



Current students, alumna intern in New York theater over winter break by [Jesse Lundervold](#) - Feb 6, 2015

<http://hilltopmonitor.com/2015/02/06/six-students-intern-in-new-york-theater-over-winter-break/>

In January, five William Jewell students and one alumna traveled to New York City as part of a project created by Natasha Lee Martin, the College's artist in residence and Dr. Joshua Hoops, communications professor. The project was a solo show written by Martin, who also performed in the production, titled "Confessions of a Synesthetic Sailor."

Natasha Martin premiered her work June 2013 after working on it for about five years.

“That was really the first attempt to put it in front of an audience, and I didn’t feel at that time it was ready to be funded,” Martin said. “I really just wanted to see what the audience reaction would be.” After working with her dramaturg, Dr. Noreen Barnes, Martin revised “Confessions” until she started her application for a Kauffman Grant.

Dr. Hoops became involved in Martin’s project during a conversation in October. “Something just kind of clicked, where I had the thought ‘Maybe I can do something to be a part of this and get students involved,’” Hoops said.

Both Hoops and Martin applied for and were awarded Kauffman Grants.

“[Applying for the Kauffman Grant] is a pretty streamlined process. The proposal needed to explain how is this particular pedagogical choice unique from traditional classroom methods,” Hoops said.

Hoops said the proposal also needed to include how students would be involved, the budget for the project overall and how the project would be shared with the Jewell community.

Martin explained that proposals for the Kauffman Grant were intended to create a different environment in which students could learn in their chosen discipline.

“I thought that the process was very accessible. However, they were definitely looking for projects that were reflecting a high level of innovation in your field,” Martin said. “One element that was very vital to emphasize was how was this particular production going to be more innovative, and so that was very challenging.”

Martin went through several drafts of the proposal, she said that those at the Kauffman Center were “extremely monumental with helping hone the vision of the proposal.”

After being awarded the Kauffman Grant, the artistic director of the New York City-based Theatrelab proposed the idea of Martin’s show being performed at the venue.

“I was very open to the prospect of doing the show in Kansas City, however, I felt that I had a stronger relationship and professional network with people in New York City,” Martin said, “I felt like my students would benefit more from my own network.”

The Jewell students that were chosen to work on this project through the theater department were Annette Dauster, senior and production stage manager; Raquel Shaw, junior and graphics / art manager for the pre-show; and Curshion Jones, alumnus and video editor for the production and website .

“The students were interviewed quite extensively. They had to write a proposal about how they thought it would benefit their studies and their future goals,” Martin said.

Students Erin Melton and Erin Christiansen speak to audience members about Synesthesia after the show. Jewell students Erin Melton, first year; Morgan Allen, sophomore; and Erin Christiansen, senior, were part of the media and social networking team.

“They helped me in designing and executing a media plan. My plan was to not have the roles clearly delineated as to give them an opportunity to try different things, but each student adopted a different role and made it their own,” Hoops said.

Allen’s responsibility was creating and building the website for the show. Melton coordinated the social media effort, and Christiansen drafted and sent out press releases to media outlets in New York City.

“Having very little experience in theater and even less in publicity and marketing, this was largely an educational experience for me,” Melton said.

Hoops said that students who were interested had an application process then subsequent interviews.

“I reached out to students in my media writing class and reached out to those that had taken media writing in the past. Then I also presented it to students who worked with the *Hilltop Monitor*,” Hoops said.

Pre-production meetings were scheduled multiple weeks in advance before the group left for New York. Martin, Hoops, and the six Jewell students landed in New York City January 4, and “Confessions of a Synesthetic Sailor” was performed from January 7 to January 11. (2015) Pat Duffy, author of a book about synesthesia, attended the performance and held a discussion with the audience following the closing of the show. Carol Steen, the co-founder of the American Synesthesia Association, accompanied Duffy, who is also a co-founder.

“This experience is one that will form both my future professional and personal projects,” Melton said.



Students Erin Melton and Erin Christiansen speak to audience members about Synesthesia before and after the show. Audience members took pre-show tests on ipads from The America Synesthetic Association website.



Artists-in-Residence at William Jewell College

By [Jesse Lundervold](#) - May 1, 2015

<http://hilltopmonitor.com/artists-in-residence-at-william-jewell-college/>

Natasha Martin and Jay Carter, the two artists-in-residence at William Jewell College, reflect on their experience at the College and remaining active in their fields of performance.

Carter, who teaches voice lessons and conducts Schola Cantorum, stated that being an artist-in-residence is like “living in two worlds at the same time.”

“On one hand, I’m here as an academic. I teach voice and teach course work, but I leave here and go do lots of other work far away from campus at numerous points throughout the year,” Carter said. “I really do have a foot firmly planted in two worlds at once.”

Carter expressed that he is grateful that William Jewell allows him to work both in his chosen field and in the classroom with students. Many of Carter’s colleagues have

positions similar to his; however, they are only on campus one or two days a week and do not have the opportunity to work with students in a classroom setting. Carter graduated from Jewell in 2005 and was very interested in coming back to campus in a professional capacity.

“My time [at William Jewell] was so formative for me. It felt only appropriate, if given the opportunity, to come back and try to sew some seeds here,” Carter said.

Carter says that he always knew he wanted to do serious teaching work and that he could never see himself being one to travel consistently the whole year. Some years, Carter explained, whether or not he travels depends upon timing and what organizations ask him to be a guest speaker or soloist. He suggested that it is always good to have something to fall back upon when one is not able to perform as often.

Martin mainly teaches applications of theatre but also teaches basic theater classes. She states that her experience at Jewell has given her the opportunity to expand areas of curriculum development and for students to participate in that development. The challenge of translating her work in professional theatres to a small, academic setting, such as Jewell’s , is one of the facets of the artist-in-residence position that Martin enjoys.

The most rewarding part of the position, Martin said, has been the students.

“It was an opportunity for me to work with students in a different demographic of the country. The fact that it was a small, private liberal arts college really interested me,” Martin said. “To come into a different environment is always really exciting and really stimulating not only to the students but to me as a professor.”

After her undergraduate studies, Martin moved to New York City where she pursued a career as a professional actor. She decided soon after to go through a Master’s of Fine

Arts program in acting and directing pedagogy at Virginia Commonwealth University while still remaining active as an actor.

“As an artist, you tend to separate what you do as a professor and teaching students from your work as an artist. To have that union, to be able for my students to see my craft, I’ve really made a mentor-like relationship with the students here that I know will continue beyond here,” Martin said.

Like Martin, reconnecting with Jewell students is also what Carter finds very rewarding about working as an artist-in-residence.

At the time the position of artist-in-residence was open, the music department was in search of a candidate with at least a master’s degree in some form of music, some teaching experience and field experience within his or her chosen musical form.

“They were looking for somebody that wasn’t purely academic, I suspect, for this slot. They wanted someone with a professional connection in the community outside of academia,” Carter said.

Carter described that there is a very strong academic music community, but it does not overlap very much with the professional community of orchestras and ensembles.

A previous job description from the theatre department on the Jewell website for the artist-in-residence position listed the qualifications for applicants as having a M.A or Ph.D in acting, directing or a combination along with collegiate experience in teaching.

“[The theatre department] wanted someone to give them that experiential, pedagogical process that they might not have gotten from a lecture-based candidate,” Martin said.

Both Martin and Carter are still heavily involved in their performance fields. Carter recently traveled to New York City as part of a choir performing Handel works and is now completing his doctoral degree in music from University of Missouri – Kansas City.

Martin performed a self-written play earlier this year in NYC and is relocating to California at the end of the spring 2015 semester.



Spamalot, 'lovingly ripped off from the motion picture'

Published on 04 April 2014 by Bruce Rash

<http://www.thehilltopmonitor.com/en/40/1/851/William-Jewell-Theatre-Co-presents-Spamalot-%E2%80%98lovingly-ripped-off-from-the-motion-picture%E2%80%99.htm>

If you are at William Jewell College and looking for a laugh, mark your calendar; the Jewell Theatre Company and the Jewell Department of Music are presenting *Spamalot* April 10, 11 and 12, with an additional performance during Family Weekend, April 26. An untraditional tale of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, the musical comedy is an adaptation of the classic movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975). Following Arthur, his squire Patsy, and

an ensemble of bizarre characters, Spamalot brings laughs without fail. Fret not, Monty Python fans; this musical rendition isn't just a re-hash of what you've already seen.

"We actually follow a lot of the chronological story of the film instead of jumping around (like the film)," Natasha Martin, assistant professor of theatre and director of the musical, said. "It has a lot of singing and dancing as opposed to the film."

Martin was enthusiastic about how hard her cast and crew had worked thus far.

"I don't think they've done anything quite on this level since I've been here," Martin said.

The show incorporates a lot of choreography in both dances and fights. Many of the cast members had to adjust to dancing in heavy, authentic chainmail and fighting with real swords. For others, there were entirely new challenges to face.

"Many of these actors have never sung or danced before (in a show)," Martin said. "They're doing really well, and we're pushing them really hard."

For Lexi McDanel, junior, there were some bigger challenges involved with taking the stage. McDanel portrays Arthur, the leader of the Knights of the Round Table.

"I spent like an hour the other day learning how to walk like a man," McDanel said. "It's probably the hardest thing I've ever done."

McDanel is a veteran of the stage, but this is her first time performing with the Jewell Theatre Company. "I've been in three operas here," she said. "It's very different."

Although this is her first time with the Jewell Theatre Company, she had no trouble finding reasons to start.

"I really love musicals and (I've been) doing them since I was a kid ... Musical are my thing and so is medieval history," McDanel said.

Female actors taking male roles is nothing new for the Jewell Theatre Company; in the fall, many traditionally male roles in the Company's production of *Romeo and Juliet* were played by women.

“We had so many strong females and strong female singers,” Martin said about auditions. During practice, the girls have had no problems singing musical parts written for males.

“I’ve really encouraged this cast to personalize and make the role their own,” said Martin.

At 11 actors, the show’s cast is small. Many actors will be playing multiple parts and performing multiple duties. Taylor Sullivan, sophomore, manages the show’s lighting and props in addition to playing a number of characters. Last semester, Sullivan played leading lady Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*.

“It’s a lot more physical,” Sullivan said. “There’s a lot more room to be creative.”

Although her last role involved a brief dance scene, the dancing in *Spamalot* is much more intense and planned.

“I’m a dancer at heart,” Sullivan said as she stretched out for dance practice last Thursday night. The choreography and range of roles are not the only things that set *Spamalot* apart.

Walking into Peters Theater, some might be surprised to find the stage extended all the way to the audience’s chairs, looking somewhat like a wide runway with seats on any side. Taking advantage of the extra space gives the dance scenes and intricate fights an extra dimension, but also has its technical reasons.

“Taking into account space for the pit is something new,” Nate Wieske, senior, said. “That takes out a lot of space that we use for scenery.”

Wieske, who helped build the set, explained the ins-and-outs of the stage pieces.

“This is similar to *Romeo and Juliet* in the sense that everything we have is mobile,” he said, “but we have more set pieces, and they’re bigger, and that adds to some of the difficulty of making the set.”

What difficulty there had been seemed invisible last Thursday, as the cast and crew finalized the positions of prop trees and mobile staircases for the show—just a small glimpse at the plethora of stage pieces hidden behind the curtains.

“It was a different time,” Martin said, discussing chivalry and the role of women in a medieval society. “Men were very protective.” In a show now dominated by females, the androcentric norms of medieval society offer a goldmine of laughs and social commentary.

“We’re really focusing on the different elements that would have been the norm at the time,” Martin said. Spamalot is a collaboration between the Jewell Theatre Company and the Jewell Department of Music.

“We have been having enormous fun,” Martin said of herself and Ron Witzke, music professor and musical director for the show. “Like myself, Ron has also worked professionally in the world of opera and musical theatre, so it is really a plus that we speak the same language. In rehearsals we have had many moments where one of us will make a note, and the other is on the same page already without having to take precious rehearsal time to explain.” The show will feature a live orchestra with students from the music department performing backstage as the actors sing and dance.



William Jewell Department of Theatre opens season with Romeo and Juliet

The Hilltop Monitor Published on 22 November 2013 by Jill Powers

<http://www.thehilltopmonitor.com/en/33/1/726/William-Jewell-Department-of-Theatre-opens-season-with-Romeo-and-Juliet.htm>

Peters Theater is in its 30th year, and a reception will be held during the intermission of Friday night's show to honor the anniversary. Garnett M. Peters III, son of the Theater's donor and namesake, will be in attendance. Professor Emeritus Dr. Kim Harris, who retired from the College in May of 2012 will also be joining the celebration. Harris directed some of the first few shows held in Peters Theater, including the last performance of Romeo and Juliet in April 1984.

That performance was one of the factors that inspired Wyman and the show's director, Natasha Martin, assistant professor of theatre and theatre artist in residence, to select Romeo and Juliet for this semester's production. But this weekend's show is going to look much different than it did almost 30 years ago. One major change is that Wyman and Martin set it in modern-day Verona, which looks much like modern cities in the United States.

"We set it in a much more minimal, abstract, neutral kind of way so that the audience really feels intrinsically connected to any place," Martin said. "It could be anywhere, it's not necessarily specific to Verona ... because the story is so universal."

In this version, Romeo (Spencer Williams, sophomore) belongs to a working-class family and falls in love with the upper-class Juliet (Taylor Sullivan, sophomore).

"We even had the conversations that were really fun to have technically, like what kind of phone would Romeo have? Probably like a Razr phone ... and Juliet would probably have the iPhone, just because they're from the different (backgrounds)," Martin said.

Other forms of technology and contemporary music have also been incorporated, and two of the main characters have switched genders. Balthazar, traditionally a male, is now a female portrayed by Julie Cleek, senior, and Benvolio is now Benvolia, played by Raquel Shaw, junior. One of the most notable differences placing the show in today's Verona is the costume designs. John Fulton Adams, the fashion designer who also worked on Jewell Theatre Company's Arcadia last spring, has inflected Romeo and Juliet's costumes with current Italian fashions.

“The costumes reflect a lot of the influence of Milan fashion that’s happening right now, which includes a lot of American ’80s styles,” Martin said. “John has taken that concept and really run with it.”

Even with these changes, many aspects of the original play are preserved, including the Shakespearian language. Martin said teaching the actors to deliver the classic language in a modern, natural way while preserving the words’ meter and integrity was challenging, but she was grateful to have the aid of Dr. Sara Morrison, associate professor of English.

“She came in to one of our rehearsals one night and did a presentation and a talkback with the actors on ... Shakespeare ... and (his) language ... We were so excited to have her come in, and I think that sort of collaboration is the Jewell spirit ... and I think that should be celebrated,” Martin said.

Luke Adams, sophomore, commented on the challenge of the language. “Memorizing lines was hard, but once you get it down and understand what you’re saying, it’s pretty cool,” Adams said. Adams also enjoyed learning the fight choreography from Martin, naming it as his favorite part of the production.

“Natasha’s super good and professional with the fight choreography,” he said.

Cleek said her favorite aspects have been bonding with the cast and crew and seeing her own skills grow. “I feel like I’ve progressed more as an actor during this show than in any other show,” Cleek said.

Kyle Miller, sophomore, has enjoyed his multiple roles as an actor and lighting designer and seeing his fellow cast members develop their skills, especially the first-years. Martin agreed that all of the actors, especially the first-years, have done well at stepping into their roles.

“I’m really impressed with the way that it’s come together. The cast is just really exceptional, the students have worked really hard and put a lot of dedication and time and effort into learning everything,” Martin said. “We have a few freshmen in some lead roles that are really doing a phenomenal job ... I’m very thrilled about some of the growth they’ve shown in this show.” Miller is glad to finally be performing for an audience, as he feels the cast is fully prepared. “We’ll be

feeding off the audience the whole time, and it's just going to be intense," Miller said. "This is not how we did Romeo and Juliet in high school."

Martin also feels that the show has been well-prepared, and she is excited to share its message with audience members.

"This show is really about two kids that are just trying to love each other and they're really not doing anything wrong," Martin said. "I think that people need to take inventory and really ask themselves if what they believe is really reality, or if it's a perceived stereotype of a particular person, of a class or a race, and really question and try to understand and embrace young people who are trying to change this by being together."



Students and faculty utilize grants for innovative business, creative ventures

[Published](#) Nov 21, 2014 by Erin Melton

<http://hilltopmonitor.com/2014/11/21/students-and-faculty-use-grants-for-innovative-business-and-creative-ventures>

Bradley Dice, junior, is a University Innovation Fellow. Students, faculty and staff at William Jewell College (WJC) are bringing innovation into their respective fields of study. *The Hilltop Monitor* spoke with some of these innovators to learn about their projects and from where the opportunities to pursue them came.

Gavin Hodges, a senior communications major; Luke Longfield, a senior accounting and economics major; and Nick Cody, a senior business administration major, have combined their Journey Grants, which are available to each Jewell student, to start a t-shirt and graphic design business. They have been working on this project for a little over a year.

“I’d been doing graphic design stuff, and [Cody] was interested in entrepreneurial stuff, and we came up with the idea of combining grants,” said Hodges.

The three students used knowledge gained from their respective areas of study in order to plan for the business.

“Between communication, design, entrepreneurship and finances, [the project] blended well into an overall approach to it,” Hodges said.

The group recognizes the uniqueness of this use of their Journey Grants, and they hope to continue with their business in the future.

“It was the first time [the College] had ever done something like we had done, since it was technically three of us combining our grants,” said Hodges.

Cole Bergmanis, a senior business major, has worked with Landon Young, director of innovation and creativity, to develop a similar idea: a clothing line, [Destined Supply Company](#).

“He narrowed the path down that I needed to be on so that I could get to the end result,” Bergmanis said.

Cole used his own funds to start his company and hopes that it will become self-sustaining, as he wants this to be his main career path.

“This is something that I’m really passionate about: bringing a unique style of clothing that I’ve seen, but putting a personal twist on it. I hope other people will like it as well. This is definitely something I see myself doing after I graduate,” Bergmanis said.

The senior also acknowledged the value of his education in business as Jewell.

“I wouldn’t know what to do if I hadn’t taken any business classes,” Bergmanis said.

He has been able to apply his learning from his current business class, Cost Accounting, to his actualized business. “When I started taking it this semester, I realized that this was the same thing that I’m having to do for my own company,” Bergmanis said.

Natasha Martin, visiting assistant professor of theater for the past three years, is working on a different kind of innovative project with the assistance of an Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation grant. She has written and will perform in a show entitled *Confessions of a Synesthetic Sailor: An Attractive Journey Through High Seas*. The script was influenced by Martin’s personal experiences as a synesthetic artist and her fascination with the neurological phenomenon. Her show was first performed in New York June 2013.

“I realized in my young adulthood, into my creative years in developing my work, that I was experiencing and perceiving the world differently than others,” she said. Martin explained what synesthesia is and why it affected her creative process. “It’s an actual neurological condition where your brain is wired differently a little bit, and you have this cross-modal experience with your senses,” Martin said.

Martin discovered the opportunity to apply for an Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation grant through a colleague, and was interested in the possibility of involving students in her work.

“I found out more details about the grant and how it could possibly apply to my show in terms of allowing students to have an experience working with a professional in the industry to develop an innovative and novel piece of work,” Martin said.

Her proposal focused on the ability of students to learn from and be involved in the process of producing her show and its interdisciplinary aspect. Past student, Curshion Jones, ’14, and Aidan Swanson, ’14, worked on the first version of the show. Jones, Annette Dauster, senior; Erin Christiansen, senior; Morgan Allen, sophomore; and Erin Melton, first-year; are working on this version.

The project focuses on a combination of a range of different subjects.

“I talked about its larger application in terms of current research involving neurology, biology and cognitive science,” Martin said. Martin further explained her show’s interdisciplinary aspect. “It also has components of other disciplines in the sense of music, the arts, and I think that the technical design and the approach to more immersive theater-making is what the Kauffman Center was interested in,” Martin said. She is excited to be able to share her work and her discoveries with the Jewell community.

“I’m so thrilled at the outcome of this grant, and I do want to bring it back to share the scholarly research and creative process with the students and the faculty here so they can feel like they have a more in-depth understanding of what it is we’re working on,” Martin said.

Bradley Dice, junior physics, chemistry, mathematics and ACT-In major, is helping to bring further innovations to Jewell as a University Innovation Fellow. He gave some insight into a few ways that innovation is being brought to the campus.

“The purpose of the University Innovation Fellowship is to foster a campus culture of innovation and entrepreneurship,” Dice said.

Dice explained that Jewell was chosen as one of 88 institutions to have fellows due to the recent development of the Creativity and Innovation program, in addition to technological advancements on campus such as the Pryor Learning Commons.

“Jewell is a very unique school among the 88 institutions with the University Innovation Fellows. We’re one of the few liberal arts colleges, particularly because of our emphases on service and experiential learning,” Dice said. Jewell’s unique environment was one of the factors encouraging Dice to pursue the partnership. “I thought this would be a good opportunity at William Jewell to have innovation from the bottom up, starting with students, as well as from the top down,” he said.

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation allows for awards of up to \$10,000 to be granted for student start-ups and creative projects. William Jewell is one of two schools that have availability to the grant, but is the only liberal arts college with this access.

“What [opportunities such as the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation grant] are doing for us is reducing the barriers students have to pursue their ideas. No longer do we have to worry about finding funding for it,” Dice said.

Jewell’s Director of Creativity is Landon Young. He is involved with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation grants and helps students embark on creative, entrepreneurial ventures.



William Jewell faculty excel in fields, take expertise off campus

Published on 15 November 2013 by Jill Powers

<http://www.thehilltopmonitor.com/en/32/1/710/William-Jewell-faculty-excel-in--fields-take-expertise-off-campus.htm>

In an article from a recent issue of the *Hilltop Monitor*, four William Jewell College faculty members were recognized for their recent accomplishments in their academic fields outside of the College.

However, many other faculty have recently made similar achievements, including Dr. Blane Baker, professor and Wallace A. Hilton chair in physics, Dr. Milton Horne, professor of religion and coordinator of faith and learning, Dr. Anthony Maglione, assistant professor of music and director of choral studies, and Natasha Martin, assistant professor of theatre and theatre artist in residence.

During his sabbatical last fall, Baker began work on *Scientific Descriptions and Analyses of Sport*, a reference book based on the material taught in his class, CTI 255 Sports Science: Physics Applications and Ethical Issues.

“A lot of students had asked me if I’d written down this material ... so I decided that it would be a good thing to have it all in one place,” Baker said.

The process took Baker about four months of writing 500 to 1,000 words per day. The result was a reference book published by Linus Learning that Baker said is good reading material for the class, though it does not include all of the exercises a textbook would. Baker is considering a revised volume that has more complete information and exercises of a textbook, but he has not yet started the work.

Baker said he is grateful for the College’s support and for the contributions of his students.

“Really (my students) asked me a lot of questions, and then I would go research, and then eventually, much of that would end up in the course,” Baker said.

Horne and his colleague, Dr. Wes M. Eades, professional counselor, have also recently published their book, *Whirlwind: Journeys With Job Through Grief, Anxiety, and Pain*. This book is a series of homilies written by Horne and imaginary counseling sessions written by Eades that tell the story of the book of Job and create conversation designed for self-help.

“I was interested, actually, for that sabbatical (in spring 2012), in Islamic and Jewish preaching, and then I got sidetracked when I rediscovered these old homilies that I had written on Job over about 25 years,” Horne said.

Because people’s knowledge of scripture often comes from homilies and counseling sessions with their ministers, Horne and Eades thought their book would be a good format to provoke thought about the book of Job.

Horne began by revising his homilies to make them “readable” to a common audience, then Eades added the fictional counseling sessions. After rejection from numerous publishing houses, the two decided to self-publish at a suggestion from another colleague and support from William Jewell faculty.

“I think we’ve sold about 500 copies so far,” Horne said.

Whirlwind is available both through Amazon.com and the book’s website.

In early October, Maglione traveled to Los Angeles to work and perform with Thrilling Adventure Hour, a monthly comedic radio-show-type live performance. He hired, arranged and directed a male choral sextet including himself and Dave “Gruber” Allen, who performed in the Shenanigans concert held on campus last year and connected Maglione to a creator of Thrilling Adventure Hour, Ben Acker.

Dave brought Ben to a concert I was conducting with the Angeles Chorale. Ben was very impressed and decided that if they ever needed any sort of ensemble singing on TAH, he would ask me to come and prepare the group,” Maglione said.

The performance was recorded by a professional film crew to make a DVD. This episode of TAH included well-known performers like Nathan Fillion and Linda Cardellini. Maglione will be working with TAH again for the 2014 Christmas episode.

“This was a really unique experience,” Maglione said. “It is outside the realm of what one would consider ‘typical’ for a professional conductor/classical musician. However, it was a wonderful opportunity to meet some new people, see actors in their element and use my skills in a creative way.”

Martin spent her summer on numerous projects related to theatre. First, she went to Brooklyn, New York to perform a one-person, self-written show called “Confessions of a Synesthetic Sailor.”

Aidan Swanson, junior, and Curshion Jones, senior, both traveled with her to work on the technical aspects of the performance.

“The students were, in working on the show, able to actually see the process of how an artist would craft a touring show like that and how you would make it work in any space,” Martin said.

Later, she traveled to Spoleto, Italy on a summer research grant awarded her by the College with Lamama, a world-renowned theatre company based in New York. Martin was selected to join a group of about a dozen chosen from thousands of applicants to train with well-known vocal coach Kristen Linklater and master theater director Paul Binnerts, both of whose textbooks are used in Martin's classes at William Jewell. Martin was also selected to teach a stage combat workshop to the other participants.

“It was kind of a dream come true, one of those moments where, you know, you find yourself surrounded by people that are much more stellar and have been doing [theater] much longer,” Martin said. “It was also a wonderful opportunity to connect with professionals ... and open the door for students to make those kinds of professional connections and to get more training.”



Arcadia Directed by Natasha Lee Martin

[Jewell Theatre Company debuts spring production of Tom Stoppard's Arcadia](#)

Published on 19 April 2013 by Jill Powers

<http://www.thehilltopmonitor.com/en/19/1/441/>

Above: The cast of Arcadia poses on the set of the Jewell Theatre Company's spring production by Tom Stoppard. The production continues tonight in Peters Theater with a showing at 7 p.m. and tomorrow with showings at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Last night marked the opening performance of Jewell Theatre Company's spring production, Arcadia, in Peters Theater.

Arcadia is a 1993 play written by Tom Stoppard and set in the luscious countryside of the West Midlands in England. The storyline is centered on Sidley Park, the spacious home of the Coverly family. Time is the operative point in this show, though, as the story shifts back and forth from the early 1800s and present day. The audience sees the 19th century inhabitants of the house and their guests, including famous poets Lord Byron and the fictional Ezra Chater, struggle through different relational conflicts. Simultaneously, in the modern day, a writer named Hannah Jarvis who is staying with the Coverlys and a scholar on Lord Byron, Bernard Nightingale, try to unravel the story of the two poets and their connection to the house.

Natasha Martin, theatre artist in residence and director of Jewell Theatre Company's production of Arcadia, proposed a question that the show seems to ask: "Is history really based on actions and characters, or is it really just a broad interpretation of historical events?"

Martin said the play also seems to question the concepts of determinism and chaos theory, as well as commenting on the art, architecture and literature of both time periods. Professor Nathan Wyman, director of theatre, agreed that Arcadia covers a wide range of topics.

"It touches on so many things that were important during the transition between the Regency period and the Romantic period, which marks a move from formality to more chaos," Wyman said. "Stoppard is just brilliant in the way he wove all these things together."

Before proposing Arcadia as an option for a William Jewell production to Martin over this past summer, Wyman had admired photos of the set of other performances of the play and thought the he would like to create a set like them. What drew him in, however, was the plot.

"I really liked the concept of jumping to different time periods, even if there was no blue police box involved," Wyman said.

Martin agreed that it would be a great show, as Stoppard has always been one of her favorite playwrights and she has wanted to direct *Arcadia* for some time. She also believes it was a great piece for William Jewell's theatre students.

"It really gave the theater students here a chance to use the skills they learned in the classical acting class and apply them in rehearsal," Martin said. Students on the technical side also got to learn about differences in the two time periods, such as architecture. One of the show's props which the actors had to learn to operate was a 19th century theodolite, a three-legged surveying tool used in landscaping that would cost \$1200 on eBay, but the College's physics department, which has six theodolites from different time periods, lent one for use on stage.

"And of course, I always like a chance to teach students how to use rapier swords," Martin said. In fact, the scene involving rapier swords is only referenced but not written in the script of *Arcadia*; Martin chose to add multiple scenes that were not originally included in order to add their own life to the show. The students were able to have their input in the choreography of these scenes, as well.

Besides additional scenes, Martin, Wyman and Jon Fulton Adams, costume and fashion designer, have added their own elements to the scenery and costumes.

"We've kind of heightened the 19th century part of the play; we've taken artistic license to add elements from other time periods and given it a kind of steampunk flare," Wyman said.

Steampunk is a fusion of fashion and technology that became popular in the 1960s and, as Martin said, has recently become almost mainstream in theater. Adams, who has designed costumes for three other William Jewell productions in the past, showcased this style in the clothing for *Arcadia*.

"Some of the costume pieces Jon designed himself, and he was gracious enough to allow the acting students to use those costumes," Martin said.

Martin mentioned Adams as one of her favorite parts of working on this production, but she most enjoyed seeing the growth of the student actors. Because of the difference in time period,

the actors had to learn different mannerisms on very basic levels, such as posture, gestures, facial expressions and rules of proximity.

“My favorite part has been watching the company members at Jewell go from complete bafflement to confident, brilliant, committed performers in a classical contemporary piece,” Martin said. “I’m grateful to them for trusting me enough to take risks and give so much of themselves.”

Wyman expressed similar gratefulness to his students.

“The best part has been letting go of things I’m usually responsible for because I have such talented students,” Wyman said. Specifically, he mentioned Annette Dauster, sophomore, who designed the lighting for the show, and Taylor Sullivan, first-year, who took on the role of stage manager.

The students, too, have expressed their appreciation for working with Wyman and Martin and having the opportunity to experience what Arcadia has given them.

“This was my first time working with Natasha, and she has opened up great diversities in direction for me,” Rachel Pearson, junior, said. “It’s been a challenge, but it’s been a good challenge.”

Since the play was cast in November, scheduling conflicts and snow days have made created obstacles for everyone involved to overcome, but now the show has come together despite these difficulties. There will be three more performances: tonight at 7 p.m., tomorrow at 2 p.m. and tomorrow evening at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for students with a College I.D., William Jewell community members and seniors, and \$10 regular admission. Martin and Wyman believe the audience can expect an enticing show.

“I think [viewers] can expect to be extremely inspired by the heartfelt performances, the amazing costumes of Jon Fulton Adams and the wonderfully unique twist on classical architecture with Professor Wyman’s set designs,” Martin said. “There will be a few surprises in the set that will be revealed in the show, and an opportunity to see history dramatized in a spectacular way.”



[Jewell Theatre Company to debut A Murder of Crows Halloween night](#)

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<http://www.thehilltopmonitor.com/en/6/1/202/>

A Murder of Crows, a dark comedy written by Mac Wellman, explores the human condition through the tale of a dysfunctional Midwestern family. Natasha Martin, theater artist in residence and assistant director of theater, leads the production. October 31 is not only Halloween but also the premiere of the theater department's production of A Murder of Crows by Obie Award-winning playwright Mac Wellman. This dark comedy explores the human condition of a dysfunctional Midwestern family.

Natasha Martin, theater artist in residence and assistant director of theater, first saw the play in the mid-1990s. The playwright came to the performance at the college where she earned her undergraduate degree.

The language of the play is often reflective of Shakespearean verse. It is a heightened text, however, so it uses modernized language. Wellman makes up words much like Shakespeare did.

“It’s vital for [student actors] to be exposed to heightened, more modern text during their training and learn how to navigate that,” Martin said.

The original version was not very physical and was mainly driven by the text, with minimal props and minimal costumes. The William Jewell Theatre Department interpreted the piece differently and made some changes for their performance. Their version is more physical and involves more interaction between the actor, the technology and the design.

Spectators are in for some surprises as well.

“[The audience can] expect creative uses of technology and the theater facility. It is unlike anything we’ve done as the Jewell Theatre Company before,” Nathan Wyman, associate professor of theatre, said.

“There has been a lot of dramaturgy, historical research into the world of the play and the characters,” Martin said. For this performance, students have had an immersive experience in terms of technical research into the animals and discovering how to tell the story of the humans and birds who are interacting in the story.

For those that do not know, just as a group of geese is called a gaggle, a large group of crows is referred to as a murder. This is because if there is a sick or dying crow in the family group, the rest will come together and murder it.

General associations with blackbirds call to mind certain characteristics. “In my discovery, some of those are the evil bird, the dark bird, but really it is about a group of animals who cohabitate and take care of each other,” Wyman said.

As the play progresses, members of the audience have to make their own decisions about the correlation between the crows, the murder of Susannah's father and her decision to leave her greedy, vulgar family to live with the crows.

The play is performed in the round, meaning the audience encircles the cast, sitting on the stage as they perform. This allows the cast and crew to break the fourth wall, using the entire theater space without infringing on the audience.

Accessing Peters Theater this fall is a little more difficult than normal due to construction from The Pryor Learning Commons. However, this difficulty plays in well to the wasteland of the piece, and the new sidewalk is serendipitous in fitting with the theme of the show.

"I thought that [the play] is perfect for a program like this – for young people who are struggling with their identity, and for college level actors to delve into that as they are grappling with adulthood," Martin said.

A Murder of Crows is about hope and choices. A person's fate is not determined. Even when an individual feels like he or she does not have a choice, he or she does.

"The way [hope and choices are] expressed is very subconscious in the sense that there are moments where it's very dreamlike, the unconscious fear, things that people are not comfortable talking about in families. They are expressed through the theatricality of the piece – mask work, movement, comedy, dance, visual design," Martin said.

Martin discussed how a younger generation is reaching out through technology. Young people are committing suicide and posting their own eulogies on YouTube before the act.

"Voices that were otherwise easily stifled, now they have to be heard because they're in our living rooms on the nightly news, on our computers through social media," she said.

According to Martin, the spine of the piece is very hopeful. Young people face obstacles that pertain to their spiritual and intellectual development. Free will allows them to have the power and know the right choice, without being defined by the vernacular of their environment.

“I think a lot of young people are dealing with an identity crisis right now, and there’s a real movement starting to happen in places like middle America, because it has to happen,” Martin said.

In today’s society, most young people are not able to label themselves or do not want to be associated with a particular label. Like life, a lot of this play is about perception.

“[The play shows] how there are two identities that we have, the self-perceived identity and the assigned role that everyone else gives us, that we have to perform everyday. The piece is universal in the sense that it’s any young person struggling with identity issues,” Martin said.

[Visiting theatre professor brings professional experience, new perspective](http://www.thehilltopmonitor.com/en/4/4/175/)

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<http://www.thehilltopmonitor.com/en/4/4/175/>



William Jewell College is no stranger to change, but a recent development in the theater department brings a particular stranger to light. Natasha Martin, an alumna of the Actor’s Studio and an active professional performer, is eager to begin her three-year tenure at William Jewell this fall as the new theater artist-in-residence and assistant director of theatre.

“Like in an applied science, there’s a eugenics of performance pedagogy which advocates practices aimed at improving the genetic composition of a liberal arts program. It’s essential that artists and professors, like myself, embrace these opportunities to shift the ecology of theatre practice and expose the students to real world scenarios. At [the College], the students are thirsty for an experience that will equip them with an ecumenical academic experience in the theatre arts that will inspire them to continue the work into the future,” Martin said.

Martin’s newly developed courses strive to expose her students to the influential movements of Dr. Noreen Barnes, Nancy Gabor, Paul Binnerts and Joe Chaikin of Open Theater, as well as to

methods of performance art, stage combat and the differences between working on and off Broadway. Simultaneously, Martin attempts to give the female voice more presence in the department in hopes of leveling out the male dominance—as demonstrated by this year's Top Ten Playwrights—in the theater world.

“I am a member of the League of Professional Theater of Women and serve on their international committee where we build affiliate relationships with female artists, theatre practitioners and social/political activists in other countries. One of the members of our committee is Artistic Director Linda Chapman [NY Theatre Workshop] who has produced shows that have successfully transitioned to Broadway,” Martin said. “[I have] worked with exceptional female set and costume designers such as Tifanie McQueen [Sacred Fools, Los Angeles who recently redesigned the interior of the Algonquin Hotel in NYC] and Vanessa Leuck [who] has designed for Disney on Ice, Broadway Bears, off Broadway projects as well as regional national theatre. Both of these ladies are paving the way for other women in a predominantly male-dominated design industry.”

Given not only Martin's wellspring of experience and innovation, but also her relationships with fellow professional actors, Martin is able to directly connect her students to contacts with the outside workforce. Her approach has been well-received in both the classroom and onstage.

“It's always exciting to have a fresh approach to performances. I've had three different directors during my time [at Jewell] and each time they've brought something new,” senior Isak Anderson, senior, said. “Whereas in the past there's been more of a focus on creation and growing as an artist, this year is more focused on preparation for the professional world and the discipline that it takes as a worker of the acting work force.”

Martin first learned of the College through Director of Theater Nathan Wyman, who met Martin during a summer theatre camp at Northern Illinois University where the two were instructing. Martin went through a selective interview process at William Jewell that narrowed down 18 potential faculty to the top three. According to Wyman, Martin was the first of the three to be interviewed, but by a unanimous vote of the Search Committee and Dr. Anne Dema, provost of the College, Martin was immediately hired and her term was extended from one year to three.

Though the two essentially specialize in different parts of theatre, Martin and Wyman compliment each other well.

“It’s really interesting—for this show, we’ve been going through a different process than what we’re both used to. We actually ended up flattering each other by mistake,” Wyman said. “As collaborators, we both have our own expertise in different areas—mine being the design and technical aspect, hers being the performance aspect—but I trust her abilities in areas that I don’t know much about and she does the same with me.”

In light of Martin’s enriching past and progressive present, the same success is expected for her future. She brings an element of enthusiasm to the department that excites her students for continued involvement.

“I really like her. She has a fun personality and you can tell that she cares about [her students’] well-being. I’m looking forward to working more with her—I’ve actually switched my major to theater and communications because of the experience I’ve had with her,” Amany Santino, first-year, said.