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## WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM OUR ALUMNI!

Please send your news and updates to Jeffrey Ward at [jeff98@k-state.edu](mailto:jeff98@k-state.edu)

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# FROM THE DIRECTOR...



As we are a month into the Spring semester, I want to take the opportunity to give you an update of the many exciting things that are happening at the K-State School of Music, Theatre, and Dance. In my first couple of months as Director of the School, I spoke with many members of the School Advisory Council who asked about the reinstatement of periodic

newsletters to keep our supporters, alumni, and friends up to date on our students and faculty. So, here is the first of what will be quarterly communications from the School!

We had a busy and exciting fall semester full of great performances that are too numerous to list, but I want to highlight a few. . .

KSU Theatre opened their season with Tennessee Williams' classic *The Glass Menagerie*. Directed by **Jennifer Vellenga**, Associate Director for Theatre, the production featured an amazing cast and incredible set designed by Associate Professor **Kathy Voecks**. *The Rocky Horror Show* directed by Assistant Professor **Jerry Jay Cranford** provided audiences with the opportunity to be a part of the show through dancing, singing, and shouting out at the actors. It was great fun!

KSU Dance began the semester with the introduction of two new faculty members **Kate Digby** and **Stephen Loch**. Along with **Julie Pentz** and **Neil Dunn**, their work was displayed in Winter Dance 2016 in December. The audience witnessed a wonderful evening of many dance styles from ballet to modern to tap to African dance.

KSU Bands under the direction of **Dr. Frank Tracz** and **Prof. Don Linn** had many semester highlights, including performances and masterclasses with The Boston Brass and electric guitarist and composer Jim Bonney. The KSU Athletic Bands had another busy fall between football, men's and women's basketball, volleyball, and even some soccer games! They also played pub crawls, tailgating events, and pep rallies. The season culminated in the Band traveling to Houston for the Texas Bowl, where they led the Wildcat faithful in celebrating another triumph for Bill Snyder and his team!

The KSU Orchestra, under the direction of **Dr. David Littrell**, performed three amazing concerts in McCain Auditorium in the fall semester. The large, appreciative audiences had the opportunity to hear such works of Bach, Debussy, Haydn, Rossini, and Lalo to name a few. The concert in December featured the winners of the KSU Orchestra Aria Competition, George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with soloist **Alex Wakim**, and Camille Saint-Saëns' *Organ Symphony* with soloist **Stephen Kucera**.

The many ensembles of the KSU Choirs under the direction of **Drs. Julie Yu** and **Josh Oppenheim** and **Prof. David Wood**, performed on- and off-campus throughout the semester. One of the many highlights was a Sunday performance of *Missa Eclectica* at Grace Cathedral in Topeka. At the December concert, they announced *Rhapsody IV* at the historic Folly Theater in Kansas City on April 23 at 4:00. This concert of the KSU Grand Chorus will bring the film music of *Star Wars*, the *Lord of the Rings*, and *Harry Potter* (just to name a few), to life! Tickets are still available at <https://www.kstaterhapsody.com/>.

The semester ended with the inaugural K-State School of Music, Theatre, and Dance Advisory Council Holiday Extravaganza. This wonderful evening of performances and fine food was a wonderful benefit to our scholarship funds! Special thanks to the many individuals in the Advisory Council who made this happen!

And now we are anxiously anticipating the wonderful upcoming Spring events. Here are a few to bring to your attention.

**March 9-12: The Magic Flute by W.A. Mozart (McCain Auditorium)**

**March 31-April 1: Spring Dance '17 (McCain Auditorium)**

**April 7: KSU SMTD Advisory Council Annual Meeting (Purple Masque Theatre)**

**April 20-29: Unity (1918) (Chapman Theatre)**

Enjoy reading this newsletter and thank you for your support of the students and faculty of the Kansas State University School of Music, Theatre, and Dance.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Ward, DMA  
Director

## SCHOLARSHIP AUDITIONS...

### MUSIC...

- Piano auditions take place on Friday, March 2nd. Potential students are required to play 2-3 memorized compositions for the committee.
- Voice division auditions are held Friday, March 10th. This is done so students can attend an opera performance while they're here.
- The Wind and Percussion auditions days are set for Friday, March 3rd-Saturday, March 4th

### THEATRE...

The theatre department's scholarship day took place on Saturday, February 11th.

### AND DANCE!

K-State Dance Day, the dance department's largest recruiting day, will be held on Friday, March 31st, all day.

For more information, visit [k-state.edu/mtd](http://k-state.edu/mtd)

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: A DAY IN THE LIFE



**Shelton Burch**, senior in English, began his K-State journey back in 2008, before taking a few years off to work in the Army. "A lot has changed from fall 2008 to now," said Burch. "But a lot also hasn't, and both are remarkable."

Burch is a member of the KSU Tap Dance Ensemble, is involved with Tap to Togetherness, has been cast in Spring Dance 2017, and has taken one or more dance classes each semester, with Tap 2 being the class of choice this spring.

The faculty at the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance originally drew Burch to K-State. "When I graduated high school in 2008, I came to K-State as a music education major," said Burch. "I went to Summer Choral Institute in 2007 and during that time met Dr. Julie Yu and her husband, Dr. Oppenheim. Dr. Yu was one of the most amazing choral directors or leaders I'd ever seen, but also cared for you individually. That alone brought me to K-State, even if I didn't continue on as a music ed major after my freshman year."

Despite his switch to a different major, Burch stayed with MTD, and found his home in the dance department. "The department has a very open approach to students," said Burch. "I didn't start dancing until I took a class later on in my college career. If you come and you are willing to work hard, the faculty will work with you and help you go as far as you want. Even more, the other dancers will help you to. From the moment I started showing interest, other dancers were willing to work with me for hours outside of class and never asked for anything in return."

Can anyone join the dance department? With the welcoming environment, Burch thinks so.

"You can join with all the experience in the world, or none at all," said Burch.

# FACULTY NEWS

**Dr. Frederick Burrack**, Professor of Music and Director of the Office of Assessment, has been invited to contribute to the eleventh volume of GIA Publications' Teaching Music Through Performance in Band. This influential series continues with an additional 100 pieces, grades 2-6, to be published by December 2017.



**Dr. Melissa Poll**, adjunct instructor of theatre, has been awarded a postdoctoral fellowship through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Her project, "Towards Reconciliation: Recognizing the Intergenerational Repercussions of Colonization through Intercultural Performance-Making," will focus on a First Nations opera staged in Vancouver, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's "Going

Home Star-Truth and Reconciliation" ballet, and Choctaw artist Randy Reinholz's "Off the Rails," an adaptation of William Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," which will open at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in July 2017.

**Dr. Susan Maxwell**, Instructor of Bassoon, retails a bassoon reed making profiler that is now the reed profiler used by the Eastman School of Music Bassoon studio in Rochester, NY. It started as a Kansas State University Research Grant project and was also assisted by K-State's Advanced Manufacturing Institute. This university tool is used by over 50 U.S. universities and internationally.

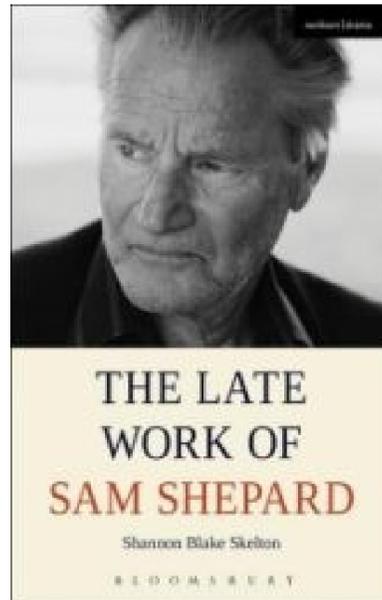
**Dr. Craig Weston's** chamber music piece, "Glimmer," received its premiere at the College Music Society National Conference in October. Dr. Weston, Associate Professor of Music, won the national biennial commissioning composition from Pi Kappa Lambda, the national music honor fraternity. The piece was premiered by K-State music faculty **Tod Kerstetter, David Littrell,** and **Slawomir Dobrzanski.**

Associate Professor of Music **Anna Marie Wytko's** new CD "Anna Marie Wytko, Saxophonist," received high praise in the December 2016 edition of "The Absolute Sound," an internationally regarded audio journal.

The review states there is "no finer modern advocate for concert saxophone performance than Wytko" and that "she possesses a prodigious technique plus extraordinary control of tone and dynamics."

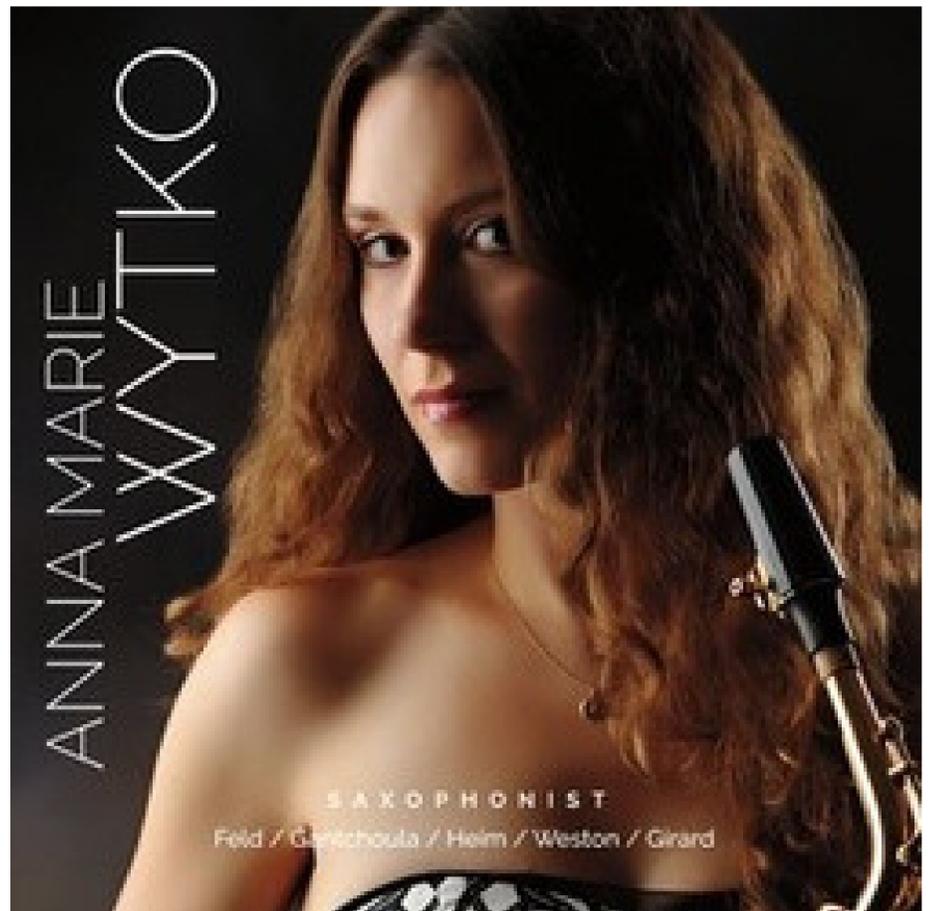
**Shannon Blake Skelton**, Assistant Professor of Theatre, recently published "The Late Work of Sam Shepard," a book on the American playwright, actor and director.

Hailed by critics during the 1980s as the decade's "Great American Playwright," Shepard has since continued to produce work in a wide array of media including short prose, films, plays, performances and screenplays. Like Samuel Beckett and Tennessee Williams in their autumnal years, Shepard relentlessly presses the potentialities and possibilities of theatre. This is the first volume to consider Shepard's later work and career in detail and ranges across his work produced since the late 1980s.



Skelton's comprehensive study includes consideration of his work in films such as "Hamlet" (2000), "Black Hawk Down" (2001), "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford" (2007) and "Brothers" (2009); issues of authenticity in the film and screenplay "Don't Come Knocking" (2005) and the play "Kicking a Dead Horse" (2007); of memory and trauma in "Simpatico," "The

Late Henry Moss and When the World was Green," and of masculine and conservative narratives in "States of Shock" and "The God of Hell."



# STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Three Kansas State University piano students won awards at the Kansas Music Teachers Association State Piano Competition Nov. 6 at Washburn University in Topeka. **Matthew Meals**, senior in applied music, won the first prize in the junior/senior category. **Samuel Fifield**, senior in applied music, won the third prize in the junior/senior category. **Oscar Vasquez**, graduate student, won the second prize in the graduate category. All three are students of **Slawomir Dobrzanski**.



**The K-State Wind Ensemble** has been invited to perform at the 2019 American Bandmasters Association Convention in Denver, Colorado. They are one of only four university bands to receive this invitation. This is a tremendous honor and a testament to the fine work of **Dr. Frank Tracz**, **Professor Donald Linn**, and the wind percussion faculty.

**The Kansas State University Saxophone Quartet** received second place/alternate at the Music Teachers National Association West Central Division Collegiate Chamber Music Competition Jan. 8 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. This ensemble, directed by **Dr. Anna Marie Wytko**, associate professor of saxophone, competed against some of the finest chamber music ensembles in the country including groups from Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska and South Dakota. The ensemble consists of graduate saxophone students **John Ashburn** and **Michael Meier** and undergraduate saxophone students **Adam Lechner** and **Jacob Wright**.



The K-State Trumpet Ensemble made university history on Jan. 20 by being selected as semifinalists for the National Trumpet Competition. The group will travel to Denver in March to compete with trumpet ensembles from all over the country.



Student trumpeter players **Abby Giles**, **Sarah Grose**, **Lucas Johnson**, **Kyle Lefler**, **Steven Schmoll** and **Hunter Sullivan** will be the first students from K-State to ever compete on this national platform.

Singers from K-State's School of Music, Theatre, and Dance competed in the West Central National Association of Teachers of Singing Regional Auditions Nov. 4-5 in Wichita.

The following finalists are eligible to compete at the national level:

- **Matthew Cyphert**, fifth place-graduate men
- **Kage Edgar**, third place-junior men and third place-upper division musical theatre men
- **Michael Fibelkorn**, second place-senior classical men
- **Morgan Higgins**, fifth place-sophomore women and fifth place-lower division musical theatre
- **Rachel Hunt**, fifth place-upper division musical theatre women
- **Nick Overbey**, fourth place-sophomore men
- **Lane Turner**, first place-junior men
- **Kelly Urschel**, first place-upper division musical theater women and fourth place-junior classical women
- **Samantha Williams**, second place-freshman women
- **Samuel Wilson**, second place-junior men and fourth place-upper division musical theatre.

Semifinalists include **Anthony Bandy**, **Christian Blackburn**, **Madison Boyer**, **Alex Cowley**, **Craig Meyer**, **Spencer McIntire**, **Madison Moore**, **Garrett Prall** and **Grace Volker**.

Students represent the voice studios of **Reg Pittman**, **Patricia Thompson**, **Amy Rosine**, **Bryan Pinkall**, **Cheryl Richt** and **Janie Brokenicky**.