BARD STARTS $350 MILLION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Largest Amount in College's History to Be Raised
By 2011 to Commemorate 150th Anniversary

by Michael Brown

The college is now in the "silent phase" of its newest capital campaign aimed at raising $350 million dollars to expand the endowment and fund expansion to key buildings on campus.

The announcement is not yet official, as the silent phase of the campaign entails a period of some months for gauging interest among interested donors before it can be approved by the board of governors. Ideas for future projects are under discussion, with plans to bolster financial aid, expand the library, the athletic facilities, the campus center, as well as a recreational student space.

President Leon Botstein, when asked about the feasibility of such a venture considering the endowment of the school is now at $770 million, commented, "The college in the last 10 years raised somewhat in that order of magnitude, and we are going toward the 150th anniversary of the college." He added that to fill the desired needs for expansion, upwards of $400-500 million would be needed, but that is likely not within the means of the college. Other larger universities such as Stanford have recently announced their own capital campaigns, aiming for goals around $4 billion. Botstein detailed the costs of merely maintaining normal operation commenting, "The way the college operates now we have to raise $114 million annually to break the budget even."

Botstein maintained that the capital campaign was unrelated to the B&G contract renegotiations, offering his view on the circumstances, "The college has had a good collective bargaining agreement with the Union for many many years. We've always come to a good agreement. No matter how the campaign works out the college's basic financial capacity is small change. We've always settled amicably with the Union. A lot of this jockeying for this or that position is part of the ritual of collective bargaining."

Most of the donors are expected to be from outside the college, with still relatively little money coming from alumni donations. Botstein attributed this trend to the type of graduates that Bard produces. "Our graduates do not go into lines of work that are necessarily lucrative." He added, "It's never been an institution where the primary undergraduate motivation was becoming rich in business."

Visc President of the college and head of Alumni Affairs Debra Fensterman said that alumni will continue to play a growing role. She argued, however, that the percentage of donations from Bard alumni has been quite low relative to other schools. She said that Bard "does not have a culture of giving among its alumni." She argued that it was difficult to cultivate a sense of class pride at a place where individualism is valued so highly.

Botstein commented on the changing attitude about giving among alumni. "Yes I think there's a move. In the last 10 or 15 years the alumni participation is much greater. The numbers are small, but the attitude is terrific. There's a much greater sense of responsibility."

Frustrated by the administration’s refusal to grant proposed wage increases, B&G workers turned to students, faculty, and parents for help this month as three rallies demonstrated external support for the demands of the union. Despite continued negotiations dating from last July's expiration of the previous contract, B&G demands for a “living wage” remain unmet and a settlement has yet to be reached.

As last October rallies proved successful in inducing the college to supplement B&G’s contractual health care policies, the Student Labor Dialogue and SEIU 200, B&G’s union, hoped to capitalize on that success in this arena. A series of lunchtime rallies attended by both B&G workers and students culminated in the events of Family Weekend, where students and their visiting families were greeted with petitions, brochures, and informational tables staffed jointly by members of the Student Labor Dialogue and SEIU 200. The brochures, in addition to detailing the on-campus responsibilities of the Buildings and Grounds team, cited living wages for Dutchess County generated by the Fiscal Policy Institute in comparison to B&G employees. Brochures were also distributed among visiting families, in an attempt to involve parents in the issue.

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"When you think of the amount of money parents give to the college, there is a right to know how the college is treating their labor," explained B&G worker and union representative Brian Watts. "The majority of our members have to work second jobs to make ends meet." Though Watts and other workers expressed their desire "not to detract from the experience of students and parents together" informational tables increased awareness and questions distributed outside the Parent Q&A Session sparked a discussion with President Botstein on the subject.

In response to a parent question concerning the equityability of the college’s treatment of lower paid workers in comparison to those with higher salaries, Botstein clarified, "The current difficulties are not about salary." He went on to explain the under-compensation of faculty across the board in comparison to their contemporaries at similar institutions, pointing to Bard’s severe lack of endowment. He reasoned that B&G workers are paid more equitably in comparison to Marist and Vassar staff than faculty. Even I am sorely underpaid," he joked. "I am proud of the relationship we have with the union and our lowest paid workers. I’m not concerned about this situation."

In answer to a second question concerning labor issues, Botstein denounced the protesters' portrayal of the administration as an evil corporate entity. He encouraged
Eric Sundwall had 5,200 signatures for his petition to run for the United States Congress as a Libertarian from the 20th district in New York. Sounds was ultimately kept off the ballot due to challenges to the signatures he collected for his petition to run, while Van Auker managed to overcome objections to his own petition's signatures.

Both candidates technically had enough signatures, but in New York it is generally considered that a candidate needs at least double the legal minimum as a protection against ballot challenges. Further stacking the odds against third party candidates is that, legally, the five recognized parties in New York State, a group that includes the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, need fewer signatures than third party candidates. For instance, to run for Congress, a Democrat would only need 1,250 signatures. Bill Van Auken, the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for the United States Senate from New York, had 25,000 signatures when the minimum for running for Congress in New York as a third-party candidate starts to become clear why it is so amazingly difficult to run as a third party candidate in New York.

If the third party candidate gets enough signatures, as Van Auker told me, “Such an operation [aimed at challenging signatures] makes it very difficult for a new party to get on the ballot, as it entails extensive work in proving that your challenged signatures are indeed valid as well as appearances in court and before election boards, all of which consumes [sic] a great deal of time and money.” For a major party candidate, this could make signature challenges all the more enticing, because even if the third party aspirant prevails in court, he will very likely have been bled dry of most of his campaign funds in the process. Now, how does one go about challenging petition signatures, one might ask? Redlich informed me when he was reviewing the challenges to Sundwall's signatures, the most common one was the “no town, wrong town” objection. According to New York law, only a residence address is acceptable for the purposes of signing a candidate's petition—most people don't know this, so they put down their mailing address, such as a P.O. box. Furthermore, in New York, there are many hamlets and villages that fall within the jurisdiction of a larger town and thus are not valid residence addresses. To name an example, Annandale-on-Hudson is a hamlet falling with the Town of Red Hook, which also includes the villages of Red Hook and Tivoli. But because most people are not actively aware of such fine distinctions, they are apt to put the “wrong” information down when signing a petition, making them vulnerable to a determined signature challenger.

To zoom in on the 20th district, our district if you are registered to vote using your Bard address. Representative John Sweeney (R-NY) has wielded signature challenges on multiple occasions. Once was against Sundwall—it was someone on Sweeney’s payroll who challenged Sundwall’s signatures. Another time, it was against Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand, who is challenging Sweeney for his seat. Both wanted to be on the Independence Party’s primary ballot to try and gain their nomination and thus their votes, but Sweeney filed petition challenges to keep Gillibrand out of that primary. (Although Sweeney is a Republican, New York Democrats are just as likely to see such tactics.)

Mr. Redlich, for one, is not pleased with the current system in our state. “New York’s ballot access laws are too restrictive, and I understand the political reality of it, but I find it shameful to do that to a third party candidate,” referring to challenging their signatures on whatever grounds present themselves. He continued to say that he finds such actions highly undemocratic and that they are depriving voters of a choice.


ELECTION DAY IS NOV. 7TH
We will give you buses, pizza and doughnuts—all you need to do is vote.

Vote Nov 7th!! if you have any questions please email ap491@bard.edu

Meet The Candidates

October 4th Meet the Candidates event in the MPD, moderated by Leon Botstein, introduced the student body to their potential future representatives: Kirsten Gillibrand (D), running for the district’s Congressional seat, Marc Molinaro (R) and Victoria Martin (D), running for State Assembly, and Brian Keeler (D) running for State Senate. Each candidate was given a chance to speak and then answered questions from the audience who were eager to make them sweat.

Gillibrand opened by affirming her dedication to “reward[ing] people who work hard.” She spoke on the importance of a living wage, and vowed to fight to raise the minimum wage, which her opponent, John Sweeney, has voted against. She also cited Sweeney’s unwillingness to stand up to the President’s plan to privatize social security, a plan which she called “poor public policy” and promised never to support. Gillibrand moved on to the state of education and health care, saying that she’d like to see college tuition tax deductible up to $10,000 and a switch to more alternative energy use like hydropower and fuel cells. She stated that she wanted America “to be the leader in this endeavor” and also that “outsourcing is not inevitable.” She sees the possibility for a lot of jobs created by the development of alternative energy, as well as in a return to older industries. “When a nation builds its agricultural base and its manufacturing base it becomes stronger.” Gillibrand repeatedly made the point that “when we stop manufacturing we can no longer innovate.” She said she would not have supported CAFTA and thinks cutting our trade agreements hurts local agriculture.

During the Q&A, audience members, including Leon Botstein, pressed Gillibrand to speak more in depth about several of her policy positions including her stance on withdrawing from Iraq, gay marriage, and fiscal responsibility. She spoke on the importance of an exit strategy from Iraq that involves getting out in less than a year and promising the Iraqi people that we have no stake in their oil. She is for the Federal implementation of civil unions in all states and leaving it up to individual states to decide what kind of language they want to use when it comes to marriage. She also stated that she would repeal the Bush tax cuts given to the wealthiest percentage of the country. Her opponent, John Sweeney, who has been in office since 1999, did not attend the event.

The Democratic candidate for the 13th district State Assembly, Victoria Martin, discussed her background as a professor (She was teaching at the University of Albany when asked to run) and declared her main concern to be “the state of the middle class.” Like Gillibrand, she spoke on the high costs of education and health care, as well as encouraging and
parents to keep in mind that it wasn’t a situation of good and people, saying “they are preying on positive sympathies, but the facts simply aren’t there.”

While admitting that the union and the college are still “some distance apart” where wages are concerned, “I don’t anticipate any difficulty (solving)” this,” seconded Jim Brudvig, Vice President of Administration and one of the chief figures in the ongoing contract negotiations. Last week the administration tabled an offer of a 3.5% increase every year over a three-year period, which would increase the wage of the lowest paid B&G worker from $1430 to $1563 per hour by the third year. The union’s proposed increase of 10% every year, raising the lowest wage from $1430 to $1879, was deemed unsupportable on the grounds that, as Brudvig put it, “students come to Bard to get good teachers, not to get great administrators or great plumbers.”

Though willing to discuss the establishment of a realistic ‘living wage’ figure, Brudvig said the effect of student and parent support on his decision in the form of petitions and protests was minimal. “The resolution of this is between the administration and the union. Tactically does [student support] change my mind? No.”

As contract negotiations continue it is unclear whether or not the student rally will affect the outcome. As one first-year student from the Student Labor Dialogue observes, “I think they project the image that the students have an input – what students care about should matter. Whether administration does anything about it is another matter entirely.” Though B&G workers are still fighting for a living wage and the benefits of the rallies are yet unseen, Watts reminds students that, while not underestimating the importance of the union, “[Student involvement] is the only way. If students weren’t involved, nothing would get done.”

JOIN THE OBSERVER FAM!

The Prison Activist Coalition presents–

TEACH US, DON’T CUFF US: JUVENILE (IN)JUSTICE IN NYC

A panel discussion by the Prison Moratorium Project
Tuesday, November 14
7 pm, MPF

This workshop breaks down what’s happening inside New York City schools, especially with an increase in NYPD presence that has shortened “The School to Prison Pipeline.” Come learn about the dollar for dollar trade off between education and incarceration/policing. As more money funnels from schools and social services to prisons and policing, it’s time to unite to fight back!

PMP is a Brooklyn-based organization dedicated to the abolition of prisons. www.nonoprisons.org

Continued on page 5
The Senior Class Gift: Socially Responsible Investing and a Political Student Union

by Ethan Porter

The Senior Class Gift has been a semi-regular tradition at Bard for some time. The Gifts, made with donations from students and parents, are chosen in an attempt to improve some aspect of campus life. The swing set that sits outside the Campus Center was one such Gift. The Gift is selected every year by a group of student volunteers called the Senior Class Committee.

After much internal debate and many discussions with our fellow class members, this year’s Senior Class Committee has decided to use the Senior Class Gift to establish a socially responsible endowment. The SRI endowment will be controlled by Domini Social Investments, an endowment that will fund a political student union.

Political Student Unions exist across the country, and indeed, around the world. Many of these Unions operate in the following manner: several times a semester, a notable speaker indeed, around the world. Many of these Unions operate in the following manner: several times a semester, a notable speaker is brought in to debate contentious issues. It would also bring the opportunity to debate political issues in a structured format.

We chose this gift in particular in order to accomplish two distinct, yet interrelated, goals: to improve the quality of the school’s primary endowment. The SRI endowment will act as an average of a simple student recommendation. The Senior Class Gift will pay for speakers to come to campus who would otherwise be out of Bard’s price range. By creating a Political Student Union, the Senior Class Gift will encourage organized political debate and highlight speakers of note.

The Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) component of the gift is in large part a response to increasing concern with Bard’s primary endowment. The SRI Committee has labored in recent years to figure out where Bard’s endowment money is located, and the picture has not always been pretty. Currently, our school invests in a variety of conservative media interests and oil companies. Profit, not ethics, are the chief motivating factor of the school’s primary endowment. Of course, the school needs to raise money, especially as it prepares to kick off a $300-$350 million capital campaign. This new SRI endowment will act as an average of a simple student recommendation. The Senior Class Gift will pay for speakers to come to campus who would otherwise be out of Bard’s price range. By creating a Political Student Union, the Senior Class Gift will encourage organized political debate and highlight speakers of note.

Please join us for The Inauguration of the Hessel Museum of Art at the Center for Curatorial Studies and the opening exhibition “Wrestle”

curated by Tom Eccles and Trevor Smith

November 12th, 2006

Free and open to the public

Inauguration Events:

10:00 a.m.

“WITNESS TO HER ART” PANEL AND BOOK LAUNCH

With editors Rhea Anastas and Michael Benson.

A new anthology of artists’ writing and criticism featuring artists in the Marieluise Hessel Collection: Witness to Her Art: Art and Writings by Adrian Piper, Mona Hatoum, Cady Noland, Jenny Holzer, Kara Walker, Daniela Rossell, and Eau de Cologne.

Presentations by Michael Benson, Faculty, CCS and Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College, Helen Molesworth, Chief Curator of Exhibitions, Weiner Center for the Arts, Bard College, and other presentations by the students of The Bard College Conservatory of Music.

1:30 p.m.

LUNCH

2:30 p.m.

“WRESTLE” PANEL DISCUSSION

With Tom Eccles and Trevor Smith:

Arthur Danto, Johnsonian Professor Emeritus, Philosophy, Columbia University; Vasif Kortun, Formerly Chief Curator, Museum of Art at the Center for Curatorial Studies and the Hessel Museum; Leon Botstein, Dean of the College; and Molly Nesbit, Professor of Art, Vassar College.

Theater, Milton and Sally Avery Center for the Arts

*Schwinn's and concessions will be available for purchase at the museum.
While I wish I could have written an article of some interest but actually consider the appropriate matter at hand. Let me say, however, that most of the questions posed by Bard of the Chair to ignore dumb questions. Who invited this man? Another instance involved Mr. Hitchens outright telling a colleague and now a bitter-rival stated in an essay in Nation: from that of pre-911 Trotskyism to post-911 neo-conservativism. Perhaps all I will remember of Hallie, now that some time has passed since I used to walk those paths, for how dear can an acquaintance with whom you shared a breakfast or a short walk to Olin hall or a cup of tea in the campus center, those friends you meet for fleeting moments headed in opposite directions and those people you smile at for no reason at all—are these the dearest, closest friends for it will not be our time on this earth is fleeting, and though we are able to appreciate great beauty and we are able to feel invincible, we are vulnerable nonetheless. Every moment you stop running, wind stop blowing: let me find myself again in a imaginary stop buttons in the walls of your room and try to appreciate great beauty. For it will not last. Our time on this earth is fleeting, and though we are able to appreciate great beauty and we are able to feel invincible, we are vulnerable nonetheless. Every moment you share with someone else on this planet is a gift of immeasurable value, and like a diamond will only appear rich when given time to compress into a gem. I’m willing to bet Hallie would be satisfied with such a lesson.

Bliss you, Hallie. Bliss you
The Molinaro Mirage

By Ethan Porter

On October 4, Marc Molinaro came to Bard as part of the Bard College event. Molinaro, the mayor of Tivoli and a Dutchess County legislator, is a Republican now running for New York State Assembly. As is usually the case when Mr. Molinaro comes to Bard, he received a warm reception from those in attendance; this should be no surprise, since, according to him, he usually receives 50% more votes from Bard than any other Republican. To many Marc Molinaro is the ‘good Republican’. That is, while he may be affiliated with the party that many Bardians would never affiliate with, he is considered to be a man of decency and integrity for whom one can set partisanship aside and cast a vote.

The term “free speech” makes my ears perk up and leads me to think that that someone’s about to talk about civil liberties and other grave stuff of the like. When Rob Ross used the phrase in the third issue of the Naked News, I read myself for a sound piece on our freedom of expression. What I got instead was a petulant whinefest from a little toy soldier who fancied himself an infantryman in the trenches.

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But what if Eliot Spitzer is not elected Governor? Spitzer’s Republican opponent, John Faso, was a zealous opponent of a women’s right to choose. While he was in the Assembly, Faso also supports dramatic cuts in New York’s basic social services, including health care and education–so much so that Faso has proposed legally prohibiting local municipalities from increasing the amount they spend on education beyond a certain amount. These are the policies Molinaro would support, de facto and de jure. If he is elected to the Assembly and John Faso wins the race for Governor.

In all likelihood however, given Governor Cuomo’s extraneous lead in the polls at the moment, Eliot Spitzer will comfortably become our state’s next Governor. Counterevolutionaries may at first sound. Molinaro’s brand of amiable conservatism would only benefit as a result. Consider the New York Republican Party is now in utter anarchy. It is in no way libelous to write that, to run against Hillary Clinton, the New York Republicans have put their faith in a former alcoholic, community college dropout, whose argument for his own candidacy rests on his vocal championing of stringing War. It is the truth. If the election were held today Republicans in New York would lose all statewide

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This may seem a truism harsh, especially given how wonderfully civil Rob was toward the editors of the Observer and Free Press, but he ran into a few problems. First, he confused criticisms of style and journalistic ethics with ideological objections. Then, he wrongly naively presumed that intellectual openness somehow overrides a majority’s tendency to exert its opinion. It is perhaps an overstatement to call Speech Refined! that his piece would somehow deal with free speech in a meaningful way when he actually just trivialized the very notion itself.

On the issue of alleged censorship by Bard’s paper Rob first cites the Observer calling his Wal-Mart article “sophisticated and condescending,” as well as “purposefully inflammatory.” Neither of those charges sound remotely concerned with the “independence of the press” and disparaging. In fact, it is discourages in Rob’s view of things. In fact, they seem to be perfectly sound bases for not printing an article. If you have an idea, you need not come off as a shibbaddy or brat, but simply, after all. You may wonder as to whether the tone I myself have taken here is an instance of shibbaddy or brat. I assure you that I’m not being a shibbaddy or brat, but rather an observer. On the other hand, it is a channel. They’re different.

Worse yet, Rob tries to paint the Free Press as another opponent of free speech because it highlighted his failure to cite sources for some very strong empirical claims. That’s his error; not theirs, and it is demonstrative only of their necessity acute critical eye, not some facetious impulse to qualify his work into meaninglessness. The Free Press has printed a wide range of opinions, the kind of views that make stomach’s churn on their outlook is correct and when Rob profers ideas they might not find agreeable, they must judge these ideas over and conclude whether they dig them or not. Rob is not entitled to your ideological acceptance, nor is anyone else. If you can’t deal with this reality, man the fuck up and bring a stronger Pokemon next time.

What really gets my goat (and it’s a mean goat, though), is that Rob has framed himself as a martyr for free speech, when really, homeboy just doesn’t get it. There are people who have made profound sacrifices for the ability to express themselves and disseminate information against the interests of an oppressive state. We can recall the story of Jacobo Timmerman, an Argentine journalist who endured merciless torture and degradation for criticizing the human rights violations of the government. Timmerman experienced unbearable cruelties, ranging from sleep-deprivation to savage beatings, so that freedom of the press might thrive. And just like Rob, he was complaining about voluntary, privately assembled school newspapers that have no obligation to grant him a voice, while no external power keeps him from writing or saying whatever he wants to people. There is no issue of ‘free speech’ here, and to pretend otherwise is a vulgar slight to those who actually labored and struggled to preserve such liberty.

Perhaps, as Rob describes the average human, I am a prickly guy, I’ll admit it. That doesn’t keep me from being able to read something I’ll potentially disagree with and then make an informed determination as to its worth. I hope at some point, Rob will realize that it’s not our job to make him feel secure in his opinions, but rather his job to persuade us, and that will never change. And why on Earth did he quote Frederick Douglass? Frederick Douglass would probably make a paper boat out of Rob’s article and call it the U.S.E. Fucking Delusional

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Dear Ladies,

I heard that there is now a vaccine for HPV. REALLY???

Love,

Totally Psyched.

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Men

First, please understand that while I work for the Bard campus.

Love,

totally
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I Must Insist, I Only Have One Hand But Both Are Present
a commentary on life’s foibles by Tom Shepherd

My fat, balding boss with gastronomic irregularity nearly fired me last week because, as he said, “a habitual chicken-peeker.” He asked me, “Are you proud of this?” Proud? No, I thought. How can one be proud of their inability to type in an efficacious way?

After all, I am a male secretary and my job necessitates quick keyboarding skills. Do I possess them? I once did, and they were vestiges to my great masculinity. These memories now – quick lightning flash remembrances of my lines flying across the computer screen – but a secretary that lives on memories is about as good as aPickled dick – nice to look at but functionally useless.

I am ashamed, but this shame has one simple origin. I lack a right hand.

About every person I know and care for has told me that I have both a left hand and a right hand. Chicken tricky: They do not know what in the world I am talking about. I do have two hands, but I only have one hand. It is a left hand. And, yes, one could phrase it as follows, both hands are present, but I must insist, I only have one hand.

Am I senile? No, I do not believe so, and neither does my left hand. It is pecking out this sad confession. If only you could accept the menial life so your suffering art can bloom.

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The microphone also added that his views did not necessarily represent the views of the student population.

For some reason, the audience loved the act. It seemed, from where I was standing at least, that the audience was rolling around on the floor, eyes filled with tears, just because they were laughing so hard. After that, I tried to convince myself that the material was actually funny because so many people had liked it. (I believe I was the only one who wasn’t on board because more and more of the comedians began switching to this kind of act. Then, a couple of weeks ago, during a mis-

check, I was listening to one of the comedians make flatteringly flattering references to me. I couldn’t believe it. Finally getting back to normal. But then the person started explaining to everyone in the room that their jokes were funny because they’re Chinese.”

The microphone, who, being blind, was unable to identify the comedian in question. “That’s when I finally realized that the material really wasn’t funny. The comedians were simply racist sons-of-bitches.”

The material being used in the Comedy Workshop was not the sole point of dissatisfaction for the microphone. He also claims that he never received benefits for his work ever for "suitable material" in future shows.

I have enjoyed my time working with and working as hard as a habituall chicken-peeker. I had never been so embarrassed to be in front of so many people. I was just trying to do my job and make people laugh, but instead, I was just making people cry. I had never had so much trouble getting the perfect audience reaction. If only you could accept the menial life so your suffering art can bloom.

The leader of the Comedy Workshop, Dan Wilbur, was unavailable for comment, but released a statement, making it clear that the microphone’s departure was his own determination and the microphone “in no way, shape, or form was ever asked to leave. He will be missed and it will be difficult to find a microphone as well liked to replace him.”

For now, the microphone is scouting for and optimistic that he will be able to find work in the near future. “I’ve received a lot of calls from places needing employees, like SMDG and Open Mic Night. I even got a call about working at Kline at the front desk. But before I get back to work, I’m gonna write a bit and try to finish ‘The Great American Novel.’”

I was, at this time, living in Sioux City, Iowa. I call this period of my life, The Provincial Years. And years and years went by in rural America. I performed conceptual rape after conceptual rape at church events, VFW halls, school talent shows, knitting clubs, and so on. I booked myself wherever I could. No one got it, and after handling so much desensitizing cream with so little artistic recognition, I called it quits and decided to pursue a career for which, according to a junior high school aptitude test, I am well suited: office secretary.

I went back to community college, devoted my hours into developing a nice phone voice, worked as hard as I could to get my typing skills up to the unheated of three-hundred words a minute. I studied the nuanced of Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and Power Point. I was a veritable master, and put that shit Word anime, that annoying Two-Eyed Notebook, in the grave. I was master of the front desk, and having learned, “Halls,” in thirty-two languages and several other little tidbits, I was prepared for the satisfaction of a career I had so long delayed myself from pursuing.

Then, years later, I my typing skills waste away. I did not know why, but little, by little, my word speed slowed. Three hundred into two hundred into one hundred into fifty and finally into that pathetic number mentioned above, fifteen. So, at the end of my tail the cause, as far as I can tell, is the desensitizing cream. No, it has to be more than just the desensitizing cream. Yes, there, too, was the mental trauma of years conceptual rape, and these, too, was the sadness and melodrama of an artistic life lost to the mediocrity of the historical era in which it exists. The stupidity of humanity has destroyed my dreams and I must insist, has made me realize this: I only have one hand but both are present.
Beckett Centenary at Bard

From October 7 through October 16, Bard celebrated the 100th centenary of Samuel Beckett’s birth with a series of performances at the Fisher Center. The centerpiece of the performances was, predictably, Waiting for Godot, expertly acted by Ireland’s Gate Theatre Dublin, and directed by German Beckettian Walter Asmus. Johnny Murphy and Barry McGivern as, respectively, goofy Dog and Didi, did wonderful jobs individualizing their characters while hitting every note of Beckett’s text. The irony, the wit, the existential angst, and the bathos and redeemed by belly-laughing humor Stephen Brennan, as Pozzo, delivered the magnificently “gaa aa ga” monologue as brilliantly you almost forgot you knew it was coming. Alan Stanford, looking a bit like Oscar Wilde on a particularly pudgy day, created a really nasty and convincing Pozzo, although this is hardly his fault— I had a little trouble following his accent.

Despite the significant strengths of the individual performances, I couldn’t help feeling that a show as familiar as Godot might have benefited from a less strictly orthodox presentation. I found myself at times, feeling that I had seen it all before. Indeed, every directorial decision seemed designed to convince the viewer that he or she might be witnessing Godot as it’s 1953 British premiere. This was both a strength and a weakness. The Gate Theatre provides a useful historical simulacrum for the student of Beckett, but the show might have achieved a greater vibrancy and sense of relevance if its director had not been so closely to the tyrannical imperatives of the Beckett estate.

More exciting though less attended than Godot were the monologues put on by the Gare St. Lazar Players Ireland at the Fisher Center’s Sundown Stage and Theater Two. Much more intimate spaces than the gigantic Sosnoff Theater. The first of these consisted of dramatic monologues of selected fiction (1963-66). Enough and three of the Texts for Nothing of the late 1970s, as well as the ‘play’ A Piece of a Monologue)

On the rare occasion that someone listens to me talk, I espouse like whoa about how I think video games are the highest commercial art form available. It takes a bit of convincing, but usually, I get my point across or the person just walks away. For my own sake, I interpret abandonment as a sign of agreement. In any case, my point holds. Video games are oft an unparalleled immersion, placing participants in control of a cinematic experience that you can’t get from anything else: a screen. To say otherwise, especially if you’re a parent or the耙 faith and players stranger to this medium, is utter nonsense.

But videogames aren’t without their problems. One of the biggest is that it’s easy to lose yourself in a game, to forget about the world around you. This is especially true for those who play video games as a form of escapism, a way to avoid the stresses of daily life. It’s important to strike a balance between playing games and other aspects of life, such as spending time with loved ones, pursuing hobbies, or engaging in physical activity.

This Video Game is Beautiful and I Need New Pants

By Noah Weston

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The BARD Observer

FILM REVIEW:
The Prestige

By Karianna Butera

Reviewing The Prestige might require one to explain, without actually discussing any plot events in detail, precisely why the movie is awesome and why it proves director Christopher Nolan is one of the best in the business. This is assuming of course, that people don’t already hold such an opinion after his brilliantly structured Memento and the thrilling Batman Begins. However, here is my attempt entirely free of spoilers, and also free of comparisons to the original novel or to the competing magician movie The Illusionist, neither of which I’m familiar with, nor must anyone be in order to enjoy The Prestige thoroughly. I left the theater with a big grin on my face, and not just because Thom Yorke accompanied the closing credits.

The premise is often given as something like, “The story of two rival magicians in London.” Doesn’t sound terribly interesting when you keep it that vague. It’s a bit more than a movie about magicians. More important than watching the development of the clever magic tricks of Alger (Hugh Jackman) and Borden (Christian Bale) is watching the development of the story’s utterly fascinating psychological themes. Like in Memento, things are not told in a perfectly linear fashion, the film opens with an important image, a crucial sequence, and then a great deal is set of flashbacks beginning at differing points in time, interspersed with the aftermath of the opening sequences. The audience follows the progressions of the friendship to rivalry as one thread, the progression of Alger’s personal revelations as another, and the progression of Borden or as one more; they are chronologically separated from each other, yet bound together through the reading of diary entries, and the juxtaposition of different key moments in each flashback set is far more useful to illustrating the actual changes in the character than a linear plot would be–also like Memento.

But, The Prestige, with this kind of storytelling, is not a carbon copy of Nolan’s earlier work. It too plays with memory, how we perceive things around us, and the various guises we wear around different people. Still, it lacks a protagonist with a diagnosable memory problem. The true significance of memory and identity is instead made apparent through the innumerable plot twists.

If this doesn’t sound intriguing enough, believe me, the film offers more. Scarlett Johansson is fairly unremarkable in her role, but Jackman, Bale, and the wonderful Michael Caine contribute solid performances, the latter two lending a flavor of Batman Begins. Luckily, Caine interacts more with Jackman than Bale, so there isn’t an unraveling feeling every scene of Bruce Wayne playing with odd magical gadgets. I don’t think there’s an overwhelming sense of ‘best movie ever’ but this definitely deserves to pick up some awards, and I’m sure that I’m worried to see The Illusionist now because I don’t know what any magician movie could top this one too easily.

FILM REVIEW:
Darwin’s Nightmare

by Katy Kelleher

“Darwin’s Nightmare,” a documentary by Hubert Sauper, was screened on Friday, October 20th in the Avery theatre. The film explores the devastating effects of globalization on the small Tanzanian communities that live around Lake Victoria.

Through numerous interviews with pilots, fishermen, prostitutes, children, factory owners, journalists and ministers, Sauper creates a clear picture of the exploitation of Africa and the terrible repercussions of the money-driven fish industry.

The film focuses on the effects of the introduction of the Nile perch into Lake Victoria. The Nile perch have devoured all the other fish in the lake and are rapidly speeding up the process of eutrophication. If the environmental damage is not halted, the lake will become a large, but empty sinkhole. The environmental effects of an invasive species like the Nile perch are truly astounding. However, what are more important are the effects of globalization and the subsequent exploitation of Tanzania. The Nile perch are present throughout the movie; their cannibalistic tendency to eat their own young seems incredibly symbolic given the other problems discussed in the documentary.

Sauper continually asks the people he is interviewing one important question: what are the planes bringing when they come to pick up the fish? Russian planes fly by daily to Mwanza airport, leading with up to 900 tons of Nile perch. The planes bring food to the people, but it is incredibly symbolic given the other problems discussed in the documentary. The role of weapon importation is not the only troubling issue that Sauper focuses on in this film. He squares together scenes of suffering and horror; making this the most depressing movie I have ever seen. The people interviewed range from a night watchman who stands around wishing Tanzania would go to war so that he could have a steady job, to prostitutes who sell themselves to pilots and later end up dead. One of the most disturbing scenes is when Sauper films young children sniffing home made glue out of an empty soda bottle and passing out in short sleeves.

Although Sauper raises some interesting points in his documentary, there is a lot that he fails to explain. He wants to blame all of the problems of Tanzania on capitalism and the IMF, but this seems to ignore the issue of the corrupt Tanzanian government that allows the exploitation of their natural resources and the environmental degradation of their land. In one scene, a group of Tanzanian government officials are watching a film about the environmental problems of Lake Victoria caused by the Nile perch. One of them stands up and says, “What about the beautiful areas?” He claims that they were only showing one side of the issue, and most everyone seems to agree. It is this kind of blind refusal to accept the reality of a situation that makes it almost impossible to bring about any sort of lasting change.

The people of Tanzania cannot afford to eat the fish fillets that they are exporting because most fish and the people that process them are covered with maggots that are dumped onto the ground. Watching this movie left me feeling empty and depressed, for although Sauper is trying to help by showing the world the terrible state of Tanzania, he fails to offer any hope for the future, or any way out of this mess.

{ SHORTBUS REVIEW }

by Thomas Houseman

It’s easy to use sex for its shock value as a hook to incite interest in an otherwise dull and uncreative story. But when John Cameron Mitchell, the writer/director of Hedwig and the Angry Inch tackles the subject of sex, the result is not just shocking, but shockingly good. Mitchell’s newest film, Shortbus–his sophomore effort and followup to Hedwig– is a story of two rival magicians in London. Doesn’t sound terribly interesting when you keep it that vague. It’s a bit more than a movie about magicians. More important than watching the development of the clever magic tricks of Alger (Hugh Jackman) and Borden (Christian Bale) is watching the development of the story’s utterly fascinating psychological themes. Like in Memento, things are not told in a perfectly linear fashion, the film opens with an important image, a crucial sequence, and then a great deal is set of flashbacks beginning at differing points in time, interspersed with the aftermath of the opening sequences. The audience follows the progressions of the friendship to rivalry as one thread, the progression of Alger’s personal revelations as another, and the progression of Borden as one more; they are chronologically separated from each other, yet bound together through the reading of diary entries, and the juxtaposition of different key moments in each flashback set is far more useful to illustrating the actual changes in the character than a linear plot would be–also like Memento.

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The week before the WXBC girls headed to New York City for the annual CMJ festival we sat down to talk about WRU nominations and other such matters.

**JEN:** Why did the FM license not work out?

**KAREN:** No, it’s not an issue of money, because it’s actually a free application, but it’s a lot of legal paperwork, and we had a lawyer at the time and paying him through Jim Brudvig and through the school, but right when the paperwork was ready to be sent out, the FCC decided that there were going to be no more licenses being given out. It’s an issue of policy.

**JEN:** Is there the money to do CMJ?

**KAREN:** It was a big surprise. Basically, we just ended up in this hot pick. We were one out of five—from four other very big stations in the running for Station of the Year, and then a bunch of other stations to boot.

**JEN:** But it seemed like you won?

**KAREN:** Yeah, it’s basically that anyone involved in the radio or college radio industry can vote, so it could be DJs, or it could be promoters, it could be record label execs who’ve retired, or whatever, so what happened is that we ended up being one of the top five.

**JEN:** And we’re the only student-run station nominated for Station of the Year, and I think there’s only one other student-run station nominated for the University Radio Awards. Are we the only East Coast station too?

**KAREN:** Yeah, we’re the only East Coast station.

**JEN:** And we’ve had three in-studios so far.

**KAREN:** What has improved from last year about the station?

**JEN:** Whoa, whoa, so much. Let’s start with the broadcasting school.

**JEN:** We’re not broadcasting for only 8 hours a day, right now.

**KAREN:** We’ve had three in-studios so far.

**JEN:** Three, at least.

**KAREN:** And we have one more planned.

**JEN:** For the semester, and then probably a bunch more for next semester.

**JEN:** We catalogued our over 1050 CDs.

**KAREN:** And we uploaded our catalogue to the computer, so now our DJs have a searchable database.

**JEN:** So they can access and play anything we’ve got, from Shakta Khan to Gomez!

**KAREN:**** JEN:** Where do you get the money to buy CDs?

**KAREN:** We’ve been working for the last two years contacting promoters and record labels. It benefits them to promote the artists, so they send us CDs.

**JEN:** This year, we also got money to throw our own show, from the university’s emergency fund and ask for $4000. I mean, we have a huge emergency fund.

**KAREN:** Is there anything else you want people to know?

**KAREN:** I feel like folks should know that the station has changed so much. The quality of programming is so much higher, even than last semester, it’s unreal. Honestly, if you’re in your room and you’re bored, you should just go to your iTunes and turn in, in the middle of the night, and we’re there for you.

**JEN:** As far as little things that don’t work, we’re working as hard as we can to fix them as fast as possible. This product is for Bard, it’s not for us to have a hobby. It’s for you guys.

**MUSIC REVIEWS**

**Boogie Boarder - What Riding Waves Is All About**

**BY ANDREW WORTHINGTON**

Residents of upstate New York may no longer be able to go and jump on their boards and surf the wave but... don’t worry, dude, everything is cool.

Boogie Boarder will rock all winter long. Based in Saratoga Springs, Boogie Boarder has redesigned the way that they play the music of the surfing world with rider risks, ceramics glass rooms, and haunted house basements. Their recent April release, What Riding Waves Is All About, is a half-hour collection of mad scampering experimental progressions that is almost of a kind to show up at Smokey river there is a show.

The majority of the songs on the disc consist of a constantly walking, subtly and delicately inconsistent loud drumming and keyboarding that shows an obvious influence of those weird types of 80’s music, post-punk, synth pop, and new wave. The lack of vocals may disappoint some listeners, but the constant development should satisfy most. Fragments, one of the few downfallofs that is apparent is the ‘every song sounds the same’ syndrome that ails so many artists: by the end of the 17-track CD, I was anticipating the high pitched wall of the keyboard and the warped beat of the drums that kicked off the final song.

Boogie Boarder destructs the sounds of the Eighties and alternative in much the same way Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart радио-influenced biased over a quarter century ago. The relentless bias of noise kept me attentive for 30 minutes. Not really because I wrote this review while listening, but to sufficiently express the hipness I feel. While I wouldn’t expect that many people would consider the Boogie Boarder on the billboard chart in my lifetime, the sound should please Bard students looking for something warm and agreeable.

**DAMIEN JURADO - AND NOW THAT I'M IN YOUR SHADOW**

**DAMON JURADO IS TANCE**

In And Now That I'm In Your Shadow he is able to paint a lyrical picture that transports the listener into the wild jungle of a troubled mind. The new album, which came out 10/10/06, does not have the heavy sounds of rock and pop that were present in his earlier albums, but instead follows the lead of his last album in creating a wealth of emotive indie folk, and country ballads.

Once a rockin’ rocker in the eighties, Jurado is now cementing his place as one of the more prominent singer-songwriters in the indie scene. Comparisons may be drawn to classic songwriters such as Bob Dylan, Lou Reed, Woody Guthrie, and Neil Young, as well as more recent artists such as Elliott Smith, Conor Oberst, Ben Kweller, and Ben Gibbard. In the end, Jurado is paving a path that is fresh and unique.

While the intimacy and humanism of his lyrics is similar to each of the men mentioned above, Jurado differs in that he doesn’t worry, maybe unlike the others. He is more of a man who just half a decade ago was still a kid and was making music with Sup Pop. After several years of on and off relationship with Sup Pop he began working with Secretly Canadian and his long awaited album, which came out 10/10/06, does not have the heavy sounds of rock and pop that were present in his earlier albums, but instead follows the lead of his last album in creating a wealth of emotive indie folk, and country ballads.

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MON 10.30

Weis 7pm
A BRIVELE DER MAMAN
(A LETTER TO MOTHER)
(1939)
--Joseph Green

Avery 7pm
THE BIG COMBO
(1960)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE TARGET SHOOTS FIRST
(2000)
--Chris Wilcha

Tues 10.31

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Black Sunday
(1977)
--John Frankenheimer

Preston 8pm
TONGUES UNITED
(1990)
--Marlon Riggs

WED 11.1

Weis 7pm
THE CROW
(1994)
--Alex Proyas

TUESDAY SHOOTERS FIRST
(2000)
--Toni Basil

Thur 11.2

West 7pm
PHOTOSHOP
(1981)
--Alfred Hitchcock

The Crow
(1994)
--Alex Proyas

Tues 11.3

West 7pm
OLDBOY
(2003)
--Chan-wook Park

The Crow
(1994)
--Alex Proyas

Wed 11.4

NO SCREENINGS LISTED

Sun 11.5

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Avery 7pm
FACE OF AN ANGEL
(1996)
--Abel Ferrara

Preston 8pm
ON THE WATERFRONT
(1954)
--Elia Kazan

MON 11.6

Weis 7pm
UNDENSIGE RIKERE (OUR
CHILDREN)
(1943)
--Shinjo Dzigan

Avery 7pm
THE BICYCLE THIEF
(1948)
--Vittorio DeSica

Preston 8pm
EL MAR ADENTRO
(2004)
--Alejandro Amenábar

Tues 11.7

Weis 7pm
ROMEO CONCERTANTES
(1970)
--Lampi Jaron

Hamat Asar
(1965)
--Larry Jordan

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

WED 11.8

Weis 7pm
ROME OPEN CITY
(1945)
--Roberto Rossellini

The Bicycle Thief
(1948)
--Vittorio DeSica

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

Thur 11.9

Weis 7pm
ON THE WATERFRONT
(1954)
--Elia Kazan

The Salt of the Earth
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

FRI 11.10

NO SCREENINGS LISTED

Sat 11.11

NO SCREENINGS LISTED

Sun 11.12

Weis 7pm
HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN MUSIC VIDEO
--Jim Mcdonnell

Tues 11.13

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

Tues 11.14

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

Wed 11.15

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

Thur 11.16

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

FRI 11.17

NO SCREENINGS LISTED

Sat 11.18

NO SCREENINGS LISTED

Sun 11.19

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

Tues 11.20

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

WED 11.21

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

Thur 11.22

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

FRI 11.23

NO SCREENINGS LISTED

SAT 11.24

NO SCREENINGS LISTED

SUN 11.25

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman

Tues 11.26

Weis 7pm
THE BIRD CONSPIRACY
(1966)
--Joseph H. Lewis

Preston 8pm
THE SALT OF THE EARTH
(1954)
--Herbert J. Biberman