

**2019 Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium**

**Honors Artist's Studio I**

Moderator: Devon Boan, Ph.D.

**April 11, 2019, 3:30-5:30 p.m.  
Johnson 303**

3:30 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.

***Jacob's Ladder***

Hunt Pennington

Faculty Advisor: Professor Christine Rogers

American mythology is mediated through cultural symbols which are manifested in the form of archetypal images. Using the story of Jacob's ladder and Jung's notion of the collective unconscious as a framework, I created a photographic book which deconstructs American iconography through a sequence of original photographs, alongside digitally manipulated archival images. The work examines the reification of American ideals and the construction of cultural mythology around images, considering themes of nationalism, religion, capitalism, gender, pilgrimage, manifest destiny, leisure, violence, and environment.

The book follows a lyrical, stream-of-consciousness form; the images address these themes poetically rather than journalistically or philosophically. On the whole, this ambiguity provides gaps in which the reader might interpolate their own experience, while the fractured form mimics the constant influx of visual stimuli embodied by an increasingly visual, media-saturated culture. By repetition and careful association, the body of work creates an atmosphere which immerses the viewer in the spectacle of the American mythos, drawing attention to its archetypes and the process by which these symbols are constructed and culturally embedded.

*Jacob's Ladder* is the culmination of conscious looking, of mining my visual environment for signs and symbols, of integrating cultural theory, appropriated images, and my own photographs. The book aims to examine American iconography and the ideologies contained therein while opening a metadiscourse pertaining to the medium itself, the process of image making, and the symbolic power of photography.

4:00 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.

**Scottish Travel (Song) Writing**

Allison Kurtz

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Bonnie Smith Whitehouse

After spending fall of 2018 in Edinburgh, Scotland, I wrote and produced a 6-track EP inspired by my months abroad. The songs feature observatory and reflective songwriting and production influenced by the country's history, rich landscapes, and lively inhabitants.

To capture my time in Scotland, I utilized the practice of “travel writing.” Every lyric was journaled to bring its subject matter to life, highlighting locations, historical figures and events, and my own personal experiences. In addition to lyrical storytelling, I played with elements of sound to enhance my songs through sonic imagery. Within the resource limitations I experienced, I was able to capitalize on the natural soundscapes I encountered, instead. Rolling waves and Highland woodlands were recorded and incorporated into my songs, adding texture and depth.

I drew musical inspiration from a variety of sources: traditional Scots-Gaelic folk music and its cover artists, like Julie Fowlis; Americana folk of Joni Mitchell and Tracy Chapman; and modern influences of folk, rock, and UK sounds, like Hozier and Bon Iver.

In reflection, this project solidified music as a universal language for me – a way to connect creators and listeners across barriers of time, space, culture, and society. The writing and recording processes provided me the opportunity to broaden my sources of inspiration and capture them in song. I discovered in myself a newfound sense of independence, and the strength to share acceptance and worldly understanding with others in the future.

4:30 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.

### **A Musical Exploration of Modern Relationships**

Jason Saitta

Faculty Advisor: Scott Munsell

The world of young adult dating in 2019 is an interesting situation. As a young adult alive in 2019 who is involved in the dating scene, I have much personal experience with this topic. With this in mind, I wanted to create an album that conveyed relatable feelings encompassed within catchy lyrics and memorable melodies. I also could not make up my mind as to whether I wanted to write the album and have it engineered by another student, or vice versa; naturally, I chose to take both roles under my belt.

With inspiration from personal experiences throughout my teenage to adult life, I put together this collection of songs that showcase the emotional journey some relationships go through and the feelings that arise from both perspectives.

This album was composed, written (co-written on a few songs), recorded, edited, mixed, and mastered by myself. The record revolves around the concept outlined above and is cyclical in nature, just like dating is in reality. The result is a deeply personal and interpretable piece of music that anyone with experience being in love can relate to.

5:00 p.m. – 5:25 p.m.

### **Producer, Director, Educator: An Exploration and Application of the Many Roles of a High School Drama Teacher**

Anna Clark

Faculty Advisor: Paul Gatrell

Fine Arts Education, Theatre in particular, is frequently viewed as a frivolity by local, state, and national educational committees, is the last to receive funding, and is the first to be cut from a budget. Legislators rarely take into consideration the many benefits of including Theatre in school curricula. By consistently engaging in meaningful Theatre and Creative Drama activities, students of all ages and socioeconomic status develop socioemotional literacy, expand their English language vocabulary, and consistently achieve higher scores on standardized tests due to contextual decoding and critical thinking skills (Educational Theatre Association).

The aim of this Creative Thesis Project is to create a series of three, year-long high school Theatre class curricula with an accompanying production plan to demonstrate the ingenuity, rigor, and professionalism of educational Theatre. Included in this project are complete curricula and sample lesson plans for an Intermediate Acting course, an Advanced Acting course, and a Technical Theatre course as well as a fully realized directorial concept and production plan for George Brant's award winning play, *Elephant's Graveyard*, that is to be performed and taken to regional one-act competitions by the high school student actors. These ready-to-implement curricula and production plan are intended to provide high school students with a meaningful educational experience that creates an environment conducive to personal growth, aesthetic exploration, and academic ambition.

## 2019 Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium

### Honors Artist's Studio II

Moderator: Devon Boan, Ph.D.

April 11, 2019, 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Johnson 303

5:30 p.m. – 5:55 p.m.

#### **Slipstream: Intelligence and Other Stories**

Gabriela Gonzales

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Susan Finch

Slipstream is a genre based on magical realism, science fiction, fantasy, and literary fiction. It's a post-modern way of looking at the world, at the idea that things are not actually how they seem. The uncertainty that slipstream presents reflects the current social and political affairs.

I fell in love with slipstream literature because of the escape that it provides, the way it can transport readers to new worlds. I've stayed in love with slipstream literature because while taking readers to new worlds, it can simultaneously give them a chance to think critically about the social and political issues in their own world.

My collection of short stories aims to use slipstream as a form of satire, as a way for readers to look at issues that they face in society now and to give them a chance to form opinions on those issues from the comfort of a world that's not quite their own.

Through stories about malfunctioning robots, malevolent choose-your-own-adventure reality tv, governments that charge their citizens to use language, and more, I explore themes from violence, to political correctness, to the inhumane treatment of foster kids and orphans.

6:00 p.m. – 6:25 p.m.

#### **Funny Little Women**

Maggie Hutchison

Faculty Advisor: David Shamburger

It is very rare for actors to find a role they feel was made for them. It is even more rare for a role to be written specifically with them in mind, and perhaps rarest of all for an actor to write a character for themselves to play (the only example that immediately comes to mind is Lin Manuel Miranda, author/star of *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*). To highlight my various strengths as a performer while diving deeper into the process by which a musical is created, I wrote, cast, directed, and starred in a semi-original (everything but the music and lyrics) one act musical.

I wanted to create a show that would showcase myself as a performer while also encompassing who I am as a person. I asked myself questions regarding my values, fears, and dreams, and went

from there. The resulting story is a cautionary tale that follows a future me navigating the consequences of relationships -- both familial and romantic -- and success. It asks the question, at what cost is success no longer sweet?

After writing and casting the show, I scheduled rehearsals, booked rehearsal space, discussed character development, blocked scenes, designed lighting/props/costumes/set, hired a band, even made posters. Through this process, I quickly learned the ins and outs at every stage of putting a show on its feet. My cast and I performed the final product in the Massey Performing Arts Center on January 25, 2019, for a live audience.

6:30 p.m. – 6:55 p.m.

### **3 1/2 Years: A Collection of Original Poetry**

Andrew Gardner

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Gary McDowell

Many of us deal with heartbreak and loss in different ways. From a writer's standpoint, there are many different options. Some write songs, others write stories, and some write poetry. In my case, the latter was the most natural decision. The final product is meant to take a deeper look at modern dating and figure out how things can go wrong when mental illness is factored in.

Every section of this chapbook is meant to detail specific events of the three and a half years of my most recent relationship. To convey what each year meant emotionally, I have selected lyrics from specific songs that were important to those pieces of the relationship and used those to set the stage for the original work. Music has been an integral part of my life for as long as I can remember, and I knew I had to incorporate it into this project in some way.

At this point, you might ask me why I didn't just write music. There are many answers to that question, but the primary answer is because lyrics occasionally dip into some form of sentimentality, and that is not something I wanted to incorporate. This project was meant to take an objective look at what happened over the course of this relationship, how it made me feel, and where it went wrong. To get sentimental and focus solely on feeling without allowing the reader or listener to infer some things would be detrimental to my goal.

7:00 p.m. – 7:25 p.m.

### **A Coming-of-Age Film Set on the Open Road**

Riley Wymer

Faculty Advisor: John Lloyd Miller

Exploring the fulfillment of the "running away together" fantasy that often comes with young love, the script for "How We Ran Away" seeks to challenge traditional coming-of-age and romantic narratives by focusing on the often-overlooked complexities of a relationship between two confused young people each with their own growing pains. The story follows Sandy, an outsider with a strong conviction that if he runs away with Rachel, afraid to grow up herself, he'll be able to preserve their high-school romance. Life on the road does not live up to their

expectations and Sandy learns that if he really cares about Rachel, he'll sacrifice his own want to be with her in order for her to live a better life than as a runaway. Along with the script, this sizzle reel pulls together visuals and audio to illustrate my specific vision for the movie if I were director. The hypothetical budget includes all the anticipated costs from pre-production to distribution to produce the script as a small-budget indie film.

## 2019 Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium

### Honors Artist's Studio III

Moderator: Devon Boan, Ph.D.

April 11, 2019, 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Johnson 324

5:30 p.m. – 5:55 p.m.

#### **Sara Simply: An ADHD Lifestyle Blog**

Sara Scannell

Faculty Advisor: Dorren Robinson

Normalizing mental health, anxiety, and ADHD is a crucial part of helping the millions of people that suffer from them. However, in my research, I found that good mental health blogs are hard to find, especially for young adults looking for a voice they can relate to.

So I created Sara Simply ([sarasimply.com](http://sarasimply.com)), a blog that candidly and positively discusses life with ADHD, anxiety, and mental health for young people like myself. The site has the look and feel of a lifestyle blog, featuring fun, bright pictures, and a light, conversational tone. In my posts, I share personal stories and tidbits of advice on topics that include fidgeting in class, struggling with self-care, forgetfulness, and even dealing with larger mental health issue like bipolar and depression.

I also try to shed light on the little things people don't necessarily realize can be connected to ADHD, like trouble with impulse control when grocery shopping or chronic forgetfulness.

The perspective of young adults — particularly young women — is often excluded from larger ADHD and mental health narratives. This blog seeks to share a fun, honest portrayal of life with these issues and chip away at their stigma in the process.

6:00 p.m. – 6:25 p.m.

#### ***Sentience: A Solo Violin Composition & Performance***

Vanessa Keiper

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Deen Entsminger

I tried as many art forms as I could from drawing to dancing, but music persisted through everything. I embarked on a journey of self-discovery in the summer of 2018, in which my life completely changed after not being able to walk for two months due to an unexplainable injury to my nerves. One morning, I crawled to my living room, sat in front of my piano, and composed a song – something I had never done before.

It started with a single chord, and ended with selling my soul to my piano. Ever since then, I took on the challenge to compose for my favorite monophonic instrument. The violin.

Following this life transformation, I wanted to explore modern classical composition through the instrument that has been my companion on the stage for the past decade. The composition is a solo violin piece with no accompaniment from other instruments or voices, in which I entertain the timeless theme-and-variations structure in a modern melody and a minimalist style. The piece is titled *Sentience*.

Drawing inspiration from composers such as Arvo Pärt, J.S. Bach, and rearranger Heinrich Ernst, I will perform my own composition and let listeners into my artistic process, as well as how I created the piece and where my musical ideas come from. Composers rarely talk about their work on a piece from start to finish, so I wanted to diversify my approach and make my speech an integral part of my performance.

6:30 p.m. – 6:55 p.m.

### **Writer's Block: Writing, Recording, and Revising with a Plan to Find My Creative Habit**

Josh Coleman

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Devon Boan

Despite what the name suggests, artists of all mediums can suffer from the mental obstruction commonly called writer's block. As a musician, I often go through periods of drought where new songs are few and far between. Despite showing up to put in the work, inspiration never comes, and consequently, my interest wanes.

In the interest of learning to break this cycle and better understand my creative habit, I explored the writing process using six different strategies. For each one, I wrote and recorded a song and examined the potential benefits of the creative method used during its conception. The methods are as follows: writing a song internally before playing it or putting pen to paper, working at night when the analytical side of the brain is shutting down, working while alert and rested, working in short, incremental timespans, writing without intent/stream of consciousness, and constructing a song with words and choices selected at random.

What I found was just by framing the workflow differently each time, the strategies yielded exciting, eclectic results. The final product will be accompanied by a written analysis containing my thoughts on the methods and songs themselves and will offer a glimpse into the various stages of the writing process.

7:00 p.m. – 7:25 p.m.

### **Hope for Spring- A concept album for adolescents with depression**

Kalin Hagedorn

Faculty Advisor: Kelly Hoppenjans

Depression is a drought— a cold, bitter winter. It is a winter so badly in need of hope— hope for spring. My concept album, Hope for Spring combines the art of songwriting with music therapy



research to offer healing for adolescents with depression. Stemming from a humanistic music therapy approach, the album fuses music therapy practices, and songwriting to form one cohesive album that takes the listener on a journey through the stages, emotions and experiences of depression. This journey is not one of easy listening, as it requires much self-reflection, contemplation, change of mind, and change of heart. The album begins by first allowing the listener to explore the depths of depression—the depths of hurt, fear, anger, doubt, and hopelessness. It transitions to the need for breaking down one's wall and accepting help from others. The iso-principle is a music therapy technique utilized within the album to elicit a hopeful mood. The principle works by meeting the listener where he or she is at musically, with a dark, heavy sound and a slow tempo. Gradually, the music is altered by increasing the tempo and transitioning to an uplifting mood. Hope for Spring carries an underlying message of faith, encouraging the listener to rest in the presence of God when they feel unable to bear. The album ends with a resounding message of hope. By the end, the listener has moved past the harsh winter that is depression and journeyed to a blissful spring.

## 2019 Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium

### Honors Artist's Studio IV

Moderator: Devon Boan, Ph.D.

April 11, 2019, 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Johnson 327

5:30 p.m. – 5:55 p.m.

#### **Uneasy**

Aaron Amitrano

Faculty Advisor: Professor Michael Janas

The goal of this album is to explore emotions during the transitional periods of a person's life. The listener steps into the mind of a troubled young man who lost someone close to him at a young age. Moments like these brought him to a world where he has seemingly no control over his own life. Throughout the journey, he finds people to latch onto and provide him with that much needed comfort. He is constantly questioning the life he lives and his place in the world, always knowing that he will never have himself under control. At points he gains enough clarity to think it may be all in his head, but in the end he loses the battle for control and acceptance in his twisted world.

The music covers a wide range from lonely acoustic, to full rock band complete with a slamming organ, and even a jazz interlude to showcase the confusion within the mind of our character. It is easy to hear that a number of influences were drawn upon to craft the music behind this story. As guitars surround their head, the listener will be transported to a world of hurt and fear, culminating in the untimely exit of a troubled young man.

6:00 p.m. – 6:25 p.m.

#### **Innovations in Hip-Hop Production**

Jonathan Zangmeister

Faculty Advisor: Mark Volman

Innovations in Hip-Hop Production is an ambitious project attempting to craft a five song EP using five techniques used over the course Hip Hop history. The five techniques are sample-flipping, analog synthesis, multitrack recording, digital synthesis, and mobile production. The challenge of the project was creating a cohesive musical statement using such a broad range of production methods with vastly different sonic characteristics and technical constraints.

6:30 p.m. – 6:55 p.m.

#### **Women at the Helm: Consoles, Grooves and Spaceships**

Hannah Duff

Faculty Advisor: Professor Ed Seay

The complexities of a woman entering the world of engineering and production require an intersectional feminist point of view. The stereotype of a person in music production is white and male. Many types of people are considered ‘other’ when it comes to the lead in recording environments. Out of a need to celebrate what non-stereotypical producers and engineers bring to music production, this album was created. By drawing on imagery from outer-space and the unknown, the songs explore relationships with technology and the future. Both technical and artistic aspects of the album draw on the chaos and order that holds technology and the unknown of the universe together. The recordings rely on intuition and a belief in the power of collaborative art. An importance is placed on the nuance of groove between rhythm instruments as a base for the songs. The recorded elements have then been flipped on their heads using technology such as samples and processing to create other-worldly effects. All elements from the initial songwriting to final mix utilize science fiction and fantasy to create a danceable, R&B and art pop influenced short-length pop album.

7:00 p.m. – 7:25 p.m.

### **Saga of a Namesake: A Trilogy of EPs**

Jack Van Cleaf

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Susan Finch

This creative project consists of three collections of songs, each one four to five songs in length and surrounding one of three ancestors who share my name. Titled *John I*, *John II*, and *John III*, the extended play records are close studies of my great-grandfather, grandfather, and father respectively. The trilogy explores the influence of fatherhood as it is passed from generation to generation, while simultaneously documenting the stories of three distinct individuals, dancing on the scale of nature versus nurture, the roles of fate and free-will in shaping a person.

The creative material was produced out of research conducted via interviews with family members and close analysis of family documents and resources. Personal archives of memories or correspondences with the three subjects were also consulted in the process. Information gathered and used in the writing process was largely focused toward elements of the three individuals which influenced the others. The dynamic of father and son is a central theme to the trilogy by which sub-themes of recognition, rejection, bitterness, and love are developed.

A difficult, complex, and reactive discussion of how family weighs upon our identity and our path, these songs critique and praise the often unnoticed influence of those who are closest to us. They are meant to bring challenge into a habituated arena, but most of all to provide empathy for speaker and subject, for father and son, for everyone involved in the struggles and celebrations of family.