

From the Department Chair

While the “blizzard of the decade” set us back a few days, it did not keep us from continuing our work in the classroom, on the page, on the stage, and beyond. In fact, this winter quarter has been one of the busiest in recent memory. The thaw of spring may be a month or two away, but a little cold will not deter us!

Of particular note is the number of visiting scholars we’ve hosted, beginning with Professor Tavia Nyong’o of NYU, who challenged us all to think about the ways in which social networking, political economy, activism, sexuality, and performance are intertwined. Dance scholar Tommy DeFrantz will share his brilliance about black dance with us this quarter as well. We also welcomed job candidates in the “Theatres of the Americas” search—all of whom in their own way offered exciting new research on theater and performance beyond U.S. borders. We look forward to adding a new faculty member to our ranks this fall. We are also excited by Stacey Robinson’s visit in the solo/black/woman series.

As usual our students and faculty were also busy publishing, presenting at conferences and creating original performances. As you’ll read in these pages, graduate students Barnaby King and Andrew Brown demonstrated their acting chops in two very different performances that spanned the 19th century to the present. “Trip to America” and “Fat Camp,” respectively, engage questions of race, class, politics, and power and prompt us all to think about the ways we are implicated in the meaning making process. Professors Ramon Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young also saw the publication of their new co-edited volume, *Performance in the Borderlands*. This is an exciting new collection of essays that is sure to have a big impact in the field. Finally, Professor Mary Zimmerman has opened shows up and down the east coast in the past month—at Arena Stage and at the Met.

I would be remiss if I didn’t welcome our new artist-in-residence, Lenelle Moïse. Lenelle will not only offer a wonderful class for us in spring quarter, she will also develop a new performance that will be featured in a weekend long feminist performance festival in May that will feature performances by Holly Hughes and Rhodessa Jones.

I always marvel at our level of productivity, but then concede that it is indicative of our commitment to the work that our souls command.

— E. Patrick Johnson, Chair

P.S. Don’t forget to attend the M.A. recitals on March 12!

Stacey Karen Robinson performs *Quiet Frenzy*

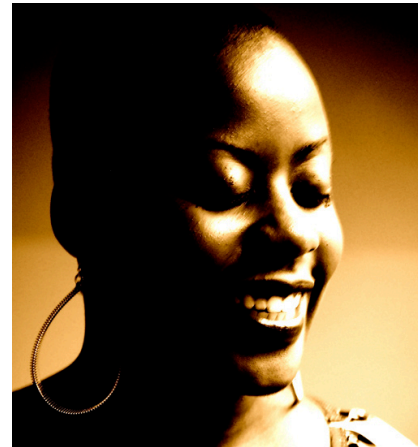
Visiting Artist Stacey Karen Robinson performs her one-woman show *Quiet Frenzy* on Saturday, February 19, at 8:00 p.m. in the Annie May Swift Studio, as part of the solo/black/woman performance series.

Quiet Frenzy tells the story of LaShonda, who, still reeling from the sudden death of her twin sister, wanders into a crack of time where strangers, spirits, memory, and magic collide. She descends into her depths and out of her boundaries, and rises from trauma to recollect her Self.

Quiet Frenzy is about the explosion, dispersion, and reintegration of a life devastated by loss.

Stacey Karen Robinson received her B.A. from Brown University in Afro-American Studies and studied in the Actor Training Program of the Julliard School. She was the recipient of the 2009 Bronx Recognizes Its Own (BRIO) Award in playwriting from the Bronx Council on the Arts for *Quiet Frenzy*. Other plays include *Deja* and *the January River*, *Wounded Heart*, and *Being in the Black*. As an actress she has appeared in numerous productions including *blood pudding* directed by Laurie Carlos, *In the Blood* directed by Peter Dubois, *Unmerciful Good Fortune* directed by Daniel Alexander Jones, and *Red Frogs* directed by Elyse Singer.

As a component of the solo/black/woman series, the Northwestern performance of *Quiet Frenzy* will be reviewed by Nadine George-Graves from the Department of Theatre and Dance, University of California-San Diego, and Stacey Karen Robinson will be interviewed by Diana Paulin, from the Department of American Studies at Trinity College.



Tavia Nyong'o presents guest lecture

Tavia Nyong'o, associate professor of Performance Studies at New York University, presented a guest lecture titled "Same Sex Africas and the Fantasy of Global Participation," on Wednesday, January 12, in the Annie May Swift Studio. Nyong'o's research focuses on the intersections of race and sexuality, visual art and performance, and cultural history. Nyong'o received his M.A. and Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University. He teaches courses on black performance, the history of the body, and subcultural performance. His book, *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), investigates musical, aesthetic, and political practices that conjoined blackness and whiteness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is the web editor of *Social Text*. He has been the recipient of a Marshall Scholarship; Jacob K. Javits Fellowship; Ford Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship; Graduate Fellowship, Center for Humanities, Wesleyan; Graduate Fellowship, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University.



Thomas DeFrantz to speak

Thomas DeFrantz will present a talk titled "Unchecked Popularity: Neoliberal Circulations of Black Dance" on Wednesday, February 23, at noon, in the Annie May Swift Hall Studio. DeFrantz argues that "curiosity with profound economic, social, and representational consequence places African American social dances at the corporeal center of global discourses of the popular. No matter the ethnicity,



race, sexuality, class, location, ability, gender, or age of the dancers, black social dances arrive as an effective currency of exchange that allows for individual expression and some sorts of group communion around the world. How this has come to be so has escaped scrutiny, in no small part because routes of exchange for social dance are extremely difficult to map.

More than this, the object of exchange—the dance—exists in relation to its practice in time, and loses both value and tangibility (presence) in transference from live performance to mediation." DeFrantz contends that, "African American social dances circulate generously because their aesthetic underpinnings fit neatly with neoliberal discourses of commodity and exchange; so neatly, in fact, that the marketplace cannot check the popularity of these dances."

Thomas DeFrantz is on the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he is professor of Theatre Arts and director of SLIPPAGE: Culture|Performance|Technology. He received his B.A. from Yale, his M.A. from the City University of New York, and his Ph.D. from NYU Department of Performance Studies. DeFrantz's books include the edited volume *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), and *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2004). He has served on the boards for the Society of Dance History Scholars and as Book Editor for the Dance Critics Association. He also organized the dance history program at the Alvin Ailey School in New York for many years. Recent work includes *Ennobling Nonna* (2004), a physical-theater solo by Maria Porter, with performances in the US, Italy, Peru, and Denmark; the tap/technology work *Monk's Mood: A Performance Meditation on the Life and Music of Thelonious Monk* (2005); *The House Music Project* (workshop 2006), a technology-driven exploration of queer black dance; *Queer Theory! An Academic Travesty* (Boston Center for Arts and Flynn Center for the Arts 2006, UCLA 2007, Wellesley College 2008), commissioned by Theater Offensive, Flynn Center, and NPN; and *CANE*, a media-rich dance theater exploration of black life in the rural South. DeFrantz has performed the Morton Gould Tap Concerto with Boston Pops conducted by Keith Lockhart and the Duke Ellington Tap Concerto with the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra led by Mark Harvey.

The Department of Performance Studies Northwestern University, 1920 Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

Core Faculty: Margaret Thompson Drewal, Paul Edwards (Director of Undergraduate Studies),

E. Patrick Johnson (Chair), D. Soyini Madison (Director of Graduate Studies), Ramón Rivera-Servera,

Carol Simpson Stern, Mary Zimmerman

Courtesy Appointments: Tracy Davis, Micaela di Leonardo, Susan Manning, Jan Radway, Sandra L. Richards,

Jeffrey Sconce, Mary Weismantel, Harvey Young

Newsletter Editor/Designer: Alan Shefsky

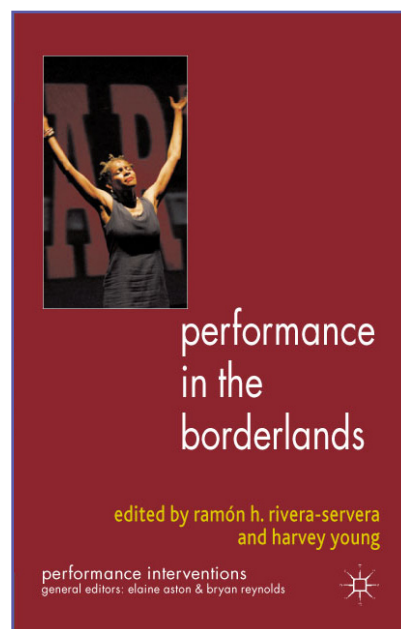
Faculty News

Mary Zimmerman is in New York working on revivals of both *Lucia de Lammermoor*, with Natalie Dessay, and *Armida*, with Renee Fleming, both at the Metropolitan Opera. Also, *Arabian Nights* is currently at Arena Stage as part of the inaugural season of its new Mead Center for the American Theatre.

Mary is currently working with a group of 25 Northwestern students whom she will take to Prague in June for the Prague Quadrennial, a world-wide theatre and performance design competition and exhibition. Several of the students are participating by showing work or creating or participating in performances.

Ramón Rivera-Servera's co-edited book with Harvey Young (Department of Theatre), *Performance in the Borderlands*, is now available from Palgrave-Macmillan Press. *Performance in the Borderlands* critically examines a range of cultural performances produced in relation to the tensions and movements of/about the border. Comprised of thirteen essays and a transcribed conversation involving the majority of the collection's contributors, the book places a spotlight on both the material and imagined lines of division that exist within North America, including the Caribbean, and that divide both geographical regions and the people who inhabit them. In focusing on the northern portion of the western hemisphere, *Performance in the Borderlands* does not center any one national border but instead brings into focus the many boundaries that exist within the quadrant. It explores critically not only the border that exists between the US and Mexico but also the intranational divisions (state and regional differences) within the US, the creation of boundaries by multinational capitalist investment and militaristic presence in the Caribbean, and the natural and political obstacles that inhibit travel between Mexico and Guatemala, and between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The volume includes essays by Professors Rivera-Servera, Young, and E. Patrick Johnson.

Professor Rivera-Servera presented "Imag(in)ing the Border: Pedro Lasch, John J. Leaños, and Joel Valentin-Martinez" as part of the Art and Immigrant Justice Session in the Arts and Social Justice Pre-Conference for the Grantmakers in the Arts National Conference at Loyola University on October 13; "Dancing Reggaetón with Cowboy Boots: Dance Ethnography and the Choreography of Queerness in the Southwest" at the National Communication Association's National Conference in San Francisco in November; "Performance Frictions: Queer Sexualities and Inter-Latina Feminisms" at the University of Illinois at Chicago on December 1; and "Moving from Realism to the Hip-Hop Real: Transnational Aesthetics in Latina/o Performance" at the New Canadian Realisms Conference at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia on January 28.



Performance Studies will move to newly planned building



The School of Communication has announced that the top floor of the planned Bienen School of Music building, will house the Department of Performance Studies, the Department of Theatre, and the School of Communication administrative offices. The building will be located at the southeast corner of campus, adjacent to the Pick-Staiger Concert Hall and Regenstein Hall. The project is slated to break ground in the spring and to be complete within four years.

Additional information and images are available on the SoC website, at www.communication.northwestern.edu/fifthfloor.

Winter Quarter Performance Hours

103 Performance Hour

Solo performances were presented by students in the department's introductory course GEN CMN 103 The Analysis and Performance of Literature
7:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 5
Struble Theater. Admission free.

Fat Camp

Created and performed by Andrew Brown
“Her husband's coming back. Help whip Amy Strong into shape.”
8:00 p.m. Friday, February 4 and Saturday February 5
Wallis Theatre.
Admission free.



Appointment at Samarra

Adapted and directed by Jeremy Fassler
Based on the novel by John O'Hara
Adapted from the 1934 novel by John O'Hara, the story examines the last three days in the life of Julian English, who pays a dire price for following his impulses at a Christmas party. The novel examines small town life and its petty prejudices and rules.
8:00 p.m. Friday, March 4, and 2:00 and 8:00 p.m. Saturday, March 5
Annie May Swift Studio. Admission free.

Performance Studies M.A. Recitals

Solo performances created and performed by Performance Studies M.A. students Soo Ryon Yoon and Rhaisa Williams.
7:00 p.m. Saturday, March 12
Wallis Theater. Admission free.

Course News

The department will offer three new “topics” course next quarter:

PERF_ST 330-0-20 Topics: Prompt & Circumstance: a Creative Lab for the Performing Writer, taught by Visiting Artist-in-Residence Lenelle Moïse.

In this course, students will study, interpret, generate, and revise solo and ensemble performance texts. Students will practice a variety of physical and vocal improvisation techniques and create original short pieces for the stage. Writing prompts, theatre exercises and experimental assignments will help fine-tune self-awareness, artistic voice, stage presence, collaborative agility, and interdisciplinary resourcefulness.

PERF_ST 330-0-21 Topics: The Art of Clowning, taught by Barnaby King.

What does it mean to clown today? How can it be considered as artistic practice? How does clowning materialize within a range of art conventions and genres such as film, theatre, visual art, and performance art? Does clowning exist as a “pure” genre? How does “doing” clown help us understand what it “is” and vice versa? This class will address these questions through a combination of practical and theoretical elaboration, with the particular intention of addressing clowning not only as a thing to be understood, but also a contrary and transformational way of understanding. A series of practical clown workshops will introduce the class to basic approaches and techniques, leading towards the development of individual clown “personae,” and short clown “turns” (skits) to be performed in class and in a final showing at the end of the quarter. Other sessions will be devoted to lectures and discussion relating to written and audio-visual materials. The class will draw on a wide range of sources, including the key clowning texts, as well as examples of clown in cinema, contemporary theatre, and online.

PERF_ST 330-0-22 Topics: Performance and Environments, taught by Derek Barton.

How do performances relate to the spaces they occupy? When and how does site-specific performance become more than just performance outside? How can one write or devise performances that relate to the non-human world—to landscapes, animals, plants—not merely as backdrops or themes, but as co-performers and collaborators? What does an environmentally meaningful performance look like? Readings and discussions will explore the intersections of environmental questions and the arts, and students will develop original creative work in response to these issues, including site-specific work. The course is suitable for all levels of performance experience.



Graduate Student News

Lisa Biggs has been named a Winter 2011 Fellow at the Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media, located at Columbia College. Lisa will be convening a working group of performing artists, educators, and activists from around the US who offer theatre and/or dance programs for incarcerated women. Though their work is largely invisible to the general public, in prisons and jails across the country women inmates have embraced live performance as a means for telling their own personal stories, counteracting dominant myths about why women break the law, and engaging in strategic acts of activism from behind prison and jail walls.

Victoria Fortuna presented a paper, “La danza y la memoria cultural en La puñalada de Susana Tambutti” (“Dance and Cultural Memory in Susana Tambutti’s La puñalada”) at the II Congreso Artes en Cruce at the University of Buenos Aires in October. In February, she begins her nine month Fulbright research grant in Buenos Aires. In March her article, “A Dance of Many Bodies: Moving trauma in Susana Tambutti’s La puñalada” will appear in *Performance Research* and her review essay on Susan L. Foster’s anthology *Worlding Dance* will appear in *Theatre Journal*.

Chloë Johnston successfully defended her dissertation, “Paths of Risk and Resistance: Walking as an Interventionist Art,” and will receive the Ph.D. degree in June.

Barnaby King performed “Trip to America,” February 11 at 6:00 pm and Saturday February 12 at 6:00 and 9:00 pm in the Deering Library. (See page 6 for more information).

Kareem Khubchandani performed with Serendipity Chicago’s 2nd Story Storytelling series at Webster’s Wine Bar, November 15, and at Lincoln Hall, Feb 14, as well as at the queer performance salon, HomoLatte, Dec 21.

Elias Krell co-hosted a Trans 101 Workshop with Owen Daniel-McCarter on campus in October, sponsored by the QPGSA, in which he performed a variation of the ethnographic portion of his Ph.D. recital. Eli also hosted and was the coordinator of the Tranny Hootnanny, a celebration and fundraising performance event at the HideOut to raise awareness for trans-positive healthcare. Eli’s band, the Homoticons, performed, as did **Andrew Brown** and **Kareem Khubchandani**. In February, Eli led a Trans 101 Workshop with About Face Youth Theater in Chicago, in which performance skits were used to talk about issues around trans-awareness. Eli has also been invited to speak at the Chicago Theological Seminary on March 5 on the same topic.

Jasmine Mahmoud will present a paper at the Cultural Studies Association Annual Conference, March 24-26 at

Columbia College. Her paper is titled, “‘Cultural marbles rolling’: Economic Crisis, ‘Non-Arts’ Policies and Contemporary Landscapes of Avantgarde Performance in Brooklyn,” and will be part of the Cultural Policy Studies Division panel on Cultural Policies and Space: Festivals, Performance, and Community.

Gregory Mitchell received this year’s President’s Prize for Humanistic Anthropology at the American Anthropological Association meeting. In March, his article “Michael, Eles Não Ligam Pra Gente!: Brazilian Rentboys, Queer Affinity and the Michael Jackson Exception” will appear in the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, and his article “Fare Tales and Fairy Tails: How Gay Sex Tourism is Shaping the Brazilian Dream” in the *Wagadu Journal of Transnational Feminist Studies*. Greg recently presented a paper at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro entitled, “Garotos do brasil: homens que vendem sexo e a ideologia anti-imigrante da Espanha” about the conflation of sex trafficking and sex work by anti-immigrant politicians. He is currently working with a group of female sex workers in Rio on a fashion line they have developed in collaboration with Northwestern University through a grant from CIRA (Center for Interdisciplinary Research in the Arts), which he will be speaking about at a special conference on fashion at Yale University.

Mario LaMothe will present a paper at the Cultural Studies Conference, March 24-26, in Chicago.

Mbongeni N Mtshali conceived and developed the performance *Blood Sun*, produced by The State Theatre Chicago, which is being staged as part of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs Incubator Project at the Chicago Cultural Arts Center on February 28 at 7:30 pm. *Blood Sun*, directed by Casey Searles, was written by **Nikki Yeboah** and features **Kantara Souffrant** in the role of the young prophetess Nongqawuse. The story is based loosely on the historic Xhosa cattle-killings in British Kaffraria between 1856 and 1857, and weaves together live performance and puppetry to bring this epic, unimaginable story to life.

Munjulika Rahman is choreographing a dance piece titled “I Hear Rivers” for Danceworks 2011, the annual show featuring works by Dance Program faculty choreographers and students. The collaborative piece is based on Munjulika’s fieldwork in Bangladesh and on the experiences and ethnographic research conducted by the performers. Danceworks performances are February 25 through March 6 in the Josephine Louis Theater.

Kantara Souffrant will present a paper at the conference A Carnival of Feminist Cultural Activism, March 3-5, at the University of York in the UK.

Undergraduate Student News

Jeremy Fassler adapted and is directing the performance hour “Appointment at Samara,” based on the 1934 novel by John O’Hara. Performances are March 4 at 8:00 pm, and March 5 at 2:00 and 8:00 pm, in the Annie May Swift Studio.

Anakin Morris graduated in December and is now an intern at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, where he works with the Performing Arts for Everyone initiative.

Jeremy Shpizner produced the Mee-Ow comedy show, January 27-29, in Shanley Pavilion.

Aaron Quick founded the Panini Players, a Commedia dell’Arte group that is having a show in the Jones Great

Room, in celebratio of International Commedia dell’Arte day, February 25. Aaron also assisted with lights and sound for the performance hour “Fat Camp,” and he was the master electrician for the 69th Annual Dolphin Show, *Ragtime*. He also designed sound for *Hedda Gabler*, *tick tick Boom*, and *Buried Child*.



Members of the Panini Players

Barnaby King performs “Trip to America”

“The Public are most respectfully informed that Mr. Mathews will be ‘At Home’ in the Deering Library, Northwestern University, with his Lecture Upon the Peculiarities, Character, and Manners founded on Observations and Adventures during his late Trip to America.”

On February 11 and 12, **Barnaby King** presented “Trip to America,” a solo performance he developed as a creative adaptation of Charles Mathews’ 1824 performance in which Mathews affected the pretense of being “at home” to audiences in London’s English Opera House and showcased his improvisatory brilliance through sequences of humorous vignettes in which he portrayed all the characters. “Trip to America” brings together evidential “remains,” such as unofficial transcripts of Mathews in performance and illustrations of historical characters, and contemporary performance styles and sensibilities, including clowning, musical theatre, solo multi-character comedy, multi-media presentation, contemporary dance and movement, and dialect work, to bring the audience an experience

that reverberates playfully between 1824 London, the US Eastern seaboard in 1822-23, and 2011 Chicago.

The performance is the most recent phase of a long term collaboration using practice-as-research methods to investigate both the historical significance and contemporary resonance of a remarkable set of performances. It is historically contentious because it includes the first depictions of African Americans on the British stage, and twentieth and twenty-first-century historians single out Mathews for racial insensitivity in his portrayals. Barnaby’s interpretation complicates this assumption and re-imagines “Trip to America” from a new perspective.

“Trip to America” was directed by Adam Goldstein, with visual design by Jacqueline Reyno, dramaturgy by Tracy C. Davis, and musical arrangement by David Pollak.

