When racial boundaries fade

an interview with Richard Alba

Extraordinary Lives: Patti Smith

What Nonbelievers Believe
FEATURES

A MORE INTEGRATED AMERICA (FOR SOME) 8

In this interview, Distinguished Professor Richard Alba, author of Blurring the Color Line, makes some telling predictions about the fading of racial boundaries and the impact demographic change and retirement of the baby boom generation will have on the workforce, the family, and American society.

EXTRAORDINARY LIVES: PATTI SMITH 12

This was the first in a series of public programs that brings to the Graduate Center, for conversations with President William P. Kelly, men and women whose exceptional abilities help shape our cultural landscape. The inaugural event featured the maximally talented Patti Smith—singer, songwriter, artist and poet—who spoke thoughtfully about her life, work, losses, triumphs, and commitment.

FROM KOREA WITH ARTISTRY AND FLAIR 16

Masters of Korea’s traditional music filled Elebash Recital Hall and Proshansky Auditorium with new sounds and rhythms during the 2009 New York Sanjo Festival and Symposium.

VARIETIES OF NONBELIEF 17

Addressing issues of religion in its second year, the Great Issues Forum focused in December on beliefs of nonbelievers.

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The notion of American “exceptionalism”—the idea that America is uniquely principled—has been given new life and meaning by the world view of President Obama and by the sense of national purpose manifest in our response to the Haitian crisis.

This exceptionalist perspective dates from 1630, when John Winthrop declared, “We shall be as a city upon a hill,” envisioning the nascent Bay Colony as “A Model of Christian Charity.” Later generations found the vitality of our “frontier spirit” singularly American, and it was our specialness that justified the far from charitable doctrine of “Manifest Destiny,” a rationale for the imperialistic adventures of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including our occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934.

Academic interest in exceptionalism flourished only with the end of World War II. The GI Bill democratized teaching and learning. Our universities threw off the weight of European cultural history and began to introduce more American subject matter into their curricula. Mining the past to create a distinctly American narrative, they cobbled together a set of ideas that undergirded national particularity.

We responded to the need to rebuild Europe, not just materially, with the Marshall Plan, but—in the aftermath of fascism and the horrors of the Holocaust—intellectually as well. We sought to share the American experience and American values, presenting ourselves as a beacon, a nation tasked to spread democratic values across the globe. From the Marshall Plan and USAID to the Peace Corps, this perception has been the driver for some of the great things we have accomplished—and for some of the most ill-considered. What began as a desire to do good too often became an excuse for the exercise of power.

Fully attentive to the Manichean character of American exceptionalism, President Obama has nonetheless recuperated its rhetoric. We’ve witnessed its return in his campaign and inaugural speeches, in his State of the Union addresses, and in his press conferences. More materially, we recognize its force in the return of U.S. marines to Haiti—this time, for a very different purpose. Yet, in a larger sense, exceptionalism has never left us. The sense of a special destiny, predicated on moral commitment, is, for better or worse, embedded in the fiber of our national identity.

William P. Kelly
President
The Graduate Center
The Mannahatta Project: New York as it Was

Have you ever wondered what Manhattan was like before it became a metropolis? Dr. Eric W. Sanderson and illustrator Markley Boyer have the answer,

as they prove in the beautiful and visionary book *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* (Abrams, 2009), an outgrowth of Sanderson’s Mannahatta Project, which he initiated ten years ago at the Wildlife Conservation Society, where he serves as senior conservation ecologist.

Sanderson spoke in Elebash Recital Hall on November 17 about the exciting and complex research involved in reconstructing the 1609 landscape of the island—known as “Mannahatta” or “Island of Many Hills” to the Lenape Indians, who were living there when Henry Hudson sailed into the harbor.

What began as a simple imaginary exercise turned into a full-blown project as Sanderson pursued his interests in cartography and landscape ecology. He discovered an extraordinary primary source, a ca. 1782 British Headquarters Map of the island’s topography, drawn up over a number of years as an aid to the British defense of the island during the Revolutionary War. The original map, kept in the National Archives of the United Kingdom, is more than ten feet long and three feet wide and drawn at a scale of one inch to eight hundred feet. It shows tree-lined streets, backyards, road networks, fields, orchards, sandy beaches, streams, individual buildings, estates, formal gardens, and alleys of trees, plus ecosystems of marshes, forests, beaches, rivers, ponds, streams, cliffs, coverts, bays, and salt grass fields.

Another primary source vital to Sanderson’s research was the set of detailed 1808–11 Randel Farm Maps in the Manhattan Topographical Bureau. The work of surveyor John Randel, Jr., they were commissioned by the government to assist in the expansion of the city, and they led to the rectilinear street grid we know today.

Using these and other sources, as well as standard scientific tools, mapping software, spatial analysis techniques, aerial views, models, and even moviemaking technology, Sanderson and Boyer formed photorealistic images of the island’s natural features in 1609—streams, hills, forests, caves, beaches, fields, ponds—and its fifty-five different ecosystems, revealing a biodiversity per acre rivaling that of Yellowstone National Park’s 2.2 million acres.

“Manhattan could have been a National Park. Its forests were home to bears, wolves, songbirds, and salamanders, with clear, clean waters alive with fish—and a mountain lion was treed on the Upper West Side!” Sanderson said. Central Park’s original topography included wetlands, streams, and Lake Mannahatta. On today’s Foley Square, an underground spring fed the forty-eight-acre, sixty-feet-deep Collect Pond, a source of fresh drinking water and a place for ice skating and other recreation—until waste and pollution from tanneries, breweries, and slaughterhouses destroyed it.

A feature on the Mannahatta Project’s Web site provides information and images of any specific Manhattan location in 1609. On the Graduate Center site were a hilly oak and hickory forest, a stream, and wildlife ranging from beavers to black bears. Sanderson’s team also concluded that the Lenape probably fished and duck hunted in this immediate area.

Though the Mannahatta Project offers a spellbinding glimpse into Manhattan’s past, Sanderson explained that it is “not merely an academic flight of fancy.” Its mission is to stimulate awareness of remaining wild places, explore ways to make cities more livable, and discover methods to restore some of the ecological processes lost to New York City, “the ecosystem that never sleeps.”

The lecture was cosponsored by the Gotham Center and the Center for Urban Research’s CUNY Mapping Service project.

Critic Gary Giddins Talks with William P. Kelly about the Evolution of Jazz

To the delight of an enthusiastic overflow crowd, President William P. Kelly engaged eminent jazz critic Gary Giddins, visiting professor of American studies at the Graduate Center, in a spirited and informative interchange on the state of jazz, past and present.

The author of ten books on jazz, Giddins has...
won an unparalleled six ASCAP–Deems Taylor Awards, a Peabody Award for Broadcasting, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a lifetime achievement award from the Jazz Journalists Association, two Ralph J. Gleason Music Book Awards, and a National Book Critics Circle Award in Criticism.

Calling his guest “the world’s greatest interviewer,” Kelly invited the former Village Voice writer to talk about Jazz (W. W. Norton, 2009), his most recent book, coauthored with Scott DeVeaux. Taking an historical approach, Jazz follows the development of the form through different geographic regions and eras, and Giddins identified what he considers “the four way stations of jazz”: its beginnings as New Orleans folk art around the turn of the last century, the emergence of popular swing music in the 1930s, the World War II era when “bop” and other jazz forms had a cult status, and the classical 1950s mode when structure and improvisation were combined. “Jazz makes you consider other kinds of music and how they work,” he added, “for example, hip hop.”

The book includes an audio CD that provides examples of certain topics addressed in the book. Giddins played a selection that demonstrates how New Orleans funeral marches are the background from which Jelly Roll Morton’s work evolved.

In discussing the place of jazz in universities and the effect of institutional support—jobs, grants, rehearsal and performance facilities—on jazz and jazz musicians, Giddins observed that “Musicians working and teaching in educational institutions are serving a new kind of apprenticeship,” quite different from the old route of working for years in a jazz quartet, club, or orchestra of a seasoned professional in order to become established, sign with a record label, and headline tours and engagements. Giddins noted, however, that jazz courses often are placed in academic rather than music departments, because many “nineteenth-century music departments” do not accept jazz as an established and serious art form.

Turning to the current state of his profession, Giddins decried the disappearance of “outlets for music criticism” and the current “plague of amateur criticism,” such as one finds on Amazon.com or on blogs, MySpace, and Facebook. “I don’t think criticism or art is democratic,” he stated, and suggested that true criticism requires comprehensive knowledge of both the history of music and the history of music criticism in order to apply meaningful criteria when discussing the art form.

Looking back on the evening, President Kelly said, “The opportunity to spend an hour discussing Gary’s new history of American jazz was a joy of the first order. His remarks were illuminating, graceful, and witty, which is to say they were characteristic of the man and of his work.”

This event was presented by the Center for the Humanities and introduced by its chair, David Nasaw, on November 2 in the Skylight Room.

—Kris DiLorenzo

“Dissolving Media,” A Look at How Technology Advances the Art of Animated Images

This motion-captured moment from “Ghostcatching,” a 1999 virtual dance installation, was a key illustration of what writer and curator Sarah Lewis called “Dissolving Media” in her lecture on “The Impact of Digital Media in Contemporary Art Practice” in October at the Segal Theater. Created by dancer and choreographer Bill T. Jones with the multimedia artists now called the Open Ended Group, “Ghostcatching” captures the spirit of what Lewis and her cocurator David Belasco plan for the upcoming biennial exhibition at New Mexico’s SITE Santa Fe. Titled “The Dissolve,” the exhibition, which will feature a new and technically updated version of “Ghostcatching,” takes its name and theme from video’s ability to make images fade into each other and will focus on video art and moving images in their many forms.

Guarding New Energy Sources from the Curse of Oil

As the world comes to terms with dwindling amounts of oil and turns its attention to developing new sources of energy to fill the void, valuable lessons can be learned from the troubled history of oil extraction.

Three panelists at an event hosted by the Center for the Humanities broached this timely topic: Peter Maass, author of Crude World: The Violent Twilight of Oil (Knopf, 2009), which exposes the devastating effects of oil extraction, production, and exportation; George Caffentzis, professor of philosophy at the University of Southern Maine; and Silvia Federici, professor emerita of philosophy and international studies at Hofstra University.

Seldom do the people of oil-rich countries share in the enormous financial benefits of oil production. Oil is often called a “resource curse,” particularly in those places where corruption, political instability, violence, and poverty are the direct result of its extraction. Maass spoke about legislation now before the U.S. Senate that calls for transparency in the activity of energy companies. The Energy Security Through Transparency Act would
require that energy and mining companies reveal how much they pay to foreign countries and the U.S. government for oil, gas, and other minerals. This mandatory disclosure would establish accountability and help cut down on corruption. “Investors would be informed about where their money is going, companies would be able to secure their reputations, and, importantly, corruption would be minimized,” said Maass. The legislation could also provide a model for future energy resource management.

Caffentzis called for a change in our approach. “We need to think about oil in another way,” he said. “Increasingly, in many parts of the world, groups of indigenous people are demanding that water and oil be treated in the same manner—as a common resource pool, owned by the people who are affected by its extraction.”

As countries begin to move away from oil to new energy sources such as wind and solar power, an important shift will have to take place in the way that energy is developed and distributed and how the financial benefits are disbursed. Federici cautioned that many of the world’s largest oil producers—ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP—are now vying to be suppliers of green energy, a situation that threatens to replicate the troubling dynamics of oil extraction.

The panelists agreed that reducing energy consumption is of prime importance no matter how green the production. “One of the dangers of looking at green energy as the savior is that it diverts attention from the fact that we need to create a different kind of economic system that is not built on immense energy consumption,” said Federici. “We are under the illusion that if we have windmills or solar power supplying the energy we will be able to continue to consume at the same rate.” Becoming more conservation-minded about overall energy use will safeguard not only natural resources but also the well-being of those whom the resources should benefit.

The well-attended November 10 event was moderated by Ashley Dawson of the Graduate Center’s doctoral faculty in English.

—KC Trokker

**Leon Levy Center Launches First Biography of Legendary Photographer Dorothea Lange**

Despite her extraordinary influence on American documentary photography, Dorothea Lange (1895–1965) had never been the subject of a biography until the 2009 publication of Linda Gordon’s *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits* (WW Norton & Company). At a launch event hosted by the Leon Levy Center for Biography on October 21, Gordon, the Florence Kelley Professor of History at New York University and a renowned social and political historian, spoke about the book and her experience as a first-time biographer.

“This biography forced me to examine more closely how gender works in the life of the individual,” she said, adding that she “made these observations about gender against Lange’s will. She was no feminist… She wanted to be a great photographer, not a great woman photographer.”

If Lange’s dismissal of feminism was consonant with the attitude of the times in which she lived, the narrative of her life flew in the face of convention. At the age of twenty-three, she became San Francisco’s most sought-after portraitist and was later to distinguish herself as a photographer for the Farm Security Administration (FSA), which had been created as part of the New Deal to document and fight rural poverty. It was under the FSA that she captured some of the most memorable images of the Great Depression, most notably her iconic 1936 photograph “Migrant Mother.” Lange was also one of the few photographers to capture images of the Japanese-American internment camps established during World War II. Not only was she a successful female artist in a male-dominated field, she also managed a disability, walking with a permanent limp that was the result of polio in childhood.

In her talk, Gordon brought her scholarship on gender and women’s issues to bear on her understanding of Lange’s life and career. “A biography always has to be one life seen through another life,” she said.

Gordon explained how Lange attempted to reconcile early twentieth-century expectations of marriage and motherhood with her independence and artistic ambition. Lange married twice, and was mother to six children, four of them stepchildren. On many occasions, she placed all six in paid foster care when her jobs required her to travel. While this may seem psychologically cruel to us today, Gordon noted that “Child development experts at the time held that foster care was a superior choice, offering children a mother, a family—possibly a father.” Whatever the prevailing opinion, the decision to place her children in care came at a high price, according to Gordon, resulting in strained relationships and extreme feelings of guilt on Lange’s part.

—KC Trokker

**The Age of Stupid Looks Back at the Origins of Climate Change from An Apocalyptic Future**

A GC screening of *The Age of Stupid* (2009), a documentary-cum-sci-fi film by British director Fanny Armstrong, provided the opportunity for thoughtful commentary by Professor Charles Vörösmarty, the recently appointed director of the CUNY Environmental Cross-Roads Initiative at City College.

The film presents an apocalyptic vision of 2055, when civilization as we know it has been obliterated by increasing global temperatures. In its framing device, an archivist (Pete Postlethwaite) has access to a Global Archive, from which he selects evidence that documents the causes of Earth’s plight. These short, cautionary tales take place in parts of the world with varying levels of development, from completely undeveloped but petroleum-rich sub-Saharan Africa to highly industrial France.

The filmmaker shines a kindly light on the characters in these tales. Their only evil, if any, is ignorance or stupidity—thus, the name of the film. They are struggling to make a living and fulfill their higher natures in a world where oil production, the uncontrolled and wasteful consumption of energy, and the growing global demand for higher standards of living are leading toward the apocalypse. Among them are a young woman, poverty stricken in an oil-rich land, yet dreaming of becoming a doctor; a wealthy businessman seeking to establish a low-cost airline for his less fortunate fellow citizens, oblivious to air travel’s contribution to carbon levels in the atmosphere; and a Shell paleontologist who rescues fellow residents from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina even as the nature of his work contributes to the growing force of hurricanes.

After the screening, Professor Vörösmarty re-
Birthday Greetings from Hizbollah and Other Surprising Aspects of a Changing Middle East

During his twenty-five years as a Middle East correspondent, Neil MacFarquhar, now UN bureau chief for the New York Times, developed an understanding of the region as a place of “warmth, humanity, and generous eccentricity.” It is a view that, particularly in the West, is too often obscured by the violence in the region’s contemporary history. One of only a handful of Western journalists fluent in Arabic, MacFarquhar served as correspondent for the Associated Press in Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Cyprus, and was based in Cairo for five years as Times bureau chief there.

He spoke at an event celebrating his new book The Media Relations Department of Hizbollah Wishes You a Happy Birthday: Unexpected Encounters in the Changing Middle East (PublicAffairs, 2009). In it, he writes of his experience in the region and weaves stories of everyday life with political commentary and personal profiles of men and women working for political and social change.

The book is an attempt to dispel a “profound American ignorance about the character of the region” and to reconcile the disconnect between his experience of the Middle East and Western media coverage, a disjunction MacFarquhar began to feel at age ten in Libya, “where he and his father, a chemical engineer, heard of the 1969 coup on BBC news, an event that they had been unaware of even as it unfolded around them.”

MacFarquhar is keenly aware of the region’s problems, including tight restrictions on freedom of speech, the press, and assembly. “Mukhabarat, the Arabic word for ‘secret police’, is among the first words expatriates learn, particularly reporters,” he noted. Minority rule in politics also frustrates social change. “Constitutional monarchy in the Middle East,” he said, sharing a popular quip, “means that the monarch writes the constitution.”

MacFarquhar further explained how those outside the region, especially Americans, can help realize change in the Middle East, beginning with dispelling American ambivalence about Palestine. Altering the vocabulary of discussion is another critical step, particularly abandoning stock rhetoric about “freedom and democracy”—as was promised when the U.S. entered Iraq—and instead speaking in the language of the region about our shared values of justice and dignity. He further encouraged Westerners to support all agents of change in the region and to speak out against oppression in the Middle East, be it in Palestine or Saudi Arabia.

The talk was sponsored by the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC).

Sarah Schulman Delivers CLAGS’ Tenth Annual Kessler Lecture

Sarah Schulman, professor of English at the College of Staten Island and a Fellow at NYU’s New York Institute for the Humanities, delivered the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies’ (CLAGS) David R. Kessler Lecture before an enthusiastic audience on November 12 in Proshansky Auditorium. A part of CLAGS’ programming for the past ten years, the annual lecture turns the spotlight on a scholar, artist, or activist who has produced a substantive body of work that significantly influences lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) studies.

Sarah E. Chinn, executive director of CLAGS, introduced Schulman, praising her “humanity, her fearlessness of purpose,” and her idea that “another world is possible.” “Possibility is the cornerstone of Sara Schulman’s work,” Chinn declared.

Schulman has written nine novels, three plays, and four nonfiction books, including her newest, Ties That Bind: Familial Homophobia and Its Consequences (New Press, 2009), and has been deeply involved in organizations for social change, including the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and the Lesbian Avengers, of which she was a co-founder. Schulman’s awards include a Guggenheim playwriting fellowship, Fulbright scholarship, Revson fellowship, two American Library Association Book Awards, and a Stonewall Award. She also was a Prix de Rome finalist.

Preceding Schulman’s lecture on “Ties That Bind: Familial Homophobia and Its Consequences” was a video montage by Jim Hubbard of vignettes from Schulman’s public appearances, including a 1990 CBS News Nightwatch, a 1993 CUNY-TV broadcast, and a conversation with Kate Millett.

In her lecture, Schulman made the controversial statement that how LGBTQ people are treated in their families is more influential than the debate over gay marriage. “The family is the first place where we are instructed in homophobia, a product of heterosexual culture,” she said.

She also spoke of the invisibility, “constant diminishment,” and exclusion from mainstream discourse experienced by LGBTQ people. “We are not where we should be,” she said. “We are not a niche market.” Schulman called for “full citizenship” and “systems of accountability” to create deterrents and consequences for homophobic practices in government, media, the corporate world, and among individuals. “Homophobia is not a personal problem,” she declared, “but a cultural crisis.”

—Kris DiLorenzo
Renaissance Fashion Took Accessorizing Seriously

“As love tokens, Renaissance accessories played significant roles in facilitating and marking the bonds of love, betrothal, and marriage,” said Renaissance studies specialist Bella Mirabella in her lecture on “Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories.” Handkerchiefs, jewelry, gloves, and hats could also transmit political messages and even change fortunes.

The handkerchief, a highly valuable, finely crafted work of elaborately embroidered linen and lace, whether it was given, accepted, worn, or even purposefully dropped, was a highly adaptable means of communication, sending messages of courtship, court intrigue, position, manners, or a struggle for power. Said Mirabella, “In the Renaissance, accessories could be of equal if not at times of more importance than luxurious dress.”

This view is corroborated in literature and in real-life examples. In Shakespeare’s Othello, Iago manipulates a handkerchief to ignite Othello’s jealous rage. Letters published in Queen Elizabeth and Some Foreigners: Being a Series of Hitherto Unpublished Letters from the Archives of the Hapsburg Family (Bodley Head, 1928) reveal that the queen’s offer to use her handkerchief to wipe some smut off Sir Walter Raleigh’s face generated gossip that she loved Raleigh “beyond all others.” Then there is Anne Boleyn, second to marry Henry VIII and first to be beheaded. At least two scholars have attributed her sad demise to her indiscriminate dropping of a handkerchief at the feet of a favorite courtier after a joust, according to Mirabella, who cites Marie Louise Bruce’s Anne Boleyn (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1972) and Retha M. War尼克’s The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the Court of Henry VIII (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

When it comes to “critics” of fashion, omnipresent since human beings first eyed each other’s garb, Mirabella named, among others, the Roman poet Juvenal, famous for his Satires; Christine de Pisan, who considered the medieval dress of her day in The Treasure of the City of Ladies; Baldesar Castiglione, Renaissance diplomat and soldier, whose Book of the Courtier provides advice on costuming; and Dutch scholar Erasmus, “Prince of Humanists” and Catholic theologian, whose Handbook on Good Manners for Children: De Civilitate Morum Pueriliom Libellus addressed matters of dress as well as behavior at the dining table and ways to converse with one’s elders and the opposite sex.

Mirabella used classical paintings to illustrate the ideal of tasteful accessorizing. The imaginary subjects of Bellini’s “Queen of Cyprus” and Botticelli’s “Portrait of a Woman” show restraint in their use of hair ornaments and pearls—one of the most prized items one could own—and the very regal Eleonora of Toledo, as painted by Agnolo Bronzino, is also a model of good taste, wearing only pearls as ornaments. Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I, on the other hand, dazzle the viewer with ornate jewels and clothing, exemplifying what Mirabella called “excessorizing.”

Bella Mirabella is associate professor of literature and the humanities at New York University. Her November 17 presentation, part of the Women’s Studies Speaker Series, was sponsored by the Society for the Study of Women in the Renaissance (SSWR).
Ronnie Ancona (Prof., Hunter, Classics) is the new American Philological Association (APA) vice president for education, serving from 2010–14. The APA is North America's principal learned society for the study of ancient Greek and Roman language, literature, and civilization.

Meena Alexander (Dist. Prof., Hunter, English) has received the 2009 Distinguished Achievement Award from the South Asian Literary Association (SALA), and she was honored with the publication of Passage to Manhattan: Critical Essays on Meena Alexander (Cambridge Scholars, 2009), coedited by alumna Lopamudra Basu (English, 2004).

Marvin Carlson (Dist. Prof., GC, Comparative Literature, Theatre) was honored by the publication of Changing the Subject: Marvin Carlson and Theatre Studies, 1959–2009 (University of Michigan Press, 2009). This collection of essays by theatre scholars celebrates Carlson’s fifty-year career. The author of fifteen books and a prolific translator, editor, and reviewer, Carlson has also taught many major contemporary scholars. The foreword is by his former student, playwright Paula Vogel of Yale School of Drama.

Mary Ann Caws (Dist. Prof., GC, Comparative Literature, English, French) was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on October 10.


Mary Gibson (Prof., John Jay, Criminal Justice, History) was keynote speaker at a conference in Turin, Italy, in November, marking the death centenary of criminologist Cesare Lombroso. Her address was entitled “Criminology Before and After Lombroso.”

Patty Kelly (Anthropology, 2002), George Washington University assistant professor of anthropology, was awarded the American Ethnological Society’s Stephens Prize for Lydia’s Open Door: Mexico’s Most Modern Brothel (University of California Press, 2008).

David Del Tredici (Dist. Prof., City, Music), a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer considered the father of music’s Neo-Romantic movement, has had his work performed by most major American and European orchestral ensembles. On December 16 in Elebash Recital Hall, his piano compositions were celebrated in performances by concert pianist Dr. Svetozar Ivanov and seven of Ivanov’s current or former University of South Florida students.

Phil Kasnitz (Prof., GC/Hunter, Sociology) and John Mollenkopf (Dist. Prof., GC, Political Science, Sociology; Director, Center for Urban Research) have won the prestigious ASA 2010 Book Award from the American Sociological Association for Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age (Russell Sage/Harvard University Press, 2008).

Samuel L. Leiter (Dist. Prof. Emeritus, Brooklyn, Theatre) was awarded an Andrew W. Mellon Emeritus Fellowship for 2009 to continue his study of postwar Japanese theatre. This is the first Mellon Emeritus Fellowship given to someone in the field of theatre. The project, titled “Kabuki in the Age of Danjuro XI: 1952–1965,” follows the story of kabuki theatre from the end of the Occupation through the death of the genre’s most popular actor.

Setha Low (Prof., GC, Anthropology, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Psychology), outgoing president of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), presented the distinguished lecture at the association’s annual meeting in Philadelphia on December 5, marking the completion of her two-year term. Her topic was “Claiming Space for Engaged Anthropology: Spatial Inequality and Social Exclusion.”

Ruth O’Brien (Prof., GC, Political Science), on November 18 in Copenhagen, Denmark, delivered the keynote address at the Copenhagen Business School’s Center for the Study of the Americas Guest Lecture and Panel Debate, “Obama: Year One.” Her address, “Out of Many, We Are One: Obama and the Third American Liberal Tradition,” characterized the President’s political vision as being in the American tradition of small “d” democratic populism.

Ursula Oppens (Dist. Prof., Brooklyn, Music) was a 2009 Grammy Award nominee for “Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (without Orchestra)” for Oppens Plays Carter (Cedille Records, 2008).

Gerardo Piña-Rosales (Prof., Lehman, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages) has been elected Honorary President of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society. Established in 1919 at the University of California, Berkeley, Sigma Delta Pi honors students who have completed three years of college-level Spanish, including courses in Hispanic literature and culture, and maintain a 3.0 GPA.

David Reynolds (Dist. Prof., Baruch, English) in October presented a copy of his book, Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson (Harper, 2008), to President Bill Clinton at a New York Historical Society dinner in Clinton’s honor.


John Torpey (Prof., GC, Sociology) will serve from March through June 2010 as a Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Cultural Studies at the University of Graz, Austria, teaching two courses on the theme “American Exceptionalism Reconsidered.”

Jock Young (Dist. Prof., GC, Sociology, Criminal Justice), with coauthors Jeff Ferrell and Keith Hayward, has won the 2009 Distinguished Book Award from the Division of International Criminology of the American Society of Criminology for Cultural Criminology: An Invitation (Sage, 2008).
Almost from the outset, race has been the defining and dividing issue of American society. Despite significant gains, the goal of broad-based integration has eluded us. Today, we see demographic changes bringing into the workforce a generation far more diverse racially and ethnically than any that preceded it. To assess the impact these changes will have on racial integration, Folio turned to Distinguished Professor Richard Alba, author of *Blurring the Color Line*.
As more white baby boomers retire, African American and Hispanic workers will take many of their good jobs.

Your book posits the likelihood of America becoming a more racially integrated nation over the next several decades with the broadening of economic opportunities for African Americans and other minorities. How is this going to come about?

One of the main reasons is the employment opportunities created as baby boomers retire over the next twenty-five years. The baby boom generation—those Americans born during the two decades following the end of World War II—contains the most highly educated cohorts in U.S. history and occupies the richest and best-paid terrain in the U.S. labor market. The baby boom’s departure from the labor market is going to create an unusual opportunity to bring about more integration.

The boomers are 80 percent white and non-Hispanic. As they retire, there will be fewer whites to take their places. Whites will make up a bare majority—if a majority at all—of the cohorts that are, even now, entering the labor market. This creates opportunities for other groups to advance socially, especially African Americans and Hispanics, and they’ll do so without appearing to threaten the position of whites. Whites will still have the same life chances they have today—the same chances to get good jobs and good educations—but there just won’t be enough of them to take advantage of all the opportunities that are out there.

Is this what you call “non-zero-sum mobility”?

Yes, it is, because it doesn’t challenge the position of the most advantaged group. It doesn’t create circumstances that might lead some whites to throw roadblocks in the way of socially advancing minorities. We can understand better how this might work if we look back in history, because there was a period of even greater non-zero-sum mobility during the twenty-five years following World War II. This was a period of mass assimilation for certain groups of European ancestry such as eastern European Jews, southern Italian Catholics, and Irish Catholics. That’s when these groups became a part of the mainstream.

You’re not saying that Jews, Italians, and Irish faced the same kind of discrimination that African Americans do?

No, I’m not, and I think one runs the risk of overstating the parallels between then and now, because there are very important differences. For one thing, the color line is far more entrenched than was the ethnic line. Nevertheless, while the major boundaries of American society are now defined in terms of race, they were also defined in other terms in the middle of the last century. Religious and nationality differences among whites were very important. In fact—and surprisingly, given our contemporary perceptions—some groups, like the Irish and the Italians, were not even seen as fully white at that time. And religious differences loomed large, for this is a nation that had defined itself as Protestant throughout much of its history. And so Jews and Catholics were still on the margins of the mainstream as World War II began. But that changed very dramatically over the course of the war and in the twenty-five years that followed.

This perception of ourselves as a white, Protestant nation was actually reflected in law during the prewar years, was it not?

You can see it in immigration legislation of the 1920s, a major thrust of which was to keep out undesirable European groups. So the nationality quotas for groups like Russian Jews, Polish Jews, and Italian Catholics were set extremely low, because these groups were seen as not very assimilable into the American mainstream. This was also a period when the Ivy League colleges instituted anti-Semitic quotas to keep the number of Jews low. And, what’s almost forgotten now is the 1928 presidential campaign, when Al Smith became the first Catholic presidential candidate of a major political party. There was a mass mobilization by white Protestants during the campaign, which handed a lopsided victory to Hoover.

What role did the growth of suburbs and the breakup of urban ethnic neighborhoods play in ethnic integration during the postwar era?

The Irish, Italian, and Jewish families in these urban neighborhoods were mainly there because they wanted to live with others who were like them; these neighborhoods were kind of decompression chambers for immigrants, and maybe for their children. These communities began to break up when many young ethnic families chose to live in suburban settings that they thought would be better for their children. By and large, they wound up moving into suburbs that were ethnically diverse but racially segregated. The Levittowns, for example, were racially segregated by design. William Levitt famously said that he could solve a housing problem or a race problem, but he couldn’t solve them both at once—and it was pretty clear which he chose. Still, the white populations of the Levittowns were very diverse. The families there had a wide range of religious and national origins, and this spread the process of social integration, producing surges of intermarriage across both ethnic and religious lines.

Interrmarriage, in your book, is considered a significant indicator of change, when racial or ethnic boundaries that are rigid and relatively impermeable—the ones you call “bright”—become “blurred.” By this measure, are not Asian Americans the most integrated of minorities?
Interruption is a very telling indicator of social acceptance, and the way Asians have shifted their position in American society is a fascinating story, but one that we don’t really understand and is not yet complete. Asians came into the twentieth century legally excluded from the mainstream because of a 1790 law that originally barred naturalization to people who were not white, and later barred those who were neither white nor black. So, Asians weren’t allowed to naturalize. This exclusion was validated by the Supreme Court in the early part of the twentieth century. And, of course, the Japanese were infamously interned on the West Coast in World War II. Here’s a group of people who really were kept by race from the mainstream of American society.

Then, in the latter part of the twentieth century, Asians began moving up in American society. One consequence of this rapid rise is a relatively high rate of intermarriage with whites. About half of all U.S.-born Asian Americans have a non-Asian partner—predominantly a white partner.

In the coming years we’re going to see more racial intermarriage simply as a consequence of demographic changes. That’s because marriage choices are determined by what’s available in the pool of eligible mates. This means more intermarriage by whites in particular because the number of young adult whites will be shrinking. Among the consequences of these intermarriages will be much more racial diversity within extended kin groups—more white grandparents will have non-white grandchildren, just as in Obama’s family when he was growing up. This growth in the number of mixed-race children will challenge what has been the taken-for-granted character of racial boundaries.

When you talk about the big changes of the next twenty-five years, you aren’t predicting the same kind of mass assimilation that was possible in the fifties and sixties, are you?

Not at all. One of the most important differences between then and now is that the United States, at the end of World War II, was as equal a society, in terms of income and wealth, as it has ever been. And today, of course, we’re an extremely unequal society—probably as unequal economically as we have been in any period since there have been measurements of economic inequality. This means that a large number of Americans today are condemned to be poor or to be on the economic margins of society. And the way that race works in our society, the risk of being poor is borne most heavily by minorities. So unless there is some fundamental change in the distribution of income, we’re going to have a paradoxical situation in which a large number of minority Americans remain poor and segregated, while the middle strata of society are becoming more integrated.

Your book had some encouraging statistics about younger African Americans moving into higher-paying jobs, but the New York Times recently reported unemployment rates among black college graduates nearly twice as high as among their white counterparts, with clear evidence of discrimination in hiring.

I think it’s gotten worse because we’re in a very deep economic recession, and when economic times are hard, minorities tend to suffer more than whites do—and African Americans have a harder time than other minorities, including Hispanics. Analyzing the data from a period that wasn’t a recession, I find that college-educated Hispanics enjoy somewhat more favorable occupational placement than college-educated blacks. I think that the intensity of racial stereotyping about people of African descent is, in many ways, a heritage of slavery in our society, and the level of discrimination against African Americans is something that is qualitatively different from that directed against other minority groups.

One of the things you don’t raise in your book is the different experiences of African Americans whose families have been here for generations, generally the descendants of former slaves, and African Americans of African, Caribbean, or more recent immigrant descent. While we don’t have clear enough knowledge about how the social trajectories of these two parts of the black population play out, there is plenty of evidence that the children of black immigrants are doing, on average, better than the children of indigenous African Americans. While we don’t have clear enough knowledge about how the social trajectories of these two parts of the black population play out, there is plenty of evidence that the children of black immigrants are doing, on average, better than the children of indigenous African Americans. Many of the black students who wind up going to elite schools, recruited through affirmative action programs, seem to be from black immigrant backgrounds. Barack Obama stands as an example of that.

I think that we in the U.S. have always favored immigrants over indigenous minorities. We’ve had more positive stereotypes about immigrants. We see them as people who have chosen to come here, who are willing to work hard, who are struggling to get ahead, who are replicating the story of many of our own ancestors.

There’s a point your book makes about changes that took place as a result of the civil rights movement and civil rights legislation, and how the economic progress that resulted was moving along steadily until sometime before 1980, at which point economic improvement
for minorities ground to a halt. Is it fair to put it this way? I think that’s maybe just a bit too simple. It’s true that average African Americans’ incomes are lower than those of whites, and the ratio hasn’t really changed much since the early seventies. But averages are averages. So, while one group of black Americans has become more economically desperate, another group has become more successful, and we can see a slow but still steady increase in the number of African Americans holding good jobs. The top strata of American society are already becoming more diverse.

But what’s happened to the bottom strata? At the other end, inequality has become much more acute since 1980; the distance between the very poor and the middle class has grown, and the composition of the very poor is heavily, heavily minority. I think that one thing that’s made the situation of poor and poorly educated minorities especially difficult is the increasing rate of incarceration in the United States. That is something that’s been taking place since 1980, and it hits young black and Hispanic men hardest. One can say today that the chance of a young black man having a prison record is considerably greater than the chance of his having a college degree. And it wasn’t so long ago that the reverse was the case. Another factor is surely the growing population of undocumented immigrants, people who lack fundamental rights. They now number about 12 million—that’s roughly one of every twenty-five U.S. residents—and they include several million children and young adults who have grown up here and are Americans in every respect but legal rights.

So, what can we look forward to if we wish to create a more integrated society? That’s true, and I think that would be a very bad thing for our society. What, if anything, can be done to remedy this? Well, number one is to attend to the educational opportunities of minority youngsters. I think one of the big differences between conditions today and what prevailed during the period of integration for white ethnics after World War II is the educational opportunities open to youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds. I think the school system, in the places where there were many Jews and Catholics, in the middle of the twentieth century, delivered pretty high-quality education. There was also a tremendous investment in education in the twenty-five years following World War II, especially education after high school. The capacity of colleges and universities literally quintupled between 1940 and 1970, and almost all of that expansion was due to public investment in state and municipal colleges and universities.

What we have seen since has been growing inequality in the schools that serve different groups of people and a big education gap between whites on the one hand, and blacks and Hispanics on the other. When it comes to the postsecondary credentials that matter most for getting good jobs, there’s a two-to-one difference. College graduation rates are twice as high for whites as for blacks and Hispanics.

I think the first thing we have to do is once again invest in education and invest in a way that’s going to bring up the bottom. That means addressing the decline in the quality of teaching. The decline is very well documented, and it almost certainly has to do with the expansion of opportunities for women, which has, for a good many years now, taken highly qualified women out of the classroom. So if we’re going to recruit academically talented young people—men as well as women—into teaching, we have to pay them more, and we have to make the work conditions better.

Suppose we could do all this, which would mean radically changing the way we finance public education in this country, would that be enough to truly equalize opportunity? Not without reducing economic inequality. Despite gains in integration, the apparent paradox of the next twenty-five years involves a very large group of poor Americans who are going to be disproportionately black and Hispanic. We need some means to ameliorate this great inequality that we’ve come to tolerate. Let me point again to the fact that the golden period of the mass assimilation after World War II was also a period in which economic inequality was at its lowest.

Was this not also a period when greater economic equality and a broadening of the middle class was considered beneficial to society, and there was substantial acceptance of a tax system that reflected this perspective? We’ve moved very, very far away from that in terms of the everyday ideologies of Americans and how we think about social policy and our society. I think that the Obama administration is trying to show many Americans that government can, in fact, make a positive difference in their lives. We’ll have to see how that works out.
In every era, there are men and women whose exceptional abilities and influence shape the cultural landscape of their times. *Extraordinary Lives*, a new public program series, brings such people—among the most fertile minds of our day—to the Graduate Center for conversations with President William P. Kelly.

At the first of these encounters, on November 16 in Proshansky Auditorium, President Kelly shared the stage with the maximally talented Patti Smith, singer, songwriter, artist, photographer, filmmaker, poet, essayist, and activist. Hailed as “the godmother of punk,” she has also been awarded the title Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres by France’s Ministry of Culture.

President Kelly noted Smith’s induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and recent retrospectives of her art—her works on paper at Pittsburgh’s Warhol Museum and her photography at the Fondation Cartier in Paris. “Given all this, it’s tempting to think of Patti as a living landmark,” he said, ticking off her ties to the Beats, to Dylan and the folk rock scene, to the redefinition of contemporary art in New York in the seventies, and to punk rock. “But this,” he declared, “misses the point. I think most of us who have followed Patti’s career would argue that the last five or six years have been among the most productive of her life. And I think what we’re going to try to do tonight, with Patti’s help, is to thread together the past with Patti’s extraordinary present.”

So, with Kelly’s prompting, reminding her of times and places, performances and recordings, Smith spoke thoughtfully of her life and work, losses, triumphs, and commitment. Here (lightly edited) is some of what she said.
“I was just a natural person. I was the way I was... but it seemed like everything I did offended somebody.”

On coming to New York
“The practical thing that brought me to New York was there was no work in South Jersey, or even Philadelphia, for a twenty-year-old girl with no skills. But also, living in a very rural area of South Jersey, everything you did was scrutinized and judged. I was just a natural person. I was the way I was. I wasn't trying to offend anybody, but it seemed like everything I did offended somebody. The way my hair was, that I didn't comb my hair. How I dressed or if I wore black. I was reading books by French poets. Everything I did seemed to offend someone. So, I would get a bus to New York periodically, and one thing I noticed in New York was nobody cared. It wasn't a cruel kind of noncaring. It was nobody was looking, nobody seemed to mind how I was dressed, if I had my hair in pigtails. So I felt very free and very safe in New York City. I really came just like Dick Whittington. For me, the streets of New York were paved in gold, and I came, and I got a job. I got a job in a bookstore, and I met one of the great loves and friends in my life, Robert Mapplethorpe.”

About the '60s
“In the '60s, I didn't really have time for the revolution because I pretty much spent all my time studying and working. But when I think of the Beats, and I was friends with them all, not Kerouac, but the one I have to say was the greatest influence—he was my favorite—was Allen Ginsberg, because Allen Ginsberg, more than anyone else, gave us the whole package. He was a free spirit; he pushed and pushed and pushed. He was an historian; he could speak to you about the link between William Blake and Walt Whitman and himself in the most esoteric or the clearest of terms, and he could also, when he was done, get out on the streets and motivate thousands of people to protest something the government was doing. Allen was like ten people. When Whitman says we contain multitudes, he was thinking about Allen Ginsberg, because he did.”

How the girl who wanted to write came to perform
“I started speaking my poems and things out loud as I was writing and drawing. And Robert Mapplethorpe used to tell me, ‘Well, why don't you perform your poems and things?’ It had never occurred to me. It took me a long time to accept performance as an art form because I was so fixated on writing and painting. I had never really thought about performance.”

What happened on February 10, 1971, at St. Mark's Church
“It was my first time doing a poetry reading, and I'd been to a lot of poetry readings, and most of them were boring. I didn't want to be boring. I wanted to infuse some blood in what I was doing, and I had really good mentors. I mean, I was friends with Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, those fellows, and none of them was boring. And so I had a challenge. I decided to ask Lenny Kaye to interpret a poem I had written on his electric guitar, and I thought that would be cool. But back then, it was like blasphemy, because they had never had an electric guitar in St. Mark's Church. Lenny Kaye's was the first time anybody had done that. For me, it was just a natural thing. I thought it would be cool. I wasn't really trying to do anything controversial or blasphemous, I just wanted to connect with the people in a really strong way, and I guess we did.”

About rock and roll
“I was a girl who felt rock and roll had saved her. I was skinny, really tall, really skinny, with really bad skin. I had a million tons of energy; I didn't know where I belonged, and I felt like rock and roll saved my life. It gave me something to identify with. And, to have a rock-and-roll band, I've never taken it for granted. I don't ever take it for granted. Every night, or anywhere we do a concert, whether it's for 50,000 people or 500 people, we have a little moment—the band. Every single concert, we just, without words, say a little prayer of gratitude to be in a rock-and-roll band.”

“Our mission was to let people know—people who felt like they were alone, who felt they were disenfranchised, who felt like nobody cared about them or nobody was talking about them—that we, our little band, that we were here for them.”

On being a woman leader of a rock-and-roll band
“When I went to high school, girls took home economics; the boys learned to drive. Girls had to get ready to be a wife, a mother, a hairdresser, and there's nothing wrong with any of those things; it's just I just didn't gravitate toward any of them, although I am a proud mom.
The idea of a girl being the leader of a rock-and-roll band, it just wasn’t around. We had great performers like Tina Turner and Janis Joplin and Grace Slick, but the idea of more of a frontal rock-and-roll performer… I don’t know how it happened.”

“I think why I’m not chained to the whole gender thing is because I started as an artist. Since a child I wanted to be an artist. I never attached gender to art. Never attached gender to poetry, and I’m well aware that rock and roll has been traditionally a male game, and I just modeled myself after the best. I’m not saying that I was as good as them, but when I wanted to think about how to cut my hair or how to look or how to hold my guitar, I studied Jimi Hendrix. I studied Keith Richards; I studied Bob Dylan; I studied the people I identified with, and I never thought about it in terms of gender.”

About the ’70s

“It was a rough time, because we lost people that we revered. We lost Jimi Hendrix; we lost Janis Joplin; we lost Jim Morrison, and we’d lost Brian Jones. Bob Dylan had had a motorcycle accident and withdrawn somewhat from the forefront of the public. It seemed like a new era with more drugs, more that was just glamour, and the whole aspect of ‘it’s all sex, drugs, and rock and roll.’ But that revolutionary voice—that thing that bound us all together, spiritually, emotionally, and politically—I felt that was in danger. And so, I thought that I could maybe help a little. I didn’t really know what I was going to do, but I thought maybe I could stir up the real people.

“People in the ’60s, people like Jimi Hendrix, MC5, and all of those very revolutionary bands, what they really wanted—what they were going for—was universal communication through rock and roll. They felt that, through rock and roll as a universal language, we could change the world, because the idea of prejudice and so much corruption and corporatization would not be part of our ultimate language. And with the death of so many of our leaders, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, even Malcolm X—he also was a person with strong spiritual and political ideology—it just seemed that we were losing that.”

Working with her husband Fred “Sonic” Smith of the band MC5

“First of all, Fred was really a great artist, and he was not the easiest man to work with, and he was my husband, which sometimes made it even more difficult. But I had such respect for him, and I just did everything I could to comprehend what he was looking for and to do it. I mean, our greatest work together was creating our children.

“When we did a song like ‘People Have the Power,’ I remember that very clearly. Fred came in. I was over the sink peeling potatoes, and he says, ‘Tricia.’ I said, ‘What?’ And he said, ‘People Have the Power, write it.’

“Yes, sir,” I said, ‘as soon as I finish KP duty.’ At that time, it was like ’85 or ’86, we were watching Jesse Jackson’s campaign, and so I really meditated on this phrase ‘people have the power.’ And I went back to the Bible, the area where it speaks that ‘The meek shall inherit the earth.’ I just thought of all the ways we need the people to access their power, to protest against war, against the destruction of our environment. And so I took all of these ideas and wrote him the lyrics and gave them to him. And he wrote the song.”

“Fred taught me to play at the end of his life, in ’94, because he was quite ill, and it was a way that he could center himself and do something. He was also giving me a gift. He was giving me the ability to write my own songs, because I had spent the last sixteen years writing with him. It was his last gift to me, actually, to teach me enough chords to write songs. And the first song I wrote after he passed away was ‘Farewell Real’ for him. So it’s my first use of the lessons he gave me.”

Bringing her up to the present, Kelly pointed out, “You’re at a different stage of your career now, a senior figure in all that is rock and roll and what you’ve done. You said before that we all have a voice, with a responsibility to exercise it, to use it. Have you imagined that the way in which you exercise your voice has changed, or is it still the same desire to speak that it was when you were first playing in the East Village?”
Where she is today

“One evolves. I wrote a lot of the words for ‘Jesus died for somebody’s sins, but not mine,’ when I was twenty. But, in the last forty-three years, I’ve gone through an intense amount of evolution and, hopefully, I can’t be that person; I think being a mom has informed my work or the way I look at things. I still can be disinterested and self-centered, as a lot of artists are. But, being a mother, you can’t help but become more empathetic and compassionate.

“I think the biggest change in me is that, when I was young, I was talking to the disenfranchised, who I imagined would be just artists and poets and activists. Now I look at the disenfranchised differently. We’re all disenfranchised. I look at what’s happened to America; I look at the economic strife in Detroit, where I lived for sixteen years. I look at how the people are lied to and used, and so the disenfranchised who I want to reach out to, they’re a wider range of people.”

And, when Kelly asked if she still believes that people have the power, she replied:

“I’ve always believed that. I think that they don’t know that. I don’t think that they believe that. And I understand why they don’t believe that, because it’s getting harder and harder and harder to penetrate the walls that are built, the corporate walls. I mean, the Bush administration built such impenetrable walls that it’s like Obama is just chipping away with an ice pick.

“It’s hard to keep heart and keep protesting and keep using your voice, but we have to do that. Ralph Nader taught me a long time ago that we have to not be ready to win when we go out and protest against our government or protest war or protest Con Edison or whoever else needs to be protested against. We have to be willing to lose, and lose and lose and lose and lose, but still make certain that we are counted, that the opposition or the people who are oppressing us know that we exist.”

It was then that President Kelly reminded her of the line, “I hope we die before we get old,” from the Who’s “My Generation” and asked what she thought was the legacy of their generation. To this, she responded, “My generation? We’re still here. I’m only sixty-three; I’m not 140. We’re not done yet.”

“Far from it,” Kelly added, “that’s a legacy, that’s sufficient,” and asked, “Will you favor us with a song or two?” And so she did, singing “Grateful” and “My Blakean Year,” and treating a wildly enthusiastic audience to a powerful recitation of “People Have the Power.”
For two days in October, the New York Sanjo Festival and Symposium brought leading scholars of Asian music and the foremost masters of sanjo, the traditional music of Korea, to the Graduate Center for lectures and performances presented by the Ph.D./D.M.A. program in music and the Gugak FM Broadcasting System of Seoul.

Drawn from music of Korea’s indigenous shaman culture, sanjo evolved during the nineteenth century, adopting elements of the country’s court and folk traditions, to become the dominant instrumental genre of the time. Sanjo’s multimovement form provides opportunities for extraordinary virtuosity by soloists improvising on a melody in time to the rhythmic accompaniment of the janggo, the hourglass-shaped drum of sanjo. The festival featured performances by masters of the genre’s distinctive instruments: the daegeum (bamboo flute), haegum (two-stringed fiddle), geomungo (six-stringed zither), ajaeng (bowed zither), and gayageum (twelve-stringed zither).

The festival was first conceived by music program alumnus Ju-Yong Ha, who served as artistic director. It was directed by Stephen Blum (GC professor of ethnomusicology) and sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. Lectures by both American and Korean scholars dealt with the origins of sanjo, its transformational structure and improvisational techniques, twenty-first-century practices, and the use of Western instruments in Asian music. Sanjo’s relationship to traditional Indian and Indonesian music was also discussed at the conference, as was the spread of the genre to China, Tibet, and Kazakhstan.

Setting the tempo on the double-headed janggo was Master Kim Chung Man, honored by Korea as a National Human Treasure.
The second round of this year’s Great Issues Forum—titled “What Are the Varieties of Nonbelief?”—got off to a spirited start, when one of the panel’s atheist team rejected the “nonbeliever” label. “An atheist,” said philosopher Colin McGinn, “disbelieves in the existence of God—thinks there is no God—and that’s a positive belief.” He went on to add, “Also, of course, an atheist would believe in a number of other things quite strongly, such as art, science, philosophy, sport, morality.”

Belief, nonbelief, and other questions of religion are the focus of the Great Issues Forum in its second year, following an inaugural year devoted to examining the exercise of power, from military power to the power of education. By exploring critical issues of our time, the forum, says Graduate Center President William P. Kelly, “encourages the kind of informed discussion essential to a healthy democratic policy.”

Joining Professor McGinn, who teaches philosophy of the mind at the University of Miami, on December 7 in Elebash Recital Hall, was author and journalist Susan Jacoby, whose bestselling book, The Age of Unreason, traces the rise of American anti-intellectualism. With them on the panel was philosopher and theologian Denys Turner, the Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology at Yale University, Gustav Niebuhr returned as panel moderator. A veteran journalist and associate professor of religion and the media at Syracuse University, he had moderated the first of the religion panels on “What is Religion? What is it For? How does it Change?”

When Susan Jacoby first spoke, she began by making clear that secularism—which she was quick to point out “has become a dirty word in American politics”—doesn’t fall into either the belief or nonbelief camp. “I can’t emphasize enough that secularism is not a religion. It’s also not synonymous with atheism.” It is, however, becoming more common, she noted, citing a recent Graduate Center survey that found 25 percent of Americans identify themselves as secularists—up from 16 percent in 2001—although 95 percent claim to believe in God.

When Turner, the Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology at Yale University, had moderated the first of the religion panels on “What is Religion? What is it For? How does it Change?”

Coming quickly to grips with belief in the existence of God, the panel dealt first with whether atheism left room for doubt. Susan Jacoby, opt for the soft-core atheism of Robert Green Ingersoll, celebrated as the Great Agnostic at the end of the nineteenth century. “He said,” she quoted, “‘There’s no difference between an atheist and an agnostic’” adding that, “You can no more prove that there isn’t a God than that there is a God, and I would never say to you, I know there is no God.” As to why people insist on making a distinction between atheism and agnosticism, Jacoby contends, “It’s because atheism is such a naughty word in America.” Agnostic, in her lexicon, is “the coward’s word for atheist.”

McGinn, who takes a harder line, does not temper his atheism with doubt. While he finds it sensible to allow for doubt when evidence exists on both sides of an issue—as, for example, continuing the war in Afghanistan—he said, “I don’t think that is the case with the question of the existence of God.”

“No sane person thinks there’s an open question about whether Santa Claus exists. They think there’s no Santa Claus, because there’s no evidence for it—because it’s a preposterous idea that Santa Claus flies through the air, and people have looked at the North Pole and haven’t found Santa Claus—so people can reasonably conclude that there is no Santa Claus.” He would allow that the nonexistence of God can’t actually be proven (citing Descartes’ dictum that “Nothing is absolutely certain”), but maintains, “That doesn’t mean you can’t have very good evidence against the existence of something and very good reason not to believe in it.”

McGinn describes the God denial spectrum as running from agnostic to atheist to anti-theist, which he explains, “means you’re against belief in God and against religion.” While this doesn’t mean you want to destroy religions, it does mean you wish they weren’t there. McGinn describes his own position as a bit further out than anti-theism. Mostly, he is what he called “a post-theist, someone who really doesn’t think there’s an issue anymore.”

Professor Turner argued that one can’t simply deny God, as he put it, “off the cuff.” He maintained, “Being an atheist actually takes a lot of hard work,” that is, he explained, “if you want to engage in any sort of debate about the issue.” He pressed the other panelists to define just what it was they were denying when they denied God, because, he said, “I think I’d agree with a lot of the denials you go in for.” After McGinn responded with what amounted to a blanket rejection of divinity, Turner took issue with none of it, save for the one insurmountable difference between them, which was McGinn’s rejection of God as creator of the universe. This, Turner saw as a sort of minimum standard for any God he would believe in. Moreover, the creator in whom he would believe “has to have some attributes of a person,” although he was quick to rule out “ordinary secular concepts of personhood.”

When Gustav Niebuhr, as moderator, asked Turner about the role of doubt in religion, the theologian spoke about the importance in Christianity of “expelling false gods” in order, he said, “to discover
the un-knowability of the one God." He went on to tell McGinn and Jacoby, "I’m in line with a great deal that you guys are talking about here, because there are so many false gods… so many that Christianity itself has been responsible for," and he singled out, among those responsible, "the people you critique as engaged, in the name of Christianity, in American right-wing politics."

When the discussion turned to public values, there was broad agreement that religion was no requirement for morality. McGinn expressed amazement that some people still believed that it was, pointing out that this argument was successfully refuted two and a half thousand years ago in the Platonic dialogue explaining that the gods command something because it is right. It’s not right because the gods command it. “Morality has its foundation in ordinary human reason,” said McGinn. "It’s nothing spectacular; it’s things like knowing that it’s right to keep your promises, to repay your debts, to not cause harm.”

Turner, who earlier said, “I don’t think that knowing why murdering people is wrong requires an appeal to the divine,” went on to share his doubts that God gave the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel as a set of rules to live by. Based on his reading of the Book of Exodus, Turner believes it is more likely that God was warning that people who didn’t organize their relationships along those lines would be worshipping false gods. “In other words,” said Turner, “you’ve got to get your morality right if you’re going to get anything right with God.”

Susan Jacoby made clear her stand on public principles and religion when she described secularism as “an approach to life in general… that formulates ethical principles based on the well-being of human beings here on Earth without any reference to a deity or the possibility of a future life.” As to religion as requisite for morality, she said, “I consider the question of whether it’s possible to be good without God a diversion from the real issue of whether our species can ever get itself to be good period.”

Toward the end of the evening, Niebuhr raised the question of atheism as an organizing principle. “I think it doesn’t work as an organizing principle,” McGinn responded. “It’s just a label for a set of beliefs that people have who reject traditional religion”—a label that would be unnecessary, he noted, in a world without any theists.

Although Jacoby agreed atheism provided no organizing principle, she contended that it “affects more than you think it does,” and told of how her partner of thirty years had died of Alzheimer’s disease two years ago. “I must have thought every day while this was going on,” she said, “how terrible this would be for me if I were a religious person, because I would have to answer the question that occurs to everyone whether religious or atheist: ‘How could a loving God allow this to happen to a brilliant person?’ And for the first time, I felt emotionally a deep sense of satisfaction and happiness that I was an atheist.”

A theme that recurred throughout the evening was the heightened politicization of religion in America. Jacoby pointed out, “One of the ironies of religion in the United States is that, over the last forty years, both the most conservative precincts of Christianity and the secular side have increased. I think that this is really responsible for a lot of the intense cultural conflict.”

At this point, Niebuhr brought the discussion to a close, asking that the panelists each recommend books that would “further elucidate our topic.” McGinn told the audience “Bertrand Russell wrote some quite good things”; Turner proposed God Matters, by Herbert McCabe, a Dominican priest; and Jacoby recommended Betraying Spinoza, by Rebecca Goldstein, a woman raised in a strict Hasidic community, who, Jacoby said, “is grappling with problems of philosophy and how you move from very restrictive belief to another kind of belief system.”
**Revolutionary Voices at the Segal Theatre Center**

“We live in the midst of a language hell. Our house of words is cursed and sick! It no longer serves its purpose!” So says Dr. Hitman, a scientist in Dušan Jovanović’s political drama *Military Secret*, translated into English for the first time by Ivan Talijančić.

Though it’s possible that this “language hell” caused problems at the Zoological Institute at the Veterinary Clinic where the play takes place, there was certainly no failure of communication on November 16 when staged readings from this and four other plays once considered subversive in their respective countries of origin—Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Romania—were performed to a full house at the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center. The plays had been translated for publication in *Playwrights Before the Fall: Eastern European Drama in Times of Revolution*, marking the first multiauthor international anthology of Eastern European plays to appear in English.

The book was especially created and published by the Segal Center as its contribution to the larger citywide festival sponsored by the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, “Performing Revolution in Central and Eastern Europe,” honoring the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and Communism in the East Bloc countries.

“Once we were invited to be a part of this festival and exhibit, we knew that we had to find something special to do, something that fit our particular mission,” says Daniel Gerould (Dist. Prof., GC, Theatre, Comparative Literature), who holds the Lucille Lortel Chair in Theatre. A leading scholar of Eastern European theatre and director of publications and academic affairs at the Segal Center, Professor Gerould selected the plays and edited the anthology.

In keeping with the Center’s mission—to bridge the gap between academia and the performing arts—the readings were followed by a panel discussion featuring all five of the plays’ directors, some of the translators and actors, and three of the playwrights—Slovenia’s Jovanović, Hungary’s György Spiró (author of *Chickenhead*), and Romania’s Matei Vișniec (author of *Horses at the Window*), all of whom flew in from Eastern Europe for the occasion. “It was a fascinating reunion,” noted Gerould. “The playwrights knew each other or, in some cases, at least about each other’s work.”

Adding to the postreading discussion were audience members representing the Polish Cultural Institute in New York, the Hungarian Cultural Center, the Consulate General of Slovenia, the Romanian Cultural Institute in New York, and the Czech Center New York, all of which supported publication of the anthology.

“The conversation, like the plays,” said Gerould, “focused largely on the period in the 1980s when Communist regimes still existed but were starting to teeter.” The panel analyzed that point in history from a current perspective, taking a look at the gains made with the end of totalitarianism, as well as the frustrations and problems that arose, and the extent to which ideals of what life might be like under a democratic form of government have yet to be realized. Some even acknowledged nostalgia for certain aspects of life before the fall of Communism—such as the crucial role that theatre played in public life and discourse at that time.

Other recent events sponsored by the Segal Center, though not associated with the “Performing Revolution” festival, have also focused on the works of Central and Eastern European playwrights. On December 7, staged readings from Russian playwright Olga Mukhina’s *Tanya-Tanya* were performed as part of the Center’s International World Theatre calendar of events. And on November 9, an evening of Polish Futurist theatre, poetry, manifestos, and art was held in conjunction with another citywide event, Performa 09, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Futurist movement, instigated by Italian poet Filippo Marinetti in 1909.

“Frank Hentschker and I decided to do Polish Futurism,” explained Gerould, “because so few people know anything about it.”

The highlight of that evening was a thirty-minute contemporary performance piece based on excerpts from Bruno Jasiński’s 1930 avant-garde play *Mannequins’ Ball*. The story focuses on what transpires after a human mistakenly stumbles into a French fashion house, as the mannequins are about to start their annual celebration. To stage the production, director Allison Troup-Jensen organized some twenty performers and twenty mannequins, working with several fashion institutes and alumni fashion designers from Parsons The New School for Design.

As with many other Segal Center events, the evening concluded with a panel discussion. In this case, Troup-Jensen; Polish artist Krzysztof Zarebski, whose installations appeared in the lobby; Joanna Warzwa, theatre curator and producer; and Marek Bartelik, professor of art history at Cooper Union, participated, with Gerould moderating.

—Jackie Glasthal
Planning for Climate Change

A key role in planning for climate change has been played by doctoral faculty member William Solecki, professor of earth and environmental sciences, who heads the CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities, located at Hunter College. As cochair of the New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC), he and his colleagues have been evaluating the impact of changing climate conditions on the city’s ecosystem and infrastructure.

“We’re starting to think about how the city can respond,” says Solecki, whose panel issued its first, sobering report in December 2009, assessing changes in temperature, rainfall, and sea level over the next ten, forty, and seventy years. The report predicted: more frequent storms and more damaging coastal flooding; annual precipitation increasing by as much as 10 percent; and mean annual temperature up 3°F in the next decade and 7.5°F by the 2080s (when New York’s temperatures would be much the same as present-day Raleigh, North Carolina).

Projecting sea levels, the report anticipated levels rising twelve to twenty-three inches by the 2080s, with the possibility of a fifty-five-inch rise in case of a “rapid ice melt scenario,” which would occur if ice melt rates in Greenland and West Antarctica continue to accelerate. This is not an unlikely scenario, according to the research of Marco Tedesco, doctoral faculty member in earth and environmental sciences and assistant professor in earth and atmospheric sciences at CCNY (see above).

The NPCC analysis has given New York City government a “heads up,” highlighting: upcoming vulnerabilities of the city’s infrastructure—its subway system and tunnels, waterfront power plants, and waste-transfer terminals; predictable demands on services; and a wide array of other anticipated problems. As the first American city to undertake comprehensive planning for climate change, New York is using this analysis to inform preventive planning that includes updating the city’s floodplain maps to reflect susceptible areas, adjusting building codes to address the consequences of climate change, and identifying new building sites for future development.
Environmental issues rank high on the Graduate Center’s research agenda, with a strong local focus and—considering the city’s historic dependence on its waterways and 580 miles of shoreline—a significant aquatic tilt. Described here are several recent, current, and proposed projects.

Bringing Back Oysters to Jamaica Bay

As part of the Sustainable Cities initiative, John Waldman, an aquatic biologist at Queens College, also on the doctoral faculty in biology and earth and environmental sciences, is working with Professor Solecki on a proposed project to restore the colonial-era ecology of Jamaica Bay by reducing the high salinity of its tidal creeks. This, they hope, will make possible the reintroduction of oysters, one of nature’s greatest natural water purifiers. Solecki, whose NPCC project is part of Mayor Bloomberg’s PlaNYC 2030 for comprehensive sustainability, notes that “In the mayor’s long-term planning for sustainability, increasing the bivalve population in the city’s surrounding waters was identified as a means to promote water quality.”

With the flow of freshwater into Jamaica bay, it will welcome home Crassostrea virginica (above), our native East Coast oyster.

In the case of Jamaica Bay, the flow of freshwater from tributaries that once fed the bay—and controlled its salinity—began to diminish as water tables in Brooklyn and Queens fell after New York City began pumping water from wells in the two boroughs back in 1887. Today, all but one of the nearly seventy wells have been capped. Once pumping ended, water tables began rising by as much as thirty feet, periodically flooding area homes. Tapping into these water tables now would make it possible to reintroduce freshwater to selected tidal creeks. Such an influx of fresh water would reduce salinity, presumably allowing oysters to flourish and purify the bay. Waldman would also introduce captured rainwater from the Belt Parkway, which runs along Jamaica Bay. The ecosystem would then enjoy two sources of freshwater—steady water from the wells and rainwater runoff—a situation that provides the variability of sources typical of a healthy estuary.

Green Roofs for Energy Conservation

How well will advanced environmental technologies conserve energy and reduce harmful emissions? That’s the question a team of researchers from CUNY, the New York State Energy and Development Authority, and the Brookhaven National Laboratory are studying, under a grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Coprincipal investigator for the project is Associate Professor Yehuda Klein, executive officer of the Graduate Center’s earth and environmental sciences program. Among the energy-efficient technologies to be tested, he explains, is the use of “green roofs.” These are roofs partially or totally covered by vegetation over a waterproof membrane, which can reduce heating and cooling costs, limit storm water runoff, filter pollutants, and prolong a roof’s life—even grow vegetables. More significantly, they will reduce demand on the city’s electricity supply, with a resulting drop in emissions from the small gas turbines that kick in when demand on the electric grid is highest. To establish strategies for specific communities, the project will develop pilot projects using green roofs on several CUNY campuses and in an area of West Harlem where emission levels rise sharply in warm months and there is a high rate of asthma among local residents.

This 2.5-acre green roof—one of the nation’s largest—flourishes atop the United States Postal Service’s Morgan mail processing facility in midtown Manhattan.

Cleaning Up the New York/New Jersey Harbor Watershed

An example of social science collaborating with natural science is the role played by Ronald Hellman, director of the Americas Center on Science and Society and adjunct professor of sociology, in the New York/New Jersey Harbor Project. A political scientist as well as a sociologist, Hellman was a member of the coalition of stakeholders formed by the New York Academy of Sciences that included: community and environmental groups; industry and small business associations; local, state, and federal government; regulatory agencies; academics; and representatives from labor and the conservation sectors.

John Waldman and a number of other doctoral faculty members contributed to the coalition’s ten-year study of the harbor watershed: William Kornblum, professor of psychology and sociology; Joseph Rachlin, professor of biology; Janis Roze, professor emeritus of biology; and Martin Schreibman, distinguished professor emeritus of earth and environmental sciences. In a series of reports, the Harbor Project identified sources and impact of five contaminants: mercury, cadmium, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The coalition recommended and promoted remedies to reduce contaminant emissions, demonstrating how this approach—based on a comprehensive understanding of contaminant life cycles—provides a realistic and replicable route to successful prevention.

When the Harbor Project’s findings were released to the public in May 2008 as “Safe Harbor: Bringing People and Science Together to Improve the New York/New Jersey Harbor,” Mayor Michael Bloomberg noted that, by supporting the project, the New York Academy of Sciences had “adhered to the fundamental belief that good science makes good policy.”

It is a statement that makes Hellman proud. “My hope,” he says, “is that, in this example and in others, we will soon begin to see science driving policy more than policy driving science.” Hellman is a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

In “Life in New York Harbor: Death and Resurrection,” a special presentation for CUNY Science Café series on November 2, Dr. Waldman talked about the Hudson River’s long history, from its pristine beginnings through years of industrial waste contamination, to its current rejuvenation. The talk can be heard at http://www1.cuny.edu/portal_ut/news/radio/podcast/lecture_259.mp3.
In October and November 2009, the Graduate Center received twenty grants totaling $2,836,241. The name(s) of the principal investigator(s), awarding agency, the title of the project, and the amount of each grant of more than $20,000 are listed below. This information was submitted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.


Three Graduate Center distinguished professors of mathematics—Lucien Szpiro, Kenneth Kramer, and Victor Kolyvagin—recently received a Focus Research Grant (FRG) and a Research Training Grant (RTG), totaling one million dollars, from the National Science Foundation (NSF), for training and research in number theory.

Number theory is the study of the properties of numbers, particularly integers (whole numbers, positive or negative, including zero), and often prime numbers (numbers divisible only by 1 and themselves, as in the case of 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, and so on). Elementary number theory begins with the study of Diophantine equations (named after the third-century mathematician Diophantus), in which variables can assume only integer values. An example is the Pythagorean equation—a “polynomial” equation that has multiple possible solutions. The equation formulates the theorem that the square of the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the lengths of its other two sides. In other words, $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.

Solutions to polynomial equations such as Pythagoras’s form the basis of number theory today just as they have for centuries. A generalization of the basic Pythagorean equation was the basis of Pierre de Fermat’s famous Last Theorem, annotated in the margin of his 1670 edition of Diophantus’s *Arithmetica*. More than 350 years later, in 1994, Andrew Wiles’s proof of the theorem, a widely reported breakthrough, brought number theory to the attention of the mainstream media.

Number theory comprises its share of conjectures—mathematically intuitive and reasonably verified inferences—for which no rigorous proof has yet been discovered. More likely than not, Fermat had no unassailable formal proof for his Last Theorem (though he claimed in the marginia that the margin was too narrow to accommodate his “truly marvelous” proof); rather, he presented a conjecture. Such conjectures risk being contradicted, because while numbers that are manageable (not very large) exhibit properties that can appear to be universal, very large numbers may eventually be discovered that violate these properties. Consider that no rule has yet been discovered for finding prime numbers (that is, for finding the next largest prime number following any given number); so, a very large prime number may be discovered that violates a conjecture. “The distribution of prime numbers is one of the big mysteries of mathematics,” says Szpiro.

Number theorists therefore seek formal proofs for abstractions of the behaviors of numbers. The search for proofs has led to the development of new mathematics that is ultimately useful for purposes other than just the proof. “The method used to prove it is more important,” says Szpiro. “If the problem is good, it allows you to invent mathematics that is important for other problems.” Kramer, who specializes in the number theory of elliptic curves, adds: “The strange thing is that I don’t think people would care about Fermat’s problem except for the mathematics that was developed to solve it. It’s one equation among infinitely many, but the ideas that people invented to prove it seem to really get at the essence of number theory. It’s the development of ideas—with the motivation being the Fermat problem—and the output of these ideas that are much more interesting than the particular problem.”

Szpiro can potentially apply Wiles’s discoveries in elliptic curves for his algebraic geometry research (a highly specialized area of number theory), which can in turn be used in methods to encrypt sensitive information digitally transmitted across the Internet. “The goal of the course that I’m teaching now,” says Kramer, “was to show some of the interesting features of the number theory of elliptic curves to a much broader range of mathematicians … A couple of people in my class are interested in cryptography, and they seem to have gotten something out of number theory though their basic knowledge isn’t in it.”

Kramer’s students meet with colleagues not only from the Graduate Center but also from other local institutions, in weekly seminars during the academic year. On Thursday, December 10, twenty or so students heard a classroom presentation that was part of the New York Joint Columbia-CUNY-NYU Number Theory Seminar made possible by separate NSF RTG grants to the Graduate Center, Columbia University, and New York University.

By design, the first hour was attended only by students. Subsequently, more than a dozen faculty members and senior researchers joined the seminar for presentations by two Texas A&M professors. The grant, says Kramer, also stimulates “the development of work in this general area not just at the highest research levels but also at the undergraduate level. I am going to be teaching a master’s-level course on number theory to undergraduates at Queens College in Spring 2010.”

One objective of the grants, according to the Graduate Center’s announcement, is “to make New York a premier world center and model for the study of number theory,” which would seem altogether achievable given the dedication and enthusiasm of the faculty and students.

—Bhisham Bherwani
This list reflects titles that have been published since the previous listing in Folio with 365 Fifth (Fall 2009). All members of the doctoral faculty are invited to contact pubaffi@gc.cuny.edu with information about their books once final proofs have been submitted. Due to space limitations, full descriptions cannot be printed here. However, a listing that includes more complete descriptions, book covers, and links for purchase may be viewed at www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/bookshelf.htm.

MEENA ALEXANDER (Dist. Prof., Hunter/GC, English), Poetics of Dislocation (University of Michigan Press, 2009). Alexander examines her personal creative process as well as the work of other notable writers. She outlines the dilemmas that face modern immigrant poets, including how to make a place for oneself in a new society and how to write poetry in a time of worldwide violence.

RONNIE ANCONA (Prof., Hunter, Classics), series ed. BC Latin Readers (Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2009–ongoing). This nineteen-volume series, intended for intermediate or advanced college study, provides annotated selections, with extensive introductions and a complete vocabulary. Published this year are the Sallust, Lucan, Plautus (seen here), and Terence readers.

ZDRAVKO BLAŽEKOVIĆ (Adj. Asst. Prof., GC Barry S. Brook Center, Music) and BARBARA DOBBS MACKENZIE (Adj. Asst. Prof., GC Barry S. Brook Center, Music), eds. Music’s Intellectual History (RILM, 2009). Sixty-six essays offer insight into the history of music scholarship from the Renaissance through the twentieth century. They indicate the directions the discipline has taken in the past, reveal the precedents for current music scholarship, and suggest future paths for further pursuits.

ZDRAVKO BLAŽEKOVIĆ (Adj. Asst. Prof., GC Barry S. Brook Center, Music) and JAMES R. COWDERY (Adj. Asst. Prof., GC Barry S. Brook Center, Music), eds. Liber Amicorum (RILM, 2009). The editors address the absence of accessibility to Festschriften documents with an annotated and indexed bibliography of 3,881 essays dedicated to music scholars published before RILM’s bibliographic directories began in 1967.

CLARE CARROLL (Prof., Queens, Comparative Literature), A. Hadfield, D. Damrosch, et al., eds. The Longman Anthology of British Literature: The Early Modern Period, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Longman, 2009). Building upon the strengths of previous editions, this volume devotes sustained attention to the context in which the literature was produced and provides a broadened scope that includes the full cultural diversity of the British Isles.

RAYMOND ERICKSON (Prof., Queens, Music), ed. The Worlds of Johann Sebastian Bach (Amadeus Press, 2009). Incorporating the latest important discoveries concerning one of Western music’s central figures, Erickson includes an unknown aria, Bach’s oldest known autographed manuscript, biographical information not found in any of the standard reference works or other biographies, and over 200 illustrations.

DAVID HARVEY (Dist. Prof., GC, Anthropology, Earth and Environmental Sciences, History), Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom (Columbia University Press, 2009). Using the foundational concepts of geography—space, place, and environment—Harvey shows how geographical knowledge is necessary for the formation of social and political policy and for genuine democracy.

SAMUEL I. LEITER (Dist. Prof. Emer., Brooklyn, Theatre), ed. Rising from the Flames: The Rebirth of Theater in Occupied Japan, 1945–1952 (Lexington Books, 2009). When World War II ended, the majority of theatres in Tokyo and Osaka had been destroyed. Sixteen essays herein relate how Japanese theatre overcame the devastation. A wide range of topics are covered, including the censorship of theatre under the American occupation.

JANOS PACH (Dist. Professor, GC, Computer Science) and Micha Sharir, Combinatorial Geometry and Its Algorithmic Applications (American Mathematical Society, 2009). An up-to-date survey of several areas of combinatorial geometry, the volume explains why ideas such as counting incidences became the theoretical backbone for this kind of geometry.

VIRAHT SAINI (Prof., Brooklyn, Physics), Quantal Density Functional Theory II (Springer-Verlag, 2009). Saini explores methods and applications of this new local effective-potential-energy theory of electronic structure.

LIA SCHWARTZ (Dist. Prof., GC, Comparative Literature, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages), ed. Francisco de Quevedo, La hora de toda y la fortuna con seso (Castalia, 2009). An annotated version of Quevedo’s ca. 1636 satire in which a meeting of heroes and gods in Olympus provides the opportunity for political, social, and religious commentary.

PAUL JULIAN SMITH (Vis. Prof., GC, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages), Spanish Screen Fiction: Between Cinema and Television (Liverpool University Press, 2009). Smith creates a scholarly place for the dominant Latin American genre of the telet novela within the context of Spanish television.

LARRY E. SULLIVAN (Prof., John Jay, Criminal Justice), ed. The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences (Sage Publications, 2009). This reference work with an interdisciplinary scope defines the major terms needed for fluency in the social and behavioral sciences.

MARK D. WHITE (Assoc. Prof., Staten Island, Economics) and Irene van Staveren, eds. Ethics and Economics: New Perspectives (Routledge, 2009). This book features eleven essays by leading scholars in economics and philosophy who argue for a renewal of the bond between the two disciplines.

SHARON ZUKIN (Prof., Brooklyn/GC, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Psychology, Sociology), Naked City (Oxford University Press, 2009). With the perceptive sense of a longtime critic and observer, Zukin probes the issues of gentrification in six New York areas, examining the changing meaning of “authenticity.”
For a full listing of alumni notes received, see www.gc.cuny.edu/alumni/alumni_index.htm. Alumni are invited to submit news by contacting pubaff@gc.cuny.edu.


Michael A. Cramer’s (Theatre, 2005) forthcoming book, Medieval Fantasy as Performance: The Society for Creative Anachronism and the Current Middle Ages (Scarecrow Press, 2010), examines why and how the members of the SCA, an international organization of nearly 100,000 medievalists, adopt medieval persona who interact at fantasy tournaments, wars, feasts, festivals, workshops, and seminars.


Ju-Yong Ha (Music, D.M.A./Composition, 2010) served as artistic director for the October New York Sanjo Festival and Symposium: Korean Sanjo and Other Improvisational Traditions in Asia, which featured Korea’s foremost masters of this traditional music form. See related article on p.16.

Brenda Henry-Offor (English, 2007), CUNY Pipeline coordinator, received the Outstanding Student Advocate Award from the Honors Opportunities Conference (HOC) for forging collaborative alliances across programmatic and institutional boundaries.

Holly Hill (Theatre, 1977) coedited, with Dina Amin, Salaam. Peace: An Anthology of Middle Eastern American Drama (Theatre Communications Group, 2009).


James LePree (History, 2008), adjunct assistant professor, City College, has made the first English translation from Latin of a fifth-century spiritual work, the Pseudo-Basil’s Admonitio ad fidem spiritualem (Admonition to a spiritual son); his translation, based on the 1955 text edited by Paul Lehmann, appeared online in Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval Northwestern Europe, Vol. 13 (November 2009).

Alistair Ramirez Márquez (Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages, 2004), professor of Latin American literature and Spanish, Borough of Manhattan Community College, recently published Los sueños de los hombres se los fuman las mujeres (When Women Smoke Men’s Dreams) (Planeta Editorial, 2009). An English translation of an earlier novel, Mi vestido verde esmeralda (My Emerald Green Dress) (Stockerc, 2006), awarded the International Literary Prize by Círculo de Críticos de Arte de Chile, will be available this year.

Samuel Márquez (Anthropology, 2002), assistant professor, SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, recently instituted a new required course, the first of its kind in the nation: Understanding Anatomy through the Art of Sculpting, which provides a three-dimensional method for medical students to learn how anatomical systems work. His revolutionary course was the subject of the article, “Sculpting Future Doctors: Medical Students Turn to Clay,” Daily News (November 17, 2009).

Cameron L. McNeil (Anthropology, 2006), Lehman College assistant professor of anthropology and a research associate at the New York Botanical Garden, coauthored a paper in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) (December 14) that presented key evidence disputing deforestation as the cause for the demise of the Maya in the Copan Valley, Honduras. The research, expanding on her GC dissertation, has challenged accepted scientific thinking on the topic.


Joseph J. Palackal (Music, 2005) had his thesis “Syriac Chant Traditions in South India” adapted for the documentary Kerala, the Cradle of Christianity in South Asia: The Cultural Interface of Music and Religion. Produced by the Christian Musicological Society of India and Kerala’s government, the film, which highlights the region’s religious, musical, and linguistic complexity, was selected for the 2009 Queens International Film Festival.

Karen Pinkus (Comparative Literature, 1990), professor of Italian, French, and comparative literature at the University of Southern California, published Alchemical Mercury: A Theory of Ambivalence (Stanford University Press, 2009), the first comprehensive study to consider alchemy in relation to literary and visual theory, from antiquity to its Golden Age in seventeenth-century Holland and to modern times.

Stanislao G. Pugliese (History, 1995) published Bitter Spring: A Life of Ignazio Silone (FSG, 2009), the first English biography of the acclaimed Italian writer. On September 1, Pugliese was named Distinguished Professor of Italian and Italian American Studies at Hofstra University; in spring 2010, he will serve as visiting scholar at Harvard University.

Mark Sacharoff (English, 1967), Temple University professor emeritus, had his play, A Magazine at Terezin, produced on January 10 at the Keneseth Israel Synagogue, Elkins Park, Pa. The play balances the grim circumstances and high spirits of five teenagers producing a magazine in the Nazi’s “model” concentration camp in Czechoslovakia with stand-up comedy, satire, poems, and songs.

Jack Shuler (English, 2007), assistant professor of English at Denison University, published Calling Out Liberty: The Stony Slave Rebellion and the Universal Struggle for Human Rights (Mississippi University Press, 2009), a study of one of the earliest organized slave rebellions in colonial America.

Edward Smallbone (Music, 1986), professor of music and director of the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, had the world premiere of his piece “Cantare di Amore” featured in the “Stony Brook Premiers!” concert series. Written at the request of the series, the piece was first performed at SUNY Stony Brook’s Staller Center on November 10 and again at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City on November 12.
A Meditation on Urban India

Privileged residents.

Among these claims, said Gidwani, are the right to a secure habitation, municipal services, and sustai-

able livelihoods, as well as the right to education for their children, “in short, the right to the

right to ownership of waste” as part of a broader struggle by the urban poor to exert their claims on India’s cities.

Gidwani noted that he did not want “to be seduced by an apocalyptic vision” of planet Earth covered in garbage, as posited by recent films like WALL-E, but instead wants to think of the spatial politics of waste as the source of a positive political vision for righting urban injustices and wrongs.

—KC Trommer

The Afterlives of Waste: A Meditation on Urban India

At the fall luncheon meeting of the doctoral fac-

ulty, Professor Vinay Gidwani, recently appointed to the Ph.D. Program in Earth and Environmental Sciences, talked about his new research project, “The Afterlives of Waste,” a multiyear project inves-

tigating the spatial politics of waste in urban India.

Gidwani proposes that the globalization of waste creates new forms of interdependence between people and places, often in unanticipated ways. In the example of Delhi’s waste pickers, Gidwani shows how this socially stigmatized and marginal-

ized group manages to imbue economic value and artfulness to their difficult and hazardous work. In some cases, they organize to protect their interests and recast their labor as an economic service and ecological subsidy to the city. In paying particular attention to these waste pickers, Gidwani seeks to highlight their struggle over the “right to ownership of waste” as part of a broader struggle by the urban poor to exert their claims on India’s cities.

Among these claims, said Gidwani, are the right to a secure habitation, municipal services, and sus-

tainable livelihoods, as well as the right to education for their children, “in short, the right to the city as a right to anticipate a future, like its more privileged residents.”

“The Afterlives of Waste” project will be realized in three stages. A photo essay will aim to create a social critique that includes visual and written observations about the effects of rapid urbanization on human relationships and the city’s ecology. A book of essays on post-1930s Delhi will cover topics ranging from the historical geography of waste to urban planning initiatives and the recent upsurge in judicial and environmental activism. The final aspect of the project will investigate the global-

ization of the trade in waste and its uneven effects on the flow of labor, capital, information, and materials.

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Kress Foundation Chooses Latin/Greek Institute

In an unprecedented and unsolicited move, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation has designated the GC’s summer Latin/Greek Institute as the place for beginning graduate students interested in studying ancient works of art to start learning the language so necessary for their future research. The Kress Foundation will support five such language-learning fellowships each year.

The Afterlives of Waste: A Meditation on Urban India

The City University of New York

Daisy Deomampo, India, “The New Global ‘Division of Labor’: Reproductive Tourism in Mumbai, India” ($18,398); Kareem Rabie, Israel/Palestine, “An Occupied Economy: Development, the Private Sector, Statelessness, and State Formation in the West Bank” ($14,000); R. Sophie Statzel, Colorado, “Paths to Godliness: The Political Ethics of Intimacy in Contemporary American Evangelicalism” ($14,975); Kaja Tretjak, New York, District of Columbia, New Jersey, Texas, “U.S. Conservatism in Decline?: Power, Governance, and Knowledge Production in the Contemporaneous University” ($20,000); and AnaLisa Villegas, Brazil, “Cidade: O Mico? (Where is the Tamarin?): Locating Monkeys in the Politics of Land and Conservation in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil” ($15,000).
Spring 2010 President’s Public Programs

Elebash Presents: Concerts & Conversations

Lauren Flanigan: The Art of the Monodrama  Tuesday, March 2
An Evening with Paquito D’Rivera  Monday, May 3

Great Issues Forum

Immigration and Islam  Monday, March 8
Intellectual Reform in the Islamic World  Tuesday, April 20

Extraordinary Lives

Bill Kelly in Conversation with Ira Glass  Monday, May 17

For details and reservations, go to www.gc.cuny.edu/events.