THE 115TH ANNUAL VARSITY SHOW

May 1, 2, and 3 in Roone Arledge Auditorium
PLAYBILL STAFF

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The Varsity Show, born in the wake of the Panic of 1893, provided a welcome bit of escapism for an audience reeling from economic crisis. In 1894—the year the Show, as it was known, came into the world—national unemployment rates climbed to 18 percent and the country was plagued by a series of workers’ strikes and mass transportation shutdowns. More than a century later... that doesn’t sound so bad, does it?

Still, escapism should not be a lifestyle. With every passing year, both this little magazine as well as the Show must close their ears to the metaphoric Sirens who sit atop the Gates, seducing all Columbians into resigning themselves to six square blocks of solipsism. It was just the other day that the Blue and White, acting in the Odysseyan tradition that is our wont, stuffed the Varsity Show’s ears with beeswax and bound ourselves to the Nuts 4 Nuts stand out of self-preservation.

The Siren Song of campus pleasures is unyielding. Morningside Heights is a company town, and besides the mandatory Music Hum trip to Lincoln Center, there are few, if any, compelling reasons to leave it. The Blue and White lived a life of quiet reflection for three days during our stint as mappers of this much-charted territory, the product of which you hold in your hands at this moment. We bought coffee with Flex, found lunches in rooms reserved for various ethnic celebrations, and lived mostly in Lerner, where all such journeys of the spirit really must be undertaken. Eventually, the Sirens’ Song was muted by nine fire alarms in East Campus during a single night, and we emerged from our long, dark fortnight of the soul with the renewed conviction that whether it be with beeswax or sheer will-power, the temptation to resign oneself to a bebubbled life really must be resisted.

Of course, we did have all those crumpets from Barnard College’s Crumpets for Kashmir benefit. And we’ll contend the point that there is enlightenment yet to be reified atop glass ramps and within crowded elevators. And it is with this in mind that the Varsity Show and the Blue and White invite you to enjoy “The Gates of Wrath.” We hope you enjoy its Songs.

COVER: “The Gates of Wrath” by Stephen Davan

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Varsity 2009
The Gates of Wrath

**Principals**
*(in order of appearance)*

**LAURA**, a Columbia College student seeking a Columbia College student. .................................................. EMMA GOIDEL
**GABRIELLE**, an engineer with a dream. ................................................................. GISELLE GASTELL
**PETER**, a Columbia alumnus who refuses to graduate. .................................................. ADAM MAY
**RUTH**, a General Studies student who is young at heart, and actually young. .......... NINA PEDRAD
**JAKE**, a first-year really trying to get off campus. ................................................... KENDALE WINBUSH
**AUSTIN QUIGLEY**, the outgoing dean of Columbia College. .............................................. PATRICK BLUTE

The Ensemble

Morgan Fletcher (*Credit Card Girl*), Yonatan Gebeyehu (*President Bollinger, Vincent Stephanzo*),
John Goodwin (*The Registrar, SDS member, Emo Kid*), Nicole Lopez (*Laura’s friend, Dance Captain*), Jill Schackner (*SDS member, Laura’s friend*), Connor Spahn (*Buog Punster, Football Player*), Emily Wallen (*Quigley’s Freshman Lackey, Swipe Lady*)
Act I

Scene 1: College Walk
Scene 2: Dean Quigley’s Office
Scene 3: A John Jay Hallway
Scene 4: The Steps
Scene 5: A Mudd Classroom
Scene 6: Campo
Scene 7: A John Jay Double
Scene 8: The Gates
Scene 9: Dean Quigley’s Office, College Walk

“My Place”
“I’m the Dean”
“Beyond the Gates”
“I Want to Be a Broadway Star”
“Drunken Waltz”
“Please, Don’t Go”
“Our Case of Insulation”

Act II

Scene 1: A John Jay Hallway
Scene 2: College Walk
Scene 4: John Jay Dining Hall
Scene 5: College Walk
Scene 6: Around Columbia
Scene 7: Dean Quigley’s Office
Scene 8: College Walk

“Satan is Coming to Town”
“Hallelujah, I Love You”
“Gabrielle”
“Downtown”
“Please, Don’t Go (reprise)”
“My Place (reprise)”
Serendipity has favored Adam May, C’11. When he undertook the “Tour de HamDel”—a feat that WikiCU characterizes as a “grueling gamut run only by the stout of heart”—he tore through the famed establishment’s 29 sandwiches. But it was sheer luck that led him to his favorite snack in Morningside, the “Let it Ride.” The sandwich is a monster: toasted bread with garlic, olive oil, fried chicken, melted mozzarella, onion rings, and gravy. To ask for it, you have to be in the know, because the Hamilton Deli powers-that-be “ran out of room on the board,” he says.

May’s start in acting was a similarly happy accident: his high school adviser accidentally double-booked his class registration time with a theater kid who encouraged him to audition for The Crucible.

But the luck that had introduced him to Arthur Miller and the “Let it Ride” ran out during suite selection. Or perhaps not: During his exile in a tiny Schapiro double, he made an effort to get out more, and ended up auditioning for and being cast in XMAS!, as well as two Late Nite shows, and then finally V115. “Housing screwed me over for a reason,” he says. –ECS

To hear her mother tell it, Emma Goidel’s rise to stardom began nine years ago on the AstroTurf field of the Georgia Dome. It was the Super Bowl XXXIV pregame show, and clad in American flag vests, Goidel and her elementary school classmates walked out to perform with country singer Faith Hill. While a sea of cameras swirled around them, the youngsters delivered a sign language translation of the national anthem as the pop star performed. “My mom brings out that tape every time we watch the Super Bowl,” she says.

Ever since then, Goidel, B’12, has had her sights set on a future in theater. She attended one of Georgia’s top arts magnet schools, DeKalb School of the Arts, and has performed in various regional productions. It is no wonder that she chose to attend college in New York, near her beloved Broadway. “I wanted to be in a city that could offer me all the training I could ask for,” she says. The city itself has become her favorite subject. After participating in Columbia Urban Experience, she decided to major in urban studies. Still, the glimmer of the city is no match for the allure of the stage. “I’m just thinking about how much fun I’m having,” she says with a smile. –JYH

Giselle Gastell, C’09, is surrounded by families. When she’s not home in New Jersey with her close-knit Cuban kin, she’s living with the group of girls she has lived with since her Carman days. Or she’s performing with Sabor, the dance group, or spending time with her sisters in Alpha Chi Omega. Now, she is the matriarch of V115, where she is the only upperclassman among the principals. “I feel like grandma over here, pushin’ 80,” says Gastell with a laugh.

People rarely guess at Gastell’s wide-ranging affiliations. Her name gives many the impression she’s French and also generates some colorful nicknames—
“Gizball” and “Gizface,” for example. And her Greek side surprises those harboring typical assumptions about sorority girls.

“They’re like, ‘You’re not a big bitch and you’re not a slut,’” she says. “I don’t know how to respond to that, but thanks, I guess.”

Giselle has gained a reputation for playing some of the more forceful characters on Columbia’s stage, from a caustic homeless lady in *A New Brain* to a drug-dealing prostitute in *Tommy*. But her post-graduation plans reveal a more even temper.

“To me music is something really beautiful, and something that transcends any language barrier or age,” Gastell said. “And anything to get that across is something I want to be a part of.” – LBD

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**KENDALE WINBUSH**

Among its many distinctions, Columbia is the proud home of at least two former Simbas. Anyone worth his or her weight in back issues of *Teen People* knows that J.T.T. voiced the young lion in the animated “The Lion King.” Few, however, are aware that Kendale Winbush, C’10, played the same role in his Los Angeles middle school’s production of the musical.

Winbush embodies many of the best attributes of child stars: he’s charming but never cloying, and comfortable around the adult graduate students with whom he is performing in several plays. He speaks with a dreamy languor that sounds like he’s remembering lines from a script.

Though he attended performing arts schools for years, Winbush initially planned to stay away from college productions and focus on academics. “I was hoping to stay away from theater, but there’s really no avoiding it,” he says.

And though Winbush credits a former Varsity Show cast member with convincing him to audition for this year’s show, he believes there may have been other forces at work and says he’s drawn to the idea of “higher powers.” “I just like that idea...of there being someone who I would surrender my power over to,” he says. “I’m not scared by it and I’m also not just comfortable with it.”

Winbush isn’t sure whether he’ll try out for *V116*. “I’m just trying to get through this year’s,” he adds with a grin, not quite scared, not quite comfortable. – NW

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**PATRICK BLUTE**

At any given moment, Patrick Blute, C’12, is ready to explode into dance and song—and usually ones of his own invention. This is not just for fun. “It’s how I practice,” he says. One tune, which he sings half unconsciously, goes like this: “Do me, do me, Sarah Dooley.”

Though he slips into character with ease, Blute refuses to admit that he has an innate gift for theater. Nor does he believe that years of practice have made acting any easier. “Each character is a completely individual vision to realize on the stage, so it’s always challenging,” he says. Last spring, STA Travel, a youth travel organization, cast Blute as their Ultimate World Traveler Intern, a cushy role that involved traveling around the world for 80 days and hosting an online TV show about it.

Sometimes he takes on unexpected characters. Asked by his hometown theater director to act in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, he agreed. “I said, ‘Sure... wait, that’s the one with the talking plant, right?’ Well whatever. It turned out to be...very different.”

Not content to absentmindedly sing to himself, Blute likes to pull friends and acquaintances into his musical productions, even involving this reporter in a movie he made about MacBooks. Though hesitant to call acting his chosen profession, he says he would consider himself a man of the musical. The genre, he says “accepts absurdity as the best way to express something on stage.” – MEH

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**NINA PEDRAD**

Anyone who has read the *Fed* might expect its managing editor to be of a distinctly insouciant ilk. But smiley, be-curled Nina Pedrad, C’11, is more likely to spend hours studying her Calculus notes than to toss her cares to the wind.

Pedrad transferred to Colum-
Morgan Fletcher (C’12) This is Morgan’s debut on Columbia University’s stage. Morgan has performed in West Side Story (Maria), The Foreigner (Betty Meeks) and Kiss Me Kate (Kate/Lily). She has performed as a soloist at The Academy, Virginia’s oldest theater, as well as in the All-State Chorus. In high school she was a member of the Amherchos Show Choir and was recognized as a solo performer in various competitions, winning the “Outstanding Vocal Soloist” award at the Walt Disney World 2008 Festival Competition. Currently, Morgan is a member of her beloved a cappella group, Notes and Keys. She is extremely grateful for their and her friends’ support throughout the Varsity Show process for the opportunity to perform with this beautiful, vibrant, talented cast of The 115th Varsity Show.

Yonatan Gebeyehu (C’11) is thrilled to be a part of The 115th Varsity Show! Previous credits at Columbia include: Songs for A New World (Man 2), Pippin (Leading Player), and A New Brain (Richard). He also was in XMAS 3! and had the privilege of falling in goat love on this very stage with Claire Halberstadt. Thanks to friends and family for support. He is from D.C., and enjoys purple, facetious comments, and the power of a wonderful hug.

John Goodwin (C’12) is ecstatic to be a member of The 115th Varsity Show! He appeared last semester in the NOMADS Theater Workshop, CUPlayers’ I Am My Own Wife, and XMAS! North by Northpole (John Pagan). He plans to major in Film Studies and Political Science, graduate, and get one of the abundant high-paying jobs in either of those disciplines. John has wanted to be a part of the Varsity Show ever since he saw a preview of Morningside Hates at last year’s Days on Campus, so you can imagine how he feels right now. He would like to thank the C-Team and cast for their astonishing, tireless work and wonderful, lasting friendship.

Nicole Lopez (C’12) is enjoying the experience that is Varsity Show! She is a prospective theater major and you may have seen her last semester as Gloria in The Last Days of Judas Iscariot or a member of the rocking ensemble of The Who’s Tommy. Hailing from Orlando, Florida, her past roles include Reno in Anything Goes, Irene in Crazy for You, and Tranio in Taming of the Shrew. Nicole also doubles as a pianist with 15 years of experience, previously serving Orlando’s Saint Andrew Catholic Church as resident pianist and the Winter Park Playhouse as musical director. She thanks her parents, the drama depot, and KC for being her rocks of support.

Jill Schackner (B’11) is a music major. She’s been on Broadway in Les Miserables, Off-Broadway productions including Landscape of the Body, White Noise (reading) and The Broadway Kids, in film in House of D and more recently Paper Man, and on television in All My Children, Star Search, Celebrity Deathmatch and others. You probably saw her in a Verizon commercial. This is Jill’s first production at Columbia and she couldn’t love the Varsity Show van of surprises more.
Jill is also a member of the Columbia Clefhangers, the finest a cappella group. Thanks and much love to her family, 10N, next year’s suite, Millie, and that guy who does the Millie voice.

Connor Spahn (C’12) is from the wonderful suburb of Freehold, NJ. He has appeared on Columbia stages in the Fall production of Tommy, as Uncle Ernie, and more recently in Little Shop of Horrors as Mr. Man. Some pre-Columbian credits include the Cat in the Hat in Seussical, the Emcee in Cabaret, and Hines in The Pajama Game. He is more than excited to perform in The 115th Annual Varsity Show, and wishes to thank everyone that he has met in Columbia theater for being so awesome and making his college theater dreams come true! He would also like to thank everyone involved in the show, especially Matt, his friends, his family, and his other family: Uptown Vocal.

Emily Wallent (B’11) is excited, overjoyed, and thankful (and every other adjective) to be involved in her first ever Varsity Show. You may have seen her in CMTS’ Love Could Drive a Person Crazy last year, or in the Barnard Theatre Department’s fall show Hippolytus. Emily was involved in the Under the Radar festival this December/January as an assistant stage manager for Mabou Mines Off-Off Broadway at P.S. 122, and spent her ‘08 summer as an arts management intern at Surflight Theatre in Long Beach Island, NJ. She would to thank the extraordinary C-Team, Plimpton 3C4 for allowing her to practice into the wee hours of the night, Pennsylvania, and Hewitt flat bread pizza for the best semester of her life.

The Creative Team

Thomas Anawalt

Director

The elephant logo of Anawalt Lumber dots the Southern California landscape that Thomas Anawalt, C’09, calls home. But Anawalt would rather be a film director than a lumber baron: “If I go back after graduation, the fear is that I’ll have no plans. Then I may have to work for my dad.” Still, the apple doesn’t fall far from the timber-bearing tree; the same grandfather who inspired Thomas’s iconic role of “Gramps” in V113 also shares his feelings about the family business. “He says the best decision he ever made was getting 300 miles away from a lumber yard,” Anawalt says.

Sporting a scruffy beard and a blue aloha-patterned button-up (his “Gramps” shirt), Anawalt is reflective about his own grandfatherly sentiments. He sees V115 as the end of an era: this year’s senior class “is one of the last that didn’t have text messaging in middle school. Students today are more cynical, more disconnected.” Anawalt hopes to use musical theater to “call people out, but also to get them to laugh.”

Anawalt’s natural charm is essential for his directorial style, which is best summed up by the bright green Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles hoodie he wears almost daily. “Michelangelo is the best. He’s the party dude, and he always solves things,” Anawalt says. “And I feel like, as a director, that’s my role.”

Becca Lewis

Producer

Some overlords rule by intimidation. President Bollinger, for instance, harnesses opulence to achieve order. “He lives like a king,” gushes Becca Lewis, C’11. She was made privy to the bowels of PrezBo’s baronial estate during a recent trustee dinner, which she attended as the evening’s harpist.

Other figures of authority govern with a feared severity. Take, for instance, Madame Thernardier from Les Misérables, whom Lewis played in a high school production. “It was completely different than what I’m like in real life,” she says. “She’s just kind of a bitch.”

And then there’s Lewis’ brand of overseer. She’s a compassionate conservative—sympathetic to the cre-
ative process, but ultimately committed to maintaining order. “I like to be someone that the cast feels they can approach, but also someone that can be a firm hand,” she says. Lewis characterizes herself as an “overall guiding figure” whose job it is to ensure “that the show actually comes to fruition.”

Her producing credentials—she also served as assistant producer in last year’s Varsity Show and helped produce Columbia Musical Theatre Society’s Tommy last semester—are complemented by her experience as an actor. Actors are “kind of a whole different breed, from the production side of things, and I feel like I know how to handle them better now,” she says. –ARK

**Darcy Zacharias**  
**Producer**

Darcy Zacharias, C’10, was on stage before she had a full set of teeth. At less than one year old, she played the baby Jesus at her parents’ church in Cincinnati.

“It occurs to me there are people who don’t care [about theater] and that’s shocking,” she says, slurping a Broadway milkshake at a booth in Tom’s Restaurant. “I learned my American history from 1776 and Big River.”

Freshman year, while assistant directing The Real Thing, she was introduced to the sparse funding and low attendance rates that frustrate many a Columbia thespian. She countered apathy with boosterism, producing, directing, and stage-managing half a dozen shows over the past three years. Now the president of the Columbia Musical Theater Society, she is fluent in Columbia bureaucratese and can rattle off the fire code of the Lerner Black Box. She keeps Band-Aids in her wallet and a can of hairspray on hand to repair stocking runs. “Actors are constantly breaking themselves,” she says with a toothy smile.

Some day, she muses, she would like to study theater management and start her own company. But for now, her focus is the V115 team. “Nobody cares about the stage manager or the producer,” she says. “It’s about the show. It’s not about me.” –SEV

**Erica Drennan**  
**Writer**

The daughter of two professors, Erica Drennan, C’11, chose her specialization—the 19th century novel—early.

After devouring David Copperfield in the sixth grade, she wrote an epic, unfinished tale of a scullery maid and “this street boy from Ireland who had gotten thrown into debtors’ prison,” she recalls. Her focus persisted through high school, when she composed a one-act play called Jane Err, about a mad Charlotte Brontë trying to write her novel in modern-day Los Angeles. When Brontë leaves her writing desk for lunch, Rochester—Jane Eyre’s husband—sneaks over to use her telephone to call his gay lover, a Peruvian in leather pants. Little Adele, Rochester’s French ward, speaks neither French, nor English, but Spanish—and her dialogue is almost entirely verses from a Pablo Neruda poem about self-discovery.

Adele “is actually the wisest character in the story,” Drennan says, “but no one has a clue what she’s saying.”

A more recent short story tells of a Midwestern Charlotte Brontë devotee who hosts séances and moves her husband and teenage children to the moors—all in the name of literary obsession. Drennan has recently declared as a major in Russian literature, so be vigilant for the influence of Anna Karenina and The Brothers Karamazov on tonight’s show. –ACM

**Rachel Leopold**  
**Writer**

Tonight, Rachel Leopold, C’10, will be watching the show from Roone Arledge’s extra-exclusive box seats. Never heard of this section? That’s because it doesn’t exist.

Last year, Leopold’s friends convinced her that she needed to buy tickets for Into the Woods in Roone’s secret, elite section. Why? It was just another way to lovingly exploit Leopold’s trusting nature. One time, her friends convinced her she was being sued by the recording industry after she had downloaded one song online.

Though Leopold may take her friends’ pranks seriously, she knows how to take herself lightly. In high school, she won a national playwriting competition with a play about a middle-aged therapist going through a divorce. It was a comedy, naturally. These tendencies leave Leopold equally savvy and gullible, and she embraces this dynamic in her comedy and theater—especially in her performances with improvisational comedy group Fruit Paunch. The interplay of sweetness and snark is part of what makes Leopold’s humor so appealing.
“I really like to make people laugh,” she says, adding dryly, “That’s so corny.” –LRG

SAM REISMAN
Writer

Sam Reisman, C’10, began his college career by offering himself a nugget of advice: “If it’s fun, it must not be worthwhile.” However, by the looks of it, he’s ignored his own credo: Reisman has been a ubiquitous and welcoming presence of seemingly everything fun on campus, from the Fed to the Jester to Egg and Peacock.

Still, taking fun so seriously has had formidable consequences and writing V115 was no exception. Reisman, who calls his Thermos his best friend, relies on copious amounts of coffee, especially now that he’s “fully nocturnal,” he says. During marathon writing sessions, he says, “one of us types, two of us shout,” and the nutrition is iffy: “Caffeine, a big bag of baby carrots, and a family-size 17 oz. tub of hummus. And celery. And more caffeine.”

Having already broken into the New York theater scene—he stage-managed a New York Fringe Festival show featuring an all-Columbia alum cast and crew—Reisman says he’s looking to act or direct after college. But if that doesn’t pan out, he’ll settle for a job that lets him drink coffee while watching movies. And if that fails (unlikely, but a backup is always prudent) Reisman knows exactly what he wants to be: “Unemployed, with a library card, and a Netflix subscription,” he says proudly. –MMK

BECKY GREENSTEIN
Composer / Lyricist

“You can get cabin fever if you spend too much time here,” Becky Greenstein, B’10, says of the practice rooms in the Schapiro basement. Greenstein has been spending nearly all her free time in these subterranean cubbyholes, working frantically with her co-composer/lyricist Matt Stauffer, to complete the bedrock of the show.

Greenstein was practically groomed for her position: the sound-track of her childhood was her mother playing show tunes on the piano; in grade-school, she wanted to play every instrument in the orchestra (she settled for one in each family); she had a part in the Columbia Musical Theatre Society’s production of Into the Woods, and played trombone in the pit for V114.

But her gleaming musical theater résumé doesn’t end there. She mentions offhand that she was lucky enough to have her own musical, written last year in conjunction with the Columbia NOMADS (New and Original Musicals Authored by Students) group, accepted at a “small, dinky, Off-Off-Broadway theater.” The quirky Plan B: the Musical tells the story of a scientist’s attempt to build the perfect robot woman. Plan B already has its own Wikipedia page, which means that if Greenstein ever leaves Schapiro’s basement, she’ll be headed for greatness. –SCS

MATT STAUFFER
Composer/Lyricist

Matt Stauffer, G’09, is supposed to be the Bad Cop of the Varsity Show but, with his easy smile and genial manner, it’s difficult to tell how he landed the job. In fact, it was while acting as a good Samaritan that he accidentally began his involvement in Columbia’s music scene.

Stauffer stumbled into an impromptu audition his sophomore year while riding his bike past the Columbia bookstore. He passed a woman from one of his classes who was in obvious distress, and being a gentleman, he stopped and asked her what was wrong. She didn’t answer except to ask him whether he could sing tenor.

“I hopped off my bike, dropped my backpack on the street, and started singing,” Stauffer says. “I sang her a scale”—he trills some ascending half-steps—“and then I sang ‘Moondance.’” The woman turned out to be the music director of Columbia’s a cappella group Uptown Vocal, and thanks to a fortuitous shortage of men in the group, Stauffer was hired. He credits the group’s arrangements of jazz songs with inspiring him to start writing music.

“Arrange for UV taught me to write for voices, which I hope will show in this year’s Varsity Show,” he says. “We have some killer harmonies.” –JMB

CLAIRE HALBERSTADT
Choreographer

“I’m kind of a bag lady,” says Claire Halberstadt,
B’09, as she wheels her bicycle, which is laden with parcels, out into the sunshine. A busy schedule, a bad back, and an off campus apartment demand that several bags and an iPod stereo be toted around with her at all times.

This schedule is nothing new to Halberstadt. She spent fall semester as a student teacher, working in a third grade classroom five days a week. “I went from hanging out with third graders every day to working on the Varsity Show full time,” she says. “I had to watch that I didn’t start using a baby voice with the cast.”

She made the transition smoothly, though—choreography comes naturally to her. A tap-dancer for many years, she has served as president of the Columbia Musical Theater Society, where she choreographed two productions. Her distinctive style even earned her a nickname: “Claire-ography.” She starts off every rehearsal, for instance, with intense “Claire-obics.”

“My music playlist is called Power Ballads for Strong Beautiful Barnard Women,” she says. What’s on it? “Lots of Kelly Clarkson,” she says, grinning. –HML

CAYLE PIETRAS

Art Director & Set Designer

Although it was eight years ago that Cayle Pietras, C’09, starred as the lead in his high school’s performance of Peter Pan, “It’s hardly long enough for the embarrassment to wear off,” he says with a nervous laugh. Thanks to an adult-onset case of stage fright, he now shuns his days of boy-stardom. His new, preferred role is behind the curtain, though he still likes to refer to himself as a “lad.”

As the art director of V115, Pietras oversees the design of sets, lighting, sound, and costumes. “Pretty much everything you actually see on stage is what I do,” he says. Except the dancing. “Definitely not the dancing,” he says, bashfully.

In his free time, Pietras is writing a science fiction musical about a post-apocalyptic commune. “I hate the typical campy musical theater kitsch,” he explains. But he is equally apt to dismiss anything overly ponderous. “The film department at Columbia, of course, is all into the theoretical stuff,” he says.

Pietras has left college twice to explore the real world. One year, he interned downtown with Bentley Meeker Lighting and Staging; another year, he took off to teach special-needs students and coach the track team at his former high school. But despite his peripatetic bent and his boy-next-door appearance, Pietras confirms that the city is his home. “When I’m away from the city, something in my heart just hurts,” he says. –MEQ

The Production Team

AJIT C. PILLAI (Technical Director, E’11) has been doing technical theater for many years now. At Columbia, he has light designed or tech directed such shows such as The 114th Annual Varsity Show, CU Players’ I Am My Own Wife, and CU Players’ Eurydice. Outside of theater, he enjoys traveling the world and taking photos. He has enjoyed working on this year’s Varsity Show and would like to thank all involved for their dedicated work.

EMILY NAGEL (Stage Manager, C’12) is a first-year majoring in English. Last semester, she stage managed and assistant directed Songs for a New World. Before Columbia, Emily assistant directed two productions and directed a handful of small projects, including a children’s musical. Her favorite acting credits include My Favorite Year, Little Women, and Into the Woods. Special thanks to Brian, as well as to the cast, creative, production, and design teams for this incredible ride.

BRIAN LAPERCHE (Stage Manager, C’12) feels honored to work with a group of so many talented people. Involvement in past Columbia productions includes: Last Days of Judas Iscariot and The Winter’s Tale. Brian would like to thank Carman 12, KCST, the cast of V115 that amazes him everyday, the design team for making things look awesome, the creative team for making beautiful art, and his co-stage manager Emily Nagel for helping him catch all the spies.

CODY HAEFNER (Assistant Producer, C’12) is thrilled to be assistant-producing the Varsity Show this year. He was seen last semester as the minister in CMTS’s Tommy. His favorite roles in high school included Guys and Dolls, Grease, Aida, and Miss Saigon. Cody hopes to continue performing and producing on the Columbia campus. He thanks Darcy and Becca for teaching him so much, the G-team, the D-team, the P-team, and the cast.
Finally, Cody thanks his friends and family who have always supported him.

**Marly Faherty** (Assistant Director, B’12) is so excited to be participating in her first production at Columbia! Some of Marly’s favorite past experiences include *Metamorphoses*, *Fame!*, *Crazy for You*, *The Laramie Project*, and performing at the 2007 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Marly has also written, directed, and choreographed her own short piece, “EQ.” She wants to thank Mr. Thomas Anawalt for giving her this awesome opportunity, and hopes to do more theater here at Columbia!

**The Design Team**

**Will Brown** (Lighting Designer, C’12). Will thoroughly enjoyed designing the lights for the Varsity Show; in fact, he’s enjoyed it more than being an assistant designer for *Thoroughly Modern Millie* at the San Francisco Performing Arts Center or working lights for Barnard’s *As Five Years Pass*. He’s majoring in computer science and aiming for a career in animation, web design, theater, physics, or acting. Will thanks the cast, creative team and his fellow designers—it’s been an amazing experience.

**Andrew Balmer** (Lighting Designer, C’10). Andrew started working on lighting design in high school, and this is his third production at Columbia. After designing in the Black Box theater for *A New Brain* and *Songs For A New World*, he has found the challenges and opportunities of working on a large show in Roone Arledge Auditorium to be exciting. Andrew is a junior majoring in architecture.

**Will Schuessler** (Sound Designer, C’09). Will is pleased to be closing out his CU theater career with V115. Highlights of his work thus far have included art directing and sound designing *Songs for a New World* last semester, sound designing last year’s Varsity Show, and his work with the Actor’s Gang in Los Angeles last summer. After graduation, Will will be pursuing a career in theatrical sound design.

**Hilary Baboukis** (Costume Designer, C’11). Hilary is thrilled to be working with V115! You may have seen her work in last spring’s *A New Brain* or this fall’s *Songs For A New World*, both produced by CMTS; she also worked with Barnard’s *Life Under Water* this spring. She’s an exhausted but enthusiastic music major. Many thanks to all the V-Show folks, especially Halley, and, of course, to God, Greece, and chocolate, which make her world go ‘round.

**Halley Hair** (Costume Designer, C’11). Halley is and has always been a theater geek. Since the day she first crawled into a theater—mistaking the Green Room for a lovely playroom—she was stuck like a fly in a trap. Thus, it’s only natural that she got involved with theater on and off campus, including designing costumes for *Yellow Boat* and for the Off-Broadway production of *By Oscar Micheaux*. Besides theater, her life revolves around the “ologies”—archaeology, biology, paleontology.

**Kat Chan** (Props Designer, E’12). Kat enjoys painting, sculpting, and making things. Before arriving at Columbia, Kat spent her life in the visual arts studio, creating collages inspired by activism and artificial confections, namely cakes, that made mouths water. From the Varsity Show, Kat has developed superior collecting and scavenging skills. A pre-med student, Kat is so happy to have made it through. She wants to thank her friends, family, V-Show, and X-Acto knives for always being there for her.

**Ruthie Fierberg** (Assistant Choreographer, C’10). Ruthie is thrilled to be part of the Varsity Show. She was most recently seen in CMTS’ production of *Tommy*. This past summer she put her 15 years of tap to use as Peggy Sawyer in the West Hartford Summer Arts Festival’s *42nd Street*. Whether teaching dance, performing in Orchesis, or dance captaining a show, Ruthie is happiest when dancing.

**Rachel Karp** (Assistant Art Director, C’10). Rachel interacts with theater on various levels. These have included acting (*The Little Prince*), producing (*A New Brain*), administration (theaters around New York), directing (for classes, and next year for her senior thesis), and stage managing (*I Love Dick*). She relies on these interactions for her happiness.

**Alex Jinch** (Asst. Technical Director, C’12). Alex’s passion for theater production began in Mexico City, where
he oversaw both the technical and creative direction of high school shows including *Chicago* and *The Threepenny Opera*. He also designed and adapted productions for UNAM (Mexican Autonomous National University).

**Michael Chan (Asst. Lighting Designer, E’12).** Michael first started backstage work in middle school and continued throughout high school in musicals such as *Guys and Dolls* and *Lucky Stiff*. He specializes in set design but also participates in lighting design. He has never experienced anything like the Varsity Show before, and hopes to be involved in the future.

**Lila Neiswanger (Asst. Sound Designer, C’12).** So far this year, Lila has been involved in productions of *The Yellow Boat* and CU Players’ *Eurydice*, and she has had a wonderful time working with the cast and crew of the Varsity Show. In her spare time, she enjoys taking pictures and eating junk food.

**Elizabeth Rice (Asst. Set Designer, E’11).** Elizabeth is thrilled to be working on the Varsity Show this year! Apart from working on the sets of *V114* and *The Yellow Boat*, she sometimes builds treehouses. When she isn’t busy being a sophomore, she likes tea and smiling.

**Dan Miranda (Master Carpenter, E’10).** Daniel is new to the Varsity Show. Previously heard as the drummer in Columbia’s *A New Brain* and *Songs for a New World*, Dan is eager to use his engineering muscles to build a killer set. As always $G(t)^2$, and “Follow your bliss.”

**Emma Kako (Publicity Manager, C’12).** Emma was clearly born to advertise. She enjoys putting up posters along the beach, at weddings and funerals, or really anywhere. The Varsity Show is her third show on campus and the first with its own John Jay dinner.

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**Channa Bao (Scenic Artist, C’11).** Channa is majoring in mathematics. She has always been dedicated to the visual arts and hopes that this passion has helped her as a set design artist for the Varsity Show. Her works have appeared in the *Spectator* and *Gadfly*, and various other publications and exhibitions.

**Liz Pipal (Scenic Artist, C’11).** Liz is new to the set building scene, but has spent a good deal of her life in and around the art scene. She is excited to be a part of *V115*.

**Jin Chen (Graphic Designer, C’12).** Jin has been using Photoshop ever since 6th grade. She is currently an Associate Design Editor for *Spectator* and *Columbia Science Review*. She looks forward to designing more posters for the Columbia community.

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**The Orchestra**

**Suzanne Davies (Violin, C’11)** has played the violin since she was a tiny child, thanks to the inspiration of her older sister. Besides her passion for music, she is also keenly interested in the history of 19\textsuperscript{th} century America.

**Skye Gao (Piano, B’11)** has been tickling the ivories for 12 years. She is majoring in political science and music and minoring in biology. She enjoys ping-pong, swimming with floaties, ancient languages, and all varieties of vapid intellectual discourse.

**John Haney (Guitar, C’11)** has been playing guitar for almost six years. He loves playing all styles except for country. He is currently playing for Columbia’s classical guitar ensemble and jazz ensemble. It is his first Varsity Show performance!

**Johnna Jackson (Trombone, C’08)** has played the trombone for 12 years, majored in music at Columbia, and is glad to finally participate in V-show! She enjoys theater, muffin tops, umbrella guitars, dogs, SNL digital shorts, her yellow galoshes, and nautical-themed pashmina afghans.

Illustrations by Sonia Tycko
Evan Johnston (Saxophone, C’11) can usually be found on stage rather than in the pit, but he’s been known to pick up a saxophone (occasionally). He’s thankful to everyone for allowing him to be a part of V-Show. Much love to Francis.

Paul Lerner (Trumpet, C’11) is excited to be playing the trumpet in the pit for his first Varsity Show. He has played the trumpet for twelve years. He also performs with the Columbia University Wind Ensemble, CU Jazz ensembles, and the CU Marching Band. Paul would like to thank his friends and family.

Cecelia Lie (Flute, B’11) has been playing the flute for 11 years. She loves to sing, especially in Uptown Vocal! She would like to thank her friends and family for their endless support.

Timothy Liu (Violin, C’12) has served as the Concertmaster of the Detroit Country Day Orchestra and First Violinist in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra’s Philharmonic and Civic Orchestras. A great fan of musicals, Tim is excited to play in the pit orchestra of the Varsity Show.

Johanna Liu (Cello, C’12) began playing cello when she was tinier than the instrument itself. Fortunately, she has grown and is now involved in a hodgepodge of musical activities on campus. This is her first Varsity Show, and she is honored to be a part of it!

Jonny Maimon (Drums, C’10) is very excited to be back in musical theater in his fifth show at Columbia. Outside of studying economics and math, Jonathan enjoys playing in various jazz ensembles on campus. He’d like to thank his parents and friends for their continued support.

Matt Star (Bass, C’12) found his dad’s old guitar in the basement when he was nine. Little did he know that it would lead to him becoming the esteemed lead bassist for V115. Thanks to everyone involved for being so awesome!

David Shmel (Keyboard, E’10) is thrilled to be back for a second helping of sweet V-Show pit action! Previous keyboard credits include Cinderella, Little Shop of Horrors, Plan B, Songs for a New World, Tommy, Footloose, and V114.

REJECTED TITLES FOR THIS YEAR’S SHOW

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stuck on Broadway</td>
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<td>Dial G for Gates</td>
<td>The Gate Depression</td>
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<td>In the Gates</td>
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<td>The Dean Who Would Be King</td>
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<td>The Flex Best Thing</td>
<td>The Lions’ King</td>
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<td>Columbia Bubbleicious</td>
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<td>No Columbia for Old Women</td>
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<td>Insta-Gate!</td>
<td>Quid Pro Quigley</td>
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<td>Have I Told You Gately That I Love You?</td>
<td>The Ends Justify the Dean</td>
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<td>Gate Expectations</td>
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<td>The Gate Gatesby</td>
<td>Waiting with Gated Breath</td>
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<td>The Gate War</td>
<td>A Simple Twist of Gate</td>
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<td>Episode 115: The Quigley Menace</td>
<td>Double, Double, Toil, and Bubble</td>
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<td>Darth Gater</td>
<td>Gate Crimes</td>
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Varsity 2009
Thursday Night is the start of the weekend for most Columbia students because few classes meet on Friday.

The School of General Studies, or GS, is an undergraduate school that offers degrees to non-traditional students. All GS students have taken time off between high school and college, and are usually much older and have more life experience than typical undergraduates. They are known to speak at great length in class about how their children, their wartime experience, and criminal records give them more insight than the professor has.

Austin Quigley is the Dean of Columbia College, as well as a professor of dramatic literature and a scholar of Harold Pinter. He will be stepping down as dean at the end of this year but will stay on as a professor.

CU Assassins is an annual game in which undergraduates team up and shoot water guns at each other for cash prizes. Players are known to organize ambushes and surveillance details, and to generally take the game way too seriously.

Lee Bollinger is the President of Columbia University. Undergraduates seldom interact with him outside of his monthly “Fireside Chats” and annual 5K “Fun Run.”

The Economy is bad.

New York University (NYU) is worse.
John Jay is an all-freshmen dorm, composed mainly of single rooms and known for its hallway culture. The building also houses Columbia’s cafeteria, John Jay Dining Hall, which abolished the use of trays this year.

The Columbia Bubble is an oft-used term to describe the insulation of Columbia students, who seldom venture outside of Morningside Heights.

Campo is the Italian restaurant and bar on Broadway and 113th St. Fraternities often outsource their parties there.

Go Ask Alice is a website sponsored by Columbia Health Services to provide information on sexual health and well-being.

Orchesis is a campus dance troupe. All their show titles derive from puns on their name.

Gossip Girl filmed a number of episodes on Columbia’s campus this year. Columbia was used to portray Yale University.

The Bwog is a popular campus blog for news and gossip, founded in spring of 2006 by the staff of the Blue and White magazine. Its commenters are known for their outspoken postings and bad puns.

Barack Obama visited Columbia last fall with Republican presidential candidate John McCain to participate in a community service summit called Service Nation.

Frontiers of Science is a required class for all Columbia College first-years. The curriculum includes much busywork and little actual science.

Many Columbia undergraduates live in dormitories located outside the main campus in the surrounding neighborhood.

Michele Moody-Adams, formerly of Cornell University, will replace Austin Quigley as Dean of Columbia College next fall. She is both the first woman and the first person of color to hold the position.

The Hallelujah Man is a local figure that frequents Broadway and 113th St. every night, handing out Jesus-related pamphlets and shouting inspirational phrases, such as “I love you” and “Jesus loves you,” at the top of his lungs. Often dressed in a suit, the Hallelujah Man is rumored to not actually be homeless, but rather to be called to a life of wandering.

Flex is the campus currency that students can use in campus eateries, the bookstore, laundry facilities, and vending machines. All Flex charges appear on student billing and thus are often financed by parental contributions.

Exorcisms were reported to have taken place at Columbia this fall. One occurred in an undergraduate dorm. When an RA attempted to break up the noisy gathering, another RA, who was participating in the exorcism, allowed it to continue. On another occasion, students in East Campus witnessed what appeared to be a similar exorcism on Ancel Plaza. Residential Life authorities prohibited RAs from speaking publicly about the incidents. We did not make this up.

The Lerner Turnstile is a temperamental entrance to Lerner Hall from Broadway that often rejects students’ IDs when they attempt to swipe in.

The Butler Stacks house the humanities and history books of Columbia’s libraries. According to campus lore, they are also a venue for undergraduate sex.

King’s College was the original name of Columbia University when it was founded under a charter from King George II in 1754.

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) is a highly insular far-left campus group.

The Kiss-In Jubilation was an event held outside the offices of the Columbia Daily Spectator, in which participants protested a controversial Spec editorial by making out with each other.

The NROTC Online Survey was designed to gauge student support for a possible return of Naval ROTC to campus. The vote was not secure; one student managed to vote 276 times.
One sunny spring day I sat down with Erica Drennan, C’11, Rachel Leopold, C’10, and Sam Reisman, C’10—the writers of The 115th Annual Varsity Show—to talk about Obama, hummus, and a giant inflatable penis. As a two-time Varsity Show actor, writers such as these have put words in my mouth for half of college. Now, I get to put words in their mouths, or at least ask them questions that force them to put words in their own mouths. Or something. Anyway, the interview:

The Blue and White: Why did you want to write The 115th Annual Varsity Show?

Erica Drennan: I went to see the show last year and I didn’t really know anything about it—I went by myself because none of my friends would go with me. And I thought it was hilarious and decided I would like to try to write it some year.

Sam Reisman: If you want to go into writing or theater, it’s pretty much the biggest, most professional thing you can do at Columbia. It’s the thing that challenges you to put up your best work.

Rachel Leopold: I saw it my freshman year and was dazzled. I was sitting way in the back, couldn’t see it very well, but I really enjoyed it. I thought about applying last year, but I didn’t, and this year I decided to go for it.

B&W: What makes this year’s show different?

SR: I think we’re trying to tap into something that’s been going on for a long time. Last year’s show focused on the events of last year. This time we’re trying to look at something a bit broader.

ED: Yeah, not much happened this year.

SR: There was the whole president thing.

ED: There was the president thing.

SR: And an inflatable penis.

RL: Those were really the two big things.
**B&W**: Which one was more important?

*(Long pause)*

**SR**: Which one would you rather see a kickline about? Because that’s what goes in the show.

**B&W**: Describe your writing process. With three writers, do you split up the work and then edit as a group?

**RL**: We’ve written everything together, which I think is good because it gives it one voice throughout the whole thing. We’ve never written anything apart—except like our papers for class.

**SR**: And even then I like to call them for feedback. No, but the writing process generally involves two of us shouting and one of us typing.

**ED**: We all shout.

**SR**: We had a stress ball once.

**ED**: We broke it.

**B&W**: Do you tend to write Columbia jokes and then fit them into the context of the show, or write scenes and find the jokes as you go?

**RL**: We usually start by outlining the scene, and if we have some jokes that will fit, we write them on the bottom of the page and hope to fit them in. But I’d say more often than not, the jokes should come out of the character interactions, or else it just feels like you’re shoving Columbia jokes in there because it’s the Varsity Show.

**SR**: And not just at the line level, sometimes I think we structure whole scenes as “this is going to be that scene in which we make fun of sexiling or John Jay food.” It’s nice to take a big, broad thing and try and organize a whole scene around making fun of an episode that a lot of Columbia students have had to endure at some point.

**B&W**: How do you reconcile the need to fill the script with Columbia jokes with the constraints of telling a unified story?

**ED**: We try to make all the jokes come from the characters.

**RL**: Something that we struggle with a lot is whether a joke is actually a joke or just a reference. Is it a character exiting a scene saying, "All right, I’m gonna go to John Jay"?

**SR**: Pause for audience laughter.

**RL**: We don’t want to do that. We want jokes that sound natural, but the nature of the Varsity Show is that sometimes they won’t.

**SR**: You want to make it at least sound like these characters could actually be saying these things to each other in that moment and they just happen to be making these really hilarious observations about Columbia in their conversation. If it just sounds like they’re speaking punchlines at each other... I don’t know, as an audience member, I lose interest very quickly.

**B&W**: Any interesting rejected plotlines or characters?

*(Writers mumble)*

**RL**: I think someone in a creative team meeting seriously proposed that Hawkmadinejad be a speaking character. And I just ignored that.

**SR**: At one point it was put on the table—not by us—to open the second act of the show in Iraq.

**ED**: With all the characters in Iraq. The idea was NROTC would be a big element of the plot, so that in Act II, they all get shipped off to Iraq.

**RL**: An idea that was also thrown around by some people for a while was to have the show take place over one night, which doesn’t sound as crazy as it might be.

**ED**: Varsity Show in real-time type thing. There were so many others. There was Sam’s idea for—

**SR**: A construction accident at the Nexus across the street.
The Conversation

(Sam smiles)

B&W: Hilarity ensues.

SR: Hilarity and all kinds of horrible bodily humor.

RL: Naturally Erica and I said no.

SR: We tried to tie in the election at one point.

RL: We thought about Obama as a character.

SR: For a while we thought about making the plot focus around a student council election that would play out like the presidential election in microcosm at Columbia. But then it becomes very facile very quickly. You’ve got your Sarah Palin look alike character who’s an English major or something.

RL: Someone actually brought in a monologue that was a character possessed by a demon.

B&W: What’s something you wish you could make fun of at Columbia but weren’t able to?

RL: Well we haven’t yet worked in the inflatable penis. I wish I could make fun of Critical Reading/Critical Writing, the new class for English majors, but I don’t think enough people know about it. But it is literally like Frontiers of Science as an English class. It’s structured the same way, and it’s horrible.


B&W: Is there a favorite snack in the writing room?

RL: Carrots and hummus.

B&W: That’s kind of lame.

SR: When we run out of carrots, we use our fingers.

RL: I’m a little bit over hummus right now.

ED: We had a lot of hummus. Rachel was more into the whole little red candy thing.

RL: I really like candy.

SR: It’s corn syrup in the shape of a fish.

B&W: Swedish Fish?

SR: There’s nothing Swedish about it.

B&W: Have you ever wanted to replace the actors with animatronic performers or trained animals? If so, which would you prefer and why?

RL: Could we program the animatrons?

B&W: Yeah, these are Pirates of the Caribbean-style animatrons.

SR: The animatrons wouldn’t mess up their lines.

ED: Sometimes we talk about how maybe the three of us should perform the show, but we can’t sing. I figure no one needs to hear nice melodies.

RL: I would pick animals because they’re cute. We could snuggle with them backstage.

B&W: What will you be doing 10 minutes before the show opens?

RL: I’ll probably be peeing for the 15th time because I’m nervous.

ED: I’ll be flailing my hands a lot.

RL: Sam’s gonna be drinking.

SR: I doubt it. I’ll be out hailing a cab.

RL: I’ll probably be explaining to my grandmother what the Varsity Show is before she sees it. I’ll be in the audience, talking to her.

B&W: If you could sum up the Varsity Show writing experience in one word, what would it be?

SR: Wow.

RL: Tired.

ED: Hummus.

—Interviewed by Will Snider
From the Writers’ Notebooks

Writing the Varsity Show means writing a few dozen Varsity Shows’ worth of ideas, jokes, scenes, stories and characters. Here’s some of what never made it from the page to the stage.

- Add/Drop/Pop and Lock-it Form
- Add/Drop/Stop Drop and Roll Form
- Physics for Poets, Spanish for Scuba Divers, English for Accountants, etc.
- A love song called “U-N’-I”
- Rule: We will never have a character exit because he/she “has to go to the bathroom.”
- “I was looking for my Weapons of Mass Destruction class, but I can’t find it!”
- The only SEAS art class is Better Planet by Design.
- David Helfand’s seasonal migration to the north like the birds he studies.
- The economy is so bad it’s called Red Bear instead of Red Bull. Red Bear gives you...depression.
- What if James Franco was in a LateNite play?
- Long distance relationship with someone at NYU
- No professor can ever work the projector/VCR/DVD player
- “I’m a fan of your mind and brain, but NOT your behavior.”
- “On Bollinger’s Not-So-Fun Run, a man named Bernie mugged him and made off with $3 million of the endowment.”
- Ferris Booth has no booths, nor Ferris wheels
- bureaucracy@columbia.edu
- Liberal anarcho-feminist blog: ThisChildLeftBehindtheLeft.blogspot.com
- “The university has closed the 120th St. gate, because that’s close to Harlem.”
- “I’ll read you Thucydides and do the voices.”
- SEAS kid dating an NYU kid: They really do like simple machines
- Beer fountain!
- “Sex on a Friday night? Some people have a lot of free time.”
- Why are you GChatting me? My GChat status is set to busy! I am actually busy! You are actually interrupting!
- “I’ve been watching CTV for the past week, and it’s all starting to look the same! It’s almost as if they’re recycling the same three hours of content and over again! How innovative!”
- Major Cultures! Minor Cultures! Cultures of Intermediate value!
- That guy at the gym who just smells.
- “What we really need is another strike, like last year. Except this time, a little less Gandhi and a little more Robespierre!”
- Educated Hande, CC’11.
- “The ‘CU at Sigma Nu’ party was shut down!” “Another victory for the War on Puns!”
- Obama visited in bed by ghost of FDR, Ike, and Teddy Roosevelt: A Columbia Carol
- The Show takes place in a Peanuts-like universe (Administration does not speak real words).
- Drugs and Behavior = Columbia Class; Its Barnard Equivalent: High-Ho, High-Ho!
- The Nexus is Barnard’s plot to harvest estrogen.
- What if you had an actual party in the party space?
- Overzealous Obama campaign worker doesn’t know what to do with himself anymore; says “Yes, we can” to everything.

- Compiled by Erica Drennan, Rachel Leopold, and Sam Reisman

Illustration by Allison Halff
THE SHOWS

115 Years of Varsity Drama

1894 Joan of Arc
1896 Buccaneer
1897 Cleopatra
1899 Varsity Show
1900 The Governor’s Vrouw
1901 Princess Proud
1902 Vanity Fair
1903 The Mischief Maker
1904 The Isle of Illusia
1905 The Khan of Kathan
1906 The Conspirators
1907 The Ides of March
1908 Mr. King
1909 In Newport
1910 The King of Hilaria
1911 Made in India
1912 The Mysterious Miss Apache
1913 The Brigands
1914 The Merry Lunatic
1915 On Your Way
1916 The Peace Pirates
1917 Home James
1918 Ten for Five
1919 Take a Chance
1920 Fly with Me
1921 You’ll Never Know
1922 Steppe Around
1923 Half Moon Inn
1924 Old King’s
1925 Half Moon Inn (again)
1926 His Majesty, the Queen
1927 Betty Behave
1928 Zuleika, or the Sultan Insulted
1929 Oh, Hector

1930 Heigho Pharoah
1931 Great Shakes
1932 How Revolting!
1933 Home James
1934 Laugh it Off!
1935 Flair-Flair: The Idol of Peace
1936 Off Your Marx
1937 Some of the People
1938 You’ve Got Something There
1939 Fair Enough
1940 Life Begins in ’40
1941 Hit the Road
1942 Saints Alive
1944 On the Double
1945 Second the Motion
1946 Step Right Up
1947 Dead to Rights
1948 Streets of New York
1949 Mr. Oscar
1950 Wait for It
1951 Babe in the Woods
1952 Streets of New York
1953 Shape of Things
1954 Sky’s the Limit
1955 When in Rome
1959 Dig That Treasure
1960 A Little Bit Different
1961 Streets of New York
1962 Guys and Dolls
1963 Elsinore
1964 Il Troubleshootore
1965 Varsity Show
1966 The Bawl’s Opera
1967 Feathertop

1978 The Great Columbia Riot of ’78
1980 Come Fly With Me
1982 College on Broadway
1983 Fear of Scaffolding
1984 The New U
1985 Lost in Place
1989 Sans Souci, Be Happy
1990 Behind the Lion Curtain
1991 The Silence of the Lions
1993 Lion Game
1994 Angels at Columbia: Centennial Approaches
1995 Step Inside
1996 Devil in a Light Blue Dress
1997 Enlargement and Enhancement: The Scaffolding Years
1998 Love is Indefinite
1999 Beyond Oedipus: Leaving the Womb
2000 Mo’ Money Mo’ Problems
2001 Sex, Lies, and Morningside
2002 108th Annual Varsity Show
2003 Dial “D” for Deadline
2004 Off Broadway
2005 The Sound of Muses
2006 Misery Loves Columbia
2007 Insufficient Funds
2008 Morningside Hates
2009 The Gates of Wrath
There is a dreary sameness to rehearsal rooms the world over. However dazzling the show may be on stage, inside this room, things are peculiarly unentertaining. On a weekend afternoon, a line of comfy chairs crosses the middle of a dormitory lounge, facing the stage area as if they were the front row of the audience—except everybody in the chairs is looking at their respective MacBooks and ignoring the show. A yard in front of them, two or three cast members act out a vignette. They are half-engaged, and the director, Thomas Anawalt, C’09, who is the only one watching, chastises them for their lack of conviction. No one seems to be performing for any audience, until Yonatan Gebeyehu, C’11, winkingly addresses one of his lines—a shout-out to “my great aunt Carol from GS”—to this reporter.

The cast and crew of the 115th Annual Varsity Show have been holed up together for 4 hours and 15 minutes, and they’ve got another three-quarters of an hour to go. One producer flips between her email account and a website of photographs of home-cooked meals. An actress digs into her sports bag and pops what appears to be her daily dose of birth control. At different spots along the floor, the carpet is unspooling under their feet, and the tables and couches are somewhere underneath stacks of empty salad containers with oil and pepper lingering on their clear sides.

“Especially on the weekends there tends to be this great, catastrophic deluge of plastic bags and forks and plates that people left behind,” says producer Darcy Zacharias, C’10.

The five-hour weekend rehearsal is like a hangover crossed with summer camp. The actors are the campers, who share the easy intimacy of bunk-mates, trading massages and offering soulful hugs between run-throughs. When they chat during notes, the choreographer-slash-counselor, Claire Halberstadt B’09, snaps, “We need quiet, guys!” She wears a red tube top, a cut-off mini-skirt with patches in the shape of stars, leggings, and a high ponytail. In fact, only two of the ten or more women in this room do not have their hair in ponytails. Theater people may have a reputation for being peacocks, but practicality is the mark of rehearsal style; Zacharias’s bun is knotted through with two mechanical pencils.

“If people are talking during rehearsal, then there’s no excuse for it looking bad,” inveighs Halberstadt. Bringing the cast to attention, she claps her hands and taps her feet, then calls out, “and ONE and TWO and THREE and FOUR and FIVE and SIX and SEVEN, A CAPPELLA!” The actors lift their arms, bounce, and gyrate. Their moves are not crisp yet; between attempts they ask for minute clarifications of the steps. Each run-through moves a little faster, but most of the singing voices still hang at half-mast.

Downstage, a couple of male principals work their way through a bromantic scene set at neighborhood nightclub Campo. Adam May, C’11, has aroused a moderately plausible stage cry, but the five ensemble members dancing upstairs are not quite feeling the verisimilitude. They make their own techno music, once-oonce-oonce in stage whispers. They mockbrush their teeth while shaking their butts. After ten minutes, background dancer Emily Wallen, B’11, asks, “Are we still doing this?”

In situations like this, only the director can corral the dissolute campers. Anawalt is the papa-bear—powerful in his enthusiasm, but a little bit terrifying in his disappointment. “Do not let me see you lose character,” he calls. “Let’s do this! And you guys, smile! When you look bored, I get bored.”

After countless run-throughs, a breakthrough. The dance is smoother; the actors get the dialogue down. For a second, everybody is juiced. “You guys are fucking phenomenal,” confirms Anawalt. Then the room kibbitzes over notes and schedules, and whatever focus has collected trails off. There is the sound of zippers and of empty plastic containers being dunked into garbage cans. Camp dismissed.

—Alexandra Muhler

Illustration by Allison Halff
The People

Acknowledgements

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**Official 2009 Varsity Show Sponsor**
- Columbia Alumni Association

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- The Activities Board at Columbia
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- The General Studies Student Council
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- The President and Provost Student Event Fund
- The CU Arts Initiative and The Gatsby Charitable Foundation Fund

**VIPs (Varsity Important Persons)**
- The Anawalt Family
- The Blute Family
- The Caruso Family
- The Drennan/Stone Family
- The Faherty Family
- The Gastell Family
- The Goodwin Family
- The Greenstein Family
- The Lewis Family
- The Reisman Family
- The Stauffer Family
- The Zacharias Family

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There have been 114 Varsity Shows in Columbia’s illustrious past...
Learn more about them at our website!
thevarsityshow.com

Download music, view clips, purchase DVDs, and keep in touch with other Varsity Show alums!
Can You Make a Varsity Show?

Congratulations! You’ve been selected as a writer of the Varsity Show! Over the next several months, you’ll be working with six to nine other members of the Creative team to generate a full-length stage show. You can’t wait to begin!

1. One of the first important steps in creating the show is casting. The Varsity Show is cast before a word is even written, and collaborating with the actors to create memorable characters is an integral part of the process. When faced with a tough decision, you decide to cast...
   A. A strong dramatic actor with a beautiful voice.
   B. A hilarious improvisational and sketch comedian.
   C. The girl/guy you’ve been trying to sleep with.
   D. Oscar Hammerstein.

2. After casting, you’re going to have to start making decisions about what kinds of characters belong in the show. For starters, you’ll need a protagonist that the audience can get behind. You choose...
   A. A Human Rights major trying to make a difference
   B. A SEAS nerd with nerdy pocket protectors and nerd-acne all over his stupid nerd-face
   C. A Varsity Show writer
   D. Oscar Hammerstein (played by Oscar Hammerstein)

3. Good choice! But remember: you’re still going to need a plot hook. After much deliberation, you decide that your show will be about...
   A. The struggle of a student to define himself in a sea of overachievers
   B. Whatever big dumb shit happened on campus this year—just put that onstage
   C. How the Varsity Show saves the world thanks to the Varsity Show writers who are awesome
   D. World War I

4. The show’s plotline can always bend to accommodate a great, topical, show-stopping number. But what will that be? Your trenchant observation about Columbia couched in a kick-line is...
   A. “I Finally Made One Friend of Every Ethnicity (After Four Years)"
   B. “It’s Gotten Too Hard to Get into Bars (Now I Have to Vomit in My Room)"
   C. “Spectator Sometimes Has Typos (So the Varsity Show and Its Writers Are Better)"
   D. “This School Doesn’t Accept Women or Jews (Get with the Times, It’s 1916)"

5. When it comes down to it, though, you know that as a writer the most lasting impact you can possibly make on Columbia is with a memorable one-liner. After the performance, audience members are going to be repeating the following for years to come...
   A. “You didn’t waste your money coming here! You wasted your parents’ money!”
   B. “Did you see the debate last night? Brokaw looked as old as a GS student—and he asked almost as many questions!”
   C. “I hate you all, the Varsity Show rules!” (which you shouted after one of the above bombed)
   D. “You’ve got more moxie than Wilson did when he signed the Clayton Antitrust Act into law in 1914!”

Now, tally up your answers!

** Mostly As: Your show was dramatic and intelligent, but not enough fun! Nobody wants to be taken on an acting tour de force or listen to your preachy satirical “humor”—just make everybody laugh for two hours, okay? **

** Mostly Bs: Your show was fun, but vapid! People walked away feeling like you had just taken pot-shots at the easiest targets. It’s not that hard to hit Barnard girls—they’re big enough, right?!

** Mostly Cs: You are an egomaniacal asshole. Also, why am I taking my own quiz? **

** Mostly Ds: Your show achieved that rare balance of elements so missing in the Treaty of Versailles! Seriously, though, get back in the time machine. **
Upon waking up one rainy morning in April, ensemble member John Goodwin filled a nearby cup with water and began to drink, mistakenly ingesting cast member Emma Goidel’s contact lenses in the process.

Director Thomas Anawalt has developed a reputation for his fondness of strange aphorisms. Declarations like “Very serious people can be hilarious—just put them next to a prostitute” inspired the stage managers to keep a running list of Anawaltisms. The collection includes the following adages:

- “We have a long road ahead of us. It’s a fun road. But more than the road, I like the van traveling on the road. But most of all, I like the people riding inside the van.”
- “Working with you guys is like climbing into a box... of surprises.”
- “You’re not a dwarf, you’re a Columbia student.”
- “Once I obtain polka dots, then I will be who I truly am.”

Words to live by.

When visiting a Varsity Show rehearsal in February, Dean Austin Quigley took aside Patrick Blute, the actor playing Dean Austin Quigley, and said with a mischievous grin, “You may try, but you’ll never get me right.”

The Varsity Show creative team mascot is Nelly, an ancient dog belonging to writer Erica Drennan. During heated creative team discussions over spring break, Nelly helped ease tensions by sleeping contentedly in a nearby dog bed and occasionally sliding across the floor when her hip gave out.

Excited to participate in the creative process, the Varsity Show’s actors could not wait to offer their own ideas about which characters they should play. The following characters will not be in tonight’s show.

- A radical left-wing windbag whose favorite word is “fascist”
- An endearing, sweet, but hardcore Republican
- A nerdy, James Franco-obsessed video blogger
- Hawkmadinejad
- The Great Columbia Jewel Thief
- An undercover Columbia agent with the habit of saying, “Code Powder Blue”

The song “Satan is Coming to Town,” was the first song to be written by the composers and, like Satan himself, it has since existed in many different incarnations. The opening verses originally included students reading an “Exorcism Handbook,” and in another version of the song, a character wanders into a mythical Hartley suite and is approached by a group of creepy, nameless LLC kids. The song has become the unofficial V115 anthem.

The Gates... wasn’t that canceled?!
COLUMBIANS ACT DIFFERENT

CONGRATULATIONS
Varsity Show &
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From the Columbia Alumni Association
*a remarkable cast of characters*