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# WINTERS FELLOWS NEWSLETTER



## A message from Marie Rickard...



My Dear Fellows, It is hard to believe that another term has gone so quickly, but here I am once more writing to you with a summary of our year's events.

It is proper that I first introduce several new Fellows who have already generated excitement in the college - Allison Leyton-Brown (of the Tisch School of the Arts), Roger Scannura (extraordinary Flamenco artist and one of our own Music Faculty) and James Ellis of the History Channel.

Allison's music theatre workshop was a standout, (this is her second for us) as was my interview with James regarding his career at the History Channel. And Roger (and his beautiful wife and daughter) filled the Winters Dining Hall with the drama and passion of flamenco at this year's Year-End concert. I was thrilled to see so

many of you there to celebrate the end of term with us, and to reconnect with old friends.

In practical matters, we have finally seen renovations to our Junior Common Room – improved acoustics, new floor, furniture, audio visual equipment, windows etc. all of which have infused the space with new life. It is now a truly thriving multi-purpose room for our students and ideal for concerts, presentations, workshops and just plain lounging.

The Winters Dining Hall has also benefited from some renovation, with more to come in the future, especially a new wooden floor.

It is now the time that I share with you the news of my sabbatical effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. I have a number of writing projects that I'm anxious to get back to, and a number of trips planned - several to New York and one to Spain.

Though I can't wait to embark on this journey, I will miss my daily contact with the college, but of course, there is always the traveler's friend – Facebook!

I'm pleased to announce that Winters Interim Master will be John Mayberry, long time Fellow of the college. As he currently resides in the Masters Office as our Academic Advisor, it won't be a big move for him, and I know I speak for all of us in wishing him the best of luck in his term.

All the best,

Marie

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### INTERIM MASTER

**John Mayberry**

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

**Vivienne Song**



## Kol Nidrei ◀ ◀ ◀

*Todos los votos*

Spiritual redemption and flamenco

**Roger Scannura**



Flamenco has been a way of life for me. The music of the gypsies of Southern Spain affects me like no other. My journey into flamenco began with an aunt from Spain visiting my family in Malta where I was born. Tia Marguerita came and stayed with us every summer. She would cook for us and while cooking listen to flamenco and dance around the kitchen. During the day I was studying art and art restoration at a monastery, listening to Gregorian chanting, but when I arrived home the house was full of flamenco guitar music. As I grew up I studied music, drums mainly and then moved on to classical guitar. Although I love classic guitar music it did not fulfil me the way flamenco did. One day, after I saw Pepe Habichuela playing, I decided this was the music I wanted to play. I asked him to teach me, but he refused saying guitar is too hard. This was in of all places, in Toronto Canada where I was studying Graphic Design. When Pepe finished his stay in Toronto he said to me "If you are serious about learning flamenco guitar come to Spain and I will teach you." I was 17 years old, and after 3 months I showed up at his house in Granada Spain and asked for lessons. I studied with Pepe and other gypsy masters off and on in Spain for twelve years. Rhythm and more rhythm, respect for gipsy culture and the fine art of improvisation within these complex mysterious rhythms.

In the meantime I traced my family roots in Spain all the way to 1500, from Cadiz, to Tunisia and to Malta, the path of the Conversos during the Spanish Inquisition.

I would return back to Canada every year, and with each year more people had heard of flamenco and were learning to love it. At the time I got serious about it, flamenco was not popular and when I announced to my father (a professional soccer player) that I was going to become a flamenco guitarist his reaction was "great! you and the other man who likes it should do ok!" This motivated me even more. A few years later, perhaps 1979 I saw Paco De Lucia perform for the first time ever, I had been listening to his music since 1973, but now I heard him live. There was no looking back. This is what I was going to do.

I made flamenco guitar my life, touring with dance companies, composing and finally recording. After 25 years I had produced 6 CDs of original flamenco guitar music, heavily steeped in tradition. Eventually I was asked to teach at York University. The opportunity gave me a chance to spread the word of flamenco to young people. Aside from students at the university I teach others who have a love of guitar and flamenco, such a person is Mr. Harold Levy. During one of his lessons we started to work on Taranta, a gipsy rhythm from Sacromonte, Granada, Spain. Immediately Harold said "This reminds me of Kol Nidrei". I had no idea what he meant. Soon as he left I started to research Kol Nidrei. I was fascinated by this simple, haunting melody, spiritual and moving, flamenco but not.

I then listened to many Kol Nidreis, Max Bruch, Sephardi, and countless others. The diversity was amazing.

At Harold's next lesson, he brought up the Kol Nidrei subject again. I explained that I now know what that is and how moving the melody is. He then suggested I compose a flamenco Kol Nidrei. This set me off on a 6 month journey of listening and comparing Kol Nidrei to flamenco, digging for the right flamenco palo that it would work in. After months of working and trying different palos, it dawned on me, my eureka! moment, Kol Nidrei is the roots of several of the cante jondo, being Segurillas, Tientos, Taranta and Solea por bulerias. I might even say of all flamenco. Let me explain.

Flamenco started around 500 years ago, a time in Spain called the age of Convivencias, meaning everyone got along. Christians, Muslims and Jews. All got to practice their religions freely. The only ones excluded were the gitanos, or gypsies, because of their lifestyle. The gitanos could hear Christian church music from outside the church and also Cantors in the synagogues and Emirs in the temples. All this was put into the melting pot known as flamenco. To the gitanos flamenco is the only way to talk directly to god.

Armed with 25 years of flamenco playing, and the worst winter in the history of Toronto I locked myself up, considering the weather divine intervention, I proceeded to compose my Kol Nidrei.

The most important thing I wanted to achieve besides being true to Kol Nidrei and being true to flamenco, I wanted to retain the improvisational aspect of flamenco music. I have written my Kol Nidrei in sections, or modules they can be performed in any order the artist feels compelled to do. I feel this will result in different versions, with freedom for the performer whether he is a classical or flamenco guitarist. It is important to me that guitarists other than me will be interested in performing and sharing the Scannura Kol Nidrei. I will be eternally grateful to Mr. Harold Levy for introducing me and encouraging me to undertake this journey through hundreds of years of music full of passion, happiness and redemption.





## Nicholas Elson ◀ ◀ ◀



I'm an applied linguist, with particular interests in language teaching and learning, language assessment, and the investigation of sociocultural, sociopolitical influences on how languages are taught and learned. My fundamental research question is: "How do we learn language?" Winters College has been a tremendously rewarding environment for someone with my research profile, since over the years my interactions with the rich mix of fellows and students of Winters have exposed me to a very fertile range of perspectives and experiences related to areas that interest me. My time here has consistently reinforced for me how important the academic presence of the college is.

My current research project (other than a book I'm working on that seems more like "Groundhog Day" all the time) is with an NGO based in Ottawa

called the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. This group works with the federal and provincial governments on the development of resources and standards for English (and French) as a second language across Canada. They have recently revised a set of benchmarks for literacy performance. These are national standards by which administrators, assessors and teachers can determine what performance level a newcomer is at from a literacy and language standpoint. I have been asked to assess the validity of these benchmarks, and to review the various assessment instruments that are used to determine learner literacy levels and English language abilities.

There are two interesting aspects to this. One is that a person can be quite literate in their first language, but have little or no English language ability. In such cases, there is a danger that they will be regarded, and, in some cases, dismissed, as "illiterate," when, in fact, they are not. We therefore have a test that assesses literacy in the learner's first language. This is an important recognition of the value of the learner's *first* language, and also reminds us that a lack of ability in English can obscure a remarkable level of intelligence, experience, and ability on the part of an individual.

The other interesting aspect of this work is simply the contact with people across the country. Data collection is an important aspect of this project, and it has been particularly interesting to have contact with people from every province, and to get an understanding of how different parts of the country deal with some of the complex aspects of immigrant and refugee settlement. The diversity of Canada becomes very real in a project like this. Convinced as I have been that Toronto is in fact the centre of the known universe, it is always a healthy experience to learn that there are very different views and experiences in other parts of the country that can inform, and, indeed, greatly improve on, my own.

Professor Nicholas Elson

Winters College

## ▶▶▶ Alistair Newton



For the majority of this year, I have been participating in the Neil Munro Intern Director's Project at the Shaw Festival. The Shaw contracts two directors each season to take part in this unique professional training opportunity, which is named in memoriam to the great Neil Munro, former associate director at the Festival. The interns' duties include assistant directing on festival productions, engaging in audience outreach and education activities, and leading master classes for the ensemble. The program culminates in September when the intern directors each present a one-act play drawn from The Shaw's mandate.

I arrived in February at the start of rehearsals for *Cabaret*. The opportunity to assist Peter Hinton on the production has been a truly edifying and inspiring one; not only is Peter a long-time theatrical hero of mine, but the period of the Weimar Republic — the interwar years in Germany — is an era that has had a hold on my creative and political imagination since I performed in a University of Victoria production of Brecht's *Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* in 2003. Peter and all of his collaborators have tapped so fully into Weimar Berlin's legacy of sexual liberation, cultural experimentation, and socio-political upheaval, that this rendering of *Cabaret* feels to me like some kind of Platonic ideal of Kander and Ebb's musical; playing a part in this piece has been a special honour.

Currently I'm in tech rehearsals for Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* where I'm serving as assistant to The Shaw's Artistic Director Jackie Maxwell. *Juno* centers on the impoverished tenement-dwelling Boyle family and is set against the backdrop of the Irish Civil War. This production is a true expression of the fantastic quality of the Shaw Festival's acting ensemble, and it gives proof to the words of the legendary — and legendarily hard-to-please — critic John Simon who called The Shaw's performers the "finest in North America". Jackie Maxwell has been a font of wisdom and an open and generous mentor throughout the process, and working under both Peter and Jackie has provided creatively nourishing exposure to the director's craft from two different approaches and dispositions.

July and August will find me in final preparation and rehearsals for the piece I will be directing in September, and I find myself excited to continue my immersion in the unique opportunities that working at The Shaw provides.

If you find yourself in Niagara-on-the-Lake for an evening performance of *Cabaret* before September 21st, please attend my pre-show lecture (and do say hello!).

a handshake of thought,

Alistair



Cast of *Juno and the Paycock*.  
Photo by David Cooper.



Cast of *Cabaret*.  
Photo by David Cooper.

## Trichy Sankaran ◀ ◀ ◀

Recently, I was in New Delhi to receive the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi award from the President of India Hon. Pranab Mukerjee. This is one of the highest national awards given to an artist of eminence. The award ceremony took place on April 11, 2014 at Durbar Hall located in Rashtrapathy Bhavan, New Delhi.

Sangeet Natak Akademi (established in 1935) has been doing yeoman service, honoring artists of eminence in various fields in Fine Arts each year. It is considered one of the most prestigious awards given to an artist of repute for his or her contribution in their respective fields. It is a national award of excellence supported by the Ministry of Culture and given by the President of India.

I was chosen to receive the SNA award for the year 2013 for my contributions over the years listed below:

- Mastery over the instruments Mrdangam and Kanjira
- 60 years of performing contribution to the Carnatic music field
- Influencing generation of students in the teaching field at York University, Canada and other places, bridging eastern and western pedagogical styles.
- Innovations in the composing field creating new compositions for extraordinary scholarship.

Professor Trichy Sankaran  
Department of Music



## Holiday Concert 2013 ◀ ◀ ◀

*Photographs given by Sterling Beckwith from the fellows Holiday Concert*



Ed Hanley



Suba Sankaran



Wibi



Trichy and Lalitha Sankaran enjoying the concert.



## ▶▶▶ Phillip Silver

“Could I, would I write an article for the Winters Fellows newsletter?” was the request from the Master’s Office. It could be about my shift to “retirement mode” or my recent professional activities or my recent trip to Israel or whatever else I wanted to write about! The Master’s Office should take a minute to consider what the readers might want to read about before offering any of us a tabula rasa!! (Research assignment for undergrads: find the meaning of “tabula rasa”).

First, retirement!! There is an interesting FFA aspect of the shift into retirement which is worth considering. Teaching and research in Fine Arts generally falls into two modes -- “studies” or “studio”. The activities in the “studies” stream are generally similar to those in most other departments across the campus – research and teaching which relies heavily on resources found in or through the university. And so retirement may mean a diminishing of those activities and a major, sometimes shocking, shift in the rhythm of one’s life. For those of us on the “studio” side of fine arts, while our teaching is, of course, within the university, our research is our creative activity which usually happens outside university funding and facilities and in many cases, in partnership with other artists. Those connections and activities can continue seamlessly beyond the date when salary stops and pension starts.

In my own case, the shift to retirement mode was even more seamless, to a large extent due the fact that, as dean of FFA, I had accumulated some administrative leave time which I took in that last year of “employment”. So the mythical retirement slow-down actually began a year earlier, at least to the extent that any slow-down was evident. The year was filled with a number of activities, mostly related to my field of stage design. I served on a number of arts-related boards, including completing my term as president of the Associated Designers of Canada, the professional association for designers for the live performing arts in Canada outside of Quebec. (A much longer article would be needed if you really want to know the details of how federal agencies make ‘line in the sand’ decisions.) I currently continue on several of these boards.

As an example of the kind of project which can that span pre-to-post retirement period, I point to a particularly challenging theatre/dance project. It all started in 2009 with a brief “call me” email, followed by invitation to design the production’s scenery and lighting. In 2010, I visited India in 2010, to begin research on the subject of the production, the people and events surrounding the building of the Taj Mahal. The production was the brainchild of Lata Pada (York MFA’99), artistic director of Sampradaya Dance Creations. Lata put together a creative team including a choreographer, composer and costume designer, all from India; and a writer, director, projection designer, all from Canada. The production featured both Indian and Canadian actors and dancers. Given that group, this cross-cultural, cross-discipline story-telling process became one of the most interesting of my career. “TAJ” debuted at Toronto’s Luminato Festival in 2011 and last year was revived for a 10-city Canadian tour. As I write this, the producers are looking at taking the production on tour in India in 2015, so I have started preliminary work on that.

If all goes well, I’ll update on that in a future newsletter, assuming the Master’s Office is foolish enough to issue another invitation to me!



Phillip Silver, RCA  
Dean Emeritus, Faculty of Fine Arts  
Associate Professor, Department of Theatre



## Contact Us!

Fellows:

We want to hear from you!

What have you been up to since leaving Winters College and York?

We want to know!

Send accomplishments, updates and pictures to

[wcmaster@yorku.ca](mailto:wcmaster@yorku.ca)

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## Welcome to New Winters Fellows!

**We would love to give a warm welcome to new fellows and not-so-new fellows who have not yet had the chance to be properly welcomed into the Winters Fellowship! Welcome!**

### Alumni Fellows

**Michael Kasaboski,**

**George Clark**

### Associate Fellows

**Allison Leyton-Brown**

**Jodi Tavares**

The College Banner, with its bold angles of ruby, scarlet, green, blue and white, is displayed in the Master's Office and at college events and ceremonies. It was designed in 1968 by Kenneth Lochhead, a noted Canadian painter who was most recognized for his experimentation with abstract expressionism. The hard-edged colour-field design of the Winters College Banner was influenced by Lochhead's attendance at a summer workshop with Clement Greenburg in 1962. Lochhead received the Governor General's Award in visual and media art forms from Governor General Michaëlle Jean in 2006.

Kenneth Campbell Lochhead died under the care of his loving family in his Ottawa home on July 15, 2006 at the age of 80. He left us whispering, "I've gotta go. Enjoy every second."



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**Comments? Opinions? We want to hear from you!** We welcome thoughts and opinions from all Fellows and Alumni.

Please send your comments to: [wcmaster@yorku.ca](mailto:wcmaster@yorku.ca)





# HOME COMING

All Winters fellows are cordially invited to join us for

## **THE WINTERS ALUMNI GATHERING**

September 20th, 2014 at the **ABSINTHE PUB**  
following the Homecoming Game!

RSVP your attendance (and guests) to:  
[wcmaster@yorku.ca](mailto:wcmaster@yorku.ca)

