



# creators

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Seattle Pacific University's Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts Newsletter



## Dressing a Broad Range of Characters by Design Is Not **Sew Simple**

**Sarah Mosher has designed hundreds of costumes. The 2002 graduate of Seattle Pacific University is in her third and final year at the University of Texas-Austin (UT-A), where she pursues an MFA in theatrical design with a concentration on costume design.**

For Sarah, who majored in theatre and minored in psychology, costume design is a calling. "God has given me a gift," she says, "and the most honorable thing I can do to serve him is to use my gift." And gifted she is. Her costumes — as diverse as the characters who don them — are extraordinary.

There's Lady Wishfort, from William Congreve's "The Way of the World." The first of her two costumes — one of 20 Sarah designed for the play at UT-A — is a silk-brocade-corseted dress under a silk-burn-out-velvet cape trimmed with feathers and gold metallic braid. And atop her bewigged head (Sarah also designed all the wigs for the play) sits a feather-and-antique-lace headdress fully two feet tall. Then there's History Book, a character in a 21st-century epic tale about industrial pollution called "Ashes, Ashes," who sports a full-body tailored canvas suit screen-printed with history text, along with a pulled-felt hood complete with art lamp.

From Lady Wishfort to History Book, the common thread in Sarah's costumes is that they capture the personalities of the characters.

Designing costumes is a complex, time-consuming, often grueling undertaking. First Sarah reads the script at least twice. She then meets with the director "to hear his vision." After that, she talks with the actors,

set designer, lighting designer, sound designer, choreographer, and others. Then comes research into the world of the script. Finally, she begins drawing.

Once she has refined her drawings, she turns them into fully painted renderings — works of art in their own right — and hands them off to the costume shop, where further conversations and refinements happen. At dress rehearsal, everything comes together and necessary adjustments are made.

Design, Sarah stresses, is about making decisions. "That's what I do all day — ask questions, answer questions, and make decisions." Reece Carson, SPU communications specialist and graduate of 2002, was in the theatre program at Seattle Pacific with Sarah, and remembers meeting her when they were both freshmen. "She was shy, and timid about making decisions," he recounts, "but underneath lurked a creative lioness. As she made choices she would get this look in her eye that said you'd better have a good reason for disagreeing. She understood instinctively what constituted good design choices."

June 2007 was a good month for Sarah. On June 4 she received the Austin Critics Table Award for Outstanding Costume Design for "The Way of the World." Ten days later she was in Prague for the 11th International Exhibition of Scenography and Theatre Architecture, the most prestigious international competition of its kind in the world. UT-A had been invited to exhibit its work in the student section. It was a tremendous honor, much of it owing to Sarah's work.

Sarah credits Seattle Pacific Professor of Theatre Don Yanik for her success. "Don saw something in me I didn't see in myself. I wouldn't be where I am today without him."

"Sarah's a fantastic designer," says Yanik. "I'm convinced she'll be a huge success."



“She understood instinctively what constituted **good design choices.**”

LADY WISHFORT — DESIGN, SKETCH, AND COSTUME (ABOVE) BY SARAH MOSHER (UPPER LEFT).

# Setting a Monster Hit to Music

**Foggy moors, an ensemble of dancing monsters, and a mob of angry villagers itching for a little pitchfork action are all in a good night's work for Todd Gowers.** The adjunct professor of double bass at Seattle Pacific University was the bass man for the recent world premiere in Seattle of the new Mel Brooks comedy musical, "Young Frankenstein."

Keeping up with the raucous score of a multi-million dollar smash hit headed for Broadway is a challenge tailor-made for Gowers. For 10 years, he has played in the orchestra for a raft of major



theatre shows, including "Chicago," "Guys and Dolls," "Sweet Charity," "Spamalot," and "West Side Story." Some of it's what he considers less taxing "oompah music," but let him sink his teeth into a contemporary Broadway rock score for a production such as "Wicked," and he grins ear to ear. His most difficult challenge to date – being in the "Wicked" orchestra – meant he had to master a five-string electric bass, an instrument he had never before played.

No matter. "I love all the different styles and to switch on a dime from swing to funk," Gowers says, contentment in every syllable. "And as an adjunct professor, I can offer my students all those styles. Many students come to us having played in contemporary worship bands. I urge them to bring in recordings of their favorite groups and I show them how to capture that sound."

For Frankenstein, he juggled 24 performances (eight shows a week) and worked around the huge set – complete with two elevators – by watching the conductor via video monitors. "Mel Brooks was there the whole time, in the front row, taking notes," says Gowers. The attention to detail paid off. One reliable prediction is that the show is gold and will have a four-to-six-year run on Broadway, where the best tickets fetch \$450 each, and go on to travel the country.

The accomplished bassist was pleased to learn that because of all the major stage productions he's done, he has a favorable reputation among musicians in the New York theatre world. His 10 years of work substituting in the Seattle Symphony and playing for Hollywood filmmakers in various IMAX productions, "The Matrix" movies, and others such as Disney's "Air Bud," have helped solidify his standing as reliable, versatile, and good.

"It's rare for a local musician to stay local and have steady work," Gowers explains. "This is an extremely competitive thing, like the Olympics."

For him, the days ahead promise to be just as rich, just as busy. He plays in a tango band and a jazz quintet, and will be in the orchestra for the three-week winter run of "Mame" at Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre. "As a freelancer, you're always on your toes," he says. "If not, you don't get called back." And that would be positively monstrous.



TODD GOWERS

## Honk! if You Like Musical Theatre

# With Heart



*Different isn't spiteful, different isn't wrong.*

*So why is it so hard to get along?*



-the character **Ugly**, from **Honk!** by **George Stiles** and **Anthony Drewe**

**Have you ever felt like the only one who's "honking" when everyone around you seems to be "quacking"?** That's the situation faced by Ugly, the hero of the musical "Honk!"

An adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling*, "Honk!" tells the tale of Ugly's journey from misrepresented duckling to elegant swan. As part of its 46th season, the Seattle Pacific University Theatre Department will share this story with audiences during Homecoming and Family Weekend, January 24–26, 2008. Additional performances will occur January 31–February 2.

"It's not often we feature a musical as the Homecoming show," says Don Yanik, chair of the Theatre Department and scenic and costume designer for the show. "But this one is ideal."

The appeal of "Honk!" lies in its mix of simplicity, cleverness, and heart — a combination that works for both children and adults. Plus, the musical has a worthwhile message.

"Hans Christian Andersen wrote this story about people feeling different," Yanik says. "It discusses inclusiveness, which relates to [President Philip Eaton's] initiatives around hope and radical reconciliation."

In the story, while Ugly looks and sounds different from his family, he doesn't think poorly of himself at first. That changes when others start making fun of him.

"Somewhere along the way, many of us have probably felt like Ugly," says Ruben Van Kempen, the director and choreographer of "Honk!" "The show is a very believable fantasy."

# Beauty and Function Transform Art Center

**When Seattle Pacific University senior Samantha Davis returned to campus from summer break in September, she made a welcome discovery:** The University's Art Center she'd studied in for the past three years had changed.

"It's more open and comfortable," says the visual communication major from Mill Creek, Washington. "It's a real classy place."

Davis isn't alone in her assessment of the Art Center remodel. Roger Feldman, chair of the Art Department, summarizes the student response to the remodel in two words: stunned joy. "It's clear the students feel better about being here this year," he says. "And about what they do here."

Part of this positive feeling comes from the use of cohesive design elements throughout the building, such as drop ceilings, white and other neutral color choices, clean lines, and open spaces.

"Visual' is what we do," remarks Feldman. "Students visit great spaces and study them in books, journals, and magazines. If they then look around and get a mixed message from the space they're in, that can have a negative effect. The remodel promotes our work and identity."

Months prior to the renovation, which began in June 2007, Feldman and the other art faculty began to define the facility's new identity, and how to transform the converted building, originally a Darigold milk bottling plant, into an inviting space.

Together with Darrell Jacobsen, project coordinator in SPU's Facility and Project Management office, the group created a design that addressed what the faculty needed in the space in order to meet their academic and professional goals.

Some of the changes include more offices to accommodate the growing art program; improved heating and cooling; the addition of a studio for senior-level art majors; storage lockers and enhanced lighting in many classrooms; and magnetic-card access that provides security for students working in the Art Center after hours.

But it is the Art Center Gallery that received the most attention. "We've made it more professional and functional," says Feldman. "The walls moved back to make the gallery larger and more

open. We provided a softer light for the space. Plus, we created an ADA-approved ramp to allow more people access."

All of the gallery changes make for an inviting atmosphere, which ties into the larger goal for Feldman and the art faculty: To engage with the Seattle art community.

"Before the remodel, the building was predominantly a teaching environment," Feldman says. "Now it is a destination for the larger community. It's a place where artists and art connoisseurs can come together."

Samantha Davis agrees. "It's good to walk through the professional space and see the art," she says. "It makes me think, 'Maybe I'll have a show here someday.'"



DIRECTOR OF THE TRANSFORMED SPU ART CENTER GALLERY IS PROFESSOR OF ART LAURA LASWORTH (STANDING). SEATED IS ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ART KATIE KRESSER.



*[The new Art Center Gallery is a destination for the larger community.*

*It's a place where **artists and art connoisseurs** can come together.*



"Honk!" marks the second collaboration between Seattle Pacific and Van Kempen, who is the director of theatre at Roosevelt High School in Seattle. He also directed "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" in the SPU Theatre Department's 2006-07 season. "Ruben is very encouraging," states Yanik, who has worked with Van Kempen professionally as well. "He knows how to help students grow."

Joining the "Honk!" creative team as music director is Jacinta Koreski, an adjunct professor of voice in SPU's music department. Koreski sees the show's difficult, yet tuneful music as an important part of the theme. "At the end, after three pure solos, other voices gradually join in. It's a real coming together" as a community, she says.

Along with the pure fun the show offers and its message of loving people where they are, "Honk!" represents an important goal for Yanik and the other artists.

"The show wants to say that beauty is in us, but we need to go through a transformation to become more beautiful," says Yanik. "It's important to find the people who see us in our best light."

After a pause, he continues. "SPU's theatre program wants to help students discover that community, a place they can join in."



*Somewhere along the way, many of us have probably felt like Ugly.*

*The show is a very **believable** fantasy.*



VAN KEMPEN AND KORESKEI HAVE THEIR DUCKS IN A ROW.



## Choir Director **Seeks Meaning** in the Music

**New Men's Choir Director Ken Pendergrass is passionate about creating music with humor, insight, and a sense of community.** He has worked with various choirs throughout the Puget Sound region, including The Northwest Girlchoir and The Women's Chorale at Western Washington University. In his often fast-paced rehearsals, he enjoys teaching individual singers to combine their voices in ensemble to create meaning for both performer and audience. Pendergrass also teaches music at Seattle's Coe Elementary School and enjoys using the latest technology in classroom music.

## Filling the World With Music, One Student **at a Time**

**Andrew Parks, a bass-baritone who has sung professionally for 15 years, is a Mozart specialist and assistant professor and head of vocal performance at Seattle Pacific.** He has sung many of the great symphonic works and performed with the Aspen Music Festival, Operafestival di Roma, Seattle Gilbert & Sullivan Society, Tacoma Opera, and others. The roles he has sung include Don Giovanni, Figaro, Cervantes, and King Arthur. In 2000, Parks released the jazz CD *Zing a Little Bing! A Tribute to Bing Crosby*. His voice students have also distinguished themselves, including those who have appeared in national tours of "Miss Saigon," "Starlight Express," and "Peter Pan." A former instructor of voice at Cal-State Fullerton, Parks is an active clinician, presenting master classes on Mozart's operas, Verdi's operas, and the American musical.

## Check Out **Scholarships**

### for the Talented

**A share of \$250,000 in fine and performing arts scholarships awaits those entering Seattle Pacific University next year.** Students with a demonstrated talent in theatre, visual arts, or music are urged to audition for individual scholarships worth \$500 to \$3,000 each.

Auditions will be held at Seattle Pacific on January 26, and February 22 and 23, 2008. Auditions by mail are available to those who live far from campus. During an audition, the student will be evaluated on overall talent, diversity of skills, and repertoire. Complete scholarship audition details and online application are at [www.spu.edu/finearts](http://www.spu.edu/finearts).



*inside!*



**See** who has a costume ball designing period clothing.

**Meet** the bass man who makes a monster dance.

**Learn** how a classy new gallery does everyone proud.

**Observe** life through the eyes of a homely waterfowl.

Visit our website!  
[www.spu.edu/finearts](http://www.spu.edu/finearts)

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