Theatre Program Premieres Modern Greek Masterpiece ‘The Courtyard of Miracles’

Stockton University’s Theatre Program presented the world premiere of Demetrios P. Tryphonopoulos’ original translation of Iakovos Kambanellis’ *The Courtyard of Miracles* Feb. 18-22 on the Galloway campus.

The production of the modern Greek masterpiece was directed by Martha Frintzila of Athens, Greece. Music for the production was arranged and performed each night by Panagiotis Tsevas of Athens. Tryphonopoulos is the dean of arts at Brandon University in Manitoba, Canada.

Written in 1957 by Kambanellis, *The Courtyard of Miracles* depicts a compelling portrayal of contemporary working-class Greek life, where each of the 11 characters waits for the fulfillment of a personal “miracle.” One of the most prominent Greek writers of the 20th century, Kambanellis has been compared to Arthur Miller or Tennessee Williams for his use of social realism.

“Our this is really an amazing opportunity for all of us,” said Pamela Hendrick, professor of Theatre, who performed in the production and was one of the producers. “It is a rare experience to be able to work with an original translation and with a director from Greece who can bring so much knowledge to the process.”

Dr. Mark Mallett, professor of Theatre, served as one of the show’s producers and created the set and lighting design. Venustiano Borromeo served as ARTP technical director; Justin Maciejewski served as theatre technician and technical director of the Music Program; and Dr. Rodger Jackson, professor of Philosophy, performed in the production.

Last summer, Hendrick; Dr. Mallett; and Dr. David Roessler, professor of Greek Language and Literature; and five students from Stockton’s Theatre and Literature programs traveled to Rhodes, Greece to participate in a script development workshop to review the first draft of the new translation by Tryphonopoulos.

Dr. Tom Papademetriou, associate professor of History and executive director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies, worked with Dr. Lisa Honaker, dean of the School of Arts and Humanities, and Dr. Roessler to arrange special events for the world premiere production, including the opening night lecture by Walter Puchner, Emeritus Professor of Theatre Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; and the visit to Stockton by the Kambanellis’ daughter and granddaughter.

Dr. Mallett said he was honored to be part of the world premiere performance. “The production in many ways reflects Stockton Theatre and Stockton University’s commitment to innovation and to pushing the envelope,” said Dr. Mallett. “It was a wonderful experience to work on the show.”
Dr. Figart, Dr. Mutari Co-Author Book on Life in Casino Industry

Dr. Deborah M. Figart, professor of Education and Economics, and Dr. Ellen Mutari, professor of Economics, recently published their third co-authored book together, *Just One More Hand: Life in the Casino Economy*. The professors hosted a book-signing event in the Campus Center Bookstore on Feb. 20, where they also read two excerpts from the book. Faculty, staff, students and community members attended the event in support of the authors.

“*Just One More Hand* tells a story that workers everywhere can relate to: an industry that promised a solid and stable livelihood being transformed by competitive pressures, causing employees to lose their economic footing,” said Dr. Figart and Dr. Mutari.

The economists were intrigued by casinos as workplaces because of their fascination with how people earn a living.

“The germination of this book came from wondering how jobs in the casinos compared with the old manufacturing jobs. Could you build a life working in Atlantic City’s booming casinos?” explained Dr. Mutari, in between autographing copies of the book.

The idea for the research sat in the back of their minds for years. In 1995, Dr. Figart and Dr. Mutari moved to southern New Jersey from southeast Michigan, an area dominated by the auto industry which was in decline. At that time, Atlantic City’s casinos were flourishing.

By 2006, when the team “finally initiated” the project, the local casino industry was in flux.

“As more and more states jumped into casino gaming, the market became ‘saturated,’ meaning there is an oversupply of casinos. So many of the dynamics in Michigan’s auto industry in the 1990s were being replicated in the casino industry,” Dr. Mutari said.

Dr. Figart and Dr. Mutari spent seven years exploring the life stories of individual workers in Atlantic City in the context of the history of the city and the now-global gaming industry. They interviewed pit managers, dealers, cocktail servers, and other frontline service workers, and discovered the fascinating stories of local casino employees, some who spent more than 20 years in the industry.

In the book, Dr. Figart and Dr. Mutari use their firsthand experience from the auto industry and life in the Atlantic City economy to address core issues in economic development and the need for sustainable livelihoods and meaningful work. Incorporating the real experiences of casino employees, the authors demonstrate the difficulties for local communities that are building new casinos in the hopes of luring tourists.

“We are so thankful to the university for their support in this project,” Dr. Figart said. “Stockton provided us with research support including a sabbatical, additional release time, and funds for the interview transcriptions. Thank you to the Schools of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Education for supporting the refreshments and the Stockton Bookstore for extending their hours on a Friday and hosting the event.”
Service-Learning Hosts Merit Badge Fair for 250 Boy Scout Troops

The Office of Service-Learning recently hosted a Merit Badge Fair, which invited 250 Boy Scout troops, their parents and various leaders of the local Boy Scouts to the Galloway campus. Faculty and staff members across disciplines led the 25 educational workshops, providing various opportunities for scouts to gain merit badges. Activist-in-Residence Rona Whitehead and Diana Strelczyk of Service-Learning co-organized the Feb. 14 event.

The project began in October 2014 when Whitehead and Streleczyk sent an e-mail gauging interest of partnership with local Boy Scouts affiliates. The Stockton team then met with local members of the Jersey Shore Council and established Stockton University as a site for the Merit Badge Fair.

“The Office of Service-Learning has been partnering with the Girl Scouts for many years, and we discovered that there were also faculty and staff members involved with the Boy Scouts. It became very clear just how involved our faculty and staff are with local troops,” said Streleczyk.

Matt Unversaw, Top-200 director for WLFR, and Lake Fred Radio staff provided WLFR tours. The following faculty and staff members served as merit badge leaders: Dr. Jamie Cromartie, associate professor of Entomology (Insect Study and Nature Badges); Dr. Thomas Nolan, associate professor of Physical Therapy (Disabilities, Public Speaking and First Aid Badges); Dennis Lepore of Safety and Health Compliance (Fire Safety Badge); Dr. Joseph Trout, assistant professor of Physics (Astronomy and Inventing Badges); Elizabeth Zimmerman of Nacote Creek (Oceanography Badge); Alice Gitchell, energy specialist (Sustainability Badge); Erin O’Hanlon, adjunct instructor (Textiles Badge); Robert Kraus, former Stockton Police staff member (Crime Prevention Badge); and Whitehead (Textiles Badge).

Dr. Keith Diener, assistant professor of Business Studies, Law, and Joe Thompson, assistant director of Student Development, participated in the Eagle Scout Merit Badge Panel. The panel discussed the impact that earning the Eagle Award had on the participants’ lives, giving current Life Scouts the opportunity to hear firsthand accounts from professionals and students. The Life Scouts also had the opportunity to ask specific questions about the Eagle Scouts’ projects and experiences.

The Offices of Event Services, Production Services, Computer Services and N-Wing Cafeteria were on hand to assist with audio/visual components and to provide food for the day. “We want to especially thank the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics for the faculty and use of Nacote Creek, and for their heavy involvement in this event,” Streleczyk said.

Stockton Federation of Teachers Holds Adjunct Awareness Event

The Stockton Federation of Teachers (SFT) hosted an adjunct awareness campaign on Feb. 25 as part of National Adjunct Awareness Week.

During the event, held in the G/H hallway, about 20 faculty members distributed flyers and “A is for Adjunct” stickers, and talked to students and the University community about the working conditions of adjunct faculty. Dr. Anne Pomeroy, associate professor of Philosophy and SFT president, said full-time and part-time faculty were also asked to speak to students about the use of adjuncts.

“The effort was to raise awareness about the use of adjunct faculty in colleges and universities across the nation,” Dr. Pomeroy explained.

“Overall, Stockton adjunct faculty are really well compensated and we only have little over 30 percent of our courses taught by adjunct faculty,” Dr. Pomeroy continued. “However, it’s still the case that the working conditions for adjuncts overall are difficult and perhaps that is not optimal for those workers or for students.”

Dr. Pomeroy said that nationally adjuncts are a “transient labor force” and many have to teach at multiple schools to make a living. Dr. Pomeroy said Stockton adjuncts are “excellent and dedicated teachers” and the event was an “attempt to honor them and educate people about what adjuncts contribute to the mission of Stockton.”
Dr. Gerald Martin Performs Lion Dance for Chinese New Year

Dr. Gerald Martin, assistant dean of Students, participated in a Chinese New Year celebration in Atlantic City on Feb. 21. Through Cheung’s Hung Gar Kung Fu Academy, located in Chinatown in Philadelphia, Dr. Martin was one of more than 20 people to perform in the dragon parade, lion dance and Kung Fu demonstrations to ring in the Year of the Sheep (Goat).

The lion dance is a cultural tradition closely tied to special occasions such as Lunar New Year, business openings, weddings, and other occasions in which performers mimic a lion’s movements in costume. Typically, schools of Kung Fu or Wushu, Chinese martial arts, perform the lion dance as a celebration tradition and as a way to practice Kung Fu elements such as stances, footwork, punches, and endurance. On the Chinese New Year, the performances can last up to five hours. Each lion has a team of two to four people who rotate in and out of the lion, giving performers needed rest, Dr. Martin said.

Dr. Martin began practicing Kung Fu when he was 23 years old. For the past one-and-a-half years, he has been studying under his teacher, Sifu Cheung Shi Pui, in the Hung Gar Tiger Crane system. Previously, he studied Emperor’s Long Fist (Tai Tzu Chang Chuan), another school of Kung Fu, for more than seven years. Prior to that, he studied Si Lum (Shaolin) Kung Fu while attending Appalachian State University.

“My Sifu - my master - is the keeper of the traditions of our Hung Gar system,” explained Dr. Martin. “Like many people in Chinatown, he is a native from Hong Kong where the tradition of lion dancing serves as a blessing ceremony. The lion is fed a red envelope filled with money, which signifies good luck and fortune, and is a donation thanking the Kung Fu school for the performance. Businesses or organizations will hang greens, typically a lettuce, from the ceiling for the lion to eat. The lion eats and spits out the vegetable for good luck and a fresh start for the new year.”

Dr. Martin, who is also an ACE certified health coach, makes his Kung Fu practice part of his lifestyle. “When it comes to staying physically fit, I always tell people they need to find things they enjoy doing,” he said. “What I love about Kung Fu are the different levels of physicality it offers.”

Some external, physical practices of Hung Gar Kung Fu include holding physical postures with weighted rings on the arms for extended periods of time, and hitting wooden poles with the forearm to condition the bones and nerves. Internal practices include deep breathing and slow, deliberate, focused movements to improve health and vitality.

“These elements are what make Hung Gar a rare and renowned fighting system. All of the lineages of Chinese martial arts are about exercise, but they are also about striving for perfection. The main Kung Fu principle I live by is that you can always reach for perfection but never actually be perfect. That requires a lot of patience, a lot of patience,” Dr. Martin said.