

The magazine of the Columbia Spectator  
15 October 2009 / vol. 7 issue 5

**the eye**

**WE LOST 1.4 BILLION  
DOLLARS IN THE  
FINANCIAL CRISIS.  
DID WE GET OFF EASY?**

if prezbo won the prize \\\ the carbon catcher \\\ why you won't be taking tv 101

Editor in Chief  
Thomas Rhiel

Managing Editor, Features  
Melanie Jones

Managing Editor, A & E  
Hillary Busis

Deputy Editor, Features  
Raphael Pope-Sussman

Senior Design Editor  
Haley Vecchiarelli

Photo Editor  
Kristina Budelis

Online Editor  
Ryan Bubinski

Eyesites Editor  
Evan Omi

Ideas Editor  
Jia Ahmad

View From Here Editor  
Sophie Meislin

Interview Editor  
Zach Dyer

Film Editor  
Peter Labuza

Music Editor  
Rebecca Pattiz

Books Editor  
Yin Yin Lu

Food Editor  
Devin Briski

Art Editor  
Hannah Yudkin

Theater Editor  
Ruthie Fierberg

Dance Editor  
Catherine Rice

TV Editor  
Joe Daly

Style Editor  
Helen Werbe

Lead Story Associate  
Emily Hamilton

Staff Illustrators  
Rebekah Kim  
Matteo Malinverno

Production Associates  
Alexander Ivey  
Talia Sinkinson  
Shaowei Wang

Photo Associate  
Vitaly Druker

Copy Editors  
Wesley Birdsall  
Tess Rankin

Spectator Editor in Chief  
Melissa Repko

Spectator Managing Editor  
Elizabeth Simins

Spectator Publisher  
Julia Feldberg

Contact Us:  
eye@columbiaspectator.com  
eye.columbiaspectator.com  
Editorial: (212) 854-9547  
Advertising: (212) 854-9558

© 2009 The Eye,  
Spectator Publishing Company, Inc.

# HOW LOW CAN WE GO?

## LIGHT BLUE IN THE RED

How Columbia and the other  
Ivies fared in the financial crisis,  
pg. 07.

### FEATURES

- 03 \\\ EYESITES
- \\ IDEAS
- 04 **Machine Trees** *Elizabeth Robinson*
- \\ EYE TO EYE
- 05 **Redlight for Trafficking** *Sarah Ngu*
- \\ VIEW FROM HERE
- 06 **Forever Young?** *Caitlin Brown*

### ARTS

- \\ THEATER
- 10 **A New Triple Threat** *Ruthie Fierberg*
- \\ TV
- 12 **TV 101** *Joe Daly*
- \\ MUSIC
- 14 **Computer Generated** *Angela Ruggiero-Corliss*
- \\ DANCE
- 15 **Ballet for the Masses** *Hannah Klain*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A few weeks ago, after Harvard announced that it had hemorrhaged \$11 billion—a staggering 27 percent of its endowment—“The Ethicist” of the New York Times Magazine took to his blog to tackle an important question: Should people donate to poor, poor Harvard?

The Ethicist—also known as Randy Cohen—answered no, and as someone who harbors the usual mix of Harvard envy and Harvard enmity, it was a satisfying answer to read. To donate to Harvard, Cohen wrote, “is to offer more pie to a portly fellow while the gaunt and hungry press their faces to the window.” He pointed out that the school’s remaining endowment, \$26 billion, is still more substantial than the GDP of Estonia. I’d point out that the money Harvard lost in the last year is more than Columbia’s endowment ever had. Compared to us, they’re doing just fine.

Stories about plummeting endowments and tightening budgets have been in the news for a few years

now, and the numbers involved get a little bewildering. Columbia’s \$5.4 billion endowment somehow manages to sound both immense (billions!) and piddly (only 5.4?). And the endowment’s recent 21 percent plunge seems awful, but was it really so bad? (Yes.) Rather than write another story about the sorry state of the economy, then, we’ve chosen simply to lay out the facts for you. Our cover story this week literally illustrates how badly each Ivy has been hit and how they now stack up.

The results aren’t pretty, and not just because the Ancient Eight have suffered. Despite their losses, the Ivies are still shockingly wealthy—Columbia has lost the equivalent of Liberia’s GDP, and yet we’re still going strong. Harvard doesn’t deserve your donations, but we probably don’t either. Our cover story this week may make it seem like we’re relatively poor, but we’re by no means paupers.

—*Thomas Rhiel*

Submit your creative writing to The Eye.

We are now accepting short stories, narrative non-fiction, and humorous essays. For more information, e-mail [eye@columbiaspectator.com](mailto:eye@columbiaspectator.com).

I'D LIKE TO THANK MANHATTANVILLE

# BOLLINGER'S NOBEL ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

BY JON KAPLAN

“Whoa! This is so shocking. I cannot believe I won! Did that sound like I was surprised? I think I am supposed to sound surprised. But, if I am going to be honest here, I was expecting this. If someone was going to take this baby home, who better than me? Well, that’s what I say. Actually, apparently, it’s what all of you say—because I won.

“The last Columbian to win the Peace Prize was President Butler, or ‘PrezBut,’ as I call him, and I am his natural successor. So I’m pretty sure Butler Library will become Bollinger Library, and with this new power, I’ll make sure that happens.

“Anyway, I’m glad that I’m finally getting recognized for my worldwide achievements. First and foremost: the Fun Run. The amount of fun that is experienced during this run cannot be calculated. It has definitely brought a lot of peace to the world. I assume at least 250 peace points. Plus, I run an entire 5K! Every year! Have you ever gone to Westside, and

then decide Appletree will be cheaper, but you discover Westside was actually better so you go back? Finally after all that you go home? That is a 5K right there. So much work! I should move on, I’m getting tired just talking about it.

“Almost as important to my win was the smack-down I laid on Ahmadinejad. I know when to treat people with kindness—like my housemaid—but I also know when it’s time for my inner bad-ass to shine. Ahmadinejad thought he could come into my house? Not this time. That earned me another, like, 200 peace points. If you’re listening Ahmadinejad, I’m ready for a rematch anytime, anyplace. Just let me speak first.

“In closing, I’d like to thank all the other nominees for putting up a good fight. I’m guessing Clinton got 400 peace points for the North Korea thing; clearly not enough. People probably thought that the next person associated with Columbia to win would be Obama, in a few years. Take that, people!”

\*drop mic\*

WORDS DO HURT

## MOST ANNOYING PHRASES

BY CAITLIN BROWN

According to a recent poll, Americans find the term “whatever” to be the most annoying word in conversation. Here at Columbia, our irritation stems from lingo of a different species: the pseudo intellectual. We conducted a brief and very unscientific poll to find which words and phrases Columbia students found most irritating:

engagement with  
the text  
otherizing  
discourse  
salient i-banking  
ascetic ideal  
CAVA(-ed)  
westernization

Lesson to Columbians: The Core Curriculum fosters campus-wide use of pretentious vocabulary. Let’s save the fancy talk for the classroom and engage a little more with the television in the common room.

MIDNIGHT COWBOY

## RECIPE: NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

BY NATHAN McALONE

As many of you may already know, this Sunday, Oct. 11, was National Coming Out Day. (If you missed it, sorry, you’ll have to wait till next year.) Such a holiday asks us, as a university, to reflect on the ways in which we include or exclude our LGBT brothers and sisters (and all those in between or otherwise). It has recently been brought to my attention that the newly reinstated Columbia School of Mixology has not taken the opportunity of their fresh start to add any unequivocally queer drinks to the “over 150” it purports to teach. Though there are a few drinks (such as Sex on the Beach), which could arguably go both ways, only Ahmadinejad would be proud that none of the other “over 149” is openly gay or lesbian. In light of this clear oversight, I propose a new drink be added to the syllabus, the popular (bafflingly pre-”Brokeback”) Australian drink known only as The Cocksucking Cowboy (an actual drink, trust us). The recipe is as follows:

2 parts cold Butterscotch Schnapps  
1 part Baileys Irish Cream  
Pour Baileys off the back of a bar spoon so it floats on top of the Schnapps in a shot glass.  
Throw back. One gulp.

Though he could not be reached for comment, I believe that this creamy concoc(k)tion would be wholeheartedly endorsed by Columbia’s very own dropout, erstwhile cowboy, and definite bottom: the incomparable Jake Gyllenhaal. Mixologists, I urge you, do the right thing.

EDITORS' TEN

## WHAT WE'RE INTO THIS WEEK

**1. The Metrodome:** After a hard fought season, the Minnesota Twins will be leaving their stadium for Target Field. Here’s to playing baseball in the snow!

—Peter Labuza, film editor

**2. The Nobel Committee:** Although its recent choices were rather controversial, I think it shows great promise for the coming years.

—Kristina Budelis, visuals editor

**3. Kurve:** An ultra-hip Thai restaurant that morphs into a popular nightclub once the sun goes down. Their White Russian Deconstruct (a concoction of vodka and ice cream) definitely lives up to its name. Why does the East Village have everything?

—Yin Yin Lu, books editor

**4. eos Lip Balm:** The packaging is the most unusual I’ve seen for chap-stick. It’s an egg-shaped orb in pastel colors with a twist-off cap. Inside, there’s a ball of soothing organic, sweet mint balm.

—Helen Werbe, style editor

**5. Homecoming:** Because it’s the one time of the year when we can pretend we go to a state school and drink beer in a parking lot before noon.

—Sophie Meislin, View from Here editor

**6. Duncan Hines Moist Cake Mix:** I was pretty skeptical when I bought it—I make some mean red velvet cakes, and all from scratch—but their cake mixes are delicious, and really easy to put together. I also recommend their strawberry and swiss chocolate mixes. They’re even tastier the morning after.

—Melanie Jones, managing editor, features

**7. Woks:** I live to stir-fry! I’m still trying to master that trick where you jerk the wok forward and toss all the ingredients up into the air. Once I get a handle on that, there will be no stopping me.

—Raphael Pope-Sussman, deputy editor, features

**8. Thom Yorke’s Weird New Band:** It’s good to see Thom keeping himself busy.

—Thomas Rhiel, editor in chief

**9. Shacktoberfest at Shake Shack:** Delicious food and drink, good times for all! Ongoing until October 17.

—Haley Vecchiarelli, senior design editor

**10. Getting over my fears of M2M:** I never used to trust M2M sushi, but I tried it this week for the first time and was thoroughly impressed. I’ve been loving tuna and salmon with brown rice, drenched in soy sauce. It’s \$4 bliss.

—Joseph Daly, TV editor

COMPILED BY EVAN OMI

## INSIDE LOOK

# Machine Trees

a columbia scientist engineers a green climate solution

BY ELIZABETH ROBINSON

PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER RENEE

Columbia geophysics professor Klaus Lackner is building a device that can take carbon right out of the air. The machine, which is often described as looking like “a goal-post with Venetian blinds,” counteracts climate change in the same way trees do: by collecting carbon to keep it out of the atmosphere. But his devices are 100 times better at it and could address climate change without disrupting infrastructure, industry, or productivity. Lackner claims that “with the best technology currently available, I can get about a ton a day, maybe a little more, with a unit that can fit in a standard shipping container.”

These air capture devices could also be set up anywhere—from Antarctica to the Sahara. It doesn’t matter because, as Lackner points out: “You can have a car in San Francisco producing CO<sub>2</sub> and a collector in the desert of Australia taking it back. It’s all the same CO<sub>2</sub>.” Once the machines are set up and plugged in (they do require some electricity) they are essentially passive, just collecting carbon dioxide as air flows across their “blinds,” which are strips of a special material developed by Lackner and his colleagues for grabbing CO<sub>2</sub>. And even with current “dirty” electricity, these machines are 80 percent efficient: Only 20 percent of what they sequester is cancelled out by their electricity use.

After they collect the carbon, Lackner and his team can go in one of two directions. They can either incorporate the CO<sub>2</sub> into stable carbonates and bury it in the ground, or they can combine it with water to make synthesis gas: the precursor to synthetic gasoline and oil. This solution is especially promising because it could create a closed cycle of energy in which carbon dioxide is captured and re-emitted with no net increase in harmful greenhouse gasses.

Of course, one machine tree isn’t enough. We would need a million of them to mitigate climate change and up to 10 million to return to pre-industrial carbon levels. Surprisingly, this is feasible. As with cars, building just one air capture device would be extremely expensive, but mass-producing them in a streamlined system is 10 times cheaper. “To put that in perspective,” Lackner says, “the world produced 73 million cars in 2006 ... so several million air capture units is not unreasonable.” “And,” he adds, “we clearly have enough room to park 10 million cars.”

Lackner is currently raising money to construct a full-scale prototype of his air capture device, which he estimates will cost about \$200,000. Though this seems a high price, Lackner is confident that it will eventually fall

to car-level: about \$20,000. “We could actually collect carbon without ruining the world economy or changing how things are done,” he says. “With 3 or 4 factories, we’d be in the game.”

The air capture industry could also scale up just as the automobile industry did—starting out with small niche markets and higher prices and then, as manufacturing becomes more efficient, lowering costs and expanding into wider and wider markets. There are, in fact, a number of industries, including soft drink production and sanding equipment manufacturing, that must purchase large quantities of concentrated carbon dioxide to produce their goods. “That gives us a leg up,” says Lackner. “We can start with a few tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in one location, and as we gain experience we can build more units that are cheaper, and our potential market will get larger.”

Air capture is unlike other climate solutions in that it addresses the problem directly and won’t require an overhaul of infrastructure or policy. Switching to electric cars, for example, would require a completely new and highly convenient refueling system, and would have a huge impact on trade and trade relations. Because Lackner’s devices are modular and can be installed anywhere, they don’t require that we develop a new transportation system or change the way we do things. Also, air capture is an ideal fit for the cap-and-trade system already in place because it collects carbon in a precisely quantifiable way.

When asked about his efforts to generate political interest for his work, Lackner laughs, “Well, we’re talking about it right?” It takes time to convince people that a technology is real and viable, he says, and it takes time to convince people it has policy implications. “It [climate change] also has to hurt before people will act, and we could well be too late by that time.”

**LACKNER’S DEVICES DON’T REQUIRE THAT WE DEVELOP A NEW TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM OR CHANGE THE WAY WE DO THINGS.**

Still, Lackner sees a bright future for climate and energy research. “Business as usual manifestly does not work, but we desperately need the energy,” he says. “So to me, this is one of the most exciting fields to be involved in.” A solution to climate change is about more than just science—it’s about economics and politics as well. “This field will not succeed,” he says, “unless it combines the restraints of all fields into one way to think about the problem.” ●





# Red Light for Trafficking

the eye interviews diana mao

BY SARAH NGU

PHOTO BY NOMI NETWORK

Nomi Network has a very clear-cut mission: end human trafficking. Though still in its start-up phase, Nomi Network actively works to combat the leading cause of trafficking—poverty—by marketing tote bags produced by Cambodian women who themselves were victims of human trafficking. Behind Nomi's surprisingly effective methods is Diana Mao, a 27-year-old social entrepreneur and co-founder of the organization. The Eye interviews Mao to discuss this incredible organization, the future of the nonprofit industry, and the choice to abandon for-profit for good.

## What role do you see for-profit organizations playing in human trafficking and social justice in general, if at all?

I was at this event with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and they said that 60 percent of our GDP comes from the private sector. Only 6 to 7 percent comes from nonprofits. And then think, \$32 billion—that is what the human trafficking industry is worth. Do you think we can make a dent with our 6 to 7 percent, a fraction of which consists of human trafficking organizations? I really believe that the private sector has a pivotal role to play. Besides having philanthropy arms, their business strategy has to be realigned. A company donates 10 percent to environmental causes while polluting the environment with products from the other 90 percent, while nonprofits clean up their work. ... You have TOMS Shoes and a lot of companies that are changing their business model and focusing more on people. They are doing things that are out of the box—and it's profitable.

## Nomi Network is a nonprofit. Is it any different from the usual nonprofit?

Most nonprofits do a lot of awareness-raising, so it's not so obvious if they are fulfilling their mission. For us, it's very clear. We focus on empowerment

and prevention through the marketplace. If we are not able to create more jobs and high demand for the products we're selling, then our numbers will show, and we shouldn't exist.

## You were in both for-profit and nonprofit industries for awhile. Why go into for-profits? Could you compare the two industries?

After grad school, I worked for MAXIMUS, a consulting firm that specializes in governmental services. ... I felt I could learn a lot from the profit-based, because given the limited resources of the nonprofit industry, I really wanted to understand how businesses work. ... I had to apply skills from both sectors to each other, such as project management, analytical thinking, financial management, and interpersonal skills. But in a for-profit industry, you answer to your shareholders, so in MAXIMUS, it was still very much about the bottom line—even though helping the government ... was very much embedded. Whereas in Nomi Network, sometimes it doesn't make sense financially, but you do it anyway. ... In a nonprofit it's [the culture] more team-based and laid-back, because it tends to attract idealistic people who really care and are more missions-focused. The for-profit tends to attract people who want to advance in their career and make money, like how I was in college.

## So you weren't always so altruistic.

As a child I was a little selfish, given my experiences. My parents were immigrants and we were not very wealthy, so I had to do everything for myself at a young age. I started working for myself at 15, and whatever I wanted to buy, I had to earn it myself. When I entered college, I wanted to live comfortably and support myself and my family. I wouldn't say we starved, but it was sometimes paycheck to paycheck. I think a lot of Asian-Americans think like that because they come from immigrant backgrounds. So I looked at economics and accounting as a lucrative opportunity—you could really go anywhere with it.

## What changed?

I decided I hated accounting after some internships—it was constantly sitting in front of the computer with minimal human interaction. I didn't feel like I was doing anything significant. I also went overseas and saw how good I really had it. I went with InterVarsity to the slums of Cairo and saw children dancing around with open syringes and piles of trash and no shoes and flies everywhere and a stench that is so bad you want to throw up—and people live there. But I also saw the innovation: People were extracting trash and turning it into something consumable and making a business out of that. Like the Bible says, to give beauty for ashes. You'd have the women and children digging through trash with their bare hands and separating them. The plastic and cloth would be processed into plastic mats and chairs. There was an entrepreneurship, even among the poorest of the poor.

## “YOU'RE FROM AMERICA? YOU LIKE HER? TAKE MY DAUGHTER.”

## After grad school, you went to Cambodia, where a father offered to give you his daughter. What did he say?

I went to Cambodia through FINCA [International Village Banking], who came to recruit at Wagner, to do research for microfinance. The man I visited had six other kids with him, and in Cambodia they have a lot of second wives. His English was broken so it was choppy, but he said something like, “You're from America? You like her? Take my daughter.”

## Was he joking?

He wasn't laughing. He was serious. I looked into his eyes and I could tell he didn't want to but it was best for her. I would say that was a climactic moment, but I had heard snippets about sex trafficking from grad school so I knew that it was prevalent in Cambodia. Seeing really old men holding hands with girls that were in their teens and prancing around them really bothered me. So it was there that I drew the connection between their socioeconomic background and what they were doing.

## So after that you decided to co-found Nomi Network. Where did that name come from—is Nomi a person?

Yes. She is someone Alissa, my co-founder, and I met in a rehab center in Cambodia. Right when we got there, she ran to us. This is their first place out of the brothels, so we expected the girls to be withdrawn, but to our disproof, Nomi just ran to us. She was, at that time, 8. She hugged me and was so trusting. Her innocence was restored. She was trusting and held us and was like, “Come and see my rabbit.” The director told us she has a mental disability now because of her traumatic experience. I really believe there is a hope for her. She was in a great place, we toured it—the facility, the care—and our hope was that she would really be able to arise and progress. And that's why we decided to name it Nomi. Her name is really Naomi, but we really wanted people to know her: Know me. Know her story. Know her success. ●



## PERSPECTIVES

# Forever Young?

one student's journey through late-teen anonymity

BY CAITLIN BROWN

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAITLIN BROWN

"So, I think it's time."

Dr. Bryant peered down at me, a wisp of cropped blonde hair sweeping over her stethoscope. Looking into the face I knew so well, I allowed myself to indulge in the comfort of familiarity, of tradition. I knew the sleek metal frame of the instrument and the peculiar way in which it wound around her jutting, Grecian neck. The cold, grey instrument had always struck me as fitting with the sterile white of her scrubs, yet contrasting with the children's hospital teddy bear logo.

I looked up from the patient health questionnaire—"Do you have at least one friend that you can talk to?" "Have you ever attempted self-mutilation?"—to find an unusually severe look on Dr. Bryant's face. What could possibly be the problem? It was Oct. 14, and I had come to the pediatrics department of Georgetown University Hospital for my mid-October flu shot—just as I had done every year since the age of two.

## EITHER I HAD ACCIDENTALLY CHECKED THE "PREGNANT" BOX AGAIN, OR THE HOSPITAL HAD RUN OUT OF FLU SHOTS.

Never before had Dr. Bryant interrupted my questionnaire time. She had broken tradition, violating the unspoken agreement between us. I determined two possibilities: I had accidentally checked the "pregnant" box again, or the hospital had run out of flu shots. I debated the options.

"It's time," she continued, "for your shot. Do you want pink or yellow?" I relaxed, if only temporarily. She was referring, of course, to Band-Aid colors. The age-old difficulty: The pink ones featured pictures of Betty Boop, but the yellow ones came with pull-off fuzzy stickers.

I went with Betty, attracted to the assured, flirty confidence of her gaze. Immunization injected, accessory attached, I figured Dr. Bryant's earlier breach of our little ritual had been a fluke. I returned to the waiting room, Dr. Bryant at my heels. "You're 18," she said stoically, "and we're a children's clinic. So, I think it's time. I made a list of doctors that we recommend for our graduates." She left me stunned and stinging from rejection as she exited the waiting room, her blonde ponytail wagging behind her.

I sank back into an olive green love seat, feeling an overwhelming appreciation for its familiarity. This was my chair: the chair that was always vacant

because of the way the caramel-brown innards spilled out of a slit in the cushion.

Yet my feelings of comfort were tainted by those of dejection. Cheeks flushing at the injustice, my misery grew into embarrassment and then bitterness, and my fingers involuntarily began to pulverize the stuffing. This love seat, over the years, had absorbed me, and I had made my mark on its fabric (literally—stomach flu, sixth grade), but I would be forgotten.

I only became aware of my behavior when a bemused girl of 16 or 17 caught my eye. Why could this room continue to be hers and not mine? Because of the year or so between us? A year was all that separated us, and yet the distance between us was insurmountable. No longer able to rest in the chair, I shed a few final tears and bowed out of the clinic.

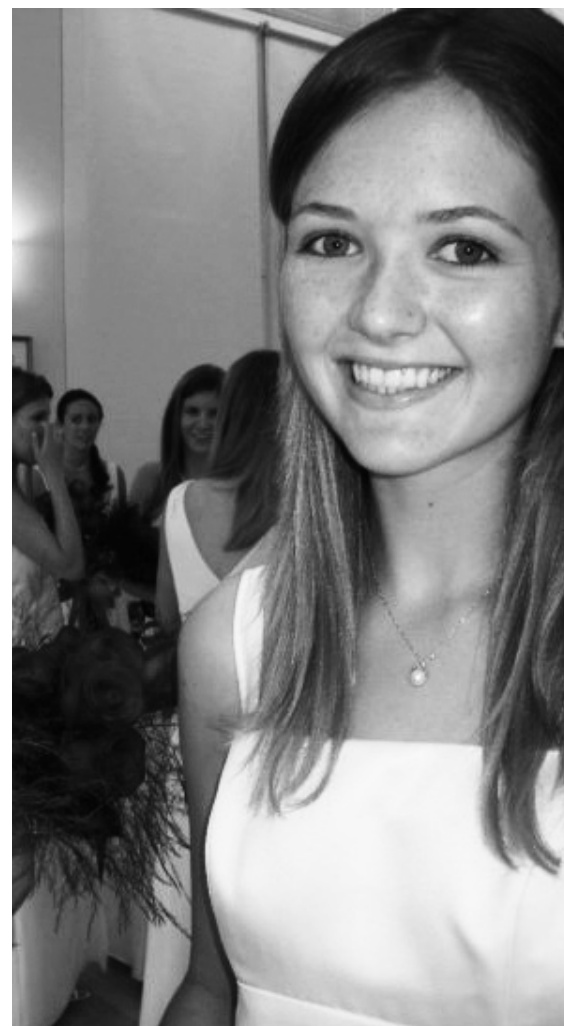
The chair in the Broadway Room of Lerner Hall was clean and firm, sterile and simple. I sat among hundreds of other chairs, with a rigidity that matched that of mine. I conformed to its frame, whereas the love seat had conformed to my frame. This chair was just like every other chair in the room, and I, its guest, was just like every other adult waiting in every other chair for a flu shot. No one was there to check up on me, and no one would notice if I decided to leave. No one inquired as to my mental state, or my chronic earaches, or my potential preference for a Band-Aid color other than the standard nude. I was a part of something much larger than myself. I was an anonymity.

As I sat in that chair, I realized that being uprooted from my haggard love seat wasn't the worst thing possible. It was in that room of strangers that I began to relish the fierce independence of the anonym. It was a newfound power: I could absorb, rather than be absorbed. There lay a strange and dangerous comfort in the notion that I could exist as an observer after having been in the spotlight for so long. The brittle blue chair in Lerner would retain no trace of its guest. It was not a dwelling point, but a jumping-off point—an object of coldness that forced me to turn elsewhere for engagement.

With no questionnaire in front of me, no olive sofa below me, and no blonde ponytail to cling to, I turned instead to the vibrancy of Broadway and wondered, for the first time, what might have existed beyond the windowsill in my hometown, had I been able to absorb it.

"Caitlin B.," they called, and I leapt up to claim my spot in line. The stragglers to my side eyed the potential vacancy of the chair that was not, in any way, mine. I briefly considered the chair's next occupant, taking comfort in the fact that this chair, unlike the love seat in Dr. Bryant's waiting room, would belong no more to him than it had to me.

I swung my bag over my shoulder and let a stray slip of paper fall, ever so innocently, onto the hard blue surface. By the time I felt the familiar prick of the needle in my upper arm, the slip had blown aside, folded and torn. ●



# WHAT IF BLU T GH LI

## columbia's finances in perspective THE REF

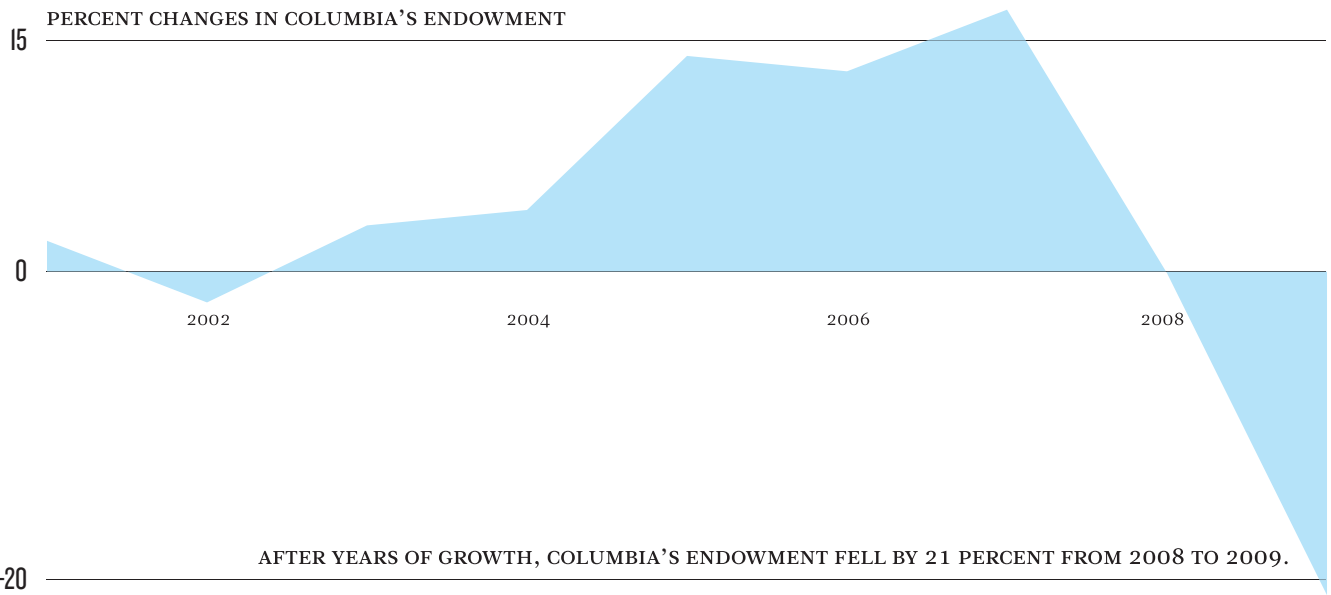
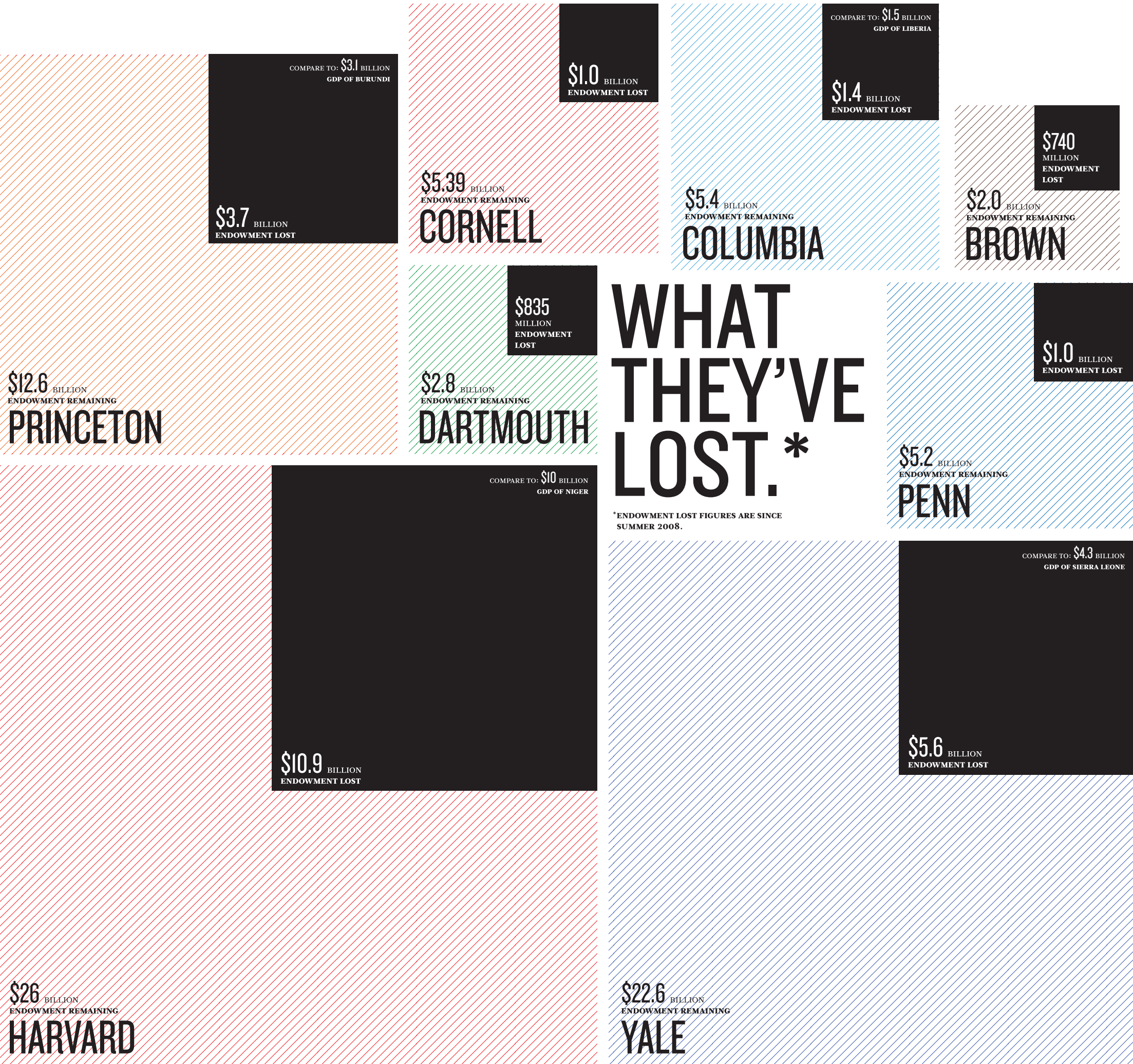
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. Actually, it was just the worst of times. Across America, the financial crisis has hit hard. Foreclosures, empty storefronts, a nagging sense of desperation. And at Harvard, the New York Times reported last week, upperclassmen are no longer receiving “scrambled eggs, bacon and other cooked breakfast foods” in their dorms on weekdays.

Needless to say, universities that entered the crisis with endowments of less than \$36 billion have also been forced to make cuts. A Chronicle of Higher Education survey of more than 200 universities found that nearly half have instated total or partial hiring freezes for faculty. More than 60 percent have frozen hiring for staff.

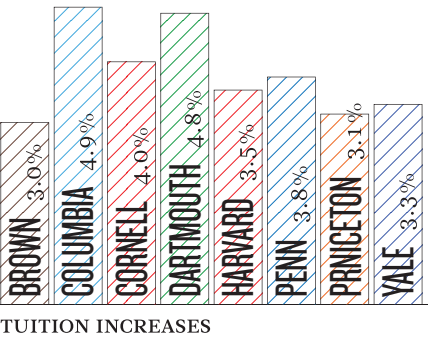
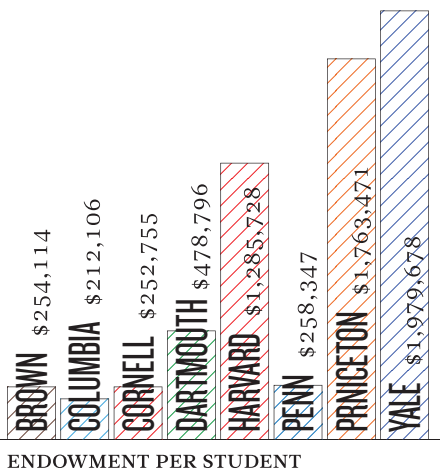
While Harvard is taking bacon and eggs off the menu, the other Ivies have been tightening up their own belts. They have no choice but to cut back—since last September’s financial meltdown, the Ancient Eight have experienced endowment losses ranging from 16 to 27 percent. After years of eye-popping returns in the bull markets, the losses left gaping holes in the operating budgets of normally flush schools like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton.

The sums of money involved here are astronomical, and it can be easy to lose sight of their significance. We’ve tried to put the numbers in perspective.





## THE AFTERMATH



Sources: www.brown.edu, www.columbia.edu, www.cornell.edu, www.dartmouth.edu, www.harvard.edu, www.princeton.edu, www.upenn.edu, www.yale.edu, bloomberg, The Dartmouth, Columbia Daily Spectator, the Wall Street Journal, the Yale Daily News

“This is the first time in modern times with no cookies. We are sharing the pain with the undergraduates.”  
—Harvard Faculty Council member Harry R. Lewis

MONEY HARVARD SAVED, PER MEETING, BY CUTTING COOKIES AND COFFEE FROM FACULTY MEETINGS

\$500

COST OF A “HARVARD YARD” SPORTS COAT

\$495





# A NEW TRIPLE THREAT

even on Broadway, Julia Stiles ranks at the top of her class

BY RUTHIE FIERBERG

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PUBLICITY OFFICE  
AND JOAN MARCUS

In the new Broadway production of David Mamet's "Oleanna," a professor purports that there are three reasons to pursue higher education, among them mastery of a craft and economic betterment. While her acting career was already flourishing by the time she entered the 116th Street gates, the star of the play—and Columbia College alumna—Julia Stiles, CC '05, pursued higher education for the professor's number one reason.

"I was going for the love of learning, and I do think there is something very valid about going to school for the experience, for a liberal arts education where you are going to learn," proposes Stiles. "To go for kind of a basic knowledge, but also to learn how to think, as they say, and also how to grow up."

While her latest endeavor—Stiles' Broadway debut—directly questions the purpose of higher education through the onstage power struggle between an Ivy League professor, John (played by Drama Desk Award-nominated Bill Pullman), and his student, Carol (played by Stiles), Stiles describes Columbia as "exactly what I needed."

"It was the perfect kind of education for me, too. I needed more of a classical education," reflects Stiles as she carefully adjusts her linen neck scarf. Stiles praises the Core, saying that it was different than anything she had experienced academically prior to graduating from New York's Professional Children's School in 1999. "I think I had some catching up to do when I was a freshman, and I got to John Jay first, and everyone was talking about how they had read the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey' in high school already, or over the summer," she says. "I felt like I had missed a memo."

But Stiles caught up soon enough. She reminisces about her Core classes as a smile stretches over her face: "It was just so amazing. I mean, I sound like a brochure from Columbia but ... it was just so memorable."

In retrospect, Columbia was the perfect fit for the actress—but she didn't always see herself here. "I had this idea in my head—I insisted, when I was applying for colleges, on leaving the city, because I grew up in New York City," she says. Thankfully, her college advisor and teacher, a graduate of the epic class of '68, convinced her otherwise: "He kept pushing me and pushing me and saying, 'You have to go visit Columbia,' 'You'll love it, you'll love it,' 'Just please apply, please apply,' and he was totally right."

Stiles decided to stay in the city and ended up deferring for a year, entering college in the fall of 2000. She continued to act professionally while in school, taking off a semester here and there. Though she never acted in any Columbia productions—"I was too scared to do any theater at Columbia"—she did film "Mona Lisa Smile" while she was a student. "I think just for my own life, they were really complementary, being able to work and go to school," she says.

**"IF YOU THINK IN A STRATEGIC, CAREER-MINDED WAY, IT MAYBE WASN'T VERY GOOD FOR MY CAREER. BUT I DON'T REALLY CARE."**

Despite her fame, Stiles maintained a fairly typical Columbia experience: complaining about papers, moving to a Ruggles suite for her sophomore year, cheering on friends in the Varsity Show, and hanging out on campus to find her niche in the Columbia community.



In show, with Bill Pullman as professor.

Coincidentally, Julia chose a major—English literature—that ultimately helped her foster a necessary acting skill. “I think what I was trying to do with my major was, if I was going to have to do this much reading it should be reading novels,” she says. “I love words and etymology and novels, and it does translate to acting ... in terms of analysis of texts.”

But Stiles’ education was purposefully meant to deviate from her life as an actor. Looking back, Stiles realizes, “If you think in a strategic, career-minded way, it maybe wasn’t very good for my career.” Then again, as she adds bluntly, “But I don’t really care.”

Just as the liberal arts education Columbia provided was exactly what Julia needed back in 2000, her Broadway debut is exactly what her acting career demands in 2009. Stiles emits an aura of equanimity and talent, whether in the casual setting of her unassuming dressing room or onstage in the throes of a violent power struggle.

While Stiles is best known for her film work—specifically all-time favorite teen flick “10 Things I Hate About You” and the gripping “Bourne” series—she got her start in live theater at age 11. The transition from the unpredictable, fast-paced nature of filmmaking to the steady routine of 45th Street can present a challenge, but the actress has become fond of the idiosyncrasies of Broadway culture. “I love the sort of ritual part of theater,” says Stiles, “which is that after a certain hour during the day I kind of have to start focusing on the play. And then an hour before the show Bill and I practice the fight ... and then I start thinking about the emotional aspect.”

Though “Oleanna” is only an hour and a half long, the three-act, two-person drama thrusts the audience and its actors into an emotional tem-

pest. It follows John, a professor of education, as he attempts to console and teach his emotionally distraught student, Carol. The two stutter and cut each other off in bouts of frustration for most of the first act, emphasizing a fundamental inability to communicate.

The second and third acts propel their interaction into zones of dangerous misunderstanding, driving home one of the professor’s statements: “We can only interpret the behavior of others through the screens we create.” According to Carol, her professor inappropriately manipulated his power and authority. John believes that he has comforted and forged a personal connection with his hysterical pupil. A he-said she-said debate escalates, culminating in an explosive ending.

Stiles presses that her favorite aspect of live theater lies in its rawness, which makes “Oleanna”’s intensity a perfect match for her. “It’s almost like a yoga class where you have to, you know, relax your body, but also be not thinking about the end of the play ... but taking it one step at a time and experiencing it,” she explains.

“With a movie ... you very rarely get wrapped up in an experience where you’re not self-conscious anymore because there’s a camera in front of you, because you’re just doing one scene that’s part of a bigger picture, and then there’s a lot of stopping and starting and waiting around,” she rushes. “Whereas with a play”—she pauses and leans in, resting her chin on her fist like a woman remembering her first kiss—“especially with a play like this ... you’re not thinking about the lines or how you’re supposed to express something. ... You’re actually thinking about the other person.”

In this case, that “other person” is Bill Pullman, to whom Stiles partially credits her stellar and provocative performance. “I’m in really good hands,” Stiles says. “I’ve learned so much from Bill nightly, and he challenges me to be a better actress. I feel that I have a responsibility when I get up onstage to be there for him, too.”

Stiles also treasures the depth of Mamet’s material. Knowing her literary background, her interest in the mechanics of language and the interpretation of truth is not surprising. Stiles dissects the language of her lines, saying, “He [Mamet] is very deliberate about pauses and the spacing of his text ... it’s almost like a musical score.”

## “WE DEFINITELY HAVE TO EARN OUR STAY HERE. I LIKE THAT CHALLENGE.”

But she also disagrees with the playwright in some respects. Though Mamet famously doesn’t believe in back story, Stiles does. “To make a play rich, more rich, you gotta make these fully formed beings,” Stiles asserts. “So yeah, I do create a back story for Carol.” Stiles possesses an unrelenting attention to detail, which infuses her portrayal of Carol’s obsession with specificity.

Stiles’s high standards for herself reflect the pressure of Broadway status. She appreciates that audiences make a deliberate, expensive choice to

## 7 THINGS JULIA LOVES ABOUT HER DRESSING ROOM

To reach it, she climbs a steep staircase from the garage-like entrance to the Golden Theatre’s backstage area. Stiles relaxes in the dorm-like room she calls a home away from home.

“Actually,” Stiles laughs, “when I walked into this dressing room I was like, ‘This reminds me of college.’”

And Julia has opted for elegance and simplicity in décor. On her checklist:

**The essentials:** A towel and a script.

**A comfy couch:** Smoothed in deep red satin and accented with coordinating pillows, Stiles’ sofa radiates warmth.

**An old-fashioned bell:** It’s been painted over, but Stiles loves that it lets her ‘feel the history’ of her room.

**Family photo:** An old black-and-white of her grandmother Ruth hangs on her wall-to-wall mirror.

**Greenery:** A parcel of snowy hydrangeas rests on the windowsill.

**Inspirational posters:** A magazine cut-out of Serena Williams’ confrontation at the 2009 US Open. Stiles draws on this image of a woman wronged to motivate herself.

**Spunky decorations:** A strand of chili-pepper lights wrapped around each of the two exposed pipes.\\\

see a Broadway play, as opposed to the more casual nature of going to see a movie. As the actress notes, “New York audiences are not as easily charmed. We definitely have to earn our stay here.” Luckily, that pressure doesn’t frighten Stiles—she adds determinedly, “I like that challenge.”

Stiles continues, saying, “I really do love live theater because I feel like that’s the most challenging and rewarding, purely because you get the immediate reaction of the audience.” And Stiles certainly provokes a reaction in “Oleanna”: audience members audibly gasp and even shout at her during performances. She interprets these responses as confirmation that she is doing her job as an actress.

While Carol possesses an unrelenting quality that often upsets audience members, one must wonder if this relentlessness originates in Stiles herself. At 28, Stiles holds the title of acting success—stage and screen—and Ivy grad. Her intellectual prowess, modest self-awareness and determined commitment render her a different kind of triple threat. While “Oleanna” is all about differing perceptions, Julia Stiles renders it nearly impossible for anyone to see her as anything but an impressive woman. ●





# TV 101

## why television is shut out of columbia's curriculum

BY JOE DALY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY REBEKAH KIM

Some Columbia students may joke that they're majoring in TV. When nights that should be spent reading Herodotus and Kant devolve into nights watching what happens when seven strangers stop being polite and start getting real, or vampire/human hybrids making love in the bayou, it may seem that we're devoting more of our time to the study of the small screen than to reading the Great Books. For Columbians, TV is a sinful escape from real work. And unless you watched "Destinos" in ninth grade Spanish, it's probably been a while since a TV show was assigned for any of your classes.

And yet, at an institution committed to a well-rounded education that's strong in the arts and located in the one of the major TV capitals of the world, it seems odd that there is barely a single class at our university that's devoted to studying TV's production, history, or writing. It's true that the history and study of television sounds less academic than say, comparative literature, but there still doesn't seem to be any reason why the genre should be completely overlooked.

Television studies as a discipline certainly isn't absent from all of higher education. On the contrary, many other top-tier universities have extensive TV studies offerings. Northwestern offers an undergraduate major in radio, TV, and film. NYU's Tisch School offers an undergraduate film and TV degree, whose completion requires taking classes in TV production, history, and writing. For their minor in mass communications and media studies, Tufts even offers a class called "Reality Television."

Perhaps Columbia could learn from Boston University's Communication school. Deborah Jaramillo, an assistant professor at BU's department of film and television, and author of a new book called "Ugly War, Pretty Package: How CNN and Fox News Made the Invasion of Iraq High Concept," sees Television as serious stuff—serious enough to warrant a capital "T." "There is this cultural hierarchy that demonizes or at least dismisses television. Television is a bad word in many academic circles. Film was legitimated in the academy very early on, [but] television has struggled," says Jaramillo.


"When I get students to sit down and watch television as scholars," she continues, "with a comprehensive understanding of the drama that unfolded between broadcasters and regulatory bodies ... with an eye toward authorial style, with an awareness of the tension between creativity and commerce, and with a heightened sense of how audiences are hooked and constructed as fans and different types of consumers, then an entirely new world is opened up to them." For Jaramillo, TV has proven to be a useful, rigorous subject for academic analysis—

despite the disdain that many other academics direct toward her field.

Sure, NYU, BU, and Northwestern are universities with pre-professional bents, but Tufts is a liberal arts school just like Columbia. So why is it that Columbia is completely devoid of TV studies?

Perhaps there's an "upstairs/downstairs" principle at work within the film studies department. After all, TV has always been film's more frivolous younger sibling, the Star Magazine~ to film's Vanity Fair. But when asked about the relative respectability of the two genres, Annette Insdorf, director of Columbia's undergraduate film studies program, has only positive things to say about television.

## NO ONE CAN ARGUE THAT AN EPISODE OF 'THE SOPRANOS' DOESN'T HOLD MORE CULTURAL WORTH THAN, SAY, THE TWO CAREFULLY EDITED HOURS OF 'THE LOVE GURU.'



Directory of Classes	
Subject Name	Terms
Sports Management	Summer2009, Fall2009, Spring2010
Stomatology	Fall2009
Swedish	Fall2009, Spring2010
Tagalog	Fall2009
Technology Management	Fall2009, Spring2010
Theatre Management	Fall2009, Spring2010
TV STUDIES?	Who knows?
Urgaritic	Fall2009
Urology	Fall2009

"I believe that my colleagues, like myself, respect the medium of television, especially given the cross-over between major artists in both media," she says. And Insdorf doesn't completely leave out TV in her own film courses: "When I teach the work of Sidney Lumet in my 'American Film History' class, I talk about his crucial training in live television—not to mention that one of his best films

of the past ten year, 'Strip Search,' was made for HBO," says Insdorf.

Television has even proven itself to be a valuable teaching tool in some Columbia courses. Irene Motyl, who teaches a German class at Barnard that focuses on German telenovelas, believes wholeheartedly in the power of television to teach language. "Since they [TV shows] are part of popular culture, they are easier to understand. They rely mostly on visual images and sound and therefore are very accessible," says Motyl.

Some may be surprised to hear that Motyl uses the German version of "Ugly Betty" as a teaching tool. "We look at the genre analytically, we talk about the main characteristics, compare them to the American soaps, and make a comparison of 'Verliebt in Berlin' to 'Ugly Betty' and the Spanish version, 'Yo soy Betty, La Fea'" Motyl explains. "This way we develop a visual competency, expand our vocabulary, the structures of colloquial, as well as analytical language—all in German."

Even so, many undergraduates are skeptical about the academic heft of television. When asked, some Columbia students say that they believe there are inherent differences between TV and film that make study of the former less worthy. As Sam Laskey, a Columbia College junior majoring in film studies says, "Instead of producing two hours that are meant to stand the test of time, TV stations create tons of programming to satisfy the moment. The goal of most TV is not permanent. It is hard to analyze something that was never intended to last past next week's episode."

Point taken. There's a lot of crap on TV that's held to a much lower standard than Oscar-bait films. But no one can argue that an episode of "The Sopranos" doesn't hold more cultural worth than say, the two carefully edited hours of "The Love Guru."

Still, the stereotype of TV being all fluff and no substance could be behind its absence at Columbia. Some believe that TV is omitted from the film studies curriculum not because of disrespect for the genre, but rather because of insecurities within the film studies department itself. "The problem begins with the fact that film studies has always been viewed as a slightly dubious course of study. They assume that the pop culture associations with television will either a) muddy the waters or b) affirm what skeptics of film art have long believed," says Jordan Lord, a Columbia College sophomore majoring in film studies.

Disrespect for TV is only one factor that explains why Columbia currently offers no classes that focus exclusively on television. "We would love to have more courses in the area of television studies, but [we] suffer from under-funding," says Annette Insdorf. "We used to offer 'History of Television'—a popular elective course—but our adjunct budget is terribly limited," she continues.

The lack of TV studies may also be symptomatic of Columbia's dogged opposition to

pre-professionalism. As Columbia's promotional literature has reminded countless applicants, students, professors, and potential donors, Columbia is first and foremost a liberal arts institution. It is committed to offering a laundry list of "-ologies," those lofty subjects whose study expands the mind and leaves career choices blissfully open-ended. Other students toil at pre-professional factories, but Columbians learn how to think as opposed to what to think. At least theoretically, Columbia keeps its curriculum pure, free from subjects like "business," "accounting," and "communications."

## TV STUDIES, THEREFORE, MAY BE A FIELD THAT'S TOO CLOSELY RELATED TO DOING AND MAKING RATHER THAN THINKING.

TV studies, therefore, may be a field that's too closely related to doing and making rather than thinking. This is all well and good, but some stu-

dents bemoan the lack of TV studies as just another way that Columbia doesn't prepare its students for life outside these iron gates. "There are more jobs in television than in film. If we are being trained for the real world—I'm sorry, the thought of being trained for the real world at Columbia makes me laugh—then we should be trained in TV," says Sam Laskey.

If the teaching of actual TV production is out of the question given the composition of Columbia's curricular structure, TV's place at Columbia comes down to how the powers that be at Columbia categorize television. If TV is mere entertainment, then it probably doesn't belong in Columbia's academic cannon. If TV is a product of culture, then perhaps it should be analyzed—as it already is in Motyl's classroom—in more language, anthropology, sociology, and history courses. And if TV truly falls under the elusive heading of "art," then it certainly belongs in the film studies department.

The absence of TV in our curriculum may be a case of Columbia unfairly thumbing its nose at a valuable area of study that could enrich the academic lives of its students. It seems silly if it really is just TV's mass appeal that is keeping it out of Columbia's courses. After all, the Bible is the bestselling book of all time, and it's taught in both Lit Hum and CC. Imagine the possibilities if Columbia did start to embrace TV studies. Who wouldn't want to take a new Sociology class called "From Flavor Flav to Bret Michaels: Class and Gender Bias on VH1"? ●

### CLASSES THAT SOMEHOW DID MAKE THE CUT:

So, Columbia's too serious for TV studies? Here's a look into some past, present, and future classes of questionable academic value that have been deemed worthy of study within these hallowed halls. Don't tell Ken Burns!

- Pirates, Boys, and Capitalism (Anthropology)
- Science Fiction (English)
- The Art of Being Oneself (Barnard First Year Seminar)
- Mad Love (Comparative Literature)
- Alchemy, Magic & Science (History)
- Fluent Bodies (Anthropology)
- Sex in the Tropics (Comparative Ethnic Studies)
- Words and Pictures (Comparative Literature)
- Food and American Life (American Studies)
- Mafia Movies: From Sicily to the Sopranos (Comparative Literature, Barnard)
- Costume and Mask Workshop (Theater)
- Sexual Enlightenment (French)
- Popular Music of the Americas: Country (Music)
- Physics for Poets (Physics)





# COMPUTER GENERATED

what happens when we let a web site choose our music

BY ANGELA RUGGIERO-CORLISS

ILLUSTRATION BY HALEY VECCHIARELLI

It's midterms season, I've retreated to the stacks with a mug of green tea and a looming stack of psych notes, and I'm sick of everything on my iPod. I want to listen to something mellow, something with easily dismissible lyrics that's still pleasant enough to comfort me as I descend into a hell of sodium pumps, acetylcholine, and nigrostriatal pathways. Three-plus hours of Broken Social Scene, with their muted lyrics and pretty melodies, was once ideal for situations like this. But those 45 songs have been my test-prep soundtrack since tenth grade—and they now elicit a negative response of near-Pavlovian proportions.

Taking advantage of an unusually strong Wi-Fi signal, I head over to Pandora.com and create a station based on "Broken Social Scene." Within seconds, I have a stream of songs, all characterized by "mellow rock instrumentation" and "a subtle use of vocal harmony." If a song is too boisterous, I can give it a thumbs down and move to something quieter. If it's perfect, I can give it a thumbs up and look forward to more like it. Problem solved, right?

In the past several years, a flock of music-recommendation services have sprouted up on the Internet. Though each site has its nuances—and some are better than others—all boast huge databases and super-smart technologies, which seek to identify

our tastes and make personalized recommendations. Pandora, an Internet radio and music recommendation service, is a favorite among Columbia students. Users enter the name of a favorite song or artist, and Pandora will stream songs that it deems similar, based on over 400 attributes identified and cataloged in their database. Columbia College sophomore Xander Ciucci likes the site because, as he says, "It's free and convenient." Yuriy Nartov, a Columbia College sophomore, praises Pandora's clean interface and limited ads. It's not perfect, though: "I find it repeating songs quite a lot," Nartov says.

Another campus favorite is Last.fm, a British site that tracks, or "scrobbles," the number of times you play a song on your computer and mp3 player. It compiles this data to create personalized lists of preferences and recommendations. Last.fm users can also create profiles, connect with friends, and view biographies and photos of artists.

Willie Avendano, a SEAS sophomore, is working this fall as an intern for BandsInTown.com, a lesser-known startup that focuses on live music. BandsInTown, which has been around for a little less than two years and recently underwent a major re-launch, compiles personalized lists of concerts in an area and

links to buy tickets. "It can be conceptualized as Pandora for concerts in your area," Avendano says. "Intuitively, it's very cool and very useful." The service also lets users sort concerts by distance and cost.

As overworked college students, we really don't have the time to parse endless blogs, page through magazines, listen to the radio, and make trips to the record store. Sites like Pandora, Last.fm, and BandsInTown make our lives easier by sorting through information and bringing it straight to us. Avendano stresses that BandsInTown's recommendation service is "next-generation" and "even better than Pandora's," since it factors in subtle variables like a song's kitsch value. But finding new songs and artists online can also mean losing an integral part of the music discovery experience. Pandora's right—most of my favorite music is characterized by "mellow rock instrumentation," "folk influences," and "a vocal-centric aesthetic." But can my tastes really be so clearly delineated? These kinds of sites assume that our tastes are inherent and immovable—but is this true?

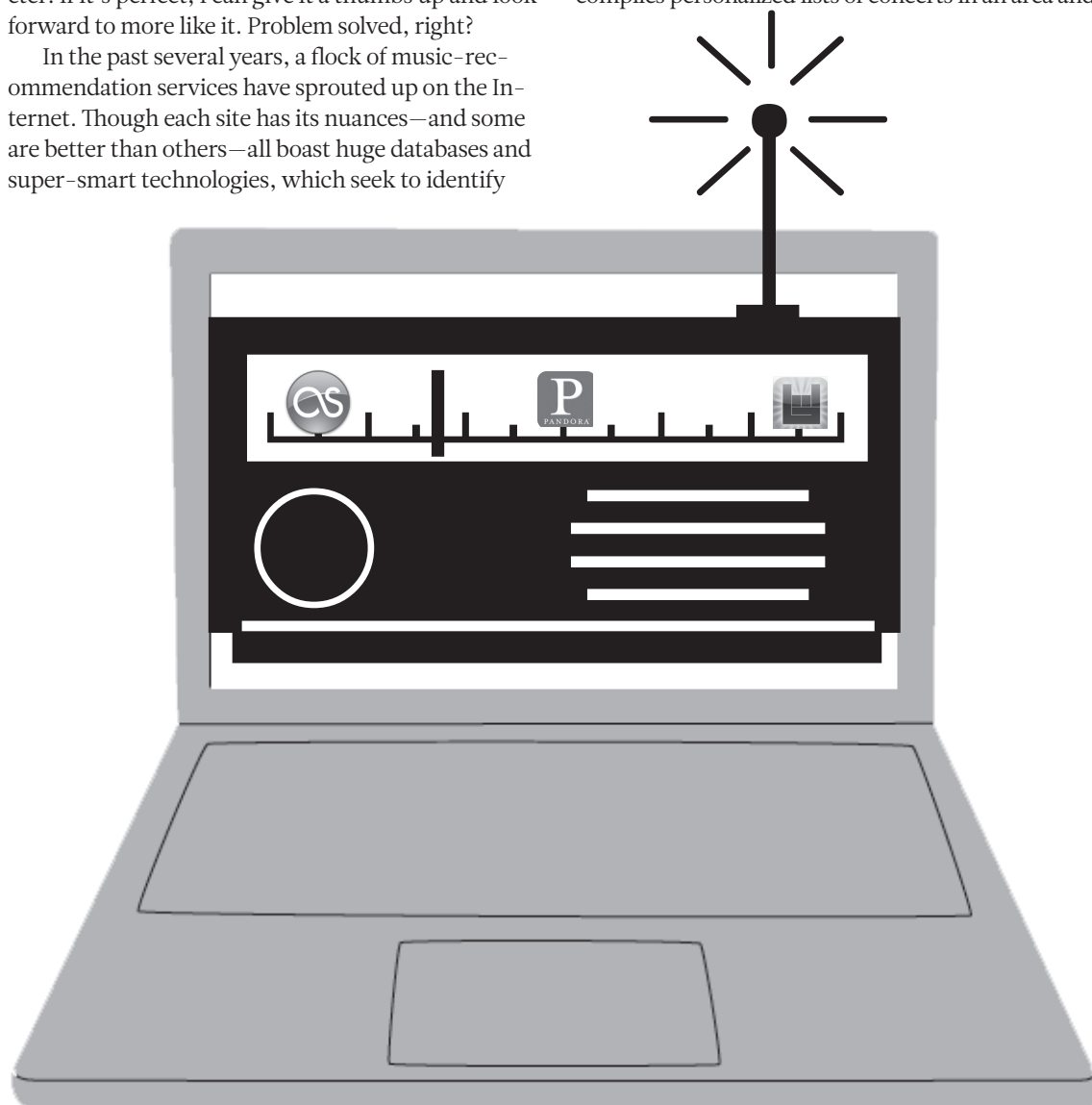
## I DOUBT A PROGRAM CAN UNDERSTAND WHY A SONG MAKES ME WANT TO CRY.

Music discovery has long been a collective process, facilitated by radio, magazines, and word-of-mouth. Web sites like these make it into something that is largely individual. With only my own pre-existing tastes as a guide, I can delve further into genres I know I like. Thinking outside that box, though, is impossible. It's easy to wind up limited rather than liberated by our individualized freedom of choice.

Even in the digital age, real-life experience constitutes a huge part of music culture. There are many songs I can't listen to without remembering the first time I heard them: Destiny's Child's "Survivor" album will forever remind me of a family beach vacation the summer before seventh grade, Bob Dylan's "Blood On The Tracks" will always make me think of my dad, and T.I.'s single "Whatever You Like," for better or for worse, will yield flashbacks of sweaty nights and poor choices at Campo freshman year. Similarly, there are artists I've seen in concert who I didn't like beforehand and loved after the fact. Music is more than the sum of its sounds: it's influenced by experience and the subtleties that concept entails.

No matter how next-gen it is, I highly doubt a computer program can understand why a certain Simon and Garfunkel song always makes me want to curl up and cry, or just how good that trashy Lady Gaga single feels when it hits my weary brain at full volume. And that's fine by me.

Sites like Pandora, Last.fm, and BandsInTown are helpful and totally worth using, especially when they make the difference between listening to a tired old Chili Peppers disc or finding an exciting new artist—or between a night of munching on Wheat Thins in your Nussbaum kitchen and seeing a live show. Their ever-improving technologies can identify and incorporate many subtle factors, finding recordings and concerts that you'll love. Of course, they can't take everything into account. At least, not yet. ●



# BALLET FOR THE MASSES

can ballet companies reach out to new audiences?

BY HANNAH KLAIN

ILLUSTRATION BY REBEKAH KIM

It's no surprise that ballet isn't as popular as, say, "Gossip Girl." The experience of watching 20 young adults dressed in odd costumes as they prance around silently to classical music is one that doesn't exactly appeal to everyone. In the age of the internet and hi-def television, some ballet companies are working overtime in an attempt to get audiences to care about dance. Others, though, are not quite so worried, leaving inexperienced audience members and ballet aficionados alike to wonder if they should be.

Ballet is a classic artistic endeavor steeped in tradition and history. But none of these qualities are helping the art form appeal to contemporary audiences. Somewhere between its invention in the 1600s and today, ballet acquired the reputation of being uninteresting and pretentious, something only the elderly and ballerinas themselves can appreciate.

A closer look at popular culture reveals that ballet isn't as inaccessible as one might think. In fact, it's far from obsolete. Thousands of people take their children to see "The Nutcracker" each year. "So You Think You Can Dance," which occasionally features its contestants performing ballet pieces, is one of the highest rated shows on television. And some of the most beloved Broadway musicals—"West Side Story," for example—are filled with balletic choreography. It's these small doses of ballet, presented with flashy lights and even flashier costumes, that garner mass appeal. Unfortunately, contemporary choreography and unfiltered classical ballet seem to get lost in the shuffle.

The Columbia Ballet Collaborative, Columbia's ballet company-in-residence, works to counteract this loss by including a variety of pieces in their showcases. "I think the great thing about CBC [Columbia Ballet Collaborative]," says Victoria North, a senior in the School of General Studies and artistic director of CBC, "is that we haven't limited ourselves to one thing ... We have a wide variety of types of dance, and types of choreographers, and types of music. Everything is truly meant to be a collaboration." CBC utilizes a diversity of programming to attract audiences who are curious about a wide variety of types of ballet. Their show this fall will include pieces choreographed to classical music by Philip Glass and rock by Radiohead, with dancers performing in everything from pointe shoes to sneakers.

## SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE 1600s AND TODAY, BALLET ACQUIRED THE REPUTATION OF BEING UNINTERESTING AND PRETENTIOUS.

The Collaborative also isn't afraid to admit that winning its audiences' approval is not actually its first priority when selecting the works they'll perform. Lydia Walker, a founder of CBC and a GS senior, says that the Collaborative's selection of pieces is based, first and foremost, on pleasing the Company's dancers. As Walker explains, "Your job as an artist ... is not to entertain the audience

... When you can get caught up in entertaining the audience, that's a problem."

This kind of indifference may seem risky, but it's a luxury CBC can afford. The company has something every ballet company dreams of: a built-in audience filled with young, intellectually-minded people. This means that CBC is not only able to draw in students using cost-effective marketing tools like Facebook and word of mouth, but also that it is free to experiment with different types of choreography in its shows. Because the majority of CBC's audience members are close friends or acquaintances of dancers in the company, the Collaborative doesn't have to worry quite so much about meeting its audiences' expectations of ballet.

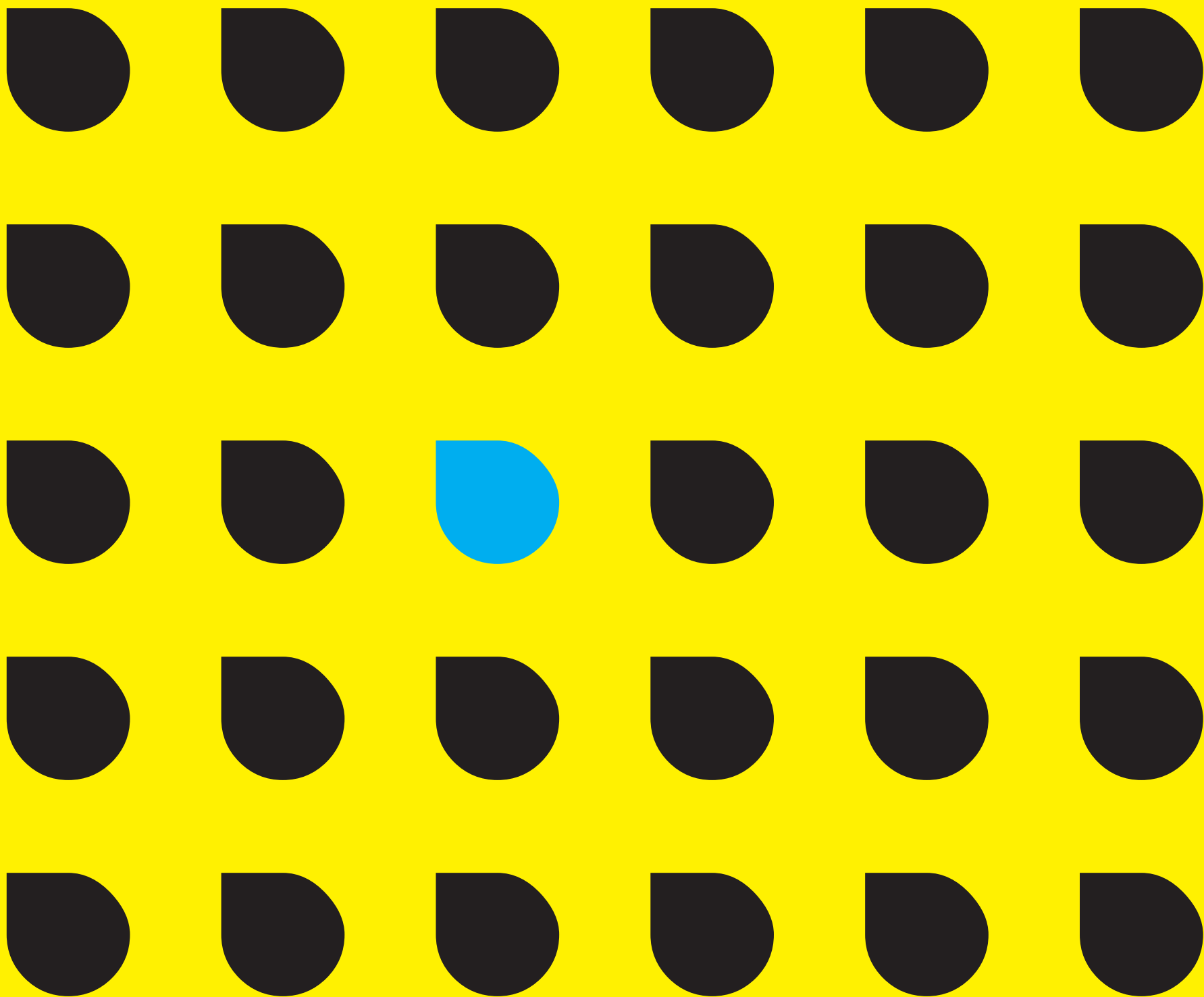
Unfortunately, most professional companies aren't so lucky. Even well-established ballet companies, like the New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, are working rigorously to garner mass appeal. According to its Web site, New York City Ballet's mission is to "expand the Company's audience and make ballet accessible to the widest possible public" through a wide variety of programming including touring, educational outreach, and inventive use of media. Nevertheless, sometimes mass appeal means knowing when to give the public what it wants. The first thing one sees upon arriving to the New York City Ballet Web site is a picture from the NYCB production of "The Nutcracker" and instructions on how to purchase tickets for this year's performances.

The major problem that all ballet companies—large and small, public and private—are grappling with is that it's nearly impossible to understand the amount of effort and athleticism that goes into ballet unless you've studied it. Columbia College first year Nick Caros perfectly illustrates this when he articulates why he doesn't care about dance: "Ballet is generally considered graceful, and I see that and I can respect that when I watch ballet—but to me that's not really enough."

So how do ballet companies get people who can't appreciate ballet to appreciate ballet? The answer, according to Lydia Walker, lies in "the process." Walker and other ballet devotees believe that companies need to open themselves up to the public while performances are being created, not just to display their finished project. Cynthia Anderson, a professor of ballet at Barnard, is in favor of this possible approach. "Any time you can taste different endeavors, I think it increases your appreciation," she says.

Giving audience members insight into the work that goes into a making a ballet will significantly increase their appreciation for the art form, whether that means holding a few open rehearsals over the course of a season or having dancers blog about their work for the company's Web site. Bringing outsiders inside the complex and exciting world of dance, giving them even just a taste of the art form, is a definitive way to get people hooked on ballet. ●





# Work for The Eye.

---

We're looking for writers, photographers,  
illustrators, and web designers.

For more information, e-mail us at  
[eye@columbiaspectator.com](mailto:eye@columbiaspectator.com)