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## Getting Technical at Campo

By Lou Fancher



From left to right: Bryan Gertz, Rory Baker, Sam Crissle, Hamed Sheikholeskmi, Charlotte Martin and Miles Lindheimer

Campolindo High School's Performing Arts Center, known on campus as CPAC, is getting a new light.

It's not a Fresnel, the spotlights common to film and theater, it's Bryan Gertz, the guru of technology at Miramonte High School. Gertz will be guiding a new after-school program for students interested in theater tech, stagecraft, lighting and design.

"I'm still working with the staff and students at Campo to develop the course," Gertz said, in a recent phone interview. "I'll be teaching them how to run the mixing board, set up sound equipment,

create sound and lighting design, use surround effects, wireless microphones, compressors, and basic electronics."

Gertz has been the Acalanes Union District Computer Tech for 11-and-a-half years. "I was working at a computer shop and I needed a better job," he said. "Sound is my true love. This all started from music."

He's referring to the work he has been doing in Miramonte's theater department. There, he has been the unofficial tech master, stepping in to drama classes and productions to assist and instruct. "I completely rebuilt the sound system at Mira-

monte," he said. "The old system hummed and had big-time wiring problems."

He has also inspired students. Arielle Swernoff, a 2010 graduate of MHS, writes in an email, "I learned a lot about wiring, patching, microphones, speakers, acoustics-- I now know about all sorts of things that had seemed terribly complicated and obscure before. Knowing about sound has also led to other opportunities--last year, I worked with students, teaching them to use the sound board so they could incorporate more technical theater into their final projects. I am definitely interested in continuing to

Photo Doug Kohen

work on sound in college. Learning about sound was one of the most valuable things I did in high school."

Gertz is mild when it comes to talking about himself, but a braggart when it comes to his students. "There's a three-and-a-half minute song from *American Idol* on YouTube. There's only nine microphones to control and he makes eight mistakes! My kids did a 3-and-a-half-hour show, with 32 mikes, and made only four mistakes. I've gotta send you the link to the video--it's bad!"

Jamie Donohoe, the Drama Director at Campo is a big proponent of the new program. "Bryan has extensive theater tech knowledge and we're really, really excited about having such an expert work with Campolindo's students," he says. "The whole idea for the program was a group idea. We said, 'we really need someone who can come in and run CPAC. Little jobs were getting done haphazardly, with a lot of good will, but not with oversight. You'd have one person setting the theater up one way, then another person changing it. It could take half a day just to get it back to where it was!'"

Sam Crossley, 16, is signed up for the class. "We had a drama class that had a tech side of it that wasn't officially a part of the class. When the new drama teacher came in, the tech part diminished because

he didn't know about it. He and some teachers developed this class. I'm excited: I want it to be more of a group thing, because last year, tech was basically me and another guy."

Jenna Guergah, also 16 and a junior at Campo, has done video production, but not theater tech. "It's great to be able to come back here, behind the scenes, and see what our tax dollars are paying for. And hopefully, Campo will start hiring students to run the productions, instead of having to hire professionals."

Harvey Benstein, part of the planning group and the school's Instrumental Music Director, explained the financial arrangements for the after-school program. "It is funded through the student activities account overseen by the student council at Campolindo going directly to student programs."

The seminar and work-study/certification program will begin in October. It is open to 15-20 students and will meet 1-2 days per week. "Already, we have a bunch of students signing up and I just got more emails," Donohoe said. The drama staff, interested students, and their leader, Gertz, will meet to decide the when and where of the course. Students in the program will work directly on productions presented by Campolindo organizations and assist in hall usage by Campolindo students, staff and the community.

## Bulldog Theater Presents "Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs"

Submitted by Jane Greenthal



Cast members rehearse a scene from "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", to be performed Nov. 3-6 at Orinda Intermediate School. Photo Natalie Wheeler

Orinda Intermediate School is very excited to announce their Bulldog Theater Company will be offering the enchanting fairy tale, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, a play based on the story by The Brothers Grimm, Nov. 3-6. For this production, the returning Director is Clive Worsley, the new Producer is Natalie

Wheeler and new Program Manager is Dianna Langer.

This is Clive Worsley's seventh time directing at OIS. He previously directed the Bulldog Theater Company productions of *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Hound of the Clackervilles*, *Mulan*, *Peter Pan* and *Annie*. Clive is a professional

actor, musician and teacher. He is also the Artistic Director of the Town Hall Theater in Lafayette and has worked extensively in the Bay Area. He works in many of our CORE classrooms as a Teaching Artist in Residence through the California Shakespeare Theater's Integrated Curriculum Program. OIS feels very lucky to have him direct-

ing again for the Bulldog Theater Company. Clive is assisted by Emily Morrison, the Artistic Learning Programs Manager at Cal Shakes, who has also served as choreographer on previous Bulldog Theater Productions.

Natalie Wheeler has co-produced the Glorietta musicals *Hello Dolly!* and *Willy Wonka Jr.*, and the most recent Miramonte musical, *Into the Woods*, and has been the parent volunteer coordinator for several Town Hall Theatre student productions. Natalie will be responsible for supporting the cast and crew and overseeing sets, props, costumes, make-up, and backstage.

Dianna Langer, the program manager, is currently the OIS Bulldog Sports coordinator, and will now be coordinating all house management, publicity, and ticket sales, registration, as well as items involving the Bulldog store.

The story of *Snow White* is told here with simplicity and charm. After her wicked stepmother -- jealous of Snow White's extraordinary beauty -- expels her from the castle, Snow White finds her way to a happy glen and the home of seven

friendly dwarfs. A deadly apple casts her into a deep sleep, from which she is revived in time by her devoted prince.

Fun for the whole family, the play will be performed by two casts Nov. 3-6. Please visit the OIS website under "Programs", then "Bulldog Theater Company" for full cast lists.

All seats for the mid-week matinees are general admission \$6. All Friday and Saturday shows are reserved seating only, with premium (first 8 rows) seats at \$10 and standard (last 8 rows) at \$8. Tickets do sell out, so reserve early! Online ticketing is now available at [www.ShowTix4u.com](http://www.ShowTix4u.com). All students are only \$1 for the 4:30pm shows only (payable at door, no advance purchase). For group sales, or other ticket questions, please contact Julie Whitsitt at [julieaw@pacbell.net](mailto:julieaw@pacbell.net).

The Bulldog Theater Company is proudly supported by Orinda Intermediate School, the Orinda Arts Council ([www.orindaartsCouncil.org](http://www.orindaartsCouncil.org)), California Shakespeare Theater ([www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org)) and Town Hall Theater ([www.townhalltheater.org](http://www.townhalltheater.org)).

## Tsao Wins MassMutual Scholarship

Submitted by Erica Zeidenberg



Rachel Tsao with two of her co-workers from PrimeWealth Management in Berkeley, where she works part-time when she is not in Dubai.

The country's 2008 economic crisis made an impression on Rachel Tsao.

The University of California-Berkeley student and Moraga resident felt additional pressure to achieve in school because her father dipped into his retirement savings after losing his job to help her pay tu-

ition.

"I am afraid he will not have retirement money," she said.

Rachel Tsao plans to change that.

The sophomore is vigorously pursuing a business degree with plans to become a financial planner. A recent

scholarship from the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) will also put her on her way.

Tsao was one of three San Francisco area students to be awarded a "MassMutual Scholar" grant. Tsao received the \$5,000 scholarship designated for multicultural students based on academic achievement and her interest in choosing a career in financial services. The grant was presented to Tsao's father, Jun-Yin Tsao, at a celebration put on by MassMutual's general agency, The San Francisco Bay Area Insurance Agency on Oct. 15.

Rachel Tsao is currently studying abroad in Dubai. She speaks Mandarin and Spanish and is studying Arabic while in Dubai.

"I want to become a financial planner because I want to teach people how to successfully manage their finances," said Tsao, who credits her grandmother for her unwavering perseverance. "I believe proper financial planning will

allow families to successfully retire, save for vacations and send their children to college. I know with hard work and perseverance I can meet these goals."

Rachel also interns as an office manager at a boutique wealth management firm in Berkeley.

"Rachel is a self-motivated individual who would be a welcome addition to the financial services industry. We are proud to work with MassMutual to assist her education and encourage her to do well," said Robert Fakhimi, general agent and chief executive officer of the San Francisco Bay Area Insurance Agency.

Through its MassMutual Scholars Program, the company assisted 28 high achieving college students of diverse backgrounds in pursuing their higher education dreams. Overall, MassMutual awarded \$135,000 in scholarships to outstanding multicultural students in 9 different metropolitan communities.



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