

Seniors make theatric impression

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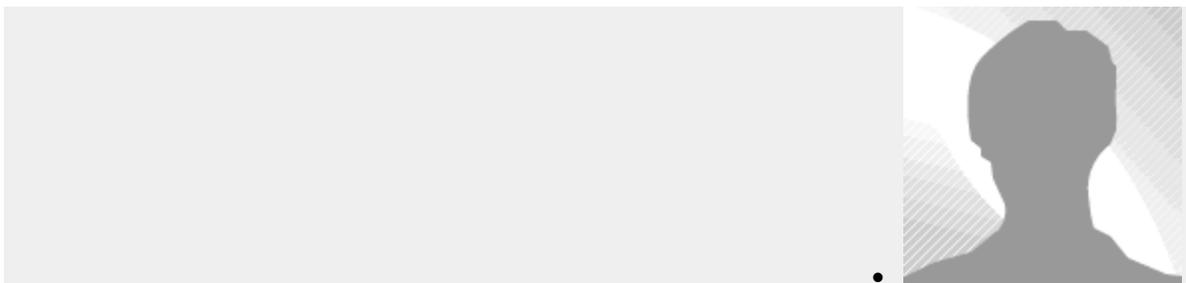


Ashley Grisham

Seniors make theatric impression

Senior Lizzie Donelan received the Barbizon Costume Design Award for her work on “bobrauschenbergamerica” and “Letters to Sala.” “I like reading a script and then delving into books and the Internet to find textual and pictorial inspiration for each individual character,” Donelan said.

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by [Emily Winters](#)

After years of honing their skills and becoming immersed in the world of theater, three senior theatre majors won regional awards for their hard work.

Anna-Lee Craig, Lizzie Donelan and Connor Davis traveled to Towson, Md. to compete in the Region 2 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in January.

The Region 2 event lasted four days and was filled with workshops, critiques and performances from people throughout the region.

Craig won the KCACTF Award for Sound Design, Davis won the Stage Directors and Choreographers Directing Fellowship, and Donelan won the Barbizon Award for Theatrical Design Excellence in Costume Design.

"For me, it was mostly a week of seeing other theatre creators and seeing their process," Craig said. "It's always refreshing to see other people your age."

Professor Dennis Beck nominated Craig for her sound design work on "bobrauschenbergamerica," by Charles Mee in April 2010 and professor Roger Hall nominated her for "Letters to Sala" by Arlene Hutton in November 2010. Sound design encompasses sound effects, pre- and post-show music and intermission music.

"Annie is exceptional," said Beck, who directed "bobrauschenbergamerica." "She's the best sound designer I've known who is a student."

When Craig first decided to attend JMU she thought that she was going to pursue acting. But after working with sound design her freshman year, she changed her mind.

"I did acting; I did stage management, but I kept coming back to sound," said Craig, a senior theatre major. "It excited me more than any other aspect; it's so interesting and I think it moves people."

Donelan was up for the award for Theatrical Design Excellence for her costume design for "bobrauschenbergamerica" and "Letters to Sala" as well.

Costume design begins with a script and a director's proposed concept for a show. Then the costume designer researches the time period of the show in order to plan the designs.

"I absolutely love research," Donelan said. "I like reading a script and then delving into books and the Internet find textual and pictorial inspiration for each individual character."

Hall, who directed "Letters to Sala," said that he had a feeling that Craig and Donelan would win an award because their show involved a variety of sounds and time periods, something that would stand out to the judges.

Originally nominated for his stage work on "True West" by Sam Shepard, Davis decided to go for directing instead. He won the Stage Directors and Choreographers Directing Fellowship, which he applied for in November of 2010. After being accepted into the competition, he selected a scene from a list provided and collaborated with actors from JMU who traveled to Towson and performed the scene, directed by Davis, at the regional festival.

"It all fascinates me; I love the research component," Davis said. "I love being on the rehearsal floor day-to-day."

Because theatre is highly collaborative, Davis, Craig and Donelan have worked together on numerous occasions and hope to do so again in the future.

"They're a delight to work with," Donelan said. "Just really thoughtful artists."

In April, the three will attend the KCACTF national competition in Washington, D.C., along with the winners from the seven other regions across the United States.

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