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Messiah's Own Amanda Holston Performs in Temple's *In Conflict*

By Melissa Paolangeli

Messiah junior Amanda Holston recently gave a passionate performance of Iraq Veterans Against the War founder Kelly Dougherty in the world premiere of *In Conflict* at Temple University. Compiled of real-life stories from a book of the same title by Yvonne Latty, *In Conflict* is a collage of memories, photos and voices of Iraq War veterans.

Although acting in a college setting is not new to Amanda, Kelly is by far the most intense and meaningful role she has experienced this far in her acting career. Becoming a character and creating a personal identity is difficult in of itself, but the fact that this was a living person who would in four short weeks be in the audience brought the pressure to an entirely new level.

The overall process was completely different from any character that she has worked on, largely due to this added element of Kelly's actual existence.

Continued on page 2



Image Courtesy of the Philadelphia Inquirer

Recent MCPC Renovations Address Burning Safety Concerns

By Douglas Yeisley

Messiah College Philadelphia Campus has been undergoing a series of renovations in order to meet fire codes and other safety recommendations, which will be completed by the end of this month.

The overall plan was launched after an architect conducted an intensive safety survey of the campus. From this individual's report, roughly 8 or 10 separate initiatives were developed and installed at the cost of \$150,000, Campus Administrator David Ayers said in a recent interview.

"Safety is a high priority at MCPC," Ayers said. "Our facilities projects have attained a high level of safety for our students and employees."

One of the most noticeable projects was the installation of multiple fire-rated doors. Since the campus is actually made up of over five different buildings, these doors serve to seal off each section. Also, the doors blockade each staircase since staircases, which are referred to as fire towers in safety terms, often act as passage ways for the spread of fire. Although the doors are a minor inconvenience now, it is only temporary. Magnetic door holders will be installed in order to keep the doors open. In the event of a fire, the magnets will release the door.

A sprinkler system was installed in the basement in order to prevent a fire in the boiler room and other such critical areas. The crater that used to be in front of the chapel was a direct result of this particular project.



Devin Thomas and Phil Harris learn about the new doors the hard way. *Photograph by Douglas Yeisley*

Workmen were hooking up the sprinklers to the water main, and the only way to do so was to excavate that portion of the sidewalk.

Other more subtle changes were made in order to improve overall safety. Outside, better hand rails and emergency lighting were installed on and around the fire escapes. Inside, hand rails with a better grip were installed in every stairway, and the fire alarm system was upgraded, Ayers said.

Additional changes might be made in the future, such as the installation of a comprehensive sprinkler system. However, the current renovations, though expensive and occasionally inconvenient, have made the campus the safest it has ever been.

Understanding Fire Safety:

Consult www.firesafety.gov for a comprehensive look at fire safety.

Community

Holston

Continued from page 1

Amanda and her fellow actors, some playing more than one veteran, were all given audio and video of the person they were to portray. They spent hours analyzing subtle details of vocal and physical tendencies, aiming to be as true to life as possible.

"Hearing how she speaks was my gateway into who she is," Amanda said. "By having her voice inside of me, I could honor her through my portrayal on stage."

Amanda's character research did not end when rehearsals were over each night. She spent hours on her own reading any article and watching any video clip she could find to learn more about who Kelly is and what motivates her. She said that Kelly has affected her personally because she took a horrible experience in her life and decided to help other people with what she learned.

"She didn't just come back to the US and feel sorry for herself because she went through hell," Amanda said. "She used that experience to fuel her passion even more to speak out against this war, and now she is head of an organization that is working hard every day to make sure that the general public are aware of what is going on over there."

Even before this project, Amanda has always been passionate about women finding their voice and telling their stories. Inspired by writers like Eve Ensler of the *Vagina Monologues*, Amanda hopes to make this her life's work. Telling Kelly's story in the original cast of *In Conflict* brings her closer to that dream.

"As a passionate woman, I respect her as another passionate woman who is not afraid to stand up and speak out," Amanda said.

Steve Earle Preaches a Poignant Message at World Café Live

By Emily Yoder

Once I moved to the Messiah College Philly Campus, I quickly learned that the only thing worse than being a music lover far away from good concerts is being a music lover living right next door to wonderful concerts you cannot afford.

After spending my summer lamenting the distance between the Buckeye State and Bonnaroo, I had been planning on some serious city concert attendance. My only obstacle was my wallet. Fortunately for me and the other shallow-pocketed music lovers of Philadelphia, The World Café Live exists.

World Café Live is two concert venues and two restaurants in one trendy Walnut Street building. This summer Paste Magazine ranked it in the top 40 best music venues in America, praising it as the "best place to discover artists you won't hear on Hot Hits 105.9" Every Friday at noon the café holds a free concert, which is broadcast live on WXPX.

On Friday, October 12 it hosted Steve Earle, the troubadour liaison between the realms of rock and country music. Earle, 52, is touring to promote his 12th studio album and voice his dissent about the second war he's taken a stand against.



Steve Earle and Allison Moorer Performing. Image Courtesy of Google Images

Messiah College junior, Devin Thomas and I arrived ten minutes early to find an eclectic crowd occupying the airy, standing-room-only basement room. Squeezing into a space on the fringes of the lower level, we waited through the radio introduction for Earle to emerge with his disheveled dark comb-over and guitar in hand.

Earle began the set with "Tennessee Blues," off of his newest album, *Washington Square Serenade*. Throughout the set, he mixed both old and new songs, evoking both nostalgia and hope. Right before the mid-concert interview, he sang the ballad, "Someday" off of his first album, *Guitar Town* (1986).

Earle got his start in music by singing alongside other anti-Vietnam protesters at coffee shops. Over two decades later, he still boldly asserts his anti-war message. *Washington Square Serenade* is inspired largely by his life in New York City's Greenwich Village, which he describes as "my one last stand with my back to the Atlantic Ocean," after he resisted the urge to expatriate when disappointed by the results of the 2004 election.

The crowd cheered encouragingly as Earle voiced his disenchantment with modern immigration, the war, and pollution. Fans respectfully mouthed along with Earle as he re-contextualized his older lyrics.

Continued on Page 3

**Be Sure to Attend An Autumn
Affair
November 16, 2007,
On board the Spirit of
Philadelphia**

Image Courtesy of Google Images



Earle

Continued from page 2

Although Earle harshly criticized current issues, his 21-year-old lyrics remained hopeful as they took on new meaning: “I know there’s a better way/ And I wanna know what’s over that rainbow/ I’m gonna get out of here someday.”

The highlight of the afternoon was when Earle was joined by his wife, singer-songwriter Allison Moorer. Their haunting acoustic duet, “City of Immigrants,” a simple melody about finding solidarity in the diversity within New York. He later joked about the catharsis of the city experience: “Sometimes you just want to look out your window and see a biracial same-sex couple holding hands. You know?”

Although the rockabilly star’s music has mellowed with his age, his poignant messages of peace and acceptance are just as strong and relevant as they were when he was making his musical debut. We exited the basement happily because “City of Immigrants” was echoing in our heads, and because we had spent a combined total of \$.75 that day.

Renoir Reflections

By Douglas Yeisley

Art is hard to produce, and equally hard to describe. Its purpose is argued by countless practitioners, and its importance is unquestioned. But why do most of us look at art? Most likely, it is because it is either famous, thought provoking, emotionally stimulating, or simply beautiful. I do not pretend to understand art’s concepts, but I know that every time I visit the Philadelphia Art Museum, I come away with something different.

Currently, an exhibit dedicated to the impressionist Pierre-Auguste Renoir is on display. His paintings, often featuring alluring women and pastel colors, offer a lovely view of 19th century France.

Continued on Page 4

A Passage About India

Wes Anderson’s predictable film gets slightly off-track in this mature new effort

By Devin Thomas

Anyone who has seen a Wes Anderson movie knows that each film exists in its own little world of loveable oddness: characters have bizarre hobbies (Max Fischer’s proclivity for beekeeping, Chas Tenenbaum’s invention of Dalmatian mice), darkly comic physical aberrations (Margot Tenenbaum’s missing ring finger, the casualty of a misguided Southern sojourn to meet her birth family), and strikingly literary destinies (like Steve Zissou’s obsessive quest to capture and kill the elusive tiger shark, a la Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*). Anderson’s films follow a familiar trajectory: quirky rising action and droll character development; inter-character tension leads into a moment when all hope for reconciliation seems lost; and finally the bittersweet denouement of detached sentimentality, usually accomplished by objective narration or a retro-chic song by The Kinks played over a slow-motion montage. To all of this, add Anderson’s inclination to populate his films with the same familiar-yet-always-enjoyable parade of actors—Bill Murray, Anjelica Huston, Jason Schwartzman, the Wilson brothers—and you’ve got the director pinned down on every front.

Don’t get me wrong: I love Wes Anderson, but after four movies he has perfected a formula that makes Woody Allen’s neurotic-nerd oeuvre seem unpredictable.

Show times for *The Darjeeling Limited* at the Ritz East:

12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 10:00

Ritz East is located in Old City.



Image Courtesy of Google Images

And there’s nothing in Anderson’s latest film, *The Darjeeling Limited*, to contradict the filmmaker’s standard mechanics: there are idiosyncrasies aplenty in this tale of three estranged brothers (Owen Wilson, Adrian Brody, and Jason Schwartzman) attempting a reconciliation while bisecting India aboard a locomotive. But with this movie, Anderson finds a way to pull down all his barriers of quirky eccentricity and shows us, for perhaps the first time, raw emotion. Though it’s not without its faults, *The Darjeeling Limited* still proves to be Anderson’s most mature film to date.

At the center of the movie are the three Whitman brothers—Francis (Wilson), a control freak who orders dinner for his brothers and plans their every move with a neatly laminated daily itinerary; Peter (Brody), a husband feeling the uncomfortable pinpricks of fatherhood as he prepares to have a baby with a woman he always thought he’d divorce; and Jack (Schwartzman), a sexually voracious pipsqueak who spies on his girlfriend by tapping into her answering machine (he still has the code) and writes thinly veiled short stories about his family and friends. They’re on a quest of rediscovery, driven by the hope of reconnecting with their mother (Anjelica Huston), a reclusive nun in a mountaintop Indian monastery. They swap illegal pharmaceuticals—from cough syrup to some sort of liquid-opium-like narcotic (“One drop is all you need,” warns Francis)—and they trade blows (as in a scene densely populated with comic mishaps, leading to the brothers’ eventual expulsion from the train).

Continued on Page 4

Urban Living

Darjeeling Limited

Continued from page 3

Left in the stark Indian wilderness with just their late father's ornate suitcases, a laminator, and not much else, the three brothers—along with, it seems, Anderson himself—stumble upon the film's emotional core.

While the boys remain patently clueless during their supposed spiritual quest, Anderson, at times, seems to say too much. His use of an over-developed train-as-metaphor-for-life sometimes seems forced, especially during a strikingly beautiful yet nonetheless slightly affected visual montage near the end of the film. As always, the director is at his most meaningful when he rests in the uneasy silences of half-answered questions and half-resolved tensions, hinting toward the future. "I wonder if the three of us would've been friends in real life," Jack wonders. "Not as brothers, but as people." Nobody replies. It's funny, yeah, characterizing the brothers' absurd and detached approach to relationships. But couldn't it also be true? In *The Darjeeling Limited*, Anderson leaves it to the audience to deal with these lingering questions in their own way. Even as he cues that last Rolling Stones song and sets his camera for another dripping-with-sentiment slow-motion sequence, the director appears to have moved beyond the crutch of his obsessive-compulsive tropes. At the end of this movie, these characters seem like *people*—not finely drawn caricatures or P.G. Wodehouse cast-offs, but folks you might meet at a cocktail party or an airport lounge. It's far from flawless, but it's the hope of something new. And I don't think Anderson would have it any other way.



Lacey Ward huddling under a sculpture. *Photograph courtesy of Lacey Ward*

A Quiet Spot

By Douglas Yeisley

Philadelphia, like any city, tends to race by, sweeping up its citizens in a swirl of colorful activity. I know I feel the pull. In the past week, I attended a multitude of friendly gatherings and other such events, including two movies. Although I am thoroughly enchanted by my concrete surroundings, the constant movement can feel nauseating. I know I need to slow the pace down, and the only way I can is by removing myself to some relatively quiet locale where I can meditate undistracted by friends, the internet, or even schoolwork.

As any longtime city dweller can tell you, a quiet spot is crucial to maintaining sanity in the face of constant sensorial bombardment. Once there, some simple meditation or silent reflection can help reorder priorities and maintain focus. A book or a journal can both serve as good ways for slowing down our frantic urban lifestyles. A quiet spot does not necessarily need to be outdoors, though I would recommend it.

As a rural expatriate, I still need a dose or two of nature in order to remind myself that this planet still has a green hue, so I make a point to bike up to Forbidden Drive. This road, now closed to motor vehicles, runs alongside the Wissahickon Creek in a wooded portion of northern Fairmount Park. Even the macabre Edgar Allan Poe allegedly roamed this area when he was looking for his own quiet spot.

I admit, Forbidden Drive will gobble up a large portion of the day. However, for a closer alternative, try relaxing in Rittenhouse Square. That has been its purpose since the days of William Penn, after all. Even sitting in the garden behind MCPC is beneficial. Just stop, take a deep breath, and ponder the words of my favorite inebriated corner store owner: "Life is beautiful, no?"

Renoir

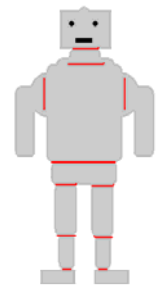
Continued from page 3

Viewing Renoir might not move you to tears, but he will evoke feelings of nostalgia and serenity. My own mother hung a copy of a Renoir portrait over her bed while I was a child, so I look forward to the experience of seeing the original.

Do not think that because you visited it on our first Sunday here, you should not pay it any more attention. Ever changing exhibits and your constantly evolving perspectives results a new experience every time you run up those stairs.

Illustrated Haiku

01001
01101



A silver robot
Gleams in the autumn sunlight;
Says he wants a soul.

Have Comments, Suggestions, or a Desire to Write for The Broad Street Journal?

Feel free to contact Douglas Yeisley at dy1157@messiah.edu or by hassling him on the street.