly with the cutting and sewing of the leather, including working 27 straight hours to finish the piece.

"I've never been more focused or driven," he says. Long wanted to document the project, chronicling the mosaic's construction. He set up a camera in his studio to capture photographs of his work-in-progress, which has since been

turned into a YouTube video documenting the mosaic's construction.

"The leather mosaic is very distinct," he says. "It surprised people." Unlike abstracts, Long says the narrative quality of the piece speaks to a variety of people, from children to security guards. With this in mind, he envisions his work moving in a more narrative direction. But Long's happy to just get a reaction.

"If they hate my work, it's better than not giving a damn about it," he says.

Long hopes "Ascension of John Long," will be exhibited at more Bay Area museums before going on permanent display in a museum in his father's homeland of Cork, Ireland.

But for now, Long is more focused on creating his work instead of promoting it. "I don't do a lot to get my stuff out," he says. "I (just) love doing the work."

BY NICOLE LUTTON

## Comic creator's series meshes religion and adventure

PHOTO BARRY ZEPPEL



Omar Morales '98, left. Good battles evil within Omar Morales's flawed comic book hero, "The CruZader."



COURTESY THE FORCE PRODUCTIONS

The work of comic book creator Omar Morales '98 boasts a provocative blend of new world skills and old world imagination. A product of a Catholic education when he enrolled at Cal State East Bay, Morales' artful imagination sprung from a foundation built on religion and a taste for sci-fi, adventure, and intrigue.

The result has been an award-winning comic book series created and produced by Morales about a monk-like character, Antonio De La Cruz. De La Cruz holds special status within the Vatican as its holy hit man, known in his fictional world as "The CruZader." Morales describes the character as "part exorcist, part Jedi, part 007, and part Van Helsing."

In the real world, the cartoon character and comic book have earned the artist-writer recognition among his

peers, placing Morales in the Top 50 in the 2008 Comic Book Challenge, an international competition sponsored by entertainment company Platinum Studios, which helped bring "Men in Black" to the big screen. Additionally, "The CruZader" won first place in the Bay Area Comic Book Hero Contest sponsored by the region's CW TV station in 2008. It brought the Pleasanton resident, who works as a broker by day in the corporate marketing department of Safeway Stores Inc., the encouragement he needed to extend the life of the character beyond one issue. "The CruZader" is now evolving into a series of six comic book adventures bound into a single volume, transforming it into a graphic novel.

Winning the contest, says Morales, who majored in mass communication at CSUEB, validated his dreams of working full-time in the comic book profession.

The Oakland native grew up in Hayward in a Spanish-speaking household, where comic books shaped his childhood and helped him learn English as he watched Ultraman, Captain America, and Spider-man cartoons growing up. Even as a kid, he says, "I would fold a thin stack of binder paper in half, staple the spine, and draw and write my own comics."

Now he's looking to partner with a comic book publisher to bring "The CruZader" graphic novel to market. In the meantime, he promotes his creative work online at [www.theforceproductions.com](http://www.theforceproductions.com), while he continues plotting the CruZader's next forays into the crucible of culture, imagination, and conflict.

BY BARRY ZEPPEL

## Songstress aims for epic style

PHOTO JONATHAN HAY PUBLICITY



Simone Taylor '03, left. Cover image for Simone Taylor's MP3 single, "I Belong to You."



Simone Taylor's debut full-length album, tentatively titled "Under the Knife," is a nod to the post-collegiate years Taylor '03 spent living in plastic surgery-obsessed Los Angeles.

"You go there as one person and come back another," says Taylor, 25, an Oakland native who drove after college to L.A., where she acted in television shows and wrote music. "I think it changed me, though I haven't gone under the knife or anything, and hopefully I won't have to."

Taylor is a classically trained musician and flute player who at age 4 was picking out the instruments on the Bach, Marvin Gaye, and Duke Ellington

records her dad played. At 16, she entered the music program at CSUEB, transferring within two quarters to the theater department.

"I didn't want to know why music was the way it was," she says, explaining why she switched. "I just wanted to play music."

An actor and model since she was 5, Taylor found a home in the theater department, sewing buttons in wardrobe before moving on to roles in different productions. "My college experience was the best experience of my life," she says.

"I came into my own."

In Hollywood, Taylor had a guest role on "The Game," a CW sitcom centered on the wives and girlfriends of

pro-football players, playing a voluptuous woman tempting one of the show's stars. Now back in Oakland, she's playing with members of the Jazz Mafia, a 60-person San Francisco Bay Area jazz group. Her new album, a mix of jazz and R&B, will come out on Arigo Recordings, the label she and her husband, David Poole '01, founded. (She and Poole met at CSUEB.)

"It's an epic album," Taylor says, noting the first single will be released during the spring. "It's a throwback with a contemporary feel to it." Appropriate for someone whose career and music has never fit nicely in one box.

BY KIM GIRARD



# SPEAKING IN *Tongues*

Triumphant production mulls over mortality through *dance, song, and spoken word*

SHORTLY BEFORE THE LAST SCENE IN “TONGUES” — THE CAL STATE EAST BAY THEATRE AND DANCE DEPARTMENT PRODUCTION THAT EARNED TOP HONORS AT A PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL THEATER FESTIVAL IN FEBRUARY — STUDENT ACTOR BRADFORD “BEE-JAY” BARNES SMASHES BARRIERS BETWEEN DANCE GENRES EVEN AS HE BRINGS THE SHOW’S REFLECTION ON LIFE AND DEATH TO A QUIET CLOSE.

In the sequence, Barnes mashes up hip-hop street performance, modern dance, and high-minded theater. His moonwalk-like footwork, “popping and locking” gestures, and staccato, mechanical breathing evoke breakdancing. But Barnes, a 20-year-old junior majoring in ethnic studies and theater at California State University, East Bay, emphasizes breath and posture over any beat, tapping the tradition of modern dance luminaries Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. And as he gradually retreats to a chair and takes hold of a staff, the movement stops, concluding the show’s meditation on mortality.

PHOTO BEN AILES

MaryAnn Mackey '69 performs with CSUEB junior Bradford “Bee-Jay” Barnes in a scene from “Tongues” in which text is projected onto the stage.



It's a fitting finale to "Tongues", which was selected as one of just four theater productions nationwide to perform in Washington, D.C. at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in April. The production, with 25 performers representing a range of ages, races, body types, and physical abilities, amounts to a triumph of diversity. Directed by CSUEB Assistant Professor Eric Kupers, "Tongues" entertains, inspires, and provokes existential questions in a way that speaks loudly about the potential of a cast made up of individuals with divergent backgrounds and physical abilities — and about the rich possibilities of a varied community like Cal State East Bay.

"The thing that is really vital about our department and our school is that we practice diversity every day," Kupers says. "We are forced to expand beyond our comfort zone."

## OUT OF THE BOX

"Tongues" immediately takes the audience out of its comfort zone.

During a campus production of the show held during winter quarter, performers stage a slow, surreal procession outside the theater before the curtain lifts. In a light drizzle, a half dozen actors, dressed in vintage clothes with faces painted white, move in single file. Two roll in wheelchairs. A trumpeter and a trombonist among them play a slow rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In."

When an audience member approaches, the performers pause and turn to make an array of silent faces — smiling, grimacing, angry. A few moments later they continue on their way into a backdoor of the theater building.

On the surface the odd scene presents a confusing jumble of images and cultural references. But together the pieces leave the impression of a universal funereal march — accounting for the range of human expression around death.

That literally out-of-the-box, or out-of-the-building, beginning set the stage for the remainder of the show.

Two accordions appear on stage playing a mournful, mysterious tune. They walk past the audience, out the rear entrance of the auditorium and back through the theater.

Soon after, two dozen or so performers ring a single chair. In a style akin to a Negro spiritual, they sing lines including "Oh Lord, I'm your child." Although some of the voices break out in solos, the singers remain anonymous in shadow.



PHOTO BEN AILES

Members of the 30-person "Tongues" cast and crew refine their performances backstage and during a February rehearsal at the University Theatre.



PHOTOS SCOTT CHERNIS

Two men in wheelchairs race across the stage, tumbling over each other.

A pair of young women dart to the front of the stage, performing a patty-cake routine of hand slapping before running off again.

## POETRY AND PROCESS

This spectrum of activity is possible partly because "Tongues" is more poetry than traditional play. Co-written by Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaikin more than 30 years ago, "Tongues" has been described as voices and visions experienced by a man on his deathbed. It is full of fragmented lines like, "This is me saying I to myself."

With its disconnected monologues, "Tongues" lends itself to having people wheel as well as walk across stage, says actor Mickey Kay, a 25-year-old U.C. Berkeley student who suffered a spinal cord injury several years ago.

"It's unclear a lot of the time what the character is," says Kay, one of the main wheelchair performers. "You take a look at the roles as they're portrayed in the piece, and not one of them is clearly recognizable or categorizable as a 'banker' or 'troubled youth' or 'rockstar' or anything like that."

The other main wheelchair character is played by Kupers.

Kupers doesn't need a wheelchair offstage and didn't begin the project expecting to be in



PHOTO BEN AILES

Student Bradford Barnes, 20, plays the lead role in "Tongues," which captured top honors at a regional festival and became one of four college productions nationwide invited to perform at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. in April.

one. But he wanted another dancer in a wheelchair to fit his vision for the choreography. So Kupers, 37, strapped himself in and took lessons from Kay.

Kupers' wheelchair adventure is in keeping with his exploratory approach to making theater. "I tend to work in a very step-by-step way," he says. "I'm just sort of helping it unfold. But it has a life of its own."

Much of that "life" comes from cast members and their suggestions. "A lot of rehearsal was like, 'Check it out. Bee-Jay's really good at this style of dance,'" Kay says.

Such an unstructured method, with a varied cast, carries risks. It can lead to incoherent, rambling results as well as internal conflicts.

There were moments when the cast had little idea where Kupers was headed with the production. "We would have our side conversations like, 'What is he doing?'" Barnes says.

But Barnes says he has come to trust Kupers in the course of classes and productions over three years. And group warm-ups helped create solidarity. Kupers would ask the cast to talk about what it meant to do the show, have them share feelings in pairs, and get them to stretch their voices and bodies. "Warm-ups bring the cast together as one and helped prepare us for shows and rehearsals," Barnes adds.

## MORTALITY MAKES A MARK

The disparate voices of the show unify around the character played by Barnes. As the focus returns to him repeatedly, he is seen wrestling with and eventually accepting death.

Such heavy themes had a weighty impact on Barnes, who performs on the darkened stage clad in a white

polo shirt, white pants, and white sneakers. As someone who prior to the production hated attending funerals and avoided thinking about death, the show helped the Oakland resident see life and death as a kind of beautiful "continuous cycle." Performing in "Tongues" — with its attention to the preciousness of life — also reinforced his passion to become a college professor in history or ethnic studies. "It helped me stay even more focused," he says.

"Tongues" also left a mark on Cal State East Bay junior Danna Ciolo, who plays one of the "girls" playing patty-cake. Ciolo's mother died from kidney failure in summer 2008. Ciolo, a 20-year-old theater major, initially signed on to "Tongues" thinking the production would help take her mind off the loss. Instead, it forced the Hayward resident to face issues of death and its aftermath even more. But that proved to be a blessing. ▶



# Kennedy Center crowd gives "Tongues" a standing ovation

BY ED FRAUENHEIM

Cal State East Bay's "Tongues" production rose to the top of the American college theater scene in 2009, bringing the house down at the legendary John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The production by California State University, East Bay's Department of Theatre and Dance was one of just four shows selected to perform in Washington, D.C. at the culminating event of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

"Tongues," which uses dance and theater to explore existential themes and features a cast of people of different ages, races, body types, and physical abilities, received standing ovations at April 16 and 17 performances at Washington, D.C.'s marquee venue. Applause continued even after the house lights went up.

The festival aims to "encourage, recognize, and celebrate the finest and most diverse work produced in university and college theater programs." The D.C. event itself does not crown a winner, but earning a place there required "Tongues" and three other finalists to stand out among a total of 56 college productions that performed in eight regional festivals around the country. And it is difficult to snag a spot in the regional event for schools in California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah. The 2009 regional festival, held at Cal State Fullerton, saw more than 80 productions vying for an invitation. Only 10 were selected.

Despite stiff competition through the years, CSUEB frequently has captured the spotlight. A Cal State East Bay production also earned an invitation to the D.C. festival event in 1982, says Tom Hird, chair of the University's Department of Theatre and Dance. And Cal State East Bay has been invited to the regional festival at least 10 times in the past 30 years.

"Even though our program in theatre arts is (limited to) four years — bachelor's degree only — CSUEB students and shows still do very well when compared to schools with graduate programs," Hird says.

Assistant Professor Eric Kupers directed the 30-person "Tongues" show. Some dancers in the production had minimal previous performance experience. Kupers jokes that appearing on the stage of the famed Kennedy Center will be a hard act to follow, saying, "I'm worried that everything after this is going to seem anti-climactic."



Mickey Kay, seated, Kate Pinedo and Dana DeGuzman perform a scene, top left, from "Tongues."

Taking an exploratory approach to choreography, center left, yielded unexpected movements and positions for cast members.



Mickey Kay holds arms outstretched, bottom left, while Justin Sharlman lifts Kate Pinedo above the stage.



PHOTOS BEN AILES

"It really helped me to heal," she says. "It helped me find some memories of the past comforting."

Ciolo was one of about 20 Cal State East Bay students involved in "Tongues," which had a total cast and crew of roughly 30 people. Community members made up the rest of the group, including performers who have worked with Kupers in his performance troupe Dandelion Dancetheater.

One of the striking performers in the ensemble is MaryAnn Mackey '69, a theater department alumna who occasionally takes classes as part of the over-60 education program. Mackey wears a long white wedding outfit in the show. She comes across as a kind of Lady Death, resembling the Mexican Day of the Dead symbol of a female skeleton in a wedding dress. At one point she and Barnes dance in a slow, waltz-like way, while she sings "From This Moment On." The classic Cole Porter tune takes on a new, melancholic meaning.

To Barnes, though, Mackey's character is not grim so much as she is a guardian angel — getting him ready to pass on. Her touch to his forehead near the show's conclusion helps him regard his end with serenity. "It's all like a smooth transition," he says.

Mackey's touch also begins the finale. A once-cacophonous stage goes silent, and the entire cast watches Barnes along with the audience. His seamless blend of dance and theater styles is breathtaking to watch. And that is what Barnes intended, perfecting the scene over hours spent creating and rehearsing the solo. "He's dying," he says about his character's fading moments on stage. "See, the last breath is leaving my body."

The last image conjures up impressions of resignation and dignity: Barnes takes a seat in the chair, staff in hand, and the stage goes dark. In the final, powerful moments of the scene, Barnes impels the audience to take a fresh look at the grit, grace, and finiteness of human life.

## DIVERSE AND UNIVERSAL

On the surface, the success of "Tongues" may seem surprising. Small compared with the programs at some Bay Area universities, the CSUEB Theatre and Dance Department does not have an endowment or offer scholarships. It's not a conservatory-type program where people audition to get in to the school. Often, Kupers says, students arrive with little education in the arts.

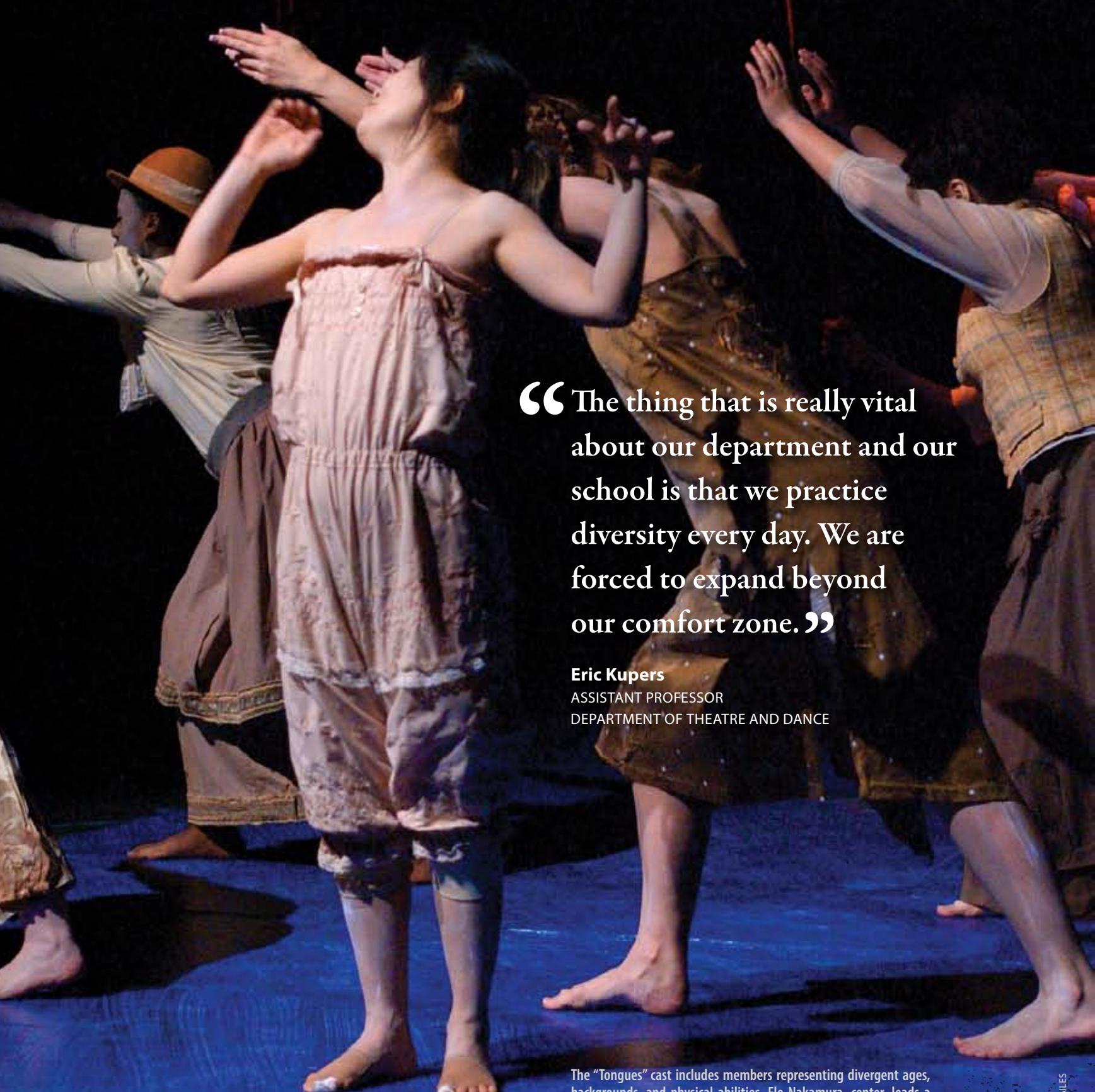
But the school's diversity serves as a kind of muse, pushing Cal State East Bay's performance community toward risk-taking and new approaches.

"Everyone," Kupers says, "is forced from the get-go to have a sort of openness."

Barnes says the show took him out of his own skin. Gearing up for the last scene in particular allowed him to channel something universal.

"At the end, it's not me out there," he says. "It's like a spirit moving. I feel like I've got a piece of everything — every little piece of life, I'm putting on that stage." ■

BY ED FRAUENHEIM



The "Tongues" cast includes members representing divergent ages, backgrounds, and physical abilities. Flo Nakamura, center, leads a group scene featuring, from left, Deborah McKaigg-Trudell, Victoria Fadenipo, Denise Hampel, and Wakana Hirose.

# On the upbeat

Using music-making software program, Ableton Live 7, student Yifan "Caroline" Wu and her "Beats, Physics and the Mind" learning community classmates started composing original songs during the first weeks of winter quarter.



PHOTOS JESSE CANTLEY

## Learning community participants grow academically, personally in second quarter of freshman year

*Editor's note: This is the second report in a yearlong project in which Cal State East Bay Magazine follows first-time freshmen in CSUEB's Learning Community Clusters program.*

PULLING OPEN THE GLASS DOOR TO THE CIRCULAR, BRICK-FACED MUSIC BUILDING, FRESHMAN ELIZABETH FUALAAU HEADS TOWARD MUSIC 1085: INTRODUCTION TO AUDIO PRODUCTION, THE SECOND CLASS SHE'S TAKEN IN THE "BEATS, PHYSICS AND THE MIND" LEARNING COMMUNITY CLUSTER.

During fall quarter, Elizabeth and her "Beats, Physics and the Mind" classmates took Physics 1200: Behind the Music, a demanding course that exposed them to concepts from frequency to the Doppler effect. Elizabeth says she earned a B in physics, a higher grade than she expected.

"That's just because I always expect the least, so I don't get disappointed," says Elizabeth, one of the first in her large family to attend college. "But that's just me."

All freshmen at Cal State East Bay participate in the Learning Community Clusters program, considered a

successful model nationwide for producing students with stronger writing and critical thinking skills than their peers who don't participate in a learning community. CSUEB students choose from among 21 clusters — focused on themes from pre-nursing to ancient history — and, as a group, take three interdisciplinary classes related to the theme over the course of the school year.

The physics principles that "Beats, Physics and the Mind" students learned in the fall are expected to deepen their understanding as they take cluster courses in music and philosophy during winter and spring quarters.

Elizabeth steps into the MB 2525 computer lab as Assistant Professor Rafael Hernandez is demonstrating features of Ableton Live 7, a music-making software program commonly used by professional disc jockeys and remixers. Cal State East Bay is one of the first universities in the nation to use the program in class, Hernandez says.

Long white worktables topped by 25 Macintosh computer stations run through the center of the rectangular room, with another row lining the back and side walls. Seated at a desk near the door, Hernandez glides his computer mouse over a small plus-sign icon ▶



From left: Lecturer Craig Derksen guides philosophy students in analyzing the lyrics to popular songs. Assistant Professor Rafael Hernandez helps troubleshoot student recordings during a session of Music 1085: Introduction to Audio Production. In composing original songs, freshmen in the cluster sampled free online music sources, played their own instruments, and recorded vocals in the studio.



**“Learning communities give you the opportunity to network with other people, so you don’t feel lonely in your freshman experience. ”**

**Barrington Edwards**  
“BEATS, PHYSICS AND THE MIND” STUDENT

that appears on his monitor. As he clicks on the icon, the movement of his cursor appears on the screen at each workstation in the networked classroom.

“This is how you’re going to control the volume,” he says.

“For those of you who just came in, we’re looking at arrangement view,” he says, referring to the software program. “If you want to move things around, it’s pretty intuitive: Just grab blocks and move them around.”

Hernandez gives the group 90 minutes to finish their first project, assigned the previous week, to compose a short song on the theme of “remixing nature.”

“We’re supposed to make some kind of track with a natural sound in it,” explains Elizabeth, now seated in front of her computer screen, rearranging music and audio clips she found online. “I have thunder, rainfall, and the beats I found ... on [www.freesound.org](http://www.freesound.org).”

Classmate Barrington Edwards creates a soothing nature track centered on birdcalls, while Yifan “Caroline” Wu takes inspiration from the undulating rhythm of ocean waves. Another student drops in the lowing of a cow.

Hernandez roams the classroom offering technical assistance and aesthetic advice. When Caroline asks him to listen to her track, he tells her the marriage of waves, thunder, strings, and drums sounds epic.

“Epic?” she asks.

“Yes, because it really fills the room,” he explains before playing the clip for the rest of the class.

Freshman Barrington Edwards, 19, of Oakland sings into a microphone during a February class session devoted to recording live sound. Students learned about signal flow, performance techniques, and different mic types.

“I’ve copied Caroline’s, because she has a rather full-sounding track,” Hernandez says. “The chords are really rich, and there’s lots of texture, and the drumbeat is very dry.”

Since the popular “Beats, Physics and the Mind” cluster has a full roster of about 50 freshmen, more than the computer lab can seat, the rest of the group is taking Philosophy 1303: Introduction to the Philosophy of Art during winter quarter. The class, instructed by Craig Derksen, meets at the same time as Music 1085, down the hall in MB 2091.

“Sometimes we do the team teaching,” Hernandez says. “We’re doing four or five meetings together (this quarter) in order to put the two parts together — the creative part in music making and the analytic part in philosophy — and help the students open up in terms of their creativity and critical thinking.”

### The philosopher’s tone

While Hernandez’s group focuses on composing original songs, philosophy instructor Derksen pushes their peers to think more deeply about the message behind the thudding, aggressive beats and fast-paced, often cryptic lyrics of their favorite pop music and artists.

By his second week in philosophy, freshman Jamel Jackson, a fan of music genres from rap to gospel, is hooked.

“It opens my mind, and it makes me think about everything more,” he says. “It can be the simplest thing, but you scratch the surface (and find more).”

During one February meeting, as he typically does, Derksen kicks off the session by inviting students to suggest a song lyric for him to deconstruct and analyze with them.

Kayvon Mangabay, an active participant in class discussions, suggests “Slow Down Gandhi” by the artist



Rafael Hernandez, assistant professor of music, right, credits the fall physics course taken by “Beats, Physics and the Mind” freshmen for helping them enter his winter quarter audio production class equipped with a grasp of acoustics concepts including how sound waves work.

### A strong argument

The next several minutes go toward analyzing the lyrics, while Derksen encourages the students to logically support their theories.

“You guys are going to be making music all next quarter,” he reminds the class. “But before you do that, you have to realize the kind of effect this stuff is having on you.”

Throughout the course, Derksen emphasizes that he’s not training “Beats, Physics and the Mind” participants in what to think. He’s introducing strategies that will let them back up and strengthen their intellectual arguments, whether in written or verbal form.

The lessons begin sinking in early in the quarter for freshman Allison Armour.

“He’s focusing on not to just present an argument but to support it,” she says during a class break. “We’re (also) doing it in my English class. It helps to get two different perspectives.”

Reinforcing academic lessons simultaneously across the freshman course load, counts as one of the strengths of the Learning Community Clusters program, according to the research findings of Catherine McHugh Engstrom and Vincent Tinto of Syracuse University, who co-authored ▶

The strong bond between freshmen enrolled in "Beats, Physics and the Mind" helps deepen in-class discussion, says Jamel Jackson, 18, of Stockton. "It feels like a family," he says. "We can have more conversations than we did before."

foundation for future academic success," according to the study.

Community spirit between cluster members has continued blossoming, with many students in the group scheduling classes together outside of their required cluster courses, says Sahar Haghigat, who teaches the general studies sections for freshmen in "Beats, Physics and the Mind." She notes that when they leave her classroom, about half of the group walks together to their next shared class, English.

"As a group, the 'Beats, Physics and the Mind' (students), the community they've developed is excellent," she says. "At this point, they've become a family."

Derkson adds he's never seen a class show as "much internal connection as this group."

Freshman Frank Martinez observes that his friends at universities that don't offer learning communities are struggling more academically and socially. By contrast, he says: "I feel lucky, because I seem to have an easier time adapting to college than they do."

"It gives you the opportunity to network with other people, so you don't feel lonely in your freshman experience," says Barrington. "It's helpful."

As winter quarter moves on, Haghigat reports continued growth in her students' academic progress, too.

"From the first week of this quarter, I would say their study skills really improved," she says. "I give a (weekly online) Blackboard quiz straight from the reading. They earned straight As all the way down."

Hands-on experience takes the stage, however, in Hernandez's Introduction to Audio Production music lab, where over the course of the quarter students have worked in small groups to create

original songs from the humorous to the serious. The emphasis on a collaborative process in learning community programs leads to "higher levels of academic and social engagement, greater rates of course completion," and higher rates of continued college enrollment, the Syracuse study concluded.

For one group project, Elizabeth works with Frank, Larry Camello and Martian Tampubolon, on a catchy tune about an irreverent subject: flip-flops. The collaboration allows the strengths of each student to emerge.

Frank, who got an A in physics and quickly mastered the Ableton program, handles the computer software. An informal team leader, Larry guides the process and is joined by Martian on the vocals.

"We decided to do something like rap," Elizabeth explains. "Larry suggested I write the lyrics. He took some of what I wrote, and he added some of his stuff to it."

"I mainly thought about my islands," she says, referring to the Pacific islands from which her family emigrated. "Because we mainly wear flip-flops or no shoes at all."

### In the studio

Down the hall in the recording studio, another foursome struggles to merge conflicting styles into a unified sound. Two members of the group prefer a rock sound, while the other pair prefers hip-hop.

"It's changed quite a few times," says Tony Sanchez, who eyes the controls operated by partner Alisha Hazelton. "We've gone through so many different phases, (because) we're both rock and they're hip-hop."

The hip-hop fans she's referring to are classmates Caroline Wu and Angel Abdhu-Salam. At the moment, Caroline is inside the sound recording booth. Through a window in the booth door, she watches for Angel to give her the signal to start crooning the words to a love song with an infectious, repetitive rhythm into the microphone.

"Let me know when you're ready," Alisha says. "We're going to give you two bars."

Synchronizing the go-ahead signal, the music, and Caroline's singing proves a challenge and takes a few tries. Afterward, an energized Caroline says she can't wait to record again.

"I was so excited," says Caroline, a theatre major who wears violet contact lenses, a lavender knit hat, and large silver hoop earrings. "I sing a lot, but I've never had the experience of recording my own song or album."

The music genre a person prefers reveals a lot about an individual,

Hernandez observes. But it's not an objective of "Beats, Physics and the Mind" to necessarily bridge music culture divides. Rather, he takes advantage of differences in students' aesthetic tastes and musical preferences to improve their ability to detect distinctive features of each genre and possibly incorporate the sounds and effects into their own compositions

### A creative force

"It's more to build their ear, so they can appreciate sound as a creative force," he says. "How do you use your ear to reinforce the message of the song?"

"What sound would make it more explicit? If the song is about love lost, how do you use sound to reinforce that? By the end of the cluster, students have an understanding of how music is created with layers."

By finals week, Derksen says he's noticed a huge growth spurt in "Beats,

"Physics and the Mind" students' ability to support their claims and organize their essays.

"They're not just following a form I give them," he says. "In my opinion, this is an indication they're taking more personal responsibility ... They're having reasons for why they're doing what they're doing."

"They have to change from being children to taking personal responsibility for their work and their world," he adds. "They're no longer just listening to music. They're people making music, and they're working toward (goals)."

During spring quarter "Beats, Physics and the Mind" students in Hernandez and Derksen's classes will swap subjects and classrooms, no doubt building on the musical and academic foundation started in the first two quarters of their freshman year. Will the final quarter of their first year in college yield harmonious results? ■

BY MONIQUE BEELER

Before taking audio production, Frank Martinez, 18, of Hayward says he didn't pay much attention to song lyrics. The class, he says, has taught him the fundamentals needed to compose a song: a chorus, an introduction, and one or two verses.





# Intercontinental Scholar ENDOWS LIBRARY BOOK FUND

Darril Hudson, professor emeritus, made his gift to the University Library to support new acquisitions in all formats. Although he has gotten used to computers, he says, "I wouldn't want to support a library without books at all."

PHOTO SCOTT CHERNIS

EMERITUS PROFESSOR DARRIL HUDSON IS A MAN OF THE WORLD. SAN FRANCISCO HAS BEEN HIS HOME BASE FOR MANY YEARS, BEGINNING WHILE HE WAS TEACHING IN CAL STATE EAST BAY'S POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT AND CONTINUING THROUGH HIS RETIREMENT. BUT HIS INTERNATIONAL ATTRACTION BEGAN IN CHILDHOOD.

"I've always been interested in foreign places and fascinated by maps," he says. "In my bedroom as a child I had a map that filled the whole wall."

Not surprising, then, that following his undergraduate years at the University of California, Berkeley, Hudson headed overseas. He earned a master's degree and doctorate in international relations at the London School of Economics, where he met his life partner, Peter Boesch '70.

Born in communist East Germany, Boesch escaped at age 14 after being apprenticed to a stonemason. "Who ever wants to be a stonemason I don't know, but certainly not Peter," Hudson says. Boesch was a hotelier by trade, equally interested in travel and eager to see the world with Hudson.

Their relationship, which spanned 33 years, seven seas, and destinations near and far, has been commemorated through the Darril Hudson and Peter Boesch Book Endowment Fund, established with a \$20,000 donation Hudson recently made to the University.

University Librarian Linda Dobb says specific endowments, like Hudson's, "encourage serendipity" by creating collections with depth and range, allowing the library to acquire materials beyond the basics.

"I go with students all the time into the stacks, and they find things that pique their interest," she says. "Students start their research thinking about one thing, then they find a book that takes it in a new direction."

After teaching U.S. troops in England and Germany in the 1960s, Hudson returned to the United States to work

as a professor, joining the CSUEB faculty in 1968. For the next 25 years, he taught introductory courses in political science as well as more advanced courses in international relations and American foreign policy.

Because of his knowledge of international culture and politics — and his fluency in German and French — Hudson had several connections with the modern language department. Yolanda Patterson, a professor emerita of the department, says she was pleased to be a member of the statewide council that appointed Hudson resident director of the CSU international program in Germany in the 1990-91 academic year. During their own travels, she and her husband were frequent guests of Hudson and Boesch, and still meet Hudson regularly at his residence in Paris.

Though he enjoyed teaching, Hudson is more fond of recalling his travels with Boesch. Europe was a frequent destination — for several years, they owned a mill in France that served as a foreign home base — but they traveled across the globe, visiting five continents and countries Hudson cannot enumerate: "Peter kept track of those numbers, not me."

Boesch died in 1995, and since then, Hudson has distributed their money to causes dear to them, including a scholarship fund for CSUEB students majoring in foreign languages and the newly created endowment to the library.

"I lived in libraries," he says, referring to schools and cities he visited all over the world. The fund in his and Boesch's names will support acquisitions, in all formats, in three fields that together represent them particularly well: German culture and politics; gender studies, particularly in the field of homosexuality; and European government.

In fact, Hudson recently finished a manuscript about his and Boesch's life, together and apart. If published, it would be a fitting acquisition to honor both men.

BY SARAH STANEK

Hudson and his late partner, alumnus Peter Boesch '70, met in Europe and spent many years traveling internationally. This photo of Boesch was taken during a trip to Greece in the late 1960s.

MINISTER OF MUSIC HITS HIGH NOTE WITH

# “Black Nativity” CONCERT

ON SUNDAY MORNINGS, THE UNIFIED VOICES OF ALLEN TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH’S GOSPEL CHOIR DRIFT BEYOND THE SANCTUARY WALLS, SPILLING OUT INTO THE STREETS NEIGHBORING THE OAKLAND LANDMARK. INSIDE, THE MUSIC ELEVATES FROM THE FLOOR TO THE CEILING AS WORSHIPPERS RISE TO THEIR FEET, HANDS IN THE AIR. THE CHOIR SWAYS FROM SIDE TO SIDE AS MINISTER OF MUSIC BETTY GADLING ’99 LEADS THE CHOIR IN SINGING “I LOVE THE LORD,” HER GAZE FOCUSED WHILE HER RIGHT HAND CONFIDENTLY CHOPS THE AIR AS SHE DIRECTS SINGERS TO RAISE OR LOWER THEIR VOICES.

A prominent figure for 33 years at Allen Temple Baptist Church, Gadling is well known for her musical programs and community involvement, particularly her adaptation of Langston Hughes’ “Black Nativity.”

The annual Christmas play, which she has produced and directed since 1981, retells the birth of Christ through gospel music, poetry, dance, and narrative.

The musical event has become a holiday tradition at Allen Temple Baptist Church, a predominately African American church organized in 1919 that has grown over the years to include 5,000 members. Every season, approximately 60 volunteers, ranging from grandchildren to grandparents, dress up in Gadling’s handmade traditional African apparel, providing a pageant filled with holiday spirit along with the richness of African culture.



The Allen Temple Baptist Church choir, led by Minister of Music Betty Gadling ’99, broadcasts live at noon Sundays on San Francisco radio station KDIA 1640 AM.

“Kids grow up looking forward to being a participant,” Gadling says. “We have (whole) families in the production.”

Carol Litzsey, a church member for 18 years, participates in “Black Nativity” and the church choir, and her daughters have grown up participating in the concert. She says she admires Gadling’s unique ability to share her vision with others.

“She knows how to pass her vision on to each individual at their level, because everybody isn’t at the same level,” Litzsey says.

Guided solely by the script of Hughes’ play and her creative instincts, Gadling worked for a year and a half on the music and choreography for the production. She researched music in addition to writing original pieces like “Nobody But You Lord” and “In a Manger Low”.

Audience members and participants can look forward to new arrangements each holiday season from Gadling.

“Every year right before we start rehearsals, Betty goes on vacation, and when she comes back she always has something additional that she adds to ‘Black Nativity’,” says Mattie Johnson, a “Black Nativity” participant since its inception. “I believe she goes away and meditates and prays. She gets her marching orders from God.”

Gadling’s other projects include organizing summer music camps, the Black History Memorial concerts, and her most consuming roll, administering the after school music program. Her job includes finding grants to fund the after-school program, which allows children ages 4 to 18 to learn an instrument one-on-one with an instructor as well as taking part in musical ensembles.

“She’s very inspirational to the children,” Litzsey says. “She mentored my children all the way to adulthood. She taught my daughter how to play the piano, and she taught my other daughter to sing and dance.”

Gadling’s love of music started as a child. She grew up in a family who spent their free time singing from music books. “We just all sang,” Gadling says. “If we didn’t sing in church, we sang at home.”

During the late 1940s, Gadling and her three younger sisters formed a musical group and traveled in Europe playing everything from pop to blues to gospel.

Although Gadling acquired much of her musical knowledge through life experiences, she also earned her bachelor of arts in music at Cal State East Bay in 1999.

“I love Cal State,” Gadling says. “I had very good support from most of the professors.”

As a student in her 60s, however, it wasn’t Gadling’s age that made her stand out from her peers. It was her attitude, says Ellen Wassermann, a CSUEB music professor for 37 years.

“She was the most eager to learn and so appreciative of everything in our music department,” Wassermann says. “Her attitude was incredible.”

Gadling’s enthusiasm for learning hasn’t changed since she graduated. She continues taking private piano lessons with Wassermann every other week.

“(Higher education) is not dependent on age or any one element,” Gadling says. “It’s your passion that makes you go ahead and get what you want. Anybody can go back to school.” ■

BY ERIN MERDINGER



PHOTOS SCOTT CHERNIS

# CLASS NOTES

## 1960s

**Thomas Lorentzen**, BA, political science ('68), retired as regional director for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Lorentzen has overseen programs such as Medicare, public health, and emergency preparedness in California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific Islands. He also worked with state, local, and tribal government organizations and health agencies while overseeing 600 agency employees.

## 1970s

**Steven Grubb**, BA, music ('72), received an Excellence in Arts Award from the Stanislaus Arts Council in March. Grubb has been music director for Grace Lutheran Church in Modesto since 1971 and has served on the music faculty at Modesto Junior College since 1976. He teaches elementary piano, music appreciation, and a course about the musical development of The Beatles. His studies abroad have included advanced master classes with the late Klaas Bolt of St. Bavo Church in Haarlem, Holland, and Harold Vogel, director of organ studies at the North German Organ Academy.

**Frederick Arn Hansson**, BA, geography ('74), was appointed to the San Mateo City Council. He served on the Public Works Commission from 1997 to 2000 and on the Planning Commission from 2000 to 2009. The nonprofit California Parks and Recreation Society honored him with the "Champion of the Community" award for his work as a scoutmaster, which included recognizing his troop's contributions to improving San Mateo's Laurelwood Park and Sugarloaf Mountain Open Space.

**Robert Lewis Horton**, BA, English ('77), wrote the novel "The Writing Class," published in February by Aberdeen Bay Books. His play "Diorama" was published by New Issues Press, Western Michigan University, in the anthology "The Art of the One-Act." Horton's stories have appeared in publications in five countries.

**Michael P. Jensen**, BA, English ('75), is a freelance writer and independent Shakespeare scholar. His most recent scholarly work, "Lend Me Your Ears: Sampling BBC Radio Shakespeare," appeared in the Cambridge University Press anthology "Shakespeare Survey 61: Shakespeare Sound and Screen."

**Michael J. Johnson**, BS, business administration ('78), was named Community Development Resource Agency Director for Placer County. He held planning positions in Folsom from 1997 to 2005, and also served in the cities of Fremont and Merced.

**Kathleen Landis**, BA, English ('70), is an award-winning freelance writer, covering travel, small business, and topics that captivate youngsters, from her Sacramento area home base. Her work appears regularly in "Boys' Life" magazine.

**Annan Paterson**, MS, counseling ('79), is celebrating her 30th year in public education. She was recently named vice president of the College of Marin Board of Trustees. In 2003, she received the Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award for her social justice work in Marin County.

**Nancy Perry**, MS, counseling ('79), has been the clinical director of the Center for Adaptive Learning in Concord for the past 12 years. Her work led her to pen her recently published book "Adults on the Autism Spectrum Leave the Nest: Achieving Supported Independence."

**Nancie (McGann) Ryan**, BA, political science ('70), retired as assistant general counsel from East Bay Municipal Utility District after 24 years of service. She completed the Alameda County Master Gardener Program and currently sits on the advisory board of the organization.

**William M. Saleebey**, MS, counseling ('73), completed his third book "Connecting: Beyond the Name Tag." He speaks nationally to attorneys, financial planners, and alumni associations. He currently serves as regional manager for Corporate Relocations for American Relocation and Logistics in Los Angeles where he is responsible for business development. He also has written "Study Skills for Success" and "Sell Yourself" and has taught at the college level since 1973.

## 1980s

**Jeff DeBalko**, BS, business administration ('86), was named president of the Business Media Division at Reed Business Information, the leading U.S. provider of business-to-business information.

**Joanne Gouveia**, BA, mass communication ('85), was named Fremont Unified School District Teacher of the Year 2008-2009. She began working in Fremont Unified in 1999. She was one of five to receive the district's Most Promising Teacher Award in 2000.

**William Keller**, BA, psychology ('85), started working for Community Bank of the Bay to expand lending capacity in the East Bay. Previously, Keller was executive vice president and chief operating officer for Diablo Valley Bank until its acquisition by Heritage Bank of Commerce. He also has served as a board member for Oakland's Children's Hospital and Research Center Foundation.

**Christine Larson**, BA, black studies ('82), recently was named vice president and chief financial officer at PDL BioPharma Inc. Previously, Larson served as a senior manager and director at Grant Thornton, LLP in the Mergers and Acquisitions Advisory group. She also is a certified public accountant.

**Charles Nice**, BS, criminal justice ('81), former Alameda County Sheriff's Commander; Nice took over as the city of Dublin's police chief in February. He has been with the Sheriff's Office for nearly 30 years and has been a member of the California State Bar for nearly 20 years. Nice has served as the captain at Santa Rita Jail and as an Internal Affairs captain. He has also worked as a detective in the courts and jails.

## 1990s

**Rebecca Carroll**, MBA ('92), is the new director of social media at Brickfish, the social media-advertising network. Carroll will lead social media marketing, including audience engagement, social media outreach, and thought leadership. She spent 14 years at Hewlett Packard, most recently as the director of marketing for the United Kingdom and Ireland.

**Kevin Cato**, BA, music ('99), has become director of Mt. Eden High School's band program. He bought instruments, a personal investment of about \$25,000, and began an intensive course of study to turn the program around.

**Caleb Cheung**, single subject teaching credential ('98), will serve as the 2009 Commission Chair for the Commission on Teaching Credentialing. Cheung was named Marcus Foster Educational Institute Distinguished Educator of the Year in 2002 and received the California Space Authority Presidential Award for

Excellence in Math and Science Teaching for California in 2005. He is currently a science program manager for the Oakland Unified School District.

**Elizabeth Koepke**, BA, environmental science ('91), was appointed vice president of National Load Auditors' audit division and lead general council. Her previous experience was in family law, estate planning, and probate.

**Rami Muth**, MS, educational leadership ('99), was named superintendent of the Martinez School District. Muth has been director of curriculum and instruction for the district since 2006. Previously, she worked in the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District where she was an elementary school principal and led a training project for new teachers. Muth also taught elementary and middle school in Benicia for 22 years.

**Damien Sandoval**, MPA ('94), has been named director of the Napa Valley College Criminal Justice Training Center. He previously worked for 28 years for the Walnut Creek Police Department where he started as a rookie officer and retired after becoming lieutenant.

**Peter Val Sellars**, BS, criminal justice ('96), became the head of the Grand Encampment of California, a branch of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In 2008, he published two books, "The History of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in the City of San Francisco" and "Calling Out from the Past." He currently manages the historic Odd Fellows Building in San Francisco.

## 2000s

**Shayiq Ahmadzia**, BS, biological science and history ('02), graduated from Ross University School of Medicine in 2008.

**Suliman Atai**, BS, biological science ('01), graduated from Ross University School of Medicine in 2008.

**Lisbeth Cervantes**, BA, mass communications ('08), worked at worldwide publicity firm Edelman and has started her own publicity firm, Elle C. Communications ([www.elle-cc.com](http://www.elle-cc.com)). The firm specializes in publicizing companies in the consumer, corporate, and lifestyle industries.

**H. Frank Cervone**, MS, education ('02), has been appointed vice chancellor for Information Systems at Purdue University Calumet. He previously served as Director of Library, Information, and Media Studies at Chicago State University. Cervone's background includes 15 years of experience in leadership developing systems to help advance student services assessment and learning outcomes.

**Robert Litton**, MA, music ('03), wrote the musical piece "Frontier Suite" that was performed by Tim Smith and the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra in February. "Frontier Suite" was the first piece he wrote at CSUEB in 2001; it was performed at his master's concert in 2003.

**Sonja Wallace**, BA, biological science ('00), was recently named associate director in the Department of Research Compliance at Stanford University. She has past experience as a manager in the Department of Quality Assurance and Regulatory Compliance at Roche Palo Alto. Previously, she was a supervisor in the Department of Comparative Medicine and a research associate in the departments of Cardiovascular and Safety Pharmacology at Syntex Research and Roche Bioscience.

## Submit Class Notes

Share news about your career, accomplishments, and changes in your life with fellow alumni. Include your address, phone numbers, degree earned, major, and graduation year. Mail to: Cal State East Bay Magazine, Attention: Editor, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., WA 908, Hayward, CA 94542. Or e-mail to: [monique.beeler@csueastbay.edu](mailto:monique.beeler@csueastbay.edu).

# CALENDAR



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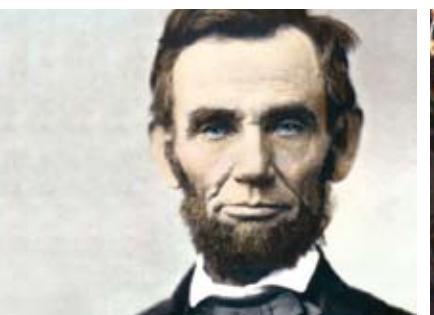


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PHOTO BEN AILES

## THEATRE AND DANCE

### Performance Fusion

May 29, 30, June 5, and 6 at 8 p.m. and June 7 at 2 p.m. in Studio Theatre. Fusion showcases original works directed and choreographed by advanced students. \$10 general admission; \$7 youth, senior, and alumni; \$5 with CSUEB ID.

## MUSIC

### Opera Workshop: Scenes and Arias

June 5 at 7:30 p.m. in Music Building room 1055. Allen Shearer and Pamela Hicks, directors. Free.

## MUSIC

### CSUEB Symphony Orchestra

June 4 at 7:30 p.m. in Music Building room 1055. Buddy James, conductor. \$7 general admission; \$5 senior and youth; free with CSUEB ID.

## ART

### Annual Student Juried Exhibition

On view through June 4 in the University Art Gallery. Free.

## LECTURE SERIES

### Lincoln at 200: Fact or Fiction

June 2, 9, 16, and 23 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Concord Campus library, room 149. Course delves into the life of Lincoln. Was he truly a great emancipator, orator, and family man? \$40 for OLLI members; \$55 for non-members.

## COMMENCEMENT

# HAYWARD CAMPUS

## MUSIC

### CSUEB Symphonic Band Concert

June 2 at 7:30 p.m. in University Theatre. Wesley J. Broadnax, conductor. \$7 general admission; \$5 senior and youth; free with CSUEB ID.

### CSUEB Symphony Orchestra

June 4 at 7:30 p.m. in Music and Business room 1055. Buddy James, conductor. \$7 general admission; \$5 senior and youth; free with CSUEB ID.

### Student Composers Recital

June 7 at 8 p.m. in Music Building room 1055. Free.

## ART

### Forgotten Contributions of the Bay Area Chinese

Through June 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday in The C. E. Smith Museum of Anthropology. Free.

## COMMENCEMENT

### College of Science

June 12 at 6 p.m. in the University Stadium.

### College of Education and Allied Studies

June 13 at 2 p.m. in the University Stadium.

### College of Business and Economics

June 14 at 10 a.m. in the University Stadium.

### College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

June 14 at 3 p.m. in the University Stadium.

# CONCORD CAMPUS

## LECTURE SERIES

### Summer's Muse

May 19, 26 and June 2, 16, and 23 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Concord Campus library, room 149. Find your own poetic voice through prose and poetry. No prior knowledge or writing experience required. \$40 for OLLI members; \$55 for non-members.

### Revising the Bible: Re-Freshing Old Texts

May 21, 28, June 4, and 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Concord Campus library, room 149. \$40 for OLLI members; \$55 for non-members.

### Mongolia Through Mongolian Eyes — Discussion and Trip to Mongolia

June 1, 8, and 15 (special session Aug. 20) from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Concord Campus library, room 149. Explore traditional and ancient Mongolian culture by surveying economic, political, and social conditions in the landlocked republic. Classroom journey is enhanced with an opportunity to visit Mongolia. \$40 for OLLI members; \$55 for non-members.

## 'Go South'

June 17 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the Oak Room at the Concord Campus. Documentary film based on a black family in the Tuskegee area during the 1960s; H. Reiders, documentary filmmaker. Free for OLLI members; \$5 for non-members.

### Faith and Social Activism: A Dialogue

July 16 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Oak Room at the Concord Campus. Free for OLLI members; \$5 for non-members.

### Persian Poetry: Rumi to Etesami

July 7, 14, 21, and 28 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Concord Campus library, room 149. \$40 for OLLI members; \$55 for non-members.

### Eastern Europe: Jews in Migration

July 23, 30, and Aug. 6, 13, 20, and 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Concord Campus library, room 149. \$40 for OLLI members; \$55 for non-members.

## COMMENCEMENT

June 13 at 9 a.m. in the Boatwright Sports Complex on the Concord Campus.



## SURVEY SAYS: Alumni want to strengthen ties to CSUEB

The Alumni Association recently completed an online survey to assess satisfaction with the Cal State East Bay alumni experience. The survey was sent by e-mail to 8,000 randomly selected alumni, and 740 responded.

"We were heartened by the comments of those who felt a strong connection with their alma mater and learned from the constructive comments of those who wanted significant improvement," Director of Alumni Relations Kate Shaheed says.

"In general, we found that graduates from the last decade wanted better online communication, career networking opportunities, and more opportunities to help students" she says. "Alumni from the 1960s through the 1980s wanted more opportunities to make a difference in the student experience. We were encouraged that many wanted a higher level of engagement with the University, despite their busy lives."

Based on survey participant feedback, the Alumni Association plans to focus on the following areas:

- Online services and communications
- Opportunities for alumni to get involved in programs that benefit students
- Professional network development

Shaheed says the association will communicate goals for the areas of focus in future issues of Cal State East Bay Magazine and through a newly revamped Alumni Association Web site and e-newsletter. In the meantime, here are some easy ways that all alumni can get involved:

- E-mail [alumni@csueastbay.edu](mailto:alumni@csueastbay.edu) to sign up for periodic e-mail communications.
- Become a "Career Contact" for students and alumni who want to learn about your job or industry.
- Subscribe to an RSS feed and receive University news that appeals to you.
- Join CSU East Bay alumni groups on LinkedIn and Facebook.

For details, visit the University home page at [www.csueastbay.edu](http://www.csueastbay.edu), and click on Alumni & Friends. ■ MB

## Inaugural Impressions

Two CSUEB Alumni Association leaders share their impressions and experiences of attending the inauguration ceremony for President Barack Obama.



Cindi Newbold, left, and her sister, Tracy Simmons, attend an inauguration ball in January.



Ambrus Reese III, right, and his wife and daughter await the start of the inauguration ceremony near the U.S. Capitol.

### Cindi Newbold '01

President  
CSUEB Alumni Association  
2002-present

#### *What part of participating in this historical event is most meaningful to you?*

Probably the day before and the day of the inauguration — the day before, being Martin Luther King Jr. Day and a day of service, and being there in D.C. We went to the African American Civil War Memorial, and there was a celebration honoring the former slaves that fought in the war. That memorial listed three names of ancestors of mine.

#### *If you could pass your experience on to future generations, what would you want them to gain from it?*

That everybody is relevant. There is nothing insignificant about how we think, what we do, and how we treat each other. The biggest thing is: We are all American. That's the thing we all have in common and to have more focus on that. It's something to be proud of that we don't all look alike, behave alike, and think alike.

#### *What was the most touching comment you overheard in the crowd?*

A little girl, maybe 5 or 6 years old, couldn't see the president from where she was, but she was looking at the Jumbotron. When he came out she was holding the flag and said, "There he is, there's my president." ... Other peoples' faces looked like they were thinking the same thing, but she just verbalized it.

### Ambrus Reese III '00

CSUEB Alumni Association and CSUEB Educational Foundation Board of Trustees  
2007-present

#### *What was the atmosphere like at the inauguration?*

Very friendly and social, like everybody knew each other. It was easy to talk to people, and we were really amazed to find so many people from the Bay Area. We also met people from other parts of the world like Hawaii, Europe, and Africa.

#### *Which part of your inauguration experience would you want to pass on to future generations?*

Obama accomplished one of his biggest personal goals and something that was considered to be impossible. He believed in himself, he worked really hard, and he ultimately was able to achieve his dream. No matter how hard or impossible it seems to achieve our dreams, we can achieve our goals if we believe in ourselves.

#### *What did you hear in President Obama's speech that will always stay with you?*

When he mentioned that we are all part of the solution and that we had to work together as Americans to find our way.

## THE LAST WORD:

# “What cultural offerings at Cal State East Bay do you find most enriching?”

The San Francisco Bay Area is known for the richness of its cultural activities and the diversity of its population, qualities reflected on the campuses of Cal State East Bay. Members of the University community, representing a spectrum of ethnic and social backgrounds, contribute a range of values, traditions, and beliefs to the creative spirit evident at Cal State East Bay. Students, faculty, and staff shared the following thoughts about the cultural opportunities they value most.



“I enjoy the Women's Herstory event, because I am able to learn about the lives of successful women and the struggles they've encountered along their path that led them to where they are today. As a woman, it inspires me to do what I want to do and not to let others or society hold me down in achieving my dreams.”

### Natasha Johnson

SENIOR  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SOCIOLOGY



*The BSU (Black Student Union) puts on a poetry slam and a Kwanzaa dinner. It is enriching, because you get to experience another culture, but it's on a fun and social level.*

**Mohannad Almussallam**  
Freshman  
Computer science



*The Saudi Arabia event in September shared our culture. We brought cultural books and foods to share with students.*

**Lexy Rhodes**  
Junior  
Psychology



*Being a CSU East Bay student in itself is a cultural offering. If you make the effort of arousing your curiosity to appreciate cultural diversity, the entire university is an informal course in cultural diversity. We are blessed to have students of many cultural backgrounds.*

**Abubakr Asadulla**  
CSUEB physician  
M.S. Chemistry '92



*I liked the Disabled Comedy Show, because it brought people from all different cultures together and educated people on stereotypes.*

**Shae Redwine**  
Sophomore  
Psychology



*I love to see the collaboration between the theatre and dance departments in creating hybrid pieces that find new ways to tell stories.*

**Marc Jacobs**  
Assistant Professor  
Theatre and Dance Department

There are limitless ways to express  
what a Cal State East Bay education  
can do for students...

Transform  
Prepare Nurture Encourage Inspire  
Motivate Create Enlighten Enthuse  
Challenge

But there is just a single word for the support  
of thousands of alumni, parents, and friends  
whose gifts make this possible each year:

**Essential!**

Every gift makes a meaningful difference—including yours. Your support helps ensure that Cal State East Bay can continue to enhance scholarship opportunities and offer a superior educational experience that is uniquely **personal, professional, and achievable** for every student.

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