

# 2019-2020 Design and Technology Annual Report

Please read what our wonderful students, staff and faculty have been up to over the past year.



*The students, faculty, and staff of Design and Technology at San Diego State University. Fall 2019.*

## National Awards and Recognition



*Brooke Nicole Kesler*

- **Brooke Nicole Kesler** (3rd year costume design MFA) received the **2020 Zelma H. Weisfeld Costume Design & Technology Award**. This award was established in 1997 by Zelma H. Weisfeld, USITT Fellow, Costume Designer/Historian, and Consultant. Winners of this award receive a \$2,000 & Conference registration for USITT Conference & Stage Expo. Awards are presented at USITT Conference & Stage Expo. “Candidates for the Zelma H. Weisfeld Award in Costume Design must display a strong design aesthetic competency in a variety of areas.”



*Reiko Huffman*

- **Reiko Huffman** (2nd year scene design MFA) received the **Judy Dearing Award in Scenic Design for 2019**. “The **Black Theatre Network (BTN)** established this award, which covers theatrical scenic, costume, and lighting design, in honor of pioneering costume designer, **Judy Dearing**. The awards were created to encourage African American students focused on elements of theatrical design.”



*Regan A. McKay*

- **Regan A. McKay** (1st year costume design MFA) was selected to be one of the three inaugural recipients of the new **Willa Kim Costume Design Scholarship (in partnership with TCG)**. Here is a [link to the announcement in Playbill](#).

## San Diego Theatre Partnerships

- After a competitive interview process for **The Hurston Design Fellowship at the MOXIE Theatre**, made possible by the generous donation of **Dea Hurston, Brooke Kesler**

(3rd year costume design MFA) was selected to be the costume designer for the play *Red Bike*.

- **Sheila and Jeffrey Lipinsky Fellowships** at the **Cygnnet Theatre** were awarded to
  - **Faith James** (2nd year costume design MFA) to assist on the costume design for *Two Trains Running*.
  - **Adam Parrocha** (2nd year scene design MFA) to assist on the scene design for *Rock of Ages*.
  - **Scott Boynton** (3rd year scene design MFA) to assist on the scene design for *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches & Perestroika*.
  - **Stephanie Lasater** (3rd year lighting design MFA) to assist on the lighting design for *The Last Five Years*.
  - **Ashley Bietz** (2nd year lighting design MFA) to assist on the lighting design for *La Cage Aux Folles*.
- **Reiko Huffman** (2nd year scene design MFA), designed scenery for *Dance Nation* at the **Moxie Theatre**. She also was hired as an assistant designer at **The Old Globe Theatre's** Tech Center for *Almost Famous*.
- **Taylor S. Payne** (2nd year costume design MFA) designed costumes for *La Cenerentola* and *Eugene Onegin* at **Opera Neo**, in San Diego.
- **Reiko Huffman** (2nd year scene design MFA), **Faith James** (2nd year costume design MFA), **Ashley Bietz** (2nd year lighting design MFA), and **Dustin Ozment** (3rd year technical direction MFA), designed and built the **world premiere play *Lying with Badgers***, which was produced in association with **Native Voices** at **San Diego State University**. **Broadway World** wrote an article about the production [here](#).
- **Adam Parrocha** (2nd year scene design MFA) designed scenery for *The Mental State* as a guest artist at **Palomar College** in San Marcos. He was also nominated for an **ACT Aubrey Award for Outstanding Scenic Design** for *Lend Me a Tenor* at **Vanguard Theatre** in Point Loma. Upcoming projects for the **School of Theatre, Television and Film** include the scenic design for the **world-premiere musical *'Til Death Do Us Part***.
- **Colby Freel** (1st year lighting design MFA) programmed for lighting professor **Anne E. McMills** for *The Last Five Years* at the **Cygnnet Theatre** in October 2019.
- **Jenni Baldwin** (2nd year scene design MFA) worked this summer as a scenic painter at **The Old Globe Theatre**.
- **Emily Wilson** (Costume design MFA alumnus 2018), designed *The Last Five Years* at the **Cygnnet Theatre** in October 2019.
- **Scott Boynton** (3rd year scene design MFA) was the projection designer for world premier workshop of the opera, *El Colibrí Mágico* presented at **San Diego State University's School of Music and Dance**.

- **Brooke Kesler** (3rd year graduate costume design MFA) costume designed *Girlfriend* (musical) at the **Diversions Theatre** in San Diego (it is the 3rd oldest LGBT Theater in the country). The musical was directed by **Stephen Brotebeck** (also a professor at SDSU).
- **Taylor Payne** (2nd year graduate costume design MFA) is the costume design assistant to **Denitsa Bliznakova** on the play *The Father* at **Pasadena Playhouse (LORT)**.
- **Waverly Strickland** and **Faith James** (1st and 2nd year graduate costume design MFAs) are the costume designers for *Euridice/Orfeo* (The Orpheus operas of J. Peri and C. W. Gluck), directed by **Alan Hicks** at **SDSU Opera**.

## Theatre and Opera (Outside of San Diego)

- **Victoria Vitola** (Scene design MFA alumnus 2019) designed scenery for Roald Dahl's *Matilda The Musical* at **Children's Musical Theatre San Jose**.
- **Brooke Kesler** (3rd year graduate costume design MFA) was able to secure a competitive assistant design position with designer **Terese Wadden** on *Così fan tutte* at the world-renowned **Santa Fe Opera** in New Mexico.
- **Jenni Baldwin** (2nd year scene design MFA) designed Horton Foote's *Orphan Home Cycle* as a guest artist for **Anderson University**.

## Class Feature: Collaborative Studies



*Pictured from Left to Right, Back Row: Ashley Bietz, Adam Parrocha, Jason Mraz, Taylor Paine, Jenni Baldwin, Brooke Kesler, Winston Limauga, Reiko Huffman. Front Row: Melissa Grove Director of Programming & Officer of Joyous Possibilities at the Jason Mraz Foundation, Faith James, Abby Dorsey Creative Director of "Shine."*

- The **Collaborative studies class** designed the "dream show" for **Jason Mraz's Shine concert** being presented on Feb 15 / 16 at **Spreckels Theatre**. This theoretical look at what

*Shine* might look like from the perspective of the scenic, costume, lighting and projection designers. The concept of *Shine* centers around the local community and celebrates the city of San Diego. “Each of these non profit organizations was chosen because of their commitment to inclusive arts education and the advancement of equality,” said Mraz. “I am humbled to provide my songs as a framework for them to express their unique points of view. By shining a light on these programs serving our local community’s youth, I want to underscore the importance of access to arts programming for all children in all communities – no matter their gender, race, ability level, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Every child should have the opportunity to find their voice through the arts.” Jason attended the final presentations in October.

## Themed Entertainment

- **Christina Martin** (Lighting Design alumnus 2019) has been hired as a Lighting Designer at **Visual Terrain, Inc.** after completing a successful internship as a Lighting Design PI with **Disney Parks Live Entertainment at Walt Disney World.**
- **Caroline Andrew** (Lighting design MFA alumnus 2018) recently completed a year-long internship with **Walt Disney Imagineering** in their Show Lighting Systems department.
- **Victoria Vitola** (Scene design MFA alumnus 2019) joined the **Disney Parks Live Entertainment** team in Orlando, FL as a Production Assistant Professional Intern in the new year.
- **Beatrice Collins** (Costume design MFA alumnus 2018), completed an internship with **Disneyland** as a **Creative Costuming Intern** immediately after graduation, and has been hired to work there full time.
- **Adam Parrocha** (2nd year scene design MFA) was a semi-finalist in the **ImagiNations** competition for **Walt Disney Imagineering.**

## Film and Television

- **Sarah Mouyal** (Scene Design alumnus 2019) worked as the art department assistant on **Criminal Minds** Season 14 and **Modern Family** Season 11. She also served as the production designer for Season 14 of CMT’s docu-series, **Dallas Cowboy’s Cheerleaders: Making the Team**, and has developed multiple shows with **Kinetic Content** as their concept storyboard artist, including **Discovery Channel’s** new challenge show, **Man Vs. Bear.**
- **Sarah Schwartz** (Lighting design MFA alumnus 2019) has been hired at **Lux Machina Consulting**, working on in-camera VFX and media server show control. She assisted with the media server programming for **the Emmys** and has subcontracted with **Disney** on some recent park projects.

- **Victoria Vitola** (Scene design MFA alumnus 2019) is currently an Art Department Assistant on a new **Netflix Original Feature** set to stream in 2020.
- **Emily Wilson** (Costume design MFA alumnus 2018) completed an internship with **Laika Studios** immediately after graduation.

## Pandemic Cancellations

Unfortunately, many exciting opportunities that our students and alumni had lined up for the summer have been cancelled due to the COVID 19 coronavirus pandemic. We would still like to recognize their achievements here.

- **Jenni Baldwin** - was asked to return to the scenic art shop at The Old Globe this summer.
- **Colby Freel** - was asked to be an Assistant Lighting Designer at PCPA this summer.
- **Reiko Huffman** - was asked to design scenery and assist other professional scenic designers at the Hangar Theatre this summer.
- **Faith James** - was asked to be the costume design assistant and a designer for TYA shows at Hangar Theatre this summer. Her Cygnet Fellowship this spring was also cancelled.
- **Brooke Kesler** - was asked to be the costume design assistant at Santa Fe Opera this summer.
- **Winston Limaugé** - was asked to be a Lighting Designer at Okoboji Summer Theatre this summer.
- **Taylor Payne** - was asked to be the Head of Crafts at Williamstown Theatre Festival this summer.
- **Waverly Strickland** - was asked to be an assistant at Glimmerglass Opera this summer.
- **Emily Wilson** - was asked to return to the Costume Crafts shop at Oregon Shakespeare Theatre this summer, after previously working there in the summer of 2019.

## Staff Spotlight

- Please join us in congratulating lighting shop supervisor **Peter Nordyke** on his retirement from San Diego State University after **40 years** of service! Peter has been the heart and soul of the electrics, sound, and projection areas. Peter graduated with his **M.F.A. in Scenic and Lighting Design** from **San Diego State University** and has over thirty years of industry experience. Peter mentored students in all aspects of the implementation of their designs in lighting, sound, and projection, and will be dearly missed. **Professor Emeritus Craig C. Wolf** joined the School virtually at our **End of the Year Celebration** to speak about Peter's work and lasting impact on the School of Theatre, Television, and Film. Happy sailing Peter!

## Faculty in Focus

- Our newest faculty and staff are eager to meet our proud alumni. **Dr. Chris Warren** joins us for a joint appointment with the School of Music and Dance. He teaches **Sound Design for Theatre, Television, and Film, and Digital Composition for the School of Music and Dance**. He brings a wealth of professional experience and a unique research profile to our program - including designing sound installations for museums, and audio software that is used in triple-A video and computer games. We look forward to having sound design MFA students in the near future to study with this amazing artist.
- Head of Scene Design/Projection and Integrated Media Design **Charles Murdock Lucas** designed his **100th production** with *Turandot* in the **Republic of Korea**. You can read more about it [here](#). Other productions included *L'heure espagnole* for **Wolf Trap Opera + National Orchestra Institute**, and *Fun Home* for **American Stage**, among others. He was also on the board of advisers for the first ever **OPERAHACK** in 2019, sponsored by [San Diego Opera](#), and **Microsoft**, a first-of-its-kind gathering of artists, designers, and technology experts from around the world dedicated to the advancement of the art form of Opera.
- Head of Costume Design and Technology **Denitsa Bliznakova** designed **two world premiers** at La Jolla Playhouse: *The Luckiest* and also *The Coast Starlight*. She was the costume designer for the **West Coast premier** of *They Promised Her the Moon* at **The Old Globe Theatre**. **Notable: Denitsa was part of the first (ever) all female artistic and production team at this theatre.** This play was also chosen for the *Globe for All* tour initiative in Sp. 2019 (free public performances in the San Diego area). In addition Denitsa designed the world premier of *The Canadians* at **South Coast Rep**, *The Father* at **Pasadena Playhouse** and *Man of God* at **The Geffen Playhouse** in Los Angeles. Denitsa is the 2020 recipient of Costume Society of America Costume Design Award for the production, *They Promised Her the Moon* at the Old Globe.
- Don Powell Chair in Set Design **Ralph Funicello** designed the set for *M. Butterfly* at the **South Coast Rep**. His set for *Don Quixote* was seen in the opening production of **Pennsylvania Ballet**.
- Head of Lighting Design **Anne E. McMills** was nominated for the **2019 Craig Noel Awards** in the category of **Outstanding Lighting Design** for "The Last Five Years" at the **Cygnets Theatre**. Also, *Wicked*, a production for which she was the Associate Projection Designer in almost a dozen different countries, became the **5th Longest-Running Broadway Show** this year. Also this year Anne became the Seasonal Lighting Designer for **Knotts Berry Farm** becoming an integral part of the team for Knott's wildly popular **Halloween Haunt**. An author as well as a designer, Anne's book *3D Printing Basics for Entertainment Design* made the long-list for **Best Performance Design and Scenography Publication** at 2019's prestigious **Prague Quadrennial** conference in the Czech Republic. And keep an eye out for Anne's flagship book *The Assistant Lighting Designer's Toolkit*. Upcoming publications include a 2nd edition early next year as well as a full translation in Chinese!
- Please join us in congratulating emeritus **Professor and Director of Technology Loren Schreiber** on his retirement from San Diego State University after 25 years of service! He continues his work as a consultant.
- Production Manager **Jay Sheehan** returned from his 5th SuperBowl, acting as Technical Director and Production Manager for the big event. Jay also helped produce an event for

Major League Baseball's All Star Game in Cleveland Ohio. Also this past summer, Jay was the National Production Manager for YoungArts and the Presidential Scholars Program held at the Kennedy Center. Jay is also co-writing the 2nd Edition of *The Production Managers Toolkit*, due out in 2021. His most proud achievement for this year was working with Feeding San Diego to create a food pantry program for our SDSU Theatre and Film students. Students are free to help themselves to many different grocery items with no questions asked. Another highlight was being able to bring Jason Mraz to campus for his *SHINE* Project, noted above