

## Centre for Creativity Report for 2013-2014

The Centre for Creativity kicked off its year's activities on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013, with a well-attended reading by the Indian playwright Mahesh Dattani. Mr. Dattani read a short monologue that had been commissioned by the BBC, and fielded a number of questions about creating characters, and about cross-cultural communication.

The Green Fest, organized by The Write Place in conjunction with the Centre for Creativity, focused on the connections between the environment, philosophy and the arts. On the opening day, October 24<sup>th</sup>, the keynote poetry-reading event by eco-poet and philosopher Jan Zwicky was bookended by events showcasing King's artists: the performance of an original choral composition by Oliver Whitehead, by the King's University College Chamber Choir under the direction of Janet Loo; and the opening of an art display showcasing the work of Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, a sizeable crowd trooped through the Vitali Student Lounge, taking in displays by TREA, Friends of the Coves, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, KUCSC, Green Initiatives at King's, Thames River Rally and other green groups at and beyond King's. Following an intense panel discussion led by Dr. Zwicky, with participants from the King's Philosophy Club, there was an entertaining poetry-reading session involving King's Student Poets and local London poets. A dance workshop with Ruth Douthwright moved the audience outdoors and used natural materials as props. All credit to Write Place administrators Professor Khimasia and Professor Dorothy Nielsen for the success of this event.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, the Centre organized a poetry reading by Western's Writer-in-Residence, M. Nourbese Philip. Ms. Philip's audience found her talk very engaging, and participated enthusiastically in the controlled chaos of a reading experiment in which broken lines of poetry were read by all the individuals in the room, at the same time. This led to an interesting discussion of the relationship between spoken word and choral music.

There was a good deal of excitement all through the year, among the Centre's members, over the possibilities opened up by the new theatre in the SLC building. Michael Tattersall kindly gave the members a tour of the theatre in early February, when it was nearly finished. The Kenny Theatre was used by the Centre for the first time for a staged reading of *Choose, But Choose Wisely*, a play by London playwright, actor and dramaturge Jeff Culbert, on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Board member James Reaney was instrumental in getting Mr. Culbert interested in this opportunity. Mr. Culbert workshopped the play with King's students, leading up to this staging. The play revisited the history of the War of 1812, from the point of view of people living in and around the London area, and the question session after the reading reflected the audience's interest in the details of this history. This has led the Centre to discuss and approve a plan to bring a full-scale professional production of the play to the Kenny Theatre next September.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, thanks to the efforts of Creativity Board member Catherine Elliot Shaw, members and friends of the Centre were invited to a guided tour of “Storms and Bright Skies: Three Centuries of Dutch Landscapes,” the McIntosh Gallery’s exhibit of the year. The rare opportunity to see works on paper from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup>, at its only Ontario venue, was greatly appreciated by the Centre’s guests.

The Centre’s events and activities for the year closed with an event on April 4<sup>th</sup>, titled “Building Bridges: Conversations About and Through Dance,” in which three dancers (Ruth Douthwright, Vidya Natarajan, Lacey Smith) discussed their dance styles and presented three solo dance pieces. The opening conversation with Catherine Elliot Shaw helped frame the relatively unfamiliar aesthetics of contemporary dance and bharatanatyam in terms that made sense to the audience. The event was very well-attended, by King’s people and the London community alike.

A brochure for the Centre, in line with the other brochures for academic Departments at King’s, is the last item on this year’s agenda. The Centre’s plans for next year include a full-scale staging of *Choose, But Choose Wisely* using London Fringe actors; a poetry reading/open mic session; a large-scale event that incorporates many types of art, and a music/dance event featuring the Gamelan player Noor Intan.

I would like to recognize the generous contributions of time and energy by Board members Antonio Calcagno, Ruth Douthwright, Catherine Elliot Shaw, Ryan Johnson, Therese Khimasia, Laura Lewis, Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy, Ian Rae, James Reaney and Elyse Ritchie. The year’s events reflect their ideas, their practical efforts, their support and enthusiasm. Special thanks to Mr. Reaney for going out of his way to put Centre for Creativity events on the London social and entertainment map. Dawna Perry’s assistance over the year, with meetings, events and planning in general, has proved invaluable.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vidya Natarajan